**1975**

Grandmother leaves her home, and moves into the Good Samaritan Center. Alec starts kindergarten, and is promised a trip to the zoo. Andy has a hard time making up his mind. Alan and Andy are no longer little boys. Alan rides his bike 30 miles, and works on his curveball. Lisa cooks Mom’s birthday dinner, and scrapes off her wallpaper. Lesle helps with the sorting. She likes to sort. Mom starts writing her first romance novel. Dad does not learn to spell rehearsal. He notices the beautiful fall trees, and gives his future self a lot of good advice. He writes “home” less and less. The final words of the final letter of this project are: “Keep your spirit up.”

**1-19-75 – Sun –** I hope you received the letter I wrote a week ago and were able to show it to M.J. and Bill and Aunt Clara. Why don’t you write us a letter. You should have plenty of time now that you don’t have to spend any time fixing your meals. The last letter we had from you, other than the Christmas note, was right after Thanksgiving. We’ve had some more snow, although the streets aren’t slick. Our city has very good snow removal in the winter. It was warmer yesterday (Sat) and some of the snow melted.

Andy has the flu right now. He came home from school Thurs with a fever. He had a concert that night and we let him go since he hated to miss it (it was his orchestra). He’s been down ever since and is still running a fever part of the time. Like everywhere, there is a lot of flu around at this time of the year.

I hope some of the children wrote you thank you notes for your money Christmas gifts. If not I’ll say “Thank You” again for you. I’m afraid my children haven’t saved much money. Lisa, especially, likes to spend her money as soon as she gets it.

Lesle got her drivers license, you may remember, and has taken the car several times so far without any trouble. She has taken Lisa and a friend some of the times. We could use a second car but just can’t afford one right now. We have a lot of expensive repair work to be done on the car as it is. Alan is out this afternoon with the Jr. High Fellowship on some kind of an outing. Alan is in Rev Reif’s Confirmation Class you may remember. They usually finish up about Easter time.

Did you ever make those paper flowers or whatever they were with that lady there at the home. What kinds of things would you like to do. Maybe we can get something for you to do. I’m guessing that you did not get out to church today, but that you will in a week or so. I’m also guessing that you are getting stronger now that you are eating a little more.

Thats nice that you got your phone in. You’ll remember that I called you up a week ago yesterday on the Sat after I made that weekend trip to visit all you folks. Has all your snow melted? We read about the big snows all over the midwest a week ago. It was good that I went to Hutchinson the weekend that I did.

This coming Wed night I’m supposed to give a magic show as part of the entertainment (I’ll use some of the kids as assistants) for the Father and Son Banquet at the Church. Its an annual event sponsored by our deacons. In a little bit Ruth and I, and maybe Lesle, are going to a Youth Symphony concert. Our kids are eligible to play in it. Hope everyone in Hutchinson is doing OK. Yesterday was Ruth’s birthday. I’m taking her out to eat tonight.

**1-23-75 – Thurs –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, We were glad to have a letter from Mother today since we hadn’t heard since her Christmas note which got here about the time I went to Hutchinson this last time; I guess that was 3 weeks ago this coming weekend. Its nice when we hear from each other about once a week. I’ve written Mother since I was in Hutchinson, so I hope she passed the letters on to you.

Ruth is accompanying Andy right now on both his French horn (he’s played less than a year) and viola solos for the solo contest they have before long. Ruth always accompanies for several children for the contests since they have trouble getting enough pianists. Rehersals are beginning to pick up for the kids and all the upcoming winter and spring concerts, contests, etc.

Last night was the annual (sponsored by the deacons) Father-Son Banquet at our church. The family and I presented about a 20 minute magic show. It was the biggest show I ever gave in terms of the size of the tricks and number of assistants. I used the head chopper and that green tent trick. Ruth played the piano during the first part when I didn’t do any talking and the 4 older children assisted. Three of them were “produced”. Anyway, we had some fun and I relived old memories of the many shows I did when I was younger. I’ve done about 10 shows since we’ve lived here. My show came after the group singing and before the speaker who was Skip Pitlock – a major league baseball pitcher with the Chicago White Sox. He lives here in Park Forest which is why the deacons asked him. Lisa missed her horseback riding lesson last night to help because she had no way to get to her lesson. We practiced the magic show on Tues night. Mon night Lesle went on a skating party with some Baptist group. One of Lesle’s good girl friends has a boyfriend who goes there and he invited them.

Last Sunday afternoon was the Youth Symphony which Ruth, Lesle and I went to; Lesle took her good friend. Alan went on an outing with the Jr. High Fellowship at the same time. Sunday evening Ruth and I ate out for her birthday dinner. We don’t eat out as much as we used to because its so expensive. Last Sat was Ruth’s birthday. We tried to do extra work on Sat so she wouldn’t have to, but she still did the grocery shopping. Lisa cooked her birthday dinner and then we had her presents. She got some clothes, a new wallet, some clothes, etc.

Sun: Called Mother last night and she said she had been to see you yesterday (Sat) and then had eaten at M.J.’s. Hope your cold and cough is better. Send this on to Mother, M.J. and Bill. Each boy got a baseball at the Father-Son Banquet and the ball player autographed them. Each boy also got an autographed (it ends there ☺)

**1-31-75 – Fri –** Well, January is just about over and its gone pretty fast. I guess its been a “big” month for you since you moved out to the home and for the first time you have somebody doing some of your work.

Sat: 2-8-75 – 1:00 PM – It was nice visiting with you a little while ago before your lunch. I guess I shouldn’t complain about your not writing us since I had started this letter a week ago yesterday and never got it finished. I think Lisa wrote you a letter within the last week.

