

My Life Story

Title of Biography



Title of Your Autobiography

The name you wish to be on your biography.

Dedication/Acknowledgments



This autobiography is dedicated to whom.

Words of wisdom, favorite quote, or words to live by.

In a few sentences, tell me why you decided to write a biography.

Factual Information

Chapter 1



Please enter the date you began answering these questions.

What is your name (first, middle, maiden name, last)? Do you like your name? If you could, would you choose another? What name would you choose? Who were you named for?

Are you male or female?

In what country, state, and city were you born? What hospital?

What is your birth order?

My Family Ancestry

Chapter 2



List the names and birthdates of your mother, father, maternal grandmother, paternal grandmother, maternal grandfather, paternal grandfather and other great grandfathers and grandmothers. What did you call them?

Are your grandparents and or parents still alive?

Do you have brothers and sisters? What are their names? When were they born? Do you remember the first time you saw them?

Where was your mother born? Where was your father born? What circumstances brought your parents to the place where you were born? Were there people already there whom they knew, or did they come into the community alone? Are most of your family members still in the area? Was the community welcoming to them?

Tell me about your aunts and uncles. Did they play an important part in your growing up? Do you remember any special aunts and uncles? Are you still close with your aunts and uncles? And if not, why?

Did you play with your cousins? Who are some of the cousins you know best? Are you still close today? And if not, why?

The House I Grew Up In

Chapter 3



Do you have warm feelings about the childhood home that you remember the most? Do you have any unpleasant memories?

What did your home look like? Was it an apartment, walk-up, condominium, or house? What was the color? Was it stone, wood - other? Was it a one story or two story?

What did you look out onto from your bedroom window?

Was your home full of people?

Was your home full of love?

What was your bedroom like?

Who stayed with you at the childhood home which you remember the best?

Did you share your room with your siblings, or was it cozy by yourself?

My Childhood And Neighborhood

Chapter 4



Who were your best friends in your neighborhood? Do you still know them or know what happened to them?

Did you play at your home, theirs or mostly in playgrounds, the streets, fields?

What do you remember about your friends' houses and families?

Did you have a secret path you used to take to meet your friend?

Did you play house? Were you the mother, father, doctor, etc? Did you play stickball, ice skate, play basketball or baseball (what position did you play)? Did you go to the library?

Do you remember how you happened to be friends with them?

Did you have many disagreements or arguments?

Elementary School Years

Chapter 5



What was the name of your school? How big was it? What did it look like? Was it a private or public school?

Did you ride a bus to school? If so, did you like riding the bus? Do you remember anything that happened on that bus?

Did you look forward to going to elementary school?

What did you learn in school that you still use to this day?

Do you remember being afraid to enter first grade? What did you think when you first saw the classroom?

Do you remember "getting" a concept? Cursive writing, maybe? Do you remember the moment when you realized you could read? Was school work hard or easy for you?

Were you parents hard on you in elementary school?

Life In A Small City or Town

Chapter 6



What was the name, state and population of your city or town?

What was the main source of the town's income?

Did you have the pride of having a farm or business handed down from generation to generation?

What types of food were generally considered for dinner time? Have you raised your family with the same types of foods?

Did you share dinner at the table?

If you lived on a farm, what was the week like? What was Sunday like?

If you lived in a rural area was it safe? If not, did you feel safe?

Did you ever experience crime in your city or town?

Holidays And Celebrations

Chapter 7



Do you like your birthday or dread it? What birthday do you remember the most?

Did you get to choose the meal on your birthday? Were birthdays considered a "big deal" when you were young? Did you raise your children to think they were a big deal?

Did your family make birthday cakes or did you buy them? What were the favorite flavors? What kind of birthday parties did you give for your children? Did you ever have a party?

What were the most important religious holidays you celebrated throughout the year? What was the significance of the holiday (i.e., why were you celebrating it)?

How did you celebrate each major holiday?

Do you look forward to the holidays? If so, what was your favorite?

High School

Chapter 8



*Where did you go to high school? What was your mascot?
What were your school colors? Do you remember any of the
cheers? What was your favorite song during high school?
What type of music was popular?*

*Who were your friends? What did you like about them? Who
were your favorite teachers?*

*What kind of extra-curricular activities did you do in high
school? Were you on the school paper? A sports team?
Were you a class officer? A cheerleader? A nerd? Were
your friends involved in the same activities as you were?
Were you considered popular?*

*Were you ever honored at school? Varsity letter?
Homecoming court? Valedictorian? Do you remember the
students who were?*

*Do you remember any students you felt sorry for because
other students made fun of them or took advantage of them?*

Were you made fun of in High School?

Did your family or caregiver have the resources to buy you the latest fashions? If not, did it affect your status in school?

College

Chapter 9



If you went to college, where did you go? Why did you choose that school? How much was tuition? Was it difficult to afford? Did you receive financial assistance or a scholarship? A loan? Was your school large or small? What was it known for?

What was your living situation? Did you live in a dorm or a room off campus? Who was your roommate? Did you get along? How did you decorate your place? Were you comfortable there?

What was your major? Why did you pick it? Were you ever able to use anything you learned in college in real life? Did you change colleges or majors partway through? Why?

Did you join a sorority or fraternity? Was it important to you? Is it still important to you?

When you first got to college, were you thrilled to be away from home? If you were homesick, what did you do about it? Write letters? Cry? Confide in someone? Or try to hide your

feelings? If you were thrilled to be at college, were you quick at making friends? Who was your first friend there? Did you remain close through the years?

Did you consider college a reason or chance to get away from home?

Did you consider college a waste of time? Or would you consider it to be the best thing you ever did in life?

Did you finish college? And if not, are you still in college or planning to go back?

What was your most difficult course and why?

Military Career

Chapter 10



Name, rank, and serial number? Were you drafted or did you enlist? What was the first you saw of the service - the enlistment center? What did you see there that made you want to sign up? What was it like at the draft board?

How quickly did you move up through the ranks? Who was the first officer you admired? What was your last rank? Are you still in the service?

What was the name of your company? Did it have a nickname? Where were you stationed? Describe what it was like.

Did you win any medals or citations? What for? Where do you keep that medal now - is it prominently displayed in your house, or is it stashed away in a drawer?

What entertainers did you see perform? Which of your buddies did you sit with when you saw the program? What songs do you remember hearing during the war? Which song most says "war years" to you?

Did someone close to you die in active duty? If so, how did it impact your life?

Home-front

Chapter 11



Were you married to a serviceman or servicewoman or did you have a sweetheart in the service? In what year did this person serve and where?

Where were you when he or she received their orders? How did he or she break the news to you? How did you react outwardly? Inwardly? Was separation like that a common occurrence for your friends during the war years?

Did you stay near a stateside base? Who were your friends when your mate was in the service? Where did you live? Did you go back and stay with your parents? Did you keep up the household by yourself?

Did you work? What jobs did you do? Were many of the people in the workplace women with men overseas?

Were your brothers or sisters in the service? Was your father a military man?

Entertainment

Chapter 12



What was your favorite radio or television show growing up?

Did you ever go to see your favorite performers in concert when you were young? Who were they?

What radio stations do you listen to now? What talk radio shows do you like? Have you ever called a talk-radio host and had your voice go on the air?

What television programs do you watch now? What are the shows that you really enjoyed through the years?

Have your tastes in entertainment been fairly mainstream, or have you gone for more unusual music or cinema? Do you like jazz or foreign films? Do you go to poetry readings?

What are your favorite movies? Why?

What were your favorite performers? Why?

Are they still your favorite performers today?

Who are your favorite actors/actresses?

Do you feel that movies and music have an impact on life in America?

Careers

Chapter 13



What was your first real job? Did you start out in an after-school job that had any relation to what you ended up doing?

Describe your current career.

Has anyone helped you up the ladder, even with the first job? Was it easy for you to ask for or accept this help?

Are you union or management?

What career would you have chosen if you didn't have to think about money or education (just assuming both were taken care of)?

Are you happy in your current career?

Do you make enough to support your lifestyle or do you still struggle to support yourself?

What would you have done differently in the past to change your struggles?

Gallup Organization Questions on Leadership Skills Chapter 14



Let's identify some early role models of yours. How would you describe the parenting style of your mother (father)?

While growing up, who did you consider your role model in terms of your family? What impact did your role model have on your development?

While growing up, who did you consider your role model in terms of individuals outside your family? What impact did your role model have on your development?

Think back during high school or before and describe someone who had a profoundly positive impact on your development? What did that person do? Who was that person?

Think back to your first job and describe the type of leader your first supervisor was to you. What did you like best about that person? What did you least like about the person?

Romance And Relationships

Chapter 15



Do you remember your first kiss?

What kind of dating did you do in high school? What is your favorite kind of date - even now?

Were you always attracted to the same type of person? Did you like the strong, silent type, or someone very opinionated?

What do you consider to be a good man or woman?

What are some of the characteristics that you are attracted to?

Who was your first love? Did you think it was going to last? Who broke whose heart?

Do you believe you can be in love more than once?

Do you still think about your first love?

Do you know what happened to your first love?

PARENTHOOD

Chapter 16



As a woman, do you remember telling your mate that you were pregnant? As a man, what did you think when she told you she was pregnant? Was it a surprise, or a long-planned for event? Do you remember telling your parents?

Question for the women: What did your maternity clothes look like? Did you share with your friends? Did you suffer from morning sickness or have other problems?

What are the names and birthdates of your children? What are the names and birthdates of your grandchildren and their parents? Name some of their idiosyncrasies.

Why did you name your children what you named them?

Which hospital did you deliver in? Do you remember the ride there?

Do you want more children?

Tell me some things that make your children special as individuals.

The House You Raised Your Children In Chapter 17



Was the house you raised your family in big enough for all of you? Did your kids share a room?

Did you ever move? Was that particularly hard on anyone?

*What was your address? What was your phone number?
What color was the house? Was your house a one-story or
two-story, stone, wood or brick? Did you have a garage?
What was the floor plan? Can you envision each room and
certain things that went on there? What was the view out
your front window?*

Was your house exactly what you expected it to be?

*Was your neighborhood that of single family homes,
apartments or rural? Were you friendly with your
neighbors? Did you ever have a quirky neighbor? Explain.*

Was everyone in and out of each others' homes? How did you pick the neighborhood? Was this your or your spouse's childhood community?

Is or was the neighborhood everything you ever imagined?

Favorites

Chapter 18



What is your favorite candy bar? Where do you usually buy it? Grocery? Drug store? Gas station? Airport?

What is your favorite birthday cake? Do you buy it in a store or does some you love bake it? What ice cream do you like? Do you get it at an ice cream parlor or in the freezer section of a store?

What's your favorite dessert? Can you prepare it yourself?

Where is your favorite beach? How far did you have to drive or bicycle to get there?

What is your favorite cartoon character or comic strip? Which comics do you remember reading when you were growing up?

What are some other favorite things not mentioned or asked about?

Food

Chapter 19



What do you prefer for breakfast on a weekend as opposed to during the week?

What are your favorite restaurants?

