

My Father's 84 Years

*Friends and neighbors, I have had many,
My cows and fields, they yielded plenty,
Three fine girls, a loving wife,
What more could I ask from life?*

FROM "MY MASTER'S VOICE"
BY CHERYL FRIESEN

When I was a girl, my family took a car trip to northeastern Nebraska to visit my father's relatives. It was a major event because dairy farmers, like my father, take vacations rarely since it was difficult to find someone to trust with the cows. Dairy farming was too demanding to ask another farmer to milk another farmer's herd as well as his own. It took a fine high school boy to trust with Dad's cows because they were his livelihood. That summer, Dad hired Allen Buskey, a neighbor boy. When one of my father's cows was about to calve, Allen slept in the barn to make certain the delivery went smoothly. As soon as Dad knew, any doubts his herd was well tended disappeared.

What I remembered most was visiting the farm where my father was born. It was east of a small town called Magnet. Even though the owners were attending church that Sunday, we went in the house. It never occurred to Dad that we were intruders because no one suspected one's neighbors nor oneself of theft.

Dad showed me the small room facing the northeast where he was born in 1911. Since it was morning, bright sunlight beamed through the window. Even though I was only twelve, I was mystified, and I wondered if the light had another source other than the sun. I later learned his older brothers Roy and Allen and his sister Mary were born in the room in 1918. I also learned his nephews Vance and Bruce were born in the room, too. No wonder Dad wanted to show it to me.

DAD'S BIRTH

Dad was the ninth child born to his parents, Axel and Hulda, in 1911. My grandmother was 38, but she was able to manage her large family because her first, second and fourth children were daughters. (In families with no daughters, a girl was often hired to help with the housework and child care.) As the Mainquist daughters became older, they

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were assigned baby brothers and sisters to tend.

My father became Edith's, the third daughter's, charge. Dad said, "I was always kind of a favorite with her, and she always took care of me." The family even took a special picture of Edith in her best white dress and high white shoes with him as a toddler in shorts. Sometimes I wonder if that's when my father developed his knack for getting his picture taken and printed in the paper.

WORLD WAR I

War was declared at 1:13 this afternoon. At exactly that hour President Wilson signed a joint resolution passed by the house [sic] and senate [sic], declaring a state of war between United States and Germany....

As the president affixed his signature to the document, Lieutenant Commander Byron McCandless signaled across the street to the navy [sic] department that war was formally on and orders were flashed out from the government wireless to ships at sea and to the forts of the United States.

The Omaha Daily News. April 6, 1917.

In 1917, when the United States entered World War I, my father was five years old. As an old man, he recited a school yard ditty about the War to me.

*Kaiser Bill went up the hill
To take a look at France.
Kaiser Bill went down the hill
With bullets in his pants.*

Six months after the United States entered the war, Dad's oldest brother Will volunteered for the army. A few neighbors--DeRosier, Jim Dodson, Bobby Baker--and Will took the train from Magnet to enlist in Hartington, Nebraska. Most of the men had willingly volunteered to fight, although the record of the neighborhood was somewhat blemished when one local boy, Ed Soost, never enlisted nor was he drafted. It was rumored his father had paid a bribe.

In 1918, after military training in Kansas and New York, Will was sent to France. Since his flat feet made him unfit for marching, he drove an artillery truck. Will hauled ammunition to the front, and he hauled the wounded on the return trip. Since the trucks were driven at night to avoid airplane attack, the drivers couldn't drive with their headlights on. A soldier with a white handkerchief led the front truck, and the others followed.

The trucks were always parked in one spot during the day and another at night. One night the planes bombed their regular night parking spot to smithereens, but fortunately the unit had just changed parking spots. Another time, Will's truck motor stalled, and Will couldn't get it to turn over. A moment later, a bomb hit the road directly in front of him.

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When Will returned home in 1919, he made quite an impression on his brothers and sisters. He brought home a gas mask, French money, an old helmet, a few bullets, and some bayonet blades. Dad's brother Allan remarked, "What I remember most is that gas mask. We all had to try it on." Another brother, Roy, added, "His swords were so shiny. He always had them in that drawer, and we had to go look at them."

When my family was visiting Will's one evening in Nebraska in the mid-1960s, a few young men were rushing to the altar to avoid service in Viet Nam before the exclusion for married men expired. Despite witnessing the horrors of World War I and nearly losing his life, he was disgusted by the young men's lack of honor.

THE MOVE TO MINNESOTA

The story my Dad and his brothers Allan and Roy told most often at family gatherings was the one about moving from Nebraska to Minnesota in 1919 to begin farming southeast of Buffalo. Hulda's sister Anna, her husband August and their children had already moved from Magnet to Buffalo and were living on the land my father would one day farm.

A few family possessions were auctioned off in Magnet, and the remaining ones were packed in an immigrant car (boxcar). There was furniture, a few horses (including Mike, the family favorite), the best cows and a calf, two dozen chickens, Buck the dog, two cats, an old wagon, the corn sheller, the old buckboard wagon, the old walking cultivator, the new Century riding cultivator (which was crated), feed and water for the animals, and other machinery. Dad's brother Allan wondered "how they got that all in there."

Ray, one of Dad's older brothers, rode in the immigrant car for three days to care for the animals. The car was switched from one train to another one time, and the water in the barrel slopped on him. This detail was remembered because he had the hottest temper of of the Mainquist children. The first words his future son would utter would be swearing.

My grandfather, my grandmother, their daughter Dora, another daughter Mary and my father rode "on the cushions." Since the Wausa bank wouldn't transfer my grandparents' account to Minnesota, my grandfather gathered all his capital in cash and carried it in a grip (small bag) on the train. He slept with his grip under the pillow on the top berth with my father. The money was the down payment for the farm.

Allan, Roy and another brother Will drove the family Model T to Buffalo. With no road signs or maps to guide them, the brothers relied on the word of strangers. Because it rained all day, they couldn't count on the sun for direction. Allan said, "I was mixed up on directions; I didn't know which way we were going." Since the roads were muddy and the Model T's tires were old, they changed tires often, adding further frustration to the trip.

They wound up southwest of Buffalo--in Dassel or Cokato--without a road map. Bill

had just returned from serving as an ambulance driver in France during World War I. He was distressed. "I don't know what we're going to do. It looks just like France."

Then they got lost in the country. They needed to learn the directions to the nearest town and whether or not a road led from Montrose to Buffalo. An old man with a boy of fifteen was driving a wagon with a cow tied to the back. Bill asked the boy about a road between Montrose and Buffalo. "Well, I don't know," replied the boy. "I've only been to town once this year."

Since there was no road between Montrose and Buffalo, they had to backtrack to Cokato. The three brothers reached Buffalo on November 1, 1919, the sleeping car passengers arrived the next day, and Ray arrived the following day.

Dad recalled the first time, Roy, Bill and he cleaned the barn at their new Minnesota farm. "We had never tripped a manure carrier [an oblong steel cradle carrying manure by means of an overhead track]. Roy pushed it out and tripped [dumped] it in the yard. Bill and I stood alongside." It was a lot different and a lot easier than using a shovel and wheel barrow to load the manure spreader the way they had in Nebraska.

