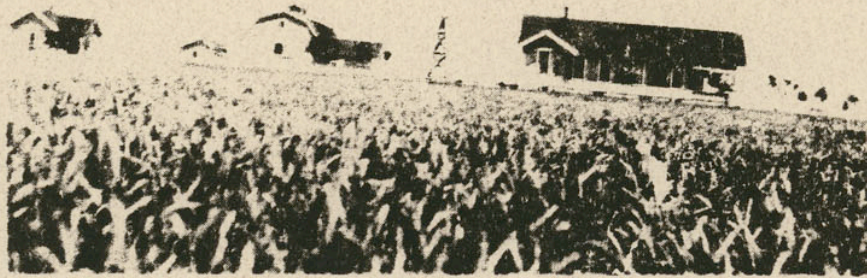


THE
JACOB & KATHERINE
LEBSACK
FAMILY HISTORY



1822 - 1986

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Foreword

This history of the Lebsack family is based in part on the remembrances of Clarence and is written in the first person by him with a reference period of 1985-86. It began as a history for his own family and expanded into a general family history, so please bear with him for the amount of information that is entered about his own family.

Others in the family added much to this collection and he hopes that each of you will add your own memories of the Lebsack family.

I would like to give credit to those who helped by providing pictures and memory refreshers:

To my wife, Esther, for putting up with papers, typewriter and pictures scattered around the family room for almost a year.

To Rachel Schuppe for pictures that helped complete the photo pages and to each of you for your help in providing family pictures.

To Lydia Dobler for information that came from her history about the earlier years of our family.

To Freda Flaig for information gathered from tapes of conversations she and Lydia had with Katherine Margaret Lebsack.

To Aunt Etta Huntley for the picture of Grandpa and Grandma Klein and for information about the Klein family.

To Lyle for compiling and editing the text on his word processor.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this collection of memories to our parents, Jacob Henry and Katherine Margaret Lebsack, who gave their all in raising a family of ten children and supplying them with all of the necessities for growing to maturity. They provided a Christian atmosphere that gave us the background to grow and provide our own families the opportunity to lead good lives. We are grateful to them for having the desire, foresight, and courage to leave their homeland in search for something better for their family. We thank God and our parents for the privileges we have enjoyed because of their decision to come to the United States. May we always honor these privileges.

Chapter 1

LIVING IN RUSSIA

In the early seventeenth century, Catherine the Great issued an invitation to the German people to come to Russia. Russia was a country rich in natural resources, but the Russians were not agricultural people and to help build a self-sufficient nation it needed people who could farm and make the land produce food for the populace. The Czarina's offer was to create something attractive enough to bring in the Germans to take care of Russia's agricultural needs. She offered freedom from military service, taxes, and freedom to live as Germans in a free country. The Germans who migrated to Russia settled along the Volga and around the Black Sea early in the eighteenth century.

One of the edicts of the Manifesto signed in 1762 was the allotment of land, not to any one individual, but to the colony as communal land. The colonists were permitted to buy land from private sources to improve or add to their holdings. If any who settled in Russia decided to depart, they were required to pay into the treasury a portion of the assets they acquired while in the Russian Empire. They were then free to travel wherever they pleased without hindrance from the Russian regime.

The Lebsacks, because of a large family, had accumulated much land through the years since the migration to Russia had begun in the time of Katherine the Great. Their holdings were about five hundred acres of good fertile land in a rainfall zone that was very productive without irrigation. They raised wheat, barley, potatoes, peas, beans, red beets, and another kind of beet that Mother described as "beets of various colors" much like our sugar beets. These beets were used for making syrup, using red beets to add color to the beet syrup. After harvest, they spent about three weeks processing the beets into syrup. The sliced beets were cooked over an open fire in huge cast iron kettles then put in presses to extract the juice and boil to the right consistency for syrup. The end result was then placed in bottles and jugs to use and make last until another harvest. They had a large orchard with all kinds of fruits and berries. Much of the fruit was dried and placed in bags and hung in shelters for winter use. One of the delicacies made from the dried fruit was soup made of dried prunes, peaches, apricots and raisins. This was called "schnietz sup" and references will be made to this soup later in this writing.

In drying the fruit, the fresh fruit was sliced and spread out on rooftops and covered with a type of muslin until thoroughly dried. The fruit was then bagged and hung in a cool, dry place and eaten when needed. Mother tells about the apples having such an aroma that it was impossible to hide them from the youngsters. One variety grew so large that the apples split open before they reached maturity. Some of the apples were stored in straw stacks for keeping in the early fall until the weather got so cold that they had to be brought inside. But while they were in the straw, youngsters playing could smell the apples and helped themselves, so not many were left when cold weather came. Some varieties of apples were pickled in large wooden barrels. When the apples were all eaten, the barrels were used to freeze meat in for the winter. The meat was sliced and layered in the barrels with snow. The barrels were then packed in snow and when meat was needed, the snow was removed, the meat chopped loose with a hatchet, and the barrel resealed.

To the best of our parent's recollection, their families came to Russia from Germany in the early eighteenth century. One of the Lebsack families of Berthoud, Colorado has done extensive work in tracing their family back to Germany to the sixteenth century. Their information causes them to believe that all of the Lebsacks and Lebsocks in the United States are descendants of one family that migrated to Russia. This family had seven sons, four of them migrated to Russia and

three stayed in Germany. These migrants lived in Russia for several generations and multiplied before some of them left for America. They believe their information is conclusive enough to indicate that these four sons and their families were the only Lebsacks that left Germany to go to Russia, and ultimately, to America.

In 1822, Martin Lebsack, Dad's grandfather, was born in a village in Frank, Russia where he grew up in a large family and married, but there is no record of who my great-grandmother was. Conrad (father of Jacob Lebsack) was born in 1852, grew to manhood there and married Anna Margaret Graining. To them were born four children--Conrad Jr., Anna Mary (Mrs. David Strasheim), Jacob Henry (1882), and Anna Margaret (Mrs. David Amen). They lived in villages protected by a high fence, fearing Russian intrusion or the wolf packs that ran wild on the Russian steppes. The wolves often became very hungry in the winter snow and cold. The farmland was some distance from the village and when the workers went out to farm they stayed until the crop was planted and later went back to tend the crops. In the fall the families returned to the crop sites to do the harvesting. The wheat and other small grains were hauled to the mill to be ground into flour. I don't know the reason, but most of the wheat was sold and the rye was made into flour. The reason could have been economic or, perhaps, government regulation. I can recall Mother telling what a treat it was to have white bread.

A minister came to the settlement at Christmas and Easter to serve communion and to baptize the children. According to some information, the minister and the school master must have had similar authority, because the same schoolmaster who confirmed Mother also officiated at Dad's and Mother's wedding. In 1889, when Jacob was seven years old, his mother passed away.

The father, Conrad, struggled to keep his family together, but finally married a young widow from the village of Walter. Three more children were born to the family--Alexander, Henrietta, and David. There will be more about David later in this history when he comes to America. The stepmother was the proverbial "mean stepmother" and the four stepchildren found her very difficult. But the family grew and prospered. The boys married and brought their brides home, and the girls of the family married and went to live with their husband's families. Most of the time the parents chose mates for their children, but this was not the case with Jacob.

At the other end of the village, lived the Kleins (John and his wife Catherine, nee Schmidt) and their family. Things had not gone as well for them. John and his brother had inherited their small farm and stock from their father at his passing. The brother decided it was too cold for him along the Volga, sold out to John and moved south, away from his family. When John's livestock were hit by disease and he lost everything, including the land, he became the village butcher. The Kleins also had a large family--twelve children. Three of the children died in infancy and a crippled son died when he was about four years old. Mother talked about little lame Frederick often. The children they raised to adulthood were Katherine Margaret (our mother) born in 1885, John, Catherine, Fred, Jake, Anna, George, and Henrietta.

Before the Kleins came to the village where the Lebsacks lived, "der FrankereKuter", they lived in Frank, Russia. Granddad John Klein did odd jobs and spent a great deal of time as chauffeur for some of the well-to-do people in Frank. Much of this information was taken from a cassette tape that my sisters Freda and Lydia had made during a conversation with Mother in her home in Greeley a year or so before she passed away. At this point in the conversation she paused and said, "Ich must viel arbeiten in Russland, und in America, Ich haben a familia gross gezogen und yetst bin ich nicht gantz nintzig yare alt und sitzen hier gantz allein." (I had to work hard in Russia and here in America, I have raised a large family and now I am almost ninety years old and am sitting here all alone.)

Times were hard and, as the children grew up, they were sent out to work to help keep the family going. Katherine Margaret went to work as a sort of maid. She took care of the neighbor's children, milked their cows, fed their hogs, cleaned the barns, baked bread, washed clothes, did the cooking, and just about anything else that had to be done. The ovens were built into an earthen wall and held up to eight large loaves of bread. They made their own laundry soap by using wood ashes and animal fat. Clothes were washed on rocks on the banks of a lake. They were made mostly of dark material and didn't show the dirt. Even babies weekday diapers were made of dark material, though Sunday diapers were made of white cloth.

When Katherine was twelve she was sent to Frank, Russia, to attend confirmation school in a class of twelve boys and girls. After this, she was old enough to leave home and work for wages. She had learned to spin the wool from the family flock and could do most of the work that the older girls were able to do.

Jacob loved to drive horses, but when he was just a young man his grandfather, Conrad Lebsack, bought some camels to work in the fields and to haul the crops to market in Saratov and haul wheat and rye to milling. According to the stories Dad told, the best of the horses didn't have a chance to keep up with the camels when it came to getting the farm work done. They had a camel stallion locked up and it was Jacob's job to water and feed it every day. Once when he was feeding the camel it took a bite out of his arm that left a scar for life. Cousin George, of whom we will read more later as he comes to America, was kicked in the nose by a camel. The nose was broken and smashed sort of flat. It stayed that way the rest of his life. Once, when he was a young lad, George was driving a team of camels and was eating his lunch when he dropped the reins. He crawled down between the camels on the wagon tongue to pick up the reins, lost his hold, and slipped to the underside of the tongue, causing the camels to spook and run away. George hung on by his hands and feet until the camels arrived at home at the corral gate. When he crawled out from under the camels, he still had half a doughnut in his mouth.

Jacob was now a young man and began thinking of girls and how nice some of them were. He began trying to court Katherine Klein. She was only fifteen and her mother didn't think this was advisable. She tried to discourage Katherine by saying, "You wouldn't fit into that family as we are too poor." However, Jacob and Katherine continued to make plans for the future. When she was eighteen, they were married (October 3, 1903) and moved in with Jacob's family. They were married in a church a long distance from their home. Katherine recalled that they had roast lamb with all of the trimmings for their wedding dinner. She wore a blue wedding dress and veil. Her mother made the veil. There are few details and no pictures. The only picture from Russia was a picture of Mother, her older sister and her sister-in-law (John's wife, Marybelle) which you can see in the picture section.

By this time, there were rumors of war and the Czar was drafting young men into the service. Jacob was one of these draftees. Katherine continued to live with the Lebsack family, but when she could get away she went to the other end of the village to visit her family. Her mother reminded her that she had been warned things would not work out and that she would not be happy living in the Lebsack household.

Jacob served in the Russian army for three years, but never was in actual combat. He spent most of his time, after training, serving as the Czarina's chauffeur, taking her wherever and whenever she wanted to go. After three long years, Jacob was home for three weeks and the first child was conceived. During Katherine's morning sickness period, she got no help or sympathy from the stepmother who felt the soldier-boy's trip home was totally unnecessary.

Katherine still had to go into the fields and work along with the others. The grain was cut by hand with a scythe and tied in bundles with twisted straw ropes that the women had to make in their spare time. One day they went to the field and Katherine was helping to stack the bundles, but was not feeling too well. After going to bed that night, Katherine and Jacob's first son, Jacob Jr. was born. This was July 14, 1907.

When fall came and the fieldwork was done, Katherine had more free time and was able to visit her parents more often. Her mother felt so sorry for her, but told her to be an obedient daughter-in-law and that Jacob would soon be home so they could be a family. On one cold, stormy day Katherine asked the old grandmother (Conrad's mother, who was blind) to rock young Jake for awhile so she could go to see her mother. She placed the child on the blind woman's lap and hurried out. It was almost dark when she returned home. She saw a man in a big fur hat and coat coming toward her. It was her husband, Jacob, returning from the Russian army. It was a nice reunion. Jacob had come home to his wife and to see their son for the first time. Now with Jacob home from the service, they began to plan their lives while helping with the family farm.

When young Jake was just a toddler they went to the harvest field and while playing he ran into the path of a scythe being swung by one of the men. His leg was severely cut in the calf and to this day you can still see the scar. On January 11, 1908, Frederick was born.

Once again there were rumors of war. Jacob was drafted again, but served only a few months. The Czarina, Empress Alexandra, was also expecting a child. If it were a son and heir (after already having four daughters), the soldiers would draw straws and the lucky ones would return home. The baby was a boy, and Jacob was one of the lucky ones to return home.

Chapter 2

DISSATISFIED AND MAKING PLANS

The already large Lebsack family was growing rapidly. More of the sons were getting married and more children were being born. John was born on October 2, 1909 and, by now, the family had grown to twenty-two people in one household. There was talk of wealth and freedom in America. On October 4, 1911, Lydia was born, the first granddaughter in the large family. During this time Jacob and Katherine were making plans that would change their lives. Grandfather was very unhappy with these plans and blamed Katherine for wanting to take Jacob and the children from their homeland and go to America. The stepmother, more than a little bit devious, took Katherine's nicer things for "safekeeping"--her linens, bedding, some of the children's things--and said they would be in safe keeping until they returned from America.

When Lydia was one year old, Jacob wrote to Mr. George Strasheim in Lincoln, Nebraska, asking for financial aid to get them to this new land. Aunt Mary (Dad's sister) had married David Strasheim earlier and they had already arrived in the states and settled in Lincoln. I'm not sure about the Strasheim's relation to each other.

There was not much packing to be done and what little they had was tied into bundles. There were no color-matched "his and her" luggage. Grandma Klein packed a box of food as seven of the younger families left Frank, Russia for the new land. They crossed Germany by train, arriving at the port of the Hamburg America shipping lines. Upon their arrival, they were told that there was no room aboard the ship and they would not be able to go on this trip. When everything looked dim and bleak, a small, dark-haired, dark-eyed man appeared on the scene and told them that for a fee he would be able to find room for them. Dad told us they found out later that this little man was a scalper, taking advantage of desperate people who had to pay extra to travel.

The men on the voyage spent much time on the deck, but the weather was wet and foggy most of the three weeks it took to reach Ellis Island, New York. Several of the children in the group became ill and died. They were buried at sea, wrapped in blankets.

When the group sighted land and the Statue of Liberty, they were jubilant, and yelled and sang songs of joy. They referred to the Statue as the "Lady" and were obviously overjoyed at seeing her. By the time the ship docked, the two older boys, Jake and Fred, had contracted the measles and Dad had very sore eyes from the cold winds and salt air. This was a trying time for the family, because Jake and Fred were separated from the family, confined to quarantine. Dad was getting treatment for his sore eyes elsewhere and Mother had John and Lydia in her quarters. If Dad's eyes had not healed he would have been sent back to Russia. This was a dilemma.

The family separated into three groups and not one of them could speak a word of English. Mother would take the two little ones for walks and let them play on the grass. One day, she heard someone call "Mama, Mama!" She recognized the little voices as those of Jake and Fred, calling to her from the window of their hospital room. She called back to them, but a nurse appeared and drew the shades of their room. Then she came out to mother and told her never to appear on the premises where the boys could see her. They refused the food that was served them and simply cried for their mother. Jake's measles had settled in his eyes and he was very ill. He kept the after-effects of the disease until he had eye surgery in Sterling when he was about sixteen years old.

Chapter 3

LEAVING ELLIS ISLAND, ARRIVING AT LINCOLN

After about three weeks on Ellis Island, the family was reunited and left for Lincoln, Nebraska, to stay with Aunt Mary and Uncle David Strasheim. This was a joyful reunion after the long voyage, the illnesses and waiting, not knowing whether they would be sent back to Russia or be permitted to leave the embarkation point of Ellis Island. The folks talked so much about "der Kessel Garten," a term I did not understand until I was older and finally asked what a "Kessel Garten" was. It was the embarkation point where all foreigners arrived from their countries to be examined physically and where it was made certain they had sponsors who would be responsible for them. Here they were now, in a strange land facing a whole new life. Dad only knew how to farm and couldn't speak a word of English. What was he going to do with his young family in this place?

After about three months in Lincoln, he went to Hastings where a friend from Russia, Mr. Yashka Wagner, helped him a great deal. But how can a man who does not understand the language find a job and follow instructions? There was no welfare, no food stamps for the poor. All Dad wanted was an opportunity and Yashka Wagner had given it to him. He took Dad to the Burlington railroad shops and introduced him to a foreman who had just given a man the last opening, but he told Dad to come back in a day or two. It turned out that the new man was not capable of doing the job, so the foreman gave Dad a chance. The job was inspecting rail cars for bad bearings, brakes, etc. Dad was on this job for three years, working the night shift. When he had completed two weeks work, the railroad company gave him a traveling pass to bring his family to Hastings from Lincoln. Yashka rented a three-room house for the family and Mrs. Wagner gave them bedding and other necessities for them to settle in their new home.

When they left Russia, Lydia had just learned to walk, but with all the traveling and disruption, she had forgotten how or refused to walk. She just sat and cried when the boys went out to play. She finally started to walk by the time she was two years old. I (Clarence) was born shortly after the family arrived in Hastings on April 19, 1914. Leona was born October 5, 1916, also in Hastings.

Our family found another family in Hastings who they knew from Russia--the John Sorch family. They later came to Sterling. Mr. Sorch built a lean-to porch on their house and Mrs. Sorch would slice apples and spread them on a sheet on the porch roof to dry. The Lebsack boys helped themselves to the sliced apples and Mrs. Sorch complained to Mother. John said, "If she wouldn't put her apples on the roof we wouldn't eat them."

Mother also told the story of when Fred wore out his overalls at the knees. Mother scolded him, patched them, and sent him out to play. He went out to the alley, sat down, and neatly undid the patches and brought them back to her.

Chapter 4

MOVING TO COLORADO

By this time the Amen family had settled near Fruita, Colorado, but discovered they didn't have adequate water rights on their farms. They sold those farms and moved to farm near Proctor. This family consisted of Grandpa and Grandma Amen, Conrad and Katherine Margaret and their six children, Henry and Henrietta and their five children, George and Alice and five children, Dave and Anna and their five children, Carl and Katie and their three children, daughter Henrietta and her husband Henry Krieger and their children. They bought land along Skinner Draw and built their soddies there. Dad wrote from Hastings to Uncle Dave Amen and inquired about work in the Proctor area. He found him a job working in the beet fields.

There were three families, that I know of--the Lebsacks, Trupps, and Walkers, who came to Proctor from Hastings. The Trupps and Walkers returned, but the Lebsacks stayed. The Blue Ranch, owned by one of the first families to come to Logan County, and operated by the James N. Hamil family was to be our home for the next year. Dave and Don Hamil were part of this family, and consequently, were some of the first people that I can remember in Colorado. The Blue Ranch was a picture ranch, with a water storage tank with running water in all the buildings and corrals. It had a large, beautiful orchard with apples, cherries, plums, berries, and currants and a large two-story stone house.

On May 17, 1917, we arrived at Proctor via Union Pacific passenger train and were met by Uncle David Amen, with a team and wagon, and the Jim Hamil family to greet us. After taking our belongings to their home, the Amens helped whitewash the labor house on the Hamil farm and helped set up the beds and table, which was all the furniture.

The folks were in the beet fields early and not home until late. It was hot and dry work. When the beet thinning was finished, Dad helped at the ranch with the haying and irrigation. Dad came home from work one evening during beet thinning with a cute little puppy--a real plaything for the children, Mr. Hamil said. Leona was about eight or nine months old at the time and Lydia and I stayed at the shack taking care of Leona. We had walked to the beet field before, but when mother saw us coming without the puppy she knew we had locked him in the house or he would have been with us. She headed back to the shack and found Leona in the cradle on her hands and knees trying to keep away from the dog, which was biting and scratching at her. Her little legs were scratched and bleeding and that was the end of the puppy.

We made it through the summer and now it was beet-topping time. The boys were very young to be in the field but they did their best, wielding the knives and piling the heavy beets. The folks got up at two in the morning and, with warm clothes and lanterns, headed for the beet field. Later they came in for breakfast and took the boys with them to top beets all day. Papa said if he could make enough money he would take the family back to Russia again because the work was so hard. But Mama said that would never happen even with all the hard work.

Mr. Hamil encouraged them to stay saying better things would happen in the future. He was very kind and helped the folks over their rough times. Dad did not mind the work, but he wanted something better for his family.

After a year of working in the beet fields, Dad rented a farm from a widow who had come from Denver and wanted to return because she did not like the barren plains. He bought her meager

equipment and horses. This farm was located about four miles northwest of Proctor and joined Uncle David Amen's farm. The equipment consisted of a one-bottom plow, a two-section spike toothed harrow, and a one-row lister. There was a team of bay mares, Bert and Dolly, and a buggy mare, Babe, that filled in as a workhorse.

Dad bought another team of horses from a neighbor, Frank Brown. I don't know how good of a neighbor he was, because this was a runaway team and caused a lot of problems. One day, Fred was raking hay with Prince and Brownie and they ran away with him. Mother just knew that they were dragging him to death, but it was a bunch of hay that she saw on the rake. Fred had fallen off the rake when the team crossed an irrigation ditch and was running to catch his horses.

Mr. Vanack, the husband of the widow Vanack, was a railroader and was killed in a train wreck. Mrs. Vanack used the money from her railroad claim to buy the quarter of land mentioned in the previous paragraphs. She and her son Billy lived there several years before our family bought them out. Dave Hamil told me recently that when he was running for governor of Colorado, he met Billy in Grand Junction on a campaign trip. He had been a forest ranger on the western slope all of his adult life. After farming this dryland (the Vanack place) for one year, the folks rented an irrigated farm across the road on which Grady Cheairs, of the Cheairs Investment Company in Sterling, had built a new set of improvements. This was 1919 and we lived there for two years, farming this 160 acres and another quarter section joining it on the south.

Then, the Cheairs Company built improvements on the south quarter and sold the north quarter to Charlie Barr. So we moved to the south quarter which was to be the family home for many years to come. The Barr family did not like the area and let the farm go back to the Cheairs Company when they moved back to Longmont. I remember the Barrs had their grandfather living with them. He was past ninety, but played the harmonica, danced a jig and liked little kids and dogs. After that we farmed this place along with the home place.

In 1927, after several years of hard work and saving, Dad bought a half section of North Sterling Irrigation District land for one hundred dollars an acre. These three farms are now owned by: The Vanack farm, Kenny and Bonnie Amen. North place, Reiny and Alfreda Nein. Home place, Albert and Rachel Schuppe. Rachel, by the way, was born on the Vanack place May 23, 1918.

The Schuppe farm was broken out of sod in 1918 by Bill Fox using a steam engine tractor pulling an eight-bottom sodbreaker. I have just a faint recollection of this huge machine working across the road from the Vanack farm. In 1919, this quarter was planted to corn. I can remember Mama planting the whole quarter with four horses on a one-row lister. At the same time Dad was planting, cultivating and irrigating the north farm with the help of the older boys.

In 1917 when the family moved to the Vanack farm, located next to David Amen's, Uncle Dave helped Dad rent forty acres of irrigated land from Mr. Skinner to plant sugar beets. The Vanack farm was all dryland and it was planted to beans and small grains. This must have been a successful venture because the next year Dad rented the irrigated quarter with new improvements on it from the Cheairs Company and the family began to prosper, but not without hardships.

In 1918, the whole country was hit by a flu epidemic. People in the U.S. were dying by the thousands. In large cities, emergency hospitals were set up in schoolhouses, churches, and any available building. There was a shortage of doctors and nurses, and anyone with medical knowledge was called on to serve and nurse the sick and dying. Dad had gone to Fleming with four head of horses to get a load of seed corn. When he returned he was feverish and aching all over, so the older boys took care of the horses and Dad went to bed. It was the flu, but it must

have been a mild form. Doctor Hough of Iliff was called and he took care of Dad and others in the neighborhood at the same time. The doctor prescribed some medication and a "hot toddy." By the second morning his fever had broken and it didn't take long for him to recover.

Those early years were hard for our parents with six children, the oldest, Jake, was eleven. Fred was nine, John seven, Lydia five, Clarence three, and Leona just over a year. Trying to farm a large farm and not being able to hire help--not being able to pay for hired help--must have been terribly taxing, mentally and physically. Mother tells of some of the problems during the birth of some of us. The babies were all large, Clarence having the best start of all weighing in at sixteen pounds (the doctor may have charged by the pound and screwed up the scale). When Leona was born, Mother became very ill and could not nurse the baby enough and apparently Leona was not getting enough nutrition and cried constantly. Mother had to mix soda crackers and milk and sugar to try to feed her. An infant only a few days old eating solid food like a thresher and thriving on it was hard to believe, but from that time on she did very well.

Ernestine was named Helen Irene, but some one in the family objected. I think it was Aunt Anna Uhrich, so her name was changed to Ernestine Darline. When Clarence was baptized by Rev. Jacob Amen, he asked for a middle name and there was none, so he said, "from now on he will be Clarence Albert Lebsack." When Ernestine was born, Freda was two years old and had the measles. Lydia took care of her, rocking her and keeping her head covered. She was told the baby's eyesight could be injured if light was allowed to shine into her eyes. In telling some of these incidents, Mother would often pause and say, "Kinder, seitfro das wir in America sein, sohnst werden wir all tot." (Children, be glad that we are in America or we might not be living.)

When Lydia was a baby, lamb triplets were born in the sheep barn. The ewe did not have enough milk for all three and one little lamb was not getting fed and was about to starve. When Mother heard of the little lamb's plight she had Dad bring it to her and she nursed it back to health until it was strong enough to hold its own with the other two lambs.

When Freda was a baby, the folks went to a church convention in Fort Collins. On the way home they stopped in Sterling to do some shopping. George and Mrs. Amen were with them and Freda was asleep. While Mrs. Amen and Mother were in a drug store, Dad and Mr. Amen decided to go to another store, apparently not thinking of the sleeping baby in the back seat. When Mother and Mrs. Amen returned to the car and their husbands were gone, they knew Dad would not be carrying the baby around town. They heard a baby cry and spotted a couple parked nearby with Freda. Mother ran to the car and told them that this was her baby and took her from them. We still do not know whether they picked her up because she was crying or if they had other motives. The lady told them that they were just about to leave with the baby, but Mother thinks that she might have been joking. Anyway that kept the number of kids in the family at ten.

Mom tells of another time they were going to be gone over the weekend. The children were told and she designated Ernestine to be the duck caretaker. She was to be sure the little ducklings were in their shed every night and were turned out every morning. When they returned, Mother went out to open the duck shed on Monday morning and found that the little ducks had been locked inside all weekend. She got fresh water and gave each of them a drink and saved them all.

When we lived on the north place, Emma was born April 27, 1920. I have a lot of memories from that farm. In 1919, the John Amen family (This is the family of Jacob R. Amen who married Esther's cousin, Mary Ring, as well as John Amen, Jr. who later married Mary Schuppe) lost a small boy, I think his name was Joseph. I recall Mr. R.G. Pyle and Dad going to Sterling with Pyle's Model T Ford to get a tiny casket. The funeral services were held in the home (where

Herman Sommerfeld now lives), then the casket was placed in the Model T and hauled to the Sterling cemetery for burial.

When we left the Vanack farm, a family by the name of McConnell rented the farm. Leonard McConnell was married to Bob Hamil Sr.'s sister-in-law. He was originally from Tennessee, the same area that the Hamils came from. Bob Hamil was a brother to J. N. Hamil--Dave and Don's dad. Leonard had just been discharged from the Army after the end of World War I and came to Colorado to make his home. In about 1921 or 1922 they had a little baby boy, their first and only child. Little Billy was not very healthy and had a lot of problems. His problems turned out to be what we now call allergies. His mother breast-fed him and, between the lack of a good milk supply and his allergies, he almost starved. One day Mother was walking home from the beet field and Mrs. McConnell's mother came out to talk to her concerning Billy. He cried continually and had a severe rash. This was in the summertime and the weather was very warm. Mother went to the house to see the baby and try to give some kind of aid. The baby was wrapped in blankets and was slowly dehydrating. Mother unwrapped him and was shocked at the condition of the skinny little baby. She was nursing one of my sisters at the time, so she sat down and nursed Billy and found that he was literally starving. She nursed him for several days, then Leonard went to Ft. Collins and bought a milk goat. Billy was put on goat's milk and his condition changed and he grew up to be a healthy young man. After his education, he found employment with an oil company and was sent to Saudi Arabia, where he spent the rest of his life. He died shortly after his father and mother passed away. The father, Leonard, was run over by a farm tractor with steel lugged wheels and lost a leg. He then retired from the farm and was our neighbor when we lived on McKinley Street.

When I was about four years old something happened that kept me close to home for a long time. We were still living on the Vanack farm and Cheairs were building the new home. The well drillers had completed the well but left the drilling rig setting near the buildings. Weeds had grown up around the machine and John and I were playing around it when something jumped on my back and scratched me pretty badly. My screaming drew the whole family and the animal ran towards the Amen farm with my brothers running after it with pitchforks and clubs. We didn't know what it was, but guessed a raccoon.

Another time Mother and Aunt Annie Amen were going to Proctor with the old bay mare, Babe, and the buggy. I crawled into the back of the buggy as a stowaway. There were no cross fences at that time, so they headed off to the southeast towards Proctor. They were about a mile away from home when I was discovered. The begging and crying did not help. There was no compassion. Aunt Annie held the reins and Mother gave me a send off in a northwesterly direction, while they went on to town. That was an awfully long mile for a four-year-old to walk by himself, I thought. I didn't try that again.

One other thing that I remember when we lived on the north place was a blizzard in the late spring. We had gone to visit one of the Amen families on a Sunday evening. While we were there, a snowstorm came up suddenly. The reason I'm not sure which of the Amens it was is because three of them had built identical looking sod houses. It was either Henry or George Amen's place. I remember the thick walls of the soddies. They were about two feet thick with the windows set near the outside of the wall. This left a deep window well for keeping houseplants and the ladies kept them full of greenery. Dad, Jake and Fred took the team and wagon and went home. The rest of us stayed overnight. The next day, by mid-afternoon, the storm had let up enough so that Dad could come back to pick us up. This was a late spring storm and when we got home we had to dig pigs out of snowdrifts. We had a bunch of turkeys and some had nested around the farm under machinery. Mother knew where most of them were and

we dug them out of the snow and moved them, along with their eggs, to a warm, dry spot in a barn.

Another storm I can recall was a year earlier when we still lived on the Vanack place. J. N. Hamil from the Blue Ranch was moving some cattle from winter pasture back to the Ranch when the storm came up. It was snowing hard when they drove the cattle past our place. One of their horses was not feeling well, so they put her in our barn overnight. She foaled during the cold night. In the morning Dad took me out to see the little colt. It had frozen to death.

In the winter of 1931, we had a very severe blizzard. It gathered up steam as it passed through northern Colorado and when it hit southeastern Colorado, it became a violent storm. The tiny community of Towner in the southeast corner of the state, near Springfield, was hardest hit. A school bus left the schoolhouse at noon to get the children home before the storm became too severe, but because of the sparsely settled area and the bad weather, the bus became stalled. Without radio equipment, the bus driver was helpless to make his whereabouts known. The storm lasted three days. The children and the driver had just a little food left over from their lunches. Several of the children died of cold, but one of the older boys was credited with saving the lives of the rest of the children by keeping them awake and moving and exercising to keep them from freezing to death. The bus driver had gone for help and he died in the storm. The name of the boy hero was Bryan Unteidt.

Proctor is where I first saw a hearse. "Dead wagon" is what they called it. It was A. D. Jackson and Son Mortuary's Model T Ford hearse. It was painted solid grey. Uncle Dave Amen had some Mexican beet labor and they went on a drinking binge one weekend. Turned out they were drinking wood alcohol, a deadly poison. We saw the hearse go past our place four times. Each time, Dave Amen lost another beet worker.

When we lived on the Vanack farm, before organized community threshing and before Dad was able to afford farm help, he stacked the bundled grain by hand with team and wagon. I can remember the howling of the coyotes in the night and remember the folks talking about how brave the coyotes were--coming into the yard, catching chickens and chasing the animals. Dad told me about the time he was stacking bundles out in the field when the collie dog ventured out too far from the wagon and was chased by the coyotes. They followed him back to the wagon and Dad had to fight them off the dog with his pitchfork.

Chapter 5

OUR EDUCATION

Education played an important part in the early days, but not by today's standards. Most of the parents did not have a great deal of education, so they felt it was important to have at least an eighth grade education, with some of the boys of this first generation going on to high school. Many had to stay out of school in the spring to plant crops and again in the fall to harvest. Since most of the new families were large and worked their own sugar beets, when they stayed out of school for beet harvest it didn't leave many children in school so school was closed through the month of October.

When many of the boys finished the eighth grade they were sixteen or seventeen years old and were doing a man's work. They did not return to further their education. The older boys in our family started school at Proctor while we lived at the Blue Ranch, then attended McGinley school for the rest of their elementary education after we moved to the Vanack and Cheairs farms. The school was about a mile and a quarter west of our place and we nearly always walked. Sometimes in extremely bad weather, Dad would take us by horse and wagon. In those days, the teachers lived and boarded with one of the families living close to the school. The teacher, along with the help of the older children, did the custodial work--building the fire, sweeping, carrying wood and coal, carrying water from the pump, or in our case, carrying the water from Mr. Dugan's farm across the road. I can remember how irritated Mr. Dugan became when we had to come for water more than once during the day.

Although it was not part of the teacher's job, some of them conducted night school for adults who were interested, especially those who were working toward their United States citizenship. Dad was one of those studying for their tests at the time. The teachers also conducted spelling bees for young people and adults on special evenings. I remember Mr. Dugan, an Irishman, was given the word "sure" to spell. He spelled it "shure" and put up a good argument that it was right. He said there is no way to get "shure" out of "sure." Then there were the periodic programs put on by the pupils and teacher, usually at Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc. Along with the plays and community sings there were pie suppers and box suppers where the girls and the teacher decorated boxes and packed them with food. The boxes were then auctioned off after the program. The girl who brought the box generally made sure the boy she liked best knew which box or pie was hers. The teacher's boyfriend was usually present and the fathers and older boys somehow knew which box was hers and made the boyfriend pay dearly for it.

I also remember the Benedict boys who checked their skunk trap lines on their way to school. It wasn't bad until the schoolhouse warmed up. Then they were often sent home, but by then our clothes had absorbed so much of the skunk odor that even we smelled like skunk when we got home from school. Then there were times when the older boys caught a ground squirrel or snake and put it in the teacher's desk when she was not in the room.

Every Friday afternoon was a special time in school. It was a time when students could more or less do what they liked to do. It could be a drawing hour, manual training, or making things of wood such as small barns, little trucks or wagons, or little farm animals. It was a privilege to take the blackboard erasers out on the porch and pound the chalk dust out of them. Your grades had to be good, you had to be well-behaved, and sometimes you had to be the teacher's pet. Some of the teachers I can recall were Mr. B. R. Church, Lucille Reynolds, Vivian Hogg, Clare Campbell (she was my first grade teacher and later name-sake for the Campbell school in Sterling). There were also Irene Neller, Anna Corrigan, Ruth Stewart, Edith Dyer, Fern Gable (Dorn), Ruth Benway,

Isabell McKelvy (Buckley), Earnest William, Andrew Tompkins, Mrs. Walter Bucholz, Mrs. Jesse White, Florence Reitz Purcell. Florence was the last teacher at McGinley School. After that the children were bussed to Iliff.

Vivian Gill was the teacher who held evening classes at the time when my Dad was studying for his citizenship. She was a very close friend of my sister Lydia. Lydia did very well in school, especially in spelling, and Vivian took her to the Logan County Spelling Contest in Sterling.

Mr. Church was a disciplinarian. My brother John and Raymond Pyle can attest to that. He kept a buggy whip handy and did not hesitate to use it. That was at a time when the teacher had a right to discipline children without the fear of being sued by the parents. This was not a bad system and those who were given correctional measures in school generally got the same at home.

Elmer Amen had a Shetland pony that he rode to school. Boy, that kid was the envy of all the kids in school. He and I were best friends, so I got to ride Topsy quite often. One time I stooped to reach the cinch and she kicked me in the mouth. My front teeth were jarred loose, and since we didn't have orthodontists in those days, my teeth remained crooked. When I got home my mother saw my swollen and bloody mouth and asked me, "Warst du in eim schtreit?" (Were you in a fight?).

In those days, discipline always came first, medical attention was secondary. Once a kid in school told us that if you took a shovel full of dirt off of an anthill and deposited it in a different place, there would be a new anthill there. We did that one spring just before the end of school. In the fall, we had anthills all over the schoolyard. Then we had our choice, try to eradicate the anthills or take our chances with the ants on the playground. We had to bring some kerosene from home and douse all of the anthills, repeatedly, until there were no more ants.

Some of the families that I can remember from school were the Pyle, McGinley, Zinn, Phelps, Roach, Harrach, Constance, Stumph, Marostica, Amen, Kaiser, Gerk, Omen, Fred Smith, Benedict, Schwindt, Bamford, and Zink. There were others, people who moved into the area but stayed only a short time and who didn't leave as much of an impression on my memory as did the permanent farm resident.

Around 1923 or 1924, Lydia took piano lessons, as did others in the neighborhood from a Mrs. Whitaker who traveled around the countryside with a horse and buggy. The Amen girls, Edna, Lena, and Irene also took lessons from her. Her husband, John Whitaker, fascinated us with the clacking of his ill-fitted false teeth when he talked. The buggy that the piano teacher rode in was a fancy one-seater, with leather covered top, and she drove a beautiful jet-black trotting horse.

Chapter 6

FARMING THE LAND

We all worked hard. We milked a lot of cows, worked most of the sugar beets, shocked the grain at harvest time, and raised from forty to eighty acres of potatoes. We sold as many of the potatoes as we could at harvest time, the balance was put in the cellar for winter trade. We loaded carloads of them to ship to eastern markets, but as time went on this market disappeared and we had to quit potatoes and divert to other crops. Our crops from then on were mostly beets, pinto beans, alfalfa, barley, and oats. A little corn was raised, but until hybrid seed corn was developed in the 1940's, corn yields were so low that it was not an attractive crop.

The small grains were cut with a grain binder. We then had to gather the bundles into small shocks which were later threshed. The grain binder was pulled by four head of horses, and since acreage was large and cutting was slow, Dad would start early in the morning and my older brothers would have horses ready for an exchange at about nine o'clock. Mother would have sandwiches ready to take out with the horses. Dad would eat while the boys exchanged horses and oiled the binder, then he would cut until noon. There would be another exchange of horses and lunch, with another about three o'clock in the afternoon, and then work until dark. I still have Dad's long binder whip (about twelve feet) that he used to keep the horses almost on a trot through grain cutting. While Dad was cutting the rest of us who were old enough, including the girls, shocked the grain. Hail storms were as prevalent then as now and when grain was ripe enough to cut no time was lost.

The threshing was a community project. The shocks or bundles had to be hauled to a central location in the field to the threshing machine. There is a picture of the threshing operation in the picture section of this history. The machine was driven by a steam engine. There were only a few threshermen in the area--the William Stewart family, John McDonnel from the Crook area, and John Reynolds who was our thresher for what seemed like all of my young life. In about 1929 or 1930, Jacob Amen bought a Minneapolis-Moline tractor and threshing machine. This was a gasoline tractor and the end of the steam engine era.

August was always the threshing month. About the first of August threshing crews were organized. The main crew, or machine crew, consisted of the engineer, separator man and the water monkey (a man with a tank wagon drawn by a team of horses to haul water to the engine to keep up steam). The separator man was generally the owner of the outfit and he hired a man to tend the steam engine and keep the coal and water supplied. The farmer was responsible for the coal supply. Farmers helped each other during threshing. It took eight to ten wagons and men to haul the bundles to the machines, so several farmers exchanged labor in furnishing horses, teams and men moving from farm to farm until the neighborhood was threshed out. This went well as long as the weather cooperated. Sometimes rains would stop progress for days.

In August of 1927, it rained almost every day to keep the crew at our place for seventeen days. Close neighbors went home during inclement weather, but the machine crew and extra help stayed until the job was finished. It seemed like forever to us, dressing chickens and carrying roasting ears from the field. I am sure my mother and sisters didn't think it was a picnic either. A full crew to be fed at noon was from twenty to twenty-four men. That took a lot of food and a lot of preparation. There were some men on the crew, especially Mexicans, not accustomed to the rich food, who became ill from too much food and drinking too much water in the hot weather. Old Montezuma took his revenge.

One man, Mr. Raisch, who worked beets for us with his family was one who enjoyed food. Sometimes Mother would have chicken noodle soup, with roast potatoes, roast chicken with dressing, plus all the salads, relishes and deserts. Mr. Raisch would eat one course, chicken and noodles, and nothing else. Then he would push his chair back, hold his stomach and let out a couple of huge belches. We didn't know at the time that it was a way of letting the hostess know that it was a good dinner.

Our cousin George, who came to this country in the early twenties was still having a problem with the English language. Aunt Etta Klein (Huntley) was pouring lemonade and asked Fred if he wanted more and while she was pouring for Fred, George said, "Shiet me some in, too," this being the German word for pour. Many of the men did not understand German and burst out laughing. There was a lot of horseplay during the lunch hour, and if one did not want to bare the consequences of being thrown into the horse tank (and held under), you had to be pretty good sized or a fast runner.

Raising sugar beets was very hard work. Until after World War II, it was strictly hand labor from the time the beets were planted until they were harvested. Beets were planted in rows twenty inches apart with a horse drawn beet drill and were planted as thick as you would plant lettuce in the garden. When the small plants were about two inches high they had to be thinned out, leaving a beet every ten or twelve inches. That's where seniority came in. The older workers hoed out the beets, leaving a clump every ten inches and the younger of us crawled along behind the hoer and thinned the beets leaving one beet per hill. Not two beets, just one. Woe unto you if you left a double or pulled them all out.

Dad cultivated the beets ahead of us making the ground easier to work and softer to crawl on. When he stopped his team of horses and walked across the field behind us to inspect the job we all got nervous because there was always the threat of getting the hoe handle used on anyone not doing a good job. Sometimes the threat was carried out. Beet thinning sometimes lasted well into June when the temperatures were getting into the nineties. The ground was very hot, making hard work all the harder. The fields had to be gone over two more times during the summer to hoe the weeds that grew back after thinning. This was not a hard job because it did not require crawling on hands and knees like thinning did.

When October came it was the beginning of beet harvest. This was also very hard work. Before we had mechanical beet harvesting equipment, digging the beets out of the ground was almost totally hand labor. The beets were pulled or lifted from the ground by a puller drawn by three head of horses. The hand labor then came along taking two rows at a time and hand piled the beets in two windrows about six feet apart, leaving a space for a team of horses pulling a "V" shaped drag to smooth the ground to throw the topped beets on. Topping was done by hand with a knife with a hook on it to pick up the beets. Nearly every one who topped beets has a scar on an index finger from the beet knife or a mark on a shin from the hook on the end of the knife. The girls, Mother and Dad and all of us worked in the beet fields as we did during haying, grain harvest, and potato picking in the fall. It was a family operation and no one was exempt, unless there were other jobs to be done at the same time.

In the summer, the morning milking and chores were generally done by all. The evening milking was also shared except when we were haying, irrigating or doing jobs that required hard labor. Then the milking chores generally fell to the girls.

Haying was one of the more pleasant jobs because it could be done with more mechanization. The alfalfa was mowed with mowing machines pulled by a team of horses, raked, and then

stacked with overshot stackers after being hauled to the stacker by horse-drawn sweeps or buck rakes. In later years, tractor mowers and swathers came into the picture as did power sweeps or buck rakes made out of old cars or trucks. Harold Hettinger and I built one out of an old LaSalle car. This unit had a large eight cylinder engine in it and we could put up lots of hay with that big deluxe machine. It was originally a large sedan that belonged to the Cheairs family and had it not been torn up could be worth a fortune as an antique.

About that same time grain binders were going out and combines were coming into use. However, the advent of the combines coming in was very slow. The first large pull type combines were too large for irrigated farms. Then John Deere and Allis Chalmers came out with six and five foot machines that worked very well on small farms. These were followed by self-propelled combines that came in ten and twelve foot cutter heads. Now huge machines up to thirty-six feet wide are on the market. Somewhere in the old family album is a picture of a large combine pulled by sixteen horses. It was owned by a Mr. Klein, a relative of Dad's from Mrs. Klein's side. I remember them visiting us and Mr. Klein played, "My Little Red Wing" on the piano. It was the first man I ever saw play a piano.

Chapter 7

RELATIVES IN RUSSIA

I told earlier of the Lebsack family in Russia--Conrad, who was Dad's brother and father of George and Carl Lebsack did not come to the United States. This was probably because he was the oldest son of the family and the grandparents were still living. He may have chosen to remain there because of family ties. The Bolshevik revolution was beginning to get a strong foothold in about 1920 and people could not, legally, leave Russia anymore. My parents were still corresponding with the family left behind. The nephews, Carl and George, and Dad's half-brother, David wanted to come to join the family here in America.

In the spring of 1922, Dad sent money for ship's passage to them and they planned their trek through Germany to get to a port where they could board a ship sailing for the United States. This was not easy. They had to travel by night and hide during the day going across Russia. They walked through swamps and waded and swam rivers to get to Germany. There, being of German descent and speaking German, the Germans took care of them, gave them work, food, and clothing until they reached the German port where they boarded ship for their new country. They spent six months in Germany trying to earn enough money to get to America. Somehow somebody had stolen or bilked them out of the money Dad had sent them. There was no airmail at that time and communication by letter was very slow. When Dad received word they had lost their money, he sent them steamship and railroad tickets. Finally by the fall of 1922 they made it to America.

George tells of some of the things that were happening when the Bolshevik revolution broke. One incident, I believe, was about his father or another relative. In the middle of the night, two men came into the family home and took the father by force. The mother hearing the commotion got up and lit the lamp to see what was going on. They ordered her to put out the light and go back to bed and not to ask any questions. He was not heard from for several years. One day, three men walked into the yard, two were agents, the other the father. In three years he had aged many more years than his time. He had a long white beard and was a mere skeleton of his former self. Here was a man of about fifty years who was worked and starved to have the appearance of a seventy-five year old person. Then the remainder of the family, mother and children, except Carl and George who had hidden out and planned to escape Russia, were taken away with only a few meager belongings.

The father died shortly afterwards during the time that the boys were making their way towards America. David, who was Dad's step-brother, was also with Carl and George. It was then that the boys made their way through swamps, swam icy rivers and rode in livestock trains in their effort to get to a German port so they could board a steamship for America. One lady now living in Loveland tells about her cousin being one of the gestapos that gave tips and helped haul off their own families. It was a religious war as well as economic and power struggle. Those who would not renounce their religious beliefs were lined up along trenches and were shot and buried in the mass graves. This lady tells of her cousin taking his own mother captive. She was so angry that she took a club and beat him until the mother was released. She was so angered that she felt if she could get her hands on him she could kill him, "one finger at a time." A Mr. Grosskopf, of Loveland, when Mother was still living, was getting letters from family in Russia. He suspects they must have joined the regime to still be alive and be able to get letters out of Russia. So, apparently, to stay alive many of the people renounced all of their beliefs and joined the Communist party.

I remember, clearly, the day the boys arrived. We had gone to church at the Amen schoolhouse and after lunch the depot agent at Proctor called and told us there were three young men at the depot who could not speak English, but he understood their names. Dad took the Model T touring car and went to Proctor after them. I have never seen such a happy reunion. As a youngster, I had never seen the kind of clothing they wore--heavy, black overcoats, little billed black caps and collarless shirts. After all of the hugging, kissing, and tears, Mother took them to the basement, had them remove all of their clothing and had us take the clothes out to the yard to be burned. She gave them new clothing, but only after thorough scrubbing and delousing. They were covered with head lice from riding in livestock trains and sleeping wherever they could going through Germany and the filthy conditions of the ship. They helped harvest the beets, corn, and potatoes. George and David stayed with us until they could find employment. Carl went to work for John Crum near Iliff for the winter. David later went to the Blue Ranch to work for the Hamils temporarily.

It was while Dave was at Hamils that Carl was killed while loading baled hay into rail cars for John Crum. According to the Union Pacific train engineer, Carl jumped out of the rail car to keep his horses from running away in fear of the steam engine. He grabbed a hold of the horses' bridles and was thrown into the path of the locomotive.

George later married Ernestine Keil and farmed in the Crook and Proctor area for a number of years before retiring to Sterling, where he passed away. His widow, Erna, is still living on McKinley street as of this writing. They had no children.

David married Marie Karst, and they moved to Montana. After farming there for some time, they moved to Loveland where he retired and passed away in the mid-seventies. Not having been very close to them, we did not get to know all of his family, but I believe there were ten children. When Steve was in school at Merino, we met a son and grandson at the State basketball tournament. The grandson was playing basketball on the Hiland (Ault) team and he got acquainted with Steve.

Our parents still corresponded with some of the family in Russia as late as the early thirties. We don't feel there are any of them living anymore. The letters quit coming from Russia and the only contact was through friends of friends who had heard that so and so was separated from family and sent to Siberia where most of the exiled people starved and froze to death. I can remember how Mother cried when letters and news arrived from overseas. At that time any news from Russia was news about families being broken up, the aged ones being exiled, the able-bodied being taken into work camps and the children taken from families, never to be heard from again.

Dad was one of the few of the Germans who could write in the German handwriting. Most of the men in the families could read the letters they received from Russia, but could not write to answer them. They came to our home and dictated the letters and Dad wrote them in German. I recall the families coming to our house with their letters from relatives in Russia, letting Dad read them and then write a reply for them. When someone received a letter, nearly all of the Germans in the neighborhood came to hear the news and sympathize with those for whom the news was bad.

Until the early thirties, families would pack boxes of clothing to send to their needy families in Russia. Earlier, money was sent to help them buy food and clothing, but that was being confiscated by officials, and probably postal workers. Clothing was getting through to them. Finally, there was no more correspondence and we knew that, either the mail was being censored or the relatives had been sent into exile or had all been killed.

When we think of that period, we are ever grateful to our parents for having the courage to leave Russia when they did and establish families here in our beloved country. We are glad that they sang and cried when they saw the "Lady" in New York harbor.

Chapter 8

PROCTOR

At that time, Proctor had about everything we needed except some articles of clothing. Lamb's General Store carried groceries, dry goods, clothing, shoes, hardware, and John Deere farm implements. In the early twenties, there was another grocery store (Pashby's), a lumberyard, blacksmith shop, garage, pool hall and grain elevator. The Proctor State Bank rounded out the business district. The bank was owned by William Strickland, who was also one of the early Proctor school teachers. There was also a third grocery store for a short time, across the street from Pashby's store, operated by the Eckleberger family. The barbershop was run by Frosty Correll.

The vault of the Proctor bank is still standing among the weeds. There was also a hotel standing just north of Lamb's store. It was first operated by the Bill Francis family and later by the Ralph Bagent family. Of course, every small town along the Union Pacific railroad had a passenger depot. The Proctor depot is now home of the Iliff Lions Club. If that building has not been re-sided, just beside the entrance door you may find a mark where a berserk longhorn steer chased the depot agent inside the building. His horns were too wide to get inside and one horn gouged the side of the building.

This was in the spring of 1920 after a severe blizzard. A rancher's cattle had drifted from their pastures onto the railroad tracks and one hundred sixty five head were killed by a freight train. The storm had lasted two days and the cattle, apparently a large herd, had broken through fences and drifted with the storm until they got to the railroad. The roadbed being high and free of snow, the cattle stopped there for relief from the belly deep drifts. Visibility was poor and the train crew did not see the cattle in time and ploughed right through the herd. The railroad company crews came along after the blizzard and killed all of the injured cattle and loaded them into rail cars for shipment to Denver for processing into animal food. This happened between Proctor and the Powell beet dump and cattle were wandering aimlessly in search of water and food.

Bert Davis was the depot agent and was outside of the depot doing snow cleanup work when the injured longhorn steer spotted him and took revenge. Davis got to the depot and made it inside the door just inches ahead of the steer. This was when the longhorn gouged the side of the building.

The Proctor school was in a building that had been moved from a location just north of what is now the Ceres feed lot. The school had been built there before there was even a town. When the town was established, the school was moved. Some of the teachers in that Proctor school were a Miss Miller, Mr. Strickland, Mr. B. R. Church, George Ashbrook, Alma Calvert, Lucille Reynolds, Nora McGuire, Clara Belle Davis, Ruth Stewart, Clara Stewart and others that may be found in the history archives in the Denver Historical Society building. The first manager of the lumberyard was Earl McCauley, then came a Mr. Jensen. Jim Heath built and operated the pool hall. Later, John Friend operated it. When I was too young to play pool, I went with the older boys and watched them play. Mr. Friend would give me ice cream cones and candy.

Howard and Lee Lamb ran the general store. Carl Hartzel had the first blacksmith shop and Paul Bartusik had it until it closed in the early thirties. Dewey Smith was the first depot agent I can remember. He was a big, strong man. I was with Dad one time when he went to pick up a shipment of paint that Grady Cheairs had ordered by rail. Dewey carried two five gallon pails of

the white lead paint, weighing about 12 pounds per gallon, and, without setting one down, he lifted them one-handed onto the back of the wagon.

After Carl Hartzel left Proctor, Shorty Pratt took over the garage. Proctor also had a dray and livery service, run by Louis Weisenberg. He was the father of Mrs. Jack (Kate) Schaffer. Kate weighed sugar beets at the Proctor dump as long as I can remember (until the old high dump was closed).

We lived about three miles from the Blue Ranch and from the Jesse Stewart ranch, also. Both places raised colts and mules. On a quiet morning, just after sunrise, we could hear their jacks bray. The jacks were used in breeding mares to create mules, a hybrid between a horse and a jackass. They are a very hardy animal and were widely used in farm work, especially in the south in cotton fields. There were even times when we could hear the sounds of Proctor from home-- the trip hammer pounding out plowshares, the blacksmith pounding on the anvil, and section hands pounding on the rails as they repaired the railroad tracks.

During the 1920's and early 1930's, we had gypsies and horse traders roam the country with their covered wagons. Generally, there were large families or several families and wagons traveling in caravans. They would pull into an area late in the afternoon and camp along a creek overnight. Sometimes they would stay overnight and sometimes for several days. They always had a bunch of horses trailing behind the caravan and would try to trade horses with farmers. We were always cautioned to stay away from them because they were said to be child-stealers who would sell the children along their way. I doubt they were guilty of this, but we dared not leave home while they were camped nearby, mainly because of their reputation for ransacking a farm or home and moving on.

There were always barn dances in the area on Saturday nights. One was held at the Turley farm southwest of Proctor on the south side of the river, another at the Clevenger farm about four miles north of Proctor, and yet another at the Orrin McKimm farm north of Proctor (now the Jack Scheaffer farm). We used to go to some of the dances on the sly because our parents religious beliefs had no room for anything like that. Card playing was also on the prohibited list, since face cards were supposed to represent the face of the devil. Later in life they mellowed and we were allowed to play cards.

Prohibition of liquor was in effect until 1932, so all through the 1920's there was a great deal of moonshining going on (illegal making of liquor). There were several in the Proctor area that gave law officers and revenueurs a hard time. John Barney, who had a family of several children and who had a real knowledge of the moonshine trade, was picked up periodically and served time in the state penitentiary. Shorty Pratt and Merle Stake were caught making whiskey and selling it. Shorty had a family and Merle did not, so he took the blame and served the time while Shorty continued to run his garage and make more whiskey.

One of the Barney girls caught her foot in the stirrup of her saddle and was dragged by her horse and badly injured. I remember Mother taking us to visit her and seeing her bruised face and arms. This happened while her father was in prison for bootlegging and our family helped the Barneys with food and clothing.

The barn dances were a good outlet for moonshine whiskey. In those days there were no radios in sheriff and police cars and there was a family of three brothers who farmed in the area but never raised enough to live on. We never could understand why the Roach family didn't have to work hard like we did. Turned out they had a thriving business supplying liquor to those who had

a need for it and did not make their own. They drove the biggest and fastest cars that were available--Willis Knight, Velie, Cadillac, or anything that could outrun the sheriff's cars. They operated between Colorado and Nebraska and were always being reported for their activity. But by the time the sheriff came from Sterling to Proctor they were over in Nebraska and out of jurisdiction of Colorado law. When they worked Nebraska, they would flee to Colorado. There was a still in the old Conrad pasture now owned by Albert and Rachel Schuppe. I believe I could still locate the spot, just a short distance from a running creek (they had to have water to cool the coils of their still). Sometime I may try to find the spot and see what is buried out there.

In our home, meals on different days of the week were sort of standard, like chicken noodle soup or pot roast on Sunday. On Saturday evening it was generally potato salad and sausage or a fruit soup (schnietz sup) made of dried fruit, apricots, raisins and dried prunes. On a Saturday night Fred and I got home late and decided to have a snack before going to bed. It was moonlight so we didn't bother to light a lamp. I went to the icebox and got the fixin's of a sandwich, but Fred decided to eat some leftover schnietzsup that Mother usually left in the kettle on the back of the warming closet of the coal range. Fred started eating soup from the kettle and said the soup didn't taste right, he tried a little more and decided something was wrong with it and quit. The next morning he asked Mother what she did to the soup. She asked, "Wass fuere sup, wir hat ess alle guessen und ich hattmein gescheur wasser nein geshiet," (What soup? We ate it all last night and I poured my dish water in the kettle to soak). That was good for a laugh for a longtime and, in fact, is still mentioned when we have family gatherings.

Besides being one of the best ever cooks and bread makers, Mother was a very compassionate person, with people as well as animals. She worked in the beet fields along with the rest of the family. She would leave the field about eleven o'clock and by the time we came in for lunch (we called it dinner then), she would have a good dinner on the table for us. Then while we rested for a short period, she would clear the table and be ready to go to the field with us. So it was in the evening. We would leave the field to do chores and Mother would get supper for us. I mentioned in an earlier chapter how she loved to cook and how she delighted in having a feast for the threshing crews when they came to our farm. With ten of us children in the family, you can imagine how much washing, ironing, and mending there was to do. I can recall winter afternoons, she would sit in the sun in the breakfast room window and darn socks and put patches on a dozen pairs of overalls and listen to "Betty and Bob" and "Ma Perkins" on the radio.

I had also mentioned earlier that she had planted the south quarter into corn with a one-row lister and four head of horses. Dad had set the lister depth for her and got her started planting, then he went to other jobs. It was hot and the lister pulled very hard causing the horses to sweat and tire out. She lifted the lister out of the ground a couple of notches, making it pull much easier, and she kept the horses moving along at a fast gate. She did not tell Dad about this, but with the moisture conditions the way they were at the time, the corn came up quicker than where she had been planting deeper. Until she told him what she had done, he couldn't figure out why the corn was such much nicer and taller on the side of the field where she had raised the lister.

She took time to hand feed little orphan kittens or puppies and nursed little runt pigs to grow up with the rest of the litters, feeding them with a teaspoon. She always had a home remedy for any illness that came along. We did not have an emergency room to go to when we had a bellyache and we didn't go to the doctor every time we had a little hurt. There were mustard plasters, boiled onion poultices, a piece of bacon or a raisin to put on a finger where a splinter had imbedded itself.

I was always kind of a croupy kid and would wake up during the night and unable to get my breath. Once when this happened I couldn't breathe very well and came up from the basement bedroom and stood in front of the folk's bed and shook them awake. I couldn't talk anymore. Mother rushed to the kitchen with me and gave me a teaspoonful of sugar and a drink of water and put me to bed on the davenport--and I went to sleep. She was nearly always ready for any emergency, but she never did use any of the skunk fat that Jake had rendered.

Our Mother was afraid of guns and did not like to have them in the house. We had a twelve-gauge shotgun and a twenty-two caliber rifle. The shotgun was used a lot in the winter for pheasant and duck hunting. The rifle was more for protection against coyotes and stray dogs invading the sheep yards. One evening the Zinns were at our house when I came in with the rifle. I had taken the cartridge out of the chamber, but left some in the magazine. Mr. Zinn wanted to see the gun and asked if it was loaded. I told him the barrel was empty and was about to tell him the magazine had some shells in it. But he took the gun from me, pumped it once and pulled the trigger. Result? One hole in the ceiling, two very shocked people, and the gun had to be kept in the garage from that time on.

Jake had heard that skunk oil was good for almost any ailment, from sore throats to arthritis. One Sunday afternoon after he had checked his traps and had several skunks in them he decided to render some skunk lard. He set up his operation in the basement and on the old coal range he rendered lard. You can imagine the smell and the problems he created when the folks came home Sunday evening. I don't recall the exact German words Mother used that evening.

When I was about seven or eight years old I went to the Reverend Ekhardt's place to play with their son Adolph who was my age. There was an old Emerson tractor setting there that had not been used for some time and we were playing on it, probably breaking sod or some other important play job. This was on the farm now owned by Gordon and Earline Schuppe. Adolph was on the seat of the tractor doing the "driving" while I decided to check the water level in the radiator. I opened the radiator cap and a swarm of hornets flew out and attacked us both. The tractor was setting right next to the Iliff ditch and it was full of water, luckily for us. We both jumped into the water but not until the hornets had stung us severely on the face and hands. We were like a couple of young pups, we learned one lesson and the next time we played somewhere else.

There were some unusual things during my growing up days around Proctor. John Friend, our big-hearted pool hall operator had a disagreement with one of his neighbors on the south side of the river, Ben Costigan. One hot summer afternoon, John said he was taking a nap in the shade of his shack when he heard a car come up the driveway. He recognized it as Ben's car and, thinking there would be trouble, went to his truck, got his high-powered rifle and shot Ben. When asked in court why he did it, John said he was afraid Ben was going to shoot him, so he shot first. John was sentenced to life in the Colorado penitentiary, but he walked away from the prison honor farm about three years later and was never seen again.

There were other murders in the area at about that same time. A Mrs. Willoughby, living between Proctor and Peetz, shot and killed her second husband. Dad served on the jury in that case. There was another murder on the south side of the river where a Mrs. Sturbaum and her two sons killed their stepfather and buried the body in a bin of millet. Some neighbors sensed that something was wrong and called the sheriff. When he arrived at the Sturbaum home, he asked for Mr. Sturbaum and was told that he had left several days ago and that his family had not heard from him. The sheriff went to the barn and found millet spilled out of a bin. He probed the millet and found the body.

There were things that happened that were not so gruesome. A Pentecostal group held revival meetings in the summertime in the neighborhood schoolhouses. After a hot, hard days work the boys would go swimming in the North Sterling irrigation ditch and then go to the revival meeting because that's where the girls were. Those preachers really preached fire and brimstone sermons. One evening we were sitting in the rear of the church when the preacher was laying it on hot and heavy. He took off his jacket, then his tie, and unbuttoned his shirt collar and said, "Look out you sinners, I'm coming after you now." And Bob McBride jumped out of the open window.

They held baptism services in the North Sterling ditch with total submersion. They packed those little schoolhouses and some people were left outside looking in and listening to the singing. They sang the old revival songs until the rafters shook. One evening they were singing a song to the tune of the Battle Hymn of the Republic. Some of us were standing outside the open window near the piano listening to the singing and playing. The words that the pianist was singing were not the same as those that the congregation was singing; she was singing, "The poor boys they are lonely, how they beckon me to come."

When we lived on the Vanack farm, a stray cat kept coming around and someone must have suggested doing something to the cat to discourage its presence. John and I caught it one day and tried to chop off its tail with a hatchet. The cat would not hold still so it got several tail injuries but left with its tail intact. A few days later, Conrad Amen told Dad that someone tried to de-tail his cat and did he know anything about it. Of course he didn't...we didn't tell him.

John found a lunch box with food in it one day and brought it home. It turned out to be Jake Amen's lunch who was working near by and had set it near a fence post for safe keeping. When Mother saw it she made John take it back to the place where he picked it up. I don't remember whether or not Jake knew it was missing.

One time when a calf died a short distance from the corrals, Dad came in from chores and said that there was a coyote eating on the dead calf. It was a clear moonlight night, so I grabbed the shotgun and ran out to shoot that coyote. I spotted it and took a shot. I didn't kill it, but it ran away howling. Turned out to be Dave Amen's German Shepherd.

Some other incidents that happened while we were growing up made our parents wonder how we ever did grow up. I went to Iliff High School for three years and one year to Crook High. We used to ride to school with Ellis and Arthur Smith. They drove around and picked up Ronald Amen, Alex Constance, and me in a Model T Ford. It was a touring car and in cold weather it was fitted with side curtains. We were bundled up with coats and quilts and still nearly froze. There was no anti-freeze for radiators, so we had to drain the radiator when we got to school and go to the town pump to fill the radiator before we drove home. The Iliff city water was so bad that Ellis wouldn't fill his radiator with it, so we used water from the town pump, as most of the people in Iliff did. We had to drink the city water in school or do without until we got home in the evening. The old cars didn't have a water pump to circulate the water, so it was heat expansion that forced the water from the radiator and around the cylinder walls. After filling the radiator we covered it with a blanket to get the engine warm. When the temperature was down around zero degrees, the radiator would freeze and we would have to cover it again to thaw it.

Sometimes we would get to school on time during the winter. The McGinley family lived a quarter mile south of the schoolhouse. Mrs. McGinley wanted to learn to drive their big Buick touring car. In those days there was not much traffic, you could drive from home to Iliff sometimes and not meet another car in ten miles. Mr. McGinley got the car headed for Iliff and

slowly eased out from behind the steering wheel and let Mrs. McGinley get behind the wheel. Everything went well until they got to Iliff. When they got to the main intersection where the town pump stood, they needed to make a left turn to get to the grocery store. Mrs. McGinley was headed straight ahead when Tom yelled at her, "Turn, turn, dammit turn." By that time she was nearly through the intersection, but she turned anyway and ran right through the bank window. I'm sure the banker, E.W. Balfour, with his starched white collar and toupee was excited for a bit.

While riding with Ronald Amen in the 1924 Dodge Brothers touring car, a fellow driving a 1926 Chevy roadster pulled out in front of us. With rear wheel brakes only and going about 40 miles an hour, we couldn't stop. We slid into the rear end of the Chevy pretty hard. All the time Ronald had his fist on the horn button. Mr. Crowely was really upset and chewed us out real good. He wanted to know why we didn't honk our horn. We were both too scared to talk and it didn't dawn on us until we were back on the road that Ronald had his hand on the horn all the time we were sliding into the car.

My Dad was not a good driver, but he drove fast. He had quite a few accidents and if others would not have looked out for him he probably would have had more. One time I was riding with him coming from Iliff when he failed to make a curve and went through an irrigation ditch. He had bought me a box of marshmallows and when we hit the ditch the old Studebaker really shook us up...and spilled the box of marshmallows all over the car. Neither of us was hurt, but it took a long time to gather up my candy. Did you ever try to brush dirt off of a box of loose marshmallows? In those days a kid didn't get a box of candy every time he went to town.

Another indication of Dad's driving reputation surfaced one time when we were driving cattle to the Powell stockyards to ship to market. The children at the Dillon school were outside playing and followed along side our horses and visited with us. One of them saw a car coming down the road in a cloud of dust and yelled to the others, "Let's get the hell out of here, here comes Pyle or Lebsack!" One day I was riding with Mr. Pyle in a 1941 Mercury through a hay field, getting ready to turn on some irrigation water. He was looking at me telling me something when we came to an irrigation ditch. He didn't see it and drove right through it with a bang bang--first the front, then the rear. He turned to me again and said, "I didn't see that bump," not even knowing he had gone through a ditch at about thirty miles an hour.

In 1931, Dodge came out with a six-cylinder car called the "Victory Six". It was built quite low and the selling pitch was that the center of gravity was so low that you could not roll it going around corners or over rough road. One afternoon, when I was in high school at Iliff, Paul Long, who was selling cars for Ray Smith Motor Company, picked up a couple of prospective buyers to demonstrate the new car. He came up the main street of Iliff about forty miles an hour, crossing the road from one barrow pit to the other. Just as he was bringing it from the barrow pit backup to the road it went into a skid and he rolled it right by the schoolyard.

Paul Long sold one of the new Dodges to Jesse Stewart and one to Conrad Schilling. The cars were identical and the two men lived within two miles of each other. One day both of them went to Sterling, and by coincidence, parked beside each other. There was just one difference in the cars: Mr. Schilling kept his spic and span, immaculately clean and Jesse Stewart never washed his in the life of the car. Mr. Stewart was a huge man and when he got into his car he grabbed the back of the front seat cushion with his right hand to pull himself into the car. There was a large tear in the cushion from that. After shopping Jesse was the first back to the cars. Nobody removed the keys from the ignition in those days, so he got into his car and drove home. When Mr. Schilling came to his car he noticed something wrong. HIS Dodge was gone. He called the police and reported the theft of his car, but the police insisted that the car of his description was

parked right where he had left it. Well, Jesse had taken the wrong car and drove it back to Proctor without noticing anything wrong. Mr. Schilling was so upset that he made Jesse bring his car back to Sterling and pick up his own "Victory Six."

Dad was accustomed to driving his heavy Chrysler with hydraulic brakes and one time he drove Fred's 1927 Chevy coupe, with two-wheel mechanical brakes, into the yard too fast. When he applied the brakes the little Chevy fishtailed back and forth and slid right through the garage. He got out of the car and asked Fred, "Why don't you fix your brakes? I might add that Fred kept everything in good condition and had good brakes.

A short time ago, Edward Korbe asked what kind of car Dad drove in those days. It was a black touring car, not a Ford. It could be only one car, the 1923 Dodge black touring. Korbe was a young boy at the time and he and other boys were on the front street in Iliff when Dad, coming from Sterling had somebody pull out in front of him from Iliff's main street. To avoid hitting the other car, he went through the barrow-pit across the river road and out on the highway without slowing much and headed east toward Proctor without stopping to see if there was any damage. Still another time, he was parked in front of Fredrigill's John Deere store, near the post office with the International truck. He was going to back out of his parking place and instead of putting the truck in reverse, he got it in low gear. When he looked back and let out the clutch, the truck lunged forward, hit a lamp post and knocked the large globe from the pole to the ground, shattering the glass. According to Mr. Fredrigill, he sat there momentarily, looking at the damage, put the truck in reverse, backed out and drove away.

When we were living on the north place, the first time, when Lyle was very small, I was plowing with the Oliver "80" and Grandpa came out at noon to relieve me and plow during my lunch hour. After I had lunch and came back to the field to resume plowing, Dad was just coming to the end of the field. When he stopped the tractor, he was turning and had the tractor setting at right angle to the plow. When he took the tractor out of gear, he accidentally pushed the lever too far forward and put it in reverse. He did it so rapidly, kicking it out of gear and stepping off of the tractor that when it went it went into reverse, he had already stepped clear of the tractor, just in time to look back and see the Oliver back up and with the lugged wheels climb over the plow and upset the tractor. He stood there and looked at it with the top wheel going round and round and said, "Now how did that happen?"

Jonas Schledwitz lived not too far from us and had a Model T Ford and a large family. He traded the Ford for a big Nash sedan, but it was too long for the garage, so he cut a slot in the front of the garage so the front bumper went through. That allowed them to close the back garage door. When farmers stacked hay they used steel pegs made of old Ford axles to hold the stacker in place. Jonas' little kids stuck several of these pegs through the front bumper and left them there. When Jonas and his wife got into the car, Mrs. Schledwitz was behind the wheel. She killed the engine several times trying to back up, so Jonas said, "Geb die Nash mer gas, Mama," (Give the Nash more gas, Mama). She did just that and down came the front of the garage on top of the new Nash.

Uncle Fred Klein parked his Maxwell touring car near a building in the afternoon shade. He had a bunch of goats, little ones and big ones. Near this shed were two smaller sheds. The goats jumped on top of the smallest shed, then to the next, and on to the larger shed. One of the billy goats looked over the edge of the roof of the building and jumped. He went right through the canvas top and all of the others jumped right after him. Before Uncle Fred could stop them they had all gotten up on the building and did it all over again. He stood there looking at his almost new Maxwell and the shredded top and said, "Son of a gun." I expected more.

Proctor used to have a baseball team, as did Crook, Fleming, Haxtun, Peetz, Iliff, Snyder and nearly all small towns. These were made up most of young farm boys and men. Some of the games were quite exciting and many did not last nine innings. Disagreements often turned into fistfights and then the game broke up. Some of these men are now in their seventies and eighties and if the subject came up, I'm sure it would still spark an argument over whether the man was safe.

In the Iliff school we had a very strict principal--Mr. Ralph Zeltman, red-haired and not a smile in a carload. There were children taken from the playground in grade school nearly every day for punishment. Most of the kids were not repeat offenders, because this man believed in corporal punishment. There were two little tow-headed boys from a German family who couldn't speak English very well. They were also mischievous and got into fights regularly. One noon hour, Mr. Zeltman pulled one of them off of another boy and wanted him to go to the office with him, but the little fellow chose not to go. So the principal picked him up under his arm and started upstairs to the office. The other little brother said, "Don't worry Joseph, he can't do you nuthin," so the principal picked up him up too, one under each arm. The one said, "Bite him on the hand Joe, I'll bite him on this side." And they did.

Then there was Willis Hubbard, who got his lip cut and some teeth knocked in by a baseball bat that slipped out of another boy's hand while playing baseball. He was taken to the Iliff drug store to Dr. H.W. Hough. He did not receive proper treatment and had a hairlip the rest of his life.

One cold winter morning, Fred and I were trying to start the old Fordson tractor to grind feed. It was almost a necessity in the winter to keep a team of horses in the barn to pull the cars, trucks, and tractors to get them started. The little six-volt electrical systems just couldn't turn the motor fast enough to get it started. All vehicles were equipped with a hand crank but in those days we only had one grade of oil--heavy. You could barely turn the motor over with the crank when it was cold. That morning we decided to put a hotshot battery on the old Fordson magneto to help it along. Fred, being the brains of the outfit held the terminals to the magneto while I got the job of cranking. He said, "now crank" and I pushed down on the crank. It must have been a brand new battery because the Fordson kicked back and threw me into the air so high that I saw the barn and windmill go around twice.

When I landed on the frozen ground and pulled myself together, Fred was laughing so hard he could hardly talk. I couldn't find my cap. Fred finally found it stuck between the spokes of the rear tractor wheel. Then I felt something cold on my stomach. The crank had caught my coveralls, overalls, and winter underwear and ripped them from one side of my hips to the other. I went to the house to change clothes and get a little sympathy. When my mother saw me she said, "Was hast du dan wieder getann?" (What did you do again?) I don't remember ever trying to crank that old tractor again with the help of a booster battery.

Mentioning cold weather, I'm sure you've heard of the "tongue on the pump handle." I was one of the skeptics, not believing what the older boys told me. I touched my tongue to the pump handle on a very cold morning when we lived on the north place. I was about six years old and I left a patch of white skin on the cold handle. Take my word for it, it was painful. You don't realize how much you use your tongue until you lose a patch of skin about the size of a dime.

One of the few times I was fortunate enough to get to go to Sterling on a shopping trip was one Saturday before Christmas to buy winter clothes for school. I remember getting a brown mackinaw coat and a stocking cap. I don't know how Dad trusted the old 1923 Dodge Brothers

car to drive home after dark, but we stayed in town quite late. While Dad was in the barbershop, I fell asleep. When he left the shop, I guess he thought I was following him. When I awoke and found him gone, I took out after him, not knowing where I was going. I was crying and some people walked up and down Main Street with me trying to find my family. When I spotted them across the street I jerked away from the helpful people and ran across the street to join my family, glad that I wasn't being left in Sterling. Maybe I was thinking of the story of the family who took their little boy to summer camp and then moved to a new home far away.

In the spring of one year, John stayed home from school to float (level) some ground getting it ready for planting. That evening, after school Mother sent me out to the field with drinking water and a sandwich. After John had finished his snack, I rode around with him on the float, which was being pulled by four head of horses. The float was made of two inch by twelve inch planks with a cross blade in the front, one in the middle, and one in the rear with a walking plank from front to rear. I guess I was feeling frisky or foolish and was jumping off the plank to the ground and back up on the plank. I got clumsy, lost my footing and the center blade caught my heel and rolled over me. Before I could get up, the rear blade caught me and I went under it too. All the time John was busy with his horses and did not see what happened until he turned his horses around and came back towards me. That night when I undressed for bed I found that both of my long black sox were torn off above my shoes. I was going to throw the sox away and not tell Mother what happened, but she knew how many pairs I had, so I had to explain.

I tried something new one day and it was something that just wasn't done in our family until later when Jake got to doing it. This was not done by design, rather I'd like to think I was a victim of circumstances. I was going out to rake hay one afternoon when I was about twelve years old. It was after lunch and the beet labor went out ahead of me. Two of the boys chewed and one of them lost a brand new, still wrapped, plug of Climax chewing tobacco on the road. I picked it up, intending to return it to its owner. As the afternoon went on, I gave a lot of thought to this plug of chewing tobacco in my pocket. As it turned out, I didn't give it enough thought. I finally gave in to temptation and took a big chew of tobacco and was really raking hay and spitting like a seasoned tobacco chawer. Soon things were changing. I was raking on level ground but it seemed like I was raking on a hillside. Then my vision got blurred. Well, I got rid of the chew in my mouth and threw the plug of tobacco away, but it was too late and the damage was done. By then it was quitting time, so I decided to go home. I tied my team of horses to a fence post and walked home. When I got home they asked why I didn't bring the team home. I said I didn't know, but it was because I wasn't thinking clearly. I went straight to the basement and went to bed. The bathroom was just across the hall! I didn't help do chores nor did I eat any supper. Nobody ever asked what made me sick. I wonder if my color might have had something to do with it.

Brother John had a similar experience when he and a friend got a hold of some "Bulldog Twist". The episode was similar to my hay raking experience. I guess my memory was short because on the last day of school when I was a sophomore, I smoked a Red Dot cigar on a picnic in Chimney Canyon. I did not have a very good time that day either, and I couldn't go home.

I went to the pasture one day on a saddle horse that I had broken but had not ridden much. The horse had never been roped from, but that should not have been a problem because I couldn't rope anyway. When I checked the cattle, I found that a calf had stepped into a tin can and had a sore foot. I roped the calf, which in itself was a surprise, but the real surprise came when the rope tightened up on the saddle horn and started pulling on the colt. What happened for a few seconds after that I could never make anyone believe. I didn't have any witnesses, so I won't try to

explain. If someone had been there with a movie camera this could have been a best seller as a western comedy.

On a Sunday afternoon when the folks went to prayer meeting, we found a pair of Mother's high lace shoes and put them on a calf. Then we could not catch the calf to remove the shoes. We didn't know that the folks took prayer meeting so seriously.

One evening at a barn dance at the Turley farm, a group of us went out during intermission to the windmill for a cool drink of water. There was some clowning around, jumping up and grabbing a cross board and chinning ourselves or climbing up the standpipe of the pump. One of the fellows, Lionel Scoucie, bet that he could hang from the first cross board by his toes. Somebody took his bet and he almost made it, but the cross board broke and Lionel landed on his head. That's when panic set in--we all thought he was dead. One cooler head prevailed and got a pail of water from the horse tank and splashed it in his face. He got up rubbing his head and wanting to know where he was.

On another occasion, there was a dance at the old pool hall building in Proctor. It had rained for a couple of days and without pavement or even gravel, the yard was a mud bog. There had been a lot of drinking and some of the fellows were showing it. A fight started inside and then moved out into the mud. It was quite a mess, but everybody went back inside and resumed dancing. When the dance broke up and people started leaving the yard, nearly everybody had trouble getting out because of the mud. One fellow got into his 1928 Chevy and backed up several times, but couldn't make it. He finally got out to survey the situation and found an intoxicated man lying behind his car in the muddy tracks and he had been trying to back over his head, but kept spinning his wheels. The mud probably saved the man's life, but he had bruises on his cheek and forehead for a long time.

There were some interesting happenings not related to anything else in this writing. One time while I was plowing south of the house, a pheasant rooster came running up the plowed furrow toward the tractor. I thought it was odd that this bird came so close to me. When he got nearly to the tractor, he turned and ran to the fence only about fifty feet away. At that time, a large hawk zoomed down and sent the pheasant rolling. The pheasant got up and ran to the barbed wire fence, squatting directly under the wire. The hawk made another pass and hit the barbed wire. The pheasant then flew away and the hawk was in a heap under the fence. I went over to see what happened to the diving bird, but when I got there he got to his feet slowly and flew a few feet at a time until he recovered from his effort to grab a fast lunch.

If you have ever watched birds sitting on a barbed wire fence, especially lark buntings, you will notice that they always sit on the second wire, never on the top. This is survival instinct. Once when plowing on the place where Ken Amen now lives, I was nearly finished and had a small patch to plow when a badger came out of the weeds and started across the plowed ground. Here is where I almost made a bad mistake. I grabbed a ball pein hammer and started out after the badger. I threw the hammer several times, but missed and the badger kept running. The next time, I aimed well and hit the silvery-furred animal, who then turned on me and got between me and the tractor and began chasing me, making sure that he stayed between me and my safety. I had to make a long half circle to get around him and get back to the tractor. The determined animal would not stop, he chased me clear back to the machine. I was glad it was not another fifty feet. When I reached the tractor, he lumbered off and I had to wait until he got quite a distance before I got brave enough to go back and find my hammer.

In the spring of the year, we always had to put the irrigation ditch from the North Sterling Reservoir ditch to the farm in condition. New cement checks had to be put in to stop washing and erosion of the ditch banks and weeds and grass had to be burned out of the ditch. Once we were building the cement checks on a very warm, humid day. We had just finished the last one and were cleaning our equipment. We hauled water in gasoline barrels for use in mixing concrete and while emptying the barrels we could smell gasoline. Denzel Pyle said, "I wonder if there's enough gasoline in that water to burn?" He struck a match and did not even get a chance to throw it before the explosion. With the high humidity and no wind, it apparently created a sort of vacuum around us. We were both knocked to the ground by the concussion, but we were lucky. The explosion had consumed all of the gasoline that had floated on the water and there was no fire. Had there been fire this history would probably have ended right there.

There were some lightning incidents or scares that I recall. One was when Fred was painting the house on the home place. He was on a ladder on the west end of the house painting up in the peak of the roof. A storm was coming up and we were scurrying around trying to get the old hens with their baby chicks undercover. Dad had asked Fred to come down because the storm was very close, but Fred said he just had a little more to do. About then a bolt of lightning hit out in the yard not too far from the base of the ladder. Fred came down the ladder almost on a run and never spilled a drop of paint or his paintbrush.

Another time, I was helping Jake Amen irrigate corn. It was right after grain cutting and there were shocks of barley between the corn field and my truck. It began raining and hailing, so I started running to the truck, but the hail was coming down so hard that I crawled into the center of a barley shock to wait until the storm passed over. Lightning struck a barley shock several shocks away from me and set it on fire. I got out of the shock of grain and headed for the truck. I didn't know which shock was next and I wasn't going to stay and find out.

One Sunday afternoon we had some unexpected guests, a family of six or seven--the Con Helzer's--and Mother did not have enough of something in the house to finish the evening meal. This was unusual because she could squeeze food out of the pantry walls. She sent me to Proctor to Lamb's store and called Mr. Lamb to meet me there to get the groceries. I took the old Model T truck and started my errand. It had an auxiliary transmission to give it more power, but when shifting gears one had to be very quick, because if you missed the gear there were no brakes and no way of stopping the truck except to coast to a stop. On my way home, going up a hill, I tried to shift gears and missed. I tried to hold the truck in the road going down the hill backwards. Crossing two bridges while rolling backwards was kind of tricky but I made it. However, after crossing the last bridge I lost control and the front wheels cramped and blew out a front tire. I was in a predicament--Mother was waiting for groceries and I had a flat tire with no spare. In those days not many cars had spare tires, just a tire tool, a jack, and a can of tire patching. I had none of those. I walked back to Proctor, a little over a mile, and got Shorty Pratt, the garage owner, to get me an inner tube and take me back out to the truck. I got the tire fixed and drove home, but by then it was dark. I was scared of what was in store for me.

We had two bachelor neighbors living one quarter mile north of the home place, George and Ora Rogers. They farmed a quarter of dryland and worked for farmers in the area. Ora was helping us irrigate and the field of oats which he was working in was very tall and the weather was very hot and humid. When he came in for lunch his shirt was soaked with sweat. I asked him if it was kind of warm out there in the tall oats. His answer, "If it's any hotter in hell than out there I better not go there because I won't be able to stand it." They wore their longjohns all summer and until they were worn out. Once when we were hauling hay I stopped to pick them up to help me. Ora

came out to the truck and said, "We'll have to wait for George, he's in the can." After waiting awhile, Ora called out, "Hey George, cut it off in a soft place, we got to haul hay."

We used to go swimming in the North Sterling irrigation canal. Swimming suits were not the vogue out in the country, so we went swimming in the buff. We had a neighbor who lived about a half mile from our favorite spot who complained about our naked swimming. One Sunday afternoon when we were swimming he gathered up his two daughters and about a half dozen more girls and dropped them off where we were swimming. They sat on the ditch bank where our clothes were and kept us in the cold water for about an hour. The next day the sheriff called Mr. Pyle and told him his sons and the Lebsack boys would have to quit swimming in the nude. We kept up our recreation and nobody ever said anything further.

Before combines came into use we always had a lot of straw from threshing small grains. I always liked to haul straw in winter when there was snow on the ground and the lambs and cattle needed bedding. The lambs had such fun running around the corral and over the piles of straw that we unloaded. There was always that in mind, though the next summer before fall plowing, that straw all had to be hauled out to the field in the form of manure. It took a fork and a strong back. It bothered me so much that I built the first tractor-operated manure loader in the country. The job was much easier after that.

Another unpleasant job was the weekly chore of cleaning the chicken house. Sometimes when it was very cold, we had to do the job with the hens locked in the barn. The squawking, flying hens stirred up so much dust, flying feathers, and lint that it was almost impossible to breathe. Then in summer, we sometimes had to clean the hen house thoroughly and spray for lice and mites. I itched and felt like they were still on me long after I had my bath. When I complained Mother would say, "Dass mussen mir tuen, geh nur and tuess and schwei schie!"--"It has to be done, so go do it and be quiet."

Chapter 9

BUYING CARS AND TRUCKS

I recall the first automobile that Dad bought. He went to Sterling with Uncle Dave and bought a brand new Model T Ford from A.M. Scully Motor Company for \$495.00. That was in 1921 and like just about all cars of that time, it was black. The only one I can remember that wasn't was Otto Conrad's Jackson. It was a fire engine red with a beige top, styled a little like the Buick Riviera of the eighties, except it was a canvas top convertible. The Ford was equipped with side curtains, electric lights, and a starter (those were options). Just a year or so before, cars were still being built with carbide lights. When darkness came, you had to turn on the carbide gas and light the headlamps with a match. You can imagine how much light the open flickering red flame gave off. Top speed was around twenty-five miles per hour, so we didn't need bright headlamps.

In 1923, the Model T was traded in for a new Dodge Brothers touring car. This one was driven until 1926, then traded for a Studebaker touring car with a steel hardtop. This was also the first car we had with balloon tires. Before that the tires were high pressure, carrying sixty to seventy pounds per square inch. The new balloons carried about thirty-five pounds and gave a much softer ride. This car was driven until 1930 and was traded for a Chrysler sedan at Litch Brothers garage. This was the first sedan we owned with glass windows that could be rolled up and down, and the first with hydraulic brakes. Before this all brakes were mechanical and had to be adjusted by setting each wheel. As a result, most cars slid to one side or the other when you applied the brakes

Uncle Dave Lebsack, who was living with us part time bought a 1925 Overland touring car and my brother Jake had a 1925 Chevy coupe and later a 1927 Durant two-door sedan. Cars had exhaust mufflers, but young fellows who owned a car liked noisy exhaust systems, like the glass packs of today. Jake put a cut-out on his Durant--a lever controlled device that opened the head pipe just before the muffler. That was loud! On a quiet evening, we could hear Jake leave Proctor and could tell exactly which corner he was slowing up for and when he accelerated.

Hard times hit in 1929 and the family Chrysler was driven until 1936. It had over one hundred thirty thousand miles on it. The gasoline and oil consumption by that time were about equal. In 1936, it was traded for a Plymouth sedan, but it was in an accident and Dad bought a new Dodge in 1937. I was with Dad when he bought this car and the price was a whopping \$1500.00. I remember the salesman, Bud Thompson, agreeing with Dad that this was a lot of money. Bud said, "You know, Jake, they're going to get these cars up to \$2500.00 and Ray Smith, who owned the dealership, said, "Who in the hell is going to buy them?"

Our first truck was a 1922 Model T Ford one-ton. We used it to haul 60 bushels of wheat and up to two tons of beets. I recall one time Dad and Fred were hauling beets and Dad turned to Fred and said, "Sehst du, das dink schaaft nicht," (Look the horn doesn't work). While he was looking at Fred, he got too close to the side of the road and upset the truck with its load of beets into the barrow-pit. We then got a 1926 Chevy, which was a little larger than the Ford, and we could haul about three tons of beets on it. Everytime we put on more than three tons, we broke an axle, so Dad bought axles in numbers.

In 1929, a new Fargo truck was bought to replace the Chevy. This truck was built by Dodge in its Canadian factory and was identical to the Dodge. I don't know why they were imported from Canada. It was also rated as a one-ton truck, but hauled three to four tons and ran around sixty

miles per hour empty. This was too fast for the graveled roads we had at the time. Jake also had a Fargo and one day he and I were going to Ovid to get some dried beet pulp. John and Fred had the other truck. At the little town of Red Lion, Jake didn't make the curve in the road and rolled the Fargo. The truck had a wooden cab and when it rolled I was left sitting in the middle of the road on the inverted top and the rest of the truck was lying in the barrow pit. I had a gash on the top of my head. Jake was unhurt. When Fred and John came back with their load and found the wrecked truck with nobody around they had bit of a scare. Jake and I caught a ride back to Proctor from some Sedgwick people.

Our last truck, while I was living at home, was a 1936 International. This was a longer wheel base truck and hauled up to seven tons. This was also our first truck with dual rear wheels. Hauling beets with it was quite different from when we used small trucks. Two men could make seven trips a day to the dump, dumping about three loads and shoveling the rest onto the storage pile. In one day, Sid Davis and I hauled fifty-five tons, which was a record at that time, and we were worn out! The beet pile was to be eight feet high, quite high to throw heavy beets, so we went to the pile grounds after dark the first evening the leveling poles were brought out, and cut off one foot. This helped us quite a bit when unloading beets.

Our first tractor after the Fordson was a Hart-Parr, a large, clumsy, two cylinder, cross-mounted-motor tractor. It was a two-plow tractor about the same as the John Deere two cylinder. After the Hart-Parr came the Oliver 80 which is in the picture section with the power manure loader on it. Then the Oliver 88, which was several horse power larger and the Oliver 70 which was a little smaller and used for cultivating. These were toys compared to the new tractors that deliver up to 400 horsepower.

The first tractor we bought after we were married was an Oliver 70 on rubber tires for \$1140.00. The same tractor now would be around twenty-five to thirty-thousand dollars. The large four-wheel drive tractors cost over \$100,000.00. These prices along with inflated prices of farm land and the willingness of banks and loan companies to make loans during the late 1970's and early 1980's spelled doom for many farmers.

Chapter 10

RECREATION

Proctor was the nearest town to the farm, and with transportation as it was we didn't venture too far from home. The only recreation we had was what we made. In the spring and summer we were generally so busy there wasn't much time for play. On Sunday, we often got together with the neighbors and played baseball, horseshoes, raced our horses or whatever we could think of. Winter sports were mostly ice skating, sledding or playing cards (on the sly).

One very cold New Year's Day, in 1927 or 1928, several of us rode our horses to the Proctor river bridge, put on our skates and skated towards Iliff. The river was frozen solid, there was almost no snow, and skating was perfect. We had such a good time that we lost track of time and got almost to Iliff. By the time we got back to our horses it was nearly dark and the temperature was below zero. It was late when we got home. We missed the milking and the other chores. Dad and the girls had done all that, including feeding the livestock. It was so quiet at supper that I thought there would be an explosion. There wasn't. I waited for several days for it to happen. It must have been a lesson in psychology, and it worked. Fred and I were always around at chore time after that.

We sometimes hooked skunks out from under abandoned buildings and tried to dig out badgers. However, their powerful claws kept them ahead of us, digging much faster than we could. One time we found a badger's den and decided to drown him out. We loaded some fifty-gallon barrels on the old Chevy truck and filled them with water and headed for the den. We found that we couldn't drown them out either. Badgers are survivalists, the burroughs are dug fairly deep, then they flatten out and come back up near the surface. So we were pouring water in the hole, it was standing in the level part of the burrough while the badgers sat beyond the water, high and dry.

Duck and pheasant hunting were favorite winter sports. We used to go out in winter after a snowstorm at night with one of us driving the car and two sitting on the front fenders with shotguns, shooting rabbits. Shotgun shells were fifty cents a box and we shot a lot of rabbits, for which we got a dime a piece. In the early thirties, we had rabbit drives to thin out the rabbit population to keep them from eating up the newly planted crops. They were so thick at times that they would get around a stack of green third cutting alfalfa and eat their way several feet into the stack. In the drives, hundreds of people came from surrounding towns in the area to take part. Men with shotguns were hauled around in trucks to surround a section of farmland and would work towards the center from all sides. When they came together at the center the rabbits were so thick we had to let them out of the circle and shoot to the outside to keep from shooting hunters. Rabbits were killed by the truckloads; an occasional coyote was killed; and lots of pheasants. Pheasants were also thick enough to be a nuisance by pulling up tiny sugar beets and corn plants.

There were no game wardens in our area at the time, so we went hunting for ducks and pheasants when we needed them for food. We had a neighbor living where the Gordon Schuppes now live who was rumored to be a game warden. One time John and I went hunting after a snowstorm and had quite a few pheasants. We saw this fellow get on his horse and head toward us. We headed across country on foot, going through fences that he could not cross with his horse. He chased us for awhile, but finally gave up. If he had been a game warden and had caught us, we would have had to go to jail, because we didn't have the money to pay the fine that over a dozen pheasants would have cost us.

One time when we lived on the Cheairs farm at Iliff, Tom Monroe and I went pheasant hunting, legally we thought. In the past the season always opened at seven in the morning, so this particular Saturday morning we went out and got our limit in about an hour. As we were coming through Iliff, we stopped at Zink's Garage for a Pepsi and lifted the trunk lid of the car to show off our birds. There were some hunters from Denver at the garage. They admired the birds, but one of them said, "The season doesn't open until twelve noon." We lost no time getting out of Iliff and getting those birds home.

Many of you remember Harry Sturbaum. In 1953, Harry, George Debus and I went deer hunting in the Kaycee, Wyoming, area. We left home at two o'clock in the morning and got to Kaycee that afternoon. We pitched our tent and got all the camping gear set up, then went out to some bluffs and sighted in our rifles so we would be ready to go at daybreak. I was fortunate. I got my deer in a hay field just about a half mile from the camp. I hauled it in to camp, hung it in a shed and dressed it. Harry was quite heavy and while I was dressing the deer, Harry came running and puffing. He could hardly talk. This was his first deer hunting trip and he had shot a deer, but wanted me to come with the pickup to haul it into camp. We drove to the spot where he shot it, but it was an antelope and antelope season had ended several days before. When I told him that it was not a deer, but an antelope, panic set in. We loaded it into the pickup and headed for the rancher's barn. We dressed it then went to find the rancher to tell him what had happened. It was no problem. The antelope was quickly quartered, cut up and wrapped and put into the rancher's deep freeze. I don't think Harry ever lived that one down.

County Fairs in many communities go back as far as agriculture. In Logan County there were several community fairs held before the Logan County Fair was instituted. The Peetz community held its annual fair or "Harvest Festival" as early as 1914. Early records make mention of "Corn Shows" in Sterling and also Crook, Peetz, Fleming, and Haxtun every fall. Haxtun and Fleming still have their fall "Harvest Festival" complete with rodeos, games, etc.

The first Logan County Fair was held in the then "new" fair grounds where the Fair Shopping Center is now located. That facility was used until the late fifties when the new fair grounds were built at the northwest edge of Sterling. The first Fair was held in 1919. At that time, the county extension agent was in charge of the fair with the help of his appointed committees.

Our first county agent was James H. Morrison. I don't remember how long Mr. Morrison served as county agent, but I can remember him, so he must have been there at least until about 1921 or 1922. Dad spoke very highly of him. I can remember that he found some spring wheat for Dad to plant. Dad and I took a team and wagon and drove to Sterling one day to get the seed wheat out of a Great Western Sugar Company bin. I can remember the excitement of getting to go with Dad, and I can also remember the length of the trip. We left early in the morning and returned late at night.

The fair grounds were equipped with a large round livestock pavilion, a poultry building, swine building, and a merchants building where arts and crafts along with bakery goods and clothing were exhibited. I can remember the beautiful white-faced cattle and dairy cattle that were shown. The hog barn did not hold that fascination for me--it smelled. The draft horse show was huge at that time, since all farmers worked with horses and a few specialized in raising draft horses. Clarence Day of the Fleming area had the huge percherons and the Reinharts and A. G. Harris had the sorrel Belgians. They were shown in halter classes as well as two and four horse hitches. Draft horse pulling contests were a great attraction and filled the grandstand. Horse racing and rodeos and the midway carnival rounded out the three-day fair. Later 4-H and FFA livestock

created the Junior Livestock Show and the open shows were gradually phased out. Crops were also a big attraction--beets, corn, potatoes, and garden produce attracted many exhibitors.

Farmers picnics were very similar to the Fairs and Fourth of July celebrations. Farmers picnics were held sometime in June, early enough so as not to interfere with the Fourth of July celebration. At that time, agriculture was the total industry in Logan County and everyone depended on it for a livelihood. The Sterling merchants put on the Farmers picnic as free entertainment for all of the county. It was very similar to the fairs, with a free barbeque at noon. Trying to remember the size of the crowds, I would estimate the number at two to three thousand. When they called for people to line up for lunch, the crowd filled the midway. The entertainment consisted of free midway rides, horse racing, rodeos, parade, automobile show, farm equipment show and everything that the merchants could bring to the fairgrounds to exhibit. This was at a time when farmers did not come to Sterling very often, some once a week, others only once a month. So the merchants were prepared to show everything they had with the hopes of selling a farmer a piece of farm equipment or a new car. I remember Dad buying a McCormick-Deering mower from Logan County Implement Company which handled several kinds of equipment. These picnics lasted through several summers, probably from 1923 through 1925 or 1926.

One time Dad dropped Lydia and me off at the fair grounds and went to do some business with Grady Cheairs, our landlord. Dad gave us a dollar for entertainment and our lunch. Keep in mind that ice cream cones and soda pop were a nickel each and hamburgers were the same. However, there were vendors roaming the grounds selling unsuspecting youngsters little birds on the end of bamboo sticks that whistled and sang when you waved them in the wind. We did not notice that the vendor was doing the whistling while he waved the little birds around. When lunch time came the crowd was so large that we were too scared and timid to get in line, so we each got a hamburger and ice cream cone and that was the end of our money. We were then getting scared of having been left in Sterling and we walked for what seemed like hours before Dad finally showed up to take us home. We were ready.

Chapter 11

THE CRASH OF '29

The crash of the stock market in 1929 not only devastated Wall Street, but agriculture and other industries. Farm prices dropped to new lows. Hogs sold for two dollars a hundred and cattle about the same. Wheat went down to twenty cents a bushel. Dad and I took a load of hogs to the Denver stockyards and sold them for three dollars fifty cents a hundred pounds. We drove north of Denver on Washington Street to the Lafayette area where there were a lot of soft coal mines and loaded three tons of coal. The hog check was not enough to pay for the coal, so we had to dig into our pockets to make up the balance.

The two quarters of land that Dad had bought from the Cheairs Company in 1927, with a substantial down payment and set up on an annual payment basis was at stake. In 1929 an early October snow storm was the beginning of winter and an early freeze. Many acres of sugar beets and potatoes were never harvested. We lost eighty acres of potatoes and forty acres of sugar beets. Besides the crop losses, we had two thousand head of lambs in the feed lot and two hundred head of steers. We lost ten dollars per head on the lambs and about forty dollars on the steers.

Most of the fat cattle and sheep were shipped to Omaha or Chicago, hogs were shipped to Omaha or trucked to Denver. Dad went to Omaha with the last of the fat cattle and when he returned on the Columbine (the steam powered passenger train that ran between Omaha and Denver) he did not call home for someone to come after him. Instead he walked the four miles home from Proctor. He said he had to have time to think--to think about the events that led to the financial condition he was in. A cattle feeder from Loveland had also shipped some cattle to market at the same time and was so despondent he did not go back home. He committed suicide rather than face what was in store for him at home.

When the next land payment was due there was no money. There was no money to plant a new crop either. Dad went to Grady Cheairs with the sad news and offered the land back. However, with the economy the way it was, nobody wanted the land and the Company did not take it back. Instead, Grady had enough compassion to forego land payments and interest on the principal of the loan and asked Dad to pay the taxes and make the payments when the situation got better. So for three or four years we paid taxes only and then picked up where we left off. So we were greatly indebted to Grady for helping us save the farm. With this arrangement, George Gribble of Security State Bank saw fit to extend more operational credit for farming and we were given a chance to redeem the farms.

Not only was the economy bad, but the drought of the thirties came along at the same time. Dryland farmers raised almost nothing for a few years. What little they raised they could not sell. On the irrigated farms, the water shortage was so acute that some years only about half of the land was irrigated. The rest was put into feed crops that produced little, many times not paying for the seed. Most farming was done with horses, so we did not have the farming expenses we have now (the eighties).

In the late thirties, more farmers were buying tractors and less was being done with horses. Gasoline prices were from fifteen to eighteen cents a gallon, and distillate, now called diesel, cost from seven to ten cents a gallon.

It was also in 1929, when with a full reservoir of water in the North Sterling, we had a rainstorm in early May and a strong northwest wind that lasted three days. The reservoir was bank full, higher than it had ever been and beyond the capacity that the state engineer normally would allow. The strong northwest wind was splashing waves over the dam and the continuous pounding of the waves was eroding the dam to the point of endangerment. If this weather continued and the dam would break, we would have lost a summer's water supply. Worse yet the water impounded behind the dam would have flooded the valley below, including the towns of Padroni, Iliff, Proctor and Crook and taking many farms in the valley with it. Farmers and townsmen were called to duty. High schools were closed so the students could help with hauling rock and filling sandbags to shore up the dam. This went on for two days and nights without letup. I was not old enough to help, but can remember how tired Dad and all of the neighbors and high school boys were by the time the wind and rain stopped.

I recall our brother-in-law, Ted Dobler, telling about livestock sales where feeder pigs were brought into the sale barn to be sold. The farmer had no more feed and couldn't buy any. The auctioneer couldn't get a bid, so the farmer just opened the tailgate of his trailer and turned them loose on the prairie at the edge of Burlington.

Those were also the days of the dust bowl, when the high winds carried the red Oklahoma dirt into Colorado and Nebraska. I remember getting up some mornings when we had not had wind and seeing the red Oklahoma dirt settled over the yard and buildings after floating in on the winds aloft.

In the southeastern part of the state, farmers were selling out their equipment, some were moving to cities and towns trying to find work--anything to make a living for their families. Some heard of greener pastures. Washington, Oregon, and Idaho were some of the places that were not affected by the drought of the plains. Whatever or wherever it was, it had to be better than starving in the dust bowl. Farm sales were held, but sales were not good. The farmers who remained didn't have much more money than those who were selling out. So it was merely getting out from under things that had accumulated over the years and being free to go elsewhere to start over.

Because of the dust storms it was difficult to have a sale. On the day of the sale, many times it was a beautiful clear morning as the neighbors began to gather for the auction. By noon or early afternoon, the dust would begin to roll in from the southwest and within minutes, the dust was so dense it was impossible for people to leave the farm. The sale was stopped and many times the farmers would have to huddle in houses and outbuildings until after sundown when the wind and dust generally subsided.

While things were getting better for us, this situation still remained in southeastern Colorado. Ted and Lydia Dobler, brother-in-law and sister who farmed in the Burlington area moved to Proctor and farmed in the Proctor-Iliff area until the early forties when the rains came to their home area and things began to get better. A few years later, irrigation wells were being drilled in the Burlington region and the area we always referred to as "dry land," was turned into a great irrigated farming region. The country prospered for a number of years. The town of Burlington grew and all kinds of new farm equipment businesses and farm related businesses began. New homes were being built on farms and new buildings were springing up in town and country.

Now, with the farm economy floundering, agriculture and towns in the relatively new irrigated farming regions are having their economic problems, at least as much as the rest of the farming

regions of the country. Farm land values have declined, production costs have soared and many farm families have been forced to leave the land.

Chapter 12

LIVING OFF THE LAND, GETTING ELECTRICITY

Much of the food we ate was grown on the farms--vegetables from the garden, potatoes from the field and meat from livestock. A load of wheat was taken to the Denver Elevator in Sterling and exchanged for a ton of flour, about a years supply.

Butchering in the spring for summer was a big undertaking. Generally two or three hogs and one beef were butchered. I didn't mind cleaning the hogs and dressing them and the beef, but killing the hogs by stabbing in the heart and stunning the steer with a large hammer and cutting the jugular vein were a little too much for me. I tried not to be there when this was done. In fact, at lunch time just before butchering, I was not very hungry. I was feeling sorry for what was about to happen to the animals. We were assured and reassured by our parents that this was God's plan for people to survive on this earth.

Sausage was made, some of it was smoked and some placed in large crocks or jars and covered with lard rendered from the fat hogs. There was no refrigeration and this was the only way we could keep meat for summer use. There was no vegetable shortening like Crisco and vegetable oils. So we always used lard in frying and baking. Mother canned a lot of beef and pork in half gallon fruit jars for summer use.

Lots of cucumbers and red beets were canned in the summer and, in the fall, the small winter watermelons were pickled whole in wooden barrels by making a brine of salt water and layered with leaves from apple and cherry fruit trees. Mother was very finicky about this. We (kids) had to gather clean leaves, no stems, weeds, or corn shucks--just clean leaves. In about six weeks the melons were ready for the table. If they were not eaten in a given time, they fermented to the point that only a seasoned pickled watermelon lover could stand the taste of them. If company came in the evening it was a poor hostess who would not serve "sour watermelon" and freshly baked bread before the guests went home.

After beet harvest, a few sugar beets were kept back to make sugar beet molasses. The beets were washed, boiled, and peeled. They were then put in a press and the juice squeezed from them and boiled to the right consistency to make the syrup. It was not too bad when it was used in cooking and baking, but you sure had to develop a taste for it to be able to eat it on bread or pancakes.

There were no natural gas or fuel oil stoves. We had to use coal, corn cobs, and cow chips. Mother did have a four burner kerosene cook stove that she cooked on in the summer time so she didn't have to heat up the house with the kitchen range.

The old home place had a coal-fired furnace and before that we had a large cast iron potbellied stove that sat in the dining room. The bedrooms were without heat. The fire was banked at night before going to bed and cobs and coal were added in the morning. In just a short time, the pot bellied stove would get red hot.

That's where we dressed in the morning because it was too cold in the bedrooms. We would grab our clothes and head for the heater. More than once somebody would stand too close to the stove and bend over to put on their underwear and get a scorched behind.

Behind the stove in the corner was a nice place to curl up and go to sleep, but we still had to get up and go to the cold bedrooms. We slept three in a bed so we warmed up in a hurry. I was the youngest of the boys so I had to sleep in the middle. I would get so warm that I would kick the cover off and the older boys would beat up on me for doing it.

In the summer time, before we had a kerosene cook stove, we burned cow chips (dried cow manure). They gave quick heat and cooled down quickly. Leona and I generally got the job of gathering chips. We had a little home-made wagon and would go to the pasture about a half mile away to gather fuel for cooking. We burned corn cobs, but they would be gone by mid summer so we went for the chips.

We didn't have home appliances like refrigerators, toasters, electric irons, radio or television. In fact, we didn't have electricity. The house that the Cheairs Company built on what is now the home place was built of material from a house that was torn down in Sterling and it had the electrical wiring in it. That wiring was used in anticipation of electricity in the future. In 1928, we installed a thirty-two volt system and Dad bought Mother an electric iron. The system consisted of eight, four-volt glass jar batteries that were charged by an air-cooled engine running a generator. When the lights became dim, we would go to the basement and start the one-cylinder engine to recharge the storage batteries. After the batteries were several years old, they would not take a charge anymore, so we had to run the engine every time we needed light or power. So when the folks thought it was time to go to bed, the engine was shut off, ready or not. Those were the bad years and there was no money left to buy new batteries. We struggled along until 1941, at which time the Rural Electrification Associations were established for rural people all over the United States. Projects like the Tennessee Valley Authority and others also came into being.

We have Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Democratic administration to thank for this great improvement for rural Americans. From that time on (World War II) things got much better for farm living. All kinds of home appliances, radios, and television were soon available to us.

The first radio that I saw and heard was owned by the Pyle family in 1925. It was a Crosley and the receiver and speaker were separate. The speaker was a horn loudspeaker setting on the top of the receiver. Sometimes on a winter night Fred and I would walk to Pyle's place about two miles from home and listen to their radio. It was very fascinating, but very poor quality reception. The static noise made it nearly impossible to understand the words. There were a few strong stations that the receiver picked up after dark, but during daylight there was no radio reception until some of the Denver stations came into existence--KOA, KLZ, etc.

One of the early stations picked up was WLS, Chicago. The station was owned by Sears Roebuck & Company and the WLS call letters stood for the World's Largest Store.

The first radio we bought was in 1929, when we got an Atwater Kent set from Lambs store in Proctor. It was quite an improvement over Pyle's Crosley of about four years earlier. It was a console with the chassis on the top shelf. The second shelf held the speaker and batteries.

It was sort of complicated, with one "C" battery, three "B" batteries and one "A" battery. These were all dry-cell batteries, but the A battery could be replaced with a six-volt storage battery like those used in cars and trucks of that day. We did not have electricity, so there was no way to recharge the six-volt battery.

Within a year or so, somebody came up with the invention of the windcharger—a propeller driven generator powered by the wind. It wasn't very long until you could see a windcharger on nearly every farm. Among the pictures in the back of this compilation, you can see a thirty-foot tower on the south side of the old house. I built this tower of steel bed rail angle irons. There were hundreds of bolts used in assembling the tower and I drilled all of them with a hand-powered post drill. Most of the bolts were salvaged from old farm machinery and it took me a whole winter to build this contraption. Most of it was done evenings by lantern light, because I was either in school or working during the day.

Even with all the trouble that we had with dead B and C batteries that had to be replaced and the recharging needed for the A battery, we kept the Atwater Kent until 1936. Norman Litch of Litch Brothers Garage in Sterling brought out a Zenith set for us to try. It required only one battery, a six-volt storage battery that we could recharge with the windcharger, so we didn't have the cost of replacing the dry cells.

We kept this Zenith until 1941, when the REA power came our way. Soon most people had 110-volt appliances, radios, refrigerators, toasters, irons, electric drills and other power tools.

We were accustomed to carrying a kerosene lantern where ever we went after dark. Now we had lights in the barn, shop, chicken house, and even put a yard light on the windmill tower, but it was hard to utilize the electricity to the greatest advantage because we were so cost conscious and so afraid of running out of electricity like we did with the old thirty-two volt system. The yard light was about thirty feet above the ground and we used a 100-watt bulb in it. We thought it was quite an improvement over the lantern, but it was only a little glow. Gradually, Dad would let us use more electricity and was not afraid we would run out. We were then able to turn the radio on whenever we wanted without being afraid the battery would run down.

We had our favorite radio programs--Amos n' Andy, Fibber McGee and Molly, the Wayne King Orchestra, the Phillip Morris Orchestra, Benny Goodman, and some daytime soaps like Ma Perkins, Betty and Bob (some of Mother's favorites). We listened to the announcer's version of the prize fights in the time of Jack Dempsey, Max Schmeling, Gene Tunney, Joe Louis, and Louis Firpo.

These were the times of the original Sons of The Pioneers with Roy Rogers, The Olinger Mortuary Quartette, that came on every Friday night on KLZ, Beacons Men of the West, a quartet that was sponsored by the Beacons Moving and Storage Company that could be heard once a week. Kay Kaysers orchestra called, "Kaysers School of Musical Knowledge" came on every Tuesday evening. Pepper Young's Family was another of the "soaps" that came on during the day.

Those were the times in our lives when anything important that happened left an impression on our young minds, like going out to the garden which was some where near an irrigation ditch where water was handy all summer, and eating wonder berries, cucumbers, and water melons. We had a beet labor family by the name of Hofsetz who had a boy about my age and a few years earlier a family from Hastings, the John Walkers, also had a son my age. We spent a lot of time in the garden in the late summer and in those days we did not change clothes every day, but when we could take our little overalls off in the evening and stand them in a corner you knew that we had been in the garden and it was time to change clothes.

We put ice up in a cellar in the winter that was cut from a lake northeast of our place which was for summer use. We had a hand crank ice cream freezer and used real cream to make ice cream

about once a week as long as the ice lasted. We ate ice cream and mama's chocolate cake until we could eat no more and had ice cream hangover the next day much like when we used get into Hamil's orchard and ate too many apples or cherries.

This was the time Charles Lindbergh flew across the Atlantic Ocean in a single engine plane, the Spirit of St. Louis, and the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby for which Bruno Richard Hauptman was executed. The kidnapping made world wide news since the kidnapper was German and the German Government contended that an innocent man had been condemned to death. Everyone waited anxiously for news from the kidnappers and the press about the child. Our mother was very sad and vowed that no one's children were safe anymore.

Television came to Sterling via cable in the 1950's. We got our first set in 1955.

Chapter 13

THE GRASSHOPPER PLAGUE

During the early thirties, a grasshopper plague hit the country and made it difficult to raise crops because of the hungry pests. There were several ways farmers fought the hoppers. One was a contraption about twelve feet wide and made out of sheet metal over a wood frame. The front was built like a dozer blade with another piece of sheet metal about eight inches high the full width of the dozer blade and about two inches out in front. There was a space of about two inches between the pieces of sheet metal. A horse was hitched to each end and with a rider on each horse, we pulled the catcher around the fields at a pretty fast pace. The hoppers would jump into the air, hitting the dozer blade and slide down the tin into a box built behind the blade. In a day's catch we would have as many as fifteen bushels of hoppers. We would then saturate the hoppers with kerosene and dump them out the next morning and be ready for another day's work.

The tin vehicle on sled runners made a lot of noise. One time John and I were moving across the road from one field to another and crossing the hard road caused the machine to make so much noise that the horses spooked and ran away from us. That was the end of that hopper catcher and we had to build a new one.

Some farmers raised turkeys in large numbers and herded them around the fields to clean up the hoppers.

Probably the most effective method was the poison hopper bait mixed at the old fair grounds by the Extension Service and sold to farmers at cost. We would go to Sterling in the afternoon for a load of bait, made of sawdust, bran, arsenic, and banana oil for flavor. The next morning at about three o'clock we would take the truck, a bunch of pails for the bait, and start walking fence rows and irrigation ditches throwing the bait out by hand.

The hoppers were so thick that they would clean crops almost completely if not controlled. In uncontrolled areas, such as range land, they would eat the grass to the roots and they would eat the fence posts so that an old gray cedar post would look brand new.

After World War II, new chemicals such as chlorodane and DDT made it much easier to control agricultural pests. Some have now been banned because of the possible danger to health and life. Modern methods of pest control make use of airplanes and mechanical crop dusters, a more efficient way to deal with grasshoppers.

In 1931, we had a full reservoir of water and thought it would be the turn-around. We planted one hundred forty acres of sugar beets, but it turned out to be one of the worst growing seasons ever. We lost all but sixty acres of beets from windstorms and adverse weather.

We had nearly three hundred acres of barley that promised to be a bumper crop, but on the afternoon that Fred and I pulled the grain binder out to begin harvest a heavy black cloud formed in the northwest and the storm that followed hailed out every acre of barley and ruined a lot of sugar beets.

That fall after harvest, Fred had his mind made up, he got into his 1931 Chevy coupe and went to California. He drove a city bus in San Pedro for a few years and then opened a front end and brake shop that he and his son, Wayne, still operate.

We had better years after that. John began farming and feeding cattle in the Sterling area and did very well, building up one of the largest feeding operations in the state. He spent one term in the Colorado legislature and bought into the Commercial Bank of Sterling, of which he was president until he sold his interest.

Albert and Rachel Schuppe, having farmed the Bunning place for a few years, moved back to the home place and a few years later bought it and the Conrad quarter. They have been active in livestock feeding and farming, though now retired. Gordon and Earline Schuppe bought the old Maggard farm and the Fox place and are now farming Albert and Rachel's farm also.

Chapter 14

MEETING SOMEONE SPECIAL, OUR LIFE TOGETHER

In the summer of 1936, I met a very special person. My sister Leona was going with a young man from Sterling by the name of Robert Hettinger. They had been dating for some time when one Saturday evening I met Bob and Leona in Sterling and was introduced to Bob's sister Esther. She says I don't remember the details, but I do. It was in front of F.W. Woolworth's. That week I was in Sterling and she was working in a clothing store--A.G. Hagadorn's--and I suppose under the guise of buying something, for which I had no money, I asked her for a date. She must have said "yes," because I'm still going with her.

We were married on November 25, 1937, in her parent's home at 228 West Main Street. This location now houses the Pizza Hut. I was farming the Fox quarter along with Dad and his farming operation of the home place. We lived with the folks for a few months and then moved into the two room house that used to be the beet labor shack. Later we moved over to the north place and lived there until 1941, when we moved to the Cheairs farm northeast of Iliff. We farmed there until 1944, when I became ill with undulant fever--an illness contracted from brucellosis-infected livestock. It was not long after that pasturization of all milk and milk products to kill the brucella bacteria was mandatory.

In 1944, we sold our farm equipment and livestock and moved to Sterling (to 401 McKinley Street). I worked at the county agent's office for a short time, then managed the Farm Labor Association, an agency that was organized to contract for beet labor for farmers. The labor was German and Italian war prisoners and Jamaicans who were shipped in to help ease the farm labor situation during the war.

The prisoners were housed at the Logan County Fair Grounds, where the Fair Shopping Center is now located, and on South Front Street in the old Great Western Sugar Company dormitory. Tall fences were erected to keep the prisoners confined; they were also under twenty-four hour guard. The prisoners were hauled out to the farms every morning and back to the compound at night. The guards were used to keep the prisoners in and the local girls away from the compound.

At least one romance evolved. One of the prisoners, Emanuelle Campanella, an Italian prisoner, later married a girl from Padroni. He operated the Cedar Creek Auto Salvage until his retirement about 1980.

After the end of World War II, and the end of the labor association job, we bought a farm west of Sterling and moved out to farm it. The farm, thirteen miles west on Highway 14 and four miles north, was bought from two different owners. Mrs. Dallas Landrum was the agent for Lennie Johnson, from whom we purchased one-half section with buildings (such as they were), and the other half-section belonged to the Federal Land Bank and joined the Johnson land. The buildings consisted of an old barn, some hog sheds, a boxcar, and a house that nobody would live in now. It had four rooms and a porch. One of the rooms was not plastered—it just had wall paper over the two-by-four studs and the inside of the siding.

I must not forget the outhouse. It had pink wallpaper and little lace curtains over the small window. We put running water in the house, but still had to use the little outhouse. We kept some milk cows and hogs. We also bought cattle to put on grass. We had rented some additional land to farm and some of it was good grassland. We also had a half section of grass on our own place. We raised wheat, barley, millet, and some feed.

The man we bought the place from, Lennie Johnson, liked the medicine his doctor prescribed. I don't think he and his wife Lisha had the same doctor, though. She was an ex-school teacher and Lennie's habits were a problem for her. He had emphysema and claimed his wine and whiskey kept him breathing well.

When we moved to the place, we did a lot of cleaning up around the buildings and yard. Lyle was six years old and was helping me with the cleanup job. There was an old eight-foot stock watering tank that Lennie used for a trash container. We had an old Model A Ford truck with a grain bed on it and when we finished cleaning the tank and gathering up all the bottles and jugs in the sheds we had the old Ford level full. We lived there three years and when we left we were still finding bottles hidden in sheds. Some still had liquor in them, apparently some he had forgotten about or was just saving for a rainy day.

We rented some farm land from Worth Jarret, a bachelor who lived north of us one mile in a two-room house. Worth was quite a philosopher and enjoyed telling about the past. He had lived in that barren flat since 1908, when he and his mother came from England. He worked in the irrigated valley since all of his land that he and his mother homesteaded and bought was grassland at that time. When he worked in the valley, they baled and loaded alfalfa hay in cars for rail shipment east. At that time, he claimed there were two trees in the river between Sterling and Proctor. One was the Lone Tree Ditch landmark east of Iliff and the other was near the Seckler Feedlot.

One of Worth's favorite sayings when something went wrong was, "That's the penalty of being born." He would never tell us why, but he made the remark periodically that he hated his mother, saying, "I hated her from the time I can remember."

Worth helped when I hauled feed or stacked feed and he would have lunch with us. When we asked him to come in, he would say, "Well I'm not really hungry, but well, I'll come in anyway." But he always ate heartily. We would take him to Sterling with us when he needed groceries or other supplies. He would buy apples and bread, which may have been his main diet...and the reason for his hearty appetite when he ate with us.

In Worth's barn was an old 1915 Model T Ford. It had not been driven since the twenties, but was stored and still intact. I don't know what happened to it. According to Owen Swan, Worth never did learn how to drive it. He depended on Swan to drive.

We rented his pasture land and kept cattle on grass in the summer. He looked after the water, salt, and mineral. Until I assured him that salt and mineral would not harm the cattle he fed them sparingly. There were about seventy-five head of yearlings and he would give them a gallon of mineral and salt at a feeding. He came to the house one day and said he fed the cattle a gallon pail of mineral when they came in to water and when they left the bunk was empty. After being reassured several times, he finally gave them all they would eat, but still could not understand why they didn't get sick and die.

The O.E. Swan family also looked after Worth and took him to town when he needed to go. The Swans had two boys that were a little older than Lyle and also went to Liberty school. Mrs. Swan took care of Tommy when we needed to go somewhere where it was difficult to take the children. They were very nice people and excellent neighbors. One evening we went to visit them. The sun was still high in the sky, but we couldn't find anybody around. The car was there so we were a little concerned, but thought they might have gone somewhere with other neighbors,

so we went back home. A few days later, I mentioned to Swany that we were at their house but found nobody at home. He said, "Yeah, we were home but I went to bed early and Mom had to stay up to close the chicken house after dark." Their water well was of very poor quality, so they hauled water from our place. I asked him one day if he ever tired of hauling water for their stock and why he hadn't drilled a well. His answer was that the distance was the same, one mile to our house and one mile down to water.

The Paul Budin family were also good friends and neighbors. They lived a mile north and two miles west of us and had a nice cattle ranch. They had one daughter, Pearl Ann, and two sons, Paul Junior and Rudy. Rudy is still on the ranch. Pearl Ann taught school for many years and married a customer friend of ours, John Adams of Crook. They are now retired and living in Sterling. Paul Junior has an insurance agency in Sterling. Paul Senior died about ten years ago after a farm tractor accident. His widow, Helen, lives in Sterling.

The children attended various schools. Lyle started kindergarten at Lincoln school in Sterling, continuing into the first grade there until the spring of 1946 when we moved out to the farm west of Sterling. There he finished the first grade and spent a little over two years at Liberty school with Mrs. Hornicek as his teacher.

Mrs. Hornicek drove a Model T Ford to school and brought Lyle home with her sometimes, since she lived beyond us several miles. She had to get a different car and bought a Model A Ford, which had a totally different shifting mechanism and transmission. One afternoon I was working in the field and saw her drive into our yard. Luckily we had a large front yard, because she kept driving around in a circle. After several rounds in the yard, she finally stopped, let Lyle out and drove away. When I got in from the field, I asked Lyle why Mrs. Hornicek drove around the yard several times. He said, "Daddy, she couldn't get the car stopped."

Sharon started school in the first grade at Liberty in 1947 with Verlene Barnhart as teacher.

Tom was a baby when we moved to the farm and we had a lot of rattlesnakes around the place. This was one of the reasons for our short stay in the Pawnee country.

We had a cellar out in front of the house with a shed built over the entrance. In the shed was our light plant. We didn't have REA, so we got a Montgomery Ward 1500-watt generator that came on automatically when a light was turned on or the iron was plugged in. Those were the only two luxuries we had. We started out with an old ice box and brought ice from Sterling. We purchased ice at the old Sterling Ice and Cold Storage Company operated by Horace M. Titus. Then Servel made a gas refrigerator which cooled with butane gas. It was quite an improvement over the old oak ice box. It even had a cold compartment to make ice cream.

One afternoon in June, I went to Sterling to get some combine repair and material to repair grain bins for the coming harvest. Esther and the kids stayed home and an afternoon storm came up. It began to darken in the southwest. Sharon was looking out of the window and asked, "Mama what makes the clouds black?" When Esther saw what it was she gathered the three children up and headed for the cellar. When I returned from town, I saw that it had rained very hard and when I was told by a very frightened wife that a tornado had passed through the farm, I couldn't believe it. A few minutes later, Arnold Waite rode in on his horse and wanted to know if we were alright. It was indeed a tornado. We drove around the area and found that one of the neighbors house roof was raised up and turned partially around on the house. His 1933 Ford V8 two door had been rolled out into the field several hundred yards and had the appearance of a smashed tin can.

A few days later Lyle and I went out to get the grain bins ready for harvest. When I opened the door it was very light in the building and looking up, I saw the shingles were missing from the back side of the roof, so I knew there had been a tornado.

A young neighbor boy was helping me with the farming and when he saw the storm he headed for the house. He said he had the Model A truck in low gear and wide open throttle. It was so dark he could hardly see the road, but he said with the truck wide open in low gear, the fenceposts were passing him up. The wind was so strong it was pushing the truck backwards.

I have mentioned that Tom was a baby when we lived on the Johnson place and about the dirt cellar out in front of the house and the rattlesnakes. One Sunday morning we were getting ready to go to Sunday school and church and, as usual, Esther got the little ones ready first, then we got ready to go. (Sometimes she had to get them ready twice.) While we were dressing, she asked, "Where's Tommy?" I went to check on him and found him sitting on top of the cellar playing in the dirt. I went to pick him up and right beside him, within his reach, lay a small rattlesnake, about eighteen inches long. I moved cautiously over to the opposite side of Tommy and talking to him all the time telling him not to move. I reached over and got him by the arm and pulled him away from the snake so fast and hard that he cried all the way to town.

Sharon used to follow me everywhere I went around the farm. One day when I was digging post holes to build corrals she was with me. I decided to go to the house to get a drink of water and Esther asked where Sharon was. All I could think of was that she had fallen into one of the postholes head first. I ran back to where I had been working and found her sound asleep on a pile of fresh dirt beside a posthole. Sharon was great on asking questions while I was working and liked me to be attentive. One time she was asking a lot of questions and the answer to one was apparently not right. She said, "Daddy, you not listening!"

We had another scary experience with Sharon when we were coming home from visiting my folks in Greeley. We had taken short cut from Greeley to Highway 14 and were just a few miles from town when the left rear door of our 1947 DeSoto came open and Sharon fell out on the pavement. I stopped the car and ran back to pick her up. She was so stunned by the fall that she was not even crying, but she asked, "Daddy why did you throw me out?" We went back to Greeley and found a doctor still in his office (this was about five or six o'clock in the evening). We were very fortunate. She had only gravel burns on her arms, knees, and forehead, but no broken bones or internal injuries. The rear doors on cars of that period opened from the front. Sharon was standing in the back of the car and probably leaned against the door handle causing it to open.

On another occasion, Lyle and I took some hogs to the Sterling Hog market. Lyle found a friendly bull terrier and was playing with it while we were unloading. When Albert Boettcher saw his interest in the dog, he asked Lyle if he would like to have it. Lyle thought it was great, so we had a dog. We had quite a family of cats at home that were always fed at the milk barn. This dog was strictly anti-cat and he kept the cats under the buildings most of the time. One morning as I was spreading grasshopper bait around the edges of the wheat fields, I was walking along a fence row that had some freshly dug holes. The dog was right behind me and when he passed one of the holes a hissing noise came from it. The terrier, apparently thinking there was a cat in the hole, took a dive right into it. There was lots of noise and dirt coming from the hole for a bit, but the dog lost no time getting out of there. He must have thought it was the toughest cat he ever tackled, because he was slashed from ears to eyes and eyes to nose. It turned out to be a badger and not a housecat. From that time on the cats around the farm had considerably more freedom.

I mentioned rattlesnakes earlier. We had a lot of them and they were particularly numerous in the latter part of July and the month of August. Paul Budin gave us almost daily reports of his kill, which by the end of summer numbered into the forties. One evening, while visiting at a neighbor's home, we were out in the yard starting home on a moonlight night. Arnold Waite shushed everyone and said, "Shh, listen!" There was a rattler coming up the driveway towards the house, possibly attracted by the light coming from the yard light.

Another time, I went down the steps and just as I got to the bottom at eye level and less than a foot from my face was a rattlesnake lying on a ledge. It was quickly eliminated. And one afternoon I was working in the field and hung my drinking water bag on a fence post. After working for a while, I went back to get a drink. I heard a rattle and at the base of the post where water was dripping from the canvas bag was a larger rattler, coiled and ready to strike. I killed it and went back to work. After an hour or so of disking, I again went back for a drink and found the same situation. I took my water bag and hung in on the seat of the tractor. With all these experiences, our only casualty was the saddle horse that was bitten on the front leg just above the hoof. He was in very bad shape for sometime, but recovered.

Chapter 15

SELLING THE DRYLAND, MOVING BACK TO PROCTOR

In the fall of 1947, we sold the dryland Pawnee farm to the John Nelson family and moved back to Proctor and farmed the north home quarter. We sold and traded most of our dryland machinery for smaller irrigated farming machinery. We kept the Model L Case tractor and the John Deere six-foot combine and had to buy a larger truck, a 1947 Dodge for hauling beets. The old Model A was sold to Howard Schmidt of Fleming. I had placed an ad in the Sterling paper offering the old truck for sale and one morning a small plane circled the farm several times and then landed in a wheat stubble field. A fellow came walking from the plane and when he got close, I recognized him as Howard. He wanted to look at the truck we had advertised.

The first year on the irrigated farm, we bought a few cows and just milked for our own use with a little cream to sell. Then in 1949, we started in the Grade A Dairy facility, buying some Brown Swiss cows from several places in Iowa and Illinois. One of the reasons for milking cows was that we had a very severe hailstorm in 1948 and since hailstorms were very common in the area we decided that milking cows was added insurance. We built up the herd over a three-year period to about fifty cows and milking them was a full time job. However it paid very well and supplemented our farming program quite well.

Lyle was eleven years old and lot of help. He worked with the small tractors, a Ferguson and John Deere Model B, harrowing, mowing, raking and other light jobs. He loved working with the tractors, but detested the dairy chores. He did some anyway.

We had some Mexican beet labor the first year and one of them stayed and helped with the farm work for the next year. These were illegal aliens, or "wet backs." The one who stayed with us was Ignacio, or "Nacho." The kids were fond of him, but he disappeared. He had gone to visit some friends and was picked up by Immigration officers and was returned to Mexico. However, he was seen again in the Iliff area.

We had another Mexican family work for us. The family worked beets and the father, Pat Estrada, helped me with the farm work. They had several small children who came every evening with their gallon pail to get milk for the family. They were a very nice family. One of the girls, Patty, married John Rodriguez who worked for us at the elevator for nearly fifteen years. Pat, the father, was killed in about 1976 in a hay grinding accident.

Another experience with beet labor was not as pleasant. We sponsored a Polish family of displaced people through the church. It was a young couple and the wife's father. The experience was short. It appeared their only interest was to come to the United States through our sponsorship and then take off for a large city to be with their friends. The family went to Gary, Indiana where they planned to make their fortune.

Lyle and Sharon went to the McGinley one-room school for about a year with Florence Purcell as their teacher and, after consolidation, went to the Iliff school by bus.

Tommy was about three years old and loved cats and dogs. In warm weather, he would walk out to the school bus with Lyle and Sharon with the cats and dogs following him. He would play with them for a long time in the driveway before returning to the house. His first activity in the morning after getting out of bed was to sit on the porch in his little undershorts and play with the kittens and puppies. Some of the older cats were not so tame and would not allow petting, but

that didn't bother Tommy. He would follow one cat all day if he decided it was the one that he wanted and finally the cat would give in and soon it was a tamed cat. The Indians used to follow wild horses day and night until they were so tired they gave in and let themselves be caught. That was the tactic Tommy used.

One day we couldn't find Tommy. We looked all over the farm and called and called. Finally he answered and said, "I'm up here." He was on top of the windmill. I started up the ladder talking to him all the time I was moving up, telling him to stay and not move. When I got to him he was crying, I thought from fear, but all he wanted was to come down all by himself. He did not want help. Another time he was crying--we could hear him, but couldn't find him. The sound came from the machinery area where we found him hanging upside down from the John Deere tractor. He was wearing little overalls and was playing on the tractor. When he fell his pant cuff got caught on a bolt and he was hanging upside down unable to touch the ground to free himself.

After telling about Sharon's and Tom's escapades, I need to back up and tell about Lyle when we lived on the Iliff Cheairs farm. We had a St. Bernard dog and he and Lyle were almost inseparable. One time when we couldn't find him I got up on the windmill and looked around the area. I saw the dog in Jake Bauer's barley field. The grain was so tall that the dog was jumping up on his hind legs so he could see, but was staying right in one area. I knew the dog would not be a half-mile away from the house without a reason, so I got in the car and drove up to Bauer's fence where the dog was. There was Lyle, sound asleep on the ground in barley that was three feet tall.

Another time we didn't know he was gone from home until Faye Monroe called and asked if we were missing a boy. When I looked toward Monroe's place, there was Lyle and the St. Bernard on the Iliff ditch bank. The ditch had been cleaned by a dragline and there were piles of dirt four or five feet high and spaced several feet apart. Lyle would climb up one pile of dirt and fall down the other side. The ditch was full of water and he was heading toward Monroes. Still another time, when we couldn't find him, we enlisted the help of neighbors and hunted for what seemed like hours. This time we found him hiding behind a bedroom door, where we had already looked several times. He apparently was playing hide-and-seek with us and moved from one door to another. He remembers this particular incident did not have a happy ending...rather a sore one.

We lived about a half mile from the Union Pacific railroad and at that time the City of Denver, a streamlined passenger train went west about seven in the morning and east about six in the evening. Lyle, about three years old, always watched for the evening train and when he saw it would say, "There goes the stringliner." One evening after dark, he was looking out the kitchen window towards the highway and said, "Daddy, look at all the cars on the highway." I looked, but couldn't see any cars and told him he was dreaming. He replied, "They've got their lights off."

At Proctor, we farmed and milked cows on the north place while Pack and Rachel farmed the south farm, the old home place. We each farmed separately, but worked together in grain harvest and beet harvest and other jobs that took added help.

I have mentioned hailstorms in earlier paragraphs. These were not taken lightly, as most of them came early in the summer and most of the time they were severe enough so that we lost our small grain crops. Along with the hailstorms, there were winter storms. The blizzard of 1949, which came the day after New Year's was one of the most severe storms in the memories of people who were much older than we. This storm came up about nine o'clock Sunday evening, catching

many people away from home and, not knowing the severity of the storm, they tried to get home from where they were. Many were stranded in their automobiles for as long as three days and nights. Some froze to death, some were asphyxiated when their exhaust systems plugged with snow, while running the engines to keep warm.

This was a huge storm, covering Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska. Large numbers of livestock were lost when they drifted away from home into fence corners where they froze to death. Old timers who remembered the storm of 1913 said it was about as severe. In that storm cattle were still out on the range in late fall and whole herds drifted into the waters of the North Sterling Reservoir and were drowned. Others drifted miles from home and starved because of the snow depth. We lost about ten head of cows and calves in the 1949 storm. The storm was so severe that it was impossible to get out to take care of them until after the storm subsided. It lasted three days and nights without any let up. We had a yard light on a twenty-foot pole and the bulb burned out during the storm. The drift between the house and barn was so high that I walked up on the drift and changed the bulb.

We had two carloads of steers left that were nearly ready to go to market, but we had to feed them another sixty days. They lost us money and Lyle wanted to know who got the money that we lost feeding the cattle.

During the first night of the blizzard, while it was snowing we had an electrical storm complete with thunder and lightning. Our power went off and was off for seventy-two hours. Since we depended on electricity to run the coal stoker, I stayed up day and night to hand-fire the furnace for that period without power.

We farmed through 1950, another summer with a hailstorm that wiped out our small grain crop. That winter we were offered a deal that we accepted, that further changed our lives. I'll talk more about that in the next chapter.

While we were living on the north place, Tom and Marla Kay Schuppe, being about the same age played together a lot. Rachel would bring Marla to our place and they would play all forenoon. When it was time for Marla to go home, Tommy would take her hand and he would walk her nearly all the way home, then he would start home and Marla would walk him part of the way home. Then they would each go their separate ways, playing along the road. Esther and Rachel would have to call to them to hurry home for lunch. When Marla was at our house they would play on the west side of the house in the shade, where Esther had fixed them up with a bench of pots and pans and they would "cook" there.

While living in the Iliff School District, I spent three years on the school board. This was during the consolidation period, when all of the country schools had to consolidate into larger districts.

While we lived in Sterling and Merino, I spent sixteen years on the Northeastern Junior College board of directors. These were the growing years for NJC. The cafeteria, student union, agricultural building, auto mechanics, and farm machinery buildings were constructed during that time. The farm mechanics building now bears the name of Lebsack-Schmidt Hall, the co-namesake is Ellis Schmidt of Fleming, who also served on the committee.

Chapter 16

THE DECISION TO LEAVE THE FARM

In the final week of the year of 1950, when I was in Sterling paying bills and catching up on year-end details, I went to Seckler's Feed Store to pay the December feed account. It was my last stop, and I was very relieved to be going home because I was coming down with the flu and feeling sick to my stomach. Just as I was leaving the store, Bill Seckler drove up, jumped out of his car, got in the car beside me and wanted to talk. I said, "Bill, I'm sick with the flu and I just can't talk now." He said, "Hold on just a minute, how the hell would you like to own a feed store?" I told him that sounded good, but I just had to get on my way. We agreed to talk later, so after a few days when I felt like talking and after Esther and I had discussed it at length, I went to see Bill. He made the offer very attractive, but I couldn't see how we could possibly scrape up enough money to buy a business. Bill was very persistent and said he would help us all he could, even stocking the place.

We discussed it for a few days at home and took inventory of what we had, what we owed the bank and what a farm sale might bring. Bill wanted \$10,000 for the business plus inventory, which was not too high at the time of takeover. We finally made the deal and scheduled a farm sale. We had the herd of Brown Swiss cows, most of them registered, and had no idea how they would sell. The sale surprised us and we were able to buy the feed store and even had money left over to stock the store. We were very grateful, and still are, to Bill Seckler for what he did to get us started in a type of business that I had dreamed about for quite some time. I even thought of renting an empty building and opening a feed store while we were still farming.

I had a back and sciatica problem that was being aggravated by being in rubber irrigating boots so much of the time. I had been going to Dr. Jack Naugle with my problem repeatedly. He told me one day that, "If you can't stay out of those boots, I can't help you."

We were fairly successful in the thirty-two year operation, in spite of a feeling by some people, even family, that a couple from the farm would not be able to make a go of it.

The store had been strictly a feed store while Secklers had it and we began to expand into farm hardware and garden and yard products as soon as we could. In those days, fertilizing a lawn was unheard of, but a very persistent salesman from Rocky Mountain Plant Food Company, George Fleming, talked me into stocking a ton of his Green Gro lawn fertilizer. We began talking up fertilizing lawns, but were so intimidated by constant refusals that we were almost ready to give up this new product. Then neighbors of the people that we did get sold began to see the results of the fertilizer and came in to buy.

That year we sold about three tons of the product. The next year it mushroomed into about ten tons. The next, forty or fifty tons. We then started handling bedding plants which we hauled out of Denver. We set the plants out in front of the store during the day and put them back inside at night.

We also handled weed killers that were kept only in our sales room where seeds and plants were also kept. One warm weekend, we had the plants inside and the sun shining in the large window on the east warmed the room so much that weed killer fumes escaped from the gallon cans. Monday morning, when I opened the store, I could smell the weed killers and the tomato plants were curled over dead.

We sold Gooch's Best Feeds out of Lincoln at that time and we outfitted the help and ourselves with Gooch's Best jackets and shirts. Just as soon as the boys were large enough to be fitted with these shirts and jackets, they insisted on having them. Gooch's chicken feed came in one hundred pound white and print bags that were of shirt and dress quality. Every one on the farm had a flock of chickens--and children--so when the mother came in to buy chicken feed we had to be prepared to dig out whatever colors she wanted. Sometimes that meant moving a ton of feed to get to the bag she wanted. We could tell our customers by the colors of shirts and dresses the kids wore when we saw them on the streets.

Our business grew and we were cramped for space. Businesses around us complained because of the dust from the feed mill, so we started looking around for a possible new site. The old Unruh Elevator on South Front Street was about to go out of business and was purchased by the Conelly Ross Company out of Denver. After operating it for about a year, they decided to close it down, so we bought from them in 1953. We started construction of the feed mill and a feed warehouse and in 1954 we moved the business to 401 South Front Street.

O.O. Unruh had moved the old Snyder elevator from Snyder to the present location in Sterling. It was a small elevator with no milling space or room for equipment. We added the north end for milling facilities and built a molasses vat in the basement. We also raised the headhouse to gain greater capacity.

The lawn and garden business began to grow and in 1955 we built a small greenhouse on the north side of the store building. We kept it for a couple of years and then built a lean-to fiberglass greenhouse on the east side of the store. Then in 1960 we built a forty-foot addition to the north side of the old building, allowing us to expand the garden center even more. This turned out to be a good portion of our business. As the farm economy changed, we turned more and more to higher profit-margin items such as lawn mowers, snow throwers, shop heaters, and automatic livestock waterers and feeders.

We began hauling supplies from Denver by truck and pickup and later bought a van so we could haul more and have plants protected from the wind and cold. Esther started making the trips to Denver for us. We hauled feed from Purina in Denver, Ranchway in Ft. Collins, and some trips were made to Wheatland, Wyoming for decorative rock. We became very well acquainted with many businesses along the front range. Esther surprised the women who went to Denver with her for companionship with how well she knew her way around the city.

After Steve was in school, Esther spent full time as bookkeeper and saleswoman. We had a number of bookkeepers during our business years, two of the more memorable were from Texas. Marge Duke, from Houston, made her own coffee because we didn't make it strong enough for her, and then she used about half cream and sugar. Marge got very irritated by the constant ringing of the telephone.

The other was Dee Fults, a red-head from San Antonio, who like her eggs scrambled and her toast "just this side of burnt." She and her husband had some turbulent times. One time after a few days off as they were returning from San Antonio, they argued while in a motel. When he was asleep, she took the keys out of his pocket and came on home and left him in the motel somewhere in west Texas.

After Dee, we had Mary McCreary from Norton, Kansas, work for us for a couple of years. She returned to Norton after her husband and son were drowned in a boating and fishing accident on

Lake McConaughy in Nebraska. After Mary, my sister Rachel came to work for us and stayed with us until we sold out. Donnelle Kirkwood worked during Rachel's absence because of illness.

The regulars who worked during the spring season were Lois Sandstead, Barbara Koester, Esthyre Amen and Alberta Smart. Neva Lindsey and Inez Busig were the first "garden ladies" with the others following in later years.

Some of the children helped in the business--Lyle from the time we started and the others as they grew older. Sharon worked as a bookkeeper several summers. Tom worked while in high school and summers during his college years and Steve helped as he grew into the business during his high school and college years.

Gerald Reavis and Leonard Pevler were two employees we inherited from Bill Seckler. Then came Joe Lazzaretti, who was with us for about ten years. Roy Ottosen started in 1958 and stayed until we sold the business. He is still with the company as of this writing (1985), but plans to retire at the end of 1986. John Rodriguez was with us for thirteen years and is also with the new ownership. Rachel Schuppe started in 1966 and stayed until 1982, sixteen years later. I'm not forgetting Duane Kirkwood, Rick Hendricks, Tracy Dowis Messick, Marla Schuppe, Clara Sewald, Doris Butler, Gerald Talbot, Joe Notario and others who were with us for shorter periods of time.

When we moved to Sterling, we rented a house from Bill Sincock at 512 Chestnut Street. Two years later we bought the Hounshel house at 331 McKinley and completely remodeled it. This was in 1953 and we stayed there until 1958 when we bought a lot in Country Club Hills and had the Schuppe Brothers build a new house. In 1961, we bought the Fred Luft, Sr. farm at Merino and had Schuppes build a new home there, leaving Country Club Hills in 1962. We rented the farm to John and Anna Stieb and kept the river pasture for ourselves.

We sold the McKinley Street house to the Robert Planks when we moved to Country Club Hills. Lyle had some close high school friends who spent a lot of time in our basement. When we moved out over a weekend, Planks moved in. Lyle forgot to tell his friends that we had moved. One morning Roger Dowis came to the house and went directly to Lyle's room without knocking and found some different people in the basement beds. On his way out he was intercepted by Mrs. Plank and had to do some explaining.

Chapter 17

MOVING TO MERINO

I mentioned earlier that we had Schuppe Brothers build a house for us on the farm at Merino and rented the farm land to John Stieb.

In the fall of 1962, we moved into the new farm house. That same fall I went to the Wyoming Angus Ranch west of Cheyenne and bought forty registered black angus cows from Mark Cox III. When the herd increased, we summer pastured at Paul Budin's for several years and in 1965, after the flood, we pastured in John Lebsack's sandhill pasture east of Sterling for a couple of years.

This bunch of cows were quite an experience for us. I had been around cattle nearly all my life, but not around cattle who saw people only twice a year. Most of them quieted down reasonably well the first year, but there were a few who were pretty wild as long as we had them. As soon as we had replacement heifers, we sold the squirrely ones.

Steve kept some of the steers for FFA projects and did quite well with them. He went to the State Fair with one and got first in his class of thirty-three entries. There are some pictures in the album of some of our branding operations, where Steve, when he was in Junior High School, was lying on a calf waiting for the branding iron. We always eartagged the calves and gave them a shot of vitamins at birth. One Sunday morning, while we were still in bed, I heard the pickup leave the yard. I got up to see what was going on and there was Steve out in the pasture hanging on to a newborn calf, trying to eartag it and the mother cow was trying to get to Steve. He was kicking at her trying to hold her off. This was a dangerous thing to do and he was cautioned not to do it anymore. (Editors note: Clarence probably understates what he said to Steve in the "caution." Steve can probably give you more detailed verbage.)

When we moved to Merino, Steve was in the sixth grade and we stayed there until he was through high school. We made some very good friends while we lived in the Merino community--the Ed Dermers, Herman Amens, Willard and Margaret Lutes, Shinos, Harold Fritzlers, Bill Fritzlers, Hank and Katherine Fritzler, Joe Stahleys, Keith Talbots, Earl and Lois Sandstead, the Wolevers, Ladds, and so many others who we saw at basketball and football games. The McClurgs, Vlasins and so many other teachers and people in the community became part of our lives.

Ron Vlasin was basketball and football coach during the time that Steve went to school in Merino. Steve started playing basketball in Junior High with Larry Rewerts as coach. By the time Steve got to high school, Ron had built quite a reputation as a coach and worked with the boys to have a winning team for a number of years. I'm not sure of the statistics, but I think Merino won five state championships over a seven year period.

With Steve playing, we followed the basketball team to many games and places, enjoyed the cake raffles at halftime and going to different homes after the games for cake and ice cream. I always bought a raffle ticket and won quite a few cakes. It became such a regular occurrence, that our friends began to boo every time my name was called out. One evening I won the last cake and Steve won one earlier that evening, so I gave my winning ticket to a little girl who was clutching her ticket in her hand. When we got ready to leave the gym, Steve reminded me not to forget my cake. I told him that since he won one, I gave mine to a little girl. He said, "I saw that you had won one, so I gave mine to a little boy." So we went home without a cake, but it was worth it.

We lived near the South Platte River and close to the Lutes family. Steve and Frank Lutes became very good friends. They played down in the river a lot. Sometimes, Esther would fix a lunch for them and they would not come in until late in the evening. In the summer, the river was low and provided a lot of fun for them.

At the store, we had a customer who couldn't pay his bill, so we took a palomino horse for a portion of the bill. We had this horse broken to ride and he became Steve's pride and joy for the years we lived on the farm. He rode in the Silver Spurs riding club in Sterling, so about once or twice a week during the summer we would load Socks in the trailer and go to the O'Connells, where the club practiced their drills for the Logan County fair and other fairs in the area to which they were invited. We also had Polly, the paint mare that all the kids rode when we lived in Country Club Hills, and her colt named Speck. We had him broken to ride when he was a three year old, so we were in the horse business.

Once when Freda and Hugo Flaig were visiting us, Steve, Cindy, and Susan decided to go horse back riding. Steve was going to ride the colt, Speck and the girls were to ride Polly and Socks. When we were on our way home from the store in the evening, we met the three riders. Steve was on Socks, Susan on Polly and Cindy had the colt. This colt had been ridden very little, so I asked Steve about the arrangement. He said, "Socks was too frisky for Cindy, so I let her ride Speck."

In 1969, when Steve was out of high school at Merino, we sold the farm to a Ridenour family from Tipton, Iowa and bought the house in which we now live, from Ed and Rese Fuerst. They were being transferred to Texas by their oil company.

It was a great experience--building the house next to the river and living in the Merino community for seven years.

Mentioning being next to the river reminds me of the 1965 flood. It had been raining heavily in the mountains and all along the South Platte watershed and the river was running bank full. A dam broke near Agate and the water came down the Bijou and into the Platte, which was already above flood stage. We had to take the cattle out of the river bottom and haul them to John's sandhill pasture where they stayed for the remainder of the summer.

When we had everything moved out and had the cellar door covered with plastic we stood on the patio and watched the high water, wondering when it was going to crest. We had been warned that the river would be out of its banks, so we were waiting for it to rise. I went around to the west side of the house and saw the wall of water coming across Milt Kautz' field toward us. We thought it was time to move. We got into the pickup and the battery was dead. It wouldn't turn over the motor.

All that was left to do was head towards the highway on foot and hope we could outrun the floodwaters. I went back to the pickup one more time to try to start it. It turned over and started and we didn't lose any time in getting out of there. When we got out of the driveway, the water was about a hundred yards from us. Large cottonwood trees and other debris were coming across Herman Amen's field. We heard later on the radio that the Lebsack house at Merino had water up the to eaves. This was a mirage. We talked to several people and from the highway it actually appeared that the water was up to the roof.

Hay stacks, sheds, and all kinds of debris were floating down the river. There were stories of strange happenings--there were several fat hogs that swam out of the river near the Merino bridge, that apparently were washed away from the farm of John Hernandez at Hillrose.

Willard Lutes had a baby calf born the day before the flood and when they took the cows out of the river bottom land the day of the flood they could not find the calf. That evening, just before dark, the Albrandt boys, a mile downstream pulled it from the flood waters at their farm. There was also a story of a pig, a chicken, and a coyote floating down the river on a small stack of hay.

A week later, when we were able to get back across the river and get home, we were surprised to find that no water had gotten into the house. It did cover the patio, which was four inches below the floor level of the house. There was mud and silt on the sidewalks and driveway and, in the barn, a type of Bijou mud that could not be washed away when wet and too hard to scrape when dry. John Stieb plowed the fields that fall and two years later, when the field was plowed again there was the two-inch layer of yellow Bijou soil back on the surface.

The Lutes home was flooded and we, along with a lot of the neighbors, helped them clean up the mud. It was a lot like trying to hose down axle grease with water. When we thought we had it pretty well cleaned up, the mud would begin oozing out from under cabinets and appliances.

All of the fences in the river bottom were washed out and had to be rebuilt again. There was a program for flood relief for rebuilding what was damaged by the flood. The County Commissioners sent truck loads of men out to help with the clean up. We had a group for one day, dragging barbed wire and posts out of debris. I don't know where these young men were recruited, but we had one from Pennsylvania. When they were brought out they came past John Lebsack's feed lot. He was impressed by the number of cattle in the lot. When he asked how many were in the lot, I told him about 20,000. He then asked, "Gee! Who in hell milks all of them?"

Chapter 18

SELLING THE BUSINESS AND RETIRING

After running the Feed, Grain, and Garden Center for thirty years and making a multitude of friends, we made plans to sell the business.

Early in 1982, we were approached by a party that was interested in the business. The number of years in business and our ages made the offer quite attractive. We met with the prospective buyers repeatedly trying to work out something they could handle and that we could live with also. We finally agreed to hire the man they had selected as their manager if the deal could be consummated. This man was Jim Holmes, a young local man. He worked for us from May 1982 until the end of the year. If this arrangement worked out, the new partnership would buy the business. Late in 1982, we met with George Edwards, an accountant, and G. N. Hurst, owner of a heavy equipment company, and worked out a deal whereby they would be the new owners as of January 1, 1983.

The new owners of Lebsack's Feed and Seed are George Edwards, Roy Edwards, and G. N. Hurst.

After the sale, I agreed to stay with the new owners in a consulting role for one year. After a year and a change in managers, I still spend considerable time advising.

During our years in business we kept quite busy, but still managed to take some time off every year to visit with the children and grandchildren scattered from North Dakota to Texas and from Spokane to Chicago and Mississippi, and then to Tokyo.

Before we sold the business, we bought a fifth-wheel camper and did some traveling. We went into Canada, then east to International Falls, Minnesota where Lyle, his wife Sharon, and their family were vacationing. We then traded the trailer for a Southwind motor home and did some traveling in it, touring the western part of Canada and the Pacific Northwest. In the winter of 1984, we went south to the Rio Grande Valley where Hugo and Freda were spending the winter. We have been to Chicago numerous times, Midland, Texas, Houston, Ft. Smith Arkansas, Hattiesburg, Pennsacola, Spokane, Portland, Williston ND, Nashville, California and all points between. Albert and Rachel went with us to Pennsacola, California, Black Hills, Chicago, and Burwell (to see Hugo and Freda) and we had a good time.

After retiring Esther got busy doing a lot of things she had been putting off while she was working at the store. As of this writing she has just started the last grandchild's (Erica) afghan. She has made one for each of the others--Kirsten, Erik, Elliot, Jordan, Adam, and Jessica.

I invested in Sears Roebuck stock (by buying some tools) and am keeping busy doing wood working, taking care of the yard, and helping out at the feed store.

We have been blessed with a family of four fine children--all doing well--and seven grandchildren, of whom we are very proud, as we are of the fine daughters-in-law who have joined our family.

Chapter 19

OUR CHURCH LIFE

Lebsack church affiliations were with two denominations during our lifetime. During the early 1920's, we attended church at the Amen school. This was the Congregational church and was served by three pastors that I can remember. When there was no preacher, different men in the church read the sermon and gave their interpretations of the scriptures. Those interpretations were often criticized by other members. In those days religion was taken very seriously and there was no room for humor.

We always had devotions before breakfast. Dad would read scripture and have prayer. If you lagged behind after chores and came in late, devotions waited for you. I sometimes thought he read too many verses and prayer lasted a little too long, because we had done the chores and were hungry and breakfast was waiting.

All devotions and prayer were in German. Sometimes we were embarrassed when some of our friends who couldn't understand German had dinner with us. We said our German prayer, and sometimes we could tell by their actions that they were not accustomed to having prayer at the table.

The first preacher I remember was Reverend John Eckhardt, who lived with his large family on the place where Gordon and Earline Schuppe now live. Another, the Reverend Mehl, farmed about two miles west of the McGinley school with his two sons and a daughter. I don't remember how many years each of these men served the church.

The other one I remember was Reverend Steiger, who came from Switzerland, but spoke German. He lived on the north place where Reiny and Alfreda Nein now live. He lived there with the privilege of raising chickens, turkeys and geese. His geese were a problem, because the flock of about twenty roamed the neighborhood. One day they were over at our place and I was to drive them home. I threw a rock and hit one old gander in the head and thought I had killed him. It ran in circles for a bit and dropped to the ground. It scared me. I was afraid of what would happen to me for killing the preachers goose. While standing around, not knowing how I was going to explain this, the gander got up, staggered about for a bit and then made a bee-line for the other geese. I would not have felt too badly if the old gander had died, because he chased me and pinched my behind so often.

We always had the Sunday School Christmas program in the little school house. I remember having to memorize a Christmas verse and so many times was not able to recite it before the congregation, even though the last thing before leaving home was to stand by the Christmas tree and recite for practice. We always knew it well at home.

After the program, we each received a bag of candy with nuts and an apple or an orange. Christmas presents were few, as we lived with the bare necessities.

One Christmas eve, our church and a church near Crook combined their services. The folks loaded us in the old farm wagon, pulled by a team of horses, and bedded with blankets and straw and headed for the school house about nine miles away. There was snow on the ground and it was bitterly cold. The horses were covered with frost and their nostrils were white with frost. I can still hear the steel wheel rims of the wagon squealing on the hard-packed snow and hear the horses hooves clippity-clopping. I wonder how many of us today would hitch up a team of horses

and drive eighteen or twenty miles after dark in near zero weather and not get home until near midnight. That was dedication.

The Rev. Ekhardt, mentioned earlier, preached fire and brimstone sermons and very loud at times. The small children had to sit in the front row where everyone could see them and see that they behaved. One Sunday morning, he was standing behind the teacher's desk, which was the pulpit, and to drive home a point slammed his fist on the desk and the bookshelf on the back of the desk fell to the floor right in front of me. I was asleep when this happened and it scared me so that I ran back and sat with my Mother. Women and men sat on opposite sides of the church, the little ones up front and the teenagers in the rear.

The Rev. Steiger, whose goose I nearly killed, was a more tempered speaker and he and his wife were very kind people. One time when we were thinning beets near their home, they had been to town and brought us some ice cream with strawberries on it. That was really a lift for us, because thinning was a dreaded job and we appreciated the treat.

In 1927, a new Congregational Church was built at Fifth and Chestnut streets in Sterling while Rev. A. Fuenning was pastor. The Amen School Church was closed and our family and the Amens and the Constance families transferred their membership to the new church.

After Rev. Fuenning left Sterling, Rev. J. P. Flemmer came to serve the church. This was a new frontier for most of us. Rev. Flemmer and his wife were very sociable and, in spite of some of the older people, it turned out to be a church of laughter and good times. Attendance and membership increased, a good Sunday School and Christian Endeavor (young people's league) were formed. Church picnics became very popular. We had a Fourth of July picnic every year in the John Amen pasture near the river. Races, horse shoes, ride the mule, nail driving contests and a lot of food and ice cream were enjoyed. I got into a left-handed nail driving contest and was doing real well until someone came up behind me and stopped me, took my hammer and put it in my right hand. It was my Mother. She knew I was left-handed.

After Reverend Flemmer left Sterling, Reverend Jacob Amen, brother of the Proctor Amens served the church for several years. Followed by Reverend Wilhelm Strauch and then by Reverend Emmanuel Gackle. Reverend Gackle officiated at our wedding on November 25, 1937.

The Gackle's had four children while in Sterling. I believe they went to Loveland and later back to their home state, South Dakota. This winter, we learned that Hugh Gackle, son of the minister, was teaching in the Northbrook, Illinois, schools and was teacher to our grandson, Erik. We called Reverend and Mrs. Gackle in Aberdeen, South Dakota and had a nice visit with them.

I think all except Jake and Fred were confirmed in the new Congregational Church in Sterling. They were confirmed in the country church.

As an aside to the church chronology, Reverend Jacob Amen told about coming to Sterling from Hastings, Nebraska, for an interview and trial preaching. They had just purchased a new 1933 Ford V8 two-door sedan, pretty sporty black with bright yellow wheels and spare tires mounted on the front fenders. It was summer and they were driving with the windows rolled down. Roland, who was about ten was riding in the back seat when he spotted a wasp on his fathers hat. Without any warning he rolled up a magazine and whacked the wasp on the Reverend's hat. It scared the Reverend so that he ran into the barrow pit, lost control of the car and wound up in a farmers field. He was in such a state of shock that they parked in the field for some time until he regained his composure and was able to continue on to Sterling. He drove much like his brother,

Conrad, who would come out of church, get in his car, put on a pair of white cotton gloves, spit in his hands, rub them together, start the motor, honk the horn, and put 'er in reverse with open throttle.

We were members of this church until 1948, when we transferred our membership to the First Presbyterian Church of Sterling. At that time the Rev. Wm. Faulds was the minister, followed by Dr. Francis N. White, Darrel Davis, John Frehrichs, and Ivan Rudus, our present pastor. All of our children were confirmed into this church and Esther and I sang in the choir for about thirty years. I served as a ruling Elder for eight years, and, as is customary, once an Elder, always an Elder.

Chapter 20

DAD AND MOTHER LEBSACK

Through all of his farming, Dad was always very healthy and a very strong man, physically and mentally. It was quite a shock to us when, in 1947, he wasn't feeling well and went to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, where the doctors diagnosed his illness as chronic leukemia. His health began deteriorating slowly and over the next several years he required blood transfusions periodically. This would give him a lift and he would be able to live a fairly normal life. Several of the boys who worked for us at the store and their friends and the Dobler boys and their friends who were helping build the elevator would go to Greeley periodically and give blood to his supply in the blood bank to keep it available at all times.

Dad was always a hard worker and expected everyone else to be the same. He was meticulous in everything he did and expected perfection of others. He kept good equipment and his horses were almost of show-horse type and always well-kept.

One winter, after losing several horses because of age and crippling he went to a special draft horse sale at the Denver Stockyards and came home with six dapple gray percheron horses and one team of almost snow white. One team weighed a ton each, and the others weighed around seventeen and eighteen hundred pounds. These were beautiful animals and I wish there were some pictures in the old family album of them. Dad later bought a team of blacks from John Waltz of Crook. This was a very high-life team and were used for planting beets and cultivation only. These were Dad's team and it was only in an emergency when someone else worked them. He planted the straightest beet rows in the country and, unlike George Amen, his horses did a good job. George told me one time when I looked down his beet rows, "My horses don't give a damn about my work."

Many times in winter or in early spring when it was raining, we would have to bring the harnesses into the basement where the repair work and the oiling of the leather was done. Those were also the days when we would trim the horses hooves and mane and tails to be ready to go to the field when the weather permitted.

We never worked on Sunday or religious holidays, except for irrigating. When we turned on North Sterling water, we stayed with it day and night until we were finished, since we didn't have enough water to waste. The other exception was Good Friday which was potato planting time. We would go to church in the morning and plant potatoes in the afternoon.

Dad was a leader--in church, in the school district, Republican politics, or anytime anything had to be done in the neighborhood. When we went to the little church in the Amen School House we were often without a preacher. Those times, Dad was nearly always appointed to read the sermon. He was the only one who could read and do it with expression enough to preach a sermon. His ability to sing kept him in the position of song leader. This was also true after we went to the Sterling church. We often heard that when "Brother Lebsack was not in church or prayer meeting, the singing did not go very well."

After Dad's passing, Mother sold the big house on 18th street and bought a smaller house close to their church on the east side of Greeley. We had been after her to get a new refrigerator because her's was so old and inconvenient, but she resisted the idea because the new ones were too expensive. One day Esther and I went to Greeley to visit her and she wanted to know why we came. "Kommt ihr von Denver und hatt geshtopt bei mir?" (Are you coming from Denver and

just stopped here?) She always felt that we did not come to see her, that we were just stopping as we were going through. When we told her we wanted to go refrigerator shopping, she again told us they just cost too much. (Die kosten zu viel.) She finally consented to go with us and we found a nice Frigidaire that she liked. After it was delivered, she said, "Warum haben wir es nicht lang zurik getan?" (Why didn't we do this long ago?)

The first television set that they had was one that all the children chipped in on to buy for their fiftieth wedding anniversary. It was not working well, and again we tried to get her to buy a new one, but she again said new ones were too expensive. One Saturday when we closed the store at noon, I went to Stickney's and bought a new Zenith television. That afternoon I took it to Greeley and hooked it up for her. She was still saying it was too expensive and she didn't watch television that much anyway. Sometime later we visited her and asked her how she liked the new color television set. She said, "Warum habit ir mich so lang sitzen lossen mit dem altes dink?" (Why did you let me sit here with that old thing so long?)

Mother took care of her yard and loved flowers, of which she had lots and lots. When she was eighty years old she still mowed her own lawn, but she had some bad luck and then hired someone else to do the mowing. The mower chute plugged up with wet grass and she reached in too far and cut the tips off her index and second fingers. That slowed her down, but didn't stop her. We were admiring her nice yard one day with curbs and sidewalk edges so neatly trimmed. I remarked that Donnie (grandson) sure did a nice job. She said, "Wer hat taas getan?" (Who did that?) I repeated that Donnie had done such a nice job. Then I found out that she had trimmed about one hundred feet of sidewalk with an old butcher knife.

Not much later, she became ill and had to have surgery for rectal cancer. Through her determination to recover, she got along very well, but had to live with a colostomy. It did not keep her from enjoying life and keeping up with her crocheting and other handy work or keep her from having a good meal ready no matter when family or guests arrived.

Although she lived alone after her illness, she needed help with her colostomy and some of her household chores. We have our sisters Leona and Ernestine, who live in Greeley and near Mother, to thank for all of their help and attention to her in the late years of her life. If it had not been for them being close by and close to her, her last years may not have been pleasant. One of her greatest fears was to have to live with some of the family or worse, live in a retirement home.

She was an excellent cook and bread maker, and when they were still on the farm and hired hands ate at the family table, they always thanked her for the kind of food that they seldom found elsewhere. When the threshing crew came to our place they always knew the food would be plentiful and excellent. When we helped the neighbors thresh grain and we came home evenings, her first question was, "What did (Mrs. Amen or Mrs. Pyle or whomever) have for dinner today?" The crews would be at our house soon and Mother wasn't about to be outdone by any of the neighbor ladies.

When she lived alone in Greeley and Lyle was working for KOSI in Denver, he would come home for the weekend and sometimes he would stop in Greeley and bring her to Sterling. One time he stopped to pick her up and he had a car with seat belts, which was a new concept to her. When she got into the car and Lyle started to fasten her seat belt, she said, "Lyle, if you gonna drive like dat, I shtay home."

On Wednesday, December 4, 1975 she was to celebrate her ninetieth birthday, but because her birthday came during the week, we (the family) decided to celebrate her birthday on Sunday,

December 1. Nine of her ten children were present to wish her a happy birthday, plus a host of grand- and great-grandchildren. Jake was snowed in at home at Holyoke, but made it to Greeley on Monday. Those from out of the area returned to their homes on Monday and Fred and Mollie were going to leave on Wednesday for their home in California. Early Tuesday morning, Mother came to Fred and Mollie's bedroom and complained of severe pains and nausea. Fred called the ambulance and Ernestine and Leona, but by the time they reached the hospital, she had passed away.

When Mother and Dad retired from the farm and moved to Greeley they renewed acquaintances with many people whom they had met at church conferences and meetings from Lincoln, Nebraska, to Seattle, Washington, and points between. Along with Mr. and Mrs. Schmidt of Loveland, and Mr. and Mrs. Wagner and the Fahrebruchs, they attended many church conventions in Nebraska, Oregon, and Washington as well as Colorado, Wyoming and Idaho.

These things were high on their priority list and they had a lot of enjoyment doing them. They lived their last years to the fullest. After Dad passed away and Mother moved nearer the church, she attended services and prayer meetings regularly as long as she was able.

As I mentioned in the chapter about arriving at Ellis Island, we can and do thank our God and our parents for having the foresight, courage, and determination to leave their families and homeland, sailing the forbidding Atlantic for an unknown land to establish a new home. We are grateful to them for suffering and slaving so that we might have a decent life beyond that Great Lady they sang to in New York harbor.

MEMORIES OF JACOB LEBSACK

The following is a portion of the history of Jacob and Katherine Lebsack as he had written it for his ten children. The first version is in German, from his own handwriting. The second I translated into English.

LEBENSLAUF VON JACOB AND KATHERINE LEBSACK

Jacob Lebsack ein sohn von Conrad und Anna Margaret Lebsack, geborne Graining, eine geborne Kissler, wurde geboren am 9 ten April 1882 zu dem Franker Kutter Russland, wo er als ein kind die heilige taufe emphing, und nach seinem 15 ten lebens jahr confermirt von Pastor Ross. Er verelichte sich mit Katherina Margared Klein am 5 ten Oktober 1903 wurde getraut von Pastor Sommed. Sie wurde eine tochter von Johannes and Katherina Margared Klein eine geborne Schmidt, tochter von Andreas Schmidt. Sie wurde beboren am 4 ten December 1885 in Frank Russland, wo sie als kind die heilige taufe empfing, und nach ihrem 15 ten lebensjahr confermirt von Pastor Sommed.

Am Nofember 12, 1903 wurte ich in die Russiche Armie eingezogen, wo ich 3 jahre ferbrachte. Am 12 ten Nofember 1912 verlisen wir die alte heimat, und mach einer langen reise kamen wie am 29 ten December, 1912 in Lincoln Nebraska an. Nach einem zwei monathlichen aufenthal in Lincoln kamen wir nach Hastings Nebraska wo wir 4 Jahren un 3 monaten aarbeiteten fur Burlington Eisenban als car inspector. Im jahr 1917 den 17 ten May kamen wir in Proctor an wo wir die farmerei betriben bis 1944.

Den 6 ten September haben wir unse in den Ruhstand, gesetzt in Greeley Colorado, und der libe Gott hat gnaden geschenkt zu unsrer reise, un unsere arbeit gesegnet.

Waren all die jahren mit der Kongregational Kirche glidlich ferbund. Ihrst in dem Amen schule hous, dan in die Sterlinger gemeinde, und dan in Greeley St. Paulus Kongregational Kirche.

Ich habe meine birger-schaaft von American (citizenship) bekommen in dem jahr 1922.

Die mutter in dem jahr 1952 am zwelften April.

Here is my translation of Dad's history on the preceding page.

Jacob Henry Lebsack, son of Conrad and Anna Margaret Lebsack, nee Graining, daughter of Jacob and Margaret Graining, nee Kissler, was born on April 9, 1882 in Frank Russia, where he was baptized as a baby and when he was fifteen years old he was confirmed by a Pastor Ross. He was married to Katherine Margaret Klein on October 5, 1903 by Pastor Sommed.

Katherine Margaret Klein, daughter of John and Katherine Klein, nee Schmidt, daughter of Andreas Schmidt, was born in Frank Russia December 4, 1885. She was baptized as an infant and confirmed when she was fifteen years of age also by pastor Sommed.

In November, 1903, Jacob was inducted into the Russian army where he served for three years.

On November 12, 1912 they left their Russian homeland on a long trip to the United States of America. On December 29, 1912 they arrived in Lincoln, Nebraska with the help of a friend, George Strasheim. They located in Lincoln for three months and then moved to Hastings where Jacob found employment with the Burlington railroad as car inspector for four years.

In 1917 on May 16, they arrived at Proctor Colorado where they were met by the James Hamil family, where they were employed for one year and then began farming three and one half miles northwest of Proctor, where all of the ten children received their elementary education.

On September 6, 1944 they moved to Greeley where they lived in retirement (until Jacob passed away on February 16, 1959, and Katherine December 3, 1975).

They were affiliated with the Congregational Church as members of the Proctor Country Church, then at the First Congregational Church of Sterling, and ultimately St. Paul's Congregational Church in Greeley.

Jacob received his American citizenship in 1922 and Katherine hers in January 1952.

As a closing remark of this history, translated from German to English and from his written hand, Jacob had written, "The Dear Lord has blessed us throughout the years of our lives and has blessed our work on this earth."

MEMORIES OF KATHERINE LEBSACK

Recorded and transcribed by her daughters.

Jacob's girlfriend had gone to the U.S. They had been friends all through school. After she left he started paying attention to me. I was much younger. His cousin was my best friend. One evening she said, "You know what? My grandfather says you are going to be Jacob's wife." I told her he was too old and did not want him for my husband.

We were a group of friends, boys and girls. We were in a confirmation class and got together a lot of evenings and played together. He came into our group and we said, "What does he want here in our younger group? Why can't he stay with the older friends where he has always been?"

Since Jacob was three years older than I, I was very timid when he was around. If he was in our group, I was always the first to rush home. When the boys and girls came to my house, I became very nervous and quiet during the evening. I was only 16.

In our culture, the young unmarried couples had a certain way of celebrating Pentecost. If a couple were "dating," the young man would bring a "May tree" to her home and place it on the gable of the house. The parents who had daughters had the fixings for a May tree on the gable. The tree was made of branches of blooming bushes or trees wrapped around a long pole to make a round, beautiful tree. This was put in place on the front of the house. The boys would go from house to house, as a group, putting up their May trees on the house of the girl that was special to them. They were then invited in for kuchen and milk. If the couple were having disagreements, the boy would bring a butsamán (scarecrow). I received a scarecrow one year. I didn't mind it--I was young--and I still felt he was too old for me.

One summer I worked for a family. I had received some fabric from an aunt who had a fabric store. We lived in a summer kitchen during the summer. I was there one evening, sewing on my blouse when he came to see me. I asked him why he came to see me at this time of evening. "I just wanted to see what you were doing," he answered. During the conversation, I must have said something to provoke him. He teasingly took a sleeve from the blouse and put it in his pocket. He kept it for about two weeks, but did return it.

Jacob asked me to marry him many times, but I felt I was too young. He then went to my parents. They, too, said I was too young. He wouldn't give up. He took his godfather with him the next time. They still refused. My mother became concerned, asking if we "had" to get married. I assured her that we didn't. Jacob informed my parents that he would soon be going to the army, so they gave in and we were married on October 5, 1903. Jacob was 21. I was 17. I wore a blue dress for our wedding. My mother made my veil. We had fried lamb, kuchen, and whiskey. We had a wedding dance.

In November, a group of young men had to draw lottery numbers. When he came back, he announced that he was a soldier now and we had only been married a month.

I was really sorry I had gotten married when I had to live in Jacob's home. In our culture, the girl did not live with her parents or work outside of the home after she was married. She moved in with her husband's parents.

I had to work terribly hard and there were so many people in his family. His stepmother was very hard to live with. The home I worked in before I was married was ideal. They had two children and the parents spent most of the day in the store they owned.

Jacob enjoyed his first stint in the Russian army. He had done some trading with the Russians, therefore learned to speak Russian. He carried a gun, but didn't need to use it. He took care of the carriages and horses and transported officers wherever they needed to go.

He was in the army about two and a half years. The Czar had three daughters. He had promised the soldiers that if he and his wife had a baby boy, some of the soldiers would get three months leave. It was a boy and on January 6, they had a lottery. Jacob drew the first lucky number. He was the first lucky soldier to go home. I didn't know this until the evening of January 6. This is a holiday and much celebrating was going on in the neighborhood. Grandma Lebsack, who was almost blind, the baby and I were home. We heard a sled come into the yard. The windows were frosted over except for a small space on the bottom. We both peeked out and there was Jacob. The baby was six months old.

He had to return to the Russian army again when Russia declared war on Japan. John was just a baby. Some of the men had six children. It was a very sad time for us mothers. The school master had invited all the families to the school house where he delivered a sermon, sang hymns and a prayer. The soldiers got into the wagons and left. I cried, for I was sure I would never see him again. I had three children.

He was gone just a short time when the war ended. He returned and said, "That was the last time! I'm going to America!" His father wanted him to stay and work, since he felt Jacob hadn't done his share of work during the army years. Jacob said, "I had someone here working for me," meaning me. His parents were wealthy farmers, but would not give him money to go to America. He wrote to Uncle Jascha in Hastings, Nebraska. A Mr. Strasheim stopped in to see us and offered to help us. He and Jacob went to get all the papers, passports, and all that needed to be done. The family now had grown to six: Jake, Fred, John, Lydia, and the parents.

Jacob had a hard time find a small boat that would take us out to the ship which we were to board for America. Finally, a "little Jew" with a motor boat came to us and offered us a ride to the ship. He even helped us with the children and baggage. We had no idea why this man came to us and would take no pay. We think Mr. Strasheim must have paid him.

We had gotten on the ship before the Strasheims. They were so happy to see us. They said they were praying that we would get on the same boat. There were seven families from our town in Russia that came to America on the same ship. They were Frederick Roths, Strasheims, Fricke, and Hoffofer. It was nice being with all of our friends on the long trip.

We had many hardships. I remember the terrible storm when the dishes fell out of the cupboards and off the table. The water entered the ship and I was very much afraid.

The children became ill with measles. We wrapped Fred in a blanket and took him up to the doctor. He was put into the quarantined area where the rest of the family joined him until they docked. We were in a room alone and it was nice. We didn't get too much sleep at night. The people from down below would come up to visit, sitting on the floor and just talking.

Many of the children on the boat became ill. They were taken to Castle Gardens where the hospitals were. A man met them with a cart with a white cloth on the bottom. He put John, Fred,

and Jake in the cart and covered them with the white cloth. I carried Lydia across the bridge to the hospital. He put Jake and Fred in one door. They were screaming, "Mama" as loud as they could. I cried. We went on to another hospital where they put John. Lydia and I were in another building. Jacob spent a lot of time on deck of the ship watching the fishing boats. His eyes were very red and sore. He was in another hospital, but I did not know where. I had such a fear of his having to be sent back to Russia.

Once I recognized Fred in a hospital window. He had a bandage on his head. I was happy to see him. Another time I saw Fred and Jake watching some bunnies from their open hospital window. I called to them and they said, "That's Mama," and started crying. A nurse reprimanded me for doing that. They were now sitting on their bed crying.

A friend had a child in the same hospital as John. On her next visit she would put John up to the window so he could see his mother. She put him in the window, but he didn't care if he saw his mother or not.

When it was time for the family to be dismissed from the hospitals, they brought the three boys to me. John turned around and said, "I want Papa". Papa joined us to continue our journey to Nebraska by train.

When we got to Lincoln, there wasn't any work, so we went to Haviland. Jacob got a job digging sewer ditch. Because of not doing any work for the three months on the ship, his hands became very sore and blistered. He was ready to go back home, but I assured him I would never make that hard trip again. He soon forgot how hard he had to work. We had debts to pay: \$75 to Mr. Strasheim. We bought a bed for \$2 while we were in Lincoln.

We moved to Hastings where Jacob had a job working on the railroad. Aunt Marybell and Uncle Jascha helped us a lot. The boys used a grape basket to get the eggs we needed from her. She gave us canned fruit, jelly, and even a beautiful pieced-quilt. I really liked the quilt because I had to leave everything I had with Jacob's family. That was hard.

Our long trip was very hard as well as our stay on Ellis Island and Castle Garden. Not knowing the language and therefore not knowing where my children were was very hard. We cried a lot!

After we arrived in Nebraska I wrote a long letter to our relatives in Russia telling of our experience. They replied and said they had read my letter in the prayer meeting and there was not a dry eye.

LEBSACK DESCENDANTS

During World War II Robert Hettinger and Leona took their two boys Loren and Lowell and went to California where Robert went to work in the coastal shipyards. While they were in California Bob became ill. After a lengthy diagnosis the doctors found that he had Hodgkins disease. They came back to Sterling where Bob, after beginning to feel better opened up an auto repair shop, something he loved to do, but after about a year he passed away. This was February 1, 1944. Leona and the boys then moved to Greeley and lived there for some time and then married Dan Steinmetz, May 10, 1946 whose wife lost her life in an automobile accident. Dan had two sons, Donald and Delbert, and one daughter Margaret, so they had the five children between them, who are grown, married and have families of their own.

The Good Lord has provided for a perpetuation of the Lebsack name:

Jake and Dollie have three sons. Robert has seven children, five boys and two girls, Terry, Kelley, Holly, Dana, Heidi, Robin and Brandy. Richard and Mary Lou have a daughter, Lori, and a son, Curtis. Allen and Colleen have one son, Ryan.

Fred and Alma have a son, Wayne. He and his wife Vera have no children.

John and Mary have two sons, Donald and John Jr. Donald and wife Joyce have two daughters, Julie and Jan, and one son Kenton. Ken Carlson and Julie have one baby daughter Erika. John and Holly have one son, James Bennett.

Ted Dobler (now deceased) and Lydia have one daughter, Bonnie, and two sons, Stanley and Tom. Dean and Bonnie have two sons, Doug and Donn and a daughter Deana. Stanley and Joanne have two sons, Brent and Brian, and one daughter, Barbara. Tom and Rose have two sons, Chris and William, and two daughters, Lynette and Jessica Katie.

Clarence and Esther have one daughter, Sharon, and three sons, Lyle, Tom, and Steve. Lyle and wife Sharon have one daughter Kirsten, and one son Erik. Tom and Linda have three sons, Eliot, Jordan and Adam Jacob. Steve and his wife have two daughters, Jessica and Erica.

Dan and Leona Steinmetz have four sons, Don, Delbert, Loren, Lowell, and a daughter Margaret. Don and wife Betty have two sons, Don and Duane, and a daughter Donna, Delbert and his wife, Jean, have one daughter, Debbie, and two sons Mike and Todd. Jerry and Margaret Walters have two sons, Dan and Jerad. Loren and Margaret Hettinger have two sons, Tom and Trevor and one daughter Krista. Lowell and Jennie Hettinger have a daughter, Jill and a son, Todd.

Albert and Rachel Schuppe have one son, Gordon, and two daughters Janie and Marla Kay. Gordon and Earline have one daughter, Cindy, and a son, Mike. Earl and Marla Jessie have one son, Kevin, and Richard and Janie Miller have a son, Jason and a daughter Shelley.

Ray and Emma Kautz have a daughter, Judy, and two sons, James and Gary. James and his wife Stephanie have two sons Justin and Garrett, and a daughter Amy. Lonnie and Judy Medcalf have one daughter, Paula.

Hugo and Freda Flaig have one son, Kenton, and three daughters, Linda, Cindy and Susan. Don Amen and wife Linda have four sons, Shelby, Nathan, Cole and baby Seth. John and Cindy Gaterud have one daughter, Abby. Kenton lives in New York City and Susan in Aspen, Colorado.

Fred and Ernestine May have two sons, Randy and Rick. Randy and Michela have a son, Chad. Rick and Nancy have no children as of this writing.

Jacob and Katherine Lebsack left a crop of twenty-seven grandchildren and fifty-two great-grandchildren, twenty-five of them bearing the name of Lebsack. The Lebsack girls have done their share of preparing for the perpetuation of their husbands' family names also.

Written by Clarence Lebsack in 1986

BIRTHS IN THE LEBSACK & KLEIN FAMILIES

The Lebsack Family:

Martin Lebsack	1822	
Conrad Lebsack	1852	
Anna Margaret Graining	?	
Jacob Henry Lebsack		April 9, 1882 (Feb.16, 1959)
Katherine Margaret Klein		December 4, 1885 (Dec. 3, 1975)
Jacob Lebsack, Jr.		July 14, 1906 (Mar. 7, 2003)
Fred Lebsack		Jan. 11, 1908 (Jan. 12, 1988)
John Lebsack		Oct. 2, 1909 (Dec. 20, 1992)
Lydia Lebsack		Oct. 4, 1911 (Nov. 20, 1993)
Clarence Albert Lebsack		April 19, 1914 (Dec. 15, 1991)
Leona Pauline Lebsack		Oct. 5, 1916
Rachel Lebsack		May 23, 1918
Emma Katherine Lebsack		April 27, 1920 (June 21, 1993)
Freda Marie Lebsack		July 27, 1922
Ernestine Darlene Lebsack		May 24, 1924 (Sept. 26, 1998)

The Klein Family:

John Klein	April 1, 1860 (December 1933)
Katherine Klein (Schmidt)	January 6, 1863 (October 1927)
Katherine Margaret Klein	December 4, 1885 (Dec. 3, 1975)
Katherina Klein Walker	(1915)
John Klein	December 16, 1887 (April 1960)
Fred Klein	April 13, 1897 (April 27, 1985)
Anna Klein Urich	July 4, 1900 (January 22, 1970)
Jake Klein	June 20, 1902 (Nov 26, 1968)
George Klein	Nov 11, 1905
Etta Klein Huntley	Sept. 13, 1908

WEDDINGS IN THE LEBSACK FAMILY

Jacob Lebsack, Jr. married Natalie Keil	Feb. 8, 1931
John Lebsack married Mary Fritzler	Jan. 24, 1932
Fred Lebsack married Alma Peters	Sept. 5, 1937
married Mollie Herbst	Apr. 9, 1950
Lydia Lebsack married Ted Dobler	Feb. 22, 1924
Clarence Lebsack married Esther Hettinger	Nov. 25, 1937
Leona Lebsack married Robert Hettinger	June 5, 1938
married Dan Steinmetz	May 5, 1946
Rachel Lebsack married Albert Schuppe	Nov. 24, 1940
Emma Lebsack married Raymond Kautz	June 22, 1941
Freda Lebsack married Hugo Flaig	Sept. 22, 1943
Ernestine Lebsack married Fred May	June 24, 1946

LIBERTY, STANDING FOR THE FUTURE

by Lee Iacocco

From the beginning, Americans didn't really appreciate what they had...what the Lady in the harbor stood for.

To really understand, you may have to look through somebody else's eyes. Think back with me for a minute to what it must have meant to my parents, or to yours, or to your grandparents...to all those 17 million people who came during the big immigration wave.

First, those people left their families and their homes. Most knew they'd never get back to see them again. What makes people do that? Courage? Desperation? Determination to be free? Wanting to give their kids a decent life? All of those, I guess. But what a wrenching thing it must have been.

And then 17 or 18 days on the ocean, down in steerage, where almost everybody on the ship was seasick. (My own mother got typhoid fever.) They had two to three crowded, smelly weeks to think about what they'd left and to wonder if just half the stories about America were really true.

None of the immigrants remembered that boat ride very fondly. But they remembered the day they got to New York. They all came up on deck, dressed up in their best clothes, because this was the biggest day of their lives. They stood on the deck with just the clothes on their backs, and maybe a suitcase with a rope around it.

The first thing they saw was the Statue of Liberty. It was shiny then, because the copper hadn't turned green yet. And they could see it gleaming in the harbor from miles out.

I don't care how sick they were, or how scared, or how lonely--the sight of the Lady saying "Welcome" made the whole thing worth it. They never forgot that--or what happened next.

If the statue was a symbol of hope, then Ellis Island was the reality. The immigrants called it "The Island of Tears" and for good reason. They were herded off the boat into a gigantic building...thousands in a single day. It looked like a cathedral but inside it was a cattle barn. Everybody was jammed into long lines, hanging onto each other, to the kids, and to the suitcase with a rope around it.

The sheer numbers meant that nothing was personal. There were quick medical exams, some of them humiliating. Tags were hung around their necks, and they didn't know what they meant. An immigration agent asked them 30 questions in two minutes in a language they didn't understand. Twenty percent of them were detained on the Island for medical and legal reasons, sometimes for days, sometimes for weeks. One in 50 was put back on the boat for Europe. For them the dream was over.

But we need its symbol as much as we need the statue--because that's where the story really began. That's where the 17 million people were really introduced to America.

They took a ferry across to the Battery and--guess what--they found that the streets were not paved with gold. They were on their own. The adventure was over. Now they had to go to work. Now they had to build something--with brains and strong backs and sheer guts.

They went to work in factories and in the mines and on the railroads, generally at the lowest-paying jobs. Those always went to the new arrivals. But in just a couple of decades they built an industrial America that was the wonder of the world!

They also built homes and neighborhoods and churches. Their kids went to college, fought in our wars, and became leaders in their communities.

So both the Statue and Ellis Island are important symbols. One, of the shining hope for freedom and a better life. And the other, of the sacrifice, the suffering and the plain, hard work that turned that hope into reality.

We need them both.

Almost half of the people in America today are direct descendants of those 17 million whose first glimpses of America were those two symbols.

But they are equally important to every American--whether his forebearers came 300 years ago to find religious freedom or later from Scandinavia to farm the prairies or to cut timber in the Northwest, from China and Japan to work on the West Coast--north from Mexico or south from Canada.

The Statue of Liberty stands for the same thing for all of us--even those whose ancestors were brought to this country in chains as slaves. Maybe she is especially important to them.

I've spent a lot of time on the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island project. And other people are working full time on them. Millions of people have sent in money. This caught on because these symbols still stand for something beautiful.

But symbols mean nothing if the values aren't there.

We aren't spending millions of dollars just so the statue won't fall into the harbor and become a hazard to navigation. We aren't fixing up Ellis Island so people will have a nice place to go on a Sunday afternoon. We're doing it because we want to remember, honor, and save the basic values that make America great--hard work, dignified by decent pay, courage to risk everything and start over, wisdom to adapt to change, and maybe most of all: self-confidence--to believe in ourselves. Nothing is more important than that.

The country is going through some big changes today. I don't know what to call it--the "information age," the "high-tech era," the "post-industrial society," or all of these. And people are scared. They wonder if there'll be a place for them.

What are they scared about? There was also a revolution going on when those millions of people were being pushed through the chutes at Ellis Island. It was called the industrial revolution. They came from sulfur pits in Sicily and coal mines in Silesia and jumped right into the middle of it here. They didn't even speak the language.

So what's so tough about today? And why can't our kids look forward to even more than we have, not less?

We make a mistake if we think the Statue of Liberty is just a historical monument, for she has never stood for the past. Every immigrant and every returning GI who sailed by her was escaping the past and entering the future.

She may be 100 years old, but the values she stands for had better not be as weathered as she is. And I don't think they are. Maybe now that we've gotten her polished up, more people will see that.

We're not just preserving a statue, we're preserving all that she stands for. And if that's not worth passing on to our kids...then what is?

To those of you who are following the path Jacob and Katherine Lebsack have cleared for you and have read the short referrals that I've made to the Statue of Liberty in this history, I hope you read Mr. Iacocco's article carefully. Then stop and think, seriously, where we could all be had it not been for the courage and the desire that these two people and thousands like them had in wanting something better for their families and future families.

OUR CHILDREN: GRADUATIONS AND VOCATIONS

Three of our children graduated from Sterling High School. Lyle in 1957, Sharon in 1959, and Tom in 1964. Steve graduated from Merino High School in 1969.

Lyle went to work at radio stations before he graduated from high school and continued after graduation. Working in Sterling, Ft. Morgan, Ft. Collins, Aberdeen, South Dakota, Denver, Nashville, Omaha, Indianapolis and Chicago. As I mentioned earlier in this history, when we got our first radio in the 1920's we listened to the National Barn Dance on WLS in Chicago. It would be stretching my imagination to think that after I grew up, got married, and had a family, one of our children would be working at WLS.

Sharon graduated from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley with a major in music and returned to get her Masters Degree. She then went to the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg and has been teaching flute and harp there since. She now owns a townhouse there, so it appears that Mississippi is her home.

Tom graduated from Colorado State University in Fort Collins with a degree in electrical engineering. He worked for Boeing in Seattle for a year, then joined Schlumberger Oilfield Services, with whom he is still affiliated. His various stations with the company have been in Fort Morgan, Williston, ND, (twice), Fort Smith, AR, Houston (twice), Farmington, NM, and Tokyo, where they presently live. Their U.S. home is in Breckinridge.

Steve went to Northeastern Junior College, then to Colorado State University. He also spent time in Hattiesburg. Steve has been with radio and television stations in Hattiesburg, Denver, Portland, Spokane, and then back to Denver with KIMN. His family's present home is in Westminster.

CLARENCE AND ESTHER LEBSACK'S CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN AND GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN

(Updated by Tom Lebsack, October, 2008)

	<u>Birthdate</u>
Lyle Dean Lebsack	June 29, 1939
(married Sharon Marye Lord August 5, 1967)	July 2, 1943
Heidi Ann Lebsack	March 3, 1969 (d: July 11, 1971)
Kirsten Marye Lebsack	May 29, 1971
(married H. Clayton Whipple Oct. 21, 1995)	February 10, 1971
Chase Thomas Whipple	January 31, 1999
Jack Dean Whipple	April 27, 2002
Erik Dean Lebsack	January 22, 1973
(married Joanna Stidham May 30, 1998)	October 5, 1974
Shannon Christine Lebsack	January 31, 2003
Owen Matthew Lebsack	July 17, 2004
Drew Thomas Lebsack	July 18, 2004
Sharon Elaine Lebsack	September 12, 1941
Edwin Thomas Lebsack	February 2, 1946
(married Linda Diane Hays April 11, 1971)	November 25, 1947
Eliot Todd Lebsack	March 25, 1972
(married Cynthia Flinn May 28, 1998)	February 28, 1976
Abigail May Lebsack	May 29, 2001
Evan Tesla Lebsack	January 25, 2003
Samantha (Sadie) Joy Lebsack	December 6, 2004
Jordan Thomas Lebsack	April 18, 1975
(married Dana Mychelle Bauer, Aug. 10, 2008)	September 30, 1980
Adam Jacob Lebsack	June 15, 1979
Steven Allen Lebsack	September 10, 1951
(married Patty Hendricks September 7, 1975)	
Jessica Lynn Lebsack	September 17, 1979
DeShaun Dixon	May 24, 1999
Erica Leigh Lebsack	September 20, 1982
(married Diane Montiel Nov. 25, 1999)	November 27, 1950