What recipe are you famous for? Did anyone ever insult you regarding your cooking skills? What dish you usually bring to a pot luck or picnic?

When were you first introduced to coffee? How do you take your coffee? Do you have a favorite mug?

What is your favorite Campbell's soup?

What does a typical meal for you consist of?

Do you like experimenting on different meals?

Moments From Your Adult Life

Chapter 20



Did you and your mate often go dancing? Where? What music did you dance to? Did you and your mate have "our song"? Which dances were popular?

When you and your friends got together, what did you do? Whose home did you go to most often? Did your children become friends with your friends' children? How did you meet the friends you are most comfortable with now?

What kind of movies do you find yourself drawn to....adventure, epic, violent, comedy? Do you go to movies now as much as you used to? Why or why not?

What books do you like to read? Novels, biographies, romance, science fiction? Do you have a specific part of the house for books? What is the last book you read? Why did you choose that one? Where were you sitting when you read it?

Are you friendly with your neighbors? Do you sit down for an evening together on the porch or patio or are you merely cordial with them, nodding acquaintances? Have you ever

had a neighbor whom you've loved and lost? Were you close to a family that later moved away?

Are you happy and content?

Are you relatively healthy? If not, do you know why you aren't healthy? Would you like to explain why?

Politics and History

Chapter 21



Who was the best president of any country ever? Who was the worst president? Which president of the United States did you admire most? Did you ever meet a famous politician? What happened?

Do you have a strong political party alliance? Have you ever worked on a campaign? Have you ever worked at a polling place?

Which domestic problems are most important in your town today? In your country? In the world?

What have been your causes over the years? What did you do about issues that bother you?

Which campaign slogans stick in your mind? Why?

Do you believe in our government?

Do you believe that voting makes and impact on life? Do you believe your voice counts?

Your Community

Chapter 22



Some people prefer to describe the community in which they lived most of their years rather than where they are living now. What is the name of the community you would like to describe in the following series of questions? In what city, state and country is it located? What are the dates you lived there?

What were the big businesses? Did you know any of the community leaders? Did you become one?

Were there major highways going through your town? What and how far is the next largest city? What is the nearest airport? How do people get to the airport in your town? Cab? Shuttle? Good friends?

Which public buildings do you use? The library? The municipal swimming pool? Town tennis courts? What is your local newspaper? Has your name ever been mentioned in one? Has your picture ever appeared?

Was there a heavily delineated rich side of town and poor side of town? Did they have specific names? Did you spend much time in either?

Your House Now

Chapter 23



Some people prefer to describe the home in which they lived most of their years rather than the home in which they are living now. What is the address of the home you would like to describe in the following series of questions? What are the dates you lived there?

Why do you like your home? What do you dislike about your home? Do you have an attic? If so, what is in it?

What is the most comfortable room in your home? What is your favorite chair? Favorite place to read? Where do you usually sit to talk on the phone? Where do you usually do your computer work?

Do you have the same furniture as when you were raising your children? Do you have the kitchen you want? How would you change it? Enough room for books? How would you change your current home if you decided not to move? What addition would you make to your house now if you could?

What type of trees grow on your property? Describe what your garden looks like each year and what is in it.

Who lives with you?

Everyday Life

Chapter 24



What have been your personal landmarks in your life? (e.g., restaurant in your neighborhood, gas station, museum, barn)

What grocery store do you use? How much do you usually spend each trip?

Favorite drug store? Know your pharmacist by name? Favorite drycleaner? What's your favorite book store, hardware store, cookwares store?

Are there birds or squirrels in your yard? Raccoons or deer?

What time do you get up in the morning?

What is your schedule like Monday to Friday? What do you do when you first wake up until you go to sleep?

Habits

Chapter 25



Are you usually late or early?

Are you more comfortable speaking or writing? Do you enjoy talking on the phone more than writing letters?

Do you have any superstitions?

Do you have certain days of the week you do certain chores?

Do you eat your meals at the same time everyday? What do you most often eat?

Appearance

Chapter 26



Describe what you look like now. Have you been happy with the way you look? What did you look like as a teenager? As a young child? If you had to name a famous person whom you looked like, who would it be? Who would you most like to look like?

Has your appearance played an important part in your getting along in the world? Do you think it's been detrimental or beneficial?

What is your best feature? Your worst? Do you have any birthmarks or scars that differentiate your looks absolutely from anyone else?

Have you ever considered plastic surgery? If so, did you end up doing it? If not, why not? In all truth, are you vain?

What would you change about your appearance? Do you wish you were taller or shorter?

Grandparenthood

Chapter 27



Where were you when your child told you that you were going to be a grandparent? What were your first words?

Who called you from the hospital to tell you your first grandchild was born? What time was it? Who was the first person you called?

What did you think the first time you held your grandchild?

Were you able to go over to the house much and help out with the new baby? Did you cook dinner for the new family for awhile or bathe the baby? Did you stay over or come and go in the mornings and evenings? When did your grandchild first say your name? Were you at your house or at the child's house? What do you grandchildren call you?

Did you ever make anything by hand for your grandchild? A needlepoint pillow? A wooden toy? A quilt?

Travel and Leisure Time

Chapter 28



What did you always like best about the weekends? Did you have a usual routine?

What do you like about weekends now? What do you like least?

To what cities in the United States have you traveled? Do you have a favorite vacation spot?

To what foreign countries have you traveled? What cities? What were some of your favorite cities and why?

Do you vacation with certain people or is every vacation different?

Vehicles

Chapter 29



What are you driving now? How many years have you had this vehicle?

When did you get your first car? Did you buy it yourself or did your parents help you?

If you paid for your first car yourself, how did you earn the money? Were you in love with the car?

What was your absolute most favorite vehicle purchase?

How much did gas cost when you got your first car?

Moods, Attitudes, and Philosophies

Chapter 30



Do you like rainy days? What do you do on them?

As an old dog, have you learned new tricks?

What heroic attributes do you have? What not-so-heroic-at-all attitudes do you have?

Would you say you're a doer or a procrastinator?

Would you say you're blessed? How so?

Looking Back 20/20 Hindsight

Chapter 31



What were your favorite years? What were your favorite ages?

What are the important dates in your personal history?

What do you think other people think of you? Do you think they see you the way you really are?

What was the hardest thing that you ever had to do?

What has been the angriest that you've ever been? What did you do about it?

Hard Questions

Chapter 32



Whom did you trust and / or respect most in your life?

Did you have any real vices / bad habits?

Would you prefer a burial, cremation, mausoleum, Viking funeral, or something else?

What do you want said about you at your eulogy?

Have you thought about what you want your obituary to read?

Heavy Questions

Chapter 33



What was the happiest moment of your life? The saddest?

What are the most important lessons you've learned?

Are there any words of wisdom you'd like to pass along to particular family members or friends?

How has your life been different than what you'd imagined?

How would you like to be remembered?

Add Your Own Questions

Chapter 34



Please include the questions we didn't ask, or add some family documents. Letters from your grandmother, perhaps, or a family history written by another family member.

Add a question and answer or family text here.

Add a question and answer or family text here.

Special Community Chapter On African Americans Chapter 35



Who are the greatest African Americans?

What was it like to be raised as a black American?

Have you ever experienced prejudice?

Do you think being black stopped you from doing something?

How has the United States changed its attitudes toward the African American community over the years?

Do you believe you would've gotten further ahead if you were another race?

Special Chapter On Aids

Chapter 36



When were you first diagnosed with AIDS?

Describe how you were told. Was your diagnosis done with dignity?

What did you do the day after you knew you had AIDS? How long did it take you to absorb the news?

Who was the first person you told?

Did you know about AIDS before you were diagnosed?

Surviving Cancer

Chapter 37



When were you first diagnosed with cancer?

Describe how you found out you had cancer.

What did you the day after you knew you had cancer?

Did you know about cancer before you were diagnosed?

How has living with cancer changed your life?

Surviving Hurricane Katrina

Chapter 38



How did you prepare for the storm?

Did you coordinate plans with your family for riding out the storm?

Did you think the storm would cause more or less damage than it did?

How did the storm affect your life?

Did you temporarily evacuate or leave your community to start a new life?

How do you think the Hurricane Katrina disaster was handled?

Special community chapter on being gay/lesbian

Chapter 39



When did you realize you were gay?

Was it difficult telling the ones you love?

Who are the greatest gay men and women?

What was it like to be raised gay?

Have you ever experienced prejudice for being gay?

Do you wish things could be different?

How did 911 Impact You?

Chapter 40



Where were you when you heard about 911?

Were you affected? If not, why?

How long did the disaster affect your life?

Did you think it could have ever happened in America?

Were you bitter about the event? Are you still bitter about the events?

Frequently Asked Questions



How long will it take to answer the questions?

It will take an interviewer an hour or two. This is primarily why we prefer to meet you where you're comfortable. This way we can get the best answers possible to make your biography true to life.

Can I add my own questions?

Yes! Just let your interviewer know which questions you choose to add. We want to create a biography that is relevant and personal.

Are my responses confidential during the writing process?

Yes.

Can I keep my biography confidential?

Yes. Respecting your privacy is important to us. At the end of your interview, you will be able to decide if you will make your biography available to the public and / or to friends and family. Confidential or not, be honest, reflective, and unafraid to share your hopes, your dreams, your accomplishments, your set backs, your experiences, your thoughts, and your lessons learned.

Is there a limit to the length of any answer?

You will find that some questions can be answered in one or two sentences; other questions will inspire you to write an entire page. There is no limit to the length of any answer but the total biography cannot exceed 400 pages.

Is there a limit to the length of my biography?

The total length of your biography cannot exceed 400 pages. But keep in mind, the more time you spend with your biographer, the more the cost is affected.

What if I want to change my biography?

We recognize that your life will continue to change and so should your personal history. You may change your answers and photos but there will be a fee to do so.

Will my answers be edited?

With highest respect for our right of free speech and expression, only in the most extreme circumstance will biographies be prohibited from being published. Of course, inappropriate photos will not be allowed and we have a filtering system that will not allow offensive language. Other than that, to achieve the realest voice possible for your family members and friends, we do minimal editing.

How will you ensure accuracy and truthfulness of answers?

Writers will be personally held liable for any inaccuracies or statements that cause harm.

Is someone able to help me through the process?

Everybody needs some encouragement while preparing a personal history. Award-winning writer and best-selling

author Toy Styles who is also the founder, will be available to assist you. Offering tips and inspiration, Toy Styles will lead you through the writing process, answering questions that arise along the way.

Is someone available to help with additional questions?

E-mail us with questions at mylifestorytold@yahoo.com.

Are there restrictions or rules to follow?

We want your biography to be as true to form as possible. So if using profanity is how you'd like to relay your message, let your interviewer know.

Any suggestions on how truthful I should be about other people?

Keep in mind that you will decide who will read your biography - just those personally close to you or the entire world. We encourage you to be as open and honest as possible but not hurtful to others. Sometimes you will want to mention the name of the person who may have caused you pain along the way, but it's probably best to mention the hurt without denigrating the person. Then just move onto the next question.

I'm worried about the longevity of electronic archives. How can I store my own autobiography?

