

GRANDPA

"TELL ME ABOUT THE GOOD OLD DAYS"

KEEPING IN TOUCH

THE GIFT OF A LETTER

(Taken from an article written by V.M. Parachin)

When Ronald Reagan was president, he received a pain filled letter from a young woman in Georgia. She wrote to tell about her husband, a Vietnam veteran who suffered terribly from the lingering effects of the war. Although he tried to get help by seeing a succession of counselors and therapists, he could not find a way to exorcize the demons that raged within. Finally, the woman explained to the president, her husband committed suicide.

Ronald Reagan's immediate reply was memorable, inspiring and surely transforming for the Georgia woman who received his letter. "Can you realize," he wrote, "that your husband was a casualty of war - a victim of the enemy every bit as much as those other 50,000 men who gave their lives in that conflict?"

"Obviously the experiences he had undergone were such that the breaking point which is within all of us, was eventually reached", the president continued. "You have every right to be proud of him and to honor him as a man who gave his life for his country. Let us hope and pray that never again will we have to ask young men to do this for their country - that we will find ways to resolve our problems peacefully."

For people who are suffering from life's stresses, a few words, carefully chosen, can transform a moment and brighten a day. A letter can even make a difference between life and death.

Offering the gift of a letter does not mean you have to be a poet or a Rhodes scholar. What it takes is an open eye and open heart. In a day when life seems ruled by the voice message, the telephone, and the answering machine, here are five tips for offering the gift of a letter.

Keep it Short - Short is better than long. When in doubt, cross it out.

Be Specific - Whether your note is one of thanks or support, be precise in your remarks. This makes a letter more personal.

Express Support - A few sentences offering support and friendship can become a beam of light to someone walking through a dark valley or experiencing an emotional low.

Be Spontaneous - Write from your heart. The note you send can fill a need, heal a hurt, soften a blow and generally make life more bearable for someone.

Keep in mind, the gift of a letter transforms itself into a gift of hope. Think of who might need a note of support, an expression of friendship or a word of thanks. WRITE THE LETTER TODAY.

RULES OF LIFE

Authors Unknown

(Different quotes, grandpa often sent in letters)

YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

There are two days in every week that we should not worry about, two days that should be kept free from fear and apprehension.

One is YESTERDAY, with its mistakes and cares, its faults and blunders, its aches and pains. Yesterday has passed, forever beyond our control.

All the money in the world cannot bring back yesterday. We cannot undo a single act we performed. Nor can we erase a single word we've said - yesterday is gone!

The other day we shouldn't worry about is TOMORROW, with its impossible adversaries, its burden, its hopeful promise and poor performance. Tomorrow is beyond our control.

Tomorrow's sun will rise either in splendor or behind a mask of clouds - but it will rise. And until it does, we have no stake in tomorrow, for it is yet unborn.

This leaves only one day - TODAY. Any person can fight the battles for just one day. It is only when we add the burdens of yesterday and tomorrow that we break down.

It is not the experience of today that drives people mad - it is the remorse of bitterness for something which happened yesterday and the dread of what tomorrow may bring.

Let us, therefore, live one day at a time!

HEAVEN'S GROCERY STORE

I was walking down life's Highway a long time ago -
One day I saw a sign that read, "Heaven's Grocery Store"

As I got a little closer, the door opened wide - and when I came to myself, I was standing right inside.

I saw a host of angels, they were standing everywhere,
One handed me a basket and said, "My child - shop with care".

Everything a Christian needed was in that Grocery Store, and all you couldn't carry, you could come back the next day for more.

First, I got some Patience, - Love was in the same row -
Further down was Understanding, you need that everywhere you go.

I got a box or two of Wisdom, a bag or two of Faith, I just couldn't miss the Holy Ghost, for it was all over the place.

I stopped to get some Strength, and Courage to help me run this race, by then my basket was getting full, but I remembered I needed some Grace.

I didn't forget Salvation, for Salvation - that was free, so I tried to get enough of that to save both you and me.

Then I started up to the counter to pay my grocery bill, for I thought I had everything I needed to do my Master's will.

As I went up the aisle I saw prayer - I just had to put that in for I knew when I stepped outside, I would run right into Sin.

Peace and Joy were plentiful - they were on the last shelf. Song and Praises were hanging near, so I just helped myself.

Then I said to the Angel, "How much do I owe?
He just smiled and said, "Just take them everywhere you go."

Again I smiled at him and said - "How much do I really owe?"
He smiled again and said - "MY CHILD, JESUS PAID YOUR BILL -
A LONG TIME AGO!"

I'M A LITTLE MIXED UP

Just a line to say I'm living
That I'm not among the dead
Though I'm getting more forgetful
And am messed up in the head

For sometimes I can't remember
When I stand at the foot of the stairs
If I must go up for something
Or if I just came down from there

And at the Fridgidare, so often
My poor mind is filled with doubt
Have I just put food in, or
Have I come to take some out

And there's time when it is dark out
With my nightcap on my head
I don't know if I'm retiring
Or just getting out of bed

So if it's my turn to write to you
There's no need in getting sore
I may think that I have written
And I don't want to be a bore

So remember I do love you
And I wish that you were here
But now it's nearly mail time
So I must say good-bye dear

P.S.

There I stood beside the mailbox
With a face so very red
Instead of mailing you my letter
I had opened it instead

IRISH PRAYER

*Take time to work,
It is the price of success.*

*Take time to think,
It is the source of power.*

*Take time to play,
It is the secret of perpetual youth.*

*Take time to read,
It is the foundation of wisdom.*

*Take time to be friendly,
It is the road to happiness.*

*Take time to love and be loved,
It is the privilege of the gods.*

*Take time to share,
Life is too short to be selfish.*

*Take time to laugh,
Laughter is the music of the soul.*

"The Man in The Glass"

When you get what you want in
your struggle for self
And the world makes you King
for a day,

Just go to a mirror and look at
yourself
and see what that man has
to say.

For it isn't your father, or mother
or wife

Whose judgement upon you
must pass,

The fellow whose verdict counts
most in your life
Is the one staring back from
the glass.

Some people might think you're
a straight-shooting chum
And call you a wonderful guy

But the man in the glass says
you're only a bum
If you can't look him straight
in the eye.
He's the fellow to please, never
mind all the rest
For he's with you clear to
the end
And you're passed your most
dangerous test
If the guy in the glass is your
friend
You may fool the whole world
down the pathway of years
And get pats on your back as
you pass
But your final reward will be
heartache and tears
If you've cheated the man in
the glass.

OLD SONGS

Old songs grandpa sang and played on his organ

OLD SONGS

During the Civil War, President Lincoln sent General Grant to Atlanta, Georgia with 50,000 men with orders to scorch the earth 20 miles wide from Atlanta to the Atlantic Ocean which he did, and here is their song:

Bring the good old bugle boys
We'll sing another song.
Sing it as we used to sing it
As we marched along
While we were marching thru Georgia,
Hurrah, hurrah, we bring the jubilee
Hurrah, hurrah, we set the country free
As we were marching thru Georgia

They sang and danced these songs on the Old Oregon Trail:

Buffalo gal won't you come out tonite
Come out tonite, Come out tonite
Buffalo gal won't you come out tonite
And dance by the lite of the moon

Flies in the buttermilk, shoo fly shoo
Flies in the buttermilk, shoo fly shoo
Flies in the buttermilk, shoo fly shoo
Skip to Malo my darling

I can get another girl prettier than you
I can get another girl prettier than you
I can get another girt prettier than you
Skip to Malo my darling

This song was written about 1910 and I still love it:

Memories, Memories
Dreams of long ago
In a sea of memory
I'm drifting back to you
Childhood days, Wildwood days
Among the birds and bees
You left me alone
But still you're my own
In those beautiful memories

Another Oldie

Pussy cat, Pussy cat, where have you been?
I've been to London to see the Queen
Pussy cat, Pussy cat, what did you there?
I frightened a little mouse under the chair

Some More Oldies - Continued

Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah
Someone's in the kitchen I know
Someone's id the kitchen with Dinah
Strumming on the old banjo
Fe - Fi - Fiddley I-O
Fe - Fi - Fiddley I-O
Fe - Fi - Fiddley I-O
Strumming on the old banjo

Sing a song of six pence
A pocket full of rye
Four and twenty blackbirds
Baked in a pie
When the pie was opened
The birds began to sing
Wasn't that a dainty dish
To set before the king
The king was in the parlor
Counting out his money
The queen was in the parlor
Eating bread and honey
The maid was in the garden
hanging up the clothes
Along came a black bird
and nipped off her nose
The maid was very angry
She didn't know what to do
She stuck her finger in her ear
And cracked it right in two

This is one the grandkids all get a chuckle out of:

She wouldn't do what I asked her to
And at first I wasn't sore
She wouldn't do what I asked her to
So I asked her just once more
She wouldn't hug me or kiss me or hold my hand
She wouldn't even let me buy a wedding band
She wouldn't do what I asked her to
So I socked her in the jaw

"YANKEE DOODLE"

It has been reported that "Yankee Doodle" is possibly the oldest song on record, having been played and sang in many countries in many languages and verses. The most popular version is:

Yankee Doodle went to London
Riding on a pony
Stuck a feather in his hat
and called it macaroni

(Macaroni was a popular dish just introduced in England.)

Chorus: Yankee Doodle keep er up
Yankee Doodle Dandy
Mind the music and the step
and with the girls be handy

Another Verse: Yankee Doodle went to town
On a load of switches
He pulled and I pulled
And down came his britches

(This verse is a little ancient humor.)

