Foreword

We are the nineteen grandchildren of Joseph N. Moonan and Ethel Klug Moonan. Our birth years range from 1939 to 1961, and our residences range from Connecticut to Oregon. We share countless fond memories of childhood hours spent at our grandparents' home, the big brick house at 610 North State Street, in Waseca, Minnesota.

Upon the sale in 2011 of our grandparents' home to non-Moonans for only the second time in its 95-year history, we decided to collect some of our photos and nostalgic memories of the house. When the house left the Moonan family for the first time, in 1964, the oldest of us was not yet old enough to be nostalgic, and the youngest was not yet old enough to form memories.

The Building of The House

Our great grandparents, John Moonan and Rosemary Breen Moonan, built the house in 1916. Dorothy told us when we were young that John, her grandfather, had stood in front of his new, brick house on State Street and said, “Imagine! Shanty Irish building a house like this!”

John and Rosemary were born in Waseca County. John was elected mayor of Waseca in 1897, county attorney in 1899, and state senator in 1907. Rosemary graduated from Waseca High School, and taught there for some time. She is described in Child's *History of Waseca County* as "a woman of marked ability and force of character."

The first sheet of the drawings for the house is dated September 15, 1915, and identifies Peter Moe of Minneapolis as the architect. Moe was born in Norway in about 1880, and immigrated in 1905. He died in 1960 in Arlington, Virginia, after having served as an architect with the Treasury Department, a very good political appointment in those days.

Before the brick house was built, the frame house that occupied the lot was moved on horse-drawn rollers to its current location at 623 Second Street N.W. (Until 1928, Second Street was known as First Street, and State Street was known as Second Street.)

John and Rosemary and their children lived in the frame house *before* its move. Joe, Ethel, and our mothers, the five "Moonan Girls" (born from 1913 to 1920), lived in the frame house *after* its move. After World War II, the frame house became the home of Joe and Ethel's oldest daughter, Margie, and her husband and daughter (Joe and Francie), and our generation came to know it as "Margie's house."

Architecture

We are lucky to have an architect among our number. Pat remembers: *I can with certainty place one origin of my interest in architecture to the house. I vividly recall lying on my back on the couch in the living room, perhaps at age four or five, my legs up*

the back, most of me on the cushion, looking up at the beamed ceiling. My thought at the time was how much more interesting it would be to walk on that ceiling rather than on a flat floor.

Pat gives us this look at the house from an architect's viewpoint: The Moonan house, for *the time of its design and construction in 1915-1916, had an unusual mix of elements both innovative and conservative. It shows certain elements of English Tudor Revival (the symmetrical half-timbered gable ends on the street facade, most prominently), a traditionalist historic style popular in the first couple of decades of the twentieth century. At the same time it shares features with the then-popular, more progressive Prairie School, which had originated in Chicago around 1900 and rapidly spread to other areas of the Middle West; the large central fireplace and wide openings between the more public rooms of the house, for example. The two tendencies were both rooted in the Arts & Crafts movement which had begun in 19th century England as a protest against badly-made mass-produced houses and decorative arts.*

The best of the Prairie School and Tudor Revival houses shared a penchant for fine building materials, used in elegantly straightforward, relatively unornamented, ways, and arranged those materials over a technically sophisticated basic structure and mechanical systems. The Moonan house overall is characterized by exactly that formula. Quarter-sawn stained oak paneling and trim, high-fired decorative ceramic tiles, Ludowici celadon terra-cotta roofing tiles, and so on, were combined with behind-the-scenes technical elements such as a long-span built-up truss to carry the heavy rafters required by the roofing tiles. The oak benches with square-slatted fronts covering cast-iron radiators are another such hybrid.

More subtly than the architectural style, the use of fine materials, and the technical sophistication, the choice of basic room arrangement exhibits the same mindset of combining elements of traditional formality with planning for a changing world. While there is a formal double "front door" into the living room, directly on axis with the fireplace, it is clear that it was never intended to be the house's main entry. Instead the strategy was to make a front layer, a balanced set of three rooms across the street frontage—library, living room, sun room—with their connecting wide doorways arranged on an axis "en suite," but then to actually enter the house <u>behind</u> that layer, coming into a second, back layer of spaces—entry, telephone room, stair, dining room, kitchen—which, in contrast with the first, are quite disconnected from each other. It's a clever and unusual plan, in short, not at all a common arrangement or type. (Frank Lloyd Wright, an adept planner, designed a house with a similar arrangement of rooms in 1906.) The likeliest explanation is that the plan was conceived to deal with carriage or automobile drop-offs at that paradoxical rear-layer front door. Further evidence that vehicles were being considered is the additional pair of doors opening into the entry; these look to have been intended to move furniture more easily straight in and out of the house from the height of a truck bed.

Much more could and should be written about this fine, memorable, building—and its yard and garage, too. Seldom do formality and intimacy, reserve and warmth, sophistication and simple delight, come together as they do in the old Moonan place.