When you are finished with your biography, you will have an option of having your manuscript given to you on CD, PDF or Word. With technology changing so quickly, we encourage you to make sure you keep copies of your own autobiography.

Writing about difficult times

Many people ask, "But what about the bad stuff? How do I write an autobiography that is open and honest but doesn't hurt the ones I love or doesn't damage the ones I might not love anymore?" Everybody has darker moments. Do they belong in a family history?

If you want it to, it does. If you don't, don't put it in. There is no law of full disclosure here. This is your history, not a confessional. If it helps you to write about it, write about it. If you don't want anyone to read it, crumple it up and toss it away. Shred it. Or, in this case, just hit the delete button.

Writing helps, though. You gain a page worth of perspective. When you find yourself in an emotional jungle, writing helps you scythe your way through.

No one leaves this life unscathed. We goof up. We shame ourselves. Tragedy happens. We've been hurt. We can't pretend life passed by with no potholes or wrong turns.

You don't get points for pulling skeletons out of the closet and rattling them in your unsuspecting loved ones' faces. There are positive aspects to the negative. Sometimes you do a service by not painting your life in a greeting card glow.

If one of your stories might help someone through a difficult time, it doesn't hurt to pass it along. Remember, again, that you decide who gets to read.

The whole point of life is to learn. If you learned something that might help a family member during difficult times, it doesn't hurt to pass it along.

Important!!!!

(Writers will be personally held liable for any inaccuracies or statements that are malicious or slanderous.)

Please Remember ...

You are writing a biography for all of your family to read for generations to come.

Take your time so your children and their children's children will know you completely.

The things most real are the things we can't see. Tell them all about your delights and concerns.

You can't change what you don't acknowledge - so show yourself, warts and all so your family can learn from you.

Your sense of humor will come through for generations to read.

We can design the interview so that you can answer the questions in any order you'd like.

Sit loosely in the writing saddle and continue with your deeply thought out comments.

Feel good in knowing that you are gathering the story of your life in one central place.

Enjoy this once in a lifetime process!

Our Fees

Just The Facts - \$99.99

Includes:

*A Basic Interview Of The Facts Of Your Life
Five Chapters Only (No more than 50 pages)
Typing Manuscript
Basic Cover Design
Paperback Book*

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*Interview Of 15 Chapters Of Your Choice
Typing Manuscript
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Sample Biography

Dedication

Title of Your Autobiography

Growing up in Nebraska

This autobiography is dedicated to whom?

This autobiography is dedicated to my children, Margaret Ann, Barbara Louise, and David Edward. I hope it tells them what growing up in Nebraska was like for me.

Just The Facts

Please enter the date you began answering these questions.

I started answering these questions on November 8, 2004

What is your name (first, middle, maiden name, last)? Do you like your name? If you could, would you choose another? What name would you choose? Who were you named for?

My name is Ila Faye Ullstrom James. Growing up I was always called Ila Faye. Many children in that day were called by their full names. I never particularly liked the name. Partly it was because no one else had that name. I can remember that my sister belonged to a Dorothy club. It was organized through a church paper for young people.

She had a round robin letter that she sent on to other Dorothys across the country. It always irked me because I could never have such a club. Who ever heard of an Ila Faye?

Are you male or female?

I am female.

In what country, state, and city were you born? What hospital?

I was born in the house that had belonged to my maternal grandfather in Ashland, Nebraska on March 31, 1927. My mother used to tell me that I was the only one of her babies that kept the doctor waiting. I was a breach baby. I guess they didn't try to turn breach babies in those days but let them come bottom first. I've heard it said that breach babies always have trouble with their hips. Maybe that's why I have so much trouble with mine.

What is your birth order?

I was the youngest of 4 children. The first was a boy who lived less than a year because my mother had German Measles during the pregnancy and it left the baby with a weak heart. My sisters were 7 and 5 years older than I.

How old are you today? How old do you feel?

I'm 78 years old. Two years ago I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. As a result I have trouble walking. I had walked for exercise for about 20 years before that diagnosis. Now I can barely walk for a block or two. I wouldn't feel my 78 years if it weren't for the effect of Parkinson's disease.

What is your birth date?

I was born March 31, 1927 in a house at 1641 Clay Street in

Ashland, Nebraska.

Are you right-handed or left-handed?

I guess I'm right handed. I write and eat with my right hand but I cook and deal cards with my left hand. I can remember when my aunts were around and I was writing something when I was preschool age my aunts corrected me and tried to get me to write with my right hand. I can also remember complaining to my mother that a new electric skillet had the handle on the wrong side. She told me I was using it backwards. I did have an uncle who was left handed and my daughter, Barb, is also left handed. So there are apparently some left handed genes in my family. Perhaps I do the things I was taught to do right handed and the things I just picked up on my own I do left handed.

Are you overweight or underweight?

I am overweight and have fought the pounds ever since my pregnancies. Living in a retirement home that serves great food doesn't help my battle with the pounds!

What is your height, your weight, your eye color? Do you wear corrective lenses?

I have grey green eyes and have worn corrective lenses since I was 21 years old.

What is your mate's name?

My husband's name is Philip James.

What was your maiden name? If you are a woman and married, was is difficult to give up your maiden name and

take your husband's name?

My maiden name was Ila Faye Ullstrom. I was happy to change my name to James. Taking the husband's name was the custom of the time and I think hyphenated names are cumbersome.

What is your anniversary date? How many years have you been married or were you married?

We were married August 11, 1951 and have been married 54 years.

How many children do you have? What are their names? How old are they?

We have 3 children. They are Margaret Ann James, who will be 50 years old in September, Barbara Louise Kelter, who will be 47 in October, and David Edward James, who will be 45 in December.

How many grandchildren do you have? What are their full names (first, middle, last)? How old are they?

We have 6 grandchildren. They are Seth Benjamin Kelter, age 17, Aaron Philip Kelter, age 14, Michael Philip James, age 14, Clare Margaret James, age 12, Katherine Mary James, age 9, and Teresa Elizabeth James, age 6.

What is, or was, your occupation?

My occupation was that of teacher. I taught vocal music and English in Pawnee City, Nebraska, vocal music and orchestra in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Philadelphia, and History and Principles of Education at the

University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

What is your race? What is your religion? What is your political affiliation?

My race is Caucasian. I am of Swedish, German, and mixed ancestry. Politically I am an independent although I am registered as a Republican because in order to vote in the primaries I have to be affiliated with a political party. I am very unhappy with politics in our country and feel very strongly that we need less politics and more statesmanship.

Do you live in the suburbs, a city, a town, or in a rural area? What is the population? Do you live in an apartment, a house, a condominium, or a retirement home?

I live in a small city. Lincoln, Nebraska now has a population of about 220,000. I now live in a retirement home. When we were raising our children we lived in two-story home with 4 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, living room with fireplace, dining room, kitchen, recreation room, and double garage.

Are you allergic to anything? What is your blood type?

I am allergic to ibuprophen. My blood type is A+.

How would you describe yourself?

I would describe myself as an active senior citizen. I am an intellectual who likes to read, discuss and interact with others.

Please add a question or fact that you would like to answer

or share.

My mother "gave readings." There was no TV, sometimes no radio if a tube for the radio burned out and we had no place or no money to replace it. Mother entertained people by giving readings. She kept a scrap book of poems or "readings" from which she could select poems and subjects she wanted to use. One of her favorites which she recited hundreds of times including the times she told it for her grandchildren was "Little Orphan Annie" by James Whitcomb Riley.

*Little Orphan Annie's come to my house to stay,
To wash the cups and saucers up and brush the crumbs
away.
To shoo the chickens from the porch and dust the hearth and
sweep.
and make the fire and bake the bread to earn her board and
keep.
While all us other children, when the supper things is done,
we sit around the kitchen fire and has the most fun
a listening to the witch tales that Annie tells about
and the goblins will get ya if ya don't watch out!*

*Once there was a little boy who wouldn't say his prayers,
and when he went to bed at night away up stairs,
his mammy heard him holler and his daddy heard him bawl,
and when they turned the covers down,
he wasn't there at all!
They searched him in the attic room
and cubby hole and press
and even up the chimney flu and every where, I guess,
but all they ever found of him was just his pants and round-
about
and the goblins will get yaw if ya don't watch out!*

*Once there was a little girl who always laughed and grinned
and made fun of everyone, of all her blood and kin,
and once when there was company and old folks was there,
she mocked them and she shocked them and said, she didn't
care.*

*And just as she turned on her heels to go and run and hide,
there was two great big black things a standing by her side.
They snatched her through the ceiling fore she knew what
she's about,
and the goblins will get ya if ya don't watch out!!*

*When the night is dark and scary,
and the moon is full and creatures are a flying and the wind
goes Whoooooooooo,
you better mind your parents and your teachers fond and
dear,
and cherish them that loves ya, and dry the orphans tears
and help the poor and needy ones that cluster all about,
or the goblins will get ya if you don't watch out!!!*

*Mother said that I recited that poem when I was only two
years old. I'll bet it was with every expression and
pronunciation exactly like hers! She also said that I sang my
first solo at the age of two. It was
"Jesus Loves Me" and I sang it for the Missionary Society at
the Methodist Episcopal Church at Ashland. Mother loved to
show her children off.*

Your Family and Ancestry

***List the names and birthdates of your mother, father,
maternal grandmother, paternal grandmother, maternal***

grandfather, paternal grandfather and other great grandfathers and grandmothers. What did you call them?

My Mother's name was Lola Anna Hendricks. She was born December 12, 1886 in Fillmore, Missouri. My Father's name was Wilmer Ullstrom. He was born February 1, 1876 in Mt. Carroll, Illinois. My maternal grandmother was Elizabeth Jane Rude Hendricks. She was born September 14, 1848. Her mother died in childbirth when Elizabeth was born and she was raised by a family by the name of Baker. My paternal grandmother was Louise Letting Ullstrom. She was born July 24, 1838 in Sweden. My maternal grandfather was Salathial Pritchard Hendricks. He was born July 14, 1843 in Columbiana County, Ohio. My paternal grandfather was Jan Peter Ullstrom, born April 8, 1834 in Sillerud Parrish, Sweden.

I never knew any of my grandparents. They all died before I was born. The house my maternal grandfather owned was willed to my Aunt Nellie who was the only one of the children who did not marry. She stayed at home and took care of her parents until they died. My Uncle Ernest was left a widower by the early death of his wife, Ada. They had a young child who needed care so Aunt Nellie went to Julesburg, Colorado and cared for Mary Jane in the winter when Mary Jane needed to be in school. She came every summer to live with us in her house. She loved to quilt and every winter she would piece quilts. She had a friend in Ashland, Mary Cook, who quilted with her. Each spring the quilting frames would be set up in the "sitting room" and Nellie and Mary would spend the summer quilting the quilts that Nellie had pieced during the winter. I was born in this house and lived there until 1941 when Aunt Nellie died and the house was sold and the money divided among the remaining 8 Hendricks children.