Another Verse: Father and I went down to camp
Along with Captain Goodwin
And there we saw the men and boys
As thick as hasty pudding

(This was during the Revolutionary War)

Another Verse: And there was General Washington
Upon a strapping stallion
Giving orders to his men
There must have been a million

A LITTLE FAMILY HISTORY

JOB'S AND TALENTS OF A LIFETIME

1. My first job was cleaning up in a drug store. I was promoted to clerk and soda squirt.
2. Next I was a waiter in a restaurant.
3. I worked one school term as a lawyers steno.
4. Also while in school I was a clerk in a hotel.
5. I worked a couple of summers as a laborer on a round bridge gang.
6. I bummed on railroads to southern Kansas and shucked wheat in a hundred degree weather in the shade.
7. I worked several months as a laborer on a bridge gang on the Concordia branch of the Burlington Railroad.
8. I worked in western Kansas stocking headed wheat.
9. I worked as a laborer on a new school building in western Kansas.
10. I worked one summer putting up hay near North Platte, Nebraska.
11. I cultivated corn for a farmer in Kansas.
12. I worked on the W.P.A. building roads with a pick and shovel in Nebraska. (This was before the days of unemployment compensation. W.P.A. was government sponsored. This was during the depression and they would give you work, but no free handouts.)
13. I was employed by the Burlington Railroad for 15 years interrupted by layoffs. I held the following positions:

Gang laborer	Hostler helper	Fire Builder
Machinist helper	Pipefitter helper	
Boilermaker helper	Stationary Fireman	
Boiler washer	Grease monkey	

Foreman substitute for six outlying round houses, where I maintained engines and coal sheds and water facilities.

14. Worked part time for a doctor raising chickens to pay for medical bills.

15. Had many jobs painting and paper hanging for myself and others.
16. Worked thirty years as blueprint layout man and supervisor for Verson All Steel Press Company.
17. Worked for 5 weeks as consultant to rebuild a press factory in Chaleroi, Belgium.
18. I have repaired and upholstered furniture.
19. I tiled floors and ceilings.
20. I built a foundation under my house on the south side of Chicago with slag cement blocks.
21. I raised a cow, pigs, many chickens along with three children.

A LITTLE SCHMIDT HISTORY

Written March 1995

I have never recorded much about older Schmidts because I didn't know a lot about them. But am putting down what I do recall.

At one time I had a list of our heritage, but it got away from me. I do know there was a connection with English Royalty and a Schmidt was a school master in England and he wrote a school book that was used by the schools there.

Of my fathers family, they must have lived about 1850 in Kittery, Maine and lived there into the mid 1900's. I never knew anything about my grandfather on my dad's side, but his widow, my grandmother, was in an accident with a run away horse and was an invalid the rest of her life. I recall that she corresponded with my mother a number of years in the early 1900's. After she died, I had a couple of letters from a man named Dudley.

My grandparents had eight children that grew to adulthood - seven girls and one boy who was last, and was my father.

The oldest girl was Adelaid Elizabeth; she finished college with honors and an angel sponsored her for a year in England studying music.

Adelaid was wooed and married to an engineer from Texas by the name of Wayland. They moved to Washington, Kansas in the 1800's where he built bridges and made a small fortune. He built a huge home there. Eventually he was put in a mental institution where he died.

I was born October 4, 1905, in a house across the street from their house. The Waylands had two daughters, Beatrice and Ethel.

Beatrice married a bank clerk in Wathena, Kansas and lived most of her life around St. Joseph, Missouri. She had two children, a girl and a boy.

Ethel married an oil man from Enid, Oklahoma, where she spent most of the rest of her life. They had one daughter.

Eventually after retirement, Adelaid and both her daughters ended up in Sarasota, Florida.

I was intimately acquainted with Adelaid or (Aunt Nell as she was known) and I lived with her for a time while attending school in that big house of which I previously recorded. I corresponded with all three, all there lives, into the middle of the 1900's.

A LETTER TO ALL THE GREAT GRANDCHILDREN

Did you know that your great, great, great grandfather was gored to death by a bull? He was my grandfather on my mother's side.

His name was Mathias Oswald. His parents came over from Hanover, Germany and they settled for a short time in Pennsylvania, then with friends and relatives they came to Kansas and helped establish the town of Hanover, Kansas.

Mathias was married twice, and had a large family of children with several of them dying in infancy. Seven grew up and are listed in the Schmidt "family tree".

Mathias homesteaded a farm four miles south of Hanover, Kansas on the Little Blue river. The half of the farm next to the river had to be cleared of many trees before they could farm it. The other half was hilly ground and they called it pasture land.

He was a farmer and also a cattle buyer, raiser and feeder. Cattle were usually grass fed for several years. They were then shut up in feed lots and stuffed with corn to make them fat so that when they took them to the slaughter houses, they would bring more money.

It was told that at some time in his life he had driven a freight wagon from Omaha, Nebraska to Abeline, Kansas. There were no roads, only trails. Indians and buffalo still roamed the plains. There were no bridges, so the freight wagons had to find ways to cross the streams and rivers, and of course they were in all kinds of bad weather for weeks at a time.

My mother told me that bands of Indians would come to their home and be allowed to come into the house. They would try to trade anything they had (which wasn't much) for anything they liked, even food that was on the table. They were friendly Indians and they tried to treat them nice, but they were a little afraid of them as there were many bad stories told about them.

Another story was that a roving band of Indians had found a dead horse that had been thrown in a ditch and they cooked and ate it and partied late into the night.

The Oswalds were very influential and popular and are recorded in the Washington County Centennial of the early history of the county.

The original Oswalds home was a small white stone house made from stone from the hill side. It was remodeled, but is now much the same as I can remember seventy or more years ago.

As the buffalo were being killed off, cattle were introduced and raised. Cows could be turned loose on open range and they would have calves and they would grow and they themselves have calves with practically no care or attention. Cattle were branded with a hot iron with an insignia of the owner . Every year they would be "rounded up", the new calves branded, and some of the stock sold to the slaughter houses. Cattle raising is still a big industry in the U.S. today.

The Oswald homestead had a large feed lot and they "fed out" a lot of cattle year after year. As you know "I hope" a bull is necessary to a herd of cattle and some of these critters were notoriously cranky and would try to protect their herd from any intrusion. It has long been said that anything red would make them mad if it was waved in front of them. I can recall crossing many pastures with cattle in them, but was always on the alert for any bad bull in the herd.

On one particular day, my grandfather had occasion to go in the feed lot alone, and when they heard him call they came and chased the bull away but he had got him down and stomped on him. He died shortly afterward.

They said it was the largest funeral in Washington County and the parade of wagons, buggies, horse back and people walking was over four miles long from the home to the cemetery in Hanover. He was considered a fairly rich man for that time and owned several sections of land in Western Kansas, although land in those days could be bought very cheap. His estate was estimated at eighty thousand dollars, but as I said he had many children so the shares were quite small. My mother took a half section of land as her share.

He was an outstanding man and I'm sure they still have records of him in Hanover, Kansas.

GROWING UP WITH NELLIE

Nellie Florence Bowland Schmidt was born in Tiffin, Ohio and moved to Kansas when she was four years old. Her parents were share croppers on a farm five miles northwest of Washington, Kansas called the "Hatch" neighborhood from the country school so maned there.

Nellie attended this school thru the eighth grade and mostly walked the mile and a half morning and night in all kinds of weather. The closet neighbors were nearly a mile away.

In her younger years the common way to get around aside from walking, was to use a horse. The roads were dirt with the better ones graded and ditched a little. They were very muddy when it rained and very hot and dusty in the simmer time. When the hills were too steep, the road just went around them. The bridges were mostly wooden structures that frequently washed out in the spring storms.

The farm was a quarter section and divided into corn and wheat fields and some pasture. Farming was very unpredictable and storms and bugs and dry or wet weather would often ruin crops year after year. A garden and orchard provided much of the food they had to eat. Canning and drying helped tide them over the winter.

They had a few horses, cows, pigs, and also some chickens. Money was scarce and there were few luxuries. Farming was hard work. There were many chores that mad the hours long.

With very few visitors there were many lonely days and nights. The few holidays were anticipated and planned long in advance. The school provided much of the entertainment of the community. Later the telephones helped to dispel the loneliness.

A trip to town was a treat and at times would not be made for months at a time. When cream and eggs gained a commercial value, the trips became weekly and the farmers rigs would line up for blocks around the business section of every town. Usually several creameries vied for the trade and "the cream and egg", money was the only money some of the farmers saw for long periods of time.

Grocery stores had very few canned goods, most items were sold in the bulk. There were lots of smells including kerosene which everyone needed for their lamps and lanterns.

It is hard to imagine now what a terrible pest the housefly was. There were billions of them and they got into everything. They were filthy and went from barn and manure piles to hog pens to

toilets and into homes. The horses and cattle had to fight them constantly. Screened doors were often completely covered and they swarmed inside every time the door was opened. Fly swatters and fly traps didn't make a dent in them.

Rats and mice were very destructive pests and they managed to get into everything. Their burroughs sometimes under mined homes and barns. Traps and poisons did not phase them.

There were few doctors, but they did make house calls. They serviced quite large areas and either walked or used a horse for transportation. They were called mostly in emergencies and tended everyone impartially. There were many contagious diseases and few vaccines or medicines.

Nellie's first doll was made by mother from scraps of cloth and the face was just painted on, but she was thrilled with it and loved it for many years.

At her early Christmases there were no presents, just candies and maybe an orange or an apple.

Women and girls never cut their and it grew long. They spent lots of time combing and braiding it and coiled it in many shapes held with many hair pins.

Most of the women and girls wore hats and even then it was popular to get a new hat for Easter. The Millinery stores were wonderful to behold with hats of all shapes and decorated with cloth and ribbons and beads and feathers. Very seldom were any two made alike.

Girls as well as boys wore long underwear called "union suits", in the winter. The first of April got to be celebrated as the day you could take off your longies. Nellie confesses that she sometimes rolled the legs up past her knees when she didn't think her mom would fine out.