And regarding the garage, Pat adds: *Interesting historic moment, 1915-16. This would have been the first decade in which more people built garages than stables, and this was clearly a garage. But there were still doubts, and even legal proscriptions, about having gasoline close to the main house, let alone in an attached structure. Hence the distance from the house, otherwise unaccountable in Minnesota's climate. Also notable is that it's a TWO CAR garage in a time when few families had even one automobile.*

The garage doors faced south. You entered the driveway from State Street, drove past the south side of the house, then turned left (north) beyond the huge oak to enter the garage. In addition to the two parking stalls, the garage had a large room to the left (west) of the car area, which looked (at least to a child) like a horse stall. That room had a divided door (up/down) like a stable door. The two main garage doors were very tall. They were constructed in three sections, 3-to-4 inches thick. They hung on rollers, and slid to the side, barn-door style.

While John and Rosemary Lived in the House

When John and Rosemary Moonan moved into the new brick house in 1916, their seven children ranged in age from about five to 26. The oldest, our Grandpa Joe, was already married and not living with his parents. Some of the other older children (Kathleen, Grace, and Helen) may have been away at college part of the time, but, in general, the "Boys' Room" and the "Daughters' Room" (as shown on the architect's Second Floor Plan) were presumably well occupied.

One of their granddaughters (one of the six children of John and Rosemary's daughter Kathleen Moonan Fitzgerald), Kate Fitzgerald Terrien (born in 1924), shares her recollections from visiting the house from about 1927 to 1935: *The house was big and elegant. The property in back had a big orchard and extended back to the Castors' house on the other side of the block. . . . . The main entrance, with double doors, faced the street but was not used much. The stoop outside, by the driveway and the sun room entrance to the house, had a concrete slab so that people could get out of a carriage or car and directly enter the house; after dropping off passengers, the carriage or car could be driven to the barn in the back. Later, probably early 1920's, they had an automobile. Grandma (Rosemary) had a maid named Pauline, who also drove the car; the two drove to Rochester when Grandma had her cancer treatments at the Mayo Clinic; they stayed at our house before she died. . . . . There was a large sofa facing the big fireplace in the living room. Grandpa (John) would lie on the couch for a nap after lunch before going back to the office. . . . . Grandma (Rosemary) was a disciplinarian but never mean. She had reasons to discipline: For example, my brother Pat got into her car and released the brake, sending her car down the driveway into a tree. Also, during play in the 1930's, we kids would pull the cushions off the sofa. One time when Sheila was about four (and had already broken her collar bones four times), she was wearing a large wooden T-brace on*

her back as support for a broken collar bone, and someone (probably a brother!) was chasing her around the first floor. She tripped over a cushion and re-broke the collar bone. . . . . Grown-ups sat at the dining room table for meals, and a special table was put up nearby where the children sat. . . . . There usually was a bridge game going on in the sun room, many windows - the brightest room in the house. . . . . The library was fascinating, with books to the ceiling. . . . . The narrow back stairway from the kitchen to the second floor, for the maid's use, was a neat thing for kids. . . . . There was a sleeping porch upstairs over the driveway where we kids slept. I remember looking down, at a young age, from the balcony outside the sleeping porch (maybe through slats) and seeing the car below. . . . . There were window seats on the landing of the stairs from the first to the second floor. . . . . Grandma's bedroom on the second floor had an entry area that had a settee and lots of piles of newspapers and magazines and embroidered pillows. . . . . The third floor was only used for storage.

Kate's sister Sheila Fitzgerald (born in 1931) adds: *Pictures show that Mom and Dad's wedding reception (September 19, 1919) was in the Moonan house. Uncle Joe's daughters Margie and Mary were flower girls.*

John Moonan died suddenly of a heart attack on November 23, 1922. Rosemary lived at the house until her death, in Rochester, while visiting her daughter Kathleen, on July 31, 1935.

Our Memories

For the 19 cousins, our brick house story starts with Joe and Ethel, our grandparents. Ethel Klug was born in Omaha, Nebraska, and grew up in Denver, Colorado, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She met Joe Moonan through mutual friends, when Ethel attended a teachers' college in Mankato. They married on November 12, 1912, and settled in Waseca to begin our chapter of this story. Grandpa Joe was fond of saying that by the time he was 30 he had five daughters, no teeth, and no hair.

After Rosemary's death, Joe and Ethel settled into the house. We were surprised to learn, after we were adults, that Grandma and Grandpa were *not* enthusiastic about the move. The house was much too big (by that time, only the youngest of their five daughters, Joan, lived at home) and too expensive for their taste, but Joe's siblings pressured Joe and Ethel to keep the house in the family. Joan told her children that Ethel cried when she found out that the move to the brick house was definite. She loved the white frame house (which we think of as "Margie's house") and disliked the brick house. The heavy drapes separating the rooms made the house dark, and the first thing they did was tear out all the drapes. They wanted to replace the worn carpet in the living room, but couldn't afford it. Joan said that at first she missed the old house, and felt a bit lost in the big mansion. Joan also talked about what it was like to be alone in the house. It made a lot of scary noises and there was no place that you could sit without having either a door or a window behind you. She said it was a spooky place to be alone.