SCHOOL

The Mainquist children generally weren't encouraged to pursue their education. The farm chores took priority, and hard work and a sharp financial mind were regarded as keys to financial success as opposed to schooling. My grandfather pulled his sons out of school every fall to pick corn and plow and every spring to finish plowing and plant crops. The school board and the teachers scolded my grandfather, but he ignored their criticism. Consequently, the Mainquist children sometimes became discouraged with book learning because they were always behind.

One Memorial Day evening, my father showed me the one-room country school he had attended next to Zion Lutheran Cemetery. It was a simple white building shaped like a Monopoly house with tall four-paned sash windows painted black. When I peaked in the window I saw wood floors with old-fashioned wood desks trimmed in black metal. Everything was sparkling clean. Even the windows shined like mirrors.

The Mainquist children walked to school unless they could catch a ride with someone going their way. During recess, the children played traditional schoolyard games, but sometimes a few students rode their horses over the graves in the nearby Swedish cemetery. Other times, to be smart, they gathered behind the stable by the Swedish church across the road to smoke cigarettes made from hay chaff. In the winter, the children "hopped a bob" or jumped on the runners of the bobsleds (low sleds with long, narrow boxes for hauling milk cans) going to Buffalo. Then they got off the sled before it went

too far and hitched rides back to school on the ones returning home from town.

However, no matter what pranks my father may have pulled during recess, he always behaved in the classroom. Dad's parents had warned him that if he got into trouble at school, he would be in twice as much trouble at home.

Sometimes box socials were held at the country school. The single women prepared portable dinners and decorated their boxes. No one was supposed to know who had made a particular box. An elder Illstrup auctioned off the dinners to the local bachelors, and the highest bidder won the dinner along with the company of the cook. If a young man was enamored with a young lady, he tried to discreetly learn which box belonged to her. If he was not discreet and someone learned of his intentions, Illstrup pushed up the bids and teased the poor man to the delight of the crowd.

The young boys found other entertainment. Sunday afternoons, my father and his friends rode family plug horses (work horses) bareback to a nearby field. Since their families couldn't afford riding horses, the boys put heavy work bridles on the plug horses, clambered on their backs and trotted the big animals down the dirt roads. Once they reached the field, the boys did tricks on their horses and wrestled and played on the ground until it was time to return home for supper.

THE DEPRESSION

Although economic conditions remain unsettled, there is more universal confidence of the coming of a New Year than there was 12 months ago. Business conditions have improved throughout the country, although agricultural conditions are still waiting the results of several emergency plans that have been getting underway.

Local people who went through the perilous year 1933, feel that things are on the mend and that there is no such anxiety as there was a year ago, when the bottom appeared to be falling out of everything.

Wright County Journal Press. December 28, 1933.

Occasionally Dad mentioned details about his life during the Depression. Dad's father died in January of 1929, and in October the stock market crashed. He was living with his mother, his sister Mary and his sister Dora in town. They had moved there when my grandfather developed throat cancer. In 1931 my father quit high school because his friends had and he didn't care for sitting in a classroom. He then began farming for my grandmother on the fifty-acre place east of Buffalo my mother still owns.

The Depression was terrible time to begin farming. My father, his mother, and his sister Mary sometimes ate in the cellar because it was the coolest spot on the farm. They carried water pumped from the kitchen to the garden because the ground was dry and there

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were no garden hoses. A large neighbor family rode to church in a lumber wagon pulled by horses because they couldn't afford the gas for their car. Threshers used wood for steam power again because gasoline was too expensive.

When I felt bad about being paid poorly and living at home, Dad told me of Stanley Peterson working for room and board with no salary. Sometimes people in the city went hungry because they could not raise their own food like farmers.

When Dad's brother Roy, who farmed nearby, needed to paint his single-car garage, he took his team to work for a road crew three nine-hour days to pay for a couple gallons of white paint. His farm income had to support a family and didn't provide for such extras. When Dad needed overshoes, he chopped wood for a day to sell in town and pay for them.

Mary Lake shrunk from about 250 acres to five acres. In the center of the lake, a man could touch bottom and keep his head above water. Roy harvested three or four loads of millet and three or four loads of wide blade and cattails from the lake bed. After feeding the cows his harvest that evening, he scooped the dirt and dust out of the manger. Later the lake bed became even drier. Roy wouldn't drive his team there because he was afraid his horses would break their legs in the four-inch cracks.

My dad's cows didn't fare well for feed either. Every time Dad came out to milk them because they cried because they were so hungry. He felt so bad because all he had to feed them was straw.

Despite the economic hardships, he enjoyed life. Dad remembered, "Everybody came in [to Buffalo] on Saturday night and played pool until nearly midnight. We used to play for ten cents a game. You got chips, too. If we got in smear games, we could play for half an hour. If you lost it cost you fifteen cents. If you won, it didn't cost you anything." A good player could have himself a whale of a Saturday night, taking on all comers, and not spend a nickel doing it.

With his buddies--Marvin Gilbert, Glen Illstrup and Vernon Illstrup--my father often went to Minneapolis. He remembered, "Marvin used to go down there to pick up machinery, with that old Chevrolet truck. They had a place on Washington Avenue called the Valhala. We could go in there and play pool. Whatever you paid in money you got back in full, in chips. You could get some awfully good malted milks down there. We used to get a big bang out of that."

"There was a clothing store down there, too. We bought cheap second hand clothes there. Sometimes, we'd buy a suit of clothes, wear it a couple years, take it back, and trade for a different suit."

While Dad told many stories of the Depression, my favorite was about his trip to Nebraska. Dad told the story of his adventure in 1933 many times at holiday dinners with

his brother Allan's family. My family loved it.

Times were hard, and the weather was dry. "There was nothing much to be had so I got the idea I was going to Nebraska and pick corn," Dad said. His mother hired the neighbor across the road, Otten, to do the chores, she sewed seven dollars (all his money) in his father's old sheepskin coat, and he was off.

Dad continued, "I hooked an old freight in Montrose. It never stopped or slowed down. I grabbed the ladder and climbed on top. [The rungs on freight cars are thin and short--not what you'd want to climb on a moving train.] I lost my cap right away in the wind. I was a little bit afraid there." It took Dad three tries before he grabbed a moving ladder. He added it was "real bad" if you got your legs under the train wheels.

"I came to a place in Willmar, and I got off the train toward dusk and went down in a place called the jungle. A couple of guys and I got together with some crackers and made coffee in an old tin can. We got on another train going to Sioux City, Iowa that night."

Dad learned which freight to hop from bums familiar with the train schedule. He asked the conductor one time, too. The conductor didn't become angry because many people were hopping trains then.

That night my dad crawled into a boxcar. Dad said, "It was fall; it was getting cool. We rode inside that boxcar all night. The next morning, we got off at Sioux City, Iowa. There was a whole slew of us getting out of that car. There were Negroes, too. You couldn't imagine all the people bumming in those days."