Now many many years later, many of these scenes come vividly back to mind and the loves and hates and thrills and sorrows are still felt as strongly as they were then.

FRANK BESSLER THE RICH RELATIVE

Frank Bessler spent most of his adult life around Akron, Ohio. After he married Carrie Bowland (Nellies older sister), he managed to make a living as a carpenter. He tried a number of things and had several inventions. He invented the first disappearing stairway and had a factory know as the Bessler Stairway Company for many years in Akron. He made a small fortune.

He was a Catholic and Carrie joined the church when they married. They strongly supported the church all their life. They never had any children. He built a beautiful home on Portage Lake south of Akron. At one time he owned about ten houses on the lake.

Note from Marge: When Aunt Carrie and Uncle Frank came to visit, all the neighborhood kids managed to come around because he would take a big roll of bills out of his pocket and give all the kids a dollar.

He left his estate in trust in favor of the church but Carrie was permitted to the company profits the rest of her life. Carrie ran the company for a number of years and left a sizable estate to her relatives when she died. The factory and real estate was held in trust in the hands of the lawyer who drew up the wills.

Note from Marge: (As I remember the story. she left about \$20,000 to each of her sisters and her brother. The rest was supposed to go to the Catholic church. The lawyer however got her to break the trust and sell the company and in the end, he ended up with the bulk of the estate including the homes on the lake.) Some family members and some people from the Catholic church tried to contest it but to no avail.

Frank couldn't read or write very well and his secretary recorded intimate experiences in a little notebook.

When Carrie died I read some of these notes and he said that on several occasions he had been transported in his sleep to a heavenly area where he met Christ and other biblical characters and that he saw and talked to a dog with a mans head.

Note from Marge: I wonder what he was smoking.

Carrie Bessler has been dead many years now and it has just dawned on me that many blessings have graced me and my family since knowing these people.

GRANDPA STORIES

LITTLE BOY LOST

This is a story they tell about me. I was just a toddler. We lived in Washington, Kansas near the railroad tracks. I had wandered away one day and came to a man selling apples out of a boxcar. I guess he gave me an apple and I wouldn't leave. It was getting late and he wanted to leave and he didn't want to leave me alone, so he took me by the hand and house after house he tried to get me to go in. He finally came to our house and I went right in. My mother came out to thank him and it was her older brother who lived in a neighboring town and had come just to sell the apples.

GROWING UP

I used to like to hunt, fish, trap and just explore, when I was young and had enough free reign to become intimately acquainted with the creeks, the woods, and the fields for miles around.

The only way we had to get somewhere was to ride "shank horses", (that means to walk) and I wore out many a pair of shoes, which were very hard to come by.

I recall hunting one day miles from home and walking quietly up a small gully and coming face to face with some animal in a bush just a few feet away. I just looked at it and it looked at me for what seemed like a full minute. I first thought it might be a baby sheep but decided it must be a jack rabbit, so I shot and killed it. It was a big one. I cut a small slit in his leg where there is a strong tendon and strung him on my belt. I was pretty good sized and his head drug on the ground. He was heavy and by the time I got him home I was tuckered out.

Jack rabbit meat tastes a little wild and strong, but we ground it up and mom mixed it with hamburger and sausage, and it was real good.

They are nearly all gone now. The last ones I ever saw were on a prairie in western Texas.

FISHING FOR A COW

Would you believe Dick and Ronnie went fishing for carp (big fish) and caught a cow.

All the family remember Tillie that we raised. We all loved her. She was a pure Jersey cow and a more perverse critter was never born. She would run away every chance she could, and I swear she just watched for a chance to put her foot in the bucket when I went to milk her. Feed was scarce and expensive and on occasions we would put a long rope around her neck and one of the boys would "herd" her along the side of the road.

Now about the fishing bit. The boys, Dick and Ronnie, had been swimming and fishing in Plumb Creek and had learned that if they pulled up some oats from the farmers field, they could make a small bundle and tie it with fish-cord on which they tied some fish hooks. They would throw this bundle into the creek and the carp would get caught trying to get the oats.

In getting ready for the next days fishing, they fixed one of these bundles and put it in the barn.

Now Tillie liked oats too, and when they were bringing her home instead of going into her pen where she belonged, she went into the barn and got the bundle of oats.

I was close by and saw we had trouble, so I caught her and tried to get the bundle away from her but some hooks had caught in her mouth and then some were caught in my clothes so I twisted her head till she fell down and I held her and hollered to my wife, "Bring me the butcher knife".

Nellie was in the kitchen door just a few feet away screaming "No, no, you can't have it. I won't let you kill her."

I was finally able to make her understand I wanted to cut the cord and not the cow, so she gave me the knife and I got free and reached down Tillies throat and got the rest of the hooks.

So that was the way the boys went fishing and caught a cow.



A WINE TASTING PARTY

In the year of 1940, we were living in a small five room house on a small acreage in Wymore, Nebraska. We had a small pasture, a cow, a pig, a flock of chickens, a nice garden spot and some grape vines.

We had got thru some very trying years with no prospect of things getting better. Declining work on the railroad had eliminated my hopes of a future there.

As fall approached our chickens gave us eggs, the cow gave us milk and the garden had produced generously and the grapevines were loaded with grapes. Nellie canned vegetables and made grape jelly, but I still had a couple bushels of grapes.

I got a wooden keg and stuffed the grapes in it with a little sugar and in a couple of weeks I had a couple gallons of good wine that I put in fruit jars and stored in the wine cellar which was not connected to the house.

In October I went to Chicago looking for work and the second factory that I applied at hired me and I went to work the next day. I worked for Verson All Steel Press for thirty years. I worked there a year before I had enough money to pay off all our debts in Wymore, get an apartment on 79th street in Chicago, order 3 rooms of furniture which I paid for at the rate of \$5.00 a month, and bring the family to Chicago.

Nellie had written to me that the wine I had made had been exploding over the year and she would clean up the broken glass.

After the war broke out, some of the neighbor kids would be sent to Great Lakes Naval Station, just north of Chicago, for boot training. Often times they would call us and come to see us on the weekends, or we would go up and see them. On this particular weekend, one of them got in touch with me, so I made a trip up there to see him. We had lunch together and visited.

He jokingly told me that after I left for Chicago, some of the kids would be playing at our house and after my kids went in, the older boys would go to the cellar and drink a bottle of wine and break the bottles so my wife wouldn't know. After drinking the wine they had a great time running and chasing each other and tumbling in the grass.

When I got home and told Nellie - she couldn't believe it of those nice neighborhood boys. I asked her if she didn't ever wonder why there was no wine spilled when the bottles exploded?

A HALLOWEEN TALE

October 31, is observed by some sects as All Saints Day, and the night before is called Halloween. On that night, mysterious gremlins roamed freely and committed many pranks to pester and mystify the people.

One of the pranks was to tip over small sheds and privies. For the benefit of later generations who might not know about outside toilets, they were known by several names, latrines, out houses, privies and crappers were among the nicer names.

Now a privy is a small building that is placed over a hole that has been dug in the ground. Inside the little house is a bench with two or three holes of different sizes to fit different size seats. These holes were used the same as the toilets in your homes today, only there was no flushing. They were quite odorous and a home for flies, wasps, bugs, rats and mice, but they served the purpose and every family had one.

Now to get on with my story. In 1938 we lived in Wymore, Nebraska and we had quite a nice sturdy privy. That year the gremlins came early and several nights before Halloween they turned over my crapper.

I was aware of the tradition and had in my younger days even helped out the gremlins, so I took it good naturedly and put it upright again over the hole.

Well the next night they came again and again I replaced it.

The next night was Halloween and I figured the gremlins would strike again, so at dusk I moved the privy forward just off the hole and covered the back of the hole with corn stalks and went into the house for supper.

While we were eating we heard a commotion out back. I took a light and went out to investigate. My toilet was still standing but someone had been down in the hole and you could see the marks in the dirt where he had clawed his way out.

I replaced it again where it belonged and the word must have been passed, because my outhouse was never molested again.

I told my wife and kids not to tell anyone about it and maybe we could find out who the culprit was.

It was several days later that a neighbor boy stopped by in the morning to walk to school with my kids and as they weren't quite ready, he sat in the kitchen talking to my wife Nellie, and he said to her "Mrs. Schmidt will you tell your husband to be more careful when he replaces his toilet - the last time he didn't quite get it on the hole".

FUN IN THE EARLY 1900'S

My early days were spent near the railroad tracks; I spent lots of time there as there were so many interesting things to see. The trains came daily and the engines would take on coal from a large coal shed and water from a huge water tower that had a big chute that looked like an elephant's trunk.

It was always interesting when the passenger trains arrived, as there were people coming and going and there was freight to load and unload. There was always a hack driven by a horse to pick up the salesmen and take them to the hotel. There was also lots of 5 gallon cream cans loaded to be sent to a creamery in another town. Since the train had a schedule, all of this was taken care of as fast as possible. The loud engine whistle made you jump if you were near by.

The station building was large enough for an office, a storage room and a washing room that always had a big warm heating stove when the weather was cold.

There was a telegraph operator who sat in a little cubicle where he could see the track both ways, and his telegraph machine was constantly rattling, sending messages. He was there all day long, everyday.

The coal shed was a large dirty building. A car of coal would be positioned in back of it so that the coal shed man could scoop the coal into the shed. There were many iron buckets and each held half a ton of coal. He would fill and position each bucket in the center of the floor where a swinging hoist, run by hand, would lift the bucket to the second floor and store it for easy handling to put into the engines.

Near the station house was a large grain elevator. Wagon loads of grain could be driven into the building and a devise would hold the wagon and then lift it up so the grain would fall into a big bin underneath the building.

There was a conveyor belt with small buckets spaced on it that reached from the bottom pit to the top of the building and the grain could be raised to a storage bin in the upper part. From there gravity would fill the railroad box cars.