As I said over the phone we’ve had cold like you have. Its supposed to get down around zero here tonight. We, of course, have colder weather here normally than you have in Kansas. I heard the other day that up until then our temperatures had averaged about 3 degrees warmer than normal so far this winter. I’m sure you’ll get out more when the weather gets a little warmer. That was nice that M.J. took you and Aunt Clara for a ride yesterday when it was a little warmer.

I’m here in the living room watching Alec play; Alec wants one of his neighbor friends to come over and play this afternoon but nobody answered when I called their house. Alec has lots of friends about his age in this block which is nice, but means a lot of birthday presents for all the parties.

Ruth, Andy and the girls are out this afternoon to the library, etc. This morning Lisa had a riding lesson and Andy had his regular youth choir practice at the church. Tonight Ruth and I are going to the church to the Mariners Group (couples group) pot-luck supper. Tomorrow (Sun) is regular schedule. As I said over the phone I’m going with a couple of men on Tues to Washington, D.C. to attend a meeting on albumin (one of the proteins in the blood that we sell). I’ll either come back Thurs night or sometime Friday.

Next weekend is real busy. Ruth goes to another town to accompany about 25 5-6-7-8 graders, including Alan (bassoon) and Andy (viola and French horn) on their solos for the annual solo contest. It’s a big job for Ruth but she likes to help the music program in that way. Every student is expected to play a solo so its good experience and they learn to appear in public. Ruth practices here at home 3-4 times with each student and last Mon and Tues night they all played in practice recitals out at our Jr. High.

Last Thurs night Andy and I went to the Cub Scout Father-Son Banquet at a restaurant. One of the speakers was an 83 yr old man who has been a scout for 70 yrs. He joined in England before coming to the U.S. Last night the girls and I went out to see a big basketball game for their team. A clipping about the game is enclosed. Crete-Monee won and it was very exciting. Why don’t you get some of your letters written and maybe you’ll get more mail. Pass this on to Aunt Clara, M.J. and Bill.

**3-2-75 – Sun –** Well March came in more like a lamb than a lion here; it had been very windy for a few days, but there was little or no wind yesterday. It is colder than normal for this time of year, however. Its afternoon and Lisa just left with a friend to go to a movie. There are so many movies on TV that the kids don’t ask to go to many movies. Of course, with their activities they are not here every evening, but they still watch plenty of TV.

Ruth had her choir this AM, but they will be off the next two Sundays because of Easter; they only hire Ruth for 3 times a month and they will sing Maundy Thursday and Easter, of course. Our churchs cantata is Maundy Thursday so I may sing there.

Ruth’s choir is rehearsing (with an A!!) tomorrow night rather than Tues, so on Tues night Ruth and I can attend the kids tri-orchestra concert. All 4 of them will be playing in their three orchestras that night and naturally Ruth and I want to hear them.

Andy has decided not to play baseball this summer. We’ve told him he has to take some kind of music lessons or join something. There is no doubt now that Andy is not quite as atheletic as Alan, and also likes his music pretty well. He might take guitar or percussion lessons over at the Conservatory, or enroll in something in the Recreation Commision program.

Alan is outside cleaning the back seat of the car which was dirty from carrying some scout things several weeks ago. Alan is quite (still) interested in scouts. They have an overnight campout next weekend. He has several merit badges started which he needs to finish up. Alan is signed up for baseball for this summer; I’m sure he’ll also plan to go to scout camp this summer, also.

We haven’t made our summer vacation plans as yet. I have 14 work days of vacation left; I used one of them when I went to Hutchinson in January.

Alec is doing fine except that he has some cold and coughs some when he’s asleep. My singing voice is the best its been since before Christmas. I got our income tax roughed out and just about ready to send in. I’ll get a refund on the U.S. income tax, but will have to pay extra to the state (over and above what they withheld from my paycheck).

As I’ve told you and M.J., I’ll promise to keep one or more of your steel files. I think we could store one or two out in our storage area if we do some rearranging. We might want to store them for awhile in Hutchinson, however, before we can get them up here. I’ve asked the girls to think of things from Grandmothers house that they might like to keep.

This Wed night is the 4th Lenten service. I made it last Wed night (Ruth teaches too late to go), but missed the first two services. Ruth and I, for the first time in several years, are free of major church responsibilities. I’m still Jr. Dept. Superintendent but that doesn’t take much preparation. Ruth still handles the Jr. Dept music. Glad you’re getting out a lot and nice to have your good letter.

**2-18-75 – Tues –** I can’t remember who I sent the last Hutchinson letter to, so I’ll send it to you first. You folks should have received some valentines from the girls by this time; I guess it doesn’t matter if all the valentines didn’t make it there by Valentines Day. For Valentines Day I brought the family a 3 lb box of chocolates and candy which I bought in the Washington D.C. airport. Ruth had presents for everyone in the family: I received a new tie which I have worn several times already.

Tonight Lisa is at her jazz band rehersal and Ruth at her choir rehersal. I could have gone with Ruth but decided to stay home tonight. I went a week ago last night to her rehersal and sang with her choir last Sunday. I’ll help her some more in the next few weeks during Lent and Easter; I don’t know her Easter music schedule as yet. Ruth’s choir has held up pretty well this year and she got a new lady last week.

Tomorrow night is the 2nd Lenten Service at our church. Nobody went last week when I was in Washington. Ruth teaches till 8:00 on Wed nights. This Thurs night Alan’s band is playing for the music parents group out at his Jr. High. I don’t know whether I ever told you that Alan will be going to a new Jr. High School next year. Jr. Highs around here are almost all just 7th and 8th grade, but our High School (which now includes 9th graders or freshmen) got so crowded that our school district voted to build a new Jr. High so Alan won’t go to the high school building next year where Lesle and Lisa go.