Some of our collective memories of the house come from stories our parents told us of happenings before we were born. One such story is retold by Marilynn: *Grandpa and Grandma decided to move to the Waseca Hotel for the winter months of 1940 - 1941 so they wouldn't have to heat the brick house. It might have seemed an unnecessary move on the morning of November 11, 1940, since the outside thermometer was pushing 60 degrees. Mom, before her marriage, worked at the IRS in St. Paul, and was in the habit of taking the train to Owatonna on Saturdays after work to spend the weekend in Waseca. Dad would pick her up in Owatonna. November 11 was a Monday, so I'm not certain why Mom was heading home… maybe she felt the barometer falling. In any case, she was wearing light fall clothing for the train ride. By the time Dad picked her up, the storm had begun; by the time they arrived at the Waseca Hotel, it was raging. It was an intense low pressure system that caused temperatures to plummet and winds to howl. Lots and lots of snow.*

For some reason Mary was alone in Owatonna and decided to take the bus to Waseca to be with the family. Along the way, the bus driver picked up stranded people, among them a young woman from South Dakota who was nearly frozen. Mary brought the young woman to the Waseca Hotel, where they discovered she was the daughter of one of Grandma's good friends in South Dakota. The young woman thawed out and, from Mom's telling, they all had a good time being snowed in at the Waseca Hotel.

The stormed dissipated the next day. When the family walked up North State Street to take stock of the brick house, they found that the front doors had blown open and there was snow as far back as the staircase.

Also not within the memories of most of us are the weddings of the Moonan Girls. Photos help fill in the blanks.

All five of the Moonan Girls lived all or some part of their married lives in Waseca or Owatonna, so most of us had the good fortune of growing up with our grandparents as a steady presence in our lives. Thirteen of the nineteen of us also managed to be born in Waseca, not, for the most part, because the nuclear family resided in Waseca on our birth dates but because our mothers chose to return to their parents, their sisters, and their hometown doctor (Orville Swenson) before giving birth. The brick house had a welcoming, revolving door, with our moms, our dads, and all of the babies coming and going. Grandma must have been an *expert* at newborn care. So, from our earliest days, our vision of the brick house emerged as home, as refuge, and as the resort of the transitional, the emerging, the celebrating, and the kids checking in for a dose of love.

But some of us had more "quality years" in the brick house than others. The Friedel, Walbran, and Hough children spent all their childhood years, at least until after Grandma's death, in Waseca or Owatonna. The Senn children lived away from Minnesota until their family moved back to Waseca in 1952. And the Pinnell children, already disadvantaged by their late births, also missed out on some wonderful memory-building years by moving away from Waseca in late 1956, when Tony was only a baby and before Peggy and Mary were born.

Francie remembers the day the Pinnells left for Missouri: *I watched your car pull out of the brick house driveway with my mom and Grandma Moonan. Then we went into the house and Grandma cried. She wondered what would happen to you without her.*

Too Young for Memories

Mary, the youngest of us, says, *Sadly, I have no memories of the brick house. There is one photo of Grandma holding me as a baby in her lap. It was taken shortly before Grandma died. I think she was sitting in a chair near the bottom of the stairs. I have many happy memories of what I call Aunt Margie's house. What I would give for that purple bathroom!*

Tony and Peggy are in the same boat. (On the bright side, those three youngsters can probably still remember where they left their car keys.)

As Pete says, the younger cousins' memories *are more feelings than well-formed images. Trips to Minnesota were always fun and special, and my memories are wrapped up so much with the people who were there. All the aunts were kind and warm, and the uncles always joked around and kidded with us. My clearest mental image is of running into the house when we first arrived, to meet Grandma walking from the kitchen, drying her hands on her apron and welcoming us with a big smile.*

And Robby remembers laughter: *No one could make little Joanie, our Mom, laugh like Grandpa Joe Moonan did. The worries of raising seven kids went away when Grandpa made her laugh. Hearing his voice and seeing his mischievous smile, Mom just giggled like she was eight years old.*

First Memories of Older Cousins

At the other end of the spectrum, some of the older cousins have very clear first memories of the house. Jack says, *My first distinct memory in the house was the palpable upset of everyone in the house on hearing the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor, as broadcast over the great domed radio just to the left of the entry to the library.*

And Francie adds, *My earliest memory of the house was Halloween night, so I would have been two years old. My mother and I had walked over to the Gahler/Gallagher house to trick or treat. We were walking home when Grandpa Joe swooped up in his big Dodge and told my mom to get in—my dad was on the phone and his troop ship had docked in New York. We hustled home and went into the phone closet to talk with him.*

Memories Shared by the Middle of the Pack

Those of us in the middle of the pack share many of the same memories of the house. So let's mentally scamper through the house, to see what we remember.

First, up the front steps. But, if it's winter, watch out! There's an enormous icicle hanging from the front corner that (our mothers warn us) might fall.

Front Entry Room

Then through the sunny front entry room, where Grandma displayed her carnival glass. She said it developed color from the sun. This is also where, shortly before Christmas in 1944, when Aunt Margie didn't know exactly where Uncle Joe was fighting, the mailman delivered a Nazi helmet—just threw it into the front entry room. It was from Uncle Joe, so Margie would know he was still out there somewhere behind the German lines.