A short distance away was an oil house with several large steel storage tanks. A car of oil could be positioned and the oil pumped into the tanks. The building was large enough that the oil man could drive an oil truck pulled by two big mules thru it. With the wagon in place, he could pump it full. All the pumps were operated by hand.

Coal oil was the most used oil as everybody needed it for lamps and lanterns. Coal oil Johnny would drive out in the country to every farm, where farmers would buy five gallons or fill a 50 gallon drum.

Another place where we used to play, was on a turn table that would turn the engine around when they desired to go a different direction. There was a pit with a circular track in it and a carriage holding the engine, and when balanced, the table could be turned by hand.

There was quite a large stock yards that we loved to play in when there weren't any cattle in it. We would walk on the top rails, playing "Dare You". It must have been about the last of the cattle era, because I cannot remember many cattle being shipped.

There was also a section men's tool house. The section men would ride to work on a hand car with pump handles for several men to pump.

A GOPHER

A gopher is a furry little varmint that burrows in the ground and leaves a large pile of dirt at its entrance which it always closes. You can tell exactly where the entrance is because there is always a faint circle in an otherwise smooth mound. If you dig carefully at that spot, you will find this open burrough which is his home. He lives on the roots of plants that he finds in the ground.

I don't think anyone paid much attention to them until the farmers started raising alfalfa for hay and the gophers thrived on these fields and they became a great pest and the mounds so numerous that the farmer had a lot of trouble cutting and raking his hay.

Finally to help the farmer, a law was passed and the government would pay a bounty of five cents for every gopher scalp.

This induced many people to trap them and some old characters made a living at it and were called "Gopher Hunters". Lots of kids, me included, use this means to get some spending money.

We used a small victor spring jawed trap and placed it in the cleaned out burrough and then it had to be carefully covered, because if the gopher saw any light he would shove dirt and spring the trap.

After many years the farmers found out they could put poisoned wheat in the burroughs and exterminate them.

RAILROADING

I started out quite early in my working life working for the railroad, and in those days they were very active and hadn't been in operation very long.

First I worked a short time doing extra work as a candy-dancer or section hand and we worked with a pick and shovel and kept the road bed in shape straightening the rails and putting in new ties under the rails. Eight or ten men worked under a foreman and we took care of about twenty miles of track. The work was hard and tiresome, but once you were "broke in" it didn't seem so bad. The pay was very low.

Next I worked as a helper on a bridge gang. A crew was eight or ten men, mostly carpenters, and we repaired and built bridges large and small. Our territory was about 100 miles long and we lived in "crummymys" or box cars with doors in that were arranged for us to live in with beds or bunks and stoves to cook our meals and keep warm.

The "crummymys" were kept on a side track in the town closest to the bridge we were repairing. We would live in these cars for a week at a time, only going home for Sundays. We would ride back and forth on a small motor car that would barely hold all of us.

We had all kinds of tools, shovels, axes, hammers, jacks, ropes and chains.

The work was hard and we were out in all except the worst storms and at times we were either terribly cold or terribly hot.

We took turns cooking our food and you can just bet it wasn't the best of food, but we managed to survive on it. At nights we were so tired we could sleep anywhere.

We also repaired depots, coal sheds and stock yards, so there was always lots of jobs ahead to do.

Shortly after Nellie and I married, I went to work in the "round house" in Wymore, Nebraska.

Wymore was a division point with trains running in all directions. It was on a mainline from St. Joseph, Missouri to Denver, Colorado. There were times when as many as thirty trains ran there in a day and the engines and cars were serviced there.

There was also a "rip track" setup to repair and rebuild freight cars, and at times as many as a thousand men worked for the railroad in Wymore.

As I said, I started in the "round house" a large circular building where the steam engines were stored. There were twenty four stalls all leading to a "turn table" which also linked outgoing and incoming tracks.

The labor gang that I started on had from ten to twenty men under a foreman, and we did a number of cleaning and labor jobs, but mainly we worked to clean and shine up the engines when they were to depart. One man would wash the windows and clean the head light. Two men would wipe and shine the upper part of the engine while two more would wipe the wheels and the side racks. Another man would clean the water tank right behind the engine. Another man would put graphite on the smoke stack to make it shine like silver. There was also brass to shine on the valves, the whistle and the bell.

There were three eight hour shifts, and the new men soon ended up on night jobs, since there was a seniority program. Thus older employees got the better or easier jobs.

The work force in the round house consisted of machinists and helpers, boiler makers and helpers, pipe fitters and helpers, flue blowers, fire builders, grease monkeys, boiler washers and helpers. tank machinists and helpers, electricians and helpers, inspectors, hostellers and helpers along with a number of foremen and superintendents.

At first there were very few electric lights and at night everyone had a small oil torch with a wire handle he could hang it up with.

Everything was very greasy or dirty, and we wore heavy clothes to try to keep clean. We wore overalls and jackets most of the time and we wore a bandanna kerchief around our neck.

We would try to wear these clothes a week, but many times they doubled their weight with dirt the first day.

There was much seasonal work during the summer when the wheat harvests were moving but when that was over they would reduce the forces and there were periods in the winter when there was no work, so we were usually in debt to the grocers and doctors by spring. Then during the summer we had to work very hard to try to get paid up before another slack time came.

I stayed with the railroad for fifteen years and eventually became quite capable at most of the jobs I have listed and I would jump from one job to another to try to hold a job. A general decline of the railroads reduced forces so drastically that I could only hold a job for a few months in the summer so I had to find other employment.

The once massive round house, train tracks, coal sheds, water towers and store houses in Wymore are all gone now with only a few of the tracks left and only a couple of freight trains a day. The things I tell you about now are just ghosts of memories.

BIG EXPLOSION

This happened during the early days when I was working in Wymore, Nebraska on the railroad.

A small freight train coming to Wymore struck an oil tanker right at the end of main street in Blue Springs.

The explosion killed the truck driver, the train engineer and fireman and also a bum that had hitched a ride on the train.

The train kept going but stopped when the caboose was even with the burning tanker. Several railroad men were trapped in the railroad car. One man was George Clark, a close family friend. They all miraculously escaped.

I was working at the roundhouse at the time with Doug Vernon, Paul's uncle. As soon as the news of the accident came to Wymore, Doug and I were ordered to go and take care of the locomotive. We were immediately taken to the wreck.

The engine had broken free from the train and had gone several rods before the open train brake line caused the brakes to set on the train and the engine.

When we climbed on the engine the throttle was still open. We immediately closed it, set the independent engine brake and shut off the broken hose at the back of the tender, allowing the air pump to build up pressure to release the brakes.

We were able to repair the damage to the front of the cowcatcher that had hit the tanker, the engine could now be moved and brought back to the round house, just a mile away.

ABOUT STEAM LOCOMOTIVES

The use of steam for power is a relatively new invention. It is said a man got the idea when he saw the lid pop off a boiling tea kettle.

The idea spread rapidly and was used to propel boats, run stationary engines and to haul cars on tracks. Early locomotives had to compete with running men and horses, but steam power soon proved its worth.

Countries that used the steam engine developed much faster than others, and the United States far surpassed all the rest.

Congress, reluctant to invest dollars for promotion did donate thousands of acres of land that started a race to take the rails from coast to coast and to every state in the union. Thousands of stories of the problems and hardships are recorded in the libraries and museums.

A locomotive is merely a tea-kettle designed to heat water efficiently and control the pressure developed and convert it to make the wheels move.

The boiler of the locomotive is shaped around a fire-box and many long tubes carry the smoke to the smoke stack on the front end. Water surrounds the tubes and absorbs the heat and it turns to steam.

The area next to the fire-box is strengthened every few inches with "stay bolts" which are heavy threaded rods about an inch in diameter. They hold the inner and outer sheets in align. Since these bolts expand and contract so much from the heat, they do occasionally break inside the sheets. To locate the broken bolts, small holes are drilled partly thru the bolt and when it breaks, a small jet of steam locates the broken member and it can be replaced.

It is very important that water be maintained in the boiler high enough to cover all the heat tubes, otherwise they would melt and an explosion would occur.

These tubes corrode from the water and in places become as thin as this sheet of paper, and still not leak with 200 lbs of pressure.

On top on the boiler are two large domes. One contains fine sand that can be blown under the drive wheels for better traction when the track is wet or slippery. There are small valves within reach of the engineer to be used when necessary.

The other dome is part of the boiler and contains the throttle valve which permits the steam to go to the cylinders and then exhausted into the smoke-stack in puffs. A long rod from the throttle extends into the engine cab and a lever enables the engineer to open or close the valve as he chooses.

The drive wheels of the locomotive are quite different in size. In general, the larger wheels are used on faster trains like the passenger trains, while the smaller wheels are used when more power was needed like on freight trains or in the mountains.

All of the drive wheels of a locomotive have tires that can be removed. They are several inches thick and are contoured to "ride the rail". To remove or put on a tire, a pipe ring with holes inside is placed around the jacked up wheel and oil is blown into it and ignited so a ring of fire encircles the flange and heats it till it expands enough to remove or install. Metals expand at a certain rate for every degree of heat and it is call the "coefficient of expansion". Knowing the size of the wheel and the rim when it is cold, it is easily figured how much shim to place between them to assure when the tire shrinks into place it will have enough tension to remain firmly in place. The tires are continually checked for contour and relationship with the wheel opposite it.

The small wheels on the front of the locomotive carry a little of the weight and help guide the larger wheels on the track.

It was discovered, that if a jet of steam was shot into a stream of cold water, that a greater pressure than the steam alone was created. Using this principle, cold water could be induced into the boiler to replace the used steam. These units were called "injectors".

There are two sets of brakes on a locomotive. One controls the brakes on the locomotive itself and another set that controls all the brakes on all the cars of the train. They are controlled by air and until they were perfected, it was very hard to control the movement of a train.