Lesle will have a birthday on March 6th; thats a date I’m sure you remember every year. It doesn’t seem possible that I will have a 17 yr old daughter, and we will have been married 18 yrs this spring. We talk a little bit about college with Lesle but she really doesn’t have much of an idea yet in regard to what she might take. Like with Jim right now, a year from now Lesle will have a good idea of where she will go. If she goes to a nearby junior college, she will probably live at home for a year or two.

Our weather the last few days has been just about average for this time of year, with high temperatures of 35-36 and lows of 18-20, with occasional snow. We haven’t had as much snow the last few weeks as we did in Dec.

A week ago tonight was the girls high school band concert which I had to miss because I was in Washington. I went by jet to Washington in the afternoon. I stayed at the meeting through Fri noon and we flew back Fri afternoon. Several Armour people were there. It was cold in Washington and rained some. Was clear on Fri when we left.

Sat was icy and snowy here. Ruth accompanied the students at their solo contests Sat. Andy got ones on his viola and French horn soloes and Alan one on his bassoon solo. Sat night was the Sokolov pianist concert with the Chicago Hts Symphony. Had a good crowd 1000+. Glad to have Aunt Clara’s letter. Write us.

**3-8-75 – Sat –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, Hope you’re having warmer weather than we are. Today is clear and cold and there is still a little snow on the ground. Our temperature is to be below normal for several days. Our high is 42 and low about 27 at this time of the year. I think everybody is ready for the colder weather to be over.

Alan is at a scout camp in Michigan this weekend until tomorrow afternoon. He went last evening with a neighbor who has a scout. This was for fathers and they are staying in a cabin, but it was best that I didn’t go since Ruth has a heavy cold and sore throat and is not planning to go to church tomorrow (her choir is off the next two Sundays because of the extra Easter services later). Alec will stay home also since he has a bad head cold and an ear infection. He’s had a bad cold for several days and has been coughing, but he has still played hard and gone places, but it caught up with him yesterday.

Thurs – 3-13-75 – I did it again – I started this last Sat and just didn’t start writing again until now. We’re still having cold weather and I hear they had a lot of snow in Kansas City.

Last night I went to our 5th of 6 Lenten services; Alec went with me. Ruth is changing her last lessons on next Wed night to another time so she and I can both attend the last Lenten service and hear Andy sing in the youth choir.

This Sat is Alan’s jr. high band and orchestra contest at a nearby town. We’ll drive over to hear them. Alec is essentially well but is still taking doses of his liquid penicillin-like drug from the big bottle that the Dr. prescribed for him. Lesle, Lisa and Andy are doing fine. Alec is growing tall and Andy is putting on some weight and is probably going to have a build about like Alan. Alan had a good time on his scout outing, but came back with a breaking out and swollen glands. The Dr. cultured strep from his throat so he got a big shot of penicillin in the leg, which made him quite sore for a couple of days. He missed some school, but is better now (he has felt fine all the time). Alan has had extra practices this week for the contest Sat.

A week ago Tues night was the tri-orchestra concert. Andy played in the all district orchestra (elementary). Alan played in the Jr. High Orchestra and sat in with the high school orchestra. Lesle and Lisa, of course, played in the high school orchestra.

Last Fri night was the decorated cake contest at Andy’s Cub Pack Meeting. As usual, it was a last minute job after I got home from work (the fathers and sons are supposed to make it together), although Andy had thought up putting a real lighted bulb in the middle of the cake (using batteries) for the cockpit of the “flying saucer”. They gave 1-2-3 in 3 categories and Andy took 3rd in the original category. I guess I talked to Mother over the telephone since I wrote last. Hope you’re all OK.

**3-22-75 – Sat –** I’m at the church with Alec while Andy attends his Youth Choir practice. His choir sang last Wed night at the last Lenten (6th) Service. Lisa is out at her riding lesson. Alec, Andy and I will pick her up on the way home from the church. Lisa still likes to ride horses very much. Having her lesson on Sat AM is more convenient than when it used to be on Wed nights.

This morning is more March-like, with cooler temperatures and clouds. The last two days (Thurs and Friday) have been Spring-like, with temperatures yesterday reaching into the 70’s, which was probably our warmest day since last Fall sometime. All the children have been outside a lot the last few days.

Hope Hutchinson has had some Spring-like days recently so you have been able to get outside some. Also hope you got over your cold and hoarseness. As I told you over the phone, I had the same thing this Winter. I’ve only had about 2-3 weeks since early last December when my singing voice was the best. It was my worst winter in many years for colds, hoarseness, etc.

Tomorrow on Palm Sunday I’ll go help Ruth’s choir at the other church as they are singing with their Youth Choir. Our churchs Easter Cantata is next Thurs night, on Maundy Thurs so I’ll come here for that. On Easter Andy’s Youth Choir sings at one of the early services.

Ruth’s folks went to Florida recently but are home now, I believe. I guess its been over a year now since they visited us. Mr. L is still having some trouble seeing as well as he would like to with the glasses he got after his cataract operations.

I’m off work this coming Good Friday. I’m not sure how much time the kids have off from school. It was a year ago during Spring vacation that we all went to Hutchinson on the train. It was good we got a lot of things sorted last spring.

For last Wed night Ruth changed some of her piano students to other times so she could come with me and hear Andy’s choir here at church. We left the service early after they sang and took Andy to his Schools Science Fair. Andy made a model of the human ear. Science is big now in schools and this fair was the biggest one I could remember at this grade school where all of our children have gone.