The house was on Clay Street in Ashland. The house had a

full quarter of a block of land. It also had a barn and a coal shed. We had a large lawn and a large garden. My parents raised most of the food we ate. One of Ashland's bankers lived in a large Victorian house across the street. He had three quarters of a block in land around his house. One quarter of his land was used as an orchard, one quarter was lawn and he let my family garden the other one quarter which he did not care to use. I can remember helping to plant the garden and shell peas, snap beans, and shuck corn.

My mother canned the produce from the garden that we couldn't eat fresh. She also dried corn. She would cut the corn from the cob, spread it evenly over cookie sheets, cover the corn lightly with cheese cloth to keep the bugs off and let it dry out in the sun for days, stirring it from time to time to make sure it dried. When this was dried it was stored in a cotton bag. It was not as good as fresh corn on the cob, but it was edible. I don't know whether some ancestor learned this from the Indians but at any rate I assume it was passed down from previous generations. There was no air conditioning. Mother's canning was done by the hot water bath method. In Nebraska with temperatures often in the 90s and 100s, you can imagine what it must have been like in that kitchen! In addition, she cooked on a cooking range that was fueled by wood or coal so that heat was added to the hot temperatures from outside. My mother did not lead an easy life.

Do you have brothers and sisters? What are their names? When were they born? Do you remember the first time you saw them?

I was the youngest child in the family. My sister, Marjorie Helen, was seven years older than I and Dorothy Anne was five years older.

Where was your mother born? Where was your father born? What circumstances brought your parents to the place where you were born? Were there people already there whom they knew, or did they come into the community alone? Was the community welcoming to them?

My mother was born in Fillmore, Missouri. She was the youngest daughter in her family. I was also the youngest daughter in my family. Our daughter, Barbara, was also the youngest daughter making her the youngest daughter of the youngest daughter of the youngest daughter. That progression will end with Barb's generation because Barb has only boys. After the Civil War my grandfather moved his family from Columbiana, Ohio to Fillmore, Missouri where he bought a farm. The school in Fillmore only went through the eighth grade. All the other children in the family got an education by living with some of their older siblings. But my mother was the baby and her Mother wouldn't let her go away to school. Mother's older sister, Clara, was teaching in Ashland, Nebraska and so Salathiel Hendricks sold his farm in Missouri and moved to Ashland so that my mother could go to high school. Ashland High School offered what they called Normal Training which prepared a student for teaching school. My Mother took this Normal Training course and she taught in Cedar Creek and Grand Island. She left teaching to get married. In those days married women were not given the opportunity to teach. Those jobs were to be left to women who were single or widowed and had to have a job to support themselves.

Tell about your aunts and uncles. Did they play an important part in your growing up? Do you remember any special aunts and uncles?

My favorite aunt was Aunt Orla. She and her husband, Uncle Martin owned a small grocery store in Wann, Nebraska. This was not far from Ashland. I stayed overnight for a few days with her from time to time. When her grandchildren came to visit she would often have me come, too, so that they would have someone to play with. When I received my last doll, I named the doll Elizabeth, which was Aunt Orla's daughter's name so that I could be Aunt Orla.

Was yours a religious family? Did you attend services together? Were these dress-up affairs?

My family were members of the Methodist Church. The children always attended Sunday School and often attended church. My mother was actively involved in the Missionary Society and in teaching Sunday School. We dressed up to go to Sunday School and church. I also attended the Methodist Youth Fellowship during high school days. I started playing piano for the singing of hymns for the Junior Department of Sunday School when I was about 12 years old. When I was 14 I started playing piano for church. Our church had no organ at that time. I played piano for choir practice and for church all four years that I was in high school.

Did your family say grace? Did you sit down at the table together for every meal?

Our family said grace before every meal. We children were taught grace in Swedish and said that grace before every meal.

Did your family take vacations? Did you go to the same place every year; a summer house or resort?

I grew up during the depression. We couldn't afford to take

vacations. However, very few others in our town could afford vacations either so we didn't feel very different from the others. My father had a jewelry and music store and those things were luxuries so people didn't buy them. He had to close the jewelry store and took up painting and paper hanging. Houses still needed to be painted.

What was your relationship with your parents like? Would you describe it as warm? Formal? Loving? Stern? Demonstrative?

My parents were very concerned with their children. They always knew where we were and knew the parents of the children we played with. Education was very important and we were expected to excel at school. There were always reading materials available. We lived 2 blocks from the local Carnegie Library.

Did your family ever have a reunion? What were some of the best reunions and why?

Until Aunt Nellie died, the Hendricks relatives came every year to the house in Ashland to have Thanksgiving dinner together. Uncle Bert bought the bird and my mother cooked it. Usually it was a turkey but occasionally it was a goose.

Other members of the family who lived in the Ashland-Lincoln-Wahoo area came and brought other food for the dinner. One of my photographs shows the family gathered for Thanksgiving. Aunt Nellie died when I was 14 and the house was sold and the money divided between the remaining children. My family moved to an apartment in the building that my father owned and we didn't have room for the family gathering after that.

Can you remember any stories you heard about your

grandparents when they were children? Do you feel as if you knew much about their lives?

My grandparents were all dead before I was born so I had no relationship with them. I was the youngest in our family and my mother was the youngest in her family and my father was 10 years older than my mother so I was the youngest of the cousins and had little in common with the cousins .

Did anyone in your family do handiwork? Needlework? Wood work? Was anyone particularly mechanical or artistic?

My father was a fine artist. He attended the Chicago Art Institute. But I think he felt he couldn't make a living at it and he didn't want to be a starving artist. He also had a wood working shop in the barn where he had a lathe and other tools. He made bird houses and did repair work on the house as needed. My mother sewed and made many of our clothes. She often made over clothes that were passed on from the family into clothes for the children.

What did your dad do for a living? Your mom? Your grandparents?

My dad owned a jewelry and music store in Ashland. It did well and he built a larger store. But when the depression hit jewelry, phonographs, and pianos did not sell well because people didn't have money for luxuries and my dad had to close the store. He rented the building out for a number of years to the Nebraska Public Power. He took up painting and paperhanging to make a living. My mother taught school until she got married. She also worked as a reporter for the local weekly newspaper. After I graduated from high school my parents moved to Lincoln so that I could attend

the University of Nebraska. We all got jobs at the State Home for Children. My mother finally ended up as Assistant Superintendent of the Home. She also worked for the Lincoln Action Program and was recognized with a special award for her work with senior citizens.

Were you considered rich, poor, or middle class? Were times ever tough for all of you, or was it always smooth sailing? Did you have to go without things that your friends had?

I suppose we were poor but we didn't know it! I never felt that others had more than we did. By comparison with my children's Christmases, ours was pretty meager. My Mother always managed a couple of packages a piece under the Christmas tree. One was probably clothes that we needed.

We didn't have a car but gasoline and tires were not available during World War II and so farm families were the only ones who had access to gasoline anyway. I remember being asked by a boy from a farm to go to a basketball game in a neighboring town when I was in high school. We had 3 flat tires on the way home. The boys had patches to mend the tires with but it was cold and it took time to keep changing the tires so we were late getting home.

How did the Great Depression affect your family?

The Great Depression affected my family deeply. My father was doing very well in his jewelry and music business when the depression hit. He moved from his first location to a larger store on the main street of Ashland. He did beautiful engraving. His customers had jewelry engraved by him and souvenir spoons were popular. I have a spoon with the Ashland High School engraved on it which was sold at his store. But he sold jewelry, pianos, and phonographs and

those were all luxury items and people didn't spend money on them during a depression so he was forced to close his store. He took up painting and paper hanging. Even that didn't make a great living because people didn't have the money to pay for having it done.

Can you describe your paternal and maternal family history in a page or less?

My paternal family came to America from Sweden on the sailing ship, Argo, sailing out of Bremen, Germany. They came with 4 children and another on the way. My grandfather had reached the age where he either had to serve in the military or leave the country. He had a family and he did not feel he could support them if he went to the military. So they came to America to avoid military service in Sweden. They came to Mt. Carroll, Illinois where there was a settlement of Swedish farmers. My grandfather bought land there. My father was born there. I don't know why they left Mt. Carroll. Perhaps it was news of more or better land.

They sold their farmland in Illinois and bought land in Memphis, Nebraska which is near Ashland.

My maternal grandparents came to the United States much earlier and settled in a sizeable Pennsylvania Dutch settlement. Census reports indicate that there were many Hendricks families in Pennsylvania. However, my grandfather's family moved on to Ohio and owned land in Columbiana County, Ohio. My grandfather fought in the Civil War with a unit from Ohio. He was very proud of his Civil War service. He and his wife and children moved from Ohio to Fillmore, Missouri. He had taught school in Ohio but he farmed in Missouri. My mother was born in Fillmore.

The House of Your Growing Up

Do you have warm feelings about the childhood home that you remember the most?

I was born in the house that had belonged to my grandfather, Salathial Pritchard Hendricks on March 31, 1927. My mother used to tell me that I was the only one of her babies that kept the doctor waiting. I was a breach baby. I guess they didn't try to turn breach babies in those days but let them come bottom first. I've heard it said that breach babies always have trouble with their hips. Maybe that's why I have so much trouble with mine. The house was at 1641 Clay Street in Ashland, Nebraska. I remember the house on Clay Street in Ashland as being "home." The property had a house and a coal shed and a barn. The property had a full quarter of a block of land. We had a large lawn and a large garden. My parents raised most of the food we ate. One of the bankers lived in a large Victorian house across the street from us. He had three quarters of a block in land around his house. One quarter of his land was used as an orchard, one quarter was lawn and he let my family garden the other one quarter which he did not care to use. I can remember helping to plant the garden and shelling peas, snapping beans, and shucking corn. My mother canned the produce from the garden that we couldn't eat fresh. She dried corn. She would cut the corn from the cob, spread it evenly over cookie sheets, cover the corn lightly with cheese cloth to keep the bugs off and let it dry out in the sun for days, stirring it from time to time to make sure it dried. When this was dried it was stored in a cotton bag. It was not as good as fresh corn on the cob but it was edible. I don't know whether some

ancestor learned this from the Indians but at any rate I assume it was passed down from previous generations. There was no air conditioning. Mother's canning was done by the hot water bath method. In Nebraska with temperatures often in the 90s and 100s, you can imagine what it must have been like in that kitchen! In addition, she cooked on a cooking range that was fueled by wood or coal so that heat was added to the hot temperature from outside. My mother did not lead an easy life.

What did your home look like? Apartment, walk-up, condominium, or house? What was the color? Was it stone, wood - other? One story or two?

The house that I was born in and lived in until I was 14 years old was a white, wood house. It was 2 stories and had a parlor, sitting room, dining room, kitchen, bedroom and bath downstairs. Upstairs there were 3 bedrooms.

Can you remember the pictures that hung, wallpaper, carpeting, etc.? Can you remember your telephone number and address?

I remember three pictures that hung on the wall in the house where I grew up. All of them were painted by my father. My father took an art class at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

While there he painted in oils a copy of the painting "Aurora". There were also two pictures done in pastels that my father painted for my mother. One was a spring landscape and the other was a winter landscape. My father attended the Chicago Art Institute and also an engraving school in Kansas City.