Even today, it takes a part of a mile to make an emergency stop of a train going 50 miles an hour. The engineer has no way to dodge an accident.

A large air pump is fixed to the side of the locomotive and automatically maintains a steady air pressure that is stored in tanks on the engine and also under each of the cars. Full pressure must be pumped up before the train can move. All parts of the brake system is carefully checked every time the engine is serviced.

When an engine finished a "run" it is turned over to a "Hosteler" who positions the engine at a sand toner and the sand box is filled with sand. Next it is positioned at a coal chute where the tender is filled with coal. It is usually nearly empty. Next it is placed at a water toner where a large pipe fills the water tank.

Many thousands of gallons of water are carried on the large engines. Water is must and should it ever run out the fire must be extinguished and the engine permitted to "die" or cool off naturally to prevent damage to the boiler.

Next the engine is positioned over a deep pit and the fire and all the ashes are removed. The running gears are then thoroughly washed with jets of steam and hot water.

When all of this has been completed, it is then run onto the turn-table and aligned with a stall in the roundhouse.

When inside the roundhouse, the drive wheels are blocked and the steam and hot water is removed from the boiler. Servicing can then begin preparing for the next run.

A small steam driven generator on top of the engine provides electricity for the headlight and the lites in the cab.

These series of steps necessary to store the locomotive took about half an hour to and hour and shows a small segment of the work necessary to take care of a steam locomotive.

TELEGRAPH

Another occupation connected with the railroad, that is now extinct, was the telegraph operators.

Like railroads, the telegraph was a new invention and the need for communication was so great that wherever the rails were laid, there was also a line of poles carrying a single wire for a telegraph.

A telegraph instrument could be connected to the wire anywhere and a message could be sent a letter at a time by dots and dashes.

A small electric switch was touched, the instrument made a sharp click which was a dot. To hold the switch an instant more was to make a dash. So many dots and so many dashes represented a letter and the letters connected made words. With practice one could become quite fast in sending and receiving messages.

Whenever they made a railroad station, there was added a telegraph office and a telegraph to send, receive and record messages.

Many of these messages were instructions for the railroad, but anyone could send a message. The cost was so much a word which made it quite expensive, so they would keep the messages as short as possible.

In large towns or junctions, there were many wires and many operators to help relay the messages.

There are still some radio stations that use the telegraph system and the Morse Code. The Morse Code was one code accepted all over the world. You can usually find one of these stations on the short wave dial of a radio.

Now automatic communications can send and receive hundreds of messages over one wire at the same time.

The thousands of telegraph operators had to find other ways of making a living when the railroads cut back.

SMOKING IS BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH

I have mentioned that back in my high school days I was employed as a clerk in the local hotel. First as a night clerk and later as a day clerk over a period of about a year.

One of my duties after breakfast, when the trade had quieted down, was to stack the many chairs in the lobby, sweep and scrub the floor, gather up all the spittoons, take them out back, wash and scour them. Some were shallow pans with brass covers and some were quite large brass balloon shaped containers with a flared top.

It was quite popular in those days to smoke, or chew and spit tobacco. Most of the chewing tobacco had been pressed into hard cakes about one half inch thick and was then cut into two inch squares for sale. Horseshoe was the most popular brand.

A user would manage to bite or twist off a chunk of the plug, put it in his cheek and from time to time chew on it. Being it was quite strong, it was seldom swallowed but was spit out.

Many of the more prominent citizens preferred cigars, while some preferred a pipe which came in different shapes and sizes. The most popular pipe tobacco brands were Prince Albert, Velvet and Tuxedo. This tobacco could also be used to make hand made cigarettes. Packaged cigarettes were not yet on the market.

Cigarette smokers used mostly Bull Durham, which came in small cloth bags for a nickel. Each bag had a packet of cigarette papers. A paper was held in the hand in a dished manner and a portion of tobacco was then placed on the paper and carefully rolled into a cylinder shape, licking the edge of the paper at the end to make it stick together. They had to be smoked right away. They were popular with cowboys and outdoor men.

Cigars were a source of income to the hotel and a special case was used to display many different brands. The case was humidified with a large sponge in a pan of water. There were cigars in square tin cans that sold for a nickel apiece. Most were in wooden boxes that held 50 cigars, some cigars costing as much as 50 cents apiece. The empty boxes were used in nearly every household to store small objects.

I once accompanied a friend who was employed as a stripper by a cigar maker. The tobacco came in full leaf shapes and were kept moist to keep them in a leathery condition. The leaf would be smoothed out on a flat surface and the vein cords were carefully

removed. The cigar maker would take portions of these leaves and roll them into the cigar shape.

The first boughten cigarettes were available in the drug stores and were called Quebabs and were not made from tobacco but from some weed that I have been told was marijuana and was recommended for coughs and colds.

Now I smoked most of my life, starting with natural curiosity. We took dried silks from the end of an ear of corn and rolled them up in a piece of paper. We tried the seed pods from the catalpa trees, also a weed called Indian tobacco that looked kind of like tobacco. We found some porous roots that we could suck smoke through. We tried tobacco but didn't like it much. I didn't smoke much during school days, but soon after started rolling my own. I recall that at one time I had a small machine that would hold a cigarette paper and when tobacco was put in it, zip and you had a firmly made cigarette.

When I worked on the railroad, they did not allow smoking and I used snuff for a number of years.

I never considered myself a heavy smoker, seldom more than a pack a day. Eventually the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night.

It was gradually taking its toll on my lungs and by the time I was 60, I was having spasmodic coughing spells and shortness of breath. I struggled along with this until I retired at 65. I had tried to quit a number of times but always wound up sneaking an occasional smoke. Finally, completely disgusted with myself, I quit cold turkey and haven't had a smoke in fifteen years.

My lungs have recovered some and I can breathe freely and very seldom cough. I feel like a new man.

(This was written when pop was about 80. Since then he had the heart operation and his lungs were a major part of his recovery. It was hard getting him off of the respirator because his lungs were not strong. Some of the damage smoking does can never be repaired).

THE GOOD LIFE

SCHMIDT BROTHERS REUNION 1979

(This is a letter written in April 1979 regarding a reunion in California of Pop, Rene, Dale and Don)

Dear -----,

As we continue with our California vacation, we will skip to about the second week of March. Verda and Nellie spotted some nice material in the cut rate stores so Verda worked like crazy Friday and Saturday and into Sunday to finish Nellie a pant suit complete with a neck piece and Sunday afternoon, Nellie and Verda went to a church function to show off the new clothes.

On the 6th of March, Rene and Verda took us on a nice long ride into the mountains in the Palmyra area. We were high enough to see snow at the side of the road. In one valley we stopped for an hour at an old church that was built the first of the century and is still in use today. The old cemetery next to it had many old graves that were just marked with a cross of wood.

Some of the mountains were cut up with angling roads and fruit trees were planted on the steep slopes. When the fruits were harvested, they just slid the fruit down to the next road and it was carted away. We drove many back roads that were very scenic and some a little scary.

Wednesday the 7th, there was a lot of cooking going on getting ready for a family reunion planned for March 18th.

Will quickly skip about a week in which brother Dale and his wife Cedalia have arrived in the area from Brookings, Oregon and daughter Marjorie had come from Park Forest. Lots of time was spent getting reacquainted and talking of old times back in Kansas.

On March 13, Marjorie, Dale, Cede, Nellie and I drove up to Don's place in Garden Grove to get in a little visiting with him.

Can you imagine anyone getting to the age of 63 and never having had a birthday party? Well we changed that situation for Cedalia Schmidt. It took some finagling but they cooked up a surprise party with a special baked cake, balloons, hats, squealers and games. She was surprised and thrilled and said that was the first boughten bouquet of flowers she had ever gotten.

We came back to Carlsbad on the 5th. Followed the road along the ocean and the weather was sunny and warm. Stopped in a lovely park on the beach and had cheese and crackers and fed the many sea gulls that joined us.

We've had many thrills since coming here, but another biggie was in store for us on Friday, March 16th. we got up at 5 a.m. and drove thirty miles to San Diego where we were part of local T.V. show interviewing Lawrence Welk.

We sat in the front row and blew bubbles and hollered when they introduced him. He talked to anyone who wanted to ask him a question and also played a few pieces on his accordion. Cedalia requested him to play Peg O My Heart and she had to stand while he played just to her. Then he danced with some of the women and Marjorie got to make a few waltz turns with him. During the commercial breaks we talked to him informally and told hem we were from Chicago and he said he had many fond memories of playing the Trianon Ball Room there. He signed autographs and talked to everyone after the interview was over. This was presented live on the local C.B.S. T.V. station but I have no idea how large of a viewing audience they had. So far we have not had any requests for a rerun.

On Sunday, Don's were down and Verda had a feast of roast turkey and roast ham with all the side dishes. She had invited some of her family and friends. It was a regal salute to the Schmidt reunion in California in 1979.

(There was more to this letter about all the places and things they saw, but thought this was interesting about their reunion. There were originally six Schmidt brothers. Lionel, born in 1904, died at birth, or anyway the first year of life, Kenneth Oswald (Oswald his mother's maiden name) born in 1905. Malcom Rene (know as Rene) born in 1909, Wilbur Dale (known as Dale) born in 1911, Mancil Dudley born in 1914 and died in 1932 at age 18 from diphtheria or pneumonia, and last but not least Donald Dean, born in 1923, and an absolute dreamboat and the casanova of the Schmidt family. He died of cancer, sometime in the 1970's. Pop had three kids, Rene had one son, Barry, Dale, no children and Don had two children, Marcella Posy, and Mark, and I've heard rumors that he had a few we don't know about.

OUR SURPRISE 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

For the past several years, Nellie and I have gone to Peoria, Illinois in October and with our son Richard and his wife, Marylyn, have gone on the SPOON RIVER DRIVE.