Alan got his new bike this past week; it had been promised on his birthday. The 3 older children now all have good bikes. I may not have mentioned that Alan has a daily newspaper route of about 23 papers. They make so little that he may quit it. Andy and I walked it one day when Alan was sick.

Last Sat we (Ruth, Andy and I) took his route by car just before Ruth and I drove over to a town just north of Joliet (where we get on the Santa Fe train) to hear the Jr. High band and orchestra at their contest. They did fine and got 1’s. They will play at state in April. Thurs night all but Alec and Ruth went to the big jazz band concert at the High School. It was to raise money for the music program. Hope you’re all OK. Write Us

**3-29-75 – Sat –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, Hope the big Midwest storm didn’t get as far south as Hutchinson. I just heard over the radio that there have been big cattle loses in Nebraska and South Dakato. We’ve had very cold weather for this time of year the past several days, with some snow, freezing rain, etc. Its supposed to remain cold tomorrow on Easter, and won’t warm up until next week. This letter will have to serve as our Easter season greetings to Hutchinson. If you didn’t get out to any of the services, I’m sure you were able to listen to some over the radio.

I’m at the church right now waiting for Andy to be finished with his choir practice. His choir sings at one of the early church services tomorrow morning on Easter. They are having a very early (6:30) sunrise service but it probably be too cold to have it outside. That service will be followed by a breakfast, then the service that Andy’s choir will sing at, then Sunday School followed by the regular 11:00 AM service.

I was off work yesterday. The kids were out of school yesterday and have all next week off for their Spring vacation. You may remember that it was one year ago that our whole family went to Hutchinson on the train. It was good that we went since Mother and M.J. and Bill are clearing things out of the house (Mother’s). Ruth is taking next week off also; she has cancelled all her piano lessons and choir practice. It will be nice for us to have Ruth home next week at supper and in the evenings, as well as for Ruth.

Its Sat afternoon and I’m watching the college basketball game between Kentucky and Syracuse. Its of interest since Syracuse just barely beat Kansas State in their last game. I watched the earlier tournament game in which Notre Dame beat Kansas. I guess both Kansas teams were good this year, but they are not quite as strong as some of the other teams.

I just called Mother and she thought M.J. was making good progress on sorting through things at Mothers.

We’re gradually working to redecorate the boys (Alan and Andy) room. It was decorated in little boy colors and things and Alan and Andy are no longer little boys. Alec, of course, still sleeps in our bedroom. Alec is looking forward to tonight when we will dye Easter eggs.

I wonder if Jim has decided yet where he will go to college. Lesle just finished filling out her application for the big College Testing Service test which she will take the end of April. The results of that test are used to determine things about getting into college, etc.

Yesterday we all went bowling on the Good Friday holiday. Andy and Alan did about the best they ever have. I sang in the Cantata Thurs night. Again, Happy Easter to everyone in Hutchinson, even though you won’t get this until after Easter.

**4-9-75 – Wed –** We’re still having winter-like weather here. We had a Spring-like spell in March, and its been cold, snowy and winter-like ever since. As some of you may have heard we had a big snow-storm in the Chicago area a week ago today. We had some snow here and also South to Kankakee (on the way to work), but the heaviest snow was North of here in Chicago, etc. O’hare Airport was closed for quite awhile; that was only the third time in history that O’Hare was completely closed; even cars were stalled and you couldn’t drive in and out. Most of the snow has melted down here. The Chicago Cubs baseball team was supposed to have their opening game yesterday in Chicago, but there was so much snow there had to postpone the game until tomorrow.

I just to M.J. over the phone and it sounds like she has things just about ready for the sale. Everyone sure appreciates all the work that M.J. and Bill are doing. Hope you are feeling OK now after being a little upset with your stomach. Thats nice that you were able to get out to church on Easter Sunday.

Ruth should be home in just a few minutes; she now teaches till 8:30 on Wed evening. She didn’t teach last week when all the school kids had all week off for an Easter – “Spring” vacation. The girls are at band sectional rehersals this evening; they will have special rehersals like that until the state contest later this month.

We’ve promised Alec we’d take him to the zoo as soon as it warms up a little bit. As you know from Alec’s drawings, he really likes animals, both farm animals and jungle animals. Alec still goes to “Tune Town School” once a week over at the Park Forest Conservatory where Ruth teaches. He always says he doesn’t want to go but is excited about it when he gets home.

Tues: 4-15-75 – I laid this aside because I think you received some letters from the girls. Last Fri night was Andy’s Cub Pack Meeting. It was the little racing car derby. He had fun making his car, although he didn’t win anything. As usual, he waited till the last minute to finish it. I may have told you once that he almost quit Cubs a couple of months ago; we’re glad he stayed in; he’ll be through with Cubs this summer.

The girls left early Fri AM on their orchestra trip to St. Louis. One of the High School singing groups also went along. They had played several concerts, including one in Springfield, and got back Sunday evening. They got along OK and got to do a lot of sight-seeing.

Sat Ruth and I left at 3:00 PM to make a 4:30 dinner at the Candlelight Theater near Chicago. Its one of those places where you eat dinner and then see a play or show. The show which started about 6:00 PM was Carousel. We got home about 10:30. (It was a group of 5 people from the Mariners Couples Club at Church).

Sun I sang with Ruth’s choir. Glad to have your last letter. It was delayed because you had addressed it to Chicago rather than to Park Forest. Its to be almost normal temperatures tomorrow. I’m sure its been warmer in Hutchinson.