Dad stayed in Sioux City almost all day. "I talked to some guys. One big guy was real friendly. I talked to him quite a bit. I noticed one guy coming around looking for workers. I asked him what he'd pay. I don't know what kind of work he wanted, but the big guy said, 'Don't you go out and work for him. He's not paying you enough money.'"

That evening, a short local train was heading toward Omaha. Dad knew it would cross toward Oakland, where his sister Maggie and brother Will farmed, and another sister Dora helped Maggie. There were just two cars and a caboose. Dad climbed on top of one car. He and some other fellows perched there when the train crossed the Missouri River. It got cold up there so Dad crawled into the coal car, right behind the locomotive. The coal car provided shelter from the wind, but little protection from the soot and grime pouring out of the smoke stack. "Boy--dirty, dusty smoke coming down on top of you--and steam," he remembered.

Dad arrived in Oakland about ten o'clock that night. When he walked toward town, the first person he met was the town cop. As the flatfoot questioned him, it didn't take him long to decide he didn't want this bum around. Fortunately, the Saf boys, Dad's cousins, came along and explained the situation. Maggie and her husband Art were in town and

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took him home to their farm.

My dad was full of coal dust, ashes and soot and wearing a large, dirty cap he had found in a railroad bed. Maggie was furious with her younger brother. She had scrubbed my father's ears so hard when he was a little boy that they hurt and now it all was to no avail. Dad got it from Dora, too. She didn't see why a Mainquist had to stoop so low as to hook a ride on a train. When Dad told me the story, he just laughed.

Dad worked for Maggie and Art for a few weeks on their farm. They got him a job at Elof Johnson's when the corn was dry enough to pick by hand. Dad wore a pair of old paint pants that his brother Will had given them. Since the paint stains protected the fabric, the trousers lasted the whole harvest season.

Dad didn't come home until Thanksgiving. For the trip back, Ray started him with a ride to Yankton, South Dakota. He told me he paid for fare to ride "a cushion" (in a passenger car) to Minnesota with the money he'd earned by picking corn.

Fifty years later, in 1983, I rode the Amtrak with my parents from St. Paul to Chicago where my sister Laurie lived. He asked me how to use a button on the arm of the seat. I asked, "When's the last time you rode a train?" "1933."

As we sat in the small dark train compartment rattling and hurtling toward Chicago, I reached back in time to tell his story of his train trip of fifty years ago.

WORLD WAR II

Addresses of a number of men in the armed services were omitted in last week's listing in the Journal Press and are being listed in this column so that friends may send Christmas greetings.

It is pointed out that answering greetings may be a hardship on men in the service who are drawing \$21 a month and [it is suggested] that all persons sending greetings also enclose a postage stamp. No doubt this courtesy would be appreciated by the soldier boys as they will need all they can save out of their monthly stipends for holiday purposes.

Wright County Journal Press. December 18, 1941.

Dad and his brothers talked far less about World War II than the Depression. During the War, the rain had returned, crop prices were good, and luckily, no family members were in danger.

About the only way the War directly affected my dad was rationing. He could drive to town only once or twice a week, and it was hard to get sugar and tires. He also needed permission from the war board to buy milking machines. Dad proudly recalled managing to buy a huge jar of jam made with sugar from Burkland's store in Buffalo, but otherwise he rarely mentioned rationing. With good farming conditions, it was no concern.

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Dad heard about Pearl Harbor on his battery-powered radio when he was hand-milking cows by kerosene lantern that winter morning in 1941. Within a few days of the Japanese surprise attack, many young men in Buffalo volunteered to fight. Dad's friend Marvin Gilbert was among them.

Dad said he was young enough to serve in the armed forces, but he had a farm exemption. Dad was careful to keep the eighteen cows as required by the local draft board. He said a little defensively, "The home front was important, too." Since the only men seen on the streets of Buffalo were obviously too old or too young or too unhealthy to fight, it was easy for a healthy young man, like my father, to feel guilty. For my part, I don't know what his widowed mother would have done without him.

When Dad heard that Franklin Delano Roosevelt had died, he worried, "What's the country going to do now? Who is this Truman fellow anyway?" For over twelve years, Roosevelt had shepherded the country through the Depression and to near victory in Europe, and now he was gone. Despite my father's doubts about the new president, he came to trust Truman's plain, honest ways and kept on farming.

ARMISTICE DAY STORM

Storm started early Monday morning and raged furiously for over 30 hours with heavy snows and 55 MPH winds. Streets and highways were impassable by Monday morning. The storm came virtually out of the clear sky and caught hundreds in this vicinity unprepared. Those who had driven cars were forced to abandon them for the trip home and scores of cars were left on main streets and nearly covered with snow.

Wright County Journal Press. November 14, 1940, the Wednesday after the storm.

It was to be called the Armistice Day storm because it struck on the anniversary of the end of World War I. Since the blizzard hit suddenly during duck hunting season, many Minnesota hunters froze to death. According to the *Minneapolis Star*, the blizzard caused 59 deaths in Minnesota alone.

The storm was a big event for my father. He remembered he went to a University of Minnesota football game the Saturday before the Armistice Day storm. Then he remembered the warm rain the Sunday before the storm. That Monday morning snow and wind blasted the air with no warning because scientific weather prediction did not exist. Even farmers, like my father, who could read the sky and the wind, were caught by surprise because the storm had started so quickly.

Dad said, "I had horses down in the pasture. I got them up, but it was blowing so hard I couldn't get them through the door on south side of the barn. I took them through the driveway doors [for hauling hay in the barn] on the east side. I got my pigs in, too.

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All they got was corn during the storm. [Usually they got skim milk, too.] I put a lantern in a milk pail so it wouldn't blow out from the house to the barn."

"My mother stayed in the house. The old house was cold though. I remember when I had a cold, I took a glass of water upstairs with me. In the morning it was frozen to the bottom."

The wind was so strong and the snow was so fine that snow blew through the plastered walls of one of the bedrooms of Dad's brother Allan's old farmhouse. Allan's family slept in one bed downstairs away from the exterior walls to stay warm. Their phones went dead, the train no longer rumbled through their pasture, and no mail arrived at the end of their driveway.

A neighbor, Mark Hayes, lost a few cattle to suffocation. The wind caused ice to freeze on the cows' nostrils and they couldn't breathe. Fortunately, Allan had shipped sixteen hogs the week before. If not, his pigs would have met the same fate for they had no shelter. Ducks and mudhens froze in the ice on Buffalo Lake, providing the people in town with an unexpected dinner treat.

In the ditches, the snow was level with the tops of the fence posts. After the storm, Allan rode horseback to town on the railroad tracks because the snow had blocked the soft, unfrozen roads. Most of the Maple Lake township roads, where Allan lived, were impassable for a week.

I asked Dad if it was hard to be cooped up for three days. He had no complaints--as usual--but he always phoned me to warn me about bad winter weather when I was living alone in St. Paul. In 1996 he insisted on making a special trip of fifty miles to St. Paul to jump start my car after a week of the coldest weather he could remember in his 84 years. It was a way a reserved Swedish farmer could show he cared about his daughter.

Dad was proud he had protected his mother during the Armistice Day Storm. In the Mainquist family, this showed respect for women's work in the house. Even though as an old man, it was his duty to shelter his oldest daughter from winter.

HELEN HOEGER, THE GIRL FOR HIM

Wright County will again have the services of a home agent when Helen Hoeger, home economics instructor in Park Rapids, takes over the duties of that position July 24th. A graduate of Concordia College, Moorhead, where she majored in home economics, Miss Hoeger also attended the State Teacher's college in Dickinson, North Dakota, for two years.

...Born and raised on a farm near Almont, North Dakota, Miss Hoeger has lived and worked with rural people and understands their problems.

Wright County Journal Press. July 6, 1950.

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The farm agent, my mother's male counterpart in the courthouse, showed her around when she came to Buffalo in 1950. He pointed east of town and told a story about a bachelor farmer out that way. The farmer had been trapping skunks for a friend who sold them as pets. The farmer thought that if he held the skunks' tails, they wouldn't spray him.

He smelled so bad that his mother wouldn't let him in the house, and he had to bury every stitch of clothing he had on. My mother couldn't imagine anyone foolish enough to do a thing like that, but she knew all the Wright County farmers couldn't be that stupid.

My mother remembers the first time my father called her. He said his name was Evert Mainquist and he had met her at a Rural Youth Meeting. She did remember a rather tall man with a crew cut with the last name of Mainquist, but she wasn't sure. My mother decided she had better say yes because she had met this fellow through work. My father was short and beginning to bald while his younger, taller nephew Stanley had a crew cut.

The next Monday, when my mother told the farm agent she went out with Evert Mainquist, the agent roared unaccountably. Her date was the renowned skunk trapper.

My father was taken with the slim, fashionably-dressed home agent. She talked confidently to people--a quality he admired very much. He could tell the other men thought she was good looking, too. Helen Hoeger was the girl for him.

When Walter Gutneckt, a farmer who lived near my father, asked her to a Rural Youth square dance in St. Paul, my mother said yes. However, my father and Lillian Carstenson were to ride to the square dance in Walter's car, too. My mother enjoyed dancing with Walter, and my father was polite enough not to cut in.

However, on the way back, my dad decided he had to sit in the back seat with mother, and Lillian obliged to sit in the front with Walter. My mother was mortified, but fortunately, she was saved further embarrassment. My father kept her too busy to go out with any other men, and none others asked her.

After a while, my mother asked my father for his picture. He said that the only photo he had was one of his nephew Stanley. The two men had been vacationing in Nebraska when they came across a huge hole in the middle of the road. It was over five feet deep. Dad stopped the car and had Stanley stand in the hole so only his head showed. Then Dad laid on the ground and snapped the picture. When my mother talked about my father, sometimes someone asked if she had a picture of him. She replied she didn't, but she did have a picture of his nephew's head.

It took my mother more than two years to decide to marry my father because he was twelve years her senior, creating the possibility of a long widowhood. Dad bided his time because he knew she would say yes and she was well worth the wait.

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I remember my father picking pussy willows for her in the spring, and one winter day he hitched the mules to the sleigh and invited her for a private ride across the countryside. He always carried her picture in his billfold, too. At the same time, my father admired my mother's capabilities. He told me, "This place [their farm] would fall apart without her" because my mother handled the household and farming paperwork. She also was the leader in closing our country school. Even though my father played second fiddle to my mother sometimes, he was never resentful--just proud.

Despite my mother's fears of a young widowhood, my father lived to be a healthy 84. He farmed and gardened every year of their marriage. Almost until the end, he could get on a mule with the help of a wooden block--an athletic feat that would challenge many men 20 years younger. He played pool, he chased mules, and he charmed everyone.

Before my father met with his fatal fall, he left the Buffalo Clinic to get the car so my mother wouldn't have to walk far that cold winter day in 1996. She was as much as the girl for him as when he courted her over forty-five years ago.

MR. AND MRS. EVERT MAINQUIST

Helen Rosemarie Hoeger became the bride of Evert E. Mainquist at a candlelight wedding on March 8th at Zion Lutheran Church....

The bride was given in marriage by her father, W. F. Hoeger. Her gown was of traditional white satin with imported Chantilly lace. The finger-tip veil was of illusion net. She carried a bouquet of an orchid and white stephanotis. Her only jewelry was a pearl necklace, a gift of the groom.

Wright County Journal Press, March, 1952

My parents began married life on my father's farm three miles east of Buffalo. His mother, Hulda, lived with them for a while. It may have been trying at first for my mother to set up housekeeping with her mother-in-law, but they became close friends. My grandmother was rarely critical, and my mother was equally considerate of my grandmother's feelings.

The old Mainquist farmhouse had no closets, no running water, and no indoor bathroom facilities. The kitchen was comprised of a sink with a pump, a pantry, a refrigerator, a stove, table and chairs, and a little counter space. Nearly all of the walls were covered with old-fashioned wallpaper. My mother stacked hers and my father's clothes on a table because the only other furniture in their bedroom was a bed and a chair.

Undaunted, my mother had cupboards and running water installed in the kitchen, the pantry replaced with a bathroom, and a closet added to her bedroom. She covered the daybed in the living room with a lovely afghan her Aunt Agnes had crocheted. It was my

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mother's idea to plant an apple orchard and windbreak, too.

The old farmhouse needed improvement so badly that some Mainquist relatives wondered why my mother didn't do more. The house needed more work, but she refinished the old furniture ~~or moved it upstairs~~ and ignored the drab flowered wallpaper.

My mother realized that the farmhouse had been Hulda's home for over twenty years. Although she had children within visiting distance, her memories played a big part in her life. My mother respected her desire to preserve the past, and my grandmother understood her daughter-in-law's need to fix up the old house.

When I first came home from the hospital in December of 1952, my mom said the best years of her life began. My sister Sheri was born on the first day of snow on November 21, 1953. When my youngest sister Laurie was born on November 1, 1955, my mother decided two cribs in the dining room by the oil burner were enough. Laurie slept in a maple dresser drawer.

With three daughters practically right in a row, those first years as a farm wife weren't easy. With a bumper crop of carrots came a corresponding number of carrot dishes. During September my mother made 28 quarts of applesauce in one day--one batch before breakfast and the rest as she could find time between household tasks. She patched jeans, darned socks, sewed clothes, assembled photo albums, and grew both vegetables and flowers--all with three little ones underfoot.

My mother painted and fixed up her home in her remaining spare time. One day I asked her, "Is all you do is just paint?" Mom just laughed.

DAIRYING

The production of the Mainquist herd during the past three years was the best of all herds on test with the Wright County Dairy Herd Associations...During the past three years, the 23 Registered and Grade Holsteins in the Mainquist herd averaged 13.875 pounds of milk, 3.6 percent butterfat and 509.9 pounds of butterfat.

Wright County Journal Press. January 30, 1964.

My father didn't talk to me about his farming achievements until I asked him a few questions for my Mainquist family history. Three daughters and no sons provided few opportunities to talk about his operation. At the time I was writing the family history, I only remembered where his best cow Inka stood the in barn. Then I learned what champions Inka and my father were.

Recently, my father's nephew, Bill Sook, said my dad was gifted like an artist with judging cattle. Bill could explain my father's skill no other way. "Roy [Bill's father-in-law] was good at judging cattle, but your father was even better," he told me. Judging cattle was

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essential because the only way to predict if a calf would be a good cow would be to evaluate her dam (mother) and sire. A farmer had to check the dam for a high udder, bright face, well-shaped legs and feet, straight backline, and solid, square rump line and shoulders as well as high milk production. Such a process required sharp observation and good intuition--with which my father was blessed abundantly.

A close neighbor, Walter Stromberg, was one of the first farmers in the county to raise registered Holstein cows. Dad bought a registered calf named Inka from Stromberg because the conformation and production of Inka's dam and the record of her sire were superb. More importantly, Stromberg's reputation as a dairyman and an honest farmer could be trusted.

Dad was quietly proud that the Holstein Friesen Association nominated her for the Gold Medal Dam award. She produced 150,000 pounds of milk in her lifetime and was classified as "excellent." All of Inka's eight registered heifer calves inherited her superb production and conformation and became the basis for my father's outstanding herd. In 1964 my father won the first Wright County Premier Dairyman Award.

Dad said he was "more friendly with old Inka." When she became too arthritic, he had to ship her to the St. Paul stockyard. Before Inka struggled up the ramp to the truck that winter day, my mother took snapshots with the Brownie box camera of the faithful old cow--for she deserved a large part of the credit for his success.

Other skills were required to be a successful dairyman. Wyn Streif, a former Wright County agricultural agent, explained to me, "Almost everything on your father's farm got careful attention. Your father used the best seed available, planted it at the right time, and fertilized it well. A lot of livestock per acre provided him a good supply of natural fertilizer. He didn't drain unnecessarily either so he could store the rain water for drier times. Through the knowledge passed through generations of farmers, he knew what to expect during normal conditions."

Dad was proud when Streif told him he produced more on his fifty-acres than farmers with more land. Streif could tell I was proud, too.

MOM GOES TO COLLEGE

Mrs. Evert (Helen) Mainquist will teach second grade. She is a Concordia graduate and has taught at Pillager, Park Rapids, and Brockway, Montana. She has three children.

Wright County Journal Press, September 23, 1966

When my sisters and I started town school, my mother began substitute teaching there. She taught everything from kindegarten to eighth grade science to seniors in high

MY FATHER'S 84 YEARS

school. In about 1962 she began attending night school and summer sessions to become re-certified for full-time teaching. Mom had been doing a lot of volunteer work, but she decided might as well get paid for her activities outside her home.

My sisters and I were showing academic promise as well. My mother had worked so hard for her education--even scrubbing floors--that she wanted to spare her daughters the same struggles.

I remember her first evening class--Minnesota geography--and consequently, my first independent supper preparation. Mom first showed how to light a match so I could light a burner on our old gas stove that had belonged to Grandma Mainquist. One side of the stove even had a wood burner to help heat the kitchen in the winter. Then she showed me how to make a medium white sauce (with real butter because my father was a dairy farmer) with chipped beef (from the least productive milk cow). The responsibility made me feel grown-up, and I was proud to have a mother who took classes.

My mother faced a decision between home economics and elementary education. If she became certified in elementary, more positions would be available in Buffalo as opposed to the one-subject area of home economics. Re-certifying in home economics meant attending classes at the St. Paul campus of the University of Minnesota while re-certifying in elementary education meant attending St. Cloud State College. What finally tipped her decision was driving to and from St. Paul involved driving into the sun both ways. If she went to St. Cloud, the sun would be at her back during the commute.

My mother began attending St. Cloud State full time in the spring of 1966. The commute back and forth everyday became tiring so she started staying at Ardella Siebert's home in St. Cloud one night a week. Ardella and my mother had been friends in their hometown of Almont, North Dakota. My mother eventually stayed at the Siebert two nights a week and then every night of the week.

Even though I was only thirteen, I learned to cook, clean, launder and shop by myself. My most puzzling task I was cleaning our old refrigerator. Water dripped from the freezer unit into the meat drawer due to a thick layer of frost. I kept bailing water out, but more kept coming back.

I didn't feel close enough to any of the neighbor women or my aunts to ask them for advice. It wasn't a time either when you casually called your mother long distance either. I felt so bewildered and alone.

One beautiful spring afternoon, the sun was shining and a soft breeze blew across our lush green lawn. My adult responsibilities disappeared in a reverie of joy. I spread my arms and draped an old green bedspread across them like wings. Beneath the flowing branches of the trees, I danced like a butterfly.

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Suddenly it was past time to start supper. I dashed in the house and stuck frozen potpies in the oven. When my dad and sisters sat down to supper, the potpies were still cold in the middle and the crust was doughy.

Dad didn't say a word at the dinner table. He wished Mom was home so wouldn't need to rely on his oldest daughter to cook his meals--an important part of a farmer's day. The next evening, I made Swiss steak, mashed potatoes, a salad and a vegetable just the way Mom did and the way Dad liked it. I learned a way to make my father happy, but a big chunk of my childhood was over.

At St. Cloud State, my mother struggled with the mathematical concept of sets and learned to sauter and silk screen. She created a lovely *Little House* mobile with a loose cloud of sheer white tissue paper wrapped around intertwined wire hangers. From the cloud she suspended a log cabin made from corrugated paper and pins, a wash tub made from styrofoam and popcycle sticks, and a small toy Native American and horse.

She modeled her new dresses for classes for me and my sisters. With her dark hair and slim figure, I was awed by her smart professional image. When my mother finished her last class, she honked her car horn all the way down our driveway. As I looked out the living room window, I could only wonder.

My mother began teaching second grade in the fall of 1966. As with all first year-classes for teachers, it was hard work. Five of her students, who had been held back the previous year, required extra help. My mother hardly had a moment to spare with so many bulletin boards to create, teaching techniques to master and household tasks to organize.

My sister Sheri and I each made supper twice a week, my mother made it on Fridays, and my sister Laurie made breakfasts. Every Saturday morning, we three girls cleaned the refrigerator, did the sinks, dusted and vacuumed, and scrubbed the floors. Although it was doubtful any of our classmates had responsibilities approaching their own, we never made a fuss. We knew our parents had done as much and more when they were our age.

BUS DRIVING

*To Evert Mainquist
For Years of Safe Driving and
Dedicated Service
In Appreciation from
Mattson Bus Company
December 21, 1985*

From My Father's Award at the Annual Mattson Bus Drivers Banquet

When my father sold his registered Holstein herd in 1969, he had no plans I knew of

for his next work. Dad explained to me he had back problems, but later he confided he had been lonely. When my mother was teaching, my father was alone on the farm, and when she was home in the evening, he was milking cows alone in the barn.

I was distant from him, too, because I occupied myself with cooking, sewing and reading. I didn't even ask Dad to go riding with me. When Dad drove me to St. Cloud for my orthodontic appointments every three weeks, I always took a nap in his truck because I didn't know how to talk to him nor did I consider anything he had to say to be of interest. Ironically, history fascinated me, but I didn't realize what a fine historian and master conversationalist chauffeured me to St. Cloud.

My youngest sister Laurie earned straight As and recorded every cent she spent in her black book. At the same time, she held down part-time jobs. She earned her college education, graduated summa, and paid for a used car by graduation. Even when Laurie, was raising two daughters, working overtime regularly and pursuing a graduate degree, she found time to help her daughters with their homework.

My middle sister Sheri was caught up with being a teenager. She was in band and pom-pom girls, she had a boyfriend, and like Laurie, she earned straight A. Many years later, Sheri explained, "We were all doing our own thing."

After retiring from farming, it took Dad a while to find work he enjoyed separate from his land and family. Dad tried driving a fertilizer truck for the local co-op, but as an independent farmer, he didn't like supervision. He also worked as a flunky for a construction company, but that was seasonal. Then he hit on school bus driving. He had to take the driving test a couple times, but he finally got his license and Dick Mattson hired him.

My dad liked the independence, the children and the other drivers. The work also dovetailed well with his scaled-down farming operation. When I asked Dad which he liked best, he replied, "The combination of the two."

Dick said, "He was always there early with a smile and the bus checked and warmed up. Of course, he caught up on the gossip by arriving ahead of time. He and Al Varner always chewed the fat in the morning, too."

Mattson continued, "Your dad was reliable. If he wasn't at the bus garage, no one was. The kids and the other bus drivers respected him, too. I can't think of anything he did wrong. He was exceptional."

Just as my father's work suited Dick, bus driving suited my father. He once laughed at Ralph Aldrich, a neighbor, because he regularly had coffee in town instead of working all day. When you saw a light blue Chevy heading down the Hanover Road in the morning, you knew Ralph was having coffee. However, as a bus driver, my father quickly learned to enjoy coffee every school morning with his school bus driving buddies--just like Ralph did.

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Surprisingly, bus driving allowed my dad to express his sense of humor and his sense of justice. He didn't like one bus driver because she thought too highly of herself. Sometimes, in the winter, after the morning route, she left her big orange bus running while she went in the liquor store. Dad decided to take advantage of the opportunity.

One morning, without telling her, he moved her bus from the liquor store to the Covenant Church--less than a block. He also made special arrangements with the other bus drivers. When she asked them who had moved her bus, they all replied Dick Mattson.

Another year a little boy sat next to him and talked incessantly. That inspired Dad to search through his orchard to pick the biggest apple. Then he announced to all of his bus passengers that the student with the biggest mouth would win the apple. Sure enough, the talkative boy exclaimed, "Give it to me! Give it to me! I have the biggest mouth!"

My father's two grandnieces, Carrie and Sara Mainquist, rode Dad's bus. Carrie recalled, "I was lucky enough to have Evert be my bus driver when I was in kindergarten and grades one through three. Sometimes he let me sit next to him, on his left, to work the stop sign that extended when he made stops. It made me feel pretty special and gave me something to do on the way home. I remember that Evert always had candy. If I was good, I might get a lemon drop or butterscotch," Carrie continued.

"Anyway, Evert was a really cool bus driver. Every year for the last day of school, he treated the entire bus to a treat at Dairy Queen--that is only if you behaved. Another thing Evert did rarely was to actually run the bus route backwards after school. Usually the first person to be picked up in the morning was the last person to be dropped off after school. Now Sara and I were pretty much in the middle of the bus route so when he did this it just meant we got to see a different route. Most of the other kids would be yelling which way to go; some wanted to get home quickly, but others, like myself would love it when he broke the monotony and take the bus route in reverse," Carrie said.

"If kids were misbehaving, he turned down the music and hollered. If he was really mad, he pulled the bus over and came back and got you. This happened only twice as I recall. It was the same kid both times, and it was the kid's fault. Evert made him sit on the step of the entrance of the bus so he could keep an eye on him. One incident involved a whoopee cushion, and another one involved squirt guns or fighting on the bus," Carrie said.

Later discipline problems on buses were referred to the appropriate principal. However, my father retained his authority. When a rider challenged my father's actions to Principal Theiss, Theiss only said, "If Evert said that's the way it was, that's the way it was."

Dick asked him to step down because his bus company insurance didn't want to cover a driver at my father's age of 74. Dad was unhappy about retiring because he liked the work. When I contacted the state labor department about age discrimination it turned out

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my father could only work legally for the state until age 70. After my mother conveyed that information, he said nothing, but he broke out into a big schoolboy grin. He had been breaking the law and skunking the state for four years.

Dad continued to enjoy breakfast with his bus-driving buddies. He kept farming, too--renting a little more land each year and tilling a little less. After he was exhausted from seeding oats with his mules one spring day, he decided to seed the field in two days the next year. When his last two brothers--Allan and Roy--died, I wondered what he would do because they had lived in the same community most of their eighty plus years. Dad made new friends by playing pool every day at the Buffalo Senior Citizen Center. When he couldn't remember his cats' names, he simply quit naming them. Every year he let go a little more and lived his life well.

Evert E. Mainquist, 84, of Buffalo died Wednesday, March 13, at the North Memorial Medical Center...On March 8, 1952, Evert married Helen R. Mainquist at Zion Lutheran Church in Buffalo. Their marriage was blessed by three daughters: Linda, Sheri and Laurie.

Wright County Journal Press, March 21, 1996.

Calendar of Dates to Keep in Mind-- Rationing Dates Set for December

Wondering about rationing and other questions affecting you during the next couple weeks? Here's a calendar of the dates you should keep in mind for your own protection.

NOVEMBER 30--Period No. 2 in fuel oil ration commences. Stamps marked Period No. 2 will be used along with stamps for Period No. 1 until December 13, after which only stamps for Period No. 2 will be accepted. Period No. 2 expires January 6, but stamps marked Period No. 2 will be accepted until January 20.

DECEMBER 1--Mileage rationing started. All automobilists must present "A" book to obtain gasoline on a basis of four gallons per week. Holders of "B" and "C" books may obtain whatever their rations permit.

DECEMBER 1--Deadline for applications for ODT certificates of war necessity which all truck operators must have in order to obtain gasoline.

DECEMBER 7--Registration of landlords' deadline. Landlords must have their forms listing property they rent turned in to the places from which they were obtained.

DECEMBER 13--Use of fuel oil coupons No. 1 expires. After this date, only coupons for Period No. 2 are acceptable.

DECEMBER 15--Deadline for applying for War Ration Book No. 1. Persons who have not obtained their War Ration Book No. 1 (sugar ration book) must register for it in order to be eligible for War Ration Book No. 2. Registration will be taken by local ration boards. All persons who do not have that book should inquire at their boards for it.

DECEMBER 15--Sugar coupon book No. 9, good for three pounds of sugar, expires.

DECEMBER 16--Sugar coupon No. 10, value not yet determined, becomes valid.

Wright County Journal Press, December 10, 1942.

With rationing for tires, bicycles, fuel oil, kerosene, coffee, meats, fats, canned fish, cheese, rubber footwear and shoes, it is no wonder my father was overjoyed to manage to buy--with no coupons--a large jar of jam from a local department store.

Dad's 1945 Journal

My father kept what he called "Summary of Events" in his farming expenses ledger. I found it in my mother's attic fifty-five years later. I was stirred by this record written in his own hand and own way about the land and neighborhood where I would grow up.

JANUARY 12. Weather is mild today as was yesterday, but it did not thaw. The weather so far this year has been quite cold or since Christmas. There is very little snow on the ground, but most parts of the country are well covered. Mary [Dad's sister] is in Cleveland since the 5th and seems to like it [the Coast Guard Reserve] O.K. I went to Luther League last night. Einar [Ebling], Vernon [Illstrup], and I took Glen [Vernon's brother] to the city Tuesday night. Delmer [Peterson] is on furlough also.

The Allies invaded Luzon Island now and are on Formosa also. The German counter offense has been stopped and shoved back which was started before Christmas.

JANUARY 20. Weather is mild as has been past few days. About eight inches of snow lays nicely on the ground. Russian offensive of 3,000,000 men moving on 800 mile front. Much snow and cold on war front.

JANUARY 30. Weather--colder past few days. About zero with cold wind. Delmer Greeno [family neighbor in Magnet] came up from Nebraska a week ago. We were over to Roy's Sunday.

Russians are out about 93 miles from Berlin.

Twelve-year anniversary of Hitler's reign.

FEBRUARY 12. Cleaned up haystack at Aldrich's today. Poor hay. Hauled last jag to Frank [Aldrich].

Big Four had conference today. Campaign in Crimea over. France and China were to have voice in final peace pact.

FEBRUARY 22. Had some more snow yesterday. Blew some today. Had cold spell last week. Past four days have been chaotic days for marines at Iva Jima Island.

MARCH 5. Cold and windy today. Driveway is closed but road is O.K. No thaw to speak of yet. 2050 marines lost on Hiro Jima so far. 12000 Japs counted dead. Cologne to be taken. Allies massing troops to cross the Rhine River.

MARCH 12. Allies have crossed Rhine River and are making ready for another crossing. Hiro Jima is almost under control.

Weather is mild and thawing. Good bare spots showing in the fields.

MARCH 15. Have had a good thaw and rained last night. This A.M. about one inch. Much water around. Ground is quite firm. Was to Vernon Illstrup's this P.M.

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helping with work.

MARCH 25. Rained last evening and a few showers today. Some field work done. Gustafson [neighbor] has seeded in large field.

I have a cold and I feel punk. [This is my father's most personal statement. As a Swede farmer I doubt if he put much stock in his own feelings.]

Grass and alfalfa are going strong now.

Have made another crossing of the Rhine.

There has been no freezing weather to speak of for ten days.

APRIL 1. Weather cloudy today and windy. Was to Stanley Peterson's for dinner today.

Seeded oats near pasture--about seven acres. Weather has been fine in the past two weeks with much field work done.

We had the warmest March since 1910 with an average temperature of 51°. At that time it was 45°.

APRIL 3. Snowing today. Rather cool. Vaccinated calves at Jim Aldrich's [neighbor] and at Al's [brother]. Also butchered there. Seen Glen Illstrup who is home on furlough en route to Pennsylvania.

APRIL 9. Seeded my oats at Schermers today. Roy [brother] helping me with his tractor. [My dad probably didn't have a tractor.] Weather windy and cloudy.

APRIL 13. Roosevelt died yesterday 4:35 P.M. from critical hemorrhage. Very sudden.

Seeded oats for Herman Westphal [neighbor] today. Most seeding done around here. Weather cool and windy.

APRIL 15. Took Glen [Illstrup] to city last night.

Roosevelt buried today.

Weather cool and cloudy with east wind.

Twenty-two inches snow in Wyoming.

APRIL 18. Rained about an inch Monday. Cold and windy yesterday with some snow.

They are taking George Westphal away today. He will be at the Monticello rest home for a while today. I helped inventory his property today which was interesting.

APRIL 23. Rained about 1/2 inch yesterday. Weather cool with frost quite often. Took down fence around hog yard today.

Russia has Berlin completely surrounded and mostly occupied. Hitler reported to be inside the city. Brutal treatment of our prisoners is reported.

MAY 1. Weather continues cool with no rain in the past week.

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Mary was home this weekend on V 64 hour pass.

Russia has almost all of Berlin under control. Mussolini and 17 henchmen were killed Sunday. Hitler rumored to be in Berlin hiding.

George Westphal died Sunday at Mound Park Hospital.

Farm work well under way with plowing pretty well done for corn.

MAY 8, VE day today. Stores closed Surrender took place yesterday.

Weather cold and windy. Ground drying. Planted corn for Vernon Illstrup yesterday.

MAY 13. Weather continues cold and windy. Planted corn on south field. Planted corn on south field Saturday and by the house today. Small grain looks poor. Short and it seems to keep freezing back.

We need a good rain and warm weather bad. Took colt to Aldrich's pasture the 10th of May and heifers on the 5th. My cows are still confined. Am hauling silage from Illstrups at \$4.50 a ton. Frykholm [a neighbor] bought hay at \$15 per ton.

Roy's and Allan's were over yesterday it being Mother's Day. [My father was living with his mother.]

MAY 18. Weather still, cold and dry. Most of corn planting done around. Did a little painting and went to the school [the Kobbe country school I later attended] picnic today and am working on bond drive evenings.

Vera Peterson and Bob Illstrup are home on furlough.

MAY 21. Weather cool and drizzling today and some yesterday AM.

Mother was in St. Paul Saturday til this PM.

Ralph Aldrich is in States but not feeling too good. Russell Rose is also at home after being prisoner of war. Am painting wood shed and garage and all white buildings.

MAY 24. Rained some this PM. Report fishing at Deer Lake is not so good. Ralph Aldrich is expected home tonight. Albert Nelson is playing at John Danielson's garage this week.

MAY 28. Rained good yesterday about 3/4 inch. Corn is coming up now and all crops are progressing well. There has been heavy rain with hail in the southern part of the state. Am going to the city to a recital at YWCA tonight. Leaving early this PM. Stanley is here painting with me at present.

JUNE 1. Rained last night with wind. Blew down apple tree. Weather is cool and damp today. Edna and Memie [Dad's cousins in St. Paul] rode up for Decoration Day. Went to program at court house. Grace was for hire for dinner and lunch. (?)

JUNE 4. Had frost here last night. Nipped corn. Even froze some bases on trees. 26° Bemidji. 6 inches snow at Virginia. Saturday went to picnic at District 60 (country

DAD'S 84 YEARS

school my father and Vernon attended). Took manure spreader to town for filing today.

JUNE 9. Weather cloudy and cool. Went fishing last night and night before
Cultivated corn today.

Corn looks poor and is far behind. Grain looks good. Most hay is fair.

JUNE 13. Rained 1 1/2 inches yesterday and some today. Ground is soaked and
the sky still threatens.

Rural Youth roller skating party tonight at Elk River.

Cleaned up milk cans today.

JUNE 14. Rained about an inch again last night High water all over now. Ronald
Denney [a neighbor] is being married today.

JUNE 22. Weather warm and drying the past few days. Rather Windy.

Planted part of marsh at Aldrich's second time today and mowed some hay at home
on marsh. I planted cane on field that Vernon and I rented south of town.

JULY 5. Cool today. Had rain last night and evening before with wind. Put up
eight loads hay the 3rd and seven before that from marsh.

Corn is about eight inches high, but doing well at present Oats looks good.

JULY 11. Moved hay at Aldrich's today. Stanley helping. Weather is cool and fair.
Wallace Peterson had hernia operation this week at Fair View Hospital. Dora [sister] is
home for weekend.

JULY 16. Put up two stacks canary grass on the marsh this week. Also baled 397
bales alfalfa at Aldrichs. Stanley helped me. This week finished cultivating check corn.
Friday mostly knee high and over at present.

AUGUST 1. Weather pleasant today. Rained about 1/2 inch yesterday. Am butting
oats at Schermers today.

Cut at home the 27th and 28th. Oats are good are standing fair. Lodged in low
spots.

Was to St. Cloud with Vernon yesterday.

Corn is finally beginning to tassel. Second crop alfalfa looks good and some is cut.

AUGUST 9. Russia entered war against Japan yesterday.

Put up second crop alfalfa yesterday. Harvest is done.

Some threshing started with grain running excellent.

Mother left for Nebraska day before yesterday for extended visit.

A nice rain would be good.

AUGUST 14. VJ day today.

Japan surrendered at 6 o'clock PM.

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Went fishing at Lake Constance tonight with Bert Rjorklund.

Had about 2 inches rain the past few days soaking shocks pretty bad.

Very little threshing done so far.

AUGUST 16. Weather warm. Shocks (oat) drying good.

AUGUST 17. Threshed today my grain at home. Made 72 bushels per acre and at Schermers 55 bushels per acre.

AUGUST 26. Have Denny and Frank Aldrich left to thresh. South wind blowing today. The grain crop as a whole is excellent. Some oats going over a hundred bushel per acre.

AUGUST 29. Finished threshing yesterday. I don't feel so well. Stanley has mowed my hay at Aldrichs and my marsh.

Japan occupation began today. Japanese people ordered to stay inside today.

I have 3 fresh cows.

SEPTEMBER 7. Weather has been warmer and dry of late. Corn is coming along good. Pastures are drying. I have worked in the cemetery two days moving dirt. Have two cows recently fresh. Mrs. Gustafson died day before yesterday from cancer.

McArthur occupied Tokyo today. Official surrender September 1.

SEPTEMBER 16. Weather is cool and drizzling today. Has been cool past week. No frost but very cool. Some corn is out of danger. I intend to fill silo tomorrow starting here are first job with the new machine. Am milking eleven cows. Now have six fresh so far. Al [Dad's brother] filled silo this week.

SEPTEMBER 20. Filled silo here today. Weather cool and rain.

OCTOBER 1. Rained some today. We had a killing frost Friday night. Temperature down to 26°. We have filled all silos [in neighborhood] and my crib left to fill which we will do tomorrow.

OCTOBER 10. Weather warm and dry today. Am cutting a little corn now.

World Series last game today between Detroit 9 and Chicago 3.

OCTOBER 17. Weather warm this week. Am picking a little corn which is on the soft side and poor for cutting.

Am going to the city to a recital at YWCA tonight. Leaving early this P.M.

Stanley [most likely his nephew] is here painting with me.

NOVEMBER 1. Weather cool. It rained a little last night. Marv Gilbert [friend] came back from service October 29. Many lads are home again. Mary was home on weekend. Have my standing corn picked. Much corn yet to be picked. Most of it is on the soft side.

NOVEMBER 11. It rained today. Wind turned northwest this P.M. Had cold spell

DAD'S 84 YEARS

last week with some snow. Saw Minnesota Indiana football game last Saturday. 49-0.

NOVEMBER 15. Weather warmer today with south wind and clouding over. Helped Roy haul cane today.

NOVEMBER 21. Cold and windy today. Snowed a little yesterday. Helped Vic Fryholm. Did some plowing yesterday.

NOVEMBER 23. We and Roy's were to Allan's for dinner yesterday for Thanksgiving. It was rather cold and windy with some snow blowing.

NOVEMBER 28. Cloudy and thawing today. Had about 4 inches of snow night before last. Sawed wood yesterday. Roads have been slippery with some accidents reported.

DECEMBER 9. Cold and windy today after a mild week.

Russell Haften died today from cancer.

Finished bond drive today.

Some snow on ground. Side roads are icy with highways in good shape.

DECEMBER 26. Snowed about a foot over Christmas after two weeks below zero weather. Side roads blocked and highways are blocked in south. Mary has flu.

I suspect my father didn't put much stock in his own feelings, but he did his long hours of farm work in all kinds weather without complaining and enjoyed working and playing with his neighbors, friends and brothers.

My guess is Dad became close friends with Vernon Illstrup because they attended country school and Carlslund church together as boys. Vernon was called home from the war because his father, a farmer, had died, and he needed to support his mother. Vernon is dead, but sometimes I talk to his son Roger on the phone. We talk the same way about the same things.

Cow Names

These are the names of my father's cows from 1945 to 1958 as listed in his dairy records.

Annabelle
Babe
Belle
Betsy
Blossom
Bonnie
Buelah
Bunny
Buttercup
Carnation
Crystal
Daisy
Dimples
Dixie
Dixie Dee
Dolly
Donna Mae
Dutchess
Emily
Faye
Flossie
Frosty
Gypsy
Heidi
Jane
Jessie
Katey
Kitty
Lady
Lucille
Margie
Maxine
Melanie
Minnie
Molly
Myrtle
Nancy
Pansey
Priscilla
Queen
Rose
Sadie
Trinket
Violet
Winnie

Naming cows gives them personal significance. Farmers often care more about cows they

A DAIRY FARM GLOSSARY

name. A reverse example of this occurs in *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte. In the novel, the Earnshaw family takes an orphan in and names him Heathcliff. However, they do not give him the last name of Earnshaw, signifying he is an unimportant outsider.

My boyfriend, Bly Wilcox, had a sickly calf whose mother had rejected him. I had a soft spot for this calf--I suppose just as my father would. Bly didn't name his calves, but I asked him if I could name the calf Sidney. He was going to have a tough time, and I expected Bly would care more about Sidney than an anonymous calf with a number.

He spent hundreds of dollars on Sidney--way more than my father would have. The poor calf would recover and then weaken and then Bly would call the vet. That man even had a nurse friend feed Sidney through a tube. "The calf's name should be Lazarus instead of Sidney," he told me. His death was a sad day for Bly.

He rarely made a good profit farming and supported himself through his law practice. Although my father taught me not to spend that kind of money on vet bills, Bly Wilcox was my kind of man.