The SPOON RIVER DRIVE is an annual occasion on two week ends in October that starts about fifty miles west of Peoria on the Spoon River and a route leads you back and forth across the river between small towns and ends at the Indian Mounds about forty miles south of Peoria. Each small town or community tries to have something of interest for the visitors and they can hopefully see the beautiful fall colors of the trees and shrubbery.

Our daughter Marjorie, and her husband, Frank, had consented to join us this year so on October 11, Nellie and I and Ronnie drove to Peoria and stayed overnight and the next morning Frank and Marjorie and Cindy drove down and joined us.

After some hassle Dick managed to get Nellie and I ,Marjorie, Frank and Cindy in the car and we got out to the London Mills in time to have some ham and beans cooked in an iron pot over an open fire for lunch.

We took in the sights and followed the route for a couple of hours and as everyone seemed to be getting a little tired, we broke it off and drove back to Peoria. On the way home Dick mentioned he had arranged to take us all out to dinner at the Timber Lake Club. After resting a bit we all cleaned up and Dick, Marylyn, Frank, Marjorie and Nellie and I started out for a nice quiet supper. The girls all had some excuse they could not go with us.

As we arrived at the top of the stairs of the darkened upper dining room of the club, the lights flared up and dozens of voices were heard calling "Surprise - Surprise" and a glimpse of some of our square dance friends and some of our children made us realize we had been had again.

We were ushered to the quest table with an anniversary cake three feet high in the center and we were seated with our sons and daughter and their spouses. We were facing the tables along the wall filled with family and friends with everyone at their places and above the din the champaign corks began popping.

After many toasts the waitresses appeared and we were served a delicious steak dinner that Nellie and I could hardly choke down. We wanted to laugh and cry at the same time as our befuddled brains absorbed each and new spectacle of the scene.

We opened an impressive looking treasure chest to find a money tree covered with ten dollar bills and an anniversary album to keep our records of the event.

The orchestra started up soon after and everyone danced and drank. During the intermission Art Mathews, a square dance caller and friend from Chicago, set up his equipment which he had brought along, and called a couple of dances just for us.

Pandemonium reigned until 12 o'clock when we had to be out of the club. Forty of our square dance friends from Chicago, 180 miles away, had combined with our son from Pittsburg, PA and his family, and were staying in the Motel 6 and a room was reserved there for Nellie and I. We all went there after the party and room hopped and visited till everyone was tired out and went to bed sometime towards morning.

The next morning, Sunday, we got up and went to breakfast with our friends. The perfect weather we had been having had changed and it was raining and that kind of put a damper on things, so we stayed at the motel and visited until about noon when most of the folks took off for home.

The festivities weren't completely over as Marylyn had invited the family and a few friends to a fabulous feast for dinner and we all gathered at Dicks house for the rest of the day.

This was the first time for many years the whole family had been together at one time, so there was a lot of getting reacquainted to do and there were gifts from the family to open and more champaign to drink.

We had reserved a room at the motel for the second night to be with Ron and his family and Charlie and Annie, Nellie's sister who had come from Nebraska, so we got in a little more visiting late in the evening there.

We got up early the next morning and had breakfast with Ron and his family, so they could get an early start back to Pittsburg.

This was such a fabulous affair an it means so much to us this late in life. We were never much good at verbally expressing our sincere affection but we would be broken hearted if anyone felt the least bit slighted from anything we may have said or did. Our hearts are full of love for everyone of you and always will be as long as we live.

So many had to contribute so much to make this celebration the success that it was and I want to mention a few things that are in our mind.

Marylyn and Marjorie who evidently engineered much of this event, contacting the different people, and taking care of the reservations at the Motel and the Club. The cake that was falling apart as it was being taken from the baker and having to find another baker who would bake a new one and have it ready in three hours. The reservations for the motel that were sent to us and had to be explained.

Forty square dancers who go 180 miles for such you have to question their sanity. Doc and Dorothy coming from Saugutuck, MI and then only getting in a game and a half of golf. Norma Thomas who passed up her own sisters anniversary to be with us. Art and Mickey who drove to the north side of Chicago and picked up Paul and Jerry and then called a dance especially for us. Robin Mathews who came along because she wanted to, bless her. Butch and Pat who had an obligation in Green Bay, WI, but who managed to keep it and get back to Peoria to be with us. To Vi Jandeska, who helped get the Circle 8 gang together.

Kathy missing homecoming the last year in college, Bill Schmidt trying to entertain and welcome the guests as they arrived at the motel. Nellie's sister Annie and her husband surprising us again as they did 25 years ago. Roni and Jan taking over the decorations and arrangements at the club. Ron getting his gang together for three days and driving from Pittsburg, and not once did any to them act bored even when it rained. Phil and Ray didn't have to far to come, but the last time we visited him he was in the hospital. Jim and Robin managing to work this in on a busy schedule at school. Little Billy, the only baby in the family right now, nearly stealing the show.

All this from a guy and a gal who had a lot of love for each other and little else fifty years ago, have found they now have a lot of people to love and so much to be grateful for.

88TH BIRTHDAY

Written about the end of October in 1993:

I would like to share my 88th birthday with you.

For several months, my daughter Marjorie had promised me a trip to Titusville in southern Illinois to see my grandson and his family.

The grandchildren chipped in to pay for a nights stay at the Ox-Bow Bed and Breakfast in Titusville.

The bed was in a barn that had been built in 1905 and had been historically restored in 1985 to living quarters. The large beams, posts and rafters were hand hewn and held together with wood dowels. The interior was lined with old barn siding. There was lots of old household relics on the walls. There was a nice small kitchenette. The master bed was a huge 4 poster bed on a raised diaz, with a canopy and curtains.

Our genial host and his wife had also restored their large house that was nearby and had several rooms to rent. A tour of this home was like going to a museum.

Doc O'Bannion is 68 and has many talents and has had a wide variety of work and experiences in his lifetime. He was at present building garages.

He has also written and published a book "No Peace for a Rebel" about battles and skirmishes in the Civil War, along with incidents that could have happened in that era. Marjorie bought me a copy, which he autographed. I have read it thru and enjoyed it.

The next day we checked into a motel and were joined there with my son Dick and his wife Marylyn, grandson Bill and family, granddaughter Jani and family and granddaughters Roni and Cindy.

We had a nice visit and all went out to a steak dinner at the Ponderosa.

Back to the motel to lite the candles and cut the cake.

It is always a happy event when the Schmidts and Patons get together.

The trip down and back was a pleasure, past the nearly endless fields of ripening corn, soy beans and milo maze.

Many, many thanks.

A POEM FOR BILL AND NELLIE

Did anyone ever write a poem just for you? This one came from Ray and Betty Bessler, friends of Dick and Marylyn's for our 65th wedding anniversary.

We know that 65 is an awful lot of years,
Probably full of happiness,
But there must have been some tears.

During the Prairie "Nebraska Years,"
I'm sure you tired of raising kinds and calming fears
Sorting the navy beans from the stones,
A-fixing kids cuts and broken bones

But now you've passed "The Golden Years"
and added fifteen more
We bet that raising Dick, Ron and Marj
No longer seems such a chore

And now our wishes for coming years
Are ones of fun, joy and cheer
Bill and Nellie we wish you all the best
For 89 and all the rest

Dear Friends and Family:

Our sincere thanks for your consideration and love at this difficult time.

When Nellie came into this world there was little acclaim, but when she left the heavens must have been alerted and paved her way.

Anyone viewing Nellie's last days could not help but feel relieved at her leaving her earthly troubles.

The doctor and nurse who had attended our many afflictions in the past ten years showed their affection for Nellie by attending the wake.

If God places angles here on earth, he must have sent one to help Nellie in the last weeks of her life.

Kristine Kapinow, a 40 year old Polish woman, brought to this country a month previous by a Polish agency was assigned to us as her first case. She could not speak English so our communication was a game of charades.

Kristine attended to all Nellie's needs and loved and comforted her. In the hours of the long nights, any movement brought her to her side. The compassion was absolute. She also cleaned, and even did windows, - Nellie loved her.

The services were attended by our quite large family, which included all three children and spouses, all eleven grandchildren and seven of the ten great grandchildren. Neighbors, friends, and many square dancers whose friendships have lasted nearly half a century were present.

The woman in the casket was the woman I had loved these many years and not the frail woman who finished her life in her own bed. She was beautiful, leaving us with a happy memory.

The chapel services on Saturday were conducted by Rev. De Vries of Calvary Church who spoke of the lives Nellie had touched and also extended the comforting hope of a future life.

Many accompanied us to the Chapel Hill Gardens where no grave stones hamper its peaceful solemnity.

The seed of our resolution to promote better family relation was planted many years hence with cards and letters and a family reunion held every two years, which is going to be held again this year in July by popular acclaim.

In the evening after the burial the immediate families gathered at the Hampton Motel pool where the younger generation could work off some of their energy and the older ones could visit.

Sunday morning we again gathered for breakfast where we could make our final good-byes.

We are eternally grateful to our daughter Marjorie and her husband Frank, who have shared our many afflictions these past years.

We are grateful for a life of many blessings and no regrets.

Love to all,

Kenneth and Nellie Schmidt

CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

Trip to Europe - all expenses paid

FORENOTE

In the year 1970, the United States and Russia were in a cold war. Much of the world was in a state of peace and reclamation. Verson All Steel Press Co. was a progressive manufacturing company born in the 20th century and had obtained national and international prominence.

Presses are machines used to form metal and plastics in shapes suitable for modern industries. They can weigh a few hundred pounds to hundreds of tons.

Verson U.S. had acquired a bankrupt press manufacturing company in Chaleroi, Belgium and had started to revive, enlarge and modernize it.

Key officials had been drafted from Verson U.S. and some employees were sent temporarily to assist in the revitalization of the company.