Telephone Closet

Then past the telephone closet that seemed so large, filled with furs. Joe remembers picking up the phone to call Francie one day, and the nice operator asked, "Are you visiting your grandmother today, Joey?" And do you remember Great-Grandpa John's black shillelagh that was always leaning against the wall?

Third Floor

Then up the staircase, past the window seat at the landing, all the way up to the third floor. The first room to the south, labeled "Chamber" and "Alcove" on the architect's plan, was Joan's bedroom when she was a teenager. Joan's bed was built in under the window. There was a little ventilation window between Joan's room and the big attic. It spooked her so she nailed it shut.

There was also a bathroom on the third floor. When the Senns lived in the house in 1952, Mart said he'd turn on the bath water full blast, sit down on a chair and read *Time* magazine cover to cover, and, by that time, the tub would be full.

And Jack recalls the summer he worked for Emmet at the Experiment Station, sleeping in "Joan's room" in the front window bed, and soaking forever in the deep, deep tub in the third floor bathroom.

Then to the big attic. **Annie remembers** the hours of hunting through beautiful old clothes in the trunks in the big attic and descending (tripping down) the staircase, adorned in long pearls, flapper dresses, high heels, and wonderful hats.

Do you remember the portrait of the Indian Chief, in full head dress, in the big attic? Grandma told us that she was the daughter of an Indian Chief, and we *believed* her. After all, Grandma had real artifacts (Indianhead pennies, arrowheads, corn grinding stones…) in her little museum on the wooden radiator cover in "Joan's room."

Mmmmmmm. The scent of the cedar closet in the third floor hallway.

There was also a smaller attic where Grandma kept stones and shells in boxes for our inspection. A lot of old military uniforms were stored there, and a couple of parachutes Francie's dad brought back from a captured German supply train.

Joe (with Jack's help) pushed the big WWII parachute over the third floor stair railing. It was a long drop. The younger cousins got a bit dizzy just *looking* allll the way down from the third floor. The parachute didn't open, and our mothers panicked when they heard the thump, because they thought a child was attached. We made many small parachutes, some with clothes-pin soldiers, which worked perfectly. And we dropped paper airplanes, trying to get them to flip horizontal at the right moment so they'd fly into the living room and elicit a startled "what was that?" from one of the grown-ups.

Remember the central vacuum cleaning system that had been installed when the house was built? There were little brass flaps in the baseboards, to which the hose attached. One of us would be on the third floor, the other in the basement. We'd lift the little flaps and *WHISPER* to each other. A treasure for any child-spy. But if you were not careful to discharge first, you could get a static electricity shock to the lips when speaking through the tubes, courtesy of the wool carpet.

Jack remembers Mrs. Brown *using* the old "plug in" vacuum cleaner, from the tube opening under the hall table due west of the telephone closet. The system regularly became stopped up with great gobs of lint.

How about the "secret passages" that Joe discovered in the attic? Joan also used to talk about a "dead space" that wasn't part of any bedroom, but that you could see into somehow. On the Third Floor Plan, you can see that the walled off spaces are basically what was left over after the dormers were plugged into the front of the house. On the back, you had to go atop the hall ceiling from the big attic at the center (it's open to the underside of the roof) to see down into the two rear walled-off spaces.

As long as we're re-living our spooky memories: Fran used to say that she saw the ghost of Rosemary Moonan coming down the stairs from the third floor—a sort of benevolent presence, just checking on everybody. Or maybe not a ghost, just a scent? Says Reenie: *Mom talked about sitting on the stairway during some event (it might have been Rosemary Moonan's wake) and smelling roses, and she said she smelled roses in the house other times, but I don't remember her saying she actually* ***saw*** *a ghost.*

Second Floor

Now, in our imaginations, we'll scoot down the staircase to the second floor. Grandma's bedroom was the "Boys' Room," as labeled on the architect's drawings, and Grandpa's bedroom was "Mr. Moonan's Room."

The radiator bench next to Grandpa's bed was always covered with train schedules. He'd eagerly work up a route for you, if you asked. He subscribed to a great railroad magazine full of tales of runaway trains, trains racing through forest fires, steaming wrecks in ravines, trains in deep snow, *etc*.

On the door frame in Grandpa's bathroom were many of our measurements, taken regularly. And the sink in the main bathroom had a third spigot in addition to the standard hot and cold: a tall, curved spigot labeled "ice," which brought hard water to the second floor for drinking. Sheila remembers the iron-rich smell and taste. The water softener "capsule" was in the laundry room, near the vegetable cellar. (Was there a hard water spigot in the kitchen, as well?)

Jack lived at the brick house for about six months after his baby brother Joe was born in 1941, and off-and-on for the next two years. The ante-room to Grandpa's bedroom was the first "stay over" room for a grandchild, because it was as close as possible to both grandparents. Sometime during WWII, Jack was supposed to be sleeping in that room when Grandma caught him lifting the blackout shades and risking being caught by the blackout wardens who walked around looking for people recklessly displaying lights the enemy could bomb. Jack was looking for the warden. (Another Indian tale?) As we got older, we moved from the ante-room to the impressive middle bedroom (Sheila always felt like a princess when she slept in that room), and then to the southwest bedroom, lighter and airier.

Francie and Margie lived at the brick house from the spring of 1944 until late fall of 1945, most likely using the southwest second floor bedroom. Francie's dad returned from Europe in November, 1945, and all three Friedels lived at the brick house (probably in the middle second floor bedroom) until they moved to the white frame house on Second Street N.W. ("Margie's house").

Fran and the three Hough children lived at the brick house while Ricky was activated (but not deployed overseas) during the Korean War. Dick remembers a curfew whistle (at 10:00 pm?) that would awaken and scare the wits out of him when he was sleeping in the middle bedroom.

The five Senns lived at the brick house for about a half year after they moved back to Waseca so Mart could join Grandpa's law practice after Grandpa had a stroke. During that time, Fred was quarantined for scarlet fever with the Friedels at Margie's house, and the rest of the Senn family was quarantined at the brick house. Francie remembers Grandma braiding Barbie's hair in front of the mirror in the south bedroom. Barbie remembers sleeping in the little alcove next to the south sleeping porch after she and Marilynn had tonsillectomies. And the smell of cloves in the closets. Grandma used to completely cover apples with cloves, and tuck them in her closets to keep things smelling fresh. The Senns moved to their new house the day Eisenhower was elected President, November 4, 1952.

Linda remembers bats and tennis rackets. Once when Marilynn sat for the Pinnell kids at the big house (always a welcome gig, not just because Joan paid at a piece-work rate), long after bedtime (and far into the night) bats flew out of the attic and all over the house. We chased them around with a broom and a tennis racket. The bats escaped. (Mark now has that tennis racket. By coincidence, the name of the racket is "The Bat," and the insignia on the racket is dated 1916.)

Kitty remembers Grandma teaching her how to knit, sitting in a bedroom with sun coming in the window. (But Kitty never has gotten the mitten thumbs right.)

Remember the wispy curtains blowing at the windows (and later relegated to the trunk in the big attic for dress up)?

Remember Grandma's clip earrings on her dressing table? Once Francie and Sheila made aluminum foil crowns and Sheila used Grandma's jewelry for decorations. Grandma was not happy.

Grandma also displayed little statues and knick-knacks in the bedrooms. Like the friendly "guardian angel with children," and the spooky life-sized Baby Jesus statue in the small room off Grandpa's bedroom. He made us all a little nervous.

Did you know that Grandma painted the face on the Baby Jesus statue? Grandma was an accomplished china painter. Check for her initials on any painted china you have from the house.

The sunny sleeping porch was the playroom. There were never toys scattered around the house. (In fact, were there ever *any* toys in the house?) There was a row of school desks in the playroom, so we played school there. And some blocks that Pat calls "Froebel Blocks." Mom said that Grandma was trained to be a kindergarten teacher, and that's why she was so good at entertaining us. Robby remembers that the teacher-Grandma could tell a children's story with mesmerizing precision, and always had a private, gentle word for each grandchild. And do you remember how she corrected us if we said we were *done* doing something? She'd say, "Cookies are done. Children are finished."

First Floor

Now let's go down another flight of fancy—to the first floor. Remember stone school - played on these stairs? The "teacher" hid a stone in a hand and the "students" had to guess which hand. The right guess meant we could go up a step.

Dining Room

A right turn takes us into the dining room. Grandma and Grandpa had ongoing canasta tournaments on the dining room table. They played at noon when Grandpa came home for lunch, and Francie and Sheila, if they were visiting, played at the other end of the

table. Grandma and Grandpa kept a running tab of their scores, and Grandma was always ahead.

For some years, Mrs. Brown (the only African-American woman in Waseca) helped Grandma with the housework. Having been raised in the South, Mrs. Brown didn't think it proper to have lunch with Mrs. Moonan in the dining room, despite Grandma having asked Mrs. Brown to join her. So, acknowledging Mrs. Brown's sense of propriety, Grandma ate in the dining room while Mrs. Brown ate in the kitchen, and the two carried on their conversations in raised voices through the butler's pantry.

There was a buzzer under the carpet under the table, originally meant to summon the kitchen help. When Jack *s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-d* his leg to buzz it, Mrs. Brown hustled in from the kitchen. Grandma and Mrs. Brown must have reached some accord that gave Jack one buzzer-call per visit, because the rest of us can't remember any use of the buzzer during *real* dinners.

Grandma displayed her collection of cast iron trivets, with their unique iron-work designs, on the plate rail along the south wall. During the later years of WWII, when Civilian Defense workers went door to door to collect metal for the war effort ("Junk helps make guns, tanks, ships for our fighting men!"), Grandma gave up her trivet collection, as well as her collection of flatirons, for the war. (Grandpa also did his part, tending his Victory Garden on the lots behind Margie's house.)

Reenie loved the wonderful built-in cabinets and buffet, filled with beautiful china, pressed glass, and other antique glassware. Grandma knew that Joe was not a good saver, but that he would buy her anything she wanted. So she collected antique glassware, intending it to be her savings. Grandma came home with some little treasure wrapped in brown paper from almost every trip she took with Grandpa. Grandpa did the driving, but did not go into the shop. He was happiest when the shop was in town, close to a coffee shop where he could read the local newspaper and talk with the the assembled regulars. In a million ways, Joe and Ethel seemed to fit perfectly together. Under Grandma and Grandpa's reign, that house was such a warm, loving, and comfortable place, because they loved each other deeply, were great friends and companions.

Joe: *One of my sweetest memories is of visiting Grandma and Grandpa overnight, with Jack. Grandma tucked us into bed in the southwest bedroom. Giant bed. We ate breakfast off Blue Willow plates (I now have the platter), for which Grandma had a story of a failed Chinese courtship. There was fresh orange juice in the ruby red glasses. It was magic. Grandpa came down, suited up for work, but somehow out of order. A jacket mis-buttoned or a shirt tail loose. Grandma tidied him up and tied his shoes. It was so loving. Then Grandpa Joe spread corn and seed on the picnic table for the critters. Jack and I liked to kneel on the warm oak radiator bench in the dining room to watch, as Ethel pointed out the bullying jays.*

Many an hour was spent on the warm dining room window seat, watching the squirrels and blue jays going after their treats. . . . .Linda remembers the organ on the west wall of

the dining room, with knobs you could pull and pedals you could push. . . . .And Sheila recalls draping the WWII parachute over the dining room table and crawling under it, like a big tent. . . . . Dick reminds us that Grandma Ethel's walk-in china closet was off-limits for hide and seek.

Now let's step through the corner of the living room, past the grand piano on the right, and into the library.

Library

The library, with its pretty glass doors, had a hint of a hush about it. A heavy oak library table dominated the room. . . . Grandma's collection of bride's baskets was kept high on top of the cabinets. The late afternoon sun shone through the colored glass to produce a rainbow of colors. . . . The glass cabinet doors would stick in the summer and come open suddenly, scaring us that they would break. . . . .Grandma used to challenge us to find the one leaded glass panel that was different, due to a repair (north wall, lower right). . . . At least one among us felt smug that she could open the small drawers under the glass cabinets to find crayons and paper.

The shelves were *loaded* with books. And there was a special children's section with fairy books; some strangely off-brand, off-beat boys' adventure books, like *The Motor Boys in Mexico*; a series of books about Constance Dunlop, an early woman detective; and a ten-volume set of *Our Wonder World*, each thick volume with a theme ("The World and Its Peoples," "Adventure and Imagination"), dating from around 1918. There was also a series of small leather-bound books of poems (Robert Burns and others) that *seemed* like they should be children's books because they were so tiny, but weren't.

Mark remembers that on one of his last visits to the Moonan library, when he was in about seventh grade, he came across a book by Fred Allen, an American humorist and radio personality from the 1940's, containing this repartee: "Why would anyone ever want to split an atom?" And the reply, "Well, maybe you have a friend."

Living Room

Now into the living room. Do you remember Grandpa Joe playing a ragtime version of Happy Birthday on the piano? And Grandma wetting the tip of her finger and slowly moving it around the rim of the ruby crystal bowl on top of the piano to make it sing?

The great, great big—taller than any child—dome-shaped radio was in the northwest corner, and the older cousins remember Sunday night gatherings around it.

The famous Dog's Head Chair! It was always a scramble to claim sitting rights, held for only a few seconds before being unseated by another sibling or cousin.

Remember popcorn and root beer in front of the fireplace? . . . . And how terribly hot the steam radiators were? . . . . And the push-button light switches? . . . . And the soft light brown fuzzy walls? . . . . And the purple so-tactile drapes off the living room door? No child, not one, could resist wrapping up in the soft drapes and then twisting. As this was a strain on the wooden rings and their connection to the top, such play would initiate an immediate reprimand from mothers' voices. So we learned the rules.

Let's try to recall the framed art hanging on the living room walls. The Audubon woodpecker print hung on the north wall behind the piano, and we remember John Moonan's portrait. But where was *The Angelus*, by Jean Francois Millet? And Frans Hals' *Laughing Cavalier* (we knew him as "Hal")?

Sun Room

Now moving south through the living room into the sun room, we remember Grandma sitting and knitting, and we envision stacks of National Geographics on the radiator benches. And the ***not***-so-organized piles of newspapers. Jack remembers riding with Grandpa to the railroad depots twice a day, to one depot to get the Chicago *Tribune* and to the other to get either the St. Louis *Post Dispatch* or the Kansas City *Star*. The Twin Cities' papers came on the bus.

Grandpa's way of reading the newspaper was brisk. He quickly read through each section, left it turned inside out, and tossed it.

One Sunday morning, Grandma went to the third floor by the stair rail, threw the newspaper up in the air, and let the pages land wherever they happened to fall. Later she told Grandpa: "Just once I wanted you to read the newspaper the way it is when I read it."

Back Yard

Now let's go out through the rear foyer, with its musty, nutty smell, where the baskets of birdseed and nuts were kept for spreading on the picnic table in wintertime. Remember the back yard?

Raking in the fall. The huge pile of leaves, south, beyond the driveway, and the *bon fire*. Now that was exciting, and the smell of burning leaves is now an EPA-outlawed Proustian impossibility.

One time, some of the cousins were swinging a rake to knock chestnuts from the tree to gather next to the leaf pile. When Dick finally had his turn with the rake, he lost control and whacked Annie in the head. He was certain he had killed her, and felt terrible. . . . Dick also fondly recalls the time his big cousin Jack was doing work for Joe and Ethel in the back yard, cutting down a fruit tree, and Jack *asked* Dick to help him. Jack did all the heavy work but Dick got to shove the logs down the chute and help stack them in the cellar.

In the winter, on the picnic table where there were blue jays and cardinals and chickadees, there were also fox squirrels. Big ones. Bigger than the gray squirrels. Fred, did you sit on the picnic table and get squirrels to eat out of your hand?

Lilies of the valley and jack-in-the-pulpits in the spring.

Root beer and doughnuts in the yard in the summer. And Fourth of July picnics. One year we had fireworks and sparklers, and Margie was really worried someone was going to get hurt.

Grandma had a beautiful old-fashioned flower garden by the back driveway and Grandpa had that big vegetable garden behind the garage, plus his many fruit trees, which went way to the back of the property, where we had a swing set.

Remember climbing the apple tree at the back of the property? And trying to find a way to investigate the second floor of the garage? There were interesting things stored up there. It was a place we were NOT supposed to go. But some of us did. It had the dustiest attic.

Let's head back toward the house, circling north past the door we exited, and entering the door near the kitchen. (OK, Dick, you may run around front to check the sign posted on the telephone pole to see if the Waseca Braves are playing tonight.)

Kitchen

The room off the kitchen was like a cold porch. The stairs from the kitchen to the basement were mysterious, like a secret stairway in a Hardy Boys novel. They were very steep and we were not supposed to use them. . . . . Joan remembers tramps coming to the kitchen door and being fed sandwiches during the Depression. Jack also experienced that a few times during the war years. . . . Remember Grandma using the mangle in the kitchen, and the fragrance of fresh, laundered sheets? That mangle was a fascinating apparatus to see at work.

Because kids were generally kept out of the kitchen, that's the part of the house the younger cousins remember least, but the older ones can give us a guided tour:

The kitchen was light yellow. North wall: high windows, about six-feet wide. Great white porcelain double sink with dish drains on both sides, centered on the wall. . . . . White porcelain/metal table in the center of the kitchen, extending from the left end of the dish drain. (Fred points out that, if potato salad was on the menu, there were *two* bowls of it on this table: one big bowl of potato salad with onions, and one small bowl with*out* onions; Grandpa was allergic to onions.) Two white, painted kitchen chairs. . . . . West wall: far left, the door to the basement. Kelvinator refrigerator to the right of the door. When the mangle was in the kitchen, it must have been to the right of the refrigerator. . . . . South wall: centered, a white porcelain/metal storage cabinet, five to six feet wide, with

bottom storage, counter, and upper storage. Most pots and pans were there. . . . . East wall: The large white oven/stove was centered on the east wall. The stove had 6 burners, or 4 burners plus a griddle, under a liftable cover. Far right, the bi-swing door to the butler's pantry (sort of an airlock between the kitchen and the dining room), which you walked through, first straight and then a hard right, to enter the dining room through another bi-swing door. . . . . The butler's pantry was lined with wood cabinets, and had a window to the back yard—too high for a child to see out. . . . . There were always round pink peppermints, Grandpa's favorite, in a tin in the butler's pantry. . . .

While we're in the kitchen, how about a piece of Sunshine Cocoa Cake? The special ingredient was acquired by having a grandchild stand outside for twenty minutes or so, pointing the mouth of a big jar at the sun, then putting the cap on the jar and bringing it inside. Coincidentally, that was just the time Grandma needed to mix the other ingredients. The jar uncapped, the last ingredient was poured carefully into the batter.

Cellar

Now down the forbidden, steep stairs into the cellar. We loved the Victrola ("If You Knew Susie"), but the cellar had a dank, ancient-house, basement smell, and was a little spooky. There was a scary, dark water cistern under the vegetable cellar room. . . . . Remember catching tiny frogs in the cistern drain?

The furnace room, with the automatic coal feeder (the engine room on a great ship might look like that!), was directly below the sun room—hence the very hot radiators. The coal was stored in its own separate room under the entry foyer. The coal chute was just around the back corner.

Christmas

Emerging from the cellar, let's return to the expanses of the main floor to reminisce about Christmas (which never could be *mentioned* until after Thanksgiving). In the late afternoon on Christmas Day, our families gathered at the brick house, bearing little presents for our cousins.

Sheila remembers helping Grandma and our mothers sort our gifts in the library before bringing them to the radiator benches in the sun room. One year, when Dick was quite young and playing in the library by himself, he discovered the wrapped presents. He unwrapped most of them before Grandma found him. He can still hear Grandma's admonishment.

Each of us found a small pile of presents on the window-seat benches in the sun room. Grandpa always gave each grandchild a silver dollar.

After opening our gifts, we sat around our grandparents in their chairs near the fireplace, watching them open their gifts. Dinner was a buffet, set up in the dining room. We used those square metal trays with fillers.

The grown-ups ate in the dining room, and the kids ate at card tables in various other rooms. The older cousins usually ate in the library, the younger cousins in the sun room (where there were no breakable glass doors). After all the festivities, our mothers escaped to the kitchen to clean up from the feast. We kids were barred from entry to the kitchen, even for a drink of water, until all the dishes had been washed and put away.

Outside, it was dark and cold. Inside, it could not have been brighter or warmer.

On New Year's Eve, some of us stayed overnight, making beds out of chairs and blankets around the big old radio, waiting for midnight in Times Square. Who knew it was not really midnight for us?

Grandma's Wake

Reenie: *Grandma's wake is quite vivid in my memory. I remember sitting on the window seat in the dining room listening to our great aunts - Grace, Kathleen, and Helen. I didn't remember ever meeting them before and was rather fascinated by their very distinctively different (and strong) personalities.*

Ann: *My last and perhaps most poignant memory of the brick house: On the day of Grandma's funeral, I was standing near the piano in the living room and I watched Grandpa enter the library where Grandma was serenely and beautifully lying. He knelt down next to her, prayed silently for a few moments, stood and gently bent down and kissed her goodbye.*

Marilynn**:** *One more vivid memory from the day of Grandma Moonan's funeral: The house was filled with relatives, many of whom I didn't know but who had a familiar "Moonan" look. I sat on the bottom step of the staircase and listened to the conversations among the cousins of our mothers' generation as they went up and down reminiscing about all the fun they had in the brick house. It was uncanny. All of the wonders we're sharing now were cast back a generation.*

The House After Joe and Ethel

Mark: *Grandma Moonan died on March 21, 1962, and Grandpa sold the house not too long afterward to Helen and Dan Sullivan, who moved down from St. Paul. Helen was Grandpa's sister, our great aunt. She earned her Master's Degree in History. She married Dan Sullivan, whose father was an early investor in 3M. The two of them taught at Bemidji State College and were childless. The suggestion was they led a glamorous life. He played a ukulele. They smoked. Helen had an early version of an electric air freshener machine on the end table next to her chair. I recall she was quite pretty and he handsome in an older way. I visited them with Mom and Dad from time to time. They were nice, interesting, and interested in me.*

After Helen and Dan bought the home, they closed off the third floor to conserve heat, refinished the basement, and built a double garage just outside the back door. Helen and Dan stored two Cadillacs in the new garage—a sedan and a two-door coupe. The old carriage house continued to stand east of the new garage, at least until about the time the Sullivans sold the house to the Driessens in 1964.

Grandpa moved into a first floor apartment across from the Waseca Hotel and kitty-korner from the courthouse, about a block from the law office above the bank. He continued to be a vital and fun-loving presence in our lives, meeting us for breakfast at the Busy Bee on Saturday mornings, dropping by our mothers' homes for coffee or dinner, taking groups of the grandkids out for supper at the Fox Inn…. Grandpa died on June 9, 1966, after suffering a heart attack while climbing the stairs to his office.

Closing

Pete says, *As for the house, I loved **everything** about it. The big rooms, beautiful woodwork, "beams" on the ceilings, glass cabinets, push-button light switches, stained glass, the phone closet, the sun room (which, in my memory, is always sunny), the attic (what could be more wonderful than a big attic, with all kinds of spaces to explore, not to mention old clothes for costumes), the bathrooms with little porcelain tiles on the floor, the vacuum tubes in the walls, and that incredible stairway.*

Pat: *There's a classic old book from architectural theory lala-land, by a French fellow, Gaston Bachelard, called The Psychology of the House. He goes through the characteristic spaces of a house, attic to basement, and unpacks their significance and feel, especially for children. When I've designed houses for clients with children I've tried to incorporate some of those ideas. The Moonan house has character in spades.*

It was a fall day. Most of the things for sale were out in the yard—in fact I think the house was not open. Down by the carriage house, the auctioneer was taking bids. And there—in a nice frame—was the portrait (May I say iconic? We all know the portrait; there were several copies) of Great Grandpa John, "Old Top" himself, inadvertently left behind, and the bidding was on. A nicely dressed couple was bidding on the portrait and other bidders responded. What the hell?? I thought. They're bidding on our patrimony! I started to raise the bid in $1.00 increments. I think it got to something like $75.00 before the auctioneer paused and asked me, "Young man, does this picture mean something to you?" I replied, "That's my Grandpa!" (plaintively, foregoing the generational nicety) and the auctioneer took a break in the bidding. (This was a good thing because I had about $5.00 in my pocket.)

I ran up to the front stoop of the house and found Uncle Joe Friedel talking with some friends, and I related the fix I was in. I asked if he'd stake me; he said he would and returned with me to the carriage house. Uncle Joe and the auctioneer had a little visit (the bidding couple was only interested in the frame and agreed to forego their purchase), and afterwards we brought Great Grandpa John home to Margie's house.

This photo was taken at the Hough home on Havana Road in Owatonna after Reenie's wedding. (I was an usher. You know the lament: "Always an usher, never a groom.") Rick and Fran had decorated their garage as an Irish Pub, including Great Grandpa John's portrait over a fake fireplace and a bar made with one of the green doors from Margie's house.

Great Grandpa John's portrait can now be viewed at Mark's home in Owatonna.