**5-17-75 – Sat –** I’m sorry I haven’t written sooner. I started a letter a couple of weeks ago, but I didn’t finish it and just haven’t gotten around to it since. I expect that’s the longest stretch I’ve gone without writing since I left Hutchinson to go away to college in the Fall of 1950 – 25 yrs ago.

Today is like Summer; I guess we can call it the start of Summer since school will be out here in a couple of weeks. We’ve had almost no real Spring, with the weather being cold and rainy a lot of the time. From talking to you several times over the phone, I guess Hutchinson has had a lot of the same type of weather. That’s good that you’re able to get out some with M.J. – keep it up. And be sure that you keep sitting up all you can and walking all you can. Good advice Dad ☺ Your new TV sounds nice. We have a color TV also and enjoy it very much. Ours is about 6½ yrs old and doesn’t work real well all of the time anymore.

Lesle (she is finishing her junior year in high school) is beginning to get information about various colleges and universities. She doesn’t really know yet what she is most interested in. I suppose by a year from now (as is the case with Jim) she will have decided on a college. We were pleased to hear that Jim is going to the University of Kansas. Its bigger and I’m sure more impersonal than when Ruth and I went there but I’m sure that he will get along OK. I haven’t been back on the KU campus for a number of years. I expect Jim has several friends already at KU and I’m sure a number of his high school classmates will be going to KU. We were also pleased to receive Jim’s Hutchinson High School Graduation Announcement. It was 26 years ago that I graduated from the same high school.

We still wish you would try to write us. I’m sure its not as easy as it used to be and don’t worry if you repeat yourself. As I said, if you lose track of time get yourself a big calender and check off the days. That way you could determine when you last wrote a letter to somebody if you put on the calender when you write a letter. I called M.J. after I talked to you last Tues night. She told me about the “big sale” and how everything went so well. I think we all owe a big “thank you” to M.J. and Bill for all the work they have done. We’ll try to bring some of the things back with us when we go thru Hutchinson this Summer. We haven’t made our exact vacation plans as yet. Our kids enjoyed the mountains last summer, but I don’t know where we will end up going.

Andy decided early not to sign up for baseball this summer when they had registration; now he says he wishes he had signed up. Andy has a hard time making up his mind about things but is doing better. Alan is signed up for baseball and had his first practice game today. I’ll write some more news to Aunt Clara first.

**5-17-75 – Sat –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I wrote some news to Mother finally, so I’ll write some more to you first. I’m watching Alec get ready for his bath. He has lots of children his age to play with on this block, so Alec plays real hard everyday now that the weather is warmer and all the children are playing outside. Alec has enjoyed his school this year. That is the Tune Town School he attends one day a week at the Conservatory of Music where Ruth teaches. They emphasize music in his school.

Andy is doing fine. His piano recital is tomorrow night. For a year or two all four of the older children took piano from this lady who still teaches Andy. All of the children have received a good foundation on the piano from her. Alan takes jazz piano lessons from a man at the Conservatory of Music where Ruth teaches. Andy still plays the French horn and viola. Andy is through with Cub Scouts and is thinking about joining Boy Scouts in Alan’s troup. Alan and Andy are over at the big boy scout show today at Munster, Indiana (Munster is just across the state line from us – you see we really don’t live very far from Indiana). Alan will probably go to boy scout this summer but I don’t know about Andy.

I hear the new Hutchinson Hospital is about done. I expect you’ll have an equally nice room there. I think its good that both you and Mother live where you can get help in a hurry if you need it; that relieves M.J. and me of a lot of worry, you know.

Alan still plays the bassoon and we hope he will play in the local Youth Orchestra in addition to his school orchestra next year. Lisa is doing fine. She was planning to take Drivers Education this summer, but they had too many sign up so some of the younger ones will have to wait for another year. Lisa says she may stop horseback riding lessons and start taking guitar lessons. That would be fine with us since I bought the family a fairly good guitar several yrs ago and none of the kids have really learned to play it. Lisa makes good grades but I’m not sure she knows what she might be interested in. She is a sophomore in high school so there is plenty of time for her to decide.

Ruth directs her church choir tomorrow and next Sunday and then her choir will be through until Sept. I’ll sing with her choir a week from tomorrow.

We’ve had lots of concerts, etc. since I wrote last to Hutchinson. The Laidigs visited us two weeks ago. They drove from Kansas. Mrs. L is 75 and Mr. is 78. Mrs. L drove most of the way since Mr. L has had cataracts removed from both eyes and he doesn’t see as well as he’d like to. He drove about 100 miles on the way up they said. They came to be here on the Sunday when Alan’s Confirmation Class took their first communion. They came on Fri and left on Tues. I went to Washington, D.C. on Business that week from Mon-Wed.

**5-31-75 – Sat –** You may remember being in Oberlin, Kansas 18 years ago when we were married. I believe you, Aunt Clara and Uncle Clyde drove out, but M.J. couldn’t go because she had to stay in bed. You may also remember that it rained some before we were married.

We were very glad to have your letter and to hear about everything you folks have been doing. Hope Aunt Clara has been feeling better and possibly has been able to get out. Its cooler and cloudy here today and we’ve had a lot of rain the last couple of days.

I’ll have to stop here in a minute and go out to pick up Lisa from her horseback riding lesson. She will take a couple more lessons (they are already paid for) and stop, at least for the summer, and take guitar lessons. I don’t know what she will take in the fall.

Alan left early this morning with other boy scouts in his troop on a bike hike to a state park near Kankakee. I suppose its about 30 miles from here, one way. They have to go on a 4-lane highway part of the way, but they are as careful as they can be and stay together on one side. Alan, and possibly Andy, will go to regular boy scout camp in July. Alan, as I’ve said before, is still playing baseball, although he will miss his opening game this afternoon.

Alan and the girls are not going to summer school. Andy is taking band and orchestra in summer school because he will be playing in the new Jr. high band and orchestra next yr even though he’ll be in the 6th grade. We’ve just had one Jr. High but will have two next year when the new one opens; each Jr. High will have its own band.

I remember you saying that they would be adding on to the Good Samaritan Center and that you would probably be able to watch the construction out of your north window.

Tonight Ruth and I go to her choirs picnic in Sauk Village. Her choir sang for the last time last Sunday. That’s nice that M.J. played at your church.

Alec plays outside all the time with the 6-8 other 4-5 yr olds in this block. They generally get along pretty well together. Tomorrow afternoon Alec’s Tune Town (pre-school music class at the Conservatory) class is having their show over at the Conservatory (they had their last class last Tues). After that Ruth is having two recitals for her piano students, one at 4:00 and the other at 7:00 PM. I’ll help her set up as usual.

A week from today we plan to attend the wedding of Stephen William Lester (son of my cousin Dr. Bill Lester) and Kathleen Gail Thon in Kenilworth, a suburb north of Chicago. It’ll be almost a 2 hr drive from here. You may have received an invitation too. We attended Eric Lester’s wedding several yrs ago at the University of Chicago.

The kids said they wanted to go back to that camp in Colorado at least one more time so I’ve written for a cabin. If we get it we’ll be through Hutchinson near the end of August.

**6-9-75 – Mon –** I’ve forgotten when I wrote last, so I guess I can’t complain when we don’t hear from you every week. It seems like summer is almost as busy as any other time of the year. We’re having cooler weather the last few days. The swimming pool opens next weekend; I’ve sent in the money, so I hope the family uses it enough to get our moneys worth; it costs $60 a season. The pool is now owned by the YMCA. We haven’t heard yet from the YMCA Camp in Colorado where I sent for a reservation in August so our vacation plans aren’t finalized as yet. We’ll let you know as soon as we have definite plans.

I just took Andy over to register for boy scouts. He had been going for several weeks but had never officially joined. I don’t know whether he will go to summer camp in July with Alan or not.

Alan’s baseball team has lost their first 4 games. Alan has pitched some; he should get better as he gets more practice. He missed some of the early practices. He is working hard on his curve ball. Alan’s Jr. High Band, even though regular school is over, is entering a marching contest next Sun afternoon and evening at a town about 60 miles or so from here. They practice the next 3 evenings in a row.

The girls aren’t doing anything musical this summer. They are getting a lot of old stuff out and say they are going to have a garage sale. I don’t know whether they could sell anything or not.

Hope you and Aunt Clara have been able to get outside some in the warmer weather. How are they coming on the construction on the north side of the Good Samaritan Center?

As I’ve said before, Alec plays outside all day long with his many friends on the block. His recital was fun a week ago yesterday afternoon; that was his Tune-Town Class. Ruth had two recitals that day and Alan a baseball game so we were busy.

Last Tues night was the first meeting of the School Instrumental Parents Group Officers Meeting that I have attended. I said I would be secretary for the coming year. It was hard to say no when they asked me since I have 4 children in the instrumental program and I’ve never helped do anything.

Yesterday afternoon we all drove to Kankakee to the first annual Armour Pharmaceutical Co. picnic. The food was free and there were things for the children to do, etc. It was sunshiny but not hot. We got home about 5:15.

Sat afternoon we drove to Kenilworth (North of Chicago) to the wedding of Bill Lester’s son and a girl from another Chicago suburb. It was nice and we were glad we went. We had a nice visit with Aunt Margaret. She, like you, is no longer living alone. She is in Whitcomb Tower Rm 407, 509 Ship St, St. Joseph, Mich. 49085. You should write her and send her your address. That is a Baptist Home. This letter can be your “Birthday Letter.”

**6-22-75 – Sunday –** I’ll address this to everyone, including M.J. and Bill, although I assume they won’t be in Hutchinson when this letter arrives there. We assume that they have left today for their trip up this way. We’re really looking forward to their visit, since they have never visited us before. We hope to be ready for their arrival next Thursday. Lisa is redecorating the walls of her room, but hopefully will be just about done by Thurs. I thought her wallpaper still looked nice, but she scrapped it all off and is painting her walls and ceiling all white. Lesle has been helping a lot this summer sorting things (she likes to sort), etc. The boys are just about finished sorting through their things. You may remember that we started redecorating the boys room last spring, changing the little boys décor to older boys decorations. The boys have done a lot of the work themselves. They painted their chests to match everything; the only thing they have left to paint is their double decker bed.

We’ve had real summer weather the last few days. Its been hot (above 90) and humid (including a lot of showers) for several days now. Our normal high temperature for this time of year is in the low 80s.

Thats nice that M.J. and family plan to visit Aunt Margaret just before they come by here. As I told you, we had a nice visit with Aunt Margaret when we went up to a north suburb to attend her grandson’s (Dr. Bill Lester’s son who is a musician) Steph wedding.

Mon – June 23 – We hope Aunt Clara received her flowers OK from us, and that she had a nice birthday.

Ruth is teaching all day on Mondays this summer. In the summer Ruth tries to have all her students come on the same day. About ½ of her students take lessons during June and July. Alan is doing fine with his jazz piano lessons. Lisa is doing well with her guitar lessons.

Wed night Alan’s team lost their 8th straight game last night; they have 2 more games before the 4th of July break. We just had a phone call from M.J. and Bill; they are at St. Joseph, Michigan tonight, and had visited Aunt Margaret today. They will get in here about 8:00 tomorrow night. M.J. said they may do some sightseeing tomorrow in Chicago and may visit a friend whom they knew in Madison, Wisconsin.

I’m not taking off work Friday so I won’t lose a vacation day, but everyone else may go somewhere. I don’t know what we’ll do on Sat. They plan to stay through church on Sun and drive on to Bill’s meeting in Springfield Sun afternoon.

Alec sees the Dr. tomorrow and Ruth and the kids are having a garage sale. We’ll be in Hutchinson the 3rd week in August. Our cabin reservation in Colorado is for the last week.

**7-13-75 – Sun –** Its a little quieter here this afternoon (except for the dog barking) as all the children except Alec (and he is outside playing) are gone. We went to the early church service (9:00 AM) followed by s.s. The girls stayed at church to be picked up by friends who took them to a rock concert at Sox Park (thats where they play baseball). Lisa had tickets because she had participated in a March of Dimes drive or something like that.

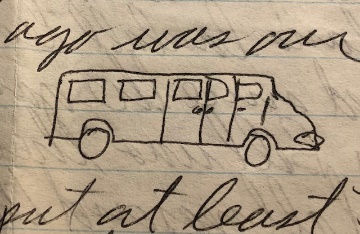
We brought the boys home about noon and Alan and Andy both left for boy scout camp. Andy is just ready to swim and should learn how if the weather stays warm. There is supposed to be a good swimming instructor at camp to help the boys. The man across the street who is taking them is planning to work on cooking. I hope they each get a merit badge or two. Last summer the camp wasn’t quite finished and things didn’t go too well, including the fact Alan didn’t finish any merit badges. I think he got only 1 badge all year after starting several. The neighbor boy who Alan was ahead of now has more badges than Alan.

Alan’s baseball team has lost all 5 games they have played since the game 2 weeks ago yesterday they won when Bill was there. That was the best game they played all year and they haven’t come close since. Alan will miss the 2 games they play this coming week and then have 3 left at the end of July to finish their 20 game schedule. Their record is 2 wins and 13 losses but they have had fun. It was almost cold yesterday during their game and it got down to 52 this AM which was a record low temperature for a July 13th.

It was nice talking to you over the phone yesterday. Hope you made it to church OK today. You shouldn’t “give up” on everything. Just drop us a note every week or so like you used to. I know you don’t have as much to talk about as you used to, but we won’t care if you say the same things over again. I can remember when I just left home and you used to ask that I just drop a note or card every week if I didn’t have time to write a letter. I think you lose track of time and you ought to write things on a calender so you can keep better track of time.

The Laidigs are pretty good and we’ll see them when we go through Kansas in August. Again, we so appreciated M.J. and Bill and family visiting us this summer. I guess Jim will soon have to get ready to leave for KU as they start earlier than they used to.

The big event here since a week ago was our buying a new Dodge passenger van.

Dad’s drawing of the new van, and pictures of it from the summer of 1976.

The old car was giving trouble when M.J. and Bill were here and we needed to put at least $500 in it to keep it going safely for the vacation, so we decided to buy a new van. We had spent over $2,100.00 on repairs, tires, and oil the last 4 years on the old car; it was the worst car we have had. Tell everyone hello.

**7-26-75 – Sat –** Its a very nice Saturday here. The temperature is in the 80’s, there is a little breeze and the atmosphere is about as clear as it ever gets. We hope you all are having a nice summer also. Hope you have been getting out occasionally and will go to church tomorrow. The kids and I will have to get a ride home from church in the morning since Ruth has to drive out to the Sauk Village Church (where she directs the choir) to play the organ. The organist they had for a couple of years quit and the replacement she recommended didn’t work out. Ruth said she would play for a couple of Sundays until they can get someone. A week from tomorrow Ruth and I are singing a duet at the Sauk Village church a week from tomorrow accompanied by our four older children.

Alan’s ball team lost their 17th game today. They were ahead until the last inning. It was the same team they beat (they have won only 2 games) 4 weeks ago today when Bill was there. That was probably the best game they played all year so it was nice that it was the one that Bill got to see. Alan hasn’t been hitting well and he missed 2 games when he was at scout camp. Alan and Andy each got 2 merit badges at scout camp. Andy got along fine. Andy is beginning to really grow and it looks like he will be about as big as Alan. Alan is almost as tall as I am; he will undoubtedly exceed me in height. The girls are both taller than Ruth. Lesle has driven the new big passenger van several times now and does OK. She went out this afternoon with Lisa and ran several errands for herself and the family. Its nice to have a third driver in the family.

Sun: Hope you got out to church today. Some of the kids went swimming this afternoon and Alec and the neighbor kids played in the sprinkler. It was hotter today than yesterday. This evening we had a nice picnic in the backyard. Lesle seasoned hamburgers in a special way and we cooked them on the outdoor grill. Ruth is teaching all day tomorrow and she won’t teach again until the week after Labor Day in Sept. I had a Chicago Heights Symphony Board meeting last Mon night. Later in the week Ruth and I worked on some newspaper notices announcing things about the orchestra. I said I would be publicity chairman for the symphony, which is a pretty big job. You have to get notices in to the newspaper on time, etc. Ruth has had a lot of experience with publicity things, so the only reason I took it is because she is willing to help me and work with me.

I just made a reservation at a motel east of Kansas City for Wed night Aug 13th. That is the day we leave here for Kansas. We plan to stop in Kansas City on Thurs, Aug 14th. We’ll let you know later the approximate time we will arrive in Hutchinson. I expect they just about have the addition built to the Good Samaritan Center. I think you said you could see them building it out your window.

**9-2-75 – Tues –** Well the fall schedule started off with a “bang” here today. All the children started school today including Alec who went to kindergarten for the first time. Alec goes just in the morning and is in the same class as his friend who lives next door. He is being punished right now because he and two of his friends went back over to school late this afternoon when they weren’t supposed to. There is a dangerous street they have to cross and, of course, there was no crossing guard there when they went back over to the school.

Ruth has just left for her first choir rehersal of the year. She sent all her choir members reminder cards about tonights rehersal while we were in Colorado. Tomorrow night I’m going over to the reception for the new director of the Chicago Heights Symphony Orchestra. The reception will be held following his first rehersal with the orchestra. Thursday night is the first choir rehersal at our church.

We want to thank everyone in Hutchinson for everything especially M.J. and Bill for letting us stay at their house the two nights. Maybe one or more of us can get back to Hutchinson before too long. The van worked fine on our trip although it took awhile to warm up before it would go at the higher altitudes in Colorado. That Sunday afternoon we left Hutchinson it looked stormy in the NW in the direction we were headed, but as we drove the storm moved and we missed it completely. There was lightening and some rain one evening in Oberlin. The kids went swimming in Oberlin as it was hot. I went to Rotary Club with Mr. Laidig on Tuesday. We got to Oberlin about dark on that Sunday and left for Colorado about Wed noon. We drove to Colorado Springs on Wed getting there in time for supper. On Thursday we went to the Garden of the Gods, Mt. Manitou Incline, Cave of the Winds, Van Briggle’s pottery and Seven Falls. I remember all those places from the time we went to Colorado Springs about the summer of 1946 (I was about Alan’s age that summer). After we left there I remembered that the cabins were named Rainbow Court, I believe. I doubt if they are still there. Seven Falls is now lighted at night so we went out there in the evening.

Fri AM we went to the Air Force Academy and then to Colorado College where Lesle and other high schoolers heard a talk from the admissions officer and had a tour of the campus. Sat we went to the Royal Gorge and the big kids walked across the high bridge. We stopped in Leadville, the old mining town. Sun we visited the old mining town Central City and visited Ruth’s brother in Denver. We were at the camp from Sun night until Sat AM. The older 3 kids went on a raft ride on the Colorado river, horseback riding, etc. We stayed in Omaha on the way back. It was our biggest and most expensive vacation we’ve had. Thanks again for everything.



A picture of our cabin from one of the years we went to the YMCA camp at Snow Mountain Ranch.

**10-12-75 – Sunday –** You and Aunt Clara can read this and then give it to Mary Janet and Bill to read. Its been several weeks since I wrote a letter to Hutchinson; thats the longest time I’ve gone without writing “home” to Hutchinson since I left Hutchinson in 1950 to go away to the University of Kansas to attend pharmacy school. I expect M.J. and Bill have been to some K-State football games, and I know they will go see KU play K-State since Jim is at KU. I expect Jim has been home a time or two to visit since he went to Lawrence. We drove through Lawrence when we were on the way to visit you in Hutchinson; Lawrence looks a lot different than when Ruth and I went to school there. You visited me in Lawrence when I went to school there.

We have had beautiful fall weather. The color of the trees has been beautiful.

You won’t remember exactly, but I have called 2 or 3 times on the telephone since I wrote my last letter. I called you on my birthday Sept 23rd and talked to Aunt Clara. Sometimes when I call you on the telephone nobody answers the telephone so I know that you are probably over in Aunt Clara’s room. We have had a busy fall. Ruth is busy teaching her piano students and directing her choir. Ruth has also been busy writing her first romantic novel or story. She has always read a lot of mystery stories, but believes she can do a better job with love stories.

I’ve been busy since I have to do some of the publicity for the Chicago Heights Symphony. The first concert is tonight preceeded by a dinner. I’m also secretary for the band and orchestra parents group so I have to write the minutes of the meeting. This is the first time I’ve ever been secretary of anything, and I have never done publicity before. Ruth has done a lot of publicity work over the years. The children have all been busy with their many school activities this year. All 5 children are in school. Lesle is a senior in high school and Alec just started to kindergarten.

Next year you will have 2 grandchildren in college when Lesle goes away somewhere like Jim is doing. We have been studying various colleges etc. but Lesle hasn’t decided on one as yet. She wants to attend a small 1000-2000 students private college. We were real pleased that she scored high enough on a test last year to be a national merit scholarship semi-finalist. She takes another test on Nov 1st and if she scores high again has about a 1 in 4 chance of winning some money. Even if she doesn’t win any money it’s a nice honor. There was only one other semi-finalist at her high school. There are 15,000 all over the country. Hope you’re all OK.



Lesle gets her picture in the paper for being smart. The caption reads: “Lesle Smith is shown as she is congratulated as a finalist from Crete-Monee high school in the National Merit scholarship competition. …She is being congratulated by Principal Russell Hunt.”

**No Date – Tues AM –** Dear Aunt Clara and All, We all hope you’re feeling better by now. As everyone we’re busy getting ready for Christmas. Keep your spirit up. Love, Carroll and family.

And so this project comes to a close. Aunt Clara will live until May 1976, reaching the age of 96. Grandmother will live until November 1979, reaching the age of 86. I have seen letters written by Dad to his sister from as late as the 1980s, but they have either been thrown away or are buried in a closet somewhere in Park Forest.

So who knows, maybe one day there will be a Volume IV. Ha!



Here is a picture of Grandmother in 1976 on Aunt Jan and Uncle Bill’s screened-in porch.