CAST OF CHARACTERS AT VERSON EUROPIA

K.O. Schmidt	Retiree of Verson U.S.A.
Nellie	K.O. Schmidt's wife
Jack Novack	A Verson Vice President
Larry Novack	Jack's son and V.P. at Chaleroi
Tom Motta	Sales Manager for Verson Europa
Mel	Tom Motto's wife
Norm Belieu	Supt. for Verson Europa
Leo (lady)	Office worker and special aide
Don Cox	Serviceman assigned to Russia
Jim O'Conners	Serviceman assigned to Russia

CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

I retired October 4, 1970 from VERSON ALL STEEL PRESS COMPANY, located at 93rd and Kenwood in Chicago. In a few days the company contacted me and requested that I go to Chaleroi, Belgium to aide them in rebuilding a press company they had acquired there.

I had smoked and lived in a smoking environment for many years. I was tired, coughed spasmodically, felt sick and just wanted to rest. My first reaction was to tell them no.

The company contacted me again and said I could take my wife Nellie, and all expenses would be paid. Friends and relatives pressured us, as this being a chance of a lifetime. Thus I reconsidered and decided to go if it killed me, and I really thought it might.

Nellie and I had our physicals, went to the immigration office to apply for our passports, did a little shopping and were ready to go.

Friends and family gathered to wish us well, took us to O'Hare Airport and put us on a plane to New York City. We changed planes in New York and our next stop was London. We had a short wait in London and bought a bottle of whiskey - duty free - as a present to management. It was then only a short ride to Brussels, Belgium where someone was to meet us.

After arriving in Belgium, we waited a couple of hours and when no one showed up to meet us, we decided to try to get to Chaleroi on our own. We inquired and found that trains left hourly for Chaleroi. We got a taxi and it took us and our baggage to the train station where I bought our tickets. When I asked them which track the train left on, the agent said "Deucer", I asked again and he repeated "Deucer". After discussing it with Nellie, it dawned on us that we were in a foreign country - we couldn't understand them and they likewise couldn't understand us. I said "Deucer" means two in any mans language, so off we went to Track 2. We waited, and no trains came. Finally Nellie, who loves to talk to little kids, found that "Deucer" was twelve, so off we went to track 12 and caught the last train of the day for Chaleroi.

The conductor never showed up and the few people in our compartment just nodded their heads as we tried to make inquiries, so as we approached each station, I had our bags ready and would stick my head way out to read the names of the station. Time after time it was the wrong station.

Chaleroi happened to be the last stop. It was just dusk and we had plenty of time to load our bags onto a truck and haul them into the station. There was a small restaurant there, so we decided to take time out and have a bite to eat. Naturally we couldn't make any sense out of the menu. It sounded like someone mentioned hamburger so I told the waiter "Two Hambers". He bought one so I ordered another. I cut the one in two and Nellie and I each took a bite. She looked at me and I looked at her and both said "RAW MEAT". It struck us as very funny and we laughed uproariously. We ate it and when the other one came, we ate it too.

We were now somewhat relaxed so decided to again try to find our way to the Verson plant. When I said "Verson Europa" to a cab driver, he nodded his head like he understood us, so we loaded our bags into the cab and he drove us about half a mile down the road, stopped in front of a huge house and some buildings, dumped us out and left. It was Sunday night and there was not even a caretaker around. We hid our bags in a dark corner, walked back to the train station and got another cab. He took us back to pick up our bags and then to a hotel just across the canal from the station where we got a room for the night.

We sat in the room a little while and I told Nellie it was time to make use of our present to management, so I poured some whiskey in a couple of glasses, added a little water and we had our first highball in Belgium.

In a little while we were feeling hungry again so we wandered out and walked up the street looking for a restaurant. After a few blocks, we came to a corner and could see a Chinese place, so we noted our turn with a sign that said "Mai's Pills" and went down and had a big bowl of chop suey. We made it back to the hotel, got into bed and passed out till morning. Thank heavens the sun was shinning when we awoke on Monday. (We found out later the "Mai's Pills" sign we used as a marker was a beer sign and was on every corner.)

I called the plant and they immeddiately sent Norm Belieu, the plant superintendent, who later turned out to be our interpreter and very good friend. He took us to breakfast and then to the plant where he introduced us to the personnel who profusely apologized for the mixup in not meeting our plane. We were then taken to this foreboding stone house with huge bronze doors and a tall iron fence around it, which they said was a "Maison".

To us it was a mansion, it was several stories high and had many rooms. A wide marble stairway led to the second floor where there were a number of bedrooms, a small kitchen and a bar room. Each bedroom had a marble fireplace and the huge windows had marble sills. We were installed in the master bedroom and the bed was so

large, that when we crawled into each side, our outstretched hands wouldn't touch. We were told to freely use the second floor.

The next day I was taken to the factory, introduced to the foremen, and was told that it was my job to observe and make recommendations for any improvements that might assist them in modernizing the plant. A new addition had been made. It was nearly as large as the rest of the plant and was to be used as an assembly department.

Every day I made a list of suggestions and gave them to Norm, who submitted them to a daily meeting of supervisors and engineers.

On the second day, we were surprised with a large floral display for our 46th Wedding Anniversary. Here is my thank you reply to management.

MOMENTS OF PLEASURE ARE PRICELESS PEARLS IN OUR STRING OF MEMORIES.
AN EXTREMELY LARGE JEWEL IS FROM VERSON EUROPA FOR OUR 46TH
ANNIVERSARY. OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION.

A large effort was made by management to make our stay enjoyable. They wined us and dined us and catered to our every wish.

On October 27, Norm took Nellie and I out to supper. Nellie had veal cooked with cheese and I had a thick steak. He explained about many of the finer points of dining there. He also told us that he had been a square dance caller in Los Angles, which interested us as we were square dancers too. We came back to the Maison and met his girlfriend "Brandy" and we made small talk until midnight. He promised to get us to Paris while we were there.

We met Jack Novak, Larry Novak and his wife, Tom Motto and his wife Mel. These were all upper management people from Verson U.S.A. and they treated us royally.

October 29 we met with Tom Mota who then hosted us to supper. He added a great deal to our knowledge of restaurant ordering. The food was delicious and as always a little wine. We relaxed in the Maison the rest of the evening listening to Foreign Services on the radio.

October 30th we had a lovely dinner with Larry Novak and his wife in their home. Had a very nice visit and was back to the Maison about 8 p.m..

On the 31st, we caught a train to Brussels and then an express to Amsterdam, Holland. We passed the Hague where the Peace Makers were.

An interesting incident on the train ride to Amsterdam was meeting a young woman from Australia who said that she was one of a very large family. Her parents had a ranch, but were very poor and could not support all of them. She had left and had worked her way across the country - mostly baby sitting. She had walked many miles and hoped to get to a relative in Finland. She only had a small pack on her back. We had a very nice visit.

A tourist service in 'Amsterdam recommended that we try one of the older hotels which we agreed to do. We were taken to a real narrow building with a steep narrow stairway to the third floor. Our room was small but clean. There were two cots and a small oil heater which we needed as the weather was cool. During the night, there was a strong wind blowing the big window open. The hatch was broken so I took a fingernail file and drove it into the sill with my shoe. During the night I got to thinking what a fire trap the building was and decided that I would not stay there another night. We changed to a more modern hotel the next day and got a room on the ground floor.

Every other street was a canal and we took a boat ride where we saw many barges with families living on them. We passed Anne Franks house, the little girl who hid in the attic during the German invasion. We passed a huge ship building and repair dock. We had dinner at a Polynesian restaurant and had the most delicious dinner we ever had, with fifteen different courses that lasted the whole evening.

The next day we took a bus ride that took us to the Rembrandt Museum where there were many valuable paintings. We also stopped at a diamond cutting factory where they had many bargains but we didn't buy any. That night we went to dinner in a very elegant but crowded restaurant. We were sitting very close to a woman and two men. The woman had a very striking hairdo which I complimented her on and that made her day. She told us that one of the men was her husband and the other her hairdresser, and that it was customary for a woman who used the same hairdresser all year, to take him out to dinner. He would in turn give her an extra special hair do for the occasion.

At the train station the next morning, Nellie got a boyfriend by buying him a cup of coffee. He wanted to practice his English with an American. We arrived back at the Maison where Norm met us and took us out to a plank steak dinner. We topped the evening off by stopping at his apartment for a rare brandy and coffee.

Jim O'Connors and Don Cox, Verson servicemen, showed up on November 4th. They had been assembling a large press in Russia and gotten in an argument and were sent to Chaleroi. They had many stories to tell of their poor treatment in Russia. They were our constant companions the rest of our visit. Larry Novak invited us to his

beautiful home in Waterloo. Cox, O'Connors, Tom and his wife, Nellie and I enjoyed many drinks, and then a delicious chicken dinner. We met Larry's children. Then back to the Maison about 2:30 a.m.

On November 6, after a few drinks at the bar with Norm, Tom, O'Connors and Cox, Nellie and I went shopping and got lost. We wandered around till we came to the Red Lite District, which they had previously shown me. From there I knew my way back to the Maison. Again we were taken to a good steak dinner and lots of wine.

November 7th was the first day we could really take it easy. We had breakfast with Jim and Don, then Nellie and I went shopping and walked several miles and bought meat and bread. Nellie got mad at me when I petered out and took a taxi back to the Maison. We went to supper at a Chinese restaurant, then back to the Maison, watched TV until we got sleepy and went to bed.

November 8 - Slept late and had coffee and rolls with Jim and Don. Norm picked us up and took us to a huge flea market with the most amazing lot of things for sale. We came home with all sorts of lunch meats. Had lunch back at the Maison. It was very cold, the coldest it had been so far. After a dinner of all kinds of sausages, Norm picked us up and took us to a fantastic canal system that allowed ships to go up and down 100 feet in one mile in huge barges that travelled rails and were so balanced that they needed very little power to operate. Jock was a machine operator, and we stopped at his home that he had built and had coffee and many kinds of cake. People in Belgium still have a sweet tooth from the time sugar was scarce during the war.