What did you do to make your room your own? Did you

sleep with a stuffed animal or doll? What was your animal or doll's name?

As a child I slept with a stuffed dog. It was made for me by my Aunt Orla. I called him Bonzo. My mother saved it for me and gave it to me when I had my first baby. I loved my Aunt Orla. She was my favorite aunt. The last doll I received I named Elizabeth because Elizabeth was Aunt Orla's daughter and I named my doll Elizabeth so that I could be Aunt Orla. But in spite of my appreciation for Aunt Orla, I took one look at that dingy stuffed dog and threw it away. I wasn't going to have my clean baby playing with that dirty dog!

Was security an issue? Did your parents keep the door locked or did family and friends come and go with the door unlocked?

My parents did lock the doors at night and when they were away from home but the key was a skeleton key which could probably have been purchased at any hardware store. There was no police in the town, nor a sheriff that I remember. We did have "tramps" who came asking for food. They probably came into town by riding the railroad. This was the depression and my mother always fed them. I remember one came on Christmas Day one year and my mother gave him a Christmas dinner--turkey, dressing, potatoes, gravy, probably pumpkin pie. Even though she always fed them she never invited them into the house. She handed them a plate and told them they could eat on the back porch and she hooked the screen door after she gave them the plate of food.

How old were you when you were first trusted with a key?

I think we only had one key for the house. Mother was usually there when we came home but if she was not going to be there, she left the key under a gas can on the back porch!

Did your family eat at the kitchen table or in the dining room? What food conjures up the best childhood memories for you?

Our family ate at the kitchen table sometimes and at the dining room table other times. On Sundays we usually ate in the dining room. Also the temperature sometimes determined where we ate. My mother cooked on a range fueled by wood and it was sometimes too hot to eat in the kitchen.

Was there much music in your house or was it relatively quiet? What type of music, if so? Did you play a Victrola, radio, record player, boom box, CDs?

There was lots of music in our home. We had a piano and we made the music ourselves. My sisters and I all played the piano. Sometimes we had a radio that worked. We didn't have a victrola but when concerts were broadcast on the radio we listened to them.

Was there a lot of talking going on? Did you feel part of the adult conversation?

When I was growing up there was no TV and so there was lots of talking. We listened to certain favorite programs on the radio. I particularly remember I Love a Mystery, Fibber McGee and Molly, Jack Benny, and Bob Hope. We listened to these together as a family. My mother listened to some soap operas while she worked during the daytime.

Did you have a lawn? Have to mow it? Did you have gardens of flowers, vegetables or herbs? Did you help care for them?

We had a large area in our yard where we set up a croquet set. Although I never knew my grandfather, my mother told about the family coming to Ashland for Thanksgiving dinner and said that Grandpa always hoped it would be warm enough for a croquet game on Thanksgiving Day. My mother continued to invite the family for Thanksgiving dinner after the grandparents were gone. Uncle Bert would always buy the bird but Mother cooked it and everyone brought food. Usually the bird was a turkey but sometimes it would be a goose. The last time my mother cooked Thanksgiving dinner in that house there were 27 of us there to eat it. Mother put all the leaves in the oak dining table and some of us "kids" ate at a card table placed in the downstairs bedroom.

What kind of chores were you required to do for the family?

My job in keeping up the house was to dust the "what-nots" and the shelf once a week. I was also expected to go to town to get items for my mother and I helped with gardening and preparing produce for eating. Sometimes I helped with ironing but I think Mother thought I wasn't able to iron anything very complicated!

What was your favorite season at your house? Do you remember summer as too hot or exhilarating and perfect? Did you swim a lot in the summer? Did you ski or do winter sports in the cold weather?

Spring and Fall are the choice seasons in Nebraska. But there was no school in the summer and we played outside until it got dark. One of our favorite games was Kick the Can. We played this with neighborhood children. There was no air conditioning and we sat outside every evening of the summer. Our parents sat out, too. We looked at the stars and talked. We looked for constellations. At certain times there would be shooting stars and we would watch for these comets. We had the custom of saying, "Money, money, money" when we saw a shooting star and the superstition was that if we could say that before the star disappeared, we would get some money! Occasionally when conditions were just right we could also see the Northern Lights.

The only place we had to swim was Linoma Beach because Ashland didn't have a swimming pool until many years later.

We didn't have transportation to go to Linoma Beach or South Bend. I did get a terrible sun burn at South Bend with a group of Camp Fire Girls when I was in fifth or sixth grade.

One of the winters that we had the most fun happened when I was in about the sixth grade. The ground had frozen and then we had a big snow. It warmed up and the snow melted but because the ground was frozen so hard the water from the melted snow did not sink into the ground. It made a lake in our yard and then it froze and we had our own private ice skating rink! The folks had some ice skates that fastened on to our shoes and they were adjustable so we could use them to skate. Dorothy and I had so much fun skating. Then another snow came and covered up our skating rink.

Dorothy wanted to continue to skate so she shoveled the snow off the rink so that we could continue to skate. She had a "job" where she sold magazines for premiums. One of the premiums was a pair of shoe skates so she earned a pair of shoe skates. I can't remember that Marge ever skated with us. I guess she was too busy with her friends. Dorothy and I

had a ball that winter. Conditions were never right for forming a little lake in our yard any other year but Dorothy and I certainly have happy memories of the fun we had that winter.

If you could now move back into the house you grew up in, just the way it was then, would you? Why or why not?

Although the house I grew up in is the one I remember as home, I wouldn't want to move back into it. Every house and apartment we have lived in during our married life has been much nicer and the house we lived in 40 years and raised our family in has replaced the one I was born in as home.

Childhood/Neighborhood

Who were your best friends in your neighborhood? Do you still know them or know what happened to them?

When you live in a small town, the whole town is your neighborhood and you know everyone your age. I played with friends in my home and in theirs. Although I no longer live in that small town, it is only 25 miles away and I see some of these friends from time to time and enjoy getting together with some of them for lunch and a good visit several times a year.

Did you play at your home, theirs or mostly in playgrounds, the streets, fields?

During my younger days I played lots with a girl who lived

next door, across the alley from our house. She was two years younger than I. Her father was our doctor. We played in our homes and yards. I remember once when they had invited me to stay for dinner. They had roast chicken. Dr. Clark served the food and since I was the only guest, he asked me first what piece I'd like. I told them that I'd like the neck because Marjorie always ate the neck at our house. They all laughed and Dr. Clark said he didn't think anyone would fight with me over that piece.

What do you remember about your friends' houses and families?

I remember the floor plan of the Clark's house. They had a music room. I remember that Santa always came and put up the Christmas tree and decorated it on Christmas Eve after the children went to bed. They didn't wrap any of the gifts but just put them under the tree. I can remember thinking after I had children of my own about what a hectic Christmas Eve those parents must have had!

What sidewalk games did you play? Did you collect anything (bugs, baseball cards, marbles, etc.)?

There was no television for us to watch nor video games to play which must seem strange to my children. We played hop scotch, we jumped rope, we played jacks. I had marbles but I don't think we played with them often. I think we considered it a boy's game. I collected wild flowers and leaves that I pressed and mounted in a scrap book. I also collected paper dolls and played with them a lot. The Sunday newspaper had a paper doll and clothes every week. I collected those, mounted the dolls on brown paper to give them more body and cut out their clothes and also drew new clothes for the dolls to wear. They were some of our favorite

things to play with.

Did you have pets? What were their names? Were they usually strays? How did you acquire them?

While growing up I almost always had a cat. Jupiter was one of my favorites. He was a short haired yellow cat. We called him Jupie. A cousin who worked for a farmer gave him to us and he was neutered when we got him. He was an ideal pet for a child because he loved to be petted and played with. I would dress him up in doll clothes and push him around in a doll buggy. As long as he was getting all that lovin' he tolerated it all! After we had Jupie for several years we had an opportunity to get a beautiful silver-grey persian cat whose owner wanted a good home for him. His name was Silver. Although he was beautiful, he never reached the loving status in my eyes that Jupie attained. We also had a cat named Boots who came to us from a neighbor.

We also had a dog which we never claimed as ours but he claimed us. We had a neighbor who was going on a trip and they asked us to take care of their dog while they were gone. He was a mixed breed dog, probably partly black Labrador.

His name was Tuffy. After the two weeks of living at our house he never wanted to go back home again. We wouldn't feed him any more because we didn't want the neighbors to think we were trying to take their dog so he went home to eat every day and spent the rest of the time at our house. I remember that he and Jupie would lie side by side sleeping in front of the stove during the cold weather.

My mother would send us to the grocery store to get a few items she needed. Tuffie was not supposed to be allowed to go down town. He always liked to follow us but we scolded

him and sent him back home. He would go back when we scolded him but he would go around many blocks and end up ahead of us grinning from ear to ear and wagging his whole rear end as though to say, "Ha, Ha, I beat you!" One of my photographs taken of the family gathered at home for Thanksgiving shows Tuffie sitting off to one side. As I said, "Tuffie claimed us." He was one of the family.

Do you remember having the chicken pox, mumps or other childhood diseases? Were you ever seriously ill as a child? Who took care of you?

I remember having chicken pox, measles, German measles, and tonsilitis as a child. I particularly remember having chicken pox because I had it in December when activities for Christmas were happening. In the town of Ashland the merchants sponsored "Santa Claus" coming to town. On a Saturday before Christmas a little house for Santa was erected on the main street (Silver Street) and all the children could be greeted by Santa and they were each given a sack of candy. The year that I had chicken pox there were so many children sick with chicken pox that they drove Santa around to each house where there was a sick child and gave those children a sack of candy. In those days children who had a communicable disease were quarantined so Santa had no trouble finding those with chicken pox because a red quarantine sign was placed on each house. Children didn't have candy as often as they do today. The sack of candy from the town Santa Claus and a sack of candy from the church Santa Claus and candy Easter Eggs was probably all the candy we had in a year. I remember that my sister, Marjorie, used to try to make her Christmas candy last until Easter.

I was in first grade when I had chicken pox. My quarantine was over the last day of school before Christmas vacation

but I didn't go back. When school started again after New Year's Day the teacher asked me why I didn't come back the last day of school. She said I could have seen the Christmas program. I'm sure that is exactly why I didn't go back. I hadn't been there for rehearsals so I couldn't be in the program and if I couldn't be in the program, I didn't want to go.

The most serious illness I had as a child was tonsilitus. I must have missed a week or two of school when I had that. Our Episcopal priest friend from Omaha came down from Omaha to see me during that illness. There were no antibiotics then so illnesses were more severe.

How did you go downtown and get back home? Trolley, bus, car, horseback, walk? Can you remember your first trip? Why did you usually go?

One of the first things I remember was the chickens that we raised. Dad built a chicken coop next to the shed, using one side of the shed as a side of the coop. My oldest sister, Marge, had a Saturday Evening Post route. She delivered them to the doors of people that she could persuade to subscribe. She took some of her profits from the magazine

route and bought some baby chicks. Although I'm sure Mother looked upon those chicks as dinners, each of my sisters and I chose a chick as a pet and named it. When we chose them they were still little balls of down so we didn't know what color they would be but we must have taken a long time to decide on names because I called mine Smokey because when it began to feather out she was a white hen with a few "smokey" feathers. Dorothy called hers

Cinnamon for its brownish-reddish feathers. Marjorie couldn't think of a name for hers and she ended up calling him MyChickie. MyChickie must have come from a line of fighters. Whenever Dad would go out to the shed to get wood MyChickie would fly up at him and he would "fight back" with his hand in his work glove. When I would play outside and the chickens were out scratching around for food, MyChickie would come up to me and put his wing down toward me like he was daring me and going to attack.

My dad thought that was funny and he began to egg MyChickie on. It got to the place that Mother's friends were afraid to come to our house because that rooster tried to chase everybody off. He was better than a watch dog. Dorothy got so mad at that rooster that when Mother sent her to the store to get something she would take a broom and shoo the chicken away as she left home. Then she would leave the broom down by the barn at the end of the property so that she would have it to fend off MyChickie when she returned.

We had a fence that ran across the property beside the side walk. It had an opening at the front door and another opening where the drive ran to the barn. I remember coming home from kindergarten and having MyChickie come running to dare me to enter. I would go back and forth from one opening in the fence to the other with me on one side of the fence and MyChickie on the other trying to out run that rooster. Finally I would yell, "Mother, MyChickie's after

me" and Mother would come and chase him away so that I could come in the house.

Eventually all those chickens made dinners for us and in the meantime the hens provided eggs, too. I'm sure I was glad to eat "MyChickie" because I hated that rooster. I always liked to go and watch when Dad killed a chicken. He didn't wring its neck like some people did. He put the chicken's head down on a chopping block and cut off its head with an axe. The reason I liked to watch was because the chicken always ran around with its head off and I thought that was funny. In an old scrapbook from my childhood I found some feathers from my chicken, Smokey, along with a notation that we ate her for dinner on New Year's Day. Not a great start for the new year for Smokey, was it?

What were your favorite board games?

My mother thought playing games was good for us and favorite gifts to us were various games. We played them with the family and also with our friends who came home with us from school to play. We played dominos, Parchesi, Monopoly, Chinese Checkers, various games that could be played with a Rook deck. Mother taught us to take care of the games and put them away carefully so that we had the games when we wanted to play with them.

What did you ever do that got you into trouble with your parents? At school? What were the punishments?

The only time I was ever punished at school was in the fifth grade and by my favorite teacher. Someone in the class started throwing paper wads and most everyone joined in. The teacher didn't see them at first and we all got bolder. Then she saw a paper wad and asked who threw that. I raised my hand. You could just see the surprise and shock

on her face. I can remember crying on the way home for lunch because I was so sorry I had let my favorite teacher down. Her punishment was for me to stay after school every night for a week. That was no punishment at all for me because I got to spend that extra time with this wonderful teacher. The punishment for me was that I looked a little less perfect in that teacher's eyes.

Was your neighborhood a good, safe place in which to take walks? Do you remember any incidences?

We walked everywhere in Ashland. It was only 4-5 blocks to town and Mother often sent us on errands to the grocery store to get some item that she needed. There were also areas around Ashland that we called the seven hollows. These made nice hike destinations, especially in the spring when the wild flowers were blooming. My mother and I used to take walks on a Sunday afternoon. Mother would never let my friends and I take these hikes alone but she would let us go if my sister, Dorothy, went with us. Dorothy was 5 years older but she usually was very willing to go with us.

Elementary School Years

What was the name of your school? How big was it? What did it look like? Was it a private or public school?

I attended the Ashland Public School. Kindergarten and all eight grades plus high school were housed in one building. It was a brick building and was relatively new. My mother had attended school in the old building.

Did you ride a bus to school? If so, did you like riding the

bus? Do you remember anything that happened on that bus?

We walked to school. For me it was 5 blocks. The school had no buses. It didn't have a lunch program either. I walked home for lunch every day. If we had to stay for lunch, we brought lunch from home in a paper sack. When there was lots of snow the father of a friend who lived a half block away picked me up and gave me a ride to school.

What did you learn in school that you still use to this day?

Looking back on my schooling and comparing notes with other friends who attended bigger school districts, I feel that I got a good education at Ashland. I had an outstanding teacher of English in the seventh and eighth grade. She taught us about grammar. We learned parts of speech, we diagramed sentences, and we wrote. We also had an excellent teacher of mathematics in high school. We had a trained music teacher who initiated many small groups, as well as choir and girl's glee club. We also had a band and an orchestra. I took part in most of the musical offerings. I sang in the chorus and girl's glee club and was chosen for participation in most of the small music groups including girl's trio, girl's sextet, girl's octet, and madrigal group. I learned to read vocal music in grade school and used that in my career as a music teacher. I would probably still be using it today, at least for my own pleasure, if Parkinson's disease hadn't taken its toll and ruined my voice. If I try to sing now I lose my voice entirely and can't talk.

Did you like physical education / gym class? Did you feel you were good at sports? Were you picked first or last for the teams?

Phys ed was not offered at my school in the elementary grades. I do remember one teacher who organized teams and supervised our playing soft ball. I was pretty good at hitting the ball but I never considered myself good at athletics. I was picked neither first nor last at games. It was not particularly encouraged by my mother. She encouraged more feminine past times. Phys ed was first offered when I was in high school but I was in band, orchestra, chorus, girl's glee club, several small vocal groups and I really didn't have time for anything more.

Do you remember shopping for school clothes? Getting excited at what you would wear the first few weeks? Did you ever go to school where you wore a uniform?

I never shopped for school clothes. My mother sewed and family members handed down clothes for us. I don't remember disliking wearing "hand-me-downs" and I loved the dresses that my mother made for me.

Did you eat lunch at school or go home? Did you bring your own lunch? Did you have a lunchbox? If so, what did it look like?

Our school did not have a lunch program. Children who lived too far to go home for lunch brought their lunch with them. I lived just 5 blocks from school. The few times I needed to stay were probably because my mother had some other duty, like a Missionary Society meeting. I took my lunch in a paper sack if I needed to stay for lunch. I don't remember anybody having a lunch box.

How did you get to school...walk alone, with friends, bus, parent, neighbor?

Most of the time I walked to school. Sometimes I went with my sister or a friend and sometimes I walked alone.

What did you do in the summertime when there was no school?

I played with neighbor children, helped in the garden, read books and played games. I remember making clothes for small dolls using leaves from flowers and bushes. The library was just 2 blocks from our house and we could go there whenever we wished.

What was your first grade teacher's name? Were you in awe of her? How about your second grade teacher or third grade teacher...or others?

My Kindergarten teacher's name was Miss Almy. I started kindergarten at the age of 5 years. I already knew how to read. Therefore, the kindergarten teacher would have me help a little boy who was having trouble learning while she worked with the rest of the class. This little boy was not very clean and certainly not an apt pupil and I would have much preferred to be with the rest of the class. Poor kid! He had two strikes against him without having a reluctant teacher.

In first grade we found an injured or sick cat on the play ground at school. That wonderful teacher let us bring that poor cat into the class room for the afternoon and got a message to my sister to come to the first grade room after school. We carried the cat home with us. We must have been sure that Mother would let us keep him because I don't remember having any doubts about that. We may not have had a telephone at that point so we couldn't have called Mother to get permission. Mother made a bed for the cat behind the pot bellied stove that heated the house and the

cat stayed there. But, unfortunately, the cat was too far gone and he died during the night. I always felt grateful for that teacher who let us try to save that poor cat. I just took it for granted that Mother would take the cat in.

Except for kindergarten where we were divided into a morning class and an afternoon class, we were in class with the same children every year except for the few who moved in or out. There were only enough children for one section of each grade. We got to know those children who were in class with us pretty well after 13 years of school together. Some of the women from my class still get together several times a year. Even though we have been out of high school for more than 60 years we still remember and enjoy each other. I think my children, who have grown up in a much more mobile society, cannot imagine what we find to visit about but our lunches usually stretch out to three or four hours which we all thoroughly enjoy.

I often invited a friend home to play after school, or was invited by a friend to their house. I don't think any of us had an abundance of toys but the toys at someone else's house were at least different than what we had at home. My mother was fond of games and thought they were good for us and we had a marvelous collection of games. Among them were Authors, Rook, Countries & Continents (an educational game), Dominos, and Monopoly. Mother taught us to take care of the games so that pieces were not lost. We played them as a family and with our friends. I don't remember my dad every playing games with us except for dominos. He would not play with playing cards or dice because he said they were gambling devices but he let us play with them.

However, he loved dominos and I remember playing dominos with Mother and Dad when I was too young to add up the spots. Wasn't it originally a gambling game?

In third grade we learned cursive writing. There were no ball point pens then. We had inkwells and dip pens which were hard enough for a skilled writer to use and terrible for none too well coordinated children. I remember our fourth grade teacher as being a stickler for the Palmer method of writing. We did writing exercises with rows of circles and up and down flourishes and then we were to write the alphabet and put a clear celluloid strip over our writing and see if our alphabet was exactly like the one on the celluloid strip. Up to this time I was not aware of my writing being either especially bad or especially good. When left to my own choice, my writing was small. Now I had to try to match the Palmer method writing which changed my whole style of writing. Later, schools quit using the Palmer method and let students write in their own style. Writing fast enough to keep up with the lecturer in college didn't help my hand writing. Later when I had children of my own learning to write cursive writing, they would complain that they couldn't read my writing. I must confess that it has only gotten worse as I have aged. Thank goodness for the computer which I now use for all my letters.

Do you remember any field trips your class took? If you lived in the city, did you go to a farm, factory, big museum?

The only field trip I remember taking in grade school was to a dairy farm. We were in the fifth grade. I don't remember what transportation we took. The school didn't own a bus.

Did you say the "Pledge of Allegiance" to start the day? Did you say a prayer? How did you feel about those topics as a child?

We said the "Pledge of Allegiance" each morning but I do not remember our saying a prayer. Our Christmas programs were very religious. When I was in high school I was chosen as one of the two speakers. We read the Christmas story from the New Testament and the choir sang Christmas anthems. No one ever questioned the Christian content of the programs.

Were you in a scout troop or any other organization? Do you remember the leader? Any projects? Any impressions?

I was in a Camp Fire Group. Two of our best teachers led the group. I remember earning honors, decorating a ceremonial gown and going to Lincoln for a Grand Council Fire.

Who was the principal at your elementary school? Were you ever called to the principal's office? If so, why?

The principal of our elementary school was also the high school principal. I was never sent to the principal's office. In fact, I don't think anyone was ever sent to the principal's office. I don't remember there being many instances of misbehavior in school. I think the teacher was expected to handle any cases of misbehavior herself. I imagine misbehavior was handled more severely in the homes of the children. We were just expected to behave!

What was your attitude about school? Were you excited about it, bored or just tolerated it?

I loved school and usually did well at school. I do remember my mother coming to visit my kindergarten class. The teacher had a project that day where she gave us a sheet of red paper and a sheet of green paper. We were to fold the

green paper and cut a Christmas tree out of the folded paper. The teacher cautioned us to cut on the open side of the paper not on the folded side. I probably was more interested in my mother's visit than listening carefully to the teacher's instructions. I cut on the wrong side and thereby cut my tree in half. We were to paste the tree on to the red paper background. The teacher gave me another piece of green paper and so I got the chance to try again and get the tree right. However, the teacher made the other kids who cut their trees on the wrong side paste their trees together. I still remember that after 60 years!

Life in a Small Town

What was the name, state and population of your town?

The town I grew up in was Ashland, Nebraska. At that time the population was about 1800.

What was the main source of the town's income?

Ashland was and is primarily a farming community. Increasingly it is becoming a bedroom community for people working in Lincoln and Omaha.

What types of food were generally considered for dinner time? Have you raised your family with the same types of foods?

We ate lots of chicken and cheaper cuts of beef and pork. Mother always made Sunday dinner a little more special than dinner on other days of the week. I was able to have a bigger variety of fresh foods than my mother had served

because fresh foods were available only in season whereas today we have available a large selection of fresh foods year round. The noon meal was dinner when I was growing up and the evening meal was lighter and called supper. When I raised my family, the evening meal was dinner because the children had limited time for lunch or were at school for lunch and the husband was at work.

Did you ever dream of leaving your small town?

My mother encouraged all of us to get as much education as possible. My sisters had both attended the University of Nebraska but neither had graduated. When I graduated from high school my mother got us all jobs at the State Home for Children in Lincoln so that I could live at home and go to college. It was just assumed that after I went to college I would not go back to Ashland because there were no jobs there. I loved growing up in Ashland but didn't see it as the place for my future.

What invention came last to rural areas from the cities?

Public transportation was probably the last invention to come to small towns. For the most part towns could not afford to have public transportation. There were buses that went from Lincoln to Omaha and back and ran about every 2 hours. During World War II gasoline was rationed and very little was available. Tires were not available either. Lincoln did have a good bus system. But when the War was over and automobiles became more available bus lines ran less frequently and people relied more and more on private automobiles for transportation.

What are some of the biggest differences between living in a small town and a big city? Pros and cons?

A small town is a wonderful place to grow up. We could walk any place in the town and therefore could go to a variety of friend's homes to play. I knew my friends better than my children did theirs because I played with them year after year. I think it gave me practice in building relationships. In a city one has more opportunities in the arts but transportation to music lessons, etc. can be limiting.

Holidays and Celebrations

Do you like your birthday or dread it? What birthday do you remember the most?

Our family always celebrated our birthdays. We always received a gift from our parents and had cake with candles.

Did you get to choose the meal on your birthday? Were birthdays considered a "big deal" when you were young? Did you raise your children to think they were a big deal?

The birthday girl or boy definitely felt honored on his or her birthday. Some years the birthday dinner was just with the family. But I remember mother having parties for us with our friends some years. I did the same with my family.

Did your family make birthday cakes or did you buy them? What were the favorite flavors? What kind of birthday parties did you give for your children?

My mother always made the birthday cake we had. Angel food cake was always my favorite. I made the birthday cakes for my children when they were small but I bought them as

they got older, especially for Dave because his birthday was December 26 and I was tired after fixing holiday meals on December 24 and 25.

What were the most important religious holidays you celebrated throughout the year? What was the significance of the holiday (i.e., why were you celebrating it)?

The religious holidays we celebrated were Easter and Christmas. I felt it was part of my job as a mother to try to make holidays fun for my children. At Easter time my mother had candy eggs for us in papier-mâché eggs which are now considered antiques. I dyed Easter eggs with my children and they hunted candy eggs hidden around the house. At Christmas time we made Christmas cookies and the children decorated them. The children all attended Sunday School regularly and knew the significance of the religious holidays.

How did you celebrate each major holiday?

We never celebrated the Fourth of July. We certainly didn't have money to burn. Occasionally I would have some money saved and would buy a few fire crackers - - - little ones (lady fingers) that were intended to be shot off the whole package at a time. I would separate these and shoot them off one at a time to make them last longer. One year I got a book from the library that told how to make parachutes. A neighbor girl and I made some parachutes and climbed up on the barn roof and tossed them off the roof. I think this was when I decided that I would try to make holidays fun for my kids. I do think my children look back on the Fourth of July as a fun time. We got together with a neighbor family that our children played with and pooled our money for fire works and had dinner together, alternating homes each year. The

men shot off most of the fireworks. The children were too small for some of them. We did let the children have sparklers. Now that I know how hot the wires of a sparkler get, I'm thankful that we never had any accidents with fireworks.

What holiday did you especially like? Which holiday was really not much fun for you?

Christmas was my favorite holiday. When my children were small my mother and I took the children down town to see Santa and have lunch on the Friday or Saturday after Thanksgiving. We started choosing a new decoration for our Christmas tree each year on this occasion. I told my children that Santa was the spirit of giving and that we all could have that spirit. This trip usually included putting some money into the Salvation Army buckets. I hoped that would be seen as the spirit of giving. The children were always given the opportunity to help decorate the Christmas tree. I used to complain that everybody wanted to help put the tree up but no one wanted to help take it down. However, now I have the tree up before the family gets here and Phil is very good to help, both with putting the tree up and taking it down.

What were some of the best memories from any of the holidays you celebrated?

When I was growing up times were really hard and we had very little money to spend celebrating Christmas. Mother always saw to it that we each had a package under the tree. Lots of times we received clothing that we needed anyway. But I think there was usually a toy, book, or game, too. We had a small, scrawny, artificial store left as a display item from my Dad's jewelry store. I discovered that the teachers

bought trees for the school rooms and many had families elsewhere in Nebraska so when the school closed for Christmas vacation they discarded those trees. I found that if I asked first I could have the tree to take home and we would have a real tree rather than the artificial one. Several years I got a tree that way. That meant that we couldn't put it up until school was out, usually a couple of days before Christmas. I would go to the teacher after school that last day and drag the tree home for us to put up.

Did you have a shower for a wedding or baby? Do you have special memories of these events? Who was there?

I was honored at three showers when I got married. One group was friends that I had met in the School of Music at the University of Nebraska. Another shower was given by friends I met in graduate school at the University of Nebraska. One was given by friends in a church youth group.

How did you celebrate New Year's Day?

We might have had a special dinner on New Year's Day, perhaps a roast chicken. My parents never went out socially. We were never left with a baby sitter. Our parents never gave parties.

How did you celebrate Valentine's Day? Did you and your schoolmate's exchange Valentine's in elementary school? What was the best Valentine's Day for you and why?

Each classroom at school had a valentine box for us to put valentines in. My mother had materials at home that we could use to make valentines. We made all our own valentines. My mother insisted that we give a valentine to

every child in the room. We started making them in the evening's weeks before Valentine's Day. Mother had some beautiful antique valentines that her students had given her when she was teaching school. She would put them in an envelope and have one of my sisters go in and put the valentine in the box for me. This started my collection of antique valentines.

Labor Day signified the end of summer. What were some of the best Labor Day weekends you experienced?

School usually started the day after Labor Day and I always liked school so Labor Day was a day to look forward to.

Do you like Halloween? What have you gone dressed up as? Did your parents make your costume or did they buy them? What was Halloween like growing up? Do you remember the pals you Trick-Or-Treated with?

When I was a child we dressed up and went to a few friends and neighbor's houses with a papier-mâché Jack-O-Lantern. The custom of going Trick-Or-Treating had not started, at least not in our little town. My mother would rig up some kind of costume for us, probably usually a ghost because an old sheet and a mask is all we needed.

What did you usually do on Thanksgiving in your youth? What do you do now?

Our Thanksgiving was celebrated at our house (my grandfather's) with my mother's family. It was a day for visiting and there was usually a football game that the men listened to on the radio. When our children were small we took turns going to my mother's house and to Phil's parent's house for Thanksgiving dinner. Later we had Thanksgiving

Dinner at our house with my Mother attending. When we had only one child left at home we began to go to a restaurant for Thanksgiving dinner and now we have dinner at our retirement home.

High School

Where did you go to high school? What was your mascot? What were your school colors? Do you remember any of the cheers? What was your favorite song during high school? What type of music was popular?

I attended high school at the Ashland Public School. Our mascot was the blue jay and our colors were blue and white. Each week a favorite radio program was the Hit Parade. It presented from 10 to 1 the most popular songs each week. It was a "must listen" program for teens.

Were you ever honored at school? Varsity letter? Homecoming court? Valedictorian? Do you remember the students who were?

I was always on the honor roll at school. I graduated as class Salutatorian (second in class). I lettered in band and was on the student council.

Did you have hobbies, read a lot, enjoy political debates, bands, or just hanging out with your friends? Did you have a part time job? Did you baby-sit? Did you do volunteer your time?

I read and played the piano a lot. I played clarinet in the school band and orchestra. I took piano lessons. I started

playing the piano for church services when I was 14 and played for choir practice and church all 4 years of high school. My first job was baby sitting for the couple who owned and published the newspaper, The Ashland Gazette. I did this the summer after my freshman year. For this I received fifty cents a day. Occasionally I was asked to do some ironing for which they paid me extra. I sat down and supervised the child's piano practicing every day. This was a musical family and they wanted me to work again the next summer and offered to pay more but I had already agreed to clerk at the local dime store and I was eager to do something that I thought would interact with adults more.

Were you philosophical - a deep thinker?

I would not have suggested the word "philosophical" to describe myself but I did like discussions in Sunday School, Youth Fellowship, and English literature and social studies classes. Even today one of my favorite activities is reading and discussing books.

College

If you went to college, where did you go? Why did you choose that school? How much was tuition? Was it difficult to afford? Did you receive financial assistance or a scholarship? A loan? Was your school large or small? What was it known for?

I went to the University of Nebraska. My parents moved to Lincoln after I graduated from high school so that I could attend college and live at home. I had scholarships

throughout my college days. I also had jobs to help pay my tuition. I worked at The State Home for Children. My first summer out of high school I worked in the nursery. When school started in the fall I had a part time job giving piano lessons to children living in the State Home for Children. I worked as a reader for the music theory department in the School of Music, grading papers and teaching ear training class. I had a summer job at the Nebraska State Capitol doing proof reading of Nebraska Statutes and Supreme Court Reports. I borrowed money from my parents to help pay for tuition and books and I paid that back to my parents after I started teaching.

I was active in Sigma Alpha Iota, a music fraternity for women, Alpha Lambda Delta, a freshman honorary society, Pi Lambda Theta, a teacher's college honorary, Pi Kappa Lambda, a music honorary, and Towne Club, a social sorority for women living in Lincoln.

Home front

What changes were there in everyday life during wartime?

Was gas rationing difficult for you? Did you save aluminum foil? Did you shop differently? Was there a certain sadness and fear that you felt in the streets?

