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One hundred and fifty miles north. . . and back. c1984

Buboltz, Laretta Emmer

Brillion, Wisconsin: Zander Press, c1984

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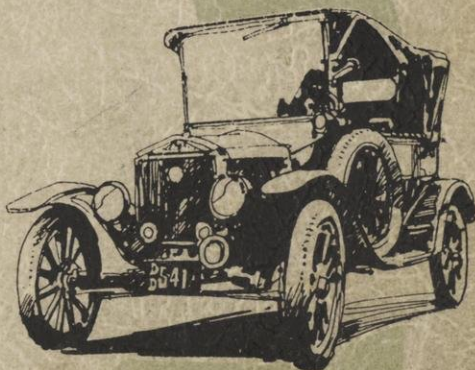
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92

Buboltz



One Hundred
and Fifty Miles
North ...

Back

By Laretta Emmer Buboltz

WISCONSIN
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Buboltz, Laretta Emmer
One Hundred and Fifty Miles N
North . . . and Back

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BRILLION, WISCONSIN



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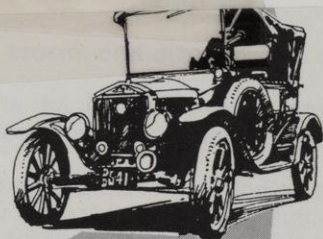
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WISCON
92 BUB

Suboltz, Loretta Emmer
One Hundred and Fifty Miles North...
and back



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One Hundred
and Fifty Miles
North ...
And Back

*Sincerely Little
With Love to my friends
Loretta Emmer Suboltz
1984*

Dedicated to my grandmothers and my children's grandmothers.

Grandma was a woman with a broom, or a dustpan, or a wash rag or a mixing spoon in her hand.

You saw her making pie crust in the morning, even humming to it. You saw her setting out the baked pies at noon, or taking them in all cooled at dusk.

She slid through the house as a vacuum, seeking, finding and setting to rights. She made mirrors of every window to catch the sun.

In her lifetime she had stuffed turkeys, chicken, gentlemen and boys.

She washed ceilings, walls and children. She laid linoleum, repaired shoes and toys, and fired wood stoves.

She fed threshers, and kept her girls best dressed in school with her own sewing. She planted huge gardens, knew how to save and preserve everything therein.

She just did everything she was expected to do and more, and she did it happily.

This book was written with sincere love and for the pleasure of my children, grand- and great-grandchildren, sisters and brothers, nieces and nephews at the request of many, and was inspired in me by a grandson, Rick, who bothered me for a long time about this.

All I have written is true and to the best of my knowledge. If I have offended anyone, it was purely unintentional, and please try to overlook the mistakes.

We have weathered some rough times together and sometimes landed in defeat. We have also witnessed much success, but we chose to "hang in there together" with faith in God and in each other.

ONE

The beginning of this story takes place at the turn of the century in the little hamlet of Grimms in Manitowoc County, population about 300 more or less, about the same number as at the time of this writing. The village boasted a couple of saloons, a general store, a one-room school and lime kilns. Here at the kilns most of the male inhabitants worked and very hard work it was.

Close to the lime plant was a row of houses, just houses, no conveniences, no extra buildings, just the little house behind the big house. In these houses lived the workers, some whole families, some just bachelors getting by. But at the top of the hill was a larger house and here my grandparents lived; John Hayek and his wife Caroline Swatek Hayek, a fun-loving, hard-drinking, noisy, dancing Bohemian family. Our grandpa was not the man who invented work, and he was at his very best when he was lifting the bottle.

Our grandma, on the other hand, was a very ambitious lady, who kept boarders and took in washing, mending and ironing from some of the working unmarried men. I'm thinking she must have loved her husband very much and always submitted herself to him because they had a large family: six boys namely Joe, John, Wenzel, Frank, Emil and Charles; and seven girls Mary (Tikalsky), Anna (our mother), Carrie (Gintner), Barbara (Gintner-Resch), Frances (Hersant), Christine (Kamps) and a baby Rose.

Our grandma was quiet, a bit homely in her old-fashioned Bohemian way with her black hair pulled tight back in a pug. Her way of keeping it that way was to put a swallow of water or coffee with a little sugar in her mouth, swish it around, spit it in her hands and slick her hair down with this. From the time I knew her she did not have a tooth in her mouth.

While other ladies were wearing beautiful be-flowered or plumed hats as they did in those days, grandma constantly wore a scarf or babushka, black with red roses, on her head. While Ma and other ladies wore skirts and pretty, very dressy, mostly white waists or flowered dresses, grandma wore the dark old-fashioned clothes she brought along from the "Old Country." She went barefoot all summer except when she did her chores, then she wore wooden shoes or heavy rubbers.

Later they moved to a farm and I loved to stay there during summer vacation. She could hardly speak a word of English and me no Bohemian, but oh how we loved her and we always managed to communicate.

Later on the farm when I was five or six years old I liked to sit on the porch with her and munch apples. They had a big orchard and garden. Grandma would scrape her apples with a spoon and eat it that way. She did the same with some garden vegetables, and she seemed to enjoy our company doing this and we loved her very much.

When she milked cows she would squirt milk into my tin cup for me to drink all warm and foamy and I liked it that way. This was one part of my heritage. Now for the other part.

About 20 miles away in Calumet County on a farm between the villages of St. John and Sherwood was a more prosperous farmer named Joseph Emmer and his wife Elizabeth Hein Emmer. They also had a large family:

six boys — John (our father), Joseph, Anton, Fred, Frank and Edward, and three girls — Anne (Sternhagen), Lottie (Thiel), and Rayce (Funk). Here was a happy, strictly modern family given to card playing and gambling for fun. This grandma came from Chicago and often went back by train to visit and shop. We could hardly wait for her return because she always brought us something. A pretty dress material, a new hat, new hair ribbons, a doll or a piece of jewelry. We loved her very much also, but by the time I was seven years old this beautiful grandma became very ill and died. It seemed so hard to understand and so unfair.

It seemed grandpa just gave up, went downhill very fast, spending much time and money in town, drinking too much and depending on his horses to bring him home safely. He became very forgetful, senile, quarrelsome and died in his sixties. His greatest fault was being too generous at the bar, with the young punks who could talk him out of anything.

Out of these two families came one part of the Almond Buboltz family, the main subjects of this story.

TWO

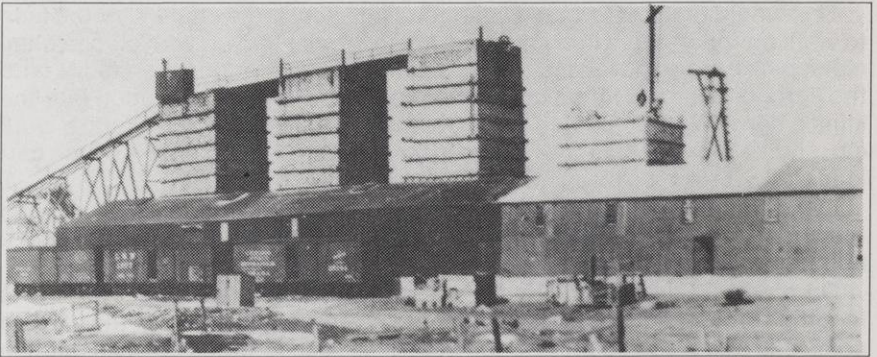
On October 6, 1902, John Emmer, the vagabond until now, married Anna Hayek. It must have been quite the thing from what I've been told. The wedding had a mixture of Bohemian dancing and hilarity mixed with German drinking, dancing and stories that lasted almost three days. It broke up only when wind and rain blew the tent down. This I've been told.

By this time, our pa was also working at the Grimms Lime Kilns. They settled in a house next to grandma Hayek's. Here four of us kids were born — Johnnie, Christine, Clarence and myself.

I suppose it was pleasant most of the time but there were heartaches too and sorrow when some sort of illness came to Grimms. At this time, Mother's little sister Rose about three years old died of what the doctors diagnosed as diphtheria and a few months later our little brother Clarence, 10 months old, died of what the doctor said was pneumonia. Grandma and Mother never understood, I guess.

Living conditions and wages didn't quite satisfy pa and he heard of another Lime & Stone Company in Valders where living conditions, wages and schools were much better. So, in 1911 my parents moved to Valders. Here we had a much better house with more pleasant surroundings and a more modern grade school.

In Valders, the wages were much better, the house much nicer and pa liked his job, mostly because it was piece-work. He was a blaster and stone-breaker. The ledge where the limestone was — was on a hill or cliff. Below this cliff in sort of a valley were the company buildings consisting of a row of houses, a pump house and a big company barn for horses; no tractors.



The Lime Kilns.

A big modern house at the far end belonged to Barney and Mag Brennan. He was the president and owner of the Valders Lime & Stone Company and a very good friend of ours. Next house was where some Italians lived, nice clean people and this man was pa's partner in work. Next was our house almost as nice as the Brennan's but not so large. The other three houses were occupied by Italians, mostly careless and quarrelsome.

One family of Italians living next door to us really were strange people. Hot blooded, either fighting to kill each other, or making red-hot love on the porch swing. In those days even holding hands in public was shameless. Then ma would make us go inside and shut the door.

One night there was such screaming and crying there that pa thought Tony was killing his wife, so he went over, and I guess it even seemed that way when pa got there. He just walked over and tried to talk to Tony, and as he did so he pushed his wife away from him. This seemed to help, so pa came back home. A few minutes later they were making love to beat the band on the porch swing. Again we were told, go inside and shut the door. But that was not the end of it. A few days later pa was served a summons to appear for striking a woman across her breast. Pa was so mad but he went. He came back home smiling — nothing came of it. But he said after that Tony could kill his wife and he would do nothing, just shut the door so he couldn't hear it.

At the end was a new house where the Anhalts' lived. They were saving for a farm of their own, and I mean saving. She had to save the potato peelings to show him at noon to prove she wasn't peeling them too thick. They had a big garden and raised lots of pumpkins and so they ate stewed pumpkin sauce on their bread most of the time even in school lunches. Maybe they were right because they moved away long before we did.

About once or twice a month pa would prepare for blasting by drilling deep holes into the ledge. Then he would put sticks of dynamite deep into these holes and prepare to set it off by pushing a lever on some sort of batteries.

Before he pushed the lever he would come to the top of the ledge overlooking the houses and yell "fire" three times (and he could yell). Then everybody including dogs would run for some sort of shelter before the blast. This would send stones flying high in the air and sometimes the smaller ones flew down into the valley and hit the houses.

This would break up enough limestone into very large chunks for the men to work on for weeks. Their job then was to break them up with sledge hammers, pick axes and wedges to a size small enough for one man to lift onto the carts drawn by a horse up the trestle. Then they were dumped into the kilns where they burned into lime. Pa and his neighbor often went to work early in the morning and then again after supper. They were paid by the cart loads they broke and it meant an extra dollar.

I was told they paid \$5.00 a month rent, and this included all the wood they needed, electricity and all the water we would carry from the pump house.

On a certain day in fall they would deliver enough wood in 3 or 4 foot lengths to each house to last all winter. Then on another day they would come and saw it up into stove lengths. Us kids liked to watch the men through a window.

Then it was our job to throw it into the summer kitchen and pile it neatly in rows and it would be full to the door.

We had a very big garden where ma worked in her spare time and almost every evening. Just past the house along Larsen's field was a boardwalk that led first to a tin-lined building. This was used for a smokehouse in spring and a coal shed in winter. Next along this walk was our chicken coop for about 25 hens and 2 roosters, I think. Then at the end was the 2-holer privy.

A long way from the house on a cold night, and Johnnie, our older brother, had to go along, hold the lantern and wait for us outside. It seemed so disgusting to him and he grumbled alot.

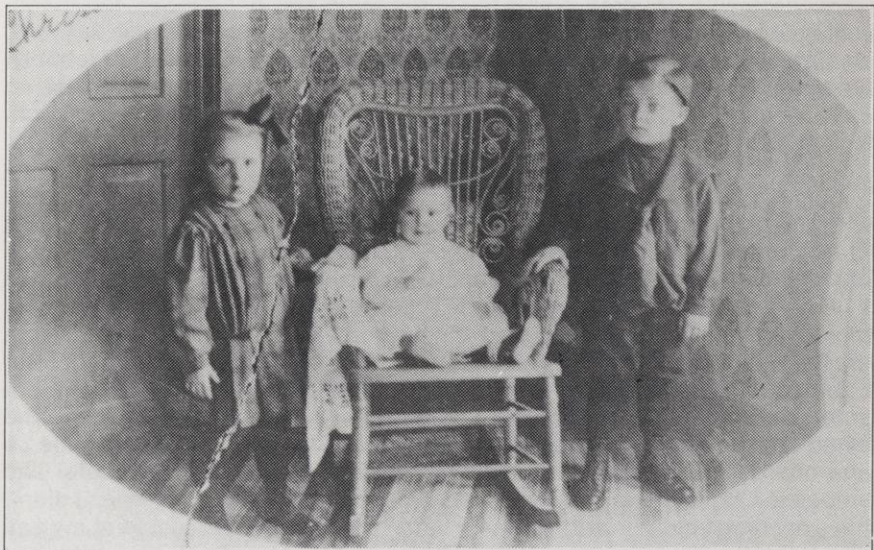
We had what I thought was a very nice house, compared to some of my friends' homes.

Mother liked nice things and by the time I was big enough to notice, she had really made it nice.

By this time I was the third one of seven children. We had rag-carpets woven into long strips, made when ma tore old clothes into 2-inch wide strips, then sewn together and wound into balls. Then woven into long carpets. Then these strips were sewn together for wall to wall carpeting. This was laid over a layer of clean straw to catch and hold the dust that came through the carpet.

We had one electric bulb hanging in the center of each room. Varnished kitchen floor redone each spring while we lived in the summer kitchen. All nice people had a summer kitchen those days in order to keep the real kitchen clean and pretty. There were pretty sash curtains with handmade hemstitching and crocheted edges, at the kitchen windows.

The living room had a big coal and wood heater, but this was moved out for the summer. There were registers in the ceiling so our upstairs bedrooms would be warm.



I was the third of seven children — Christine, Laurretta, Johnnie.

When I was too young to remember I was told of Christine's accident. It seems she was in a wagon on the back porch when someone pushed the wagon off the porch. At first it didn't seem so bad but she started to limp and it got more painful until the doctor put her in the hospital in Manitowoc. It was something with the ball joint in her hip that would start to abcess. After some time she was also in Green Bay hospitals. She always had trouble

walking. My parents tried everything but every few months it would all return and the pain and abcessing started all over. Now pa and ma were good Catholics but secretly they even gave in to a faith healer or some sort of mumble jumble. They kept it all secret but I knew what was going on when they stood on the back porch under a full moon while she prayed and mumbled on and on. Christine was about 8 years at this time. It was not successful and it cost Pa a heap of money in those days. He was very embarrassed and ashamed and tried to keep it secret, but at the time they were desperate. When it was time for school, she would walk beside me with her right arm below the elbow on my shoulder and her left hand holding onto my right hand across our bodies. This worked pretty good while she went to Valders Grade School but she missed a lot of school in winter. Later when she went to St. Mary's School in Clarks Mills she boarded there. School was something else. We lived four miles from St. Mary's in Clarks Mills, but only less than one mile from Valders School. So, in order to please the priest, the nuns and several relatives, after the fourth grade we would have to attend school at St. Mary's from September to almost Thanksgiving. Then we would attend Valders school from Thanksgiving to Easter, then back to Clarks Mills until school was out in May when we could walk in good weather.

Valders was strictly a Lutheran town with two Lutheran churches in a village of about four hundred people. As a result only a few Catholic families were there with children going to Clarks Mills and because of the inconveniences of these Valders pupils coming and going throughout the year, we were actually discriminated against and picked on, even hated probably. I'm sure we were not angels either and the feelings were mutual. It was so easy for us to do things wrong. Each time we missed a question in religion, a class with the priest as teacher, we had to hold out our hand and the Sister would come down hard with a length of rubber hose across our hand. If by impulse you unknowingly pulled your hand away a little, you got it again with the hose doubled over. And I never could learn German or The Lord's Prayer or the Apostles Creed in German, no matter how hard pa tried to teach me. I was always afraid of pronouncing it wrong and being laughed at, so I would just freeze up. So, of course, I got it again. My brother got almost more than I did but he just laughed and he didn't go to school long. In seventh grade he went to work at the lime kilns, driving the horse on the trestle. But I just couldn't stand to see Christine punished because she was timid but smart and really tried hard, so I would cry for her. After her accident and when she was in fifth grade, she couldn't walk with us to Clarks Mills so she boarded with people named Frank Denk. They owned the hotel and saloon in Clarks Mills. They were very nice to her and one time when I didn't have my name clearly written on my lunch pail, the Sisters just kept my pail and I didn't have any lunch. When Christine told Mrs. Denk about it when she went there for lunch, she sent me a big roast beef sandwich, and even brought Christine back to school after lunch so I would have time to eat it. The law was we had to have our name on our pail. We had to stay in our seats while someone passed out the pails and your name better be on it. Ma would make the pail real hot, then write our names on it with a crayon. I guessed this time it washed or was worn off. And I guess that's why we did the terrible thing we did.

When we went to St. Mary's we usually took a short cut along a small wooded lot, came out by Ed Larsen's buildings — all empty now. The barn had blown down and the roof set neatly intact across the foundation. We would pass this barn which was on a lower level than the house and so could not be seen from the road. We usually would pass this barn and go up the driveway past the house to the highway.

Well, this morning we stopped at the barn, played around and soon it was way too late for school. Of course, we didn't go that day. Now another law at school was if you missed a day you had to bring a written excuse from parents but how could we? Our parents didn't know we were missing, so we missed another and another day until the end of the week. It wasn't much fun any more and we were scared. There were Raymond Brennan, Grace Brennan, Antonia DisStefanis and I.

On Sunday I went to church with Mrs. Brennan and Grace. We had to wait for the first mass to be out, and as we stood against the fence some relatives of Brennans', the Charley McCulleys' came. They had a daughter Mary (Grace's cousin) who came straight over to Mrs. Brennan and wanted to know why Grace was not in school. She wanted to come home with her for the weekend. Oh! Horrors.

Now we didn't do these things maliciously, but mostly because we were scared of something in school, mostly the rubber hose, so we took what we thought was the lesser of two evils. It didn't always turn out that way. Mrs. Brennan was a big, fat coarse-talking Irish lady who pa called "The Big Woman." He always called her that and he did not like her gossip or all the things she told ma, but ma liked her as a good friend.

I will never forget that moment when Mary told Mrs. Brennan and she screamed, "My Lord, weren't those lassies in school?" We never liked pious, goody-goody, Mary McCulley anyway, and now she was gloating. I worried so much during church, I couldn't even concentrate on prayer, because I knew this exaggerating Irish woman would hurry home and tell ma, and she did, starting out with, "Mrs. Emmer, do you know what your Retty just did?" And then she goes into detail.

Ma couldn't believe I would do such a thing. After all I was the one she depended on to hurry home from school so I could run to the store ½ mile and get back in time for supper. When a little one was sick I stayed home to rock the cradle or entertain the sick one. (This was more than 65 years ago and school wasn't that important.)

On wash day ma got up very early to heat the water in a boiler and start washing. Her white clothes had to be on the line by nine o'clock or before we left for school even though she scrubbed them on a board and boiled them. It was my job to get up early, feed the little ones, tidy up the kitchen and get us off to school. After school hurry home, clear off the dinner table which had been pushed in a corner, because ma washed in the kitchen. Then take the clothes off the line and fold diapers and towels, and underthings, and put them away. It took all day and hard work, as there were at that time eight of us kids or maybe only seven and one on the way. It seemed there was always one on the way until there were 14 of us.

When ma finally realized it was true, she left the scene to call pa who was in the ledge, some distance away from the house. Mrs. Brennan just stayed there telling us how bad we were until my parents came.

For a minute I thought pa was smiling a little but not for long. When he started laying the punishment, he was not smiling. He had to do it, but I don't think he really believed it was that bad.

THREE

I also lived through four wars. Each one brought sadness and worry. The first World War two uncles were called. But before they left for service, the armistice was signed and such noise and celebrating. Every church bell, plant whistle, condensary whistle and pea cannery and event the kids found ways to make noise. Such relief and happiness.

Mr. Brennan took all his men from the lime kilns to Manitowoc to celebrate all day and all night. They all came home very, very different from when they left. Even Mr. Brennan who never drank came home unconscious.

We were all so happy it was over. It was a cruel war for us and for our soldiers. It was gas warfare and many came home with minds almost destroyed. We called it shell-shock. We at home suffered many shortages in everything. Even in school we planted war gardens and canned the food for war purposes. We learned to knit and in school and at home we knit sleeveless sweaters for soldiers to be worn under or over their shirts to help keep them warm. We knit socks and mittens, scarves and mufflers.

Foodstuffs were very short especially flour. So, with every 25 pounds white wheat flour, you had to buy and use 25 pounds each of dark flours such as barley graham or rye.

Sugar was off the market completely for certain lengths of time. Only occasionally could we buy 2 or 3 pounds. All was kept on record. When there was sugar, everyone rushed to get it. As a result we ate mostly heavy dark bread and sugarless cake. We used syrup or honey and no frostings. We did not have other baked goods either. But we had lots of vegetables from our big garden and fruits.

When the fruit peddlers came, they usually drove a milk wagon and in the wagon box was fresh fruit in bulk for sale in season; apples, peaches, pears, etc. and he would drive up the narrow road past the company houses. He had a scale hanging on the side to weigh whatever the women bought. Everyone canned a lot those days.

While the poor peddler would be dickering with the women on the right side of the wagon, us kids would be tossing fruit into the ditch on the left side of the wagon. After he was gone, we would gather up our plunder to eat, because what our mothers bought was for canning only, not eating fresh, that would have been extravagant.

About this time came prohibition, and as a young girl I remember the harrowing times. At least they were harrowing to most men who enjoyed alcohol and my dad surely did. The last day and night before prohibition was really a nightmare. Everyone trying to drink enough to last until it was over. It lasted for more than ten years.

So it was when our neighbors decided to make moonshine. Each time when he would run off the drinkable moonshine, our neighbors and pa included would purchase a jug or two and take them home and hide them. Some even made pretty good stuff, but some was pure rat poison.

If the prohibition agents, "Revenuers" we call them, heard of this as they usually did, they would come snooping around searching our homes. This frightened most people because in the beginning fines were very heavy.

And so it happened and ma saw the "revenuers" about to come to our house. The baby started crying and ma picked her up and prepared to sit in her sewing rocker and nurse the baby. This rocker had no arms and her skirts fell to the floor all around.

Just as they entered the house pa was very nervous knowing there was a jug in the house, knowing also that he could not pay the heavy fine nor sit in jail. In the beginning of prohibition the law was very strict and carried out. Ma went on quietly diapering her baby, then rocking gently as she nursed the child.

Pa turned pale several times as they ripped apart his hiding places, and searched the kitchen and basement. I think they really wanted to get him because he was a feisty, rebellious man to them. Sometimes he even bragged about how he outsmarted them. Then reluctantly they left the house finding nothing.

Pa looked at ma questioningly, then breathed a sigh of relief as she nonchalantly lifted her long skirts, reached under her rocker and pulled out the jug and handed it to pa. Then she turned and carried the baby into the bedroom.

So life went on. It seemed we were happy most of the time. One pleasure I treasured most was fishing with pa off the Quarry bridge. Just us two, and he could tell the darndest stories, hardly any of them true. Another was waiting for the train to come into the lime kilns. Us kids in hot summer would stand beside the tracks and yell and wave at the engineer. He would throw small chunks of ice to us, so good.

Another pleasure — after church and dinner and tidying up the kitchen, then start begging for permission to walk up town, about one-half mile along the tracks. After much begging we always got our way and each would get a nickel and 2 or 3 pennies. This would buy us an ice cream cone, and then the rest in penny candy. There was such a big selection in Halverson's ice cream parlor, it took us a long time to decide and sometimes we changed our minds once or twice. I really think he hated to see us all come trooping in. There usually were a couple of neighbor kids with us.

About this time there were many meetings and decisions to be made on the building of a high school in Valders. It was finally voted to build that school and I was so happy. I figured next year I would be done at St. Mary's, no more worry and fear and hate from that director, and I really liked school — public school style. I wanted to be a kindergarten teacher and Christine wanted to be a stenographer. We talked so much about it and made such plans. We were really going to high school when so many kids could not.

About this time Barney Brennan had ideas of his own. He owned two farms in Langlade County, 125 miles to the north, and was trying to get Pa interested. Now this is what pa was trying to save money for, a farm of his own. Johnnie had quit school in seventh grade, got a job driving the trestle horse at the lime kilns, a man's work for a man's pay. No school laws, no child labor laws. Pa was boss, so Johnnie turned most of his wages over to pa to be put in the savings fund for a farm.

Ma was worried and so was Christine and I. We liked our way of living and all it promised. Johnnie however was glad, he liked the idea of a farm I guess. That is, until we moved to one, then he was the first one to call it quits.

I guess I didn't hear all the bargaining and dickering and after a while it seemed to become quiet and we, Christine and I, were happy it was over.

Now this was still prohibition but pa liked his refreshments, so as a labor of love ma took care of that by making wine out of many things, even though she knew it was illegal.

This fall she had many bottles and jugs of fine wine stashed in a secret place behind a long high row of shelves in the cellar, and no way to see what was behind them. The shelves held every kind of vegetables and fruit all canned in jars. Behind this was several kinds of wine. Choke-cherry, dandelion and even more. Ma would do anything along these lines that pa suggested so she seemed really happy as she worked.

Didn't hear much more about moving to the farm. But I shall resent Barney Brennan till my dying day for hanging in there.

There were some frightening times also. The Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918-19 was really devastating. There were no miracle drugs then. Ma was so worried about it. Just about every family in Valders had a siege of it and many, many people died. Schools were closed, there weren't enough hospitals to handle this and the doctor made his rounds of homes every day. Just a horse and buggy and not many proven remedies. Even some of our schoolmates died.

Our Aunt Annie Emmer from High Cliff died at this time and only pa could go to the funeral. Ma was not feeling good and by the time pa got home a couple kids had it, but not so bad. I remember every night ma gathered us all around the table for our hot tea. This concoction was called hot ginger tea, and believe me it was hot in more ways than one. When it was available, she would buy rock-candy and drop a chunk into each cup. This was supposed to be medicinal and helpful in sore throat and flu. Rock candy looked like tiny squares of crystal glass all strung in chunks on a string. This was horrible to drink, but even worse was the rubdown every night with something called goose grease or skunk oil. She would rub our chest and back and then cover the area with a square of wool flannel. Most horrible, but we didn't get the 'flu' that time, but ma got it really bad for a couple of weeks.

In January 1920 Leona Marie was born. A night to remember. Doctors Gregory and O'Brian running around, Mrs. Brennan and Aunt Frances very worried, nothing going right, and me upstairs listening. I think I came downstairs a half dozen times for a drink of water, but was always hurried back upstairs. Aunt Frances was staying with us then and that made it easier.

But before the night was over, Margaret age two, became very sick vomiting and coughing terribly. When the doctor saw her, he diagnosed it as whooping cough. Before long three more little ones had it also and it was the most terrible kind. Mrs. Brennan would grab the choking child and run quickly through an open door. This sudden change of air would cause the baby to gasp and get its breath back. At least that's what they thought. Babies almost choked to death many times and when Baby Leona was six weeks old, she had it also. Ma could not rally from the baby's birth. She was very sick and so much work. Another sister of Mother's, Aunt Barbara, came to help Aunt Frances, and Mrs. Brennan was there most of the time. Almost every day I would have to pick up the wash and Mrs. Brennan would take it home to do. There was so much wash every day with the vomiting and sick kids.

Mr. Brennan had an older sister Rose who was slightly retarded and she did the housework for the Brennan's. Now she did our washing. But they had a more modern laundryroom with a stove to heat water, a hand-powered washing machine and a drain that ran from a sink into a pipe so the water ran outside the house into the backyard emptying into a field. This was supposed to be convenient 65 years ago so no one felt sorry for Rose. It took ma until late spring before she felt good enough to do her own work.

FOUR

About this time buying a farm was forgotten or pushed into the background with Christmas coming. Christmas was a real celebration in our village. The school started early in December practicing for a big program held on the stages of "The Valders Opera House." Everyone for miles around attended and they all came in bobsleds and a team of horses. No cars could operate on those roads, even if you had a car. Every kid came dressed in their very best new Christmas clothes, some even a bit over-dressed. Ma spent weeks making pretty dresses for us girls, and we really were best dressed. Bright colors always, with tiny knife pleats or box pleats that she sewed down by hand, each pleat separately, then pressed them down. We always wore big ribbons in our hair. Our long hair would be put up in rag curlers, then combed back and caught together at the back with these big bows. The bows were held in a big clasp for the ribbons, then a clip was clipped in the hair. Bird had natural curls.

But the unpleasant part came when against pa's wishes and ideas, ma put white stockings and patent slippers on us just for that night. These were only to be worn when there was no snow and weather was warm, and the arguments were usually very heated. But, ma usually won out and we wore our pretty things.

For this great event, Pa would use the company team with a big bobsled with the box filled with straw and blankets. All the kids and some adults from the lime kilns would pack in sitting close together and covered with blankets. This was part of our great Christmas. At the program we got gifts and candy, and I think pa was proud of us.

A frightening part of Christmas was the week before. Santa would peek in our windows and pound on them if we were making too much noise. Then a few nights before, he would actually come into the house, and we were so afraid of him. Ma knew when he was coming and she would poke along slowly, getting us ready for bed. We would be terrified of him and beg her to hurry so we could go to bed before he came. He would come in making noises and carrying a big stick. He would make us get down on our knees and say the Lord's Prayer, and I usually couldn't even remember the first line.

Sometimes pa would get a lick across his behind for laughing or talking smart, but when Santa left, there would be some candy on the table and a big Xmas tree would be in the summer kitchen the next morning. As an old, old-country German Pa always liked a big beautiful tree. (I really think this trait has rubbed off on his offspring.)

In the meantime Grandma and Grandpa Hayek also moved away from Grimms, moving to a farm in the Cato area on a farm owned by a man named Maurice Mullins. Years later they moved to a farm in the Greenleaf-Morrison area. It was owned by a man named Dennis Brennan.

Before this rent lease was up, they purchased a farm near the village of Phlox in Langlade County. After they all moved up north it seems that Ma and Pa were more anxious than ever to acquire that farm from Mr. Brennan. I am tempted to believe that Mr. Brennan was overanxious to dump that farm on us, and after seeing the farm and living up there, I almost hated him.

But for a while Christine and I were living in a fool's paradise. Valders was building that high school, I would be done at St. Mary's in the spring. Ma was not pregnant, and with Johnnie and pa making money, everything was going just fine, but not for long. We soon heard rumors and stories about that farm in Bryant. I thought I would die. Ma seemed happy, so came many preparations later on.

Parents, listen to your children, and try to understand. I know as one of the older children I usually had to hurry home from school, run to the grocer, etc. and get back in time for mother to use the groceries for supper. Supper must always be well done and on the table when pa came home from work, no excuse or someone, usually me, got a good scolding for wasting time or fooling around on the way home, and sometimes I did. This was in the 1920s and we had no car.

This night I hurried to the grocery, packed the groceries in a clumsy market basket, then hurried to the post office for some mail we expected. Now only one more stop, the butcher shop for two rings of bologna.

Now the store was on the south side of the railroad tracks and the butcher shop and on my way home was on the north side and I must cross the tracks. Horrors, the engine and some cars were stopped on the track where I must cross. They had stopped to wait for the rest of the train which was switching from another track.

As I waited I wondered what excuse I could give this time as I used this switching excuse too often. I had all kinds of visions of a good scolding, lots of yelling, etc. as I waited patiently. Then in panic I took the basket, got down on my knees and crawled under the train between the huge front and rear wheels. Hard work with a clumsy basket to crawl over the tracks.

Just as I was over the second track, I heard the shiver and squeak as the train slowly started to move. One second and I was out just as the train got moving.

I grabbed my basket, made it home on time, so neither mother nor I got scolded. But I never told anyone it almost cost me my young life. And if I hadn't made it people would have blamed me for being stupid anyway. All this is really true.

Purchasing the farm was official now and pa and ma were really preparing to move. She baked batches of cookies and packed them in an earthen jar covered with towels or clothing. The day before she baked many loaves of bread at a neighbor's, this she also packed in big 20-gallon jars with more linens, etc. around the bread. She kept packing barrel after barrel of household things this way.

The night before moving, neighbors came to help put some of the things in the freight car and drink up the wine which could not be moved along. Early the next morning they did the job of loading everything in the train car. We lived close to the railroad spur for the lime kilns so it was easy to carry most furniture and things there.

This farm was way up north, 16 miles northeast of Antigo, five miles north of Bryant and one and one-half miles in the woods from the last neighbor. Everyone seemed so happy about it, so I pretended to be happy also, although

I seemed to be slowly dying inside. I knew this was the end of my carefree, happy life in Valders, and also the end of my education. Now I would be just another school dropout.

Pa and Johnnie rode on the freight train with our furniture, a team of horses which they had to care for, also a wagon, a buggy, etc. Uncle Joe Gintner came to pick ma and us kids up and took us to his house. We thought Uncle Joe was someone special. He and Aunt Carrie had a lovely big farm near Cato. They also had a new car and us kids thought it was worth at least a million dollars, shiny black — Reo.

Hardly any had electricity then but Uncle Joe had his own Delco Plant, so they had lights, plumbing, a bathtub and above all a flush toilet. I had never seen one before. I just could not bring myself to use it for such a purpose, it was such a pretty white clean thing.

I tried not to think about how bad I felt, but I just held it all inside and waited. At last before we went to bed I got brave enough. Then I was afraid to flush. Cautiously, I pulled the lever very gently, and when it made such a sudden loud noise I was so scared, I was sure I had done something wrong. Again at Antigo at Aunt Mary's, I was still very scared. Talk about dumb hicks.

Aunt Carrie had a big house full of nice furniture and a library full of books. This really got to me, because the only book I had was the one I got for Christmas. It seemed some people had everything. Aunt Carrie had lots of good things for us kids to eat, too. We stayed all day and one night, then we prepared to move on the next day.

All of us kids got a very nice bath before we left, a real luxury and I wondered, would we ever have it this nice? Then Uncle Joe took us to a station where we boarded a train for Antigo. Ma was feeling pretty sad and low, Christine was sort of crippled, Johnnie was with pa, so I just knew I had a big job with all those little kids on that train. It's a good thing I was sort of a clown and full of life and laughter as I entertained those kids. Two of the little ones got horribly sick and ma just didn't look too good, so us older kids (Bird, Christine and I) kept performing all the way. Although, I would much rather have sat in a corner and cried.

Our little sister Margaret (3½ years) had to visit the potty room on that train often. Now there was no D.N.R. or much emphasis on public health or sanitation in those days it seems. The toilet just opened onto the tracks. I held tight to the little girl, but at one time she almost slipped away from me. I think of this so often.

We arrived in Antigo in early evening. We stayed at the home of Uncle John and Aunt Mary Tikalsky. They met us at the train and we stayed overnight. Our cousins took us to a show and we had treats at an ice cream parlor.

They also had a beautiful home, plumbing and all. This all boggled my mind. In the morning we boarded another even slower-moving train for the last 15 miles and then another five miles from the farm. This was a very primitive train even in those days. We called it Toonerville Trolley. Now as I think of it the village of Bryant where we stopped was almost a replica of Dodge City. There were even some gun-toting cowboy-looking tough guys.

Pa and Johnnie got into Antigo late the night before with all our belongings, now they arrived in Bryant before we did and had some things

unloaded. They had hitched the horses to the wagon, loaded on some necessary furniture and all started out for what was to be our new home.

On the previous advice from Mr. Brennan, a good neighbor, Mr. Nels Shanks who lived about one and one-half miles from our farm, came to take our family to their house for dinner. He came in a model T touring car.

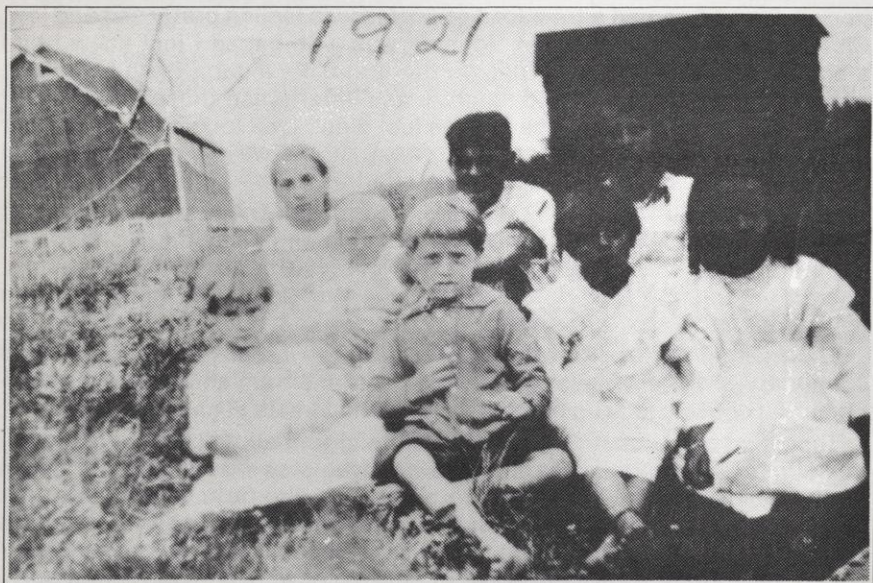
It was late spring, the narrow roads were only dirt and gutted with deep ruts, like four or five inches of soft mud in the wheel tracks. But unlike our cars today, these small light cars had high clearance underneath and very narrow tires so they usually made it through.

The little town of Bryant was in what we called the "Flats" which meant very flat land, but from there the land rose steadily for the five miles to our new home in the wooded hills area.

Now within hollering distance from the Shanks' house going up the hill, the car just could not make it any farther, the wheels spinning constantly and the engine coughing, it finally came to a halt.

The driver stepped out on the running board and yelled in an unearthly loud voice for "Daisy." Daisy was his sister and I can still hear him, it seemed this must have been common procedure because Daisy and her father came running with sand and an old rug, we all got out and walked and they got the car going and into the yard.

We had a good dinner here; the litte ones had a nap on a porch in the sunshine and so did I for a while. Then with the entire family perched on the top of the load of furniture, we traveled the rest of the way over rutted roads. Bird remembers she sat on the cook stove. That was April 1, 1921, and for some reason it made me smile. April Fools Day — Oh what fools we mortals be!



The family of eight in 1921. (Back row: Laurretta, Leona, Johnnie, Christine; front row: Margaret, Vernon, Lillian, Bernadine.)

FIVE

Our home wasn't too bad at first. It certainly was big enough, but to get the first floor clean, we used a dozen pails of hot water and eagle lye just to get the kitchen and dining floor clean. It had been used to store the winter supply of coal and wood and also some dogs.

A young family was moving out of the second floor. The house was built into a hill, so the porch of the second floor was level with the ground. Upstairs there was a big hall, four bedrooms and a very large living room. These people were very particular, clean people so we just moved in there for a few days. Downstairs the walls were stone like a basement and to make it look clean we calcimined the walls and ceiling. Every household used calcimine instead of paint in those days. It was sort of colored whitewash. It all looked pretty good for the time being, but oh, how I missed Valders and the easy life there. In Valders at this time of day we would be playing baseball or hopscotch or something like that.

Here Pa was showing us how to put the cows in the barn; how to fasten the tie-chains around the smelly cows' necks. Then, worst of all, how to milk them and later how to run the cream separator at just the right steady speed to separate skim milk from the cream. The cream was stored in cans for sale and the skim milk was fed to the calves and hogs.

Pa was excited, Ma was pretending to be happy I think. I was so tired after helping and clowning for three days and getting scolded for doing things all wrong, I was just numb and could have slept even on that bumpy wagon. We all worked far into the night and dropped into bed too tired for prayers or tears.



The farmhouse in Bryant as we moved in.

The next day some new neighbors and relatives came to help, unpacking barrels and boxes and putting things in place. Finally mother unpacked a

large barrel. She pulled out towels, blankets, etc., then called pa to come and help her. He took one look, turned pale, then looking sternly at Mother, he yelled, "Mother, we could have got caught, then what would we do?" Ma laughed out loud, and a cheer came from the crowd standing around. By this time, pa was smiling happily as he pulled out the jugs and passed out the glasses. The work went a little better and everyone stayed a little longer than they had planned, and agreed it was the best cherry wine they had ever tasted.

The days passed into weeks and got a little easier and more interesting. I got to like it more and more, but I will always hate the looks and smell of a cow. After a while there was more time for fun and play. But it was mostly work. In the summer we picked all kinds of berries every day and made hundreds of quarts of sauces, jams and jellies. We had berries and cream every morning.

Johnnie had left home to find work. Christine was slightly handicapped so Bird and I were next in line to do the chores in winter while pa had logging jobs and left home each morning before daylight. He usually had one or two men who lived with us during these jobs. Alvin Buboltz was one of these. We usually had good times after supper, popping corn, playing cards, etc., but all day was hard work. The men would cut down trees, skid them together in big piles along the logging roads or at a railroad spur where the big companies would pick them up. One of these was about two miles farther into the woods from where we lived. Sometimes towards spring pa and his men would haul some logs into Antigo themselves. These logs were piled very high with something called a "Log Jammer." When they did haul them to Antigo, they used logging sleds pulled by horses and they usually stood on the top-most log dressed in ankle-length fur coats. It was very cold and took all day to deliver one load, but then came the payoff and it was profitable. These logs were not from our woods, but these were jobs from big lumber companies.

But Bird and I were almost worked to death. First off, the big round watering tank for the stock was outside and first thing in the morning we had to rekindle the fire in the tank heater. This was a round heater immersed in the water in the tank with a fire door on the top and we were supposed to keep it going night and day to keep the water from freezing too much. Because there was no electricity we had to depend upon the wind and the windmill to pump enough water to keep the tank full and sometimes this was not enough.

So pa dug a sort of well or water hole and, of course, I had to help. This was a hole about 10 feet square and as pa dug he lined it with heavy timbers somewhat like you would use to build a log house. We kept doing this as he dug deeper and deeper to keep it from caving in. This was built in a sort of water hole or quagmire between two high hills and always nearly full of water to the top.

It had a heavy platform top with a wood cover. Sometimes it froze over a little and we had to get down on our knees and break the ice with an axe so the pail could fall into the water. Then we dipped a pail that was tied to a rope into the water and pulled up the pail of water and dumped it into two tubs for the cows. This was some distance from the barn and Bird would

would let out about four cows to start with while I was drawing water. When she saw one or two cows coming back to the barn, she knew it was time to let out two more. We only did this in winter and the spilled water created ice all around the tubs and the water hole.

When Bird let the last cow out of the barn, she came down to help me. By this time there were more than two or three cows pushing and bumping to get to the water. We must have had our guardian angels riding on our shoulder all the while because if something would have gone wrong, there would have been absolutely no help available.

After watering all the stock, we had to clean the barns, feed all the animals, milk a few cows (not many in winter), and that just about used up our day. But we found time for some fun and foolishness, too. When pa came home he was tired and all the work had to be done and a big supper ready.

In the winter, we went to the city of Antigo once or twice for supplies. We bought sugar and flour by the 100 pounds. Raisins and prunes by 25-pound wooden boxes, karo syrup and peanut butter by gallon pails, lumberjack fashion. By this time, there were 12 or 13 people at the table. We would go with a bobsled with the sleigh box full of hay and blankets to keep us warm. I think it was a good three-hour trip one way. About three weeks before Christmas, pa and I would do the Christmas shopping. It seemed ma was always pregnant or not feeling well enough to go, but she always had a list of things for us to bring and I enjoyed it.

It took a long time to get there, so as soon as we did we tended the horses in a livery barn. Then we went for a big dinner at the "Farmers Home," an eating place of plain good lumberjack food.

If I got too cold on the way, pa would make me get out of the sleigh and walk or run. Then he would make the horses trot and I would have to run until it seemed I would drop. This really made me warm, then I would crawl back into the sleigh box, cover with the blankets and ride on.

It was getting more enjoyable now (sometimes). We had card parties, birthday parties, snow parties and even work parties when some of the neighbors would help with butchering and sausage making. We all knew how to have fun all year long with the finest and best neighbors in the world, but most of the time, none of us had hardly a buck in our pocket.

To the south and east of us most of our neighbors were hot-blooded, fighting, shooting Kentuckians. Some of them carried a gun or knife and hated someone, but if you got in their good graces and they liked you, then they loved you and would do anything for you. They proved this when we moved there, but among themselves they were always feuding and fighting and threatening and there was even a shooting now and then. Moonshine helped this all along and they sure made and drank plenty of the stuff.

They warned us about becoming too friendly with the tricky Buboltz'. Said they would cheat us out of everything.

Now the Buboltz farms were a little south and west of ours. There were the Otto Buboltz, Henry Buboltz, Ed Buboltz and Albert Buboltz families, all our neighbors. Later we really learned they were not what the Kentucks had said, but the finest, loving helpful people you could find. More about that later.

I always said when I was old enough I would move back to Valders. When I was about 17 Bird and I went back just to visit, but it wasn't the same as we had dreamed. Everyone and everything were different and we were glad to get back up north.

The Big Hill

On the north end of our clearing just over the line fence was a very high hill. It seemed to look down over the land and buildings in protective way. We called it The Big Hill.

On the south side toward the buildings this hill would be covered with wild flowers in the spring. In June or July, it would be covered with wild strawberries. Many big berries on long stems. We picked stems and all to keep them from squashing together until we got them home. We picked every day while they were there, fresh for breakfast or supper with cream or canned into jam or sauce.

On the north side of the hill there was more brush and trees, we called them slashings, because of forest fires or being logged over, only dead fallen trees and bare tree trunks covered the hillside and down into the valley and into the swamp.

Here on the edge of the marsh grew the blueberries. They grew like small bunches of grapes on bushes about one foot high. These berries did not make good jam but the sauce was thick and rich — unlike the commercial canned blueberries we buy today, which are bland and watery. Sometimes this was our main dish for supper, just bowls of thick blueberry sauce, fresh homemade bread, spread thick with butter and slices of cheese.

Below this marsh was the swamp covered with a thick carpet of greenish brown moss. On this moss grew the cranberries. They grew on threadlike stems out of the moss and they looked as if they were spilled there. They were very easy to pick and store. We kept them in boxes in our walk-in attic, where they usually stayed frozen until we used them up. We used them as a condiment sauce with fowl or pork, but better still, Ma made a pudding that we all liked. It looked like a coarse somewhat heavy white cake, baked in a large cake pan, then cut in squares and served on sauce dishes. Ma made a soft vanilla cream sauce that she would put in a pitcher and we would pour this generously over the pudding. Sometimes for a change instead of the vanilla, she would use a little cherry wine for flavor. This would make the sauce sort of a pink color and so good. She also made some very good cranberry bread which we usually ate with cheese. We always had cheese in the house because the milkman delivered it on order when he picked up the milk each day.

The winters were always severe up north in the woods, but I don't think we realized it then. We just took it for granted and lived with it. But in that isolated place, if anything had gone wrong, it would have been quite frightening and hopeless.

The worst winter was in 1929. It seems it never really cleared up. Our house was built in a hill and the bottom story was the stone wall of a basement with wide casement windows. The cellar and kitchen were in the part that was in the hill, while the sitting room was in the front part. It all seemed air-tight and very warm with our box-type air-tight heater and heat from the cook stove because Ma was always cooking something, so we didn't feel the cold or never heard the wind here.

But upstairs was a different story. It was very cold so we kids would undress by the heater downstairs, then hurry for the bed upstairs. Sometimes Ma would warm small blankets, then wrap them around our feet before she

covered us with the blankets and homemade patchwork quilts. These were made from many small squares of wool cloth cut from old suits and overcoats. They were very heavy but warm. In the morning we hurried downstairs and dressed by the heater — real togetherness.

These were very busy days. Each evening we carried in about a cord of heating wood piling it in the sun porch, also wood for the cook stove. We filled the reservoir on the back of the cook stove, filled the big teakettle and the water pail before it got dark.

During the day we had to chase the cattle from the barn to drink at the water tank. There was always plenty of wind these stormy days to keep the windmill active which kept the tank full of water. The cows were always very reluctant to leave the warm barn and we would have to really chase them out, then they would hurry to get back in.

Then it was clean the barns and feed the animals, and get feed down from the upstairs hay mow for the next morning. All this was very cold, hard work but after an early supper it was fun and relaxation time when we popped corn, played cards and other games or read books or did fancywork.

After the storm, it was get out and shovel and open the roads. The snow really drifted in and piled up a couple of feet high at the edge of the woods, below the hill just before entering the driveway.

Pa would use the team of horses and bobsled to break a trail through this. I can still see the horses as they tried to get through. They would lean back on their hind legs and then jump ahead with both front feet at once. Pa would coax them on again and again until they got through these drifts. He would drive through here a few times until he opened the road.

This stretch of road was in the clearing. There was no trouble in the two miles of woods where the wind didn't have so much sweep and the snow did not drift. But when we came out of the woods near the schoolhouse and onto the flat lands, the drifts were terrible again. Here the farmers would cut the fence wires so you could drive into the fields and around the big drifts then back onto the road. We never saw a snowplow in those early years on the town roads, and it seems one snowstorm just followed another that year, and we were really shut in most of the time.

It's a good thing that we were all kept so healthy with Ma's good cooking and weird remedies. With a doctor six miles away, bad weather and roads and no transportation, it could have been quite frightening. I really think someone up there was watching over us all.

We really were a religious family, saying our prayers each day, before meals and bedtime, and always praying the rosary together on Sundays when we could not attend church. I really think that helped keep us safe.

Summer was a happy time, but Ma kept us very busy, with about one-half acre of contract beans for a canning company. The hardest back-breaking job, but fun, too. We would pick half the patch one day then the other half the next day alternating that way for about two weeks or more. According to Pa they had to be picked at the right stage to bring the best price, and I guess we did that because Ma managed to buy a new stove with the money. It was a beautiful thing mostly white enamel trimmed with a lot of nickel-plate. She was proud of it. When the house burned later that was the one thing that just had to be saved.

Then we also raised contract cucumbers for a pickle factory. More hard work. Both the beans and cucumbers had to be planted by hand, then hoed a couple times (and the quack grass was thick). And again the cucumbers had to be picked almost every other day. They were harder to pick than beans, but the job went faster. We delivered both to a station in Bryant. Again Ma saved her share of the money and in the second year she managed to buy a new gasoline powered wash machine. What a luxury — no more washboards and a washing was done in half the time. Things were really getting better.

Next came the onions, we raised some called Red-Wetherfields. They were a large purplish red onion very sweet and crisp. We had no trouble selling them by the bushel or half bushel and taking orders from the neighbors. We just ate them raw sliced, made in a salad with cream or in sandwiches. This was the only fresh vegetable we had in winter. I think we got \$2.00 a bushel for them.

Raising them was another hard job. Tiny seeds planted by hand, then weeded on our hands and knees a couple of times, then when the growing season seemed over we would break over the stalks so they would quit growing and ripen. To do this we bent over and broke the green tops. We would do two rows at a time, bending one row to the right and the other row on top of this one to the left, very neat and they would ripen and dry off in about a week or two.

The folks left for the day and told us kids to break over the onions, I guess they thought we might get into mischief if we were not kept busy. The onion patch was on a hill just beyond the barnyard down to a creek, so we thought if we started a barrel very square on two rows it would roll over and bend down the onion tops on the way, and we would be done in a hurry for more important things. Forget it, it did not work. The barrel rolled so fast it jerked some onions out of the ground, but worse it broke the tops over every which way but neat, and it took us longer to straighten it all out and repair the damage. But it was laughable for a while.

What onions we did not sell to the neighbors Pa would take to the market in Antigo, along with cabbage which we also raised and sold at the market.

Raising the cabbage was easy but making sauerkraut was something else, and we made lots of it, in twenty gallon and smaller jars. It was messy and smelly but the worst came when it was fermenting, outside on the porch of course. After a couple weeks when the fermentation process was finished Ma would clean off about two inches of really spoiled stuff then she would cover it with a clean white cloth then a cover weighted down with a heavy stone. I hated this job and decided never to make homemade sauerkraut even after we were married. The canned stuff tastes pretty good too. But then we had it on the menu a couple times a week.

SIX

Uncle Tony was one of our favorite uncles and one relative who did not agree with Pa about moving the family up north. I think he had a soft spot in his heart for Ma, and didn't think it was fair to her. He was a very generous man and did a lot to help out, like ordering things from Sears, and having it sent to us. Things like whole bolts (ten yards) of gingham, flannel, sheeting, also underwear and stockings for us kids and baby things. He scolded pa about a lot of things, but mostly when the bull chased me.

It happened on a Monday morning when Uncle Tony and Aunt Maggie were visiting us for a long weekend. Pa had gone for the cows early in the morning. Usually he brought them home from pasture all around the clearing. While he was doing that, I would rinse the milk utensils, open the gate and prepare for milking.

I heard pa shouting and hollering and I thought some of the cows might have got into the clearing, and pa was calling me to come and bring them home.

So I ran toward him but just as I got over the hill I saw the bull coming toward me. I quickly changed my route and ran for the orchard where I could scamper up one of the apple trees in a hurry. Oh how I ran, and pa kept yelling and he had had his arms full of rocks. Suddenly he yelled louder, and hit the bull with a big rock. Quickly the bull turned and ran for the barn, through the gate and into his stall.

Uncle Tony heard the noise and saw it all from an upstairs window, and he really was mad this time. Now the week before, pa had made arrangements to sell the bull, and the butcher would get him on this Monday. Uncle Tony stayed until he saw the bull leave. Afterward they laughed at me, and said they could have played 66 on my shirt tail. But I could hardly walk decent all the next day, my leg muscles hurt so bad. Even now when I even see a bull in pasture or barnyard, I will have horrible dreams at night.

But there were many more unpleasant harrowing times up there still to come. Separating milk and selling the cream once a week was very disappointing and we felt we were being cheated at every turn, because there was just one place where we could sell it, and that was a grocery store and we knew nothing about butterfat test, etc. We would get about \$2.50 or \$3.00 for a 10-gallon can of cream. So it was a wonderful improvement when all the farmers got together, and got the Kraft Milk Company to come and pick up the milk every day. Of course, it was much more work and we had to build a better milkhouse and keep it spotlessly clean so we could pass inspection for Grade A milk, and Pa would have nothing else. If a bar of soap was on the floor or a towel or apron wasn't clean or if we got one point less than perfect on inspection, the whole family caught real heck. We also had to have a gasoline engine to pump fresh water all the time, but financially it was 100% better and we loved it. It all seemed so modern then.

We never had many really wild animals, but sometimes toward morning you could hear the timber wolves howl. A terrible sound that made your blood run cold, and everyone was afraid then. Then the game wardens would be out on horseback and keep tracking them until they killed them. There

were usually only two or three together. There was a high bounty paid for wolves and coyotes, but we heard many stories of people being killed by them. Pa always told us to take our big hunting dog with us when we went walking anywhere and we would be safe. And so it happened.

In the winter when the days were short and darkness came early, sometimes pa would come and get us from school with the logging sleigh with planks on it for sitting. This was in our first year up there. After that pa fought hard and long to get the kids hauled to school and he won, but only in winter. This was a sleigh with a covered cab and a small heater in it. There were only six or seven kids from our area. Ed Peterson drove the horses and sleigh.

Well this particular night pa looked scared, I guess he must have heard a wolf howl. We were almost home when we heard the wolf howl. Well we should have had nothing to worry about with our big dog running along beside the sleigh. Instead when the dog heard the noise, he leaped up on the sleigh and crawled under pa's long fur coat and tight against his legs. So much for big brave dogs. The warden usually got the wolf in a day or two.

There were other animals in those woods, also. One of the more dangerous was the Civit Cat (we called them sliver cats). They could cry just like a baby, and you were almost tempted to go and investigate, but pa warned us against doing that. They would sit up in the tree and cry or sit quietly, then they would pounce down on their prey, animal or human. They would tear an animal to pieces.

Another was the porcupine, full of needles but harmless unless molested. Contrary to what people thought, they did not throw those needles. They had to touch their prey with them (dogs hated these animals and fought with them often) but these needles were terrible when they did penetrate your dog's face or skin, and they had to be pulled out. Painful, this would make a dog ferocious so we would close a door tight on the dog's neck with his body on one side and his head on the other with someone holding the door tight. This made the dog helpless until we pulled them out with a pliers. Another animal was the bear, harmless when there was food but not when they were protecting their baby cubs. We did see them once or twice while picking berries, but they were harmless then. They loved to eat berries.

We planted acres of potatoes all by hand. We made straight furrow rows with a plow, then us kids had to drop the potatoes, one at a time eight or ten inches apart in the furrow, then we covered them by hoeing the furrow shut. Sometimes we dug the holes to drop the potatoes in, but anyway it was a hard job and even the smaller ones had to help by dropping the potatoes. The whole spud planting would take more than a week and we would be in the field every day weather permitting from about 7:30 'til 5 o'clock. I forgot to mention these spuds had to be cut into small sections with one or two eyes on each piece. We would start weeks before the planting and sometimes cut spuds until late in the evening, but that was very easy compared to hoeing the weeds and quack grass out of a couple acres of potatoes. We never heard of weed killers. Then we had to pick off the potato bugs. We would each get a small tobacco pail with about ½ inch of kerosene in it, then drop the bugs in this and they would die. The next step when the bugs got worse, we would spray them. We would carry water

from a water hole, dump it into a 20-gallon jar, mix it with blue vitrol, lime etc. and mix, then straining it into a 5-gallon pressure sprayer. Then pump in as much pressure as you could, then try to lock it tight (the more pressure the harder it was to close). Then you put the strap over your shoulder to take care of the weight so you could use your hands to manipulate the nozzles. You just get going good when you have used up all the pressure, then you had to lift it off your shoulder and do the whole process all over again. This job was inhuman for little girls like Lilly, Bird and I. I think in this day and age even men would find this a very hard job. But then we did it all the time.

Sometimes we thought we were treated unfairly. Us kids were supposed to watch four or five little calves to keep them in a small area of meadow, and keep them out of an adjoining oats field because there was no fence.



Our way of fertilizing that land.

We got interested in some of our own games until pa saw the calves running through the oats, tramping it down he said but I didn't believe it. It was hard to round them up again because we couldn't see them all the time on account of the tall grain, just their tails sticking out over the grain.

When we thought we had them cornered, then we would see their tails way off in the other direction. But that was not as hard as the punishment which meant there would be no Fourth of July picnic for us.

This picnic was something we looked forward to all summer. A few weeks later as a peace offering we all went to a church picnic, not the same at all, no parade, no clowns, no oomm-pa-pa music or gambling our money away for foolish toys and gifts. Just a church picnic. Just plain cruel and I never forgot it.

In order to supplement feed for the cattle in winter, we cut hay in the marshes, about 2 miles from home. Years before some lakes had dried up,

now leaving some fertile grassy places where wild berries and hay grew very well. Then we would take a basket of lunch and while pa cut the hay with a scythe and ma piled it in hay cocks, us kids would pick berries most the day. There were strawberries, blueberries and dew-berries (a small sweetish black berry) all in due season. After a week, the hay would be cured enough and we would go back with a hay wagon, haul it home and stack it outside the barn. I did most of the stacking. This green hay was very slippery and would want to slide off the wagon, and this was troublesome and swearable.

Christine liked it very much in the woods. She was pretty much cook and dishwasher, but she spent lots of time sewing and all kinds of fancywork. She was very particular and always kept herself neat and pretty, so we nicknamed her "Slick." For four years she seemed to be getting better, then the abscess and the pain started all over again. I remember ma coming into my room one night after they had been to the doctor and told me how hopeless it was. Diagnosed it as tuberculosis of the spine. I wonder would that be the right name now.

About this time also, Aunt Christine Hayek was planning her wedding and I was to be her bridesmaid. Weddings were held in the homes then, so I went to Grandma's house a week or more before the wedding to have my dress fitted (Aunt Clara made them all). And I tried to help in so many ways. No electricity and I washed lamp chimneys and filled lamps with kerosene for hours. We had several lamps in each room. We emptied out two big rooms and in a big kitchen we set up tables with white linen tablecloths and napkins gathered from all the relatives. Grandma made noodles the week before and dried them for chicken soup. Every Bohemian wedding dinner started out with noodle soup. All cooked on a black Nellie stove. Aunt Clara curled our hair with curling and marcelle irons heated in the chimney of a lighted lamp. How she got everything done, I'll never know.

By the time we left for church not one of my family was there and I worried. When church was over and we came back from having our pictures taken, not one of my family still had come, and the same thing after dinner. I just didn't know what to think and I was very worried.

After supertime, Johnnie came alone and told me Christine was very sick, but said we should stay till after supper.

When we left in our just acquired Model-T car, I was really worried. The car went only a little faster than our horse and buggy, but right there its virtues ended. The distance was about 20 miles over narrow roads not much more than two cow paths and muddy with the spring rains. The lights worked on the magneto, so if we hit a bump the lights went out for a few seconds. It seemed it took hours and Christine did not seem to know me when we got home. She was very particular and didn't want anyone to mess around with her things, so when I came into her room the next morning with one of her dresses on, she recognized it and said, "Slim, you have my dress on again." Exactly one week later she passed away and nothing could have been worse. Nineteen years old and a pretty blonde, always cheerful and laughing.

No funeral homes then so when the funeral director came to the house, he would set up his tall velvet drapes and high candles, brought the casket and did what was expected with the help of Grandma Hayek. People stayed day and night for three days. So much work and confusion, and there was

no way to handle ma and pa. Aunt Mary Tikalsky and Grandma just stayed there, cooking, cleaning and washing. Aunt Mary had a washtub set up beside the house outside so she could wash every day. Certain neighbors like Mrs. John Pacer and Aunt Elsie Buboltz were there most of the time. Some people stayed all night, and there was food set on the tables all the time.

It was about this time we really found out what good friends the Buboltz's really were. At a time like this money is needed quickly and in those days no one had much ready cash. People didn't make much use of banking facilities, just mostly from hand to mouth living. But now, pa found it necessary to visit the bank, a hard job for a proud man. Now pa was usually a jovial, cheerful man, so after seeing him, Henry Buboltz, who happened to be in the bank, asked if something was wrong. After pa told him his problem, Henry was quick to tell him he didn't have to borrow from the bank. Instead he would give him the money until pa could pay him back. This made a true friendship that lasted as long as they both lived, and created a friendship that lasts even today among the Emmers' and the Buboltz's.

The Peddler

A great interesting day for us was when the peddlers came to the farm. This one came in a big long lumber wagon, drawn by a team of horses. It had a high canvas covered cab.

On the outside, on one side hung washtubs, washboards, rakes, garden tools, etc. Inside were drawers along the walls filled with everything imaginable like cheap jewelry, shoestrings, patent medicines of all kinds to cure everything from stomachache to sore muscles, to hangnails. There were toothbrushes, combs, sewing materials and patterns.

From the ceiling hung mops, brooms, and cooking utensils and on the other side on the outside were a few rag rugs and a few rolls of linoleum. This was the first time we had seen linoleum, nobody used it much as yet. It was so pretty and clean and all blue and white so pa bought enough for our big room downstairs which was a kitchen and sitting room. We were the only ones around there who had it then and we were so proud. Some people even had tar-paper strips on their kitchen floor.

We were always excited and happy to see this peddler come about once a year during those first years up there because we would all get some little trinket or cloth for a new dress. Pa hated these fellows though and said they were all cheaters.

However, this time he even helped the folks lay the linoleum rug down. In return, he got a good dinner and a late afternoon lunch. No, we didn't call it pay or installation fee, we just called it backwoods hospitality.



"Phillipe"
One of the backwoods
bootleggers teaching
Lauretta to ride
a bicycle.

When Pa moved away from Valders he had to give up many pleasures such as his poker card games every Saturday night, and drinking with the boys, but he was also an outdoors sportsman and he enjoyed it all year long, illegal or not.

He loved fishing and hunting, and we ate a lot of illegal fresh meat. He took pleasure in being rebellious toward the game wardens who watched him very close hoping to catch him with the goods. They never did and he often laughed about this. His argument was if the deer and other animals were eating and spoiling his garden and crops he had a right to kill them even tho it was a source of pleasure for him and food on our table. Ma could prepare the young deer, rabbit, squirrel and pheasants in the most delicious ways.

During deer season relatives and friends from Sherwood and Valders came to stay at our house during the deer season. We all looked forward to this time with pleasure. Ma and Pa would butcher a hog and make all kinds of sausages and head cheese in preparation for these days.

After hunting all day the evenings were spent playing cards, reliving the experiences in the wood, exaggerating many times and telling risque stories while they drank their wine. It was usually loud and hilarious, so much fun for them while Ma just kept on cooking and baking all the while. But she was well paid in the end. Each man paid generously in cash for room and board. She usually called this her Christmas money. One man named John Eckes who owned an apple orchard sent us a barrel of apples for Christmas, pure extravagance for us. Deer hunting was always looked forward to all year.

SEVEN

About this time we all enjoyed a period called "The Roaring Twenties." Business was booming, everyone seemed to have more money. Most of us could afford a victrola, and noisy music was everywhere. These machines could only play one record at a time, with only one selection on each side. With each record you had to wind up the machine, and put in a new needle each time. We bought the needles in boxes of 100. To us it was heaven, fun all the time with such records as, "It Ain't Gonna Rain No Mo," or "Yes We Have No Bananas," "Carolina Moon" or "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree." And to make it more fun moonshine was everywhere. Especially about ½ mile from our house in a dirty, lousy shack in the woods. It was a terrible place and the moonshine was poisonous. We weren't allowed to take that path when we picked berries or were getting the cows home, but I saw it anyway.

By this time mother and pappy had 14 children born to them. They were John, Christine, Laretta, Clarence, Bernadine, Lillian, Vernon, Margaret, Leona, Donald, Harvey, Lorraine, Wilbur and Robert.

I think I felt an almost parental pride, and a bit of possessiveness too for these little buggers, hearing their troubles, crying for them when they got a licking, or making a pretty dress for the girls, or a warm winter coat out of an old one.

When Robert was born I was the only attendant with Mother at that time. No telephone, so Pappy had gone for a doctor, but Mom couldn't wait, and I helped deliver the little bugger, my favorite, and it all worked out fine. I was 20 years old at the time.

There was always some necessary foolishness, also. Whenever ma felt the need for chicken for dinner, she just went out to the coop, caught a chicken, grabbed it by the head, gave it a few twists in the air and that was it, a broken neck. Well, ma and pa had gone away for most of the day. Bird decided we would have chicken for dinner, she knew exactly how ma did it, and she could too. So we went to the coop and caught our prey. We went outside and Bird grabbed the chicken and swung it around several times, then deciding that was enough, she dropped the chicken on the ground. The chicken just got to its feet, gave us a nasty look and walked away. We did not have chicken till ma was home.

Sixteen years old, looking around!

Johnnie was invited to a party but pa was worried and he wouldn't let him go unless Bird and I went too. It was a fun thing until it came time to eat, then I saw Johnnie wasn't looking so good. When they asked him if he wanted some cake, he said, "You damn right, I want cake" and the next minute his plate slid to the floor and so did Johnnie. Sometimes these reactions could be pretty serious, so we took him outside, held his head under the pump and pumped water on him. He came to alright but he was mad and was going to drive home himself.

Sometimes this bad moonshine made people violent and almost insane. After a lot of worrying our girlfriend Erma Pacer talked her friend's brothers into taking us all home. As one brother named Ted Benzon drove our car home with Johnnie in it, who had passed out again, the other brother Chuck

drove their car. Horrible when we got home, yelling and shouting, But Erma and I thought they were nice guys, and they were, so we made a date with them. Pa was wild, we were both only 16.

Oh! brother — those boys. They were just like sticks, talked about religion and the end of this sinful world. We were asked to their home on a Sunday and all afternoon they played musical instruments and sang gospel songs at their mother's request. It was then we found out they were "Holy Rollers." Enough of that. I was much more careful after that.

A terrible scary time was during the grasshopper scourge. It was unbelievable, grasshoppers ate every green living plant, even the young vegetables right into the ground.

As we walked down the lane to get the cows they jumped all over us. I usually kept my hands over my face and mouth. As they hit you it sounded like hail.

The government made available a poison to be used on the fields. This was a mixture of molasses and arsenic of lead mixed into bran. We got this in gunnysacks and we were to spread it on the edges of grain and alfalfa fields where the hoppers were the thickest, but it did not prove very effective.

But as a result our neighbor almost lost their three little boys. That day the parents got up early to get the stuff on while the grasses were wet with dew. Later they left the bags of remaining poison in the yard while they did the morning milking thinking they would finish later.

The little boys got up earlier than usual and seeing the bags they tasted the stuff. The molasses made it taste sweet so they must have eaten some.

Thinking the boys were still in bed they didn't worry until one little fellow came to the barn crying and was very ill, vomiting violently. They hurried out and found the other two boys by the sacks and very sick also.

They were rushed to the hospital in Antigo where their stomachs were pumped out. Doctors said it was very lucky they had no breakfast as the treatment was more effective on an empty stomach and easier to handle. They did recover after a few days. All the neighbors were very upset and frightened and decided not to use the poison and it was all destroyed.

Now in 1984 we have read about it, and seen it on TV. I mean the controversy about the arsenic poison that was buried in Aniwa township in Langlade County in 1932. At the time the authorities thought it was a good way to get rid of the stuff, but now it seems to be poisoning the water in that area.

This substance was buried deeply in the ground when they decided the treatment for grasshoppers was not successful. Now even after more than 50 years, they still find it very dangerous. What will they do with it now?

Another instance, while pa was cutting hay a grasshopper jumped in his ear as he bent down to unhook a machine. Pa lived about five miles from us on the way to Antigo and they always stopped to see us for a few minutes on their way. This time they drove past our place at a high rate of speed on their way to a doctor with Howdy Buboltz, their neighbor at the wheel. I knew something was wrong so, of course, I worried.

On their way home they stopped and told us all about it. The doctor got the hopper out of his ear still kicking. Pa said the kicking and scratching in his ear almost drove him crazy.

The grasshoppers hung on the fence posts and along the wire fences like hives of bees. It was so serious that people in all the churches in that area prayed for relief.

Then one day the hoppers didn't seem as active as before and only a few clung to the posts and fences. Then we saw them laying dead or dying all around the posts. In a few days it was all over. This was in 1932. Such a relief.

As I said, everything was rolling along fine. We were able to buy more furniture and machinery to make life easier and more profitable for all, but the "old-timers" could see it coming. I mean the big bust. Stock markets going way up one day, everyone deliriously happy, then plunging to terrible lows a few days later. Even the weeks before, it seemed it was getting much better, but on that terrible Friday, on October 29th, the real bubble burst. Millionaires suddenly found themselves penniless, many sought relief by suicide. People frantically withdrew their money from banks while they had time. As a result, most banks closed their doors by government order and never reopened and most people lost all their money. Pa was one who lost his money, too.

Business after business went bankrupt. Young farmers lost everything. There was no government help available then. A couple years later there were government loans, but it was too late for some, and some farmers were inexperienced and fearful of these things.

It was a state of total economic depression for the next several years. People were actually starving; soup kitchens and bread lines were set up in the cities. They called this "Government Relief." It was actually starvation welfare. You couldn't even cheat on welfare because nobody heard of welfare. We at home were not suffering. We didn't even realize it was that bad.

Johnnie became unemployed at his job in St. Nazianz and came home with his wife Blanche and little daughter. Now there were 15 at the table and every meal was a full meal. Ma baked bread almost every day, 10 or 12 loaves at a time. She made cinnamon and sweet rolls by the dozen and made raised doughnuts by the dishpan full.

She had such a big garden then, preserved everything. She made sauerkraut in 20-gallon jars. She also salted down the excess cukes after she had her glass jars full. These she put in a layer of salt, then a layer of pickles till the jar was full. She put up green beans this way also. All sliced French fashion.

When she wanted to use them, she would soak them in cold water overnight. Then cook them and prepare a sweet-sour sauce and pour this over the beans. We all liked this very much. She also made about 100 quarts of other pickles. We butchered our own animals for meat, made ham, bacon and lots of sausage. This would take place in winter.

In summer we picked berries by day, then at night we sorted and cleaned them while ma made them into sauce and jam. The next day we picked some more. In fall we picked all kinds of nuts, and baskets of cranberries, and stored them in the attic. All this helped feed this big, busy family.

She made big kettles of chili, vegetable and potato soup, large pans of home-baked beans and other things we raised. We especially liked the baked potatoes. With a fire in the cook stove all the time, we would lift the two back lids, here was intense heat and we would put the potatoes in these ashes and close the lid. We would eat them with cream or milk and butter. Many times this was a late night snack. So good.

Found in an old newspaper these local grocery specials and others included — coffee (unground) 15¢ per pound, sugar 5 pounds 22¢, raisins and prunes 2 pounds 15¢. Chevrolet cars advertised for \$485.00, haircuts 25¢, a marcel or finger wave 25¢, movies 25¢ and 10¢. Bedsheets 59¢ and Wadhams gas 9.2¢ per gallon, and we could hardly afford that.

After that first date, I found it could be quite interesting, and the rest of the young men were more fun. But Pa thought different. He was fun and quite decent to us girls, until the boys started hanging around.

He was a very jealous man, he worried about his girls, and he threatened to set the dogs on the fellows or use the gun that hung on the wall. He could be very unpleasant, also he needed us to help on the farm. But there was one guy who was as persistent as he was, yet they seemed to get along together.

EIGHT

We always celebrated birthdays or any other special day with our neighbors. Bird and I took turns going along while the other one stayed home with the smaller kids. This night it was Bird's turn to go to Weber's birthday party. We heard there were two young fellows who were vacationing with their relatives who would be there. Bird was quite enthused about the one but not the other. She told me all about it. Two nights later, when Albert Buboltz's had a party, it was my turn. To make a long story short, I too liked the younger man and we had a very good time on that first date. Then the vacation was over and it seemed like the end. This was in October.

However, about in March Pa came home and said he heard that the guy from Brillion was renting a big farm nearby, and according to gossip, he was getting married and coming to live in our neighborhood. I listened quietly and was even mad and disappointed, but what Pa said was not true.

Against a lot of opposition, threats and arguments from both sides, we started dating in earnest. Almond's older sister insisted she had to keep house for him so whenever or wherever we went, we took her along. Almond often took her home to Brillion because she was needed there, but in two or three weeks she would be back. So after 2½ years, we started planning our wedding. This distressed Pa very much. Mostly because of religion. It distressed many people, Almond's family also. People from the north were such duds according to the people from the south, but mostly it was religion. This was 54 years ago and a difference in religion was a capital sin. Aunt Mary Tikalsky told me "The Lord would punish me," and after our first year of marriage, but for the next five or six years, I almost believed her. Since then, however, we have been blessed in many ways.

Now since one of these boys proved so important to me, I will explain a little about the ancestry of these young fellows.

Their grandparents whose last names were Buboltz and Schwandner came from Germany and settled in the Brillion area in Calumet County. Great-grandma and Grandpa Buboltz had 10 sons — namely, Charles, August, John, Ferdinand, Henry, Ernest, Louis, Edward, Albert and Fred (our father) and each one had one sister Amelia. I knew nothing about the elder Schwandners except they had six daughters — Sophia (Greve), Louisa (Krueger), Mary (Ziegler), Clara (Buboltz), Carrie (Maile) and Katharine (Buboltz), our mother. Fred was a very proud, handsome ambitious man, who married Katharine Schwandner. She was not really beautiful, but very, very pretty with a few unruly curls always sneaking out around her face. She took care of her chickens, milked cows, tended a big garden, baked loaves of fresh bread, and apple kuchen. She was a good seamstress and made all her everyday dresses and aprons, but on Sunday and holidays she was really best-dressed in her satin and crepe dresses, very fastidious and perfect.

These two settled on a farm not far from the Buboltz homestead. After a few years they built a big beautiful house and some farm buildings. With their large orchard, cherry trees, grape arbor, rose bushes and landscaped lawns, it was really the showplace of Calumet County. This couple had eight children, the last two were twins. Four boys — namely, Rueben, Almond, Arthur and Melvin; four girls — Clara (Wollersheim), Cora, Sarah (Rosen-

berger) and Myrtle. This was a happy family and prosperous and I always enjoyed visiting there for a weekend and later when we moved to Brillion, they were a great help to us in many, many ways especially when the great depression hit us all. But there was tragedy and heartaches too. One great tragedy was the death of their daughter Myrtle. A beautiful, dark-haired ever popular, fun-loving girl. A favorite in school and queen of her Junior Prom.

She became ill in her early twenties, and in spite of good care and much hospitalization, she passed away at 28 years of age. A terrible, terrible grief. Being the good Christians that they were, they tried somehow to rise above it. I remember one incident I cannot forget.

My uncle Joe Emmer had a saloon at High Cliff and each year after deer season, he would have a venison dinner there for hunting friends and neighbors. I did not expect the car full of people from Antigo who came for this event, and I was so worried. This was in those hard times — no extra money and nothing much in the house to feed so many. Uncle Joe had gotten his deer in the Antigo area. I worried terribly until Grandma Buboltz and Grandpa Buboltz came to go to the party with us. No need to worry anymore. Grandma brought two loaves of fresh baked whole wheat bread, an oatmeal box full of homemade cookies and a pail of fresh eggs. I was so relieved I wanted to cry, but that explains the kind of people they were. And so in spite of religion they soon seemed to love me, and with me the feeling was mutual. No one was more fortunate in choosing in-laws than I was.

Back to our dating. It was done with a Model-T roadster, freezing cold in winter with flapping button-on side curtains for when it rained. The gas tank was under the seat, and a small tank it was, so each time we needed gas we had to take out the seat, lean it against the car, while I stood by waiting and freezing in the cold stormy winter. Just the thought was most unpleasant. We used this car until February of 1930, a few months before we were married. Then Almond bought a beautiful green Chevrolet Coach. Our wedding was the usual at-home wedding. Lots of fun, foolishness, food and near-beer. The beer we had first was pretty good but when that ran out somebody knew of a lady who made the stuff — a dirty, dirty looking female and the beer was almost as bad as she. But, of course, we had wine.

The next morning, after a five-hour honeymoon, I got up with my husband as any good wife should in those days, milked the cows and made breakfast. Even made breakfast for some relatives who stayed overnight. After that it was work as usual.

The farm we bought was a very nice farm, the house was very nice also after some going over. It had a big kitchen-dining room. Here we put ruffled voile criss-cross curtains, we bought a beautiful tu-tone ivory cook stove with wedding gift money, a big complete kitchen cabinet all from Montgomery Ward, new linoleum on the floor and a table and four chairs from a second-hand store that I painted ivory, a big living room facing the backyard, two bedrooms facing the highway. Then there was the lean-to summer kitchen, not too bad but it had an old black Nellie cook stove with a bad crack in the firebox and I was told I must always keep a metal dustpan under this crack whenever I used the stove and I was sure I did, except the day of the big fire. This was about one month after we were married. In these days the threshing machine with a crew of about 10 men went from farm to farm and

did the threshing from the field when the weather permitted. Otherwise, they hauled the ripe grain in, and threshed it out of the barn. This day they were at our near neighbor Ben Kryka, and would soon be at our neighbor Boots Weber, and then at our place.

So after I had the dinner cleared away, I decided to go to our woods down a long lane and pick berries. After I was there awhile, I heard wild noises and hollering and looked up and saw what looked like the whole universe was on fire. I dropped my pail and ran for home down the long lane thinking I had forgotten to put the dustpan under the crack and thinking it was our house or barn and it was all my fault. I ran and ran until I couldn't anymore, then stopped and looked up and saw it was not our place but Ben Kryka's large white barn and granary and straw stack, a relief yes, but so frightening.

Now Kryka's farm was just to the west of us on the same side of the road, then across the road from us and more to the east was the Weber farm. Here the elder Weber's lived with their son Boots who helped work the farm.

The threshing machine would come to the Weber's next, but there had been some arguments between Boots and his dad. Dad wanted it threshed right away but Boots wanted to wait and thresh it from the barn later when most of the neighbors were done. Boots lost the argument and he was disgusted so on this morning he decided to go to the corner saloon in Neva for a while. He stayed too long, drank too much and then after dinner decided to go to Kryka's and find out how soon they would be finished, and whether they would be at Weber's (his place) for supper.

The straw stack was close to the driveway and the chaff and dust lay in the driveway several inches deep. Boots drove in but his Model-T pickup stalled in the loose chaff. Now Boots was pretty drunk by now and as he tried to start the car. Again the engine backfired and ignited the chaff. A few seconds later fire ran along the driveway and right up the straw stack and on to the barn. The men had to work furiously just to get the thresher and engine out of the way in time. A neighbor, Millie Rine, came to be with me at our house and we just walked back and forth. We had a field of grain ready to be threshed between our house and Kryka's and the men were kept busy putting out the small fires that might have started in the shocks from flying sparks and embers. My parents who lived about three miles away through the woods saw cinders and burnt shingles fly over their farm. And with the Weber farm to the east of us, we saw smoke and ashes flying over the road toward Weber's.

As Millie and I stood on our front porch cold with fear, we saw many flying sparks, but we were watching a burning shingle. This really scared us as it fell on Weber's barn roof, but it soon disappeared and we assumed it had gone out. However, a few minutes later smoke was coming out all over under the roof and soon flames were shooting out all over the roof and Weber's new barn along with Kryka's was doomed. By the time, the firefighters at Kryka's saw it and realized it, it was all too late. Now they mostly concentrated on saving our buildings. What a terrible day and night. Kryka's barn was full of hay and the granary was full of grain. Ben Kryka just gave up then and never rebuilt his big barn or buildings.

The Washtub

In spite of many differences, ma liked Almond almost as much as I did. Now the start of this part of the story is, Ma got a new washtub. An expensive investment in those days. Nobody had that much extra money unless it was for something very necessary.

When ma finished washing, she usually tipped the tub upside down on the grass beside the house.

When Almond came, he drove up pretty close to the house. The yard here sloped down a little to the driveway. This night he wasn't going to make a lot of noise with his car when he went home which was kind of late. He figured he would just sneak out quietly, so he let the car coast a bit down this little incline where Ma's new tub was.

Sure enough he ran over it. I heard it as I went upstairs, and ma heard it in her bed, and we both knew what it meant.

Pa usually got up first but this morning ma got up first so she could remove the evidence, because I am sure that pa would fail to see the humor in it.

A few days later ma and Almond were looking at something in the trunk of his Ford and laughing, and you guessed it, there was a new washtub for ma, and no one had even mentioned it previously.

It was things like that that made life more interesting and livable on that farm in the woods.

NINE

Bird and I got along famously at home, exchanging clothes, going all over together and even sharing the money we earned by doing housework, etc. for the neighbors and other people. While one worked out, the other had to stay home and work so we divided the money we earned half and half. We even picked up potatoes all fall together for the big potato raisers. Hard work for 2 cents a bushel.

So a few weeks before my wedding she said she would not stay home even two weeks after I left. She had found a job working for some rich people in Antigo but the job would not be available until after school started in September, but Bird kept her word and almost the whole world seemed to fall apart for a time.

She and Howdy Buboltz had a date this night and they got home early. She must have told Howdy about her plan to leave that night, but it seems he wanted no part of it. So she waited until Pa and Ma went to do chores early in the morning after calling her once. When she didn't show up, Ma went to investigate and found her bed empty. She must have gone out the second floor door then through the woods then ran down the road. When Pa found that someone had out-foxed him, he hopped in his car and went looking for her. She heard the car, jumped into the woods and hid until his car passed, now she really hurried.

Pa stopped first at Howdy's house and accused him, mad enough to kill him I guess, but Howdy knew nothing of this. In fact, he thought he had talked her out of it.

I was frying pancakes for breakfast when I saw pa come, cheerful I supposed as he usually was, so I offered him breakfast. Bad mistake! I was accused of knowing where she was, even of hiding her. Oh, he was mad when he started back home.

About that time Bird was coming out of the woods and on these flat lands she could see Pa coming in the distance from the west. She must have run like a deer and just made it in time running into the boys' toilet at school. Pa never saw her and when he disappeared into the woods again, she went across the road to some very good friends who took her to Antigo where she found work. I really never knew anything about this before, but Pa never believed me, and I worried.

From now on we concentrated on making improvements around our farm. We shingled the house, the granary and one side of the big hay barn. To enter the driveway, we had to get out of the car, open a large gate, drive in then get out of the car and close the gate to keep the cattle in the barnyard. The driveway went through the barnyard past the muddy hole by the watering tank into the garage at the end. Also across this barnyard, near the cow barn was the outdoor toilet, a distance from the house and very inconvenient at any time but especially at night, when you never knew what you might step into. This was a sore spot for me. So as soon as we could we made a new driveway on the other side of the house and here we built a garage and also an outdoor toilet near the garage. We cleared a large tract of wood land for cultivated crops. No big machinery to help either.

That second year we had several acres of potatoes and the crop was pretty good. We had a potato digger but in wet ground it was almost impossible

for one team of horses to pull the machine with the wide plow in front to lift the rows of potatoes, then have the power to operate the elevators that took the potatoes, the vines and dirt up onto the two sets of aprons that constantly shook the dirt and vines out before the potatoes rolled out the back. In wet heavy ground this was very slow and inefficient. So since we now had a new car, Almond took the engine from our old Model-T truck and with the help of Otto Buboltz they put it on the potato digger to operate the elevators and thus all the horses had to do was pull the digger and the car motor did the rest. It worked like magic.

It was a very dry year with grasshoppers eating gardens and field crops. No green pasture for cows and some of our neighbors drove their cattle up into the deep woods far from the farm and left them there until fall. But we were luckier, we had our own woods and when it really got bad, Almond would cut down smaller maple trees and chop off the branches. When the cows heard the first stroke of the axe, they would all come running and eat all the branches and leaves and even some trunks up clean. It didn't produce much milk but it sure helped and we kept our cows home until relief came.

Because of the dry conditions, forest fires developed all over. Many roads were closed because of fire and smoke. Mornings we could hardly see our buildings through the smoke. This was in 1933 when Roosevelt was inaugurated. Now our C.C.C. boys were kept very busy protecting property and people. My brother Johnnie was one of them.

The C.C.C. organization sprung up during the height of the depression. This was Roosevelt's idea and a good one it was. Young fellows between the ages of 18 and 25 could volunteer. They were kept in something quite like army camps in the northern part of the state. Their duties were forest preservation, planting many small pine trees and fighting forest fires. You can see these beautiful groves of large pine trees now fifty years later as you drive north of Shawano. The wages for these boys was \$30.00 per month. The boys were given \$5.00 for themselves and \$25.00 was sent to their parents to ease the hard times at home.

We really thought we were very lucky and in spite of drought and poor crops we were very satisfied and happy with our good neighbors and friends. We had our baby Almond Jr., who was just 18 months old, and me living close to home and all the kids there. But the feeling didn't last long.

It was October, Almond had an early supper and helped me finish the chores and had gone back to the field to plow by moonlight. Plowing was very slow making only one furrow at a time so he had to make use of every minute.

It was this evening when the sheriff and a couple of men came to tell us the bad news — our farm had been repossessed. The bank who held our mortgage had folded up, the president had committed suicide, and we were losing our farm. The worst tragedy that could hit us. We couldn't believe it. We thought we were secure, although many, many farms were lost and there was no relief. Pa was heartbroken and said, "Almond, don't go. You didn't do anything wrong." But then Almond's Dad and brother Ruben came with plans of their own, even knew of a farm to rent near Sherwood. We had heard of a new bill in Washington called the Federal Farm Loans, but we were told by Ruben that would disgrace the family. (Just an added note here: Three years later, Ruben, who owned a cheese factory went bankrupt.

No disgrace.) Oh, those were terrible days, no eating, no sleeping as we planned to leave this farm we loved, and tried so hard to hold, and move back south. The personal property, cattle, animals and machinery were all paid for and were ours, but we had to get it moved so we bargained with Otto Buboltz. We gave him our motorized potato digger and in exchange he would truck all our furniture and personal property to Sherwood. Moving day was even worse than when we moved north from Valders. But I didn't cry, just wanted to die. It rained all the way to Sherwood and cold. It seems the skies cried for me.

When we got to the Brantmeier farm in Sherwood, there were neighbors there to help unload and some relatives from the north came along to help. Another long hard night, getting the animals housed, milking cows and making supper for us all. The buildings weren't too bad but that farm was very poor, almost a starvation living in the height of depression 1933. I remember we shipped a cow and a veal calf hoping to use the money for car license, but both animals did not bring enough money to pay for them.

Another instance. We rented from the Brantmeier estate, three brothers. They agreed to take four butchered hogs when they were big enough as part payment for the rent which was \$450 a year. When we delivered the fat dressed hogs after weighing, we only got something like \$25.00 for all four. But at least we were living, and many people were not doing even that well. Even the administrator of the Brantmeier estate was worse off than we were. Two of his sons had to join the C.C.C. boys.

The new neighbors were very nice and friendly and we were asked to their parties right away. The card parties among these people seemed like so much fun at first.

An older couple next door made most of the moonshine, just as easy as making jam. They really knew how to do it. Also home-brew. We drank home-brew out of any kind of container, and moonshine from the jug passed around the card table. You had to learn how to hold that jug on one arm and tip it up. It was the source of many parties and fights and jealousy between husbands and wives, and bad stories and language. To us it was embarrassing and we weren't used to that kind of stuff and we just didn't care for it for long.

But the depression and prohibition were winding down now and we made many other friends there. Life was more tolerable and in August our second son Eugene was born. Happy Day.

He was a mischievous, lively little bugger, who could climb up and down, over and under on the biggest pieces of machinery before he was two years old. This occupied my mind and I didn't have much time to be lonesome or unhappy and life rolled along smoothly. Two years later we got our baby girl, Marvis. Everything was right after that. She was very tiny, quiet, smiling most of the time. Seems these kids changed our luck to good. When Marvis was four months old we moved to a much nicer, more profitable farm near Brillion. We never thought we were poor before, but we never had any money either. The work was easier here, more pleasant, the kids growing up. We even bought a new tractor. We got electricity shortly after we moved there. Great day in the morning, we even had electric lights on our Christmas tree. This came in 1945.

When Marvis was almost three years old, Eldore John was born. Just enough kids to make everything interesting, and Ellie could do it. Fun to be around with him. As the kids got bigger, they learned something about earning money. We had contract beans and cucumbers, and they picked most of them with me, even picked beans for a neighbor. They usually earned enough money for school supplies and school clothes. They could walk to a show in Brillion about once a week, and this cost 15¢ for a ticket and popcorn or candy bar.

We had very good neighbors. One instance of good neighbors. All the neighbors helped each other at threshing time, as the machine went from farm to farm. About 10 men would come for breakfast at about six o'clock. By this time we must have our chores done, kids under control, and a hefty breakfast of meat and potatoes and lots of it on the table. I had some things organized in the kitchen when I went to the barn that morning but I worried how I would get it all done on time. No need to worry. Some time before I left the barn, Mr. Jandrey came to the barn to help Almond, and when I got in the house his daughter Elvira had things progressing nicely in time for breakfast, and the kids dressed. I needed this help so bad, and we hardly knew these people then.

The kids also caught frogs for a restaurant in Neenah. They would follow behind a hay mower or find them under the shocks of hay or grain when the men removed the shocks. Also after a rain they were easy to catch in the ditches. They kept them in a tank elevated on one end with some big stones in it and about five inches of water in the low end. They delivered them once or twice a week to Otto Rusch Jr., who paid them 30¢ a pound and he sold them to a man in Neenah. When they caught them they put them in cloth bags I had made for them and looped onto their pants belts, but Marvis said she nearly always was caught holding the bag. This was fun for them and quite profitable. They did this for a couple years.

TEN

It was more interesting now with the kids all growing up and in school. It was just busy, busy, with entries for county fairs, school parties, confirmations, homecomings, proms and graduations. But it just could not last forever and we were hearing rumors of war, and a terrible war in Europe. We knew of a leader there called Adolf Hitler. He was a ruthless, inhuman beast and a gangster who was leading the Germans in war and very successfully taking one European country after the other, and fearful people felt they had to follow him. Now it was Great Britain's turn and on Sept. 3, 1940, Britain declared war, although they were totally unprepared and America knew if Great Britain went down we would be next. We were not at war, but in these trying fearful times Great Britain and the United States found a great war leader, Franklin D. Roosevelt. So, in January 1940, we sent ships, planes, tanks and guns to help Britain and preserve our peace, but it was not to be. Even before this, there was something in Washington called Conscription and our young men had to register for the draft and war training and Vernon was one of these. In late 1941 he was called in. He came to our house that weekend in early December to say good-bye before he left. As we ate dinner we discussed the war and I remember distinctly Vernon saying, "It's not the Germans I'm afraid of, it's those damed Yellow Bastards." Up until now I didn't even know about Japan, much less that they were at war. Shortly after dinner he left to go and see Uncle Joe Gintner and Aunt Carrie in Oshkosh. But before he got there the terrible news came over the radio, Pearl Harbor was being bombed, and in less than one hour more than 1,000 of our men had lost their lives.

It took Congress only thirty-three minutes to make up its mind and the American people turned from peace to war on Dec. 8, 1941.

We were planning for another baby and in March, Joanne Bernadine was born, to cheer everybody up. She was happy, cheerful, full of pep and sassiness. Her coming helped us all.

Everyone was planning for Christmas and New Year's, and now we knew our lives would all be changed. Now all we could see was partings, sorrow and anxiety. It was so close to our shores, we felt we would surely be next.

We went about doing our chores not even knowing what we were doing. It seemed so hopeless and frightening. Vernon left for training and soon Harvey and Bud left, so hard for Ma and Pa, but we didn't see Ma cry much. Later Bob went also.

They would come home on weekends and we would all get together. Laugh and have fun but we all knew what it was about and we felt that undercurrent of fear and sadness.

Now we were fighting in two separate wars and unprepared. We were so short of the materials for war machinery.

Plants stopped making sewing machines, refrigerators and all other household things made of steel, aluminum or rubber, and changed over to aircraft, tanks, bombs and shells, guns and jeeps.

In Detroit they produced only 600 cars that year. It took about three years before we could buy any household appliance, or machinery made of metal or rubber. Women did men's heavy jobs in industrial plants. Jobs they

would have thought was impossible before the war. Many women now worked at Brillion Iron Works.

We were selling all scrap and unused articles of steel, aluminum and iron, and even some still useful, items all to be melted down and made into instruments of war.

The war changed life for many of us. Many sacrifices were made, doing without many necessities.

We were allotted tokens for food according to the size of your family. These were tokens about the size of a dime, red ones for meats and fats, blue for canned goods and other groceries and white for dairy products, etc.

When you paid for your groceries, you had to reach into your other pocket and pay with your tokens, and when your tokens were used up, you just quit buying. We also got shoe stamps to use when you bought a pair of shoes. It seemed our kids wore out their shoes faster then we could get stamps. These stamps and tokens were given to you according to the size of your family. All this was done at the high school where you registered for them each month. Coffee was a luxury and impossible to obtain.

Our older boys would always get mixed up between the names to call their two Grandpas, so pa told our kids just to call him Pappy. So they did and all the other grandchildren and all of us called him that until he died. Our kids thought he was the greatest grandpa ever.

By now the size of the family had dwindled. No longer were there 15 around the table at home in the woods. Five older girls were married, the four boys were in the army and Johnnie was living in Park Falls.

The work wasn't as hard anymore either. No more logging, or making hay in the marshes or watering cattle by an ice water hole. No one picked potato bugs or used the primitive way of spraying them. The herd of milking cows was much larger and so were the milk checks.

Pappy and Mom had bought a new car. And I think they had enough foods and other rationed items hoarded to last until the end of the war. Yes, it was better there now. But more disaster.

Then suddenly one morning Lorraine (the youngest daughter) saw the roof of the house burning as she worked in the garden. That big house full of furniture and memories.

A forest ranger stationed on a high lookout tower, not too far away in the woods near the house, saw the flames, sent for help but it was useless in such an isolated location. They just watched it burn.

When we got the telephone call telling us about it, I just walked around like a zombie not knowing what to do.

Then they called again telling us not to come until Saturday when all the neighbors for miles around had planned a shower for them. Such a shower, they got everything imaginable from canned foods to glassware and cooking dishes to bedclothes, and stacks of envelopes containing money.

They came from big farms and tar-paper houses in the woods. Pappy said he hated to take the gifts from some of the poorer people who even now had less than he did.

I thought I would cry and make a fuss when I saw the blackened empty spot where the house once stood, but I did not.

I think I was thinking of a quote from the Bible. I quote, "God works in his mysterious way, His miracles to perform."

Surely the folks could not continue to live there alone. Pappy already had one bad heart attack and could no longer work hard.

All their children would soon be gone. They had no electricity, no plumbing, no radio or telephone or TV and impassable roads most of the time in winter.

The neighbors were wonderful. One even gave them the use of a vacant house close to the farm. When we got there on that Saturday, I thought we would find tears and confusion. Nothing like that. Curtains hung at all the windows, throw rugs on the bare floors, and blankets and bedspreads on the beds. So what if nothing matched.

One family gave them a bed and dresser to match. I remember I smiled, it was painted light green and trimmed in lilac print. They also got another bed and dresser from another friend. They lived here a few months, then rented a complete farm near Bryant. When they moved into this house, they got a beautiful china closet from Mom's sisters and brothers. This helped a whole lot. This farm worked out fine with the cattle in the barn, and the heifers and young stock pasturing on the farm in the woods. This lasted about one year, then this barn burned from spontaneous combustion. It seems there was quite a lot of old dry hay in the barn, very dry, then they hauled new green hay on top of it.

Now they were looking again and found and purchased a very nice farm in the town of Polar east of Antigo. It is still in the Emmer family, being operated by pappy's grandson, Vernon Emmer.

We all loved this place. Mom especially liked this house. So nice and big and shining clean. Very nice rooms arranged in very good taste, and above all, plumbing with hot and cold water, a bathroom and a *Flush Toilet*. It must have seemed very special to them. I think they lived there about fifteen years, then they bought a nice little house in the city of Antigo.

Many years before this, in the early thirties, when things got a little better and Pappy and Mom managed to start saving money, they deposited it in the Neva Farmers Bank. But in 1933 when most banks went bankrupt along with them went the Neva Bank and Pappy lost his money. This was very sad and seemed hopeless to them.

So now they decided to do something foolish, they would use their own method of saving, primitive though it was. They put the money into a smaller jar, then put this into a bigger earthen jar, covered it with a metal cover. This they buried in a corner of the potato bin in the cellar, they covered it with a little ground and some potatoes.

Now at the time of the fire Pappy was very worried, nervously walking back and forth, but too ashamed to tell anyone. At last he could stand it no longer and told Bird all about it.

Now at times it seemed like Bird, and me too, had money to burn, but this was Pappy's money and a little too much to burn. Bird quickly told some of the men there. Otto Buboltz and Adolph Rine wanted to save it.

The cellar was at the far end of the house that was built into the hill and by now that was a pretty hot hole. I'm told they used one of the big sliding barn doors between the smoke and heat, and where they would dig in the rubble. They had to come up for air a few times because of the fire.

Just as they were about to give up, someone struck the metal cover with his shovel and there it was saved by a neighbor.

But we never mentioned it much, just too embarrassing to talk about it. After this, need I say, Pappy's savings went into an accredited bank. I was not there but this is the way it was told to me. Moral of the story is, never trust a Neva Farmers Bank, or hoard your money in a cellar.



The farmhouse as it was when it burned in 1942.

The year 1945 — a great war ends and a new era begins. After four years of frustration and fear, sadness and shortages, blackouts and despair, finally came that great day, but one more tragedy. After working so hard to alleviate the suffering for so many, and without realizing his great dream and ambition, our President Franklin D. Roosevelt died of a stroke on April 12, 1945. Just four weeks before that great day when war with Germany was over.

The Armistice was signed on May 17, 1945. Such rejoicing! Then three months later, the United States dropped the atom bomb on Hiroshima which killed one-fourth of their inhabitants. We finally won that war with Japan on August 15, 1945.

Joy! Joy! Our boys were all coming home and we could relax and live normally again.

Almond Jr. was a young man now and preferred not to be called Junior, so from now on he will be known as Al.

Al raised purebred hogs and also purebred rabbits, and after graduation he got a job at Pritzl Hardware and purchased a brand new Studebaker. Eugene was coming up close behind Al, and he had a part-time job at Bob's Service Station. Everyone busy and then as an added surprise in October, we added another daughter to our family, Peggy Sue. A very pretty baby,

lively rollicking and much loved and very spoiled, so about two years later we had a son Terrance George (Terry). This evened things up a bit with Peggy Sue, cause Terry demanded equal rights in such cute subtle ways it made Peggy sit up and take notice. But together they made such a happy laughing pair, and we all started to live over again.

We were getting tired of the farm by this time, especially me. I hated the smell of cows and wanted to live like a lady with only my house and kids and, of course, my husband to take care of. Lord knows that was a full-time job.

Almond had a job in town so in 1951 we left the farm and moved, not into the city, there was no place available there. We went west of town into an old farmhouse. This was just before the building boom here in Brillion. We stayed one year in the country, then found a nice home in Brillion. Glory Be — with flush toilets at last! I thought that would never happen.

Now with the war over and after having our name on the list in four stores for three years, we finally were able to get a refrigerator. Can you imagine that, after having a dripping icebox made of wood, to get a beautiful white refrigerator? It was unbelievable.

With an icebox, the iceman came two or three times a week and it was expensive, too, but we needed it to keep milk, baby formula and other perishables cold. Otherwise, we had to run halfway around the house, then use bad steps to carry our foods into the cellar.

Now this iceman was something else. He wore bib overalls with the two side buttons open and under this he wore ancient drawers pulled up very high and showing through the side openings where the buttons should have been closed.

Now when Bird's kids were vacationing with us, and our kids too, they just laughed and poked fun about this. Then too, he came about four o'clock on Saturday afternoons, right after I had my kitchen floor scrubbed and waxed. He would come in with dripping rubbers, then he would push the scarf off the top of the icebox onto the floor.

The block of ice was usually a bit too big, so he would set it on the floor and chip off the edges to make it fit, then leave. By this time there was water all over the floor.

When Bird and George's first three children were older and we had three all about the same ages, these kids spent their vacations together. One week at our house, then one week at their house in the summer.

You had to have a lot of patience, but it was so much fun. They did so many foolish things, played so hard, aggravated each other, then laughed and made up. Getting them to bed was something else, took so long for them to get to sleep, so much to discuss and plan, some good, some bad. They helped a lot too, gathering and cleaning eggs, getting paid a little for jobs well done, so they could walk up town to see a show. Shows cost 10¢ then. We really hated to see them leave for home.

Shortly after the refrigerator, we got our electric stove, a beautiful white luxury. No more dirty ashes to carry out or carry in wood or an unbearably hot kitchen. These really changed our way of living more than anything else.

Even long before this we got rid of our coal and wood living room heater, with which we froze about six hours of the day, and we replaced it with an automatic oil heater. We had no electricity yet then. This was really unbelievable comfort and security.

Long before, about in 1934, after we moved to Sherwood with no electricity and no radio, we heard of a battery radio. We had a good friend Butch Greve of Hilbert who sold these things. He sold us a radio with a car battery in the bottom of the cabinet and hooked up to a sort of windmill on the roof of the house. We called it a wind charger. It worked great, very modern fifty years ago, but only when the wind blew. So, we had to save the current for special news broadcasts, or the W.L.S. barn dance on Saturday nights, but even that was something wonderful in our small world.

It worked just fine for many years until the war came. Then we wanted the current news most of the time. Radios along with everything else were still unavailable at that time, wartime, although now we did have electricity. We heard of an old radio not being used at the Potter school. Butch Greve fixed it so it worked fine 24 hours a day. The war was getting very interesting and frightening sometimes and we didn't want to miss even a minute of the news. Then too, there was football to listen to for Al and his father. Yes, life was much better now, so different from this story's beginning, until we again heard the rumblings of war. I was busy and tried to ignore it, just not listen because it was in some remote country I had never heard of, Korea. I had to look it up on the map. Some of our boys were still in Germany, although not fighting, just policing.

All us parents who had sons that age began to worry all over again especially at high school graduation, it was mentioned in the speeches. Sure enough war was declared in 1950 with Korea, and again we heard that terrible word "Conscription," and boys were being drafted. About one year later Al was called in for his physical, but because of a previous back injury he did not pass. We all began to breathe easier, but in a few months he was called again, and again he did not pass.

All this time he had been dating a sweet little girl, Helen Schroeder, from Chilton but originally from Reedsville. Now they were planning their wedding. Such a lovely wedding it was, and everyone relaxed concerning the war. But just a few weeks after the honeymoon Al was called for service again, but this time he passed and had to leave almost immediately. Such sadness and hopelessness. We took Al and Helen to meet his bus for Milwaukee with terrible feelings inside. Just after we got back home, the phone rang. It was Bird telling us that Grandma Emmer had suffered a serious stroke. Funny we don't just die from so much heartache.

ELEVEN

Now Grandma Emmer was ever full of love and dreams. She had disappointments and sorrows, but she overcame them all. She already had four sons in war, but now it seemed this was more than she could take, and she suffered her first stroke the day Al left for service. With her four sons and even more grandsons probably to go, it was just too much. She was unconscious for days and the doctor said she might not be the same person after she came to, if she ever did, as she was before. But she recovered completely and overcame this grief also. Al wrote to her regularly and this helped.

Al came home for weekends quite often at first, but then came that terrible day. Some of his friends who left home with him went to Germany, but he was being sent to Korea. Germany wouldn't have been so bad.

Al and Helen were expecting their baby any day, so he was given a longer leave of ten days, then he would fly to California to rejoin his troops.

Their little girl Shelley Lynn was born and baptized while he was home, which eased the pain just a little. Shelley would be sixteen months old before Al would see her again. But when he did, oh the rejoicing. Everything was fine now. He got a job, bought a new car and bought a home. They had three more children, namely, Ricky Lee, Kim Marie and Douglas Allen.

We had bought an older home and remodeled it extensively just the way I wanted it and we loved it. We lived here for ten years. A new street was built at the west of the house, a winding creek was on the east and the B.I.W. offices were across the street on the north, which put us on a sort of an island on a large lot with beautiful trees.

About six or seven years later, the B.I.W. decided it wanted our lot to be made into a visitors park for them.

I felt awful and even cried a little, but they gave us little rest. We had decided no way would we sell at their price. At last after about three years of bargaining they told us to find a suitable house and then we would bargain in earnest. We found a very nice almost new house, very modern in a nicer part of town and that was it. We figure we got a very good deal. Our old house was moved off the lot, and later purchased by our chief of police.

At this time Eugene was dating a sweet gal Janet Kroening from Reedsville and they were planning their wedding. We went to Antigo two weeks before the wedding to discuss various things such as flowers, etc. with pappy and mom. Pappy was very excited, but before the week was out pappy suffered a massive heart attack, and died within a few minutes. We buried him on the Monday before Gene and Janet's wedding on Saturday. Of course, we were very upset and grief-stricken about it all, but after much discussion and heavy talk with the family priest and others, we decided the wedding should go on as planned.

So another big wedding, another great time, when we could forget a little. Eugene and Janet have four sons, Scott Eugene, Todd Allen, Daniel John and Michael James. Eugene also built a new house and got a job as postmaster in Whitelaw and later in Brillion.

Marvis left home after she got a good job at Aid Association for Lutherans in Appleton. She is still employed there after about 28 years.

Now with the three older children gone from home, our family seemed so small. Eldore was graduating from high school. Remembering the grief for

Helen and Al he said he had learned something, and would not get serious about a girl or marriage until he had his service with Uncle Sam completed. So right after graduation, he and some friends enlisted in the Military Guard Service and left for training. He came home all relaxed about Military Service. He started dating a young lady, Audrey Stecker, from Chilton, but originally from Reedsville, but this was not to be either. We had another lovely, happy wedding. They left on their honeymoon. But they were home only a few weeks when another sudden emergency, "The Berlin Crisis," arose and Ellie was called. How much more of this could we stand? After some time Audrey went to join Ellie in camp in Oklahoma. Thank God, the Berlin Crisis was soon over. But their little girl Denise Kay was born in Oklahoma, a beautiful little blonde, and we didn't get to see her until she was several months old. Ellie and Audrey have two more children, Kurt Norman and Jeffrey John. When the crisis was over they came home, lived in rent for a while, then bought a small home. Ellie got a good job and since has built a new home.

My one prayer, "Please God, no more wars." I couldn't stand to see any more of my young men go.

When Peggy and Terry were in school and we could use a little extra cash, I got a job at Chilton Metal Products, in the factory where I did many jobs with metal such as soldering, spot welding and assembly and testing various kinds of gas tanks for small engines. It was 16 miles from home and I did not like the work there, so I quit after three years, when Ariens Company in Brillion started hiring women. I had heard of this through the grapevine so I was the first to register for a job. My job here was spot welding also and I loved it. It was incentive work and most of the time I could earn 130% or 140%. I stayed here for 10 years when I retired.

By this time both Joanne and Peggy were thinking of marriage. After playing the field for some time Joanne found her man, a handsome Dutchman, Ron VandeYacht (doesn't that name sound Irish?) and they were married April 21, 1968. They have two sons, Vincent Edward and Troy Jonathan. They also have built themselves a beautiful home in the country in the Greenleaf area.

All this while Peggy had been planning her wedding also to a fine young man, Gerald Sonnabend, from our city of Brillion and they were married June 1, 1968. Both these were elegant, fun-filled, expensive occasions, and I wondered would life ever settle down to normal for me again. Peggy and Gerry have four little girls, Anne Margaret, Karen Sue, Mary Martha and Susan Marie. They live in an attractive, large remodeled home on Main Street in Brillion.

About in 1973 Marvis purchased a cottage on the Oconto River near the village of Mountain. The cottage is on a cliff and below it is the river, beautiful and actively noisy as it flows over the rocks, so soothing to a tired mind. This proved to be very pleasant for all of us. Especially when we celebrated Father's birthday all together there. Bonfires and cookouts and sing-a-longs at night.

There are rafters on the river most of the time and our kids in inner tubes and air mattresses. At first when bedtime came, some slept in their campers, but for the rest of us it was wall to wall people.

A few years later she had a well dug, put in plumbing and hot and cold water. One small bedroom was remodeled into a full bath. Last year she added a library, two bedrooms and an open loft for a study where she paints



The family as it was in 1976.

and writes. Pure luxury and we all love and appreciate it, and love Marvis for our chance for a real vacation.

Just one more big Bohemian wedding in the Buboltz family. After graduation, Terry worked a while at the B.I.W., then decided to go to school, attended Fox Valley Technical for two years, going to school by day and working at Ariens Company on the night shift.

Then another young lady, Marlene Foytik, from the Reedsville area again, and Terry decided to quit running around and settle down and we had another very large, beautiful Bohemian wedding on July 21, 1973. They have two little boys, Chad Terrance and Bart Terrance, and at this writing, they are expecting another child as a special gift on their wedding anniversary. Maybe a beautiful dark-haired girl like her mother this time. But no matter.

After all this time I became afflicted with a terrible sickness so the kids decided to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary on the date of our 49th year. One year early.

It was really something and all a surprise to us. All our brothers and sisters, all our kids and families, many cousins, I know all our nieces and nephews were there, and many old and new friends. There was entertainment, games and food all day long.

This all took place at the new home of Joanne and Ron in the country. It will never be forgotten. Since then we have celebrated each year, only to a lesser degree and God willing, I think this year will be no different.

We are a very caring, close-knit family, celebrating birthdays, anniversaries and especially all holidays all together. Now that the whole family numbers about 45 members, the job of feeding and entertaining so many people was a little too large for me, and our home a little too small to accommodate them all here, so the children usually take turns having the parties at their homes and great parties they are, only the Buboltzs know how to do this.

This year Christmas of 1983 was really something to remember. The temperature was 24 degrees below zero on Christmas Eve, and stayed that cold for several days. This was the coldest Christmas in these parts for many years, maybe in the history of recordkeeping.

In spite of this we all attended Christmas Eve church services to see and hear our younger members of the family tell us all about this great miracle. I myself attended in a wheelchair. After church we all went to Ellie and Audrey's house for our annual family Christmas Eve party where we exchanged our Christmas gifts and much happiness.

A week later we had our annual Christmas tree-hop. Now instead of a whole caravan of cars going from home to home, this year they used a school bus owned and driven by Gerry Sonnabend. It was so much warmer and much more fun being all together. Although the driver said the young adult males were almost harder to manage than the school children. Maybe too many pretty girls and ladies on it. But all in fun.

Silent Night

Time was when Christmas Eve was such a night
Of bustle, and of secret whisperings;
Of busy doings, and of packages bright
With Christmas ribbons; so many things
To hide from prying eyes, that always kept
Close watch upon us — and the things to do
Were endless. While excited youngsters slept,
We trimmed the tree and filled the stockings, too.
Now, with the children grown, the place is still.
The kitchen clock is heard throughout the house,
And we sit here beside the fire until
The clock strikes nine. Time creeps along. We rouse
For bed. The embers crackle as we leave —
No house should be this still on Christmas Eve.

End of a Dynasty

Two weeks ago on May 20, 1984, we attended the confirmation and graduation of a grandson, Jeffrey Jon Buboltz, from Trinity Lutheran School. This marks the end of a dynasty. For 47 consecutive years we have had children and grandchildren with our name of Buboltz attending and graduating from this school, never skipping even one year.

In September 1937, Almond Jr. started in first grade at Trinity Lutheran School, then came Eugene, Marvis, Eldore, Joanne, Peggy Sue, Terry, Shelley, Rick, Kim, Doug, Scott, Todd, Dan, Mike, Denise, Kurt and now in 1984, 47 years later, Jeff brings it to an end.

There are grandchildren and great-grandchildren still attending that school and God willing, there will be more for at least ten years, but their last name is not Buboltz. We are so proud of them all.

Scott's Illness

We have many memories of our grandchildren growing up, some anxious moments and some moments of laughter and happiness. I will relate only a few.

Some of us had gone to Marvis' cottage for the fourth of July. So much excitement and fun on the river and at night fireworks and singing around the campfire. At midnight, Eugene announced it was bedtime. The kids protested a bit but no use, they went to their camper and we went into the cabin. A few minutes later Gene came in and said Scott was very sick and in great pain.

We called for help and were told to take him to a hospital in Antigo 35 miles to the west. After an examination there, they told Gene to take him back to a Green Bay hospital about 80 miles to the southeast. They told him it must be attended to within four hours. It just seemed to get worse for weeks and in August he was scheduled for a very serious operation. We all worried and prayed and so did many good people of Brillion.

We had planned to attend a wedding in Milwaukee on that day, but I was so undecided and scared, but Scott and his parents told us to go. We went, but I was troubled and each time I found myself laughing at some joke or story, the thought of Scott would enter my mind, I would say a silent prayer, and I worried.

We went with Bird and George and after the wedding they dropd us off at home and left for their home. I hurried to the bedroom, kneeled down and said another prayer. Then I called Janet (Scott's mother) to find out how it all went. She said after 11 hours in surgery, he was holding his own, but very, very ill. Now after four years, he has a clean bill of health, all cured and the picture of health but for more than two years, it was so frightening. Don't ever tell me our prayers go unheard.

TWELVE

Though Mother and Father are gone, some of our brothers still own that land in the woods in Langlade County. They had planted the cleared farmland with little trees. They leveled off the hill where the house once stood and landscaped the whole area.

The barn was torn down to provide lumber, etc., to build a big cottage we like to call "Emmer Chalet," all beautifully furnished, even a flush toilet. The place is used by the younger relatives and some older ones for snowmobiling and skiing and hunting and for getting away from it all and really resting.

But each summer we all gather for happy reunions to remember the fun and good times we all had here. Only us older ones remember the hard times and we don't talk about that.

The snow sports are so much different in 1984 than they were in the twenties. We always had plenty of friends and relatives to play the many games and fun in the summer, but in winter we were pretty much on our own, but no matter, we enjoyed winter just as much with our homemade paraphernalia.

Many barrels were available then because so many things in the stores came bulk in barrels, such as crackers, pickles, apples, etc. Pappy would get these barrels and take them apart and make skis for us. He would use the staves, then sand them smooth, then use harness straps for over the instep and behind the heel, and he would fasten these on with screws. They worked just fine. The smaller kids used old dishpans for sliding downhill and sometimes us older kids did too. We never had the better more modern things, so we enjoyed what we had, we never missed the real things, because we thought we had the best, and so much fun.



Emmer Chalet in the woods.

Now my story has come full circle, ending where it started so many years ago. We have four lovely daughters-in-law, all originally from the Reedsville-Grimms area where our ancestors started in life. So my story will end only a few miles from where it all started in Grimms although it traveled over 150 miles through the 75 years to make it interesting.

Aunt Mary Tikalsky, we loved you very much, but you made a bad mistake with your prediction, mentioned in the story's beginning. You were wrong. We have not been punished, but rather richly blessed with seven children, four daughters-in-law, two sons-in-law, 20 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, all bringing us so much joy.

We thank you Lord!



The Emmer family as of 1982. (Front row, Lauretta, Vernon, Robert; back row, Harvey, Leona, Bernadine, Lillian, Wilbur, Margaret, Lorraine, Donald.)

You have missed a lot and never really lived unless you have . . .

Owned and worked a team of mules and milked your cows by the light of a kerosene lantern, heard a rooster crow at daylight, gathered eggs, burned wood in a cook stove, carried out ashes and drunk pure spring water on a hot summer's day.

Driven a team of horses down a dusty country lane, with indigo buntings on the 4th of July flitting across the track before you, and a hawk soaring high in the wind.

Owned a Model-T Ford, drunk moonshine and beat hell out of a neighborhood bully.

Skinny dipped, picked wild berries, gone barefoot all summer, stubbed your big toe, worn black sateen bloomers, long black cotton stockings, spats or knickers. Been chased by a bull and beat him to the fence just by inches.

I did, I know!



**Our wedding picture — July 8, 1930.
Bird Emmer was our bridesmaid. Art Buboltz was best man.**

Our Golden Wedding Day

Our fifty-fourth. Love, we made it,
although the going was rough;
Starting in depression years
when the times were really tough.

A stove, a table and two chairs
were nearly all we had;
A pillow, blanket and a bed,
the times were really bad.

But through the sorrows, ills and tears,
which beset us on the way;
Our love endured throughout the years,
grew stronger each and every day.

And now our loving children,
whom we prayed for every day,
Have honored us throughout the years,
and on this, Our Golden Wedding Day.

— July 8, 1980 —

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