November 9 - Had a big party with members from the plant till 7 p.m. Norm picked us up to go to a Chinese restaurant. Jim and Don related more stories from Russia.

November 10 - Jim and Don shared the cocktail party at the Maison. Larry stopped by to be sure we had something to do on Armistice Day. Had a wonderful dinner at Norm's house. Back to the Maison and got to bed fairly early.

November 11 - Leo picked us up at 10 a.m. and took us for a motor tour to the south border of Belgium. We drove slowly thru many small hamlets. Each one had a church and a graveyard with an eternal flame for the soldiers who had died in their many wars. Each hamlet had a few homes around it. Many were within sight of each other. We got to Dinar on the Muese River and spent a couple of hours shopping at quaint stores. High above the town was a fortress. We took a cable car to the top, where large rooms had been dug out of a solid rock with small openings in the face so that their guns could control the traffic on the river. It was thought to be impregnable, but during the war, German soldiers had

gotten through and killed all the soldiers in it. On the way home we stopped at a small hamlet where there was a large church with many bullet holes in it. As we walked up this street, I lagged a little behind and met a group of young girls. I stepped to one side and as they came up, and one of the girls was looking directly at me and I winked at her. She was a nice girl and passed it off, but an old hag who was escorting them caught it and grinned and chuckled and kept looking back until they turned the corner. She probably remembered how the American soldiers flirted when they were over there. Stopped on the way back to the Maison to see Leo's apartment and then to dinner in Chaleroi. The day was very damp and cold.

November 12 - This evening we stayed quiet. Tom, Larry, Norm and Don were with us at the bar until 7 p.m. Nellie made salmon patties and hot dogs for supper.

November 13 - Drinks at the bar and then to Tom's house for a Thanksgiving supper that Mel made because Don and Larry would not be having one in Russia. Turkey, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, dressing and good gravy. Spent the evening visiting and then back to the Maison.

November 14 - Up early and caught a train to Paris. The trains are very comfortable and we had a good dinner. We met a beautiful young lady from Cologne, Germany who was a cosmetic salesperson. She sort of took us under her wing to help us out with the French language. Took a taxi to a hotel and checked on a bus tour of the city. It was raining and the announcer on the bus had to repeat the things we were passing in three languages. Taxied back to our room which was just around the corner and made reservations for the 1.a.m. show, which included dinner, and a bottle of champagne. The show was called the Lido show. We were just seated and served our dinner when the stage extended till the performers were so close we could practically touch them. They had a variety of acts and the chorus was fifty buxom, topless, beauties. On the final skit, two horsemen in armor charged each other until they clashed and one rider fell off and his horse fell down. Got to bed at 3:30 a.m.

November 15 - Up at 9 a.m., had breakfast and walked to the Arch of Triumph, a war memorial. It was very cold and we took a taxi to the Eiffel Towers. I refused to go up one of them and Nellie never forgave me. She wanted to go. We then went to the Notre Dame Cathedral with all the tall spires and gargoyles along the eaves. The interior was massive, with many statues of Saints. We then stopped at an old prison but it was closed so we went to a war museum for a couple of hours and saw many statues of soldiers dressed as they were in the host of wars they served. We had stuck with Jim and Don all the trip, and when we got to the train station they said they wanted to do a little shopping. It came time for the train to leave and they had not shown up so we got on without them. Our German lady friend was on the train and we visited all

the way to Chaleroi. When we went to supper on the train, there sat Jim and Don. We were glad to get back to the Maison.

November 16 - The Happy Hour this afternoon included Tom, Mel, Don, Jim, Norm, Nellie and I. After Mel & Tom left, Nellie made mashed potatoes and warmed up the cabbage and rice. Norm stayed and ate with us and told us his many experiences in Europe.

November 17 - Once again the group met for cocktail hour. Nellie, I and Larry restocked the bar. We went to Larry's house for a delicious dinner prepared by Phyllis. The evening was spent just visiting and talking about the good old USA.

November 18 - Nellie was sick and stayed in bed all day. She felt that she was coming down with something. I made some chicken soup which Nellie seemed to like and we went to bed about 8 p.m. Nellie felt better the next morning.

November 20 - No Happy Hour tonight. Nellie and I went shopping. It was a huge store and Nellie got lost, she couldn't find the door we came in. Did manage to buy a few gifts. We stopped at a Chinese restaurant and Nellie ordered plain fried rice, but got rice with chicken, ham, tomato sauce and mushrooms in it.

November 21 - Tom picked us up around noon and we drove to Waterloo where we picked up Mel and then drove to Brussels to shop. Nellie couldn't make up her mind on what to get for the grandchildren, but finally decided on tams for the boys and scarves for the girls. Came back to Waterloo and picked up chicken-in-a-basket and took it to Tom's house. Played chess with his kids. Spent the night with them.

November 22 - Went back to Charleroi on the train and went back to the Maison. We again went to the flea market and walked for miles. Had a late lunch of sardines and rolls and returned to the Maison and took a nap until 6.p.m.. The fire was out in the furnace and it was getting cold. Workmen had cut off the lights during the day and had turned them back on, but the furnace had not restarted. Nellie and I wandered around and found our way to the basement and after looking in several rooms, found the furnace. There was a red light lit near an electrical switch with instructions in Belgium. I took a chance and threw the switch. Things rattled and I could hear the fire start. Soon the Maison was nice and warm again. Fixed a hot toddy and Nellie and I watched a show on TV.

November 23 - Late in the afternoon, Leo took us shopping and not seeing anything we wanted to buy she took us to a typical bar where I had a beer. She then took us to a special clam supper. The clams were good horsd'oeuvres. Nellie and I had pork chops fried real brown. Back at the Maison Leo told us many stories about her family and their troubles during the war. Leo invited us to her apartment on the 26th to eat "Bambi" (venison).

November 24 - Norm stopped by for a drink and when he left Nellie made us a cheese omlet for supper. Took a walk to buy some cigarettes and couldn't find any. Came back and borrowed a pack from Tom. Watched some TV shows and went to bed.

November 25 - Tom and Larry came by for Happy Hour and stayed until 7 p.m. Nellie made some toasted cheese sandwiches and we wrote letters the rest of the evening.

November 26 - Thanksgiving day. I made a summation of my work here. In the evening Leo took us to her lovely apartment and gave us many small glasses of wine and some brandy. She couldn't find any "Bambi" so she had marinated rabbit which was delicious. We had a wonderful evening with her.

November 27 - The whole Verson force came to have a final drink and present us with a crystal cut glass vase and the nicest recognition we ever had in our life. This was my answer to them.

TWO WEEKS IN THE MAISON HAS GIVEN US A TASTE OF THE HOSPITALITY, FRIENDLINESS AND HAPPINESS THAT THIS HOME WAS ORIGINALLY DESIGNED FOR.

This was our last night and after supper Norm took us to a very glittery gambling hall on the German border. I bought \$20.00 worth of chips and gave Nellie half of them. We played for an hour and had a lite lunch. We still had some chips left and Norm advised we go for broke. When the final bell rang I had lost mine, but when I found Nellie she had her arms full of chips. She was dropping them and people would pick them up and give them back to her. They were worth about \$17.00. We gave them to Norm to play for us next time he came.

Verson Europa was aware of the trouble we had getting there, so they made certain that we would have no trouble going home. A driver drove us to Brussels and to the airport. He took us inside, secured our tickets, took us to the gate and bid us goodbye. We wandered around until near departure time, went back to the gate and got at the end of a line of about fifteen passengers. When the gate opened they filed thru, but just as we got there, they closed the gate and said the plane was loaded. Nellie, I and a salesman from England were left and the plane took off. Back at the desk they said they were sorry and would get us on another plane as soon as they could. We had time to hear the man from London tell us of the troubles he had in South Africa. We then heard our name called on the intercom. At the desk they told us a plane was loading and for us to go see if there were seats available. They had three available seats so we got aboard, but instead of going to London, we went directly to New York. The only trouble - our baggage was on the other flight.

November 28 - We landed in New York in the morning and were held up going thru customs because we didn't have any baggage. After a lot of bickering a hostess managed to get us through. To get a plane to Chicago we had to go to another airport, so they loaded us into an old army helicopter and flew us there. Again they did a lot of talking before they let us pass. We finally got a plane to Chicago and got there about midnight. Once again the customs held us up and finally let us pass. A bus and the I.C. got us to 79th street and we were home. Three nights later in a blinding snow storm someone knocked on our door and when we opened the door there was our baggage.

AFTER WE GOT HOME, I DECIDED IF ALL THAT DIDN'T KILL ME I WAS IN BETTER SHAPE THAN I THOUGHT.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL AND TO ALL GOODNIGHT

Christmas Letter - 1994

S C H M I D I S T I C S '94 '

Often we stand at life's crosswords
And view what we think is the end,
But God has a much bigger vision
And HE tells us it's "ONLY A BEND."

Another year has passed adding two more beings in our now large family leaving us another reason to be happy and grateful this Christmas Season.

Another year that we have been able to use and enjoy the things and pleasures that our ancestors contributed so much to make it possible for us.

If there are many evil persons in the world, we can be glad that there are many more good ones and that the good will prevail.

History tells us of the many nations that have failed due to the greed and ambitions of bad leaders.

Ours is the only nation in the world that is dedicated to the betterment of mankind. We can be grateful and all try to contribute to this effort.

So drink, make merry and enjoy the fleeting moments of our lives.

Remember that this is a time of celebrating the life and death of the Son of God for our sake.

If we put our problems in God's hand,
There is nothing we need understand---
It is enough to just believe
That what we need we will receive.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL