

Memoirs

by

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1930-2017

Table of Contents

Recollections-No Complaints---An Introduction

A Depression Kid—Early Nineteen Thirties

My Family

Modern Conveniences 1930's

Willow Grove School Years 1936-1945

Transition Years --High School 1945-1949

Exploring a Future 1949-1951

In The Army Now 1951-1954

On The Thirty-Eighth Parallel 1952-1953

College-Marriage-Teaching-Family

A Lifetime Career (Hudson, Cedar Rapids, South Hamilton Years)

ISU Then Maquoketa 1970-1979

Chicago Suburbs 1979-1986

Bloomington Years 1986-1994

Our Spiritual Quest (Throughout the years)

Returning to the Roberts Century Farm (Background and Activities)

On The Road Again and Again (Our RV Ventures)

Travel Tidbits (Post-Retirement Trips)

RECOLLECTIONS – NO COMPLAINTS

These accounts reflect my attempt to record a lifetime of experiences. I hope that my family and others will find some interest in these ramblings It was exhilarating to recall these events. In whatever way I took advantage of opportunities and what luck I may have had over these many years is significantly attributable to my lifetime partner, Jo.

Long ago I realized it wasn't productive to look backwards, only forward. Accordingly, I try to never think in the "if only" mode. Tomorrow can be what you make it. It is my desire that this memoir will continue to report an optimistic and positive epilogue.

The challenge was to limit the sometimes lengthy, meandering memories to manageable, readable accounts. To my sisters who may read and differ with some of the early accounts, possibly attributable to faulty memory, I plead hallucinatory privilege. I tried to write a chronological memoir with vignettes inserted where appropriate in order to share unique experiences that I considered career or life changing.

My definition of a memoir is a personal account of those events in a life that are worthy of recording. Space and practicality prevent more details. Accounts of my early developmental years provide a context for understanding my ultimate destination. During those formative years my parents, Clifford and Mary and my sisters, Ada and Lois, played significant roles in my development. Until their deaths, my parents provided positive, non-judgmental and undaunted support. Our two daughters, Margaret "Peg" and Carol, and two sons, Jon and Mark, their spouses, and our grandchildren have been a tremendous source of pride and influence in our lives. They are all treasured and loved with all the energy we can muster. We remain continuously amazed by their accomplishments: Jon as a respected manufacturer in this country's plastics industry; Peg as Director of Test Development in an international corporation; Carol as a model teacher to children of special needs, the most challenging of all teaching roles; and Mark as a Partner in Cedar Rapids largest law firm.

This poem summarizes it all!!!

**When you set out for Ithaca, ask that your journey be long
But when you arrive at Ithaca, don't expect to find jewels
Don't expect to find treasures, Ithaca gave you the journey
Without Ithaca, you would not have gotten out
And through the journey, so wise you have become
Such things you have learned - Cavafy**

A DEPRESSION KID

Imagine a very modestly furnished farm home without electricity or indoor plumbing serving as a delivery infirmary on a late November day in 1930. Those were the trappings that Dr Fry faced as he assisted in my delivery. Present day protocol requires a very public birth with paternal presence and often cameras and fanfare. It is hard to imagine the starkness of what would be considered semi-primitive procedures surrounding this occasion. Not only were my parents the occupants of this dwelling but it also was home to my physically handicapped Grandparents, and a spinster aunt of my Dad's.

This farmhouse birthing experience was repeated again on August 19, 1933 and on January 1st 1937 when sisters Ada and Lois came along. I recall Grandpa taking me to Windham, a neighborhood gathering spot three miles from home that cold New Years Day in 1937. Had I been old enough to reason intuitively, I would have been suspicious of this foray. It was uncharacteristic that Grandpa would cart me off like that. I had no inkling or had I been forewarned when we arrived home late in the afternoon and heard what I quickly believed were the sounds of some newborn farm animal only to be greeted by my youngest sister. Parents typically prepare the young of the family of an impending birth of a rival sibling. Spock and ultrasound had not yet come along to complicate the preparation for arrival of the new offspring.

If our powers of imagination are stretched to envision how most farm kids came into the world in the early 1930's, consider going back in time into the early 1900's and the 1870's. It was in this same farm home that both my father and my grandfather came in to the world. By these standards, my delivery was no doubt high tech!!

Upon our retirement in 1994, this 1867 Century farm was purchased from my father and sisters. We subsequently razed the old house, barn, machine shed and milk house to make way for our present dwelling. There were trepidations. We wouldn't have done it before Dad's passing. With the help of Sisters Ada and Lois we have placed a large carved stone at the entry of the drive displaying the generations of Roberts that have occupied this farm. At an appropriate time our names proudly will be placed on the rock.

The farm, my immediate family, my extended family, relatives, our neighbors and the little country church two miles away provided the context for my formative pre-school years

My maternal aunts and families, and Dad's maternal uncles and families were sources of frequent Sunday after church gatherings. Since most of the kids of these groupings were out of the nest, our entertainment was rubbernecking adult conversation that centered on farm activities. Dad's paternal great uncle grew up on the corner farm one-half mile south. He graduated from Grinnell College, later became a lawyer and Dean of an eastern law school. His regular visits and rapport with Dad were a blessing. He saw in Dad a unique intellect and an unquenchable

curiosity. His attempt to feed this curiosity was a subscription to the Chicago Tribune. It was an addiction for Dad. Bertie McCormick, the Tribune's iconic publisher columnist was probably responsible for Dad's staunch Republican leanings, however in later life his politics took on a progressive bent. He continued to read and become a thoughtful, fair minded gentleman well respected in his church and community throughout his long life.

We had no concept of vacations, travel or long weekends. Providing for an extended family required a twenty-four seven mentality. The two hundred acre farmstead was considered a general farming operation that included dairying, farrowing and marketing up to 200 hogs annually plus lambing and marketing up to fifty market lambs annually. Of course Mother had her flock of chickens which provided eggs for family consumption. On Saturdays we would load the extra eggs and cream for sale at Oxford Produce. The proceeds were used for the weekly supply of provisions at either the Oxford Grocery or Iowa City A & P. The 1930's version of a supermarket amounted to a counter where you handed the clerk your list and waited until the order was filled. In addition to providing an outlet for produce, Oxford Produce owned by Irvin Goodrich periodically culled the hens buying the non-producers for slaughter. An oft repeated story involved my forgetting to close the door in the henhouse while observing the culling. Obviously the hens escaped. This episode was exaggerated and repeated in Oxford whenever I was in Irvin's presence.

Horses were a critical part of the operation while I was a child. Ada and I rode Old Kit delivering water and snacks to Dad as he worked the fields. We mounted her bare back by leading her to a wooden slatted gate and climbing on to her swayed back. As we proceeded to our destination, Kit would stop to cough throwing us to the ground. Sometimes the next gate was a distance before we could remount, no matter we had fun. Many of the draft horses were mares who produced an annual foal for sale to neighbors. Family members, especially children were enlisted to help name the foals. Babe, Bonnie, Belle, Barney etc. were monikers for the adult draft horses. Bonnie was an 1800 pound mare that was very manageable thus assigned to pulling the hay rope. Loose hay was stored in the loft of the 100 ft by 40 ft pole barn. With a series of pulleys, the hay was drawn into the barn from a track. As the loose hay was brought to the appropriate spot, Dad pulled the hayfork with a rope thrusting the tines of the fork into the hay. He then let out a yell which was my signal, even as a five year old, to lead Bonnie to a spot where a worker in the hayloft yelled for Dad to trip the fork releasing the hay to be arranged in the loft. This process continued until the hayrack was empty. Bonnie was also the lead horse on the corn planter. Farm equipment for seasonal planting, and harvesting were horse drawn with seats on the implement to allow the farmer to sit and drive the two to six horse hitches. Until I was seven, I was only an onlooker and errand boy, ever present, filled with questions and sometimes unsolicited advice. One noon Dad unharnessed Bonnie who gave birth to her annual foal. Corn planting was delayed for a couple of days for recuperative purposes. We also had American bred saddle

horses. In the summer, at an early age, I rode Silver to herd dairy cattle to summer pasture, out in the morning and back at evening.

Farm animals were a living laboratory in reproductive science. As a kid I quickly learned the gestation periods and was able to predict better than Dad, impending births. Since most birthing was at night, Dad counted on me to predict so that he might pen the animal for convenience for overnight surveillance. Horse breeding was an intriguing spectator sport. Providing stud service was a cottage industry with the owner of the stallion riding a horse drawn cart leading the normally docile stallion. If the mare was in heat, as the stallion approached, all Hell broke loose with two to three men controlling the stallion until servicing was completed. If a mule was desired, the episode was an even better sideshow. Mules are crosses between a horse and a jackass, producing a marvelously sterile farm steed. To accommodate breeding, a pit was required into which the average size mare was led to allow for servicing by the smaller jackass.

Until I was seven, I was only an onlooker and errand boy, ever present, filled with questions and sometimes unsolicited advice. During my early adolescent years, I became more useful in helping on the farm. This lifestyle instilled in farm kids a sense of responsibility and industriousness which served us well throughout life. Since the family was continuously pre-occupied with a basic livelihood, there was no time for leisure. I was always envious of friends and acquaintances that had been exposed to recreational skills at an early age. They were thus able to indulge in relaxing lifestyle pursuits not easy for me in later life.

My Family

I was privileged and somewhat unique to be a part of a multi-generation family in the same household. In the 1930's and 40's, our household included my paternal grandparents, my father's paternal aunt, my parents and my two sisters. My aunt Eudora, Dad's sister, a teacher, would spend occasional weekends until her marriage to Uncle Lyle Orr.

The arrangement seemed normal. I have early recollections of tensions and conflicts that no doubt were inevitably precipitated by this togetherness.

In Dad's adolescence, Grandpa (known by everyone in the household by this name), developed a disabling handicap, later diagnosed as multiple sclerosis. This forced Dad's early departure from formal education after his sixth grade term. At that time he became the breadwinner. My arithmetic places this during the spring of 1917 or around the conclusion of World War I. It is thought provoking to imagine what he might have done with his life had he taken advantage of more extended formal education. The era of the 1920's and 30's may have been one of the most challenging of the century for the American farmer. To have successfully managed a large family without losing and being forced to abandon the farm was an accomplishment of no small magnitude.

Mother entered my Dad's life during the mid nineteen twenties. She was the fifth, in a family of nine, growing up on a marginal east central Nebraska farm operated by her widowed mother and her siblings. Mother followed her two oldest sisters to Iowa after high school. She found employment as a switchboard operator in a rural telephone exchange less than a mile from the Roberts farm. As a live-in boarder at the telephone exchange, she admitted to a sense of liberation from the conservatively dominated religious practices during her upbringing. It is not surprising that she and Dad found one another and soon gravitated to courtship and marriage.

During the devastating farm crisis of the era, Grandmother Showalter, sold the Nebraska farm and moved to Iowa, spending her remaining years with Mother's older sisters, Aunts Emma and Fannie. Coincidentally these two farmsteads were within a five mile radius of the Roberts household. As a four year old, I vividly remember the overnight caravan of relatives to Grandmother Showalter's November 1934 Roseland Nebraska funeral. The mid-west was a desolate, dustbowl ravaged countryside during this era of rampant depression. I remember the tumbleweeds rolling across the highways. For the first time in my life, I was able to sense the somberness of the adults in my life. It dawned on me that there was a burden, not just in mourning the passing of a treasured family matron, but in the circumstances of the times.

Mother's family remained close and clearly fit the definition of an extended family. She and her eight sisters and brothers, including many of their offspring, maintained a lifetime of personal contacts. During the "Great Depression", they devised a 'circle' letter. Each sibling removed his or her letter upon receipt and inserted a new version. Our Grandmother Showalter-Nice came to Nebraska from a conservative Illinois Mennonite lineage. A very complete Nice genealogy is a part of our home library. Grandfather George Showalter came to Nebraska from the Pennsylvania Dutch stronghold of Lancaster County. Two of his sisters, Fannie and Ella remained in Pennsylvania and married Charles Heckenberger, and Harry Dietrich respectively. Grandfather Showalter's brother Harry and possibly other brothers also remained in and around Lancaster County. Uncle Harry Dietrich imported horses from Germany in the early 1920's for Philadelphia milk route

wagons. He parlayed this enterprise into a fortune. His sons, Daniel and David, Mother's first cousins, reportedly received Luden Cough Drops and Fifth Avenue Candy Bar Companies respectively on their 21st birthdays. As graduates of University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, they endowed two buildings on that campus.

When mother joined the Roberts family, in 1926, the 1890's simple farmhouse had four upstairs bedrooms but no indoor plumbing or electricity. The kitchen was ample enough to provide for a small dining table and a few built in cupboards, a flour bin and a work counter with a sink. A hot water heating system included large steel core radiators strategically placed throughout the kitchen, formal dining room and family room. Upstairs heat (such as it was) rose through openings in the floor of each room where metal cross-hatched registers were inserted. Five small very simple bedrooms accessible from a steep stairway provided space for this multi-generational family. A porch spanned the south and east sides of the house. On the southeast corner of the porch was a pump over a cistern supplied by run-off from eaves around the roof. All soft water for cooking, bathing and laundering was drawn from this source. At the southwest corner of this porch was a building designated as the wash house. It housed the old small engine powered washing machine and wash tubs for bathing during moderate weather. A two room addition was appended on the northeast corner of the home possibly at the time Mom appeared on the scene. Dad's paternal Aunt Ida occupied this space until her passing in the mid 1940's. After this my grandparents moved into the space. When indoor plumbing was added sometime in the 1940's another addition was appended to the north side of the house.

I can vividly recall the nightly effort required of both handicapped grandparents as they mounted the steep unforgiving steps to their upstairs bedroom. In addition to Grandpa Roberts' multiple sclerosis, Grandma Roberts had severe arthritis and was a large lady. We were fortunate to be in the shadow of a wonderful medical school at the University of Iowa, where a nationally renowned orthopedic surgeon, Dr Steindler, treated Grandpa and sketched a retrofit design for his Model A Ford which he drove for many years until it became mine to use as Dad directed. In the waning years of their lives, they lived with Dad's sister Eudora and Uncle Lyle and daughter Verla. Grandpa died in 1947 and Grandma not until 1960. She got to know Jo and held Jon before her death.

Grandpa always had an unlighted cigar in his mouth which he chewed as he talked causing it to twirl in a circular motion, the speed governed by the passion of the topic. Grandma, known locally as a "carpetbagger" Democrat, was in regular debate with Grandpa, a staunch Republican. Around our house, politics was almost a contact sport. During Fourth of July celebrations (they were big events), Grandma was front and center in organizing these outings, typically held in school yards or picnic areas with lots of fried chicken, potato salad and speeches by local dignitaries. Grandpa was a neighborhood character, as he rode his prized American Bred saddle horse, bareback to herd cattle and run errands. His prized horse, Silver stood motionlessly beside a horizontally slatted gate as she was laboriously mounted. Incidentally, I don't remember his ever toppling off this horse as he rode her everywhere. He was also regularly seen gadding about in the Model A with Grandma in the back seat as the front seat was modified to accommodate the hand controls.

The rural countryside of the Midwest suffered a double whammy in the 1930's. As everyone was clambering to overcome the decade long depression, at the same time record temperature swings and drought devastated a broad central section of the country. I vividly remember the years of 1935 and 1936 sleeping under the stars during the summer's oppressive heat and watching regularly Northern Lights displays, a phenomenon no longer

visible due to pollutants. The severe winter blizzards were an awesome sight as horse drawn bobsleds transported families without regards to roads and fences, as they went about daily chores. It was hard for a five year old to overhear adults discuss the realities of a neighbors' body not being retrieved for more than a week due to weather conditions. Dad plowed furrows and threw oil in their wake to form a barrier from crop invasion due to cinch bugs. Along with this crop destroying insect was the grasshopper, an ever marauding menace to moisture deprived crops. Our family survived and managed to hold on to the farm, in spite of foreclosures to many neighboring farms. New Deal interventions along with the artificial stimulations of the impending WW II brought about improving conditions

Space precludes mention of the role of neighbors during this era – they were part of the survival package. An example was Elmer Fleming, a former factory worker from Rolla, Missouri with a second wife and a blended family who moved into the 40 acre marginal farm to the north. My parents literally adopted the Fleming family, Dad providing equipment and assistance as Elmer became an invaluable helper in all phases of the family's farm operation. When 16 year old Sam Fleming won too much at a County Fair concession and was subsequently killed to retrieve the winnings, Mom and Dad literally took over the funeral planning arrangements. My penchant for sampling and or sharing with Ada or cousins, an occasional cigar kept in a box under Grandpa's Model A removable back seat, was inadvertently disrupted by Elmer Fleming. As he was playing around with me one morning before a day of corn planting, he thrust his hands into my coverall pockets, removing a cigar. I don't recall the punishment but I do remember never finding another cigar under the back seat. My introduction to major league baseball was ignited as Elmer would ask me to read him the box scores of his beloved St Louis Cardinals. It occurred to me later that he may have been unable to read.

In early January 1995, at age 91, we laid Dad to rest in the Sharon Center United Methodist Cemetery. In 1987, he sold his prized Black Angus cattle however remained in the old farm home where he was born until going to Park View Rest Home in Wellman in the early 90's. For seventy years, he was bread winner for his handicapped parents and sibling, while simultaneously supporting his own growing family, and then during his later years maintaining the farm while thoroughly enjoying employment in housekeeping at the University of Iowa. In his most productive years, he doubled the farm holdings with hog, dairy and beef production. During WW II his 25-30 Holstein's milk production sold to the Williamsburg milk drying plant was a cash cow (no pun intended) for land acquisition debt settlement. After Mom's untimely death in 1978, from an undiagnosed heart issue, he plunged into the final chapter of his life, joining a local service club, participating in many church activities and volunteering at the Iowa City Crisis Center Food Bank, receiving the 1989 Volunteer of the Year award.

Dad's ability to sustain his extended family in the face of improbable odds can only be matched by Mother, who integrated into this multi-generation family, assuming the enormous burdens as household diva. Grandma was held in high esteem by her grandchildren, all frequently recalling a favorite story, memory or saying... After her death, Dad called on his inner strength and lived his eighteen years doing what his strong Methodist faith directed: helping the less fortunate; visiting the infirm; loving and interacting with his adoring grandchildren; and creating a role model that should be a goal for each of his progeny.

MODERN CONVENIENCES

It was a new dawning when electricity came to our rural Johnson County Iowa home. This was probably the most drastic change in our household of anything I can recall as a kid. One of the many New Deal initiatives during the 30's and 40's was rural electrification. My family didn't make a big deal of most things but as a small child I sensed a rising anticipation as workers wired the old buildings.

It was in the 40's when the day arrived. Change didn't come quickly. After all everything cost money and we were in the tail end of the depression. The unadorned light bulbs protruding from strategically located fixtures represented a huge change. No more white gas lighting arranged to facilitate reading and other night chores. We even got to bed later and no more suffering from eye strain. On the farm, late night animal birthing was routine and Dad made the rounds carrying a kerosene lantern. Suddenly, with the flip of a switch everything was visible.

Mom and Dad milked approximately fifteen productive Holstein dairy cows At about ten years of age I replaced Mom as Dad's milking partner. The herd increased as I made my way into adolescence. Before I graduated from high school, we had a milking machine. My day started at 5:30, sitting on the little three legged stool, extracting from each of six to ten cows, approximately three gallons of warm milk. I wore a chapped wrist bracelet each winter as evidence of warm milk spray on cold skin.

Electrical appliances were a Godsend to Mother. I remember her cranking the Briggs and Stratton motor that powered the washing machine. The washer's conversion to an electric motor relieved her of frequent motor related interruptions. The clothesline was never replaced by a dryer. The cook-stove was the centerpiece of the pre-electrified kitchen. It provided hot water in the built-in reservoir, stove-top heat for a toaster, grates to cook and an oven. New appliances and a propane stove came along in due time. They were life altering conveniences, but believe me the pies, stews, and other fondly recalled delicacies were equally as tasty regardless of the appliance. The little radio and telephone were connections to the outside world. We had a party line with three other families. Our ring was a long, a short, a long and a short. Others on this line had some combination of these rings. Obviously everyone on this line could "rubber", or listen to the conversations of neighbors and did so. It was the pre-tech version of wiretapping. TV in the early 50's, with the soaps replaced this neighborhood drama. However the radio reined supreme with quiet required during weather and stock reports.

The icebox and the furnace both did an about face. Power driven fans eliminated the need for Dad to arise regularly on cold winter nights to "bank" the fire bed, insuring a quick early morning heat recovery. Before refrigeration the icebox was the source of perishable food preservation. The old washhouse across from the kitchen entrance housed the icebox used during months when temperatures were above freezing. The iceman brought fifty to one hundred pound blocks two to three times weekly dependent on temperatures. Ice harvest during the depths of winter

was commonplace, usually done commercially. In Iowa City as I remember, the ice business was part of the sawmill operation. In the winter giant gas motor driven saws cut blocks of ice from frozen rivers, streams, lakes and ponds. These huge blocks were transported by horse power and trucks to storage barns that were insulated. The blocks were separated and covered by large quantities of sawdust. One wonders what happened in mild winters. We tend to remember only the very cold ones.

The old walnut tree in our yard, now the site of the swing, has a chain buried in one of the limbs. This tree was the site of the annual fall slaughtering. Typically a market hog and a well fed steer were killed, strung up on the big limb, quartered, packaged and stored at the local business known as the Locker. The plant was powered by gas motor driven generators until the Rural Electrification lines arrived. Neighbors congregated and assisted with the butchering. It was characteristic for neighbors to reciprocate with these special tasks. Usually one neighbor had a special skill that combined with others worked for a successful "butchering" day. With the advent of electricity the entire operation was done at the locker plant eliminating another of those neighborhood cooperative bonding events. For those who never lived through these experiences, you missed fried brains rolled in bread crumbs and eggs or head cheese. I was not a fan of head cheese but fried brains were a delicacy. So were well prepared hearts, tongues and tails, the latter making marvelous stew "fixins."

As I reflect on my early years, it was apparent that the arrival of electricity created a significant positive change in our lives.

WILLOW GROVE SCHOOL YEARS

I was considered the luckiest kid in the area. The school I attended from kindergarten through eighth grade was a quarter of a mile from our farm house. Mother could stand on the porch and without binoculars, check on me at recess time. I doubt that she felt it necessary but nevertheless most of us know how a kid relishes his privacy. To add to this sense of surveillance, Dad served as district director with employment responsibility for the teacher in this one room country school. I was the third generation Roberts to attend this school, not necessarily in the same building. Country K-8 school districts were the foundation of our free elementary secondary education mandated with the ordinance of 1787. The country school encompassed one section measuring one mile by one mile. In Johnson County, home of The University of Iowa and Willow Grove, there were still approximately 75 of the one room schools from 1936-1945, my attendance span. A county superintendent of rural schools administered these operations with certain functions such as hiring, evaluating and firing teachers done in conjunction with local boards. I remember Superintendent's Leper and Snider who periodically dropped by for visits. These episodes put stress on the young teachers and students. Special plans such as group rehearsed recitations and individual readings were always ready in case. Apparently I could be counted on to perform somewhat flawlessly thus when grouchy old Mr. Leper visited, I was always rolled out to read or recite. My performance didn't phase the old boy. Everyone quaked in his presence and the teachers, all Catholic gals, surely recited a few more "Hail Mary's" as he departed.

My teachers Miss Robinson, Miss Hannon and Miss Goss all conjure up interesting memories. They were all young, having attended a year of normal training after high school. In some cases the older boys challenged the teacher's rules however; I do not recall many cases of offensive mischief. One ace in the hole was the proximity of our place and as I found out much later, there were occasions when Dad, one of the two district directors, was visited to seek suggestions regarding an infraction by some student. Typically he visited with the neighboring parents who always found some way of keeping the culprit in line.

It was during Miss Robinson's years, as a first grader, I apparently conjured up the plan to spend my day in the culvert between home and school. I can't remember the inspiration for this caper but I do remember the incident and consequences. My curiosity wouldn't allow me to 'stay put' and as I was watching kids at recess, I was spied. The upshot was rescue by my Mom and personal delivery to school for the remainder of the day. According to my Dad who relished discussing this in later years, there was sufficient penance to deter any future unsanctioned incidents. It was Miss Robinson who gave me my only spanking administered by a teacher. I'm fuzzy about the circumstances, but it involved my succumbing to a dare precipitated by Sam Fleming, an eighth grader. This accounted for a lasting dislike for Miss Robinson who, as fate would have it became a colleague of Jo's at Cleveland

Elementary School in Cedar Rapids. Miss Robinson raved about what a nice family we were.

The annual Christmas program was a highlight. In addition to the typical Christmas recitations and songs, along with little playlets performed on a makeshift stage. A curtain fashioned by a bed sheet was hung by a wire strung across the room five to six feet from the front. My Uncle Ike was temporarily picking corn in our area from his Nebraska farm to supplement the family depression era income. He took great delight, every time he saw me for years, in reminding me of my exaggerated rendition of Little Black Sambo. This little ditty was a remnant of segregation, that in rural white Iowa we were unaware of racial issues in 1936.

Liz Hannon was a spunky Irish gal who managed the class with a comfortable sense of humor. There were always challenges by older kids testing her mettle, but she had a way of signaling who was boss. She was too well liked to seriously cross. We all learned, mostly by listening to lessons from the upper grades. Apparently my time in grades two through six slipped by uneventfully. Years later, at my mother's pre-funeral visitation, Liz O'Rourke, the former Miss Hannon asked to have the Roberts kids identified whereupon she proceeded to offer clever Irish quips about each of us. She carried on about my curiosity and unwillingness to accept answers that were obviously brush offs.

Miss Goss was probably 19 when she inherited Wayne Geyer, Orland Detweiller and myself as seventh and eighth graders. It was a test of wills for two years. She managed to keep the upper hand but it wasn't because of her sense of humor. Obviously in her one year of normal training, she wasn't exposed to psychology. What worked for her was military discipline: issue an order; define the terms and make certain that they were understood and executed. This tall, stern, scholarly no non-sense young lady won the learning wars in spite of occasional attempted guerilla skirmishes. She never understood that she was being tested. In spite of what seemed like an eternity, my two junior high years with Miss Goss fostered in me an appreciation for learning. Her greatest contribution was the creation of an environment where distractions were unacceptable. She is one of my former teachers who deserve delayed accolades. Eileen Goss Stockman remained in the neighborhood as a homemaker and classroom teacher until her retirement. In her mid-eighties she still remains active and enjoys reminiscing about our common experiences.

WWII played out during those grade school years. The neighborhood was a minuscule microcosm of every community in the country. I remember a cousin of Dad's being wounded in the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor; neighborhood boys were enlisted and inducted. Gold and blue and red stars adorned many neighborhood windows designating serviceman status, alive and serving (blue) prisoner of war (red) and killed in action (gold). Nightly radio news broadcasts by the likes of the most listened to national broadcaster H D Kaltenborn were greeted by everyone quietly huddled around the radio. I'm not certain when the gravity of

the times struck me, but I can now only imagine how it impacted adult lives: gas rationing; food rationing; savings bonds; milkweed pod collection as raw material for parachutes; regular neighborhood civil defense meetings and many other things too subtle for me to comprehend. We were on the fringes of the pacifist Amish-Mennonite community who sent conscientious objectors to many public service jobs. Those who did join the armed services, usually were non-combatant medics who bore the brunt of ferocious battlefield rescue missions. Emotions ran high with these families quietly suffering remonstrations for their beliefs. Many homes were blottedched from paint thrown and families were shunned. I remember Mother arguing with her sisters of this faith and strongly supporting nephew George Yoder who elected to enlist in the Navy in spite of Aunt Emma and Uncle Noah's quiet pacifist belief. It was a time that tested the individual wills as never before.

The old country school closed sometime in the fifties and was moved to a farm site presently owned and occupied by the David Geyer family, approximately one-half mile away. A local family, Willard and Viota Yoder built and occupied a home on the parcel now the home of Shirley Stockman, my seventh and eighth grade teacher's daughter.

TRANSITION YEARS

1945 - 1949

I remember the day in April 1945. Mother came running to the barn to announce the death of Franklin Roosevelt. It was my Dad's 41st birthday. In spite of the family's political disagreements with FDR, they reflected the country's grief and bewilderment. It was common knowledge that the world's most devastating war was about to conclude. Who was Harry Truman, the relatively unknown Vice President? FDR was elected, almost by acclamation for an unprecedented four terms because he led us through the greatest depression and war in our history. Media did not report how severely ill he was.

Later that summer as I accompanied Dad on errands to Iowa City, I remember "All Hell" breaking loose. People were running and screaming in the streets, clusters of people were hugging and celebrating. Word had just come of the surrender of Japan. That unknown Harry Truman had earlier ordered atomic bomb raids precipitating Japan's surrender before its inevitable invasion, and the wasting of untold numbers of lives on both sides. I recall our sitting around the radio one earlier Sunday afternoon when the bomb was tested on Eniwetok atoll in the Pacific. This event was as mind boggling at that time as was the later walk on the moon.

Two years later in 1947 I was to stand within fifty feet of the rail crossing in Oxford, Iowa where I listened to a then revered Harry Truman give a five minute whistle stop campaign speech from the back of the train. That November day we read the Chicago Tribune headlines, "Dewey Defeats Truman". The next edition brought the historic retraction.

The depression was over. The war was over. I was about to experience a most significant change in my life, HIGH SCHOOL. I had become an important contributor in the family farming operation. During the war, Dad expanded the dairy herd, installing a milking machine, and a sanitary milk storage facility. This permitted the sale of raw milk to the Williamsburg drying plant which in turn supplied our troops. This single business move allowed our family to buy extra land and to pay mortgages. It is impossible to portray the changes in outlook and perspective that overcame my family. World War II was a horrible and devastating event for a huge proportion of families in this country and abroad. After this event the country tackled peacetime reparations as ambitiously as they did the war effort.

This was my world as I met eleven of my twelve high school classmates at Parnell Consolidated High School in August 1945. Hardin Township District # 2 (Willow Grove) was a non-aligned elementary school district, similar to most of the rural districts outside of cities and towns in Iowa in 1945. Dad and his fellow School District Director, Clifford Hess, had made arrangements with Parnell Consolidated District to accept Willow Grove's high school students on a tuition basis. Parnell High school was one of only two public sanctioned schools in Iowa staffed by

Catholic nuns. Don Showalter, a cousin, Wayne Geyer, an elementary school classmate and I were the only Protestants at that high school when I was enrolled. While the directors had other options in selecting the appropriate high school, they put their faith in the Nuns. It was my understanding that a great deal of thought went into selecting Parnell over other surrounding schools: courses available; perceived quality of teachers and the perceived culture of the school and the community. My experiences vindicated this decision. The curriculum was confined to the basics, but the teachers were committed and dedicated.

The old Parnell three story brick building housed kindergarten through high school. Because Don, Wayne, and I lived fourteen miles away, we rode the only motorized bus in the district. As I recall, Bill Leahy a kind grandfatherly man drove this route throughout my high school days. I inherited my grandfather's retrofitted Model A Ford and drove it occasionally during my senior year. Most of the students lived within five miles of school and were driven in horse-drawn covered wagons with seats down both sides called hacks. Yes this was 1945.

We were greeted on our first day in the big study hall. Big in terms of quaking ninth grader standards, but at most it could pack in a standing group of 150-200. Four years later, I had the honor of introducing the graduation speaker, Hugh Roberts, a University of Iowa political scientist. For the first time we met the likes of Leo Finnegan, Dick Duffy, Kathleen Curry, Pete Hannon and others with every Irish handle imaginable. We were the outsiders but that soon changed. I discovered that every kid I came to know and appreciate was just like me, with caring, and supportive parents. The only difference was that many of these Irish Catholic families like the Finnegan's had as many as twelve kids.

My high school years were enjoyable. If you weren't a basketball or baseball player, there were few other extra-curricular outlets. I enjoyed band, school plays, softball and chorus. I was still active at home assisting in the morning and evening chores which made for a long day. The only evidences of religion were the habits worn by the Nuns and the occasional meetings in the church, usually an observance of special holy days. It took the naïve Protestants a few days to understand what genuflecting meant. When observant Catholics were near a crucifix, they crossed themselves as a way of a public demonstration of their belief and love of Christ. It was a strong statement of faith and a lesson to us. I came to appreciate the definition of ecumenity over these years. Never once was there an attempt to encourage us Protestants to believe differently. Every Nun I came to know and respect became my champion. My parents felt welcome and comfortable in becoming part of this big hearted Irish community.

There were only two class reunions in these sixty plus years since graduation. My children who graduated from larger high schools joke that we could hold a reunion in a phone booth. The thirty-fifth, our last, was somewhat tense. I discovered later that Jerry Black and Francis Masterson our classmates and the only couple to

marry from the class, had just separated. Jerry was the valedictorian who went on to become head of the department of Pharmacy at the University of Iowa.

Jerry and I took four years of math under Superintendent Albert Hogan. We were the only two in the class during our junior and senior year, I was lucky to have been challenged by these two excellent minds. The other lay teacher was Carl Selby, my principal and my social science teacher. He saw in me some possibilities and found ways of challenging me without being offensive. He married one of his former students and measured up to the prolific Parnell style.

Each of the four nuns left an imprint. Sister Florette taught music with a flair. She may have found hidden skills in my voice, certainly not in my clarinet playing ability. As a senior member of the boy's quartet we were selected to attend the annual state music festival in Des Moines in 1948 where Fred Waring, the leader of the popular well known Pennsylvanians, was guest conductor. One of the many attendees at this festival, whom I didn't meet until later, was a second soprano from Boone High who has lived with me for the last fifty-five years.

Sister Eugene, my cherub-like English, Latin and Literature teacher was a good teacher for those of us who came to learn. Leo Finnegan will always be remembered as the person Sister Eugene asked to leave the room to take care of bodily functions. To put it more plainly, Leo enjoyed regularly stinking up the room. When I had to pass the Miller Analogies test to enter graduate school, I became forever grateful to this scholarly nun for being in her Latin classes for two years. I don't remember Sister Carmella so much for her making science understandable, but for her physically dragging me down a flight of stairs to the principal's office by an ear! It seemed the punishment was slightly severe for only accidentally spilling part of my inkwell down Colleen Duffy's back. I would speculate as I reflect years later that she was still in her twenties, tall, and without the habit she would have, no doubt, been the find for any eligible bachelor.

The Prom was the event of the senior year. We had our Prom at a well known Cedar Rapids ball room. The senior class president's mother was traditionally a sponsor to this event. Somehow she and Dad understood the importance of this event and arranged alternative transportation for Mom to Cedar Rapids and home allowing me to take the family Chevrolet. Somehow I managed to find a younger comely Irish passenger.

In retrospect, High School was a bridge to the future. Those years provided a perspective that spanned beyond the farm and family; not intentional in curriculum planning or in contacts, but nevertheless, very important in my maturation process.

EXPLORING A FUTURE

I don't recall giving much thought to what my life would be like after high school. At that time, career counseling was not a part of a rural high schools program. Most farm boys ended up on the family farm. Dad and I never had a serious talk about my staying on the farm. I suspect he was concerned about the farm supporting another family, especially in light of his own earlier experiences. Both parents encouraged me to experiment with other pursuits. I enjoyed doing everything required to keep a livestock and crop operation humming: milking from fifteen to thirty productive Holsteins, eventually using a mechanical milking machine; assisting in raising two to three hundred hogs annually; total care of a small flock of sheep that I had purchased; and functioning as jack of all trades in crop production from planting to cultivation to harvest of oats, hay, and corn. Dad often confessed that in my later high school years, without my help, he would have needed a hired hand.

During the summer of 1949, I learned of a possible tuition scholarship to Grinnell College. Dad's great uncle, retired Dean of Cincinnati Law School, Merton Ferson, had arranged for the scholarship. My parents and I didn't appreciate the importance of this. Several neighborhood youth, including some of my Parnell classmates and I, signed on with Amana Refrigeration the summer after our graduation. The plant was still a part of the communally owned Amana properties. One of Amana's resourceful members was George Forestner, founder of the plant. The combination refrigerator deep freeze, the newest of the products, required production expansion. The Amana high school football coach, the dock receiving clerk, left for his teaching duties just as many of the compressors from the new refrigerator freezer were being returned for the repair of a flaw. The lure of overtime for this new job offer was too enticing. I stuck around this job until it was too late for college enrollment. Neither my parents nor I could swing college room, board and books at that time.

In late October, with the overtime earned as dock receiving clerk, I had enough money to enroll at Iowa State Teachers College for the winter quarter, 1949-50. My thoughts were, if I earned a limited elementary teaching certificate in the next three quarters ending in summer 1950, it would allow me to find an elementary teaching position for the 1950-51 school year. With savings, I could see how to acquire an eventual bachelor's degree. Along with my 1939 Chevrolet coupe, some meager savings and a commitment to find enough work for board, I was on the way. Until the summer of 1950, I lived in a room approximately a mile from campus. I came to know the Chicago Heights mafia, a group of football players recruited from the same high school on a recurring basis by coach Starbuck. ISTC and Starbuck had made its mark in this sport thanks to this pipeline. Pete Petersen, one of this group needed a roommate and the cost was right, thus my indoctrination to college. I hung out with a group of guys who roomed off-campus or commuted from

Waterloo, studying and playing pinochle usually in a balcony area off the main ballroom of the Commons. We still maintain contact with Daryl Daggett and his wife Vi, one of that crew. Another from that group was Tom Pettit. We were in several political science classes. Tom set the curve, but it was fun to challenge him. Those of our generation came to know Tom as one of NBC's first news anchors until his untimely death.

The summer of 1950 was great fun in spite of the cloud of the Korean War. I had found a rural teaching job beginning in the fall. I had also secured a dorm room and a job in the cafeteria. Three fourths of the four thousand students that summer were female. In spite of this imbalance, ISTC didn't escape the panty raid fad sweeping campuses that year. I tried hard to ignore all of these distractions but often of no avail. A group of Boone County gals created a regular stir at their cafeteria table where I worked. It became my self-imposed duty to quell their mischief. My strategy was to ask the ringleader for a date to try subtle rehabilitation. For almost sixty years this effort continues, sometimes not so subtly. I departed ISTC, armed with my teaching credential, a job within twelve miles of home, and a girlfriend.

On a late August 1950 day, I met twenty-four young children from kindergarten to eighth grade in the rural school within five miles of Iowa City. In each of the nine grades represented, were special unique personalities. As an inexperienced twenty year old, I quickly learned to delegate. Twelve year old eighth grader Sally Schmidt, quite mature, slipped seamlessly into the role as my assistant, not by design but automatically. One of the three kindergarteners was a wisp of a little girl who during my tenure never uttered a word. Without Sally, I would have been unable to assist the child with what I later came to believe was autism. The students, their parents and I became a compatible group. In order to teach the required curriculum, I did what every good teacher does. The older kids always enjoy helping their younger peers, a strategy which works both ways in the learning process.

In late November, it became apparent that Uncle Sam had my number. The draft board couldn't give me a definite time for the impending draft. After giving all options full consideration, I notified the School Board of my intentions to resign at the Christmas break, after the traditional Christmas program. In visiting recruitment offices, I discovered that by enlisting, I might be able to select some training that would be of future benefit. During the two month lapse of January, February 1951, I filled in at another Johnson County rural school until the official February 24th induction into the Army.

IN THE ARMY NOW

My parents took me to the Federal Building in Cedar Rapids on February 24th 1951. I was joined by twenty plus eastern Iowans as we boarded a train for Des Moines where we were sworn into the army. Many took advantage of that last night of freedom in Des Moines. Several train cars were dedicated to inductees headed for basic training in Ft Riley, Kansas. It took about ten seconds after getting off the train, at the base station, to come face to face with military life. We were met by non-commissioned officers of our soon to be training company. A technique used by the military is to reduce each individual's sense of independence to zero. This strategy involves public group and individual ridicule with constant commands as recruits are transformed from individuals to soldiers. We were marched to our quarters from the station. You might imagine the ragged formations and the lack of ability to respond to commands. These circumstances caused a constant stream of invectives and threats as we neared our first stop, the supply room. There we were issued ill-fitting clothes, bedding and army toiletries. My narrow double A feet fit loosely in the medium B shoes that I shuffled around in for three years. Next stop was the barber shop. To qualify as a barber, you needed a clippers and an unsteady hand. Those who had a pompadour fixation were devastated by the results.

Our training company of two hundred recruits was housed in four crudely constructed barracks. Each floor consisted of a twenty-five member squad. Thirteen double decked beds were arrayed down each side. Restrooms that we learned to call latrines were at the end of the first floor. At the foot of each bed were two footlockers containing all of the recruit's clothing, toiletries and personal effects. There was a manual for everything. Each article was to be meticulously folded and placed in the locker according to the manual. Beds were to be made according to regulation with daily inspections. Any infraction, including adherence to training instructions resulted in a gig. Gigs were tabulated with non-conformists receiving the most distasteful duties imaginable. Cleaning floors and latrines with toothbrushes were examples. Each squad elected a leader. In addition, a company training non-commissioned officer was assigned each squad. There was enormous pressure to make each squad the best. This meant that tremendous competition existed. It was everyone's advantage to prevent screw-ups. Woe was the squad that had an incorrigible incompetent.

Our company reflected the diverse face of America. There were several rural black Georgians, some Jewish kids from Kansas City, and many small town and rural mid-westerners. My lower bunkmate was an early thirty something overweight car dealer from western Kansas who hadn't realized when he was discharged from WWII, that he had inadvertently signed the line committing him to the inactive reserves. Most of us survived the short grueling six week basic training in the raw winds of Kansas in March and April. Typical basic training lasted eight to fourteen weeks, however hostilities in Korea demanded a stream of replacements. Many of these minimally combat ready kids hit the front lines within two months of

induction. The grapevine kept us informed about those among our group who would never return.

The army fulfilled its pre-enlistment commitment and sent me to what was termed Adjutant General School. This was a euphemism for army records administration. My training and a subsequent permanent assignment as a supply sergeant kept me in Fort Riley until August 1952. My job called for sergeant stripes but most promotions were allocated to Korea. There were no complaints when a corporal held the job. Supply was attached to a service company in a basic training regiment. Once after discharge, when I was in a hardware store in Cedar Falls, Iowa, someone approached me and asked if I had been a supply sergeant in a basic training company in Ft Riley. After I confirmed he indicated "he would never forget that voice".

I was notified in August 1952 of an impending assignment to The Far Eastern Command. This meant a thirty day leave with a never to be forgotten tour of duty in Korea. The thirty days elapsed with the blink of an eye. In spite of continued hostilities and the knowledge of us all, that I would be potentially in harms way, the family and Jo put the best face on it. I spent as much time as possible with Jo. We were engaged and made plans to wed as soon as things could be arranged after my discharge. Goodbyes weren't easy but we were all troopers.

The six week time lapse after the goodbyes was like an out of sync slide show. It was all disjointed. The flight from Cedar Rapids to Seattle; the two week layover in Seattle awaiting the availability of a troop carrier; a long rough trip across the Pacific; another wait in Yokohama with further military logistical delays beyond our capacity to understand; the short trip across the sea of Japan and the descent from the ship down rope ladders with all of our gear in duffle bags over our shoulders and into waiting amphibious landing craft; the trip from Inchon to Yong-Dong-Po, a huge replacement depot, in boxcars on narrow gauge rail and the stressful wait for an assignment. Everything was strange and unpredictable. Even at an early age I functioned best with a degree of order and predictability.

Over two thousand worried troops crammed into quarters several bunks deep, endured at least two storms. During most of the two week trip from Seattle to Yokohama, many were so sick they couldn't eat and if they did, they couldn't keep it down. Those of us who were ambulatory were kept busy cleaning and disinfecting to control the stench. The troops were either too sick or too deep in their own thoughts to recreate and converse. Fortunately I had stashed away some Steinbeck and Faulkner books. These companions kept me sane and out of a deep funk.

Crowded boxcars were the mode of transport from Inchon to the replacement depot at Yong-Dong-Po. We passengers jumped off occasionally to help push the train up inclines. This experience defies description. However, I began to understand the implication of the old WW II term "Catch 22". When I finally reached the replacement depot, I fully expected to be sent as an infantry combat replacement. It

had been over eighteen months since minimal basic training but replacements were in demand as troops were being efficiently rotated home after a year in combat zones.

This mammoth replacement facility was the central source of supplies, troop allocation, fuel, identification of casualties, and other logistics necessary to maintain an army. The compound was enclosed by a massive woven barbed wire fence. Huge transport planes landed at all hours. A large Korean community had sprung up on the periphery to provide the civilian workforce. Huge multi-hole unenclosed latrine facilities dotted the inside of the fences. Korean workers constantly walked the exterior pathways to gain work entrances. Personal privacy was one of the luxuries immediately lost.

I waited for what seemed an eternity, though in reality only a couple of days. Late one night I was rousted from my quarters, given ten minutes to gather gear and climb aboard a canvas covered truck with seats down both sides. I was issued an M-1 carbine, two bandoliers of ammo, and told to get aboard. Just as the truck was ready to go, someone called out; "Corporal Roberts" "dismount and wait". I was given a brief reprieve. Several days later a jeep picked me up and took me to Headquarters Company of the 224th RCT (Regimental Combat Team). The Regiment was attached to support the Third ROK (Republic of Korea) Division. At that time they were patrolling and skirmishing in an area near Chunchon on the 38th parallel. This unit became my home from October 1952 until October 1953.

ON THE THIRTY-EIGHTH PARALLEL

When I joined the 224th Regimental Combat Team, it had been detached from the 40th California National Guard Division since their arrival in Korea earlier in the war. In November 1952 the war was in its twenty-seventh month. The 38th parallel was arbitrarily drawn during peace negotiations after WWII, splitting Korea almost evenly geographically. The Russians ceded control of the North to Communist sympathizers who, with their help built a strong North Korean military. South Korea was a quasi democratic regime with a paranoid, United Nations backed leader. From the beginning of the split in 1946, distrust was rampant with a mile wide neutral zone separating the rivals. There was a growing fear on the part of South Korea that the North would invade. Finally in the summer of 1950 the North Korean Army, strengthened by the Russian Industrial complex, invaded and within three months, almost annihilated the desperately ill-prepared and ill-equipped South Korean forces.

.With United Nations sanction, Truman, without Congressional action, immediately contributed United States troops in support of U.N. action. A number of other UN member nations followed suit proportionately. There were French, Aussie and Turkish reverberating from horrendous casualties reduced the military to bare bones. The first US troops were drawn from a paltry reserve left with MacArthur to oversee rehabilitation of Japan. From all reports, these men had grown complacent with a sedentary life in Japan and were suddenly forced to deal with a dispirited South Korean force about to be driven off their Peninsula.

David Halberstram's book, *The Coldest Winter*, depicts conditions accurately. For context, I note that during much of the early time I write about, we were in sub-zero snow covered circumstances. We were with the regiment at all times and moved with them, often through slippery mountain roads enveloped in smoke screens to confound the enemy. A double squad tent could be set up in about an hour. With an oil-burning space heater, six of us could keep the temperature at about the freezing mark, which with sleeping bags was tolerable. We rotated getting up and lighting the heater. When it was Arky Highfill's turn, it was hilarious to observe him dancing around on his sleeping bag as if it were a bed of coals. This was not an act.

I was integrated into the regiment and quickly discovered that I had no official line or staff assignment. It seemed to me that I was Master Sergeant Mac McDonald's (the Regimental Sergeant Major) gopher. This was not to imply that I did nothing. My colleagues in regimental records, where had a cubby hole to work from, were baffled. What might I be up to? Was I embedded from G-1 (intelligence)? They asked questions and mostly looked at me askance when I couldn't answer. The most confounding thing to my buddies was that Mac was delegating all kinds of details

that heretofore had been his responsibility. Eventually they believed my equally confused state of affairs.

Fifty years of recollection about regimental organization is fuzzy. There were five battalions; three infantry, and two tank with a service company and a headquarters company to handle administrative details. Each battalion had five companies which at full strength comprised up to 250 commissioned and non-commissioned men each. The service company to which I was assigned was responsible for all logistics required to keep the regiment's combat mission functional. The top ranking commissioned officer, usually a full (bird) colonel and the top ranking non-commissioned officer, the sergeant major were both a part of Service or Headquarters Company. Regimental duties required of the company included; what we would now see under human resources; plus food service; graves registration; and logistics. We picked up mail and payroll at Corps headquarters in Inchon via bubble helicopters, the type seen in MASH. We had a strict twelve to fifteen month rotation of men based on a point system tied to combat zone assignments. Rotation allocations were based on availability of space on returning troop ships. Replacements were based on casualties plus personnel rotated via point allocation. The tricky assignments were in Service Company as those required a special MOS (military occupational specialty). From October 1952 until January 1953, I was involved in a smattering of all of these jobs. Routinely we rotated out and replaced at least one hundred combat basic trained non-commissioned troops monthly.

An example of Mac's delegation came one night, after dark, in early January. We received about fifty Puerto Rican nationals ready to be processed and assigned. Mac routed me out of the sack about midnight and said "this is your baby". Fortunately we had some fellow Puerto Ricans in the regiment. After finding temporary quarters, I went to work. First I assigned two of my reliable acquaintances to detail steps in the process of getting them to various assignments. By searching records we identified some other nationals already in various regimental positions. I had them placed on temporary duty with us and in four days we had them dispersed. The biggest challenge was to get verification of common law marriages for payroll marriage allowances. The forerunner of the internet was the army special messaging known as TWX. It was indispensable in cases like this.

All January mornings were bone-chilling cold but on the morning I was asked to report to regimental headquarters for a face to face meeting with the commanding officer, Colonel Glover, I didn't notice the cold. The meeting was to report the sudden departure of Sergeant McDonald and without fanfare announcing a promotion to regimental sergeant major with the attendant allowable sergeant stripes. Allegedly Mac was suddenly called home to be with his sick wife. It has always been my belief that this event had been planned and was to be finalized when a suitable replacement was found and trained.

My disguised internship had prepared me well for the new responsibilities. The army was no different from what I later discovered in the real world. If you can

place good people in key roles, your success is assured. As the person responsible for replacement assignments, I had the luxury of finding the best. Chib Ulery, a Pennsylvania telephone lineman, Joe Olshan, a young Boston College graduate and Jim Guthrie a Villanova graduate student assistant were the team who helped win a Division citation for creating a model troop rotation system.

The challenge that always faced us was sudden regimental moves, sometimes with only two to three hours notice. Logistics were one of our responsibilities. To accomplish these moves we drilled emergency procedures regularly. Everyone knew his role and was also responsible in covering for new replacements until adequately trained. We followed the 3rd ROK Division as they defended parts of the Punch Bowl, hit hard by North Korea in their final struggle to gain advantage while truce talks limped along.

A major factor in earning rotation points was front line service. If you were in a one mile radius of the battle line, you qualified because of vulnerability. From the day I joined the 224th, until the truce in July, I continuously qualified for these points. The numerous rapid regimental movements on tenuous mountain winter terrain under heavy smoke screen cover qualified me for my most treasured medal, the Combat Infantryman's badge.

A final truce was signed in July 1953. The regiment settled into a routine with the challenge being to keep restless GI's constructively occupied until they qualified for rotation. The point system was modified to allow for faster rotation, contingent on availability of troop ships. Restless troops found creative ways of wasting time. Suddenly we were confronted with the challenges of maintaining disciplinary record accounting. Local newspaper police blotter reports are insightful in defining our challenge. Military police wrote crudely colorful accounts of infractions. Most of the tidbits were grossly descriptive providing hilarious reading. Each morning these accounts were transcribed for attention of the Judge Advocates. Gay alliances, new for the military police, were described in ways that would have exceeded the novelist Tom Wolf's most creative efforts,

It was a savage three year war with the peninsula ravaged by retreat, advance, invasion and stalemate, finally ending in a truce after protracted negotiations in July 1953. Our troops rose to the challenge and comported themselves as valiantly as ever recorded in the annals of war.

The war devastated the local economies, infrastructure and irrigation systems in South Korea. The intensive cultivation of rice, their ubiquitous food staple, was severely compromised. Military encampments attracted huge settlements of locals resourcefully growing service businesses to meet the military needs. Most were legitimate. Korean night spots flourished with home brew and comfort women. There were the inevitable clashes, and arrests. Combat troops were replaced by

military police and subsequently every infraction worked its way into and through our domain.

My turn for rotation home came in mid-October 1953. The inevitable wait for a troop ship and the big float back were without mishap, unlike the westward crossing plagued by choppy seas and fear of the unknown. Cruise enthusiasts describe the shimmering moonlight across endless ocean. It's a sight we relished each night. Continuous card games helped pass the time. A sense of indescribable optimism permeated the atmosphere. Everyone's plan was to resume their interrupted lives with a resolve to make up for lost time. Although Tom Brokow hadn't yet tagged the WWII defenders as "The Greatest Generation", we already knew ours exceeded that moniker.

The US Howse was scheduled to enter San Francisco Bay early on the Sunday morning before Thanksgiving. We stood in formation, at parade rest, with duffle bags beside us, looking at the Golden Gate Bridge as we glided into the harbor. The ship docked briefly debarking west coast troops into the awaiting arms of loved ones, a scene we all observed. I doubt their was a dry eye among us. The ship proceeded to Camp Stoneman where we were quickly unloaded, processed, and placed aboard various modes of transportation for bases across the country. Sixty of us were aboard a C-54 by midnight that Sunday headed for Camp Carson, Colorado. The army didn't waste time. Since I was not due for discharge until February 24, 1954, I was processed for a leave spanning Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years and on a train to Iowa City by Monday afternoon. On Tuesday morning, I was greeted at the train by my parents and Sister Lois, still in high school.

Although Jo planned to join the family for a Thanksgiving celebration, I borrowed Dad's car for a quick trip to Aplington where she taught, for a reunion. En route I greeted sister Ada, a Vinton teacher. After a lovely dinner in Waterloo, I returned Jo to Aplington late Tuesday evening. Having had no sleep for three days, I dozed while rounding a curve between Belle Plaine and Marengo, rolling the car, barely missing a tree. I was able to break the driver side window and crawl out, with only minimal scratches.

Early on pre-Thanksgiving Wednesday Dad drove a new Studebakers off the premises of Myers Motors in Coralville. His car had been totaled. I met Jo at the bus so we could celebrate my return home at a family Thanksgiving with many of my grateful relatives. On Friday the Des Moines Register and the Iowa City Press Citizen ran an account of the accident headlined as "SOLDIER WRECKS DAD'S CAR RETURNING FROM SEEING GIRLFRIEND". Time evaporated while getting reacquainted during that wonderful December.

I traveled back to Camp Carson in early January in my newly purchased blue Studebaker. The army assigned me for the remainder of January and February to give discharge lectures on veteran benefits. It was non-challenging drudgery but

their was light at the end of the tunnel. I became acquainted with Colorado Springs, a small military town then. One of the guys, who worked with me, lived off base with his new Italian spouse who introduced me to a new dish, Pizza. Eventually February 24th, 1954 arrived. I proudly drove off base on that memorable day, ready to resume civilian life. In retrospect these experiences were no doubt as valuable to me as the years that I spent earning a PhD.

COLLEGE-MARRIAGE-TEACHING-FAMILY THOSE BUSY YEARS 1954 - 1960

Spring quarter at Iowa State Teachers College began almost immediately after my February 1954 discharge. During the six year span, 1954-1960, I finished my baccalaureate and master's degree along with work, marriage and the arrival of tribe # 1, Jon and Peggy. During this span, ISTC became SCI, State College of Iowa, UNI, and University of Northern Iowa. This is the context for my ramblings about college years.

The spring of 1954 was a whirlwind; a week in the college infirmary with the measles; planning with Jo for a June 5th wedding; and completion of my first post-military college term. I contacted measles while going through discharge medical examinations. Fortunately Aplington was within driving distance. Jo took the car returning to the infirmary regularly with assignments and other necessities. Coursework almost took a back seat to the planning required for the wedding and subsequent establishment of a household but nevertheless the transition was painless.

Wedding weekend was a milestone in our lives, marking the establishment of a family in whom we can take continuing pride. It proceeded almost flawlessly probably because Jo had planned it for at least two years! The bachelor – bride bashes on Thursday night, the rehearsal dinner on Friday night, the well orchestrated ceremony on Saturday night and the Lake of the Ozarks honeymoon were all memorable and are documented by the aging albums in our basement. My parents and sisters spent a rare weekend in a Boone motel enjoying and participating in the festivities. There was a tense moment when I realized that the important wedding ring was safely stashed at Jo's parent's home. Fortunately, Vic Mathison, the best man, made a quick rescue with no one aware of a possible hitch. Friends thought of everything including the symbolic car decoration. I was able to remove the markings before we visited my Mennonite missionary cousins in the heart of the Ozarks. My only big gaff during this entire wedding week was introducing my new bride to these cousins as my wife Joanne Standley. Every couple should have such a flawless beginning!

The summer of 1954 ushered in new experiences. We occupied a cozy, inexpensive, downtown Cedar Falls apartment and had encounters with our landlord, Mr. Wellman and his unfriendly spitz. Mutually we learned housekeeping 101. The marriage survived our realization that its costs bucks to set up housekeeping. When accompanying Leonard on the first grocery runs to Piggly Wiggly, although Jo had known him for four years, she hadn't realized that he used the big wide aisles for shopping cart races! Both of us took maximum college credits. Jo was within three quarters of her BA. Leonard was looking at two years to a BA including summers. Mr. Wellman's frequent nosy encounters convinced us that one summer was enough of him. That summer, we were intrigued with the drama of the Army-McCarthy

hearings and were glued to the radio taking in every tid-bit of Herbert Hoover's 80th birthday bash at West Branch.

We moved to student Quonset housing (\$23.00 monthly) beginning in the fall of 1954. Jo had started teaching kindergarten at Manual Arts School in Cedar Falls, only several blocks from home. A large number of Korean vets were on campus thanks to the GI bill. I was fortunate to stretch these benefits through most of my coursework towards a PhD. Life was relatively uneventful during our two years in the Quonsets. Our close neighbors, the Casebolts, Clubines and Tooms provided social outlets with regular potlucks, picnics and card games. Jo introduced Lolo, her cat to the neighborhood. Many Sunset Villagers didn't know us, but Lolo became known to all for her late night lookouts atop Quonsets announcing her availability to prospective suitors. Her efforts were fruitful. We even boxed up the offspring for trips to visit family. Eventually Dad got Lolo who, while prowling in the fields, lost a leg but not her wanderlust. TV had been around since the late 40's however we made the plunge while in the Village, devoting Sunday evenings to the likes of The Ed Sullivan Show and What's My Line.

It became apparent that a full load of college coursework didn't completely deplete my daily supply of energy. I managed to get a part-time job at Simpson Furniture. Lawrence Simpson was owner of Simpson Furniture. Lee Miller, one of the sales persons was a relative. Lawrence and his wife had no heirs thus it was common knowledge that one day the growing enterprise would be Lee's. I was the set up man who eventually, along with other part-time college student, delivered furniture in a two to three county area. When not involved in these duties, I was in the showroom meeting potential customers. If a graduating student, relocating in Iowa, bought a certain amount of furniture, Lawrence would move the couple anywhere in Iowa. I had lots of chasing around Iowa. Heavy gas powered refrigerators and hide-a-bed's moved up rickety outdoor stairs to upper floor apartments were the bane of movers. Ron Donn, Jerry Heiken and I accumulated some unbelievable stories. When it became apparent to Lawrence that I was graduating and contracting to teach in Hudson, he offered me an opportunity to join with Lee as a partner. Of course I declined. Two things have happened at Simpson Furniture over the years: Lee left Lawrence who had no other heirs; and Simpson Furniture has grown to one of northeast Iowa's biggest retail enterprises. Never look over your shoulder. I might have been richer in resources but not in the sense that over a career I possibly have made positive differences in the lives of the kids in my schools.

Undergraduate days evaporated into the fall of 1956 when I began my teaching career as a high school social studies teacher at Hudson Community Schools where a year later Jo signed on as a kindergarten teacher. During my undergraduate studies, in addition to furniture experiences, other noteworthy happenings occurred in our lives: after completion of the baccalaureate degree in the winter of 1955-1956, I began work on a Master's degree; and we moved during the summer of 1956 into a newly completed upstairs apartment in the home of a lovely old couple and spinster daughter who spent weekdays as a Marshalltown high school teacher.

Hudson, in 1956 was transitioning from an extension of the Iowa State Teachers College as classroom student teaching laboratories into a purely public school. We still had elementary teachers who were staff college professors. In the 1950's, Columbia University Teachers College, Vanderbilt University's-George Peabody Teachers College, and ISTC were considered the cream of the teacher training programs in the country. We were fortunate to have had an opportunity to interact and teach beside some of the country's best. In faculty meetings, we outsiders would mouth to one another "George said this". Why? Because some of these teachers had previously been at George Peabody! Much of my early professional grounding is attributable to this experience. While learning and playing bridge with Horace and Gretchen Hegg on a regular basis, we frequently enjoyed Jack Parr, and observed the world's first orbiting space craft, the Russian Sputnik.

During the summer between our two years in Hudson we spent June, July and August with thirty plus other teachers on board a non-air conditioned bus, study tour of Mexico. We both received college credit for research done in conjunction with the Department of Sociology at ISTC. In addition to the tremendous insights gained during this trip, we gained lifetime friends, Dean and Bill Broderick who found one another on the trip.

After a stint in Hudson we both took teaching jobs in Cedar Rapids, Jo as kindergarten at Cleveland Elementary and me at Roosevelt Junior High in social science and language arts. Cedar Rapids was special for lots of things. I learned to teach in a seventeen hundred student, one hundred teacher junior high. Jo was teaching two sections of thirty plus kindergarteners while pregnant with Jon. I was being nudged into part-time quasi administrative duties (student council) (supervision of a three shift lunch room fiasco) by a principal who liked and trusted me. I was selected as one of three Cedar Rapids teachers to participate in a curriculum development project for hospitalized students in conjunction with the University of Iowa, under the auspices of a grant from the W.T. Grant Foundation.

The big event during our two years in Cedar Rapids was Jon's arrival in time for me to hand out cigars on our last day of 1958-59 at the faculty school picnic. I proudly held court describing the obstetrician's visits to the waiting room giving progress reports of Jon's breech birth. That summer, in addition to regular trips to the University of Iowa, where I participated in a curriculum development project, I worked nights at various tasks for what is now PenFord. This job bought a new refrigerator for our first little home that we purchased and finished during October and November 1958. Both sets of in-laws got in on the sweat equity finishing projects. Thanksgiving turkey was served on boards over sawhorses. We moved on the coldest December Saturday in my memory. With Dad's pick-up, Dad, Jim Mooney and I carted our possessions across town. New Year's morning 1960 with friends spontaneously invited for breakfast found us listening and watching the capers of Fidel Castro's assumption of power in Cuba.

During the 1959-1960 school year, we hob-nobbed with Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance people (they had good parties) as I tried selling insurance part-time. Along with weekly trips to ISTC, I took course work for secondary principal certification. Jo and I thoroughly enjoyed getting involved with a budding new diverse new Methodist mission church family. Activities included a building project, choir and other supportive and fulfilling endeavors

That spring, Bill Isenberger, the Hudson superintendent contacted me with an offer as junior senior high principal opening in the fall of 1960. Cedar Rapids had many persons in line for all available administrative openings and couldn't commit to any future possibility. The principal urged me to stay and be patient; however, we needed the principal's salary for survival with our soon increasing family. Peggy was due in November.

Ironically one year later, some unexpected administrative moves opened the assistant principalship at Roosevelt in Cedar Rapids. The principal dropped by our Hudson home unsuccessfully offering me the job.

A LIFETIME CAREER

My career as a school administrator began in 1960-61 as the Junior-Senior High Principal at Hudson Community Schools, Hudson, Iowa. When I retired as Superintendent of Schools from District 87 Bloomington, Illinois on June 30, 1994, I had served three years as a Principal and thirty years as a Superintendent of Schools. The years, times and places are listed:

**Principal and Superintendent of Schools Hudson, Iowa 1960-61 to 1965-66
Superintendent of South Hamilton Community Schools 1966-67 to 1969-70
Graduate Assistant Iowa State University 1970-71 Residency for PhD
Superintendent of Maquoketa Community Schools 1971-72 to 1978-79
Superintendent of Lombard, IL Elementary District 44, 1979-80 to 1985-86
Superintendent of Bloomington Community School District 1986-87 to 1993-94.**

Although we had lived in our little home on Holly Ave in Cedar Rapids for less than two years the house sold on the first day it was listed. A 4.75 per cent transferable GI loan was the hook. We were excited about moving into a new home we had contracted for construction in Hudson. The local Hudson builder arranged for us to paint, stain and decorate the interior and exterior as the sweat equity down payment. I departed for Hudson immediately after school was out in May 1960, camping in the partially built home, sanding, staining and painting. In addition I attended classes at ISTC, working toward a superintendent's certification.

Hudson is a bedroom community for Cedar Falls and Waterloo. From 1957 to 1966, during our years with the community, it grew in population from approximately 600 to 950. Graduating classes also increased from thirty something to forty-five or fifty during our era. Bill Isenberger, the superintendent, detected my ambitions even while I was a teacher and afforded me opportunities such as attending administrative conferences with him. The same was true of Les Kloempken, my Cedar Rapids Principal, who befriended me and found outlets for "getting my feet wet", activities that served to be mutually beneficial to both of us.

It felt like homecoming when we moved back. My reputation as a no nonsense teacher served me well as I began my role as principal. Many of my former high school students sought me out and I'm sure considered me a friend. As senior class sponsor, Jo and I accompanied the class of 1957 on a Chicago trip. I was flexible in giving student's opportunities, but firm in enforcing reasonable rules. These experiences preceded me and were helpful as I began my new role. We made good faculty friends; consequently the finished basement in our new home became the regular Friday night post-ballgame meeting place. We count as life-long friends the likes of the Brodericks and the Holmes of Hudson faculty days. In 2000, the Holmes had a faculty reunion. Many of the survivors of 35 to 40 years ago were in attendance.

Having dealt with ninth graders in one of Cedar Rapids most diverse junior high schools, these semi-rural youth with supportive parents at home, were a pleasure to be around. Some legendary stories were told of my teaching days, mostly handed down by older brothers and sisters. I was often asked if I recalled having my VW bug buried in a carefully molded snow drift. I consider it a tribute to be invited to class reunions. It was comforting to mingle at their 50th class reunion, with the "kids" Jo and I sponsored on their 1957 class trip to Chicago. I thought some of them looked older than us! We had strong young teachers, most of who went on to other successes. Linda Waddell, a newly graduated librarian was so good that she ended up at the headquarters of the American Library Association. Bill Broderick looked me up several years after we met in Mexico and subsequently accepted a social studies, coaching position. After earning a doctorate, he headed the educational technology department at San Diego State University.

All thirteen grades were contained in a complex of additions to the original building. The high school principal's office was in an alcove off the third floor of the old high school building. Dixie Lightheart, my inherited secretary, and I were crammed into this one room office. Dixie, who had risen to her highest level of incompetence, was the topic of faculty lounge gossip. I found her a space where she could be banished when I needed privacy with staff and students. Dixie wasn't around after my first year.

During our years as Hudson Principal and Superintendent, (1960-1966), both Peggy and Carol became part of our growing family. At eighteen months, Peg was in charge. Her mother was known to remind her of the fact that "I am the mother!" Carol was unique in her subtlety. She immediately made her mark by quietly, behind the scenes, manipulating the siblings.

I will always remember eating dinner in our little Hudson dining room while tracking two of history's most significant historical events: President Kennedy's facing down Khrushchev in the Cuban missile crisis; and his assassination. Jo tells of four year old Jon breathlessly calling to her attention "the president's been shot". That long sad weekend culminated with a National holiday in commemoration of his funeral. For those of us living in this era of ecstatic hope, it was almost impossible to deal with this national grief. At the same time we were truly paranoid in fear of a nuclear attack. There was a big push to build bomb shelters.

In the spring of my third year as principal, Gordon Strayer, the school board president sought me out, indicating that "Superintendent Isenberger would not be returning next year" and that the board would like to meet with me about the job. In learning of this (not through me), the staff, and especially Jo, were as nervous as I on the big night. Everyone, including Jo, gathered at the Thurstons, (Mel was elementary principal and Lois was a sixth grade teacher). I was ecstatic to announce my appointment. At age 33 when I assumed the office on July 1st, I may have crossed a threshold as one of Iowa's youngest superintendent's. Eleven years earlier, when I was promoted to regimental sergeant major, Stars and Stripes, (the military

tabloid of the era), included my name as one of the youngest top ranking non-commissioned officers in Korea.

As superintendent in a school enrolling 600 K-12 students, I became a jack-of-all-trades. Lyndon Johnson's war against poverty's Great Society programs, targeted underprivileged kids in our schools. Headstart and Title programs offered opportunities previously unavailable. These projects demanded application, implementation and accountability. It became my responsibility to inform the board, cooperatively develop plans, and to implement changes. The hours were long, the challenges understandable and when we could see needy students blossom for the first time, it was worth it. Math, science, technology and reading improvements were targeted. Many of our teachers traveled all over the country during summers, earning advanced degrees through these programs. They returned with knowledge and skills which greatly benefited the students.

At my thirtieth Association of School Administrators conference, the year of my retirement, I was honored. As I looked back at these annual events, I recalled my first, where in Convention Hall, Atlantic City; I peered over the balcony at what appeared to me as a giant of a man, Lyndon Johnson. His speech was to review the framework of his Great Society initiatives

I enjoyed the superintendency and began to plan, with Jo, a long-range course of action. A union card (the PhD) was one of the requirements for appointment to a larger district with more responsibilities and a better salary. Iowa State University was producing marketable graduates under the direction of Dr Richard Manatt, who was rapidly gaining a national reputation as a mentor of successful superintendents. After acceptance into his program, while participating in a Kettering Foundation educational futures seminar at Harvey Mudd College in Pomona, California, I learned that Manatt had convinced the Board of South Hamilton Schools to keep the superintendent vacancy open until I returned. He had been helping find a position closer to Iowa State University for our convenience. The family was staying in San Diego with Jo's sister, brother-in-law and nieces. After a swift trip back, I accepted the new job. Since it was early August, the Hudson Board released me to work in both districts until they found a suitable replacement. Jo and I had talked over the circumstances and, in her inimitable way, offered unconditional support, in spite of the anticipated arrival of Mark in late November.

The four years in South Hamilton were indescribably busy for us all. Mark arrived on December 1st much to the excitement of us all. Family life wasn't dull before but Mark's arrival was the capstone. South Hamilton was in transition. Four little towns ranging from 300 to 1000 had merged into a single huge rural district, two years before my arrival. K-8 schools were maintained in the towns with 9-12 shoe-horned into the former Jewel high school. To accommodate the transportation of students in a district of at least 250 square miles required thirty-three buses. I often rode with our transportation director, Kenny Voss in early morning snow storms

when we might have eight plus inches of blowing snow at one end of district and less than two inches at the other. You could never win on a snow day call. One early morning, as we were checking roads Kenny started hyper-ventilating while we were shoveling the pick-up from a drift. Fortunately when the ambulance arrived, Kenny was resting after I had extricated the truck

During the early months, in addition to administrative routines, and supporting Jo in her management of the move, I encountered: delayed construction of a new central high school halted in litigation regarding site acquisition; architectural plans for the new building developed without staff involvement; the district geographically split by construction of Interstate 35 severely limiting school bus routing; and academic limitations due to and absence of North Central accreditation. In spite of an overflowing agenda, the board supported accelerated involvement in my work on the PhD at Iowa State

District offices were located in downtown Jewell. While lunching at Roberts's café I met Jerry Blake, a crusty old attorney who told me he held the keys to resolving the building site litigation. Shortly thereafter, Jerry and I called on 80 year old bachelor-owner of the site, Tillman Erickson who related his grievances with the board who, in his mind, had not personally attempted to negotiate a reasonable transfer. I went to the board knowing that it was comprised of five independent thinkers. In spite of the challenges, the board bit the bullet and resolved their issues with Erickson in my first month on the job.

Carroll Hutchens, a Kansas City architect designed a building, prior to my arrival on the promise that the board would compensate when funds were available from a bond issue passed in conjunction with the merger. To his credit, after my refusal to accept the plans, he arranged for key staff to visit high school models similar to his design. With staff feedback, necessary modifications were made to facilitate the award of a building contract in my first six months. Two years later the new school was built and occupied. The bus routing was resolved during my first week on the job by paying thirty-three drivers an extra day when they with their local knowledge effectively created workable routes around the new Interstate 35 construction. On the first day of school, kids were picked up without a hitch and no driver complaints; after all, they owned the solution. South Hamilton applied, and after some major curricular modifications, gained North Central accreditation during my final year in the district



**Grandparents Merrit & Clara Roberts
With Ada, Lois, and Gene (as I was known pre-Army)
Summer of 1937**



**Parents Clifford and Mary Roberts
Lois, Gene, and Ada
1937**



**The Lad and his dog
Late 1930's**



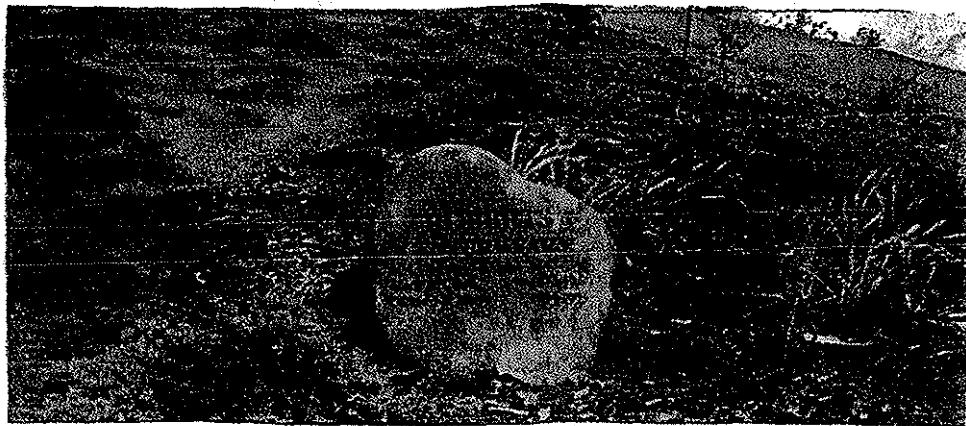
**Ready for Church
Ada, Lois and Leonard
Early 1940's**



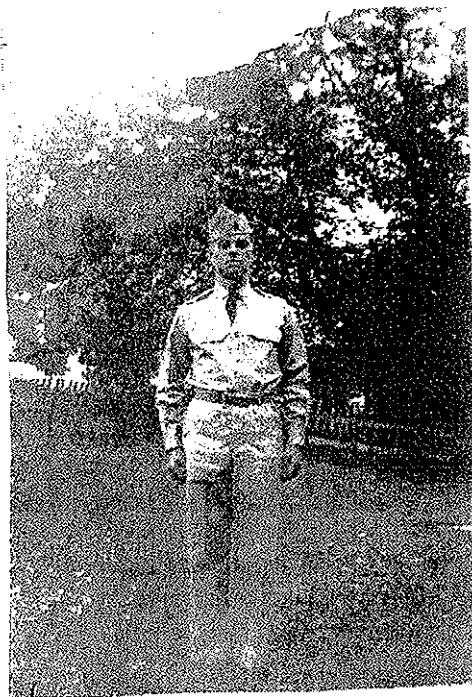
***Birthplace of three generations of Roberts
Autumn 1977***



***Retirement home of Leonard & Jo Roberts
Beginning In August 1995***



***Commemoration stone on the home site
Four generation of Roberts from 1867***



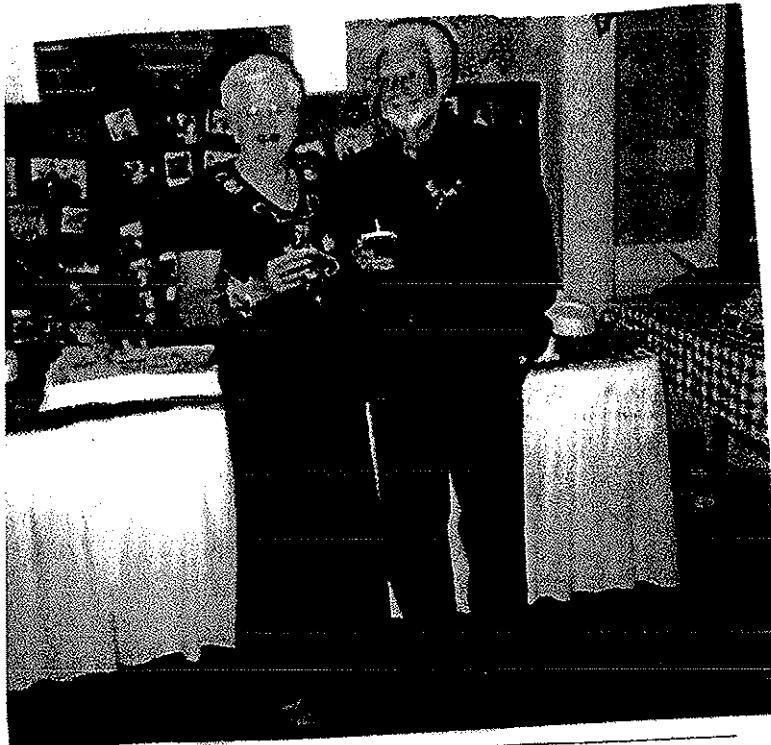
Private Leonard E. Roberts home on leave 1951



Stuffed in his old Sgt. Major jacket, Ike vintage in 2000



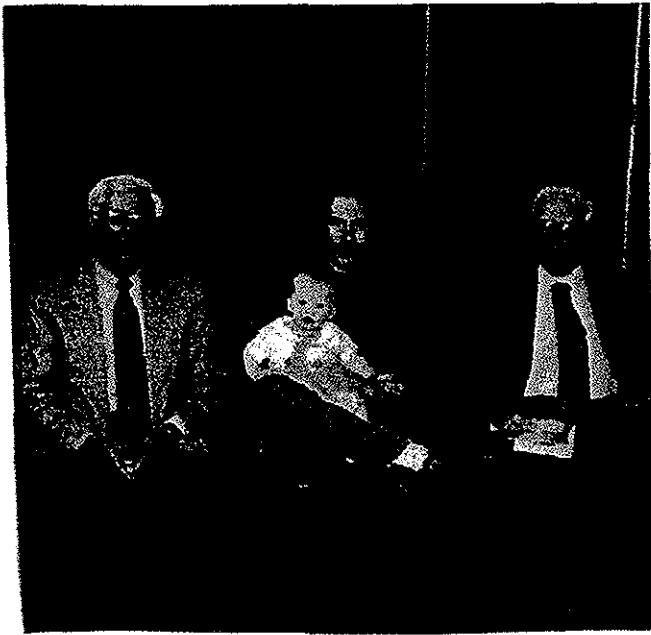
Among South Koreans 1952



***Our 50th Wedding Anniversary Celebration
June 5, 2004
Ox Yoke Inn Amana Iowa***

***Our Wedding June 5, 1954
Marion Street Methodist Church Boone, Iowa***

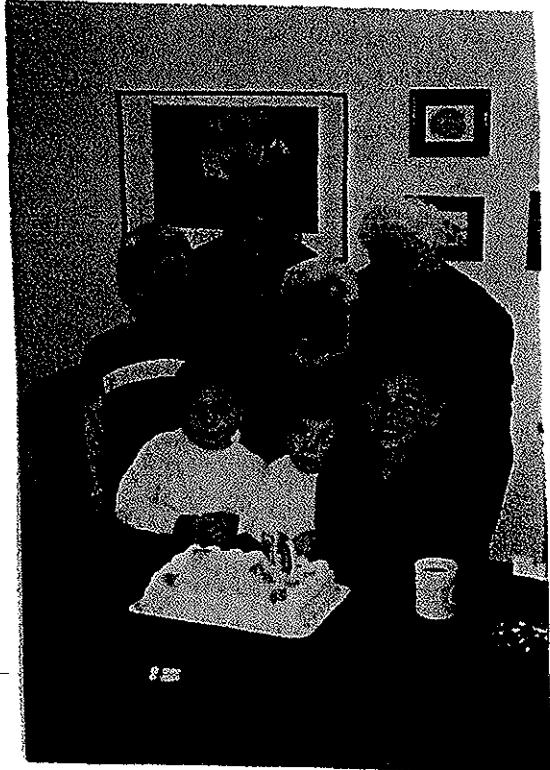




**Four Generations of Roberts Clifford's 88th Birthday April 12, 1992
Leonard E., Jon Patrick, Samuel Merit, Clifford Merit**



**Jon, Mark, Peg, Carol
At our 50th Anniversary June 5, 2004**



**Grandchildren at my 70th Birthday
Atticus Roberts, Ryan Hale, Will Roberts
Sam Roberts, Zarah Roberts, Grandpa Leonard and Grandma Jo**

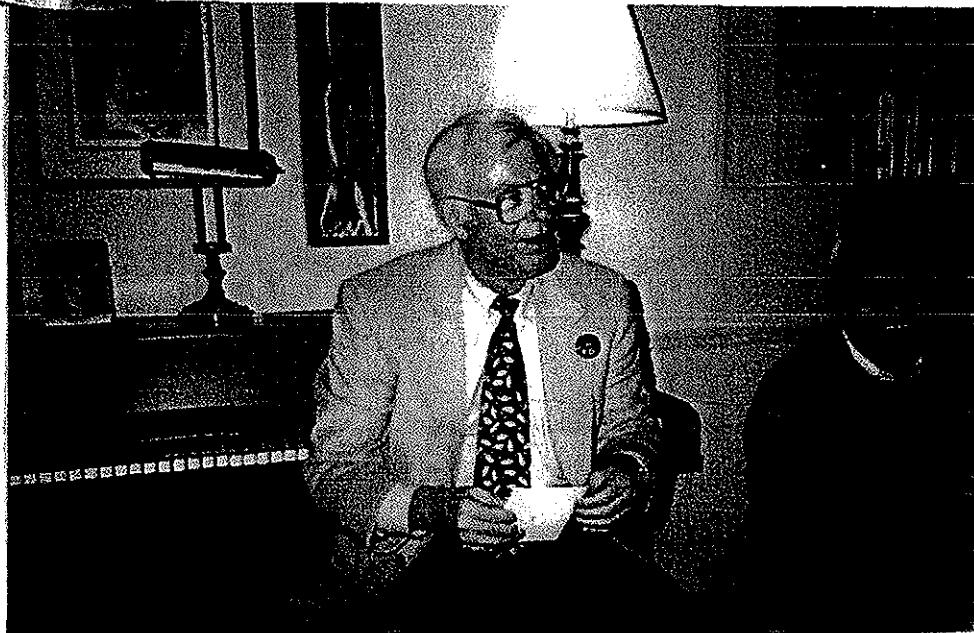


Lombard District 44 School Board at reception 1986

Dr. Alan Anderson, Bert Lauer



**Dr. Bob Leininger, Illinois State Superintendent of Schools
Illinois State School Board President Awarding Illinois
Superintendent Of the Year 1992**



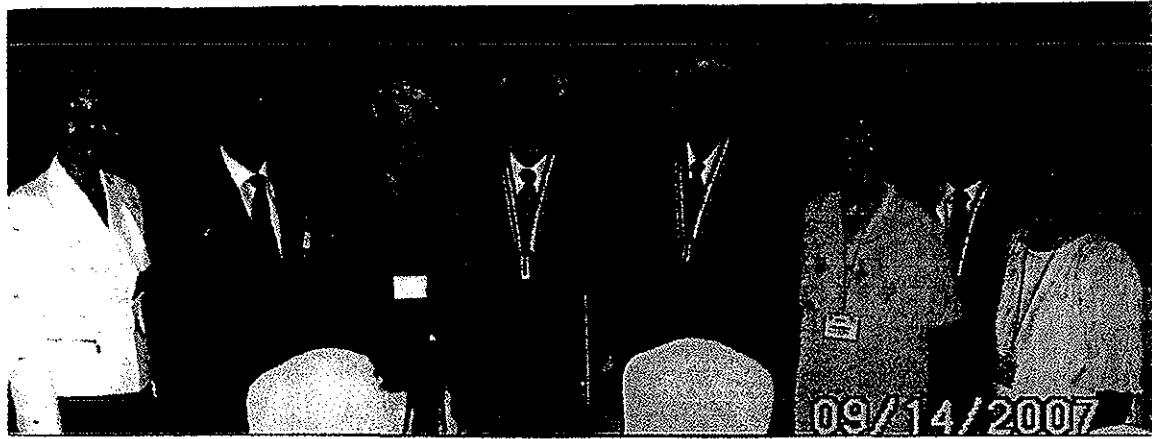
**My Friend Bill Barry
On my 60th birthday November 1990**



***Moving Day September 8, 1994
Moving from Motor home #2 the Dolphin
To Motor Home #3 the Safari***



Visiting the Korean War Memorial Washington D.C. 1997

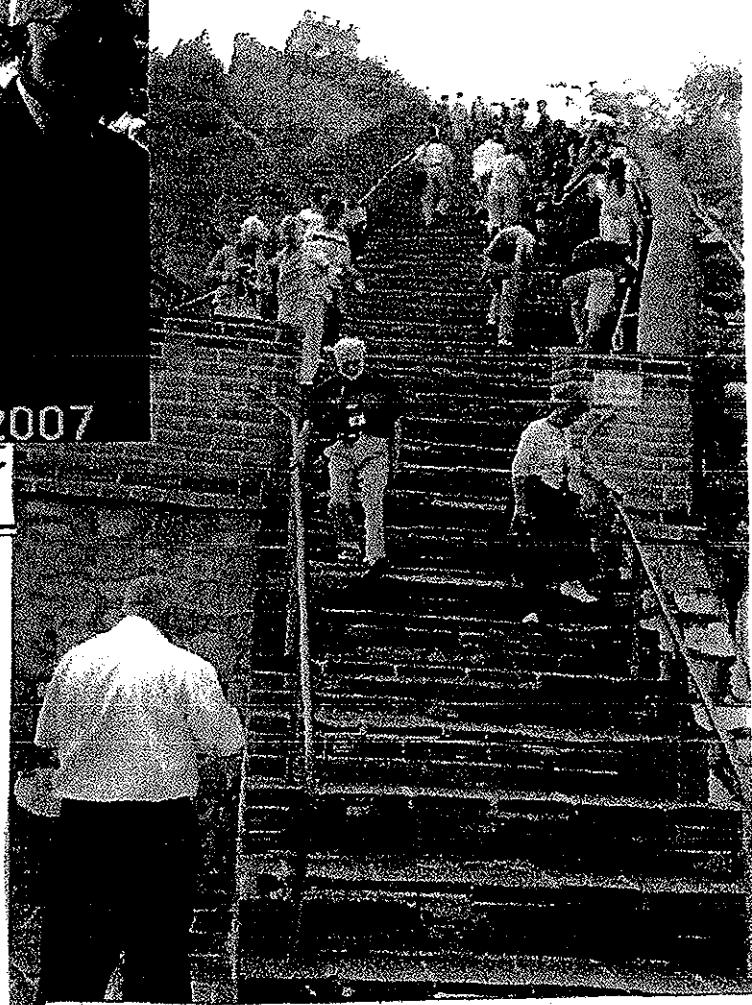


***Conferring of Korean Peace Medal
Seoul, Korea September 2007***



09/11/2007

***Astronaut "Buzz" Aldrin, a fighter pilot during Korean War
visit Korea Program September 2007***



***On the Great Wall
China extension of Korea Revisit Program***



The Travelers since 1957 on a trip from ISTC to Mexico

Leonard, Jo, Dean, Bill Broderick

.....and we are still laughing



Maquoketa Travel Group THE FUGS September 2005

Back Row : LaVerne Roberg, Len Roberts, John Ruth, Tom Breuch

Front Row: Cliff Rask, Carol Rask, Eunese Roberg, Jo Roberts,

Judy Ruth, Carol Breuch

On our Second trip to Hike in England

ISU THEN MAQUOKETA

During the school years 1970-1971 through 1978-1979, I experienced some extraordinary career milestones: completion of the PhD; an eight year stint in Maquoketa; and a Ralston Purina leave study sabbatical. After four productive years in South Hamilton, we took the plunge and resigned to fulfill the PhD residency. We moved to an adequate apartment in Huxley south of Ames where Jon and Peg were enrolled in the local schools with Jo returning to teaching in a sixth grade classroom. Her income along with my assistantship in teacher placement allowed us to live almost comfortably that year. A neighbor cared for Mark and Carol when we were at work.

To earn a doctorate I was required to demonstrate proficiency in my major, School Administration and two minors. I chose statistics and anthropology. A dissertation was required within five years of course completion. Dr Boyles, my assistantship coordinator, delegated a classroom teaching assignment and coordination of the placement office. The Problems of Teachers course offered simultaneously with student teaching, was my baptism into college teaching. Dan Gable, of wrestling fame, was in the class and made it clear that these problems would never apply to him.

The highlight of this academic year was a week long trip to Nashville assisting Dr Boyles with the development of a component of the Nashville-Davidson County Desegregation Federal Application. Norm Boyles came to ISU from Louisville, Ky. and knew enough about desegregation issues to successfully draft a winning proposal for this phase of Nashville's federal application. Our assignment was to compile an analysis of the physical condition of each school. Armed with a check-list and a driver, three of us worked seven days assembling data to be synthesized into the report. Four to five schools were inspected daily with the building principal as a guide. It was uncanny, the insights one gained through interaction with these seasoned savvy, mostly Black principals. During this era, many major urban schools were under the gun to desegregate or lose federal or state approval. This was one of the most meaningful weeks in my PhD training.

At the conclusion of this year, almost all course-work required for the doctorate had been completed plus the proposal and research design chapters for the dissertation. I had a five year window to complete this final project. It was time to get back into the superintendence and Maquoketa, with a visionary board, represented an appealing fit. After trips to the community with the family, we found a great home with the kinds of amenities favorable to the six of us. Faced with one statistics course between me and the ABD (all but dissertation), I enrolled in the only course available during summer of our move to Maquoketa, Field Studies in Advanced Regression Analysis. If this sounds daunting and intimidating, it was! Typically my minor would have not required such an advanced course designed for graduate statistics majors, nor would someone with my statistical background have been able to get through the class. With the empathy of the instructor and the tutelage of the

visiting British agricultural statisticians at ISU there for the express purpose of enrolling in this unique course taught by this internationally recognized instructor. I passed the ‘dumbed down’ version and was on my way to the next challenge.

Maquoketa became the “hometown” that our family claimed. It was the junior high and high school for Jon and Peggy. It was the elementary-junior high for Carol and Mark. We made lifetime friends. I enjoyed the strong support of a board that encouraged initiatives that bolstered education and built enhanced pride in the schools. Some of these projects included a revised curriculum that defined what students should learn and tracked their significant progress. Administration and teachers worked for North Central accreditation for our junior high school—one of the few in Iowa. The construction of a Design-Build elementary school, Cardinal, the only such building concept ever attempted in Iowa, was completed at two-thirds the typical average cost. The concept involved an architect collaborating with a general contractor bidding on an educational plan. I was aware of this approach in Indiana and was fortunate in selling it to the board that had trust in me. I was vindicated when the cost comparisons were calculated. With cooperation of community and city officials, I submitted and received Congressional approval from Carter stimulus allocations, for an indoor city-school swimming pool. This would have been the only such community collaborative effort in Iowa had the funds not been suddenly withdrawn due to a congressional election.

During this eight year span, with support and sacrifice from Jo and a contributing family, the following additional experiences bore fruit for me and for the districts, I subsequently served. They included: completion of the dissertation and the subsequent conferring of a PhD; a fully funded leave-study sabbatical awarded to forty US and Canadian elementary-secondary and college administrators in competition with colleagues throughout these countries; and service to the Iowa school administrators and the children of Iowa as head of the Iowa Association of School Administrators Legislative committee with the responsibility for providing feedback in the drafting of Iowa’s new collective bargaining bill and subsequent lobbying for passage of educationally sound laws.

With encouragement from peers, in early 1973, I submitted an application for one of forty Danforth-Purina, American Association of School Administrator leave-study and all expense paid scholarships. An Association executive soon arranged a Chicago meeting to develop a tailor-made two month experience, learning more about public sector collective bargaining and systems of management. The school board agreed to my paid absence during January and mid-July to Mid-August of 1974. In spite of some critical activities including occupancy of our new Cardinal Elementary school and imposition of daylight savings time in mid-January, in response to the oil scarcity emergency, everyone stepped up and managed without a hitch. While kids from Maquoketa waited in the dark for buses, during the January leg of the leave, my month was spent studying management systems at American University in Washington DC. I also was also able to observe and interact in Montgomery County Maryland Schools with Superintendent Homer Elsrod, who

was later the charter executive of The Educational Association of the States. While visiting nationally acclaimed Bucks County Schools near Philadelphia, I spent a weekend staying with Mom's cousin, Harry Showalter and acquainting myself with the Showalter Pennsylvania-Dutch family connection in Lancaster County. At Syracuse University, Matt Fletcher offered insights into their unique programs for training specialized collective bargaining administrators. In Binghamton, New York, John Hogan, the author of the model New York Public sector bargaining law, spent a half-day providing tremendous insights. During the final January leg, the innovative Wisconsin School Boards Association, collective bargaining model was demonstrated at several local schools.

The summer segment took me to the Ottawa, Canada schools and to schools in the Pacific Northwest where acclaimed administrators practiced noted systems of educational management. In the Seattle-Tacoma airport, awaiting my return, I watched Nixon boarding the White House helicopter giving his famous V wave as he departed the final time in disgrace. Along with receiving information about educational management practices, significant insights were gained in public sector collective bargaining. As Legislative Committee chair of the Iowa School Administrators, my experiences were invaluable as we worked with legislators in the formulation of Iowa's first public sector bargaining law. We also helped initiate the first coalition of mid-sized Iowa schools, including Maquoketa, designed to deal with collective bargaining. The coalition hired a Syracuse trained collective bargaining specialist whom I had met to represent the individual schools. Friends like Don Roberts became Arkansas state superintendent, worked with Hillary Clinton to develop the first state teacher qualifying test in the nation. This group formed a support network for the remainder of our careers.

The summer of 1977 will always go down as our "red letter" year in Maquoketa. That was the year both Jo and I walked across stages for advanced degrees. Clarke College in Dubuque, approximately 40 miles away, became Jo's other job in addition to management of her six family household, teaching full time at Andrew and continuing her community activities. The passage of The Education for All legislation in the early 1970's inspired by Iowa's own senator Harkin, opened special education opportunities for qualified, caring teachers. With Jo's interest and background, she was a natural, especially with one of the premier training programs so accessible.

She was taken aback on that summer day in 1977, upon returning from Dubuque after a grueling study session for her master's comprehensives when Mark matter of factly announced "Dad needs his radio for his room". When she tiredly muttered, "Doesn't he have one at the office?" Mark, astonished at this response exclaimed, "Don't you know? He's in the hospital!"

Just a week earlier while in Ames defending the dissertation before my committee in what was referred to as final orals, I was running a fever and was obviously ill. Immediately when I returned, after two trips to Drs Andrew and Rask, I was

hospitalized and quarantined with hepatitis. On the day I was released I wore my green plaid suit that coordinated with my yellow complexion as the family participated with Jo when she was conferred the Master's degree. One week later the family made another of our frequent trips to Ames as we participated in the ceremony of my being robed, a part of the process of having the doctorate conferred. The dissertation completion was a family affair as we developed, collated and mailed materials from research queries. Our trips to and from Ames involved sorting and feeding key punched cards into the crude computers of that era so that data could be subjected to statistical analysis.

By 1978, both Jon and Peggy were either out of high school or about to graduate. Carol and Mark were reaching the age and grades that would preclude a move during high school years. Given my experiences and the advantages of the Illinois retirement system, we became acquainted with the most visible Illinois superintendent head-hunter. His offices with the Illinois School Boards Association were located in Lombard giving him an advantage in their search for a superintendent. Two interviews during the early spring of 1979 resulted in job offers to both districts. Jo was fortunate to quickly land a job in a nearby suburb of Woodridge. After several lengthy interviews and their visitation to Maquoketa, we accepted the Lombard Board's offer and started the detachment process from Maquoketa. Peer relationships and strong social attachments made our impending leave difficult.

CHICAGO SUBURBS

Our move to Lombard was a family project. It was at the same time exciting and intimidating. Carol and Mark were troopers, never complaining or whimpering but reluctant to leave their lifetime friends for the unknown. Jo, always the person who could adapt and blend the family into any setting, proved her mettle in these new surroundings. During the late winter and early spring of 1979, we found our way through snow tunnel, Interstate 88, between Lombard and the Maquoketa area, many times. Our first challenge was shocking. It became immediately evident that replacing our lovely, comfortable Iowa home would not be financially feasible therefore we sucked it in and settled for our pleasant, but somewhat smaller and more modest middle class home in unincorporated suburban Butterfield, a part of the Lombard School district. The address was 21W 186 Briar Cliff Road meaning that it was 21 miles west of the Chicago loop, a common means of marking addresses in the Chicago area.

By July 1st, when superintendent's contracts begin, we were in our new home. Jo had secured a special education teaching position as a learning disabilities resource teacher in Woodridge, approximately thirty minutes away. Jon and Peggy, who had just graduated from high school, kept their jobs in the Maquoketa area, and made trips joining us when convenient. Peggy enrolled at ISU that fall but subsequently, worked summers with the Lombard Parks and Recreation Department. Carol enrolled in Glenbard East graduating in 1983. Mark entered Westlake Junior High and graduated from Glenbard East in 1985. Mark and Carol worked summers for the school district. After numerous visits to Lombard during our early years, Jon discovered better employment opportunities in the plastics industry and the convenience of The College of DuPage. In less than ten years from our move, he found his niche and with a partner, began Processing Technologies Inc., which in 2008 observed its 20th anniversary. During our first ten years in Illinois, there were three graduations from Iowa State University; Peggy in '83, Carol in '87, and Mark in '89. There were also weddings for Jon and Andrea Miller in 1982 and Peggy and Kyle Kramer in 1983. Zarah, our first and only granddaughter was born in May, 1985. Ron and Carol's and Mark and Denise's weddings occurred while we were in Bloomington.

Lombard, a village of 45,000 like most suburban communities, witnessed a daily migration to train stations for work in downtown Chicago. All five of my male board members were among this daily exodus. The two lady board members represented over 90% of the women in the district, as stay at home mothers. We had no school lunch programs for elementary students most of whom still went home at noon or carried a bagged lunch. Many over protective moms volunteered in the schools and were busy with a multitude of PTA activities. Superintendents found it was politically necessary to interact regularly with what we privately referred to as shadow boards (said facetiously). Jo was astounded at the first junior high parents night to be with packed rooms of parents meticulously recording each condition for ascribing a letter grade. Shame on her for thinking that this was a student's

responsibility. Like most suburban elementary school districts during this era, fewer families were of child bearing age, thus elementary schools were closing. Lombard's school population in the late 60's exceeded 10,000, compared to 6500 in 1979.

During my years in the district we closed two elementary schools and the newest junior high school. Huge turn outs of parents protested during these most unpleasant of duties. Police surveillance was provided residences of board members and the superintendent on these occasions and during teacher strikes.

Our stint in Lombard spanned the school years 1979-1980 to 1985-1986 with a number of noteworthy experiences. Each school board who were my bosses in the five districts marking my superintendence, were unique and reflective of the very different communities they represented. I learned early in my career that as the board's executive, it was critical to work at role distinctions and to establish comfortable lines of communications. In each of my settings, this axiom was the measure of my success. The two most effective board president's of my career were women with strong commitments to their role and a willingness to face issues directly, impartially and resolutely. The varied backgrounds of the thirty five plus board members with whom I considered my bosses, ranged from; a high ranking State Farm Insurance executive, and the Dean of the Dental School at University of Illinois Circle campus, to a logger entrepreneur with a tenth grade education, possessive of the most analytical mind of them all.

Lombard teachers struck in both 1980 and 1981. Strikes are legal and prevalent in Illinois. Consequently, they are regularly used as leverage by both the boards and the teachers in the absence of a will to negotiate until reasonable settlements could be forged. During my interview with teacher representatives prior to my accepting the job, they explained how in the previous year they forestalled a strike but vowed not to capitulate again so after eight days on the picket lines in 1980, a settlement was reached. Jim Reed, one of my board members bargained for management with teamsters and had created a mind set with the board that characterized teachers as the "bad guys". The second unnecessary strike in 1981 convinced the board that my pleadings for a new approach with new spokespeople and changed attitudes would create better relations and avert future strikes.

With labor peace we could concentrate on measures to foster improved teaching and learning. During these years, with the help of two respected consultants, Fred Genck and Ann Groomes, the curriculum was more rigidly defined and a system of tracking test results was instituted. These initiatives were the structure for accountability at the classroom and building level. Administration of these structures was made the province of building principals who were subsequently paid in accordance with successes. Several principals unable to adapt to the demands of this building based accountability system were dismissed or counseled into more suitable roles. Teachers generally were supportive and became believers when they internalized training and experienced measurable results in the classroom. The model, which received statewide recognition translated to progressively improving building and student test scores. These successes and my

affiliation with these consultants gained statewide recognition which resulted in activities mutually beneficial both to my districts and to the improvement in programs for Illinois students.

Roosevelt University, with a campus at the intersections of Eisenhower Expressway and Michigan Avenue in the Chicago loop, invited me to join their part-time staff, teaching educational anthropology and statistics. They sponsored after school classes in Chicago and suburban high schools, leading to a master's degree for Chicago teachers being groomed for principalships. It was exciting to interact with these exceptional black and Hispanic teachers, many of whom asked for my recommendations as they applied for competitive promotions. It was a new world to me but tremendously fulfilling

Ted Sanders became State Superintendent shortly after my arrival in Illinois and articulated principles consistent to those I initiated in Lombard. Through his leadership county school systems were dismantled and replaced by regional centers of educational improvement. Because of the successes in Lombard, I was elected by my peers to chair this center in DuPage County. The retired chancellor of the University of Illinois was selected to coordinate a massive statewide standardized K-12 curriculum development process. I was appointed by the state superintendent to coordinate professional writers in identifying and writing the science curriculum. At the regional level, among many projects was the training of school superintendents to evaluate and train building and staff level administrators in the management of these initiatives. During the summer of our move to Bloomington I conducted these training sessions for over 250 administrators in Dupage County, Illinois.

In the winter and spring of 1980, we were able to take advantage of a unique piece of legislation designed to structurally upgrade classroom buildings to comply with rigid life safety standards. After a tragic fire in Our Lady of Angels in Chicago, taking countless lives, Illinois instituted legislation mandating stringent building safety standards. Matching funds were combined with general obligation bonds allowing us with on site supervision of two architects and three construction managers to literally rebuild 12 buildings over the course of the summers of 1980 and 1981. We were able to sell the bonds at approximately six percent, investing the money until payouts were required at the early 80's inflationary rate of approximately 20 per cent. Through this mechanism, known as arbitrage we were able to abate much of the indebtedness incurred with the bond sale.

It would be redundant to say, those were busy years in Lombard.

BLOOMINGTON ILLINOIS (1986-1994)

Having experienced successes in Lombard as well as being described by colleagues around the state as a "change agent", it seemed to me appropriate to tackle one more challenge before retirement. In my years of interacting with school superintendents, two management types were identifiable. Many were caretakers, unwilling to rock the boat; good fits for many boards who had minimal stomach for the risks of change. The other type was usually considered a "mover and shaker.. I fit that category.

Steve Doty, the Lombard based, Illinois Association of School Boards head hunter, with whom I had done numerous joint workshops, urged me to toss my hat in the ring in Bloomington. He considered the school board as progressive and in search of a person with my credentials. We jumped through the requisite hoops; initial interview, board visitation to Lombard, phone calls and inquiries to many of my colleagues and constituents, district and community visitation including Jo with a dinner party at the home of a board member, and subsequently a contract offer. Bloomington was a growing community of 65,000 populations with twin city Normal at 35,000 populations and also growing. Illinois State University, Illinois Wesleyan University, State Farm Insurance Corporate Headquarters, Country Countries Insurance Corporate Headquarters, Mitsubishi Motors and Eureka Vacuum Cleaners were strong entities of the community. The fit appeared to be ideal especially with the board agreeing to permit my continued state and national involvement as well as teaching at the university level as appropriate.

Jo commuted to Woodridge where she continued her teaching until she was employed by the Woodford County Special Education Association starting in August 1987. After Carol's graduation from Iowa State, she joined us until her marriage to Ron. In the summer of 1986, we moved to a neat sprawling ranch home with two fireplaces and adjacent grounds that were too extensive for my limited maintenance time. The place was ideal for entertaining and rehearsal dinners for Carol and Ron's and Mark and Denise's weddings. In 1990 we purchased a condo that was perfect, even for accommodating family visits. Ron and Carol resided in Normal where they worked at BabyFold; Carol as a teacher and Ron as an administrator. Mark graduated from Iowa State University, took a year working in maintenance for Bloomington Schools, married Denise, and went through law school at University of Nebraska during this era. After graduation, he and Denise moved to Cedar Rapids where Mark joined the Simmons and Perrine law firm in 1993 and has since become a managing partner. It was exciting to welcome grandsons Sam and Will into our family during the ensuing years.

My enthusiasm for Bloomington was linked to the ambitious agenda they had outlined during the interviews. During the last part of my career, the concepts of accountability and management by objectives began to permeate education. Schools were resisting, mainly because leadership hadn't been exposed to principles critical to effective implementation. My PhD training with Dick Manatt and experiences

such as the Danforth leave study program along with the projects in Lombard prepared me for the challenges. Teachers and principals were somewhat resistant to change but later became advocates. My time was divided between putting forces in motion to organize a K-12 curriculum around defined outcomes at grade levels and overhauling an outmoded operations system to include staffing consistent with objectives, transparent budgeting and accounting and the implementation of an umbrella support system. This support system involved buildings and grounds maintenance, transportation and food service.

I undertook several projects almost immediately. The most important was the development of a “request for a proposal” designed to initiate an objective third party analysis of the curriculum with suggestions for closing identified gaps; along with the comparative analysis of existing staffing in all categories in relation to National Institute of Education standards. Also administrator training consistent with all initiatives was undertaken simultaneously with initiatives. There were board work sessions with an external facilitator designed to achieve consensus regarding Board-Superintendent Role responsibilities. Equally important was the development of a simplified fiscal system consistent with district initiatives that could be easily understood by lay constituents.

We worked through the projects during the eight years of my tenure and they are the nucleus of much of this account. Educational Services Institute (hereafter referenced as ESI) of Cincinnati was awarded the contract to review existing curriculum practices, identify potential upgrades and propose improvement implementation. A team from Cincinnati did an extensive audit that concluded with their findings and recommendations in early spring of my first year.

After the requisite overview with the board, Ann Groomes, ESI president, reviewed the findings with teacher and principal representatives, and citizen’s advisory members (designed to elicit support). The board subsequently approved the recommendations to begin a several step improvement plan. Included in this plan were teacher training in curriculum objectives identified by grade level; and test item design to ascertain mastery. Committees of grade level and subject matter specific teachers met regularly and produced a curriculum with mastery checkpoints that mirrored the cutting edge of instruction both in Illinois and the nation. We had hoped to publish the results for broader distribution however our teachers union could never agree on how to ascribe copyright ownership. The Bloomington staff was in demand throughout the state, as we received recognition for curriculum strategies later mandated statewide. My leadership in this area resulted in many consultative contacts under the auspices of ESI. Cincinnati was the destination for many of the Bloomington staff and me on a regular basis. Eventually our teachers developed an ownership pride for their efforts. I also assisted the Illinois School Boards Association in the development of a layman’s brochure for school board member orientation in curriculum strategies

Finance, facilities and district boundaries were challenges. On a Saturday in late September of my first year, I invited Bill Barry, my Lombard finance official to present to appropriate staff, the model he and I had developed which reflected transparency and simplicity. Bill and Donna moved to Bloomington beginning in my second year and throughout the remainder of my work in Bloomington we fashioned a fiscal structure that was the envy of other school districts. The board, staff and community attached total confidence to financial projections so critical to a Superintendent's integrity in long range planning and in collective bargaining. Bill's other responsibilities included transportation, food service and buildings and grounds. As a soft spoken retired Air Force Colonel who had flown countless missions in Viet Nam, Bill was concise and inspired confidence and loyalty with the personnel he directed. With someone of Bill's caliber, it was possible for me to concentrate on instruction with no qualms about the smooth operation of his areas. As an aside, Bill had become a close personal friend. Jo and I enjoyed many joyous social outings with him and Donna. His untimely death several years into our mutual retirements represented a great personal loss

In Maquoketa, Lombard and Bloomington, when I was hired, the boards expressed consternation about continuously diminishing financial reserves. In each of those cases this trend was reversed during my watch. It wasn't an impossible task when more than 75% of revenues were local, however with increased non-local resources, school officials were more challenged. When budgets are developed twelve to eighteen months in advance, due to tax collection cycles, the equation included: the previous year's carry-over estimate; an estimate of expenses within less than a 5% deviation; credible estimates of state and national resources; and finally a precise estimate of assessed property valuations that drive tax levies. All of my boards learned to appreciate, and to show confidence in what Bill and I privately liked to call SWAGS (scientific wild assed guesses).

I inherited in Bloomington a bloated central office administrative staff. The National Office of Education along with The Large Unit District Association of Illinois, the thirty largest K-12 Illinois districts, regularly provide comparative data showing staffing in accordance with enrollment. One of my first tasks was to do an analysis making the results available to the board and staff. The board addressed this disparity by adopting a resolution to bring administrative staff into focus with comparative districts over a three year span and to use resources recouped with displaced administrators to hire more teachers. This move positioned the district to win the support of the community and teachers in passing the first bond referendum in the district in twenty five years and by the largest positive majority in the districts history.

The board was enamored with the "middle school concept" and almost perseverated on it during my interviews. Junior high school facilities were outmoded and staff working in junior high schools, were merely pre-high school oriented. During my first two years; appropriate teachers were retrained as middle school teachers. New middle school facilities were designed with much teacher input. A nationally

eminent middle school architectural firm, in cooperation with local architects was responsible for development of the plan. A bond issue necessary to finance was overwhelmingly approved by the voters; and bids were developed, let and awarded through a construction-management procedure, the first such approach in the history of Illinois school construction. I had become acquainted with members of the Fanning and Howey architectural firm while regularly reviewing their middle school design awards at the School Administrators Convention. Our board was predisposed to use local architects but agreed to invite the firm for an interview. As Jim Fanning was making his case, Roger Joslin, board president and second in command at State Farm Corporate, looked at him rather strangely and asked if he had attended Miami University in Ohio. Jim had done his homework, and replied yes and had recalled playing tennis with Roger. Needless to say this interchange sealed the Fanning contract. Costs were typically deterrents to creative design. A regularly used tool by the Fanning Howey firm was contract management. Instead of having the general contractor function as contract coordinator with a typical ten percent cushion incorporated in his bid, the bids were sub-divided into segments unique to a particular trade. In this case thirty three separate bids were let and the project was supervised by a construction manager in lieu of the general contractor, jointly answerable to the district and the architect. The upshot was redirecting and saving part of the general contractor's management cushion and control of project cost directly in the hands of the architect and district. We built this twenty million plus project at exactly the amount estimated exclusive of change orders which were controllable because we were in charge of the bottom line. This was the first school built in Illinois under construction management.

The Bloomington District, along with Chicago and Peoria, the only three Illinois charter districts were fashioned by an ordinance developed and signed by A. Lincoln in 1856. Over the years Normal schools grew around the district leaving Bloomington with the greater share of commercial and business and both extremes of the socio-economic demography. A succession of "border wars" ensued with property parcels being either attached or detached as owners randomly sought to optimize their taxable liabilities. Ron Blake, an assistant in areas of insurance, legal issues, collective bargaining plus related issues was the person who was constantly involved in this pointless inter-district bickering. I became aware during my tenure that merger would positively serve both districts. A comprehensive citizens-business group from both districts commissioned a comprehensive study which recommended merger. The Normal Board opposed, however the requisite preliminary petitions and ballot development preparation was begun. Campaigning progressed with the question voted on in February of the first year of my retirement. I had been the driving force behind this move however a change in Illinois retirement made conditions too enticing to wait. The school board was never critical but expressed privately after the unsuccessful February ballot measure, a sense that had I been aboard the odds of passage would have been enhanced. I harbored some regrets about my timing.

Bloomington qualified, because of enrollment, as a member of the Illinois Large Unit District Association LUDA. We along with Chicago were among the thirty largest K-12 districts thus participated in lobbying, staff development and other pertinent related activities. I was vice-president and president elect of this group during the year prior to my retirement. Since LUDA was viewed as the most prestigious school group, by legislators, we hired an executive director who called on me regularly to lobby for important school legislation. It was helpful to have the chair of the senate schools committee, John Maitland from Bloomington as a personal friend.

Two honors I cherished came to me in these years as well. I served on the board, two years as chairman, of the largest hospital in the community. As a consultant with the Educational Services Group of Cincinnati, I was invited, along with its president to attend seminars by W. Edward Deming, at the time the most respected proponent of management by objectives. He was credited for assisting in Japan's rise in the 70's and 80's as a world power in product and economic development. His purpose for including me and Ann Groomes was to explore the applicability of his quality production techniques to the field of educational management. We forwarded our impressions to appropriate educational associations.

The spring of 1994 was hectic with both Jo and I: involved in retirement functions; in preparing to pass the baton with dignity; in selling the condo; and in storing and or dispersing our belongings to willing and unwilling members of the family

OUR SPIRITUAL QUEST

Both Jo and I have cherished our church involvement that became integral parts of each place we lived. Throughout our adult lives we have been mainline Christians, not wearing our religious beliefs on our sleeves but nonetheless we have sought to strengthen the spiritual dimension in our lives. The church has been important to us in our religious quest however I strongly believe that some of the most spiritually grounded among us have reached this level “on their own”. I strongly believe that my “witness” to my religion is in how I have lived my life. My lifetime role model was my father. It appeared to me that he always placed the interests and welfare of his loved ones, peers and the needy ahead of his own creature comforts. This has been a credo I have always tried to achieve, often without success. As a youth, I was inclined to seek my own answers and religious equilibrium. This marked me as independent and possibly rebellious among peers and others within my family and social sphere. An understanding of where I fit into the spiritual dimension is a lifetime quest. I am, and will continue to be a seeker and a believer in a “higher power”. As a Methodist, I have tried to study and learn about the theology of John Wesley who subscribed to the concept of doing good for as many as humanly possible for as much time as we have on this earth. I do not believe in imposing any beliefs gleaned during my own personal spiritual journey. I do however sincerely hope that my family and loved ones are in the quest of their own personal spiritual journey and will become lifetime seekers of this critical dimension to their lives.

According to my calculation, I have belonged to ten different congregations. My first experience with “church” was at the little Windham church, still alive and providing a house of worship for people in the neighborhood. It is less than two miles from the Roberts farm now our home. Each summer Jo and I go to the annual “ice cream social”, the congregation’s fund raiser. A large quilt with blocks naming congregants over the years adorns the front of the worship hall. Jo and I have been able to locate the blocks of Merit and Clara Roberts, my paternal grandparents as well as Ida Roberts an unmarried aunt of my father whom I remember and allude to in a previous chapter. Three things about this early worship experience stand out: the annual tent meeting revivals where congregants were urged to step forward confessing their sins and accepting Christ as their savior- it was difficult to resist but at my age, I was not prepared to make a public spectacle of this; Mother and neighbor, Viota Yoder, were remembered as singing duets at funerals and other events and; Marcus Bock, a respected international theologian at University of Iowa’s School of Religion holding me spellbound as he occasionally filled in as pastor. After one of his magnificent oratorical renditions, he placed his hand on my head and responded after I had told him I was eight years old, “I have never found someone of your age that engrossed in my sermons”.

During my junior high years, my parents transferred membership to Sharon Center Evangelical United Brethren church where they believed I and my sisters would benefit from established youth programs. It was my privilege to become acquainted with youth who remain lifetime acquaintances. This move coincided with other events in my life such as starting high school in an area totally removed from the church community. Although I seriously attempted to compartmentalize my allegiances, I probably was too indifferent to church activities. The upside of this affiliation was however that Sharon Center United Methodist Church (the church name after merger of Methodists and Evangelical United Brethren) remained the church of my parents through their lifetime, thus we subsequently attended services with Mom and Dad and maintained acquaintance with congregants. When we came back in 1994, after serious thought, we became members and for sixteen years have found tremendous fulfillment in worshipping, and participating. As a small congregation (approximately 200 in two services), Jo and I have been on most committees. I take special pride in two projects: as co-chair of our building committee, I was able to engineer a fund raising effort (without external consultative assistance), that resulted in a two year retirement of some \$150,000 of indebtedness for an addition; and recently I developed and implemented a long-range visioning project that is just now providing the “building blocks” for the future direction of the church.

We have worshipped and or held membership in congregations located in each of the communities where we lived. During our two stints in Hudson, Iowa we were first at the Evangelical United Brethren church and when serving as secondary schools principal and later as Superintendent of schools, we were members of the Community Church. Sandwiched between teaching and administrative duties at Hudson while teaching in Cedar Rapids, we belonged to the quirky little Faith Evangelical United Brethren mission congregation. This experience was a delight. The congregation was in the midst of expanding and building with an eclectic group of worshippers who welcomed us with open arms, enlisting us in all kinds of activities. As young teachers, Jo expecting and subsequently delivering Jon, we were game for any committee or leadership role. It was at Faith where we acquired a lifetime phase to describe a sense of stress. Pastor Sunderman, on the morning of the dedication of a new facility, described his demeanor as “keyed”. This description struck a note that has stuck! Also while at Faith we occasionally invited sister Lois, then single and teaching in adjoining Marion to join us for worship. When a good chuckle is needed, the ladies share how as both were sitting in the front row of the choir, it became almost impossible to maintain composure as one pointed to the other’s unmatched shoes!

In South Hamilton we belonged to the Federated Church, the only non-Lutheran congregation in this Scandinavian stronghold. Our only lasting recollection of this experience was the family’s occasional somewhat less than complimentary reference to my use of the then contemporary cartoon character “Underdog” in probably the only lay address I was asked to do for this congregation. It was at Maquoketa’s

United Methodist Church where the family “grew up” and experienced a sense of belonging. We were emersed in all phases of activities and made friends who have remained “close” throughout our lives. Peg and Kyle Kramer were married in this church, a beautiful wedding, an event that produced frequently shared humorous anecdotes.

During our life in the Chicago suburbs, we worshipped periodically in a variety of congregations including the initial Bill Hybels’ Willow Creek mission church, then in a movie theater. Later we worshipped in his new massive edifice, the forerunner of the mega-church movement in this country. This worship experience attracts mostly unchurched population meeting not only their spiritual but also an array of social needs. For Jo and I, having been nurtured in the atmosphere of a conventional protestant church, we found great comfort and support in St Luke’s Union church in Bloomington, our last worship experience before retirement, where Jo was elected clerk of the session. St Luke’s was a merger of Presbyterian and United Church of Christ. Its congregation was a mix of Bloomington families representing multiple ties to the area. We found the young pastor and his family, recently recruited from a blighted Los Angeles neighborhood, refreshing. Carol and Ron Hale were married at St Luke’s by Pastor Mark Hamner. The wedding ritual will be forever be remembered for his transferal of vowels in a scriptural passage substituting “noisy gongs” for “noisy gangs”. Uncle Ray’s stimulated funny bone caused a stir referenced to this day when it seems appropriate. This ceremony and enjoyable reception was also a memorable occasion. Also while in Bloomington we were proud to experience the marriage of Denise Kownacki and Mark in the lovely Illinois Wesleyan University Chapel. IWU was Denise’s alma mater.

Returning to the Roberts Century Farm

After much soul searching, Dad, Ada and Lois were pleased to work out an arrangement making it possible for Jo and me to acquire the remaining 80 acres of the Roberts Century farm. In October 1988 we met in Attorney Lloyd Epley's office where we signed contracts to pay Ada and Lois their share with Dad retaining all property rights until he chose to leave. Jo and I were settled on a retirement home giving us lots of time to plan.

During the early 1990's, the Illinois legislature began to create bills designed to entice older educators into retirement. Given educational salary structures, and tight budgets, significant savings to school districts were achievable with voluntary retirement of many long tenured teachers and administrators. The magic date for optimizing retiree benefits was no later than June 30th, 1994. In March 1994 both of us signed the necessary papers to trigger our official retirement. This triggered many events, sale of our condo, arrangements for a transition home until a new home could be built on the Century Farm, disposition or storage of household effects. Both Jo and I were honored with parties and receptions. Breaking away from friends, colleagues and responsibilities was exciting and hectic.

The condo sold contingent on May occupancy ahead of my June 30th retirement. Our plans were to be in a motor home from June 1994 until August 1995. We made a decision to create an inventory of our condo contents giving each of the family choices. They came with U-Hauls or other conveyances leaving only essentials for storage in a Cedar Rapids facility arranged by Mark. A closet sized apartment and a campground west of Bloomington were our temporary homes until official retirement on June 30th.

Shopping for a rig was exciting and consumed lots of weekends in the spring in '92 and '93. Had we known the challenges awaiting a couple of novices, I doubt we would have been up to them. The University of Notre Dame campus hosted an August RV fair with seminars on how to deal with black water and acres of various rigs on display. These trips imbued us with just enough confidence to take the plunge. A family in Dunlap, IL advertised a 36 ft two year old class A motor home. It was a bus type chassis with all of the conveniences made by Safari Inc in Oregon. We jockeyed it home, found a garage ten miles away, and took it on its maiden voyage to a campground within 25 miles of Chicago where Jon and family came to view the monstrosity. They were most impressed with the TV monitor to assist in backing. If you stood behind the rig you were visible over the monitor. The Grand Kids had their first starring roles on TV.

We had a year to play with it, taking it to Kansas City to visit Peg and Kyle. I figured if I could maneuver it through St Louis and Kansas City, I had arrived. It was priceless to see Peg and Kyle gasp as we spilled this huge rig into their drive. En Route home we pulled into Tanager Mall so that Mark and Denise and Will could share the joy of our toy.

The proximity to the farm was the impetus to make the Sleepy Hollow RV Park near Oxford our base for the summer of '94 after retirement. We pulled in on the Friday evening of a long 4th of July weekend. Sleepy Hollow was packed full of campers in their RVs. As it turned out, it was fortuitous. It was obvious that we were totally out of our element. Some of our neighbors offered to help us by showing us how to unhook our car; hook up into the sewer, water and electricity; and put up the awning. For someone who had trouble finding the right end of a screwdriver, I had much to learn.

That first summer, we decompressed. As both of us had spent years on the treadmill, it took me longer than Jo to realize that I was no longer a slave to the clock or the calendar. Much of our time was spent at the farm beginning to sift through memorabilia and getting ready for the razing of the buildings. We enjoyed the offspring who showed up periodically to asses the progress and wisdom of our new adventures.

Around the first of August, we pulled up stakes and headed for the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. As members of a campground time-share group we found many sites in that network for reasonable rates. We were finally really on the road. We discovered unusually named grocery stores and interesting people in the campgrounds we occupied. Two weeks were spent in the Upper Peninsula exploring quaint local areas, even attending the U-P State Fair. U-Pers, as residents of this area are known, take lots of ribbing. We made our way in to Wisconsin land and then over to the Mall of America in Minnesota. We were most impressed by the worst storm of our travels as we found our campground. While traveling in Wisconsin, we were suddenly aware that we were meeting school busses on the road; meaning—schools were in session. Until then, we had not even given a thought to an event that had been a significant part of our August lives for almost forty years.

Our first Iowa destination that September was Kennedy State Park near Fort Dodge to attend the Standley Family reunion one of the last with members of the older generation. Soon, we were on our way to Rockford, IL shopping for a different rig to get us out east for fall and winter. We brought the new 36 foot Safari to a Story City campground to spend a long weekend attending Jo's 45th class reunion of the Boone High School class of 1949. We returned to Sleepy Hollow for the final readiness before launching a trek that did not bring us back until the spring of '95.

September 1994 found us traveling through the Midwest and into the New England states. After stopping by the Hales and Barrys in Illinois we headed to the Finger Lakes area of New York. It was a leisurely trip where we checked out remote campgrounds that fit our time-share requirements. We enjoyed the Finger-Lakes of New York en route to a brief stay in the Adirondacks.

While lunching at a roadside park north of Albany, NY, we smelled diesel fuel but could not find a leak. About ten miles farther, passing motorists alerted us to our problem. By the time we got to a mechanic, the tow car had taken a complete diesel bath. As the broken filter was replaced, we found a car wash and after the second time through, the purplish colored Honda was renewed, to our relief.

St. George, NY, was our destination where we spent several cool drizzly days in the beautiful Adirondack fall foliage. We found local color at the Sip and Stir Café and were even included in an appreciation breakfast. Nearby Ft. Ticonderoga provided us with a crash refresher in Revolutionary War history. On the first weekend in October, we arrived in a campground some ten miles from Bath, Maine. The trek through Vermont and New Hampshire introduced us to the Roundabouts of New England; tricky with just a car not to mention one towed by a 36 foot RV.

The Shelter Institute in Bath was our sanctuary during three delightful weeks. We had the audacity to think, until our experiences at the Shelter Institute, that we could build our own house. There, thirty unique and diverse individuals spent two thirds of their day in classes taught by one of the Hennin family. Pat, a former practicing attorney in Manhattan, along with his wife, Patsy, a former teacher, bought a plot in Maine. There, using only a chain saw to fell trees, milling their own lumber, they built a home from scratch. They saw an opportunity for a lucrative business and were able to be the forerunners to teach others of the joys of building "green environmentally responsible homes". Former students were building homes around Bath so we spent the other one-third of our time aiding in construction.

Jo and I were truly fish out of water as we nailed sheeting to roofs and managed some non-threatening jobs such as toting boards. The participants in this session included: a female physician from San Francisco; two American Airline pilots and spouses; a New York attorney and her spouse, a museum curator; a coffee salesman and his son from Concord, NH; and the wife of a chef at a dinner club in Waverly IA.; along with other individuals. The Hennins owned a farm on one of the myriad of jetties along the coast out side of Bath where they held occasional lectures and pot lucks in their century home (not the one they built.) On beautiful autumn day, we helped raise one of the Hennin post and beam homes at Fly Point. Niece Maria Urice once worked at a bed and breakfast there.

Being near to the ocean was a new and different experience for us. We never really understood the ebb and flow of the tides that changed the appearance of the landscape on the route we took into Bath. It was fascinating to observe the former homes of the Sea Captains with the Captain's walks included in the architecture. Friday night at the Pizza joint, that we shared with the workers and families of the shipyard workers the major industry on the Maine seacoast, was always a lively event.

On our first night away from Maine en route to Myrtle Beach, we camped at Bennington, VT. There we learned of the passing of David Yoder, Cousin George and Audrey's forty year old son. On Sunday and Monday, we hurried through much of the Middle Atlantic States attempting to find a spot for the RV while we attended the funeral. While hurtling along the highways, we learned another important principle of RVing. Tow bars that attached the bus to the tow cars must be designed specifically to fit the car, not jerry rigged by a welding shop. I held my breath as we found ourselves in Richmond VA during rush hour. The bald tire blew on busy I-95, as we crossed into North Carolina. I unhooked the car, installed the doughnut tire while passing cars attempted to blow me away on the allegedly most congested highway in the states. Jo followed with the tow car to Smithfield NC. While we camped there, we got a new tire, had our tow bar repaired and made arrangements to fly from Atlanta to Denver for David's funeral. After returning from Denver, we enjoyed taking in the southern atmosphere and hospitality. Jon happened to be nearby on business in Wilson, NC so we were able to join him in partaking of real southern barbecue, vinegar based, not tomato. We visited tobacco barns, but the most unusual opportunity was to visit the Ava Gardner museum who was allegedly the most loved by Frank Sinatra.

The coastal areas were enjoyed. The beach walks at Myrtle Beach, Flagler Beach and Daytona remain as outstanding memories. Thanksgiving was spent at Flagler Beach where we were hosted at a fine Thanksgiving dinner by the owner of the park. We moved to Orlando where I flew back to Illinois to attend a Kitchen Cabinet meeting of recently retired Superintendents organized by Bob Leininger, the Illinois State Superintendent. Jo remained there and picked me up on my return at the Orlando Airport.

Avon Park, FL was our next destination. From there, we took the Honda back to Iowa for Christmas and were there until after Dad's funeral in early January. The best thing about Avon Park was that it was in the middle of orange groves and the smell of the blossoms on the morning walks was intoxicating. Saturday night excitement in Avon Park was not pervasive. An early trip to the Mall allowed us to see local cowboys strolling around window shopping with their girl friends. The cowboys were easily spotted by their white straw hats. It was a great time to visit the panhandle of Florida and see the white sands of Destin where we spent time with the Kownackis, Denise's parents. Watching a launch at Cape Canaveral was the fulfillment of a long time wish.

With the newly acquired Foretravel we worked our way north through Alabama, Louisiana, Arkansas, and into Branson, Missouri noting the arrival of spring at each stop along the way.

Our arrival in Branson was auspicious. I was just becoming accustomed to towing a dolly carrying the car. As I backed the car off the dolly and drove it in front of the rig, the brakes on the rig apparently jarred enough to loosen them. As I got out of the car, the slowly rolling rig pinned me between vehicles. Jo, who had been registering us, could see what was happening and hurriedly backed the rig away, with me shouting instructions. Someone in the helpful crowd that gathered called for an ambulance that was very quickly on the scene. Fortunately, because of the many dancer entertainers in Branson, an orthopedic physician was available. I had surgery by mid-afternoon to stabilize the tibia which was broken and protruding through the skin. After there was a certainty of no infection, in a few days, I went back into surgery to have a rod from the knee to the ankle. In the meantime, Peg was kind enough to come down from Kansas City to be with Jo who, with the help of fellow RVers had parked and connected the rig. Jo who was becoming visually impaired with cataracts managed the rental car with me in the back seat. The rental agency removed the front passenger seat so that I could ride to daily physical therapy sessions. I managed with a cuff and crutches to drive the car several days after surgery. With help and encouragement of so many kind people we managed well. We were able to see shows, one the courtesy of Buck Trent who we met in a pharmacy line. When he learned of my plight, gave us free passes to his breakfast show. Less than three weeks after this episode, we loaded the car on the dolly and with my cuffed leg, drove to St. Louis and then to Tall Corn KOA campground near Bloomington where we spent time visiting friends.

After our experiences at the homebuilding workshop, it was obvious we had no business trying to build our own home. We carefully researched and pondered over what kind of a retirement home was suitable for the farm. After visiting several factories and home sale sites, we decided on a Wausau partially pre-built home. On April 19, 1995, on our way to an appointment to make final construction plans with a local company, the radio news concentrated on the Oklahoma City bombing with the horror and loss of lives.

In early June, the Oxford Fire Department burned the old farm buildings. Sisters Ada and Lois joined neighbors and curiosity seekers to watch lifetime landmarks vanish. Wausau delivered the home on two semis in early July. We were present during the record breaking heat in July and August to monitor progress and to prepare for landscaping. My Dad frequently mentioned the importance of trees and shrubs to the appeal of a home. We honored this advice by planting forty trees that were 12 to 15 feet tall, along with countless shrubs. The old site required the removal of rocks and debris to make way for a suitable lawn. It was fulfilling to watch the transformation.

On the second Saturday of August, Mark delivered our stored possessions in his old Dodge Ram pick-up. The brothers helped us to move into a real home after having lived the gypsy life-style for fifteen months. We enjoyed entertaining relatives and

old friends. Sisters Ada and Lois agreed the finishing touch was the carved stone memorializing the family heritage would be appropriate. It featured the generations of Roberts that had occupied the homestead since Great-Grandfather Samuel Merit Roberts purchased it in 1867. The prominently placed stone sits at the entrance of our driveway.

We finished the basement in 1999, almost doubling our living space making it more convenient to host family and friends. We soon settled into a routine of family support, volunteering, gardening, and travel that has provided Jo and I pleasures beyond description.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN AND AGAIN

Over the retirement years, we have managed to live in a recreational vehicle during a portion of each year. After settling into our new farm home and earning calluses from landscaping, we registered for a RV Elderhostel in Borrego Springs, California, beginning in early February 1996. Hutton's RV of Urbana Iowa was interested in our unique Foretravel and made us a deal on a swap for a new Plain Jane Bounder, ideal for a trip into rugged Southern California. As we struggled to hook up the Mazda pick-up on the road at the end of our drive on a cold snowy January morning, Kevin Kinney, a Johnson County Deputy Sheriff and long time neighbor came by and offered his mechanical assistance. Even those of us with no aptitude for machinery but lots of "chutzpah" can become RV Jockeys.

En route, we discovered Voyager RV Park in Tucson Arizona as we made our way to Borrego Springs in the rugged mountains between Indio and San Diego. We stayed in the little mountain town of Borrego Springs for ten days meeting fellow RV enthusiasts and attending lectures on geology, paleontology and history of the area. On the night of the 1996 Iowa Caucuses, we entertained the group around our rig and explained this political process. The trip from Borrego Springs to San Diego could have been terrifying for Jo, who hates mountain driving. However she told me, "You drive the RV more sanely."

We reunited with the Brodericks during the next ten days in San Diego and followed them to Palm Springs where we stayed at Emerald Desert RV Park in Palm Desert. We continued to enjoy time with our long time friends as they stayed at their Marriot time share.

In March, we stayed at a KOA campground west of Phoenix and made our way to six Chicago Cubs spring training games. It was a drive of over 100 miles round trip to Hohokem Park in Mesa each day. They had not upgraded the old park. How pleasant it was to sit around picnic tables enjoying hotdogs, Harry Carey, Jack Brickhouse and even Ronnie Woo.

At the end of the season, we made our way back to the farm for routine spring and summer living. Atticus Roberts, our third Grandson arrived on September 5, 1996 making this a truly a memorable fall. Each of our Grandchildren is uniquely delightful in their own way with Atticus adding to our pleasure.

We became spooked by the possibility of driving our rigs on snow and ice, so we struck out in November 1996 stopping at cousins Lois and Jack Johnston in Kerrville, Texas. It was an opportunity to become acquainted with the Hill Country, now always referred to as "Heel Country" thanks to Jack's "fine Texas drawl."

The next stop was a Palm Desert to store the RV until later. The Brodericks boarded us before we flew to Kansas City to borrow the Toranado for the trip

home over Thanksgiving and Christmas. While in Kansas City, it was exciting to attend the Ak Sar Ben Rodeo.

After the winter break in Palm Desert in 1997, on our return to Iowa, we stopped at the Voyager RV Park in Tucson, AZ. Jo was intrigued with the activities available and vowed to eventually winter there. It was the usual busy summer shaping up the landscape and enjoying the farm.

We took short trips around Iowa; meeting the Stanhope gang at the Rolland's in Clear Lake; camping with Jo's High School friends, the Mathisons, the Pattersons, and the Youlls at the state park near Guthrie Center. After five Class A motor homes, we decided to advertise the Bounder. Within a month, a couple from Villa Park, IL drove off with it.

During the summer of 1997, we awaited the arrival of our fifth grandchild, the fourth grandson. Ryan Hale came along on July 19, 1997 and has provided us with grandparent pride. Each time when we think that a grandchild has exceeded all standards of excellence, we are delighted with some new achievement. We would like to take credit, but admit in reality it is the parents who should accept all of the kudos.

We had become intrigued with a Class C motor home model sold only at the factory in Pomona, CA. Class C RVs look like a huge pick-up with a compartment jutting over the cab. After two flights to John Wayne Airport, we ordered and took delivery of our Lazy Daze (number six, for those who are counting.) On the trip to order the rig, we spent a Labor Day weekend in Las Vegas. There we learned of the death of Princess Diana. In late October, we took delivery of the new Lazy Daze. In compliance with California law, we hired a driver to take us to Las Vegas where we took possession. It was strange to see a nun using a crutch crossing the street as we maneuvered down the strip to a campground. It turned out to be a Halloween celebration. Las Vegas appears to have strange inhabitants in the daylight and was filled with even more outlandish characters on Halloween night.

In the middle of the night a few nights later stopped in Oklahoma, we poured anti-freeze from a collector's blue bottle rigged to fit the spout. We had not planned for freezing weather.

In early 1998, before leaving for Palm Desert CA, we took delivery of the first Honda CRV from Chezik-Sayers Honda in Iowa City. We were experienced enough to know to have the correct tow receiver installed before making our way to another winter season.

On Valentine's Day night, while dining with the Mathisons and the Brodericks, we learned that Harry Carey, a revered Cubs announcer had suffered a life ending stroke at a nearby Palm Springs restaurant.

During this visit, we became serious about attending the Palm Springs International Film Festival that was begun by Sonny Bono while he was mayor of Palm Springs to invigorate local businesses.

We had enjoyed the March Family Motor Coach rally at Cape Canaveral Florida in 1995 when we had watched a launching ceremony. With these pleasant memories, we registered for the 1998 rally at Los Cruces NM.

However, wind, sand burrs, and RVs crunched together on the campus of New Mexico State University convinced us it was not our idea for an extended stay. After an early departure, we stopped through Kerrville for a brief visit with the Johnston Cousins before returning home for the spring and summer.

The summer of 1998 found us busy on the acres and in the Lazy Daze. While en route to Glacier National Park and to the Stampede in Calgary,

We spent time with friends from college, the Daggets. While we were camped at Glacier National Park, a call was received from Vinnie Yoder who kept an eye on our farm, informing us of a storm with straight winds that had caused tree damage and possible damage to the house. A U-Turn was speedily executed and we arrived back at the farm in three days. Fortunately, the house suffered no damage. Mark, Denise, Will and Atticus helped us with the tree clean-up. It was delightful watching two year old Atticus wearing oversized farmer gloves dragging brush like an adult. A memory I cherish involves the Cedar Rapids boys helping "Papa Guy" on the farm.

In late summer, we took our only granddaughter Zarah in the Lazy Daze to Washington, D.C. for a visit to many of our nation's landmarks. Jon joined us later that week as we visited Mr. Vernon and other historical places. As an adolescent traveling with her grandparents, Zarah earned an A for tolerance.

In the fall, we began our volunteer training for the Johnson County Crisis Center in Iowa City. We also served as building information source at the Johnson County Court House for people who were using the court system one day a week.

We stored the Lazy Daze for the winter as we prepared for our big trip with the Brodericks to New Zealand and Australia from late January to mid-June 1999.

The RV had good use in the summer and fall taking us to Branson and Ledges State Park where we camped with friends and classmates as Jo was Mistress of Ceremonies for her 50th Class Reunion at Boone High School. The big RV trip of the fall was to Boston to check out Peg and Kyle's new home. We parked at a suburban RV park and enjoyed their downtown apartment while visiting many of Boston's historical sights.

Peg was excited in her new role as Principal at the Lawrence Charter Elementary School. We returned home through the Alleghenies enjoying the spectacular array of fall colors.

In the RV industry, Lazy Daze is considered a gilded commodity. A couple from Plano, Texas made us an offer we could not refuse, so we bid good-bye to Number 6. A pick-up camper, number 7, required much cranking and crankiness. We took it to Cedar Falls and Clear Lake in the summer of 2000 celebrating a Hudson staff reunion at John and Ginger Holmes. Grandson

Sam was invited on a local camping trip. I did not get the impression that he thought it was our best deal. After a late summer trek to Northern Wisconsin with our Maquoketa friends at the Ruth's Retreat convinced us that a pick-up camper was not for us.

That trip will also be remembered as the auspicious inauguration of the FUGS, our travel group.

In 2002, suffering from RV withdrawal, we located a small used Fifth Wheel RV in Central Illinois. A clean late model Ford F-150 Lariat pick-up was found for the tow vehicle. In the fall of 2002, we pulled the rigs to the Voyager, stored them and returned to Iowa in December with a round-trip flight ticket. The return home in 2003 featured a wild overnight dash from Hastings NE keeping ahead of a serious ice and winter storm. My skills in towing and backing a fifth wheel were greatly challenged; thus Thompson RV in Davenport swapped Number 8, derisively known as "The Canister" for a new "Plain Jane" a Four Winds Class C, number 9. Will and Atticus were interested observers as we made the trade. At this point, Ryan also became a RV aficionado, enjoying regular rides whenever he could convince PaPa to take a drive.

The F-150 sat at the end of the drive for less than two weeks before it was sold. In the fall of 2003, Thompson RV swapped out the "Plain Jane" for one of Jayco's first class Cs with two slide-outs comfortably serving our needs at the Voyager for the 2003-2004 season. Let's see, was that number 9 or 10?

One of our first trips with number 10 was through Colorado en route to the Voyager. We visited Cousin George Yoder in Greeley before joining the Maquoketa group at the Semrads in South Fork CO for several days of play. It was a thrill to have a jeep ride over Wolf Creek Pass on our way to Pagosa Springs where we "took the healing waters of the Springs." After storing Number 10, we returned home from the Voyager for the fall and the holiday season. On our return to the Voyager in late December we joined the Brodericks in January where we volunteered at the Palm Springs Film Festival for the first time. After another enjoyable season at the Voyager, we came home in Early April for another summer on the farm.

In November 2004 we flew to Tucson and acquired a 36 foot 3 slide-out Fifth Wheel. The January 2005, the 1996 Grand Teton was delivered to our sight at the Voyager. There we stayed until the 2006 season.

In March of 2006, we purchased a site with an aluminum awning covering our rig which is permanently located there. In February 2007, we traded for a new Alfa Fifth Wheel with three slide-outs, a washer-dryer, a top grade audio system, two flat screen TVs creating all the creature comforts of home and more.

This awaits us at our convenience at 7-254 Voyager RV Park Tucson Arizona serving as our winter residence as of this writing in the fall of 2010.

TRAVEL TIDBITS

Since retiring, we haven't relied completely on recreational vehicles to get away. At this point (2010) we cannot be accused of being homebodies. For simplification purposes, these brief vignettes are presented by category: Elderhostel's, Excursions with the Brodericks, and Hiking trips with the Maquoketa friends, and Military Tours.

Borrego Springs

In January 1996, we experienced our first Elderhostel in Borrego Springs, California. Occasionally these events are scheduled with recreational vehicle accommodations, an appealing feature to us since we wished to showcase our new Bounder. Typical Elderhostel arrangements are planned for five to six days, organized around relevant lectures and tours. Food and presentations daily from early morning to late evening were available. Borrego Springs is located in a rugged mountain range one hundred miles northeast of San Diego. It is a classic location for the study of geology, paleontology, and Spanish history, which were the featured topics. After a leisurely three-week trip exploring the wonderful topography of the Rockies and southwest, we entered the Coachella valley and proceeded through the Salton Sea area to the unique village of Borrego Springs.

Copper Canyon

This event started at Fort Davis, Texas and eventually proceeded to Copper Canyon, Mexico. Before traveling to Ft Davis in the Honda Accord we celebrated Millennium New Years Eve in Galena, Illinois with the Fugawees and attended a stimulating caucus in Cosgrove supporting Bill Bradley. We were housed in a comfortable motel and walked every morning about one-half mile to a hilltop building serving as a lecture room with kitchen and dining facilities. The coordinator's husband was the cook- bus driver and county sheriff. In addition to lectures, we had daily tours in an old school bus. The second part of the seven day session was a charter bus trip to Chihuahua, Mexico staying overnight and catching a train where we wound our way to the rim of Copper Canyon. We stayed in a motel built on the rim and were given tours and lectures. Among the highlights was a walk inside the canyon, observing the life of the Taharhara Indians. Unique to their talents was the ability to run for miles without exhaustion. One of the participants was a former air force officer who spent a winter in Antarctica. One evening he invited a group of his room and regaled us with his accounts of this assignment in preparing a disabled aircraft for an escape flight.

Alaska

On our third Elderhostel, we flew from Minneapolis through Anchorage to Fairbanks where the program began. In Fairbanks, we visited University of Alaska museums, and received background on general Alaskan facts. Side trips included visits to a sled dog compound, a river trip and trips to the Alaskan pipeline. We

boarded a train to Denali National Park where we were housed and fed in rustic quarters. During our three days in Denali, the forty participants had extensive bus tours. We were lucky that weather conditions permitted an excellent view of Mt McKinley and views of grizzly bears and mountain sheep. The final three-day leg of the train portion took us through the Kenai Peninsula. We were taken to Seward where we toured a modern sea life research facility funded by Exxon because of the Valdez. Amazing insights and impressions are gained during the daily eight to ten hour Elderhostel lectures and tours especially those given by locals. On our last day we cruised the Kenai Gulf coming close to glaciers with the cruiser cutting motors so we could hear glaciers calving. As they shed ice into the water, the noises are deafening.

Hawaii

Our last Elderhostel began in early April 2006 in the Hawaiian Islands of Maui and Hawaii. We left Voyager, drove to Brodericks and flew to this six day event with the typical Elderhostel format. Neither of us had been to the islands therefore we were awed by the beauty. Presenters concentrated on history. The tours in both islands highlighted the geology, the huge military presence and the cultural uniqueness of the Hawaiian peoples. Several of our lasting impressions included the dependence of the economy on the military, the lushness the flora, the range of demographic diversity, the beauty and extensiveness of the beaches, and the lack of infrastructure maintenance. We visited the hulk of the Arizona in Pearl Harbor and the massive cemeteries. One of the moving presentations was by a 75 year old journalist who had covered news in the Pacific for decades. He provided a context that is so typical of Elderhostel's. It gave us the perspective for formulating our judgments. Our fellow participants were similar to the forty plus attendees at most Elderhostels. Most were couples in their late sixties upwards. One couple were on their 44th Elderhostel

New Zealand-Australia

Our most daring and extensive trip was the New Zealand-Australia trip from late January to mid-June 1999. Shortly after reconnecting with Brodericks in 1996, we began to explore mutual travel. They had traveled all over Europe and South America and knew the ropes of international travel. Now that we have traveled, we are convinced that travel is an adventure, not to be intimidating but to be enjoyed. People the world over are your peers, willing to accept you and to reciprocate your friendliness and kindnesses. "Ask and ye shall receive". This space is not for details. A possible future journal will be more extensive. I unabashedly proclaim this as our most enjoyable travel experience, possibly because of the effusive friendliness and chattiness of the Australians.

We spent several weeks in two house exchanges, a farm stay and various motel-hostels throughout both North and South Islands of New Zealand. The Brodericks belonged to a house exchange cooperative thus; we occupied approximately twelve homes during the trip while the owners reciprocated in the Broderick's nice San

Diego accommodations. Jo and I provided transportation over approximately 6000 kilometers in NZ and Australia. Driving on the left, extended stops for sheep herding, learning one way bridge traffic signals, driving on ocean side sculpted highways in holiday traffic, negotiating endless roundabouts, and going through Sydney, Australia's biggest city, without the benefit of expressways, were driving experiences we all survived. Bill who once taught drivers education, occasionally exclaimed "expletive, expletive Leonard, don't drive so fast!" After an afternoon on the tip of the New Zealand South Island helping dip over 1000 sheep, we stayed with an enterprising dairy and sheep producing family. Later we enjoyed another farm stay with a couple who displayed a congratulatory plaque from the Queen. After this unforgettable month in New Zealand, we flew to Sydney and other parts of Australia for the remainder of this odyssey.

We enjoyed house stays in rural Adelaide, a memorable fishing weekend on the York Peninsula, wine tasting in Koononga Hills, McLaren Vale, and the Hunter Valley along with a 36 hour train ride through the true outback to Alice Springs and back, only to mention the most notable venues. An unforgettable two weeks were spent in Ocean Grove on the Mornington Peninsula south of Melbourne. Our Australian sojourn included a week in Melbourne, a weekend in Canberra, Australia's early 1900's concentrically designed capital city, a week in Surfers Paradise, exactly as the name implies, and at various homes on the east coast north of Brisbane including trips to the barrier reef. When Jon met us at O'Hare, he did a double take. Our food and wine intake was abundantly obvious. Bill was the chef and I the sous chef with lamb, venison and lyonnaise potatoes our signature specialties. Jo and I shared most desserts with the Brodericks accusing me of having a rotary fork.

Germany

In the summer of 2000 we met Brodericks in Frankfurt and motored to the home of Herman and Gudren Lippold in Mainz where we stayed for approximately a month while they were in England. Herman organized what was Germany's equivalent to our public television. We and the Brodericks toured most of central and southern Germany visiting famous castles, churches and landmarks. Jo and I took train and river cruises to: Trier, Germany's most intact Roman remains; Castle Elz on the Mosel River; Munich over a memorable weekend; and Salzburg where along with getting lost and rescued as pedestrians, we toured Sound of Music locations. A rail pass permitted unlimited daily travel for the duration of the pass. This proved its worth after we boarded the train in Mainz for Prague only to discover we were en route to Geneva. No problem, we got off at the next station, went to Frankfurt and boarded another train to Prague getting there only an hour later than we had intended. Extended side trips with the Brodericks included: Prague where we marveled at some of the world's most unique architecture; Dresden, a treasure trove of famous paintings, and other art forms, most of which were saved during devastating Allied WW II air strikes; Berlin where we toured the remains of the Wall and enjoyed the spectacle of one of the world's great cities morphing after wars devastation; and Potsdam where Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin fashioned a contentious post WWII world. The Germans like all of the world's citizens spotted

language challenged Yanks and courteously rescued us like the time we were at a bus stop with a malfunctioning ticket dispenser, confused about our next move. The riders recognized the dilemma, and interceded with the driver. How about the time while en route to Mainz from the Lippold's suburban home, I pointed out to Jo ripening barley, only to be corrected by an English speaking native, "that's not barley, its Mainz"! Obviously you could see the town in the distance.

Manhattan, New York City

On a lark, early one January day in 2002, the Brodericks and we decided to fly from San Diego to New York to spend a short week checking out Ground Zero and doing the touristy things. Since we were at the Voyager, it was short trip to San Diego. We managed a reasonable flight and mid-town Manhattan hotel. Fortunately we experienced above normal January temperatures while sightseeing at the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. We could have spent a week at this entry point for a huge number of our ancestors. It was eerie to walk the temporary platforms surrounding the former trade center craters. We could still smell the debris and watch the hectic clearance efforts. We managed to get tickets to Rent and 42nd St. While dining in one of the B roadway restaurants, we were close enough to Bea Arthur's table to enjoy her antics. Due to mechanical issues we landed twice in Salt Lake City on our way back to San Diego. This meant viewing the prominent Olympic symbols on a mountainside twice while landing and twice at take-off. It was a fitting ending for a wonderful week.

France

Early each spring we journey from Tucson to San Diego to enjoy a week of fun and visiting with the Brodericks. We regularly reminisce about former travels and speculate about future trips. Untours was begun fifty years ago by a Pennsylvania traveler who envisioned inexpensive, manageable foreign travel. We had encountered fellow travelers who praised the system. In October 2007 we celebrated the Brodericks 50th anniversary in San Diego and planned our May 2008 month in Provence and Dordogne regions of south France. Our respective flights converged in Marseilles on May 6th where we rented a station wagon with the help of our Untour representative and drove to Pernes staying for two weeks in a lovely home that had been arranged through the tour agency. Our local representatives, the Tomlinson's, provided orientation for us along with several other couples staying in the same general area making sure that we were aware of local highlights, driving regulations and other French customs. We quickly settled into the daily routines of walking downtown for breakfast croissants, and dinner baguettes, having breakfast in the home, exploring the area highlights during the day, having our major meal in some acclaimed restaurant at noon and returning for a light evening meal. Peter Mayle, an Englishman spent a year in Provence writing a great book about the area. It was the blueprint for this leg of the trip. Lovely mountain villages with picturesque countryside agriculture dotted Provence. Week three involved moteling through ancient villages, exploring parts of France that have been central to several

centuries of history arriving at our last Untour country castle like abode owned by an artist who lived next door. This was the Dordogne area with great rivers and caverns where Cro Magnan man left many sketches showcased internationally as examples of man's early beginnings. After leaving the dark, dank castle occupied for a week we enjoyed several days in the famous Bordeaux wine region, viewing the huge Chateaus that featured world famous wine labels such as the Rothschild's. On June 2nd we flew from Bordeaux via Paris to O'Hare, another wonderful trip filed in our memory

HIKING IN ENGLAND

One of the many travel brochures we regularly receive captivated my attention. A company in the United Kingdom developed a series of walking vacations after WW II, catering to families with limited incomes. Hf Holidays expanded over the years acquiring hotel-like spots throughout Europe where they developed adjacent walking trails along with very acceptable boarding and dining accommodations. Our former Maquoketa social group; Breuchs, Rasks, Robergs, Ruths, and Semrads planned the 2001 trip in the Cornwall region of southern England headquartering in the quaint little town of St Ives. Coincidentally the departure of September 16th was less than a week after 9/11 giving us some concern however the trip was without incident. After a four day pre-hike in London, our pre-arranged several hour bus trip to Cornwall didn't materialize causing a last minute train trip with many incidents for future kibitzing. At headquarters, we met the 30 to 40 potential hikers, dined together and received an orientation. Three leaders instructed the group each night in selecting an easy, medium or difficult walk of seven to eleven miles. The groups of ten to fifteen each are transported each morning to various drop off points for the eight hour trek with rest and observation stops including a sack lunch we prepared after our sumptuous morning breakfast. If we were lucky, we encountered a pub where we could relax with a wonderful ale also restrooms much appreciated by the women. Unless otherwise designated, one can walk across fields, pastures, atop stone fences, through turnstiles and endless little villages. The sheep, cattle and occasional geese are curious but mostly non-threatening. Along the southern Cornwall coast are endless little boulders to negotiate where you look out to the sea and oddly enough, we see a palm tree or a quaint fishing and small commercial port. On our day off Jo and I visited the just recently completed Eden Project, a mammoth contrived nature complex carved from an abandoned mine once a source of clay used in English pottery, now England's top tourist attraction. Hikers were mostly European or South Africans with whom we became acquainted over delicious evening meals prepared by the chef. Semi organized dorky evening socializing was optional except for the obligatory last night performances expected of each group.

In September 2005, we did the Cotswolds walk, a rolling countryside north of London. We took advantage of each scheduled hike with a few extra days to see parts of London including the typical tourist sights and museums. The tube is an easy conveyance for negotiating this exemplary city. Jo's favorite was Harrods Department store where she inadvertently presented the bus conductor with the store's restroom pass instead of the bus pass. I wasn't along for this faux pas but

according to her giggling gaggle of friends, the conductor disgustedly permitted the confused Yank to ride. While in the city, the Breuchs and Roberts enjoyed a wonderful outdoor theartic performance of HMS Pinafore. Another lasting London memory was the chamber concert of Vivaldi in St Martins in the Fields, something reserved for only high classed tourists, yuk. Daily walking routines were the same in this walk as in Cornwall with possibly more frequent pubs. Bouton on the Water was our headquarters village with a somewhat older facility for living and dining. Each morning we headed for the barn where the hiking gear was stored, readying for the bus to take us to the daily route's origin. Rain gear was welcome. A daily trek in the rain is not as pleasant compared to mostly agreeable weather conditions. Each walking group includes the leader in front and a back marker, a volunteer hiker who helps stragglers. I enjoyed this assignment. Several of our group was less sprightly for this walk, possibly reason enough to make this hike our last. Given our experience with HMS Pinafore, our group elected to do a version of this as our entertainment finale.

The Pacific Northwest in the Roadtrek

We were inspired to hit the road in the summer of 2006 with the Road-Trek (our compact van type self-contained home away from home). Our Voyager friends, Barb and Richard from the northern reaches of Montana wanted to introduce us to God's country plus Peg was working the Washington state project for Pearson and could meet us in Portland over a weekend. There we could reconnect with cousins and niece's Jennifer and Suzanne. This three-week adventure included the Badlands, North Dakota's Roosevelt National Park, and huge expanses of Montana's Lewis & Clark territory plus Glacier National Park. The three day stop at Barb and Richard's in Big Fork, Montana on Flathead Lake near Kalispell was breathe taking in its beauty and expansiveness. We traversed the Columbia River route to Portland experiencing indescribable gorges and highway-engineering miracles arriving during Friday rush traffic. After asking for directions, we were personally escorted to our downtown hotel with the help of Portland's finest traffic control cop. Our return to the Midwest included a campground along the Pacific on Oregon's coastal highway; an overnight in beautiful Bend, Oregon; the lush agricultural bounty of Idaho; the wonders of the Grand Teton where we overnighted in Jackson; a dash through Yellowstone to reacquaint briefly and then to Greeley where we visited Cousin George Yoder, as it turned out for the last time. This four thousand mile trip was the last major outing with the Road-Trek. Its cramped sleeping arrangements became too uncomfortable for its aging occupants.

Korea and China 2007

The Korean Veterans Association in concert with The Republic of South Korea launched a Revisit Korea program several years ago. Perhaps the most honestly grateful country to another has been The Republic of South Korea to the United States for their role in the 1950-1953 police action against the invasion by North Korea. Annually over one hundred fifty veterans and significant others are hosted for a week of honors for their role. Jo and I enrolled with Military Tours, who

handled the travel for this memorable week. After an overnight at Los Angeles, we made our way via Tokyo to Seoul where we were met as honored dignitaries at the airport and taken to one of Seoul's most prestigious hotels, and registered in one of the most luxurious suites we have ever stayed. Our days were orchestrated with hosted tours, military recognition events such as the 55th anniversary of the successful Inchon invasion and a banquet where a Korean dignitary individually draped a commendation medal around the necks of each of us honorees. Two events of this week stand out in my memory: a trip and tour of Panmunjon, site of the 1953 truce signing, and the laying of a wreath on the war memorial. At the wreath laying ceremony, I stood immediately behind Buzz Aldrin, later to become an astronaut, but during the Korean War, a decorated fighter pilot. We were able to walk around the table where the truce signing took place as we watched a North Korean sentinel peer menacingly through a window. The most dramatic change over the fifty-five years since my service to the country was in the landscape and the modernity of the cities and culture. Vegetation had been totally destroyed as well as structures and landscape. Today the Republic of South Korea is one of the most modern of all countries that it has been our privilege to visit. I cite two examples as evidence of the esteem we engender in the generations of South Koreans familiar with the war. When a Korean acquaintance in Iowa City learned of my service to her country during the war, she refused to take compensation for alterations. As our bus, adorned with a large identification banner, toured through the cities, passers by stopped, shouted thank you expressions and invariably bowed en masse. As a veteran of this action, I was proud of my role but never really internalized its significance until reading David Halberstram's, *The Coldest Winter*.

Military Tours provided optional extensions to the Korean trip; a week in Beijing, and three days in Xian. We arrived in smog-draped Beijing amidst a teeming mass of people, the extent of which I had never encountered. We stayed in a modern hotel with good accommodations and food. Daily we toured such places as the Forbidden City, Tian A Min Square, a rickshaw trip and dinner in a traditional Chinese community, with regular evening concerts and events featuring typical Chinese entertainment. A trip to the Great Wall with an obligatory walk on one of the Seven Wonders of the World was a highlight almost rivaling observation of the massive movement of people and goods. Highways and streets were clogged with every conceivable transportation conveyance weaving its way at a tempo and cadence that almost defied description. Bike lanes adjoined motorized vehicle lanes complementing the rhythmic movement, a breath-defying spectacle. Our tour guide characterized this as the ying and the yang of the Chinese culture. We marveled at the preparation for the Olympic Games to be held only ten months from our visit and pondered if the Chinese would be ready. Our tightly knit amoeba of twelve American tourists herded by a veteran guide boarded the overnight train to Xian, departing the Beijing rail terminal amidst masses. Jo and I were assigned a private compartment with steel covered bunk beds covered by a blanket. As I made my way to the Chinese style restroom, I noted as many as eight Chinese in similar compartments. After an early morning arrival, we found our way to a very modern hotel and toured this city of over one million people, boasting its importance as the eastern starting point of the famous Chinese silk route. Thirty miles from this city is

the site of the Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor and the Terra Cotta Army, a world historic site. Less than fifty years ago as farmers were digging for a well, one of the terra cotta figures was unearthed beginning an unrivaled archeological excavation still only partially completed. Touring the huge pavilion housing this exposition was perhaps the capstone to a two week trip neither of us will ever forget.

CRUISING THE DANUBE

Some of our hiking friends convinced us that Grand Circle Tours offered a wonderful way of traveling to previously challenging parts of the world. We took the bait in October 2009 and signed on to a Danube River cruise along with the John Ruth's and the LaVerne Roberg's. An Atlantic flight took us through London's Heathrow airport to Prague where we spent three curiosity packed days learning the city's subway as we explored the tourist highlights. After a cross-Czech bus ride with a home stop noon meal, we joined the riverboat, Concerto, in Linz, Austria. It is a world class city, partially as a result of Hitler's efforts to "dress up" his former "home town". While docked in this river port, Jo and I traveled via bus revisiting Salzburg, Austria. We visited key central city sites and were again exposed to the Mozart mystique. This six day river cruise took us to picturesque Danube ports including Milke, Austria where a century's old abbey showcases some of Europe's most cherished religious traditions. After cruising through lush wineries along the Danube we arrived in Vienna, where we toured one of Europe's most classic and traditionally world class cities. We enjoyed one of the most wonderful music concerts of our experiences, the trappings of the Hapsburg's dynasty and finally a public transportation snafu that demonstrated how locals the world over can be counted on to rescue confused tourists. The trip also took us to Slovenia and finally to Budapest where we toured the cities of Buda and Pest on either side of the Danube. On the final day Jo and I signed up for a countryside tour to a Hungarian cowboy show. It was less than spectacular but caused us to place in perspective all of the marvelous sights, tours and new insights gained through this adventure.

WASHINGTON DC ON A WHIM

No sooner had we arrived home from the riverboat cruise than we decided to take advantage to mild fall weather and view WWII monuments, Holocaust Museum, the Newscum, and other sites we had previously visited. It's amazing the deals available on flights and hotels if you are patient and navigate the internet carefully. We found a hotel two blocks from the capital and three blocks from Union Station where we took all meals at reasonable prices. In five days of trudging we were able to check out the significant sights and museums. The National Portrait Gallery featured 180 paintings by Rose Frantzen of Maquoketa. We knew many of the persons portrayed. The Holocaust Museum helped us focus on one of history's most heinous episodes. This spur of the moment trip renewed our appreciation of the treasure trove of history available in our nation's capital.

THROUGH THE PANAMA CANAL-A FEB-MAR 2010 CRUISE

After resisting a cruise for these many years, we succumbed and did this float beginning in San Diego and concluding fourteen days and 3593 miles later in Ft

Lauderdale. We joined Bill and Dean Broderick at their San Diego condo where we retrieved our car from their garage after a long return flight and a quick overnight rest before returning to our Tucson digs. The Holland America's Ms Maasdam carried 1200 guests and 600 crew members. During our two week cruise we stopped at five ports of call: Puerto Vallarta, Mexico; Hualulco, Mexico; Puerto Chiapas, Mexico; Puerto Quetzal, Guatemala; Panama Canal and Cartegena, Columbia. From all accounts it was a challenging trip for the crew involving an outbreak of a flu-like 48 hour sickness requiring quarantine and precautionary measures such as continuous reminders to disinfect hands. Bill collected his crud stripes. We anchored in the Gulf of Panama to allow for two passengers to be disembarked to hospitals and to remove a body. On the fourth evening we began an overnight episode of 100 plus knot winds literally buffeting the vessel. On the Saturday before entering Panama territory, we were on high alert for a possible Tsunami resulting from the Santiago, Chile earthquake. The captain assured us that the best spot was to be in open sea headed into the forecasted wave. Fortunately, it didn't materialize! It was impossible to avoid the tremendous food served formally in exquisitely appointed dining facilities. If I were an ethnographer, I would classify the guests as the promenade walkers and loungers, the casino crowd, the formal diners and theater buffs and the survivalists (handicapped due to infirmities of aging but possessive of true grit). Like many, excepting for the casino crowd, we tasted a bit of it all.

At each port of call many passengers departed to explore sights, go on pre-arranged tours and to shop. At two stops we had no organized tour but hired taxis to take us on our own excursions. Jo and I enjoyed meeting Kyle's mother, Maria, where she works in the internationally acclaimed jade factory and sales facility in Antigua, Guatemala. It was fascinating to see this huge ship tie into a couple of minuscule docks contrasted to the huge commercial ports of Cartegena and Ft Lauderdale. Our stateroom (ship terminology- in reality about like an RV room) was off one of the two promenade decks allowing us to watch with interest each of the docking procedures.

The highlight of our cruise was traversing the Panama Canal, I read David McCullough's book on building the canal and was prepared for this experience. We entered the first of three locks at 7AM on Monday morning and departed the third and last lock at 3PM. Between locks are huge lakes and other waterways. Each lock has two passages thus permitting two ships to traverse, simultaneously, the six level sequences (three steps up and the same number down). Sixty to eighty ships navigate the canal in 24 hours. Massive construction was observed as double capacity is envisioned in the future. As the ship approaches each port, a pilot vessel comes alongside and a pilot comes aboard to steer the ship to port or through the canal. A commentator provided detailed information as we made our way through the canal.