We had food rationing which was a very slight inconvenience. We were allowed a certain number of stamps which we had to give to the grocer in order to buy certain items. The rationing was not very stringent. Sugar was one of the items that was rationed and I can remember my Mother telling us that she had an abundance of sugar stamps and we could make fudge if we liked. We couldn't go

to basketball games in neighboring towns because only the farmers had gas. Even the farmers didn't have tires and I remember going to a basketball game with some farm kids and having 2 flat tires on the way home which the boys had to repair to get us home.

Did any of your friends lose anyone in the war?

I didn't know my husband-to-be until he came home from service in the Navy but he lost a brother during the war. He was a pilot stationed in England.

What were your feelings about your country's position in the war? Did your feelings about war then color your feelings about war now?

The country was very united in its support of the military during World War II. All able young men were in the service. Because the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Americans generally felt that we had to defend ourselves. During World War II I felt we needed to fight and help Britain and the Allies to put an end to the destruction of Jews and the rule of Hitler. However, now I feel that very few wars have done any good. For America the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, and World War II probably accomplished some good. But I don't feel that we can tell all the countries in the world how to run their governments and I think we would resent other countries telling us how to run our country. I think we may need to defend ourselves and to help others when possible but sending our young men off to fight a foreign war is not good for our country or for its young men and women.

What was it like in your city on the day the war ended?

The buses quit running and people celebrated in the streets down town. Of course, everyone was glad that the war was over. I was glad I was home before the celebrating began because it would have been a long walk home!

Entertainment

What was your favorite radio or television show growing up?

There was no TV when I was growing up. However, the family did listen to many radio programs. I remember I Love a Mystery, Fred Waring and the Pennsylvanians, Jack Benny, the Hit Parade, Fibber McGee and Molly, George Burns and Gracie Allen, The FBI at War and Peace. My mother listened to soap operas while she did her house work.

Did you ever go to see your favorite performers in concert when you were young? Who were they?

No, I didn't go to see any performers in concert when I was young. My four years of high school were during World War II. I lived in a small town and there were no performances there. No one had gas or tires to go to a larger city. The depression was not over until after the U.S. entered the War so no one had the money to go to concerts.

Are you a theatergoer? Do you go in your hometown or only when you visit a big city? What are your favorite plays?

We were theatergoers when we were younger. We were

patrons of the Lincoln Community Theater and attended all their performances. At one time we also attended Broadway productions of shows, especially musicales. We no longer attend these because my husband's hearing is so bad that he no longer can enjoy these. My hearing is not as good as it once was and I find that many actors are not trained to enunciate as they once were. Our oldest daughter is a musical director and keyboard player at theaters in Chicago and we have usually gone to Chicago a couple of times a year to see shows when she was the musical director.

What are your most treasured "artifacts" or pieces of art that you have picked up along your path?

I love visiting art museums and have enjoyed them in various cities and appreciate the galleries in Lincoln and Omaha. I am not a collector, although if there was anything I might wish to collect if I could afford it, it would be art. I have a few small paintings that I have purchased from Lincoln Artist Guild shows and from places I have vacationed. I have hung these in groupings and I enjoy them very much. I also have a pastel landscape done by my father which I treasure.

Careers

What was your first real job? Did you start out in an after-school job that had any relation to what you ended up doing?

My first job was a summer job when I was 14 years old. I babysat for the editor of the Ashland Gazette's daughter. I took care of her 5 days a week while both parents worked on

the newspaper. I supervised her piano practice which her parents liked. For her it was like having a piano lesson every day. They wanted me to take the job again the next summer but I had already applied for and been promised a job clerking at the local dime store. Actually, this first job did relate to my future jobs because I taught music and raised my children.

Describe your career.

My chosen career was in public school vocal music. I taught high school vocal music and English in Pawnee City, Nebraska after graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Music Education. I had been involved in counseling during my senior year of college and decided to go back and get a Master's Degree in Counseling and Guidance at the University of Nebraska. After I got married in August of 1951 we moved to Philadelphia where I taught grade school vocal music. In 1954 we returned to Lincoln where Phil taught in the business college and we started our family. My family was definitely my career. In those days, especially in the Midwest, women had the choice of being a teacher or a nurse or a secretary. I didn't feel that society was forcing me into its mold. I loved teaching children to read music vocally. But we wanted to have a family. Shortly after our first child was born I was called by the head of the Educational Psychology department and offered a part time job teaching the introductory course in History and Principles of Education but I turned it down. Actually, I never really considered it.

Were you friendly with your coworkers? Is there one you particularly remember?

I enjoyed the companionship of other workers in every job I

held. I think relating to co-workers increases one's enjoyment on the job and help one to do a better job. I particularly liked the teachers I taught with in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania. A special friend was Louise Maslin. I taught with her at Garretford School. We were both newly weds. I had taught before but it was Louise's first year of teaching. Phil and I became friends with Louise and her husband, John, and we still keep in touch.

Gallup Organization Questions on Leadership

Let's identify some early role models of yours. How would you describe the parenting style of your mother (father)?

My early role models were my parents and my teachers. My mother emphasized the importance of education and encouraged us to do well in school and to continue our education. My father was loving and supportive. Several teachers were great role models. My fifth grade teacher was outstanding and I remember several music teachers who were particularly supportive and encouraged me in a field that I ended up pursuing.

While growing up, who did you consider your role model in terms of individuals outside your family? What impact did your role model have on your development?

Rev. Vernon W. Lane was a strong influence on me when I was growing up. The Episcopal Church in Ashland had too small a congregation to support their little church. Father Lane had a congregation in Omaha. One summer when I was about nine years old I was walking down town with my friend, Marilyn Clark. Father Lane was spending his

vacation time doing some writing at the Episcopal parsonage in Ashland. Father Lane was very fond of children and he came walking behind Marilyn and I, listening to our conversation. We didn't realize that he was there, so when we saw him, we were startled. Marilyn's parents were Episcopalians so Father Lane, not wanting to leave us with a startled experience, called the Clark's and invited us to come and let him photograph us.

One of his hobbies was photography. That is how I met Father Lane. Father Lane had been interested in starting a home for boys, but because Boy's Town was so well established in Omaha he couldn't get a start there because boys needing a home were referred by the court to Boy's Town. Father Lane became my special friend. I was special to him and I adored him. When he came to Ashland to have an evening service in the Ashland Episcopal Church he always came to our house to see me. He drove a Pierce Arrow convertible and took me and my friends or my sisters to places like the Gretna Fish Hatchery and the Lincoln Water Works--places of interest in Ashland surroundings that were too far to walk but that we would enjoy visiting. His car had a rumble seat and we thought it was fun to ride in it. Once when I was ill with a respiratory illness he came down from Omaha to see me. He said I was one of his parishioners and he came to call to say, "Get Well."

Eventually he received a call from a church in Memphis, Tennessee and accepted that call. The summer that I was 11 years old he invited me to come to Memphis to visit him with the organist from his church in Omaha, Alice Oglebay. It was my first ride on a train and my first time away from my parents for several days. Father Lane, being the magnet for kids that he was, had lots of neighborhood kids for me to play with. Later, he did establish a home for boys. It was called Gailor Hall -- Just a House Full of Boys. My relationship with Father Lane was very meaningful to me

and probably contributed greatly to my belief that God is Love. It was a powerful experience for a child to have an adult friend who considered me special.

Think back during high school or before and describe someone who had a profoundly positive impact on your development? What did that person do? Who was that person?

My piano teacher was an important influence in my life. It is unusual for a child to have such a close impact from an adult outside the family. She used to tell me that if a person couldn't get along with me, they couldn't get along with anyone. She thought I was unusual in my ability to get along with others and I'm sure the fact that she complimented me on that influenced my ability to get along with others.

How would you describe your mother (or guardian) as your leader?

My mother was a very strict leader who wanted most of all for her children to have an education. Both my sisters attended the University of Nebraska but did not graduate. Just as her parents had moved to Ashland so that she could go to high school, she engineered our moving to Lincoln so that I could go to college and graduate. There was no question about it, I grew up knowing that I would go to college.

She also read to me and provided art materials and encouraged reading and artistic endeavors. Whatever educational opportunities came our way were encouraged and often engineered by my Mother.

How would you describe your father (or guardian) as your leader?

My father was loving and pretty much thought that the guidance of the children was the province of the mother, as was the view of society at the time. He worked very hard to support his family after having to close his jewelry and music store because of the Great Depression. He was good at art and all kinds of creative work. He built us a swing, made us a sand box, and played croquet with us. I don't remember his ever expressing a cross word to my sisters or me but he was always proud of our achievements.

Who has had the most profound impact on your development as an individual during your adult years? Describe how that person has impacted you and who they were in your life?

Undoubtedly the person who has had the most profound impact on me during my adult life is my husband, Philip S. James. We met when he came home from the Navy after World War II. I was a sophomore in college. We celebrated our 54th Wedding Anniversary this year and we had known each other for 5 years when we married. He has been a wonderful husband. He has always been loyal. He wanted us to move back to Lincoln so that I could be near my widowed mother. After we had a child and I was no longer employed as a teacher, he always made me feel that our money was OUR money, not HIS money. We never had any fights over how to spend our money. If he had to, he would skimp on something for himself but he never skimmed on something for me. We have lived in The Landing, a retirement home for a little over a year. We decided to move in because I was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and I was having trouble with the stairs and needed to be all on one floor. Phil's mother was crippled with Rheumatoid Arthritis and she couldn't walk from the time he was in high school until

her death. It just doesn't seem fair that he has to have a crippled wife, too. But he has been wonderful at making the move. It's not easy to face having an incurable disease when you don't know how it will progress but he is always supportive and we are happy at The Landing and think we made the right decision in moving when we did. We are also appreciative of the support of our children. It's no longer possible for us to do the driving that we formerly did to visit our children and we appreciate their coming to visit us here and know that it's not always easy for them with their families and careers.

How have you changed since high school in terms of your philosophy of leading and influencing others?

While I did not hold a paying job after my children were born, I was active and numerous organizations and took a leadership role in many of them. Together, my husband and I taught a Sunday School class of young married couples for 10 years. This class also sponsored a social life for its members. We later taught a children's Sunday School class for 2 years. I was active as an alumnae of Sigma Alpha Iota, a music fraternity for women and served a term as president during my college days and also served 4 terms as president of the Alumnae Chapter. I was on the board that helped establish SAIL Music Camp and designed the logo and helped with the camp numerous years. I was leader for Blue Bird and Camp Fire Girls groups for both my daughters and was District 3 Leader's association Chairman for Camp Fire and also candy sale chairman. I was a member of Chapter DX, P.E.O. and served as various officers and as president for 2 years.

During graduate school my advisor was William E. Hall. I worked on a leadership program started by Dr. Hall which

emphasized the Positive Approach for developing leaders. This same philosophy was used and further developed by Dr. Donald O. Clifton of the Gallup Organization.

Romance and Relationships

Do you remember your first kiss?

I honestly don't remember my first kiss. I dated from the time I was a sophomore in high school. I think probably the first person I kissed was Wayne Wells.

What kind of dating did you do in high school? What is your favorite kind of date - even now?

Most of my dating in high school consisted of going to movies or to school parties. For about a year I was in a group that played pinochle once a month. We rarely go to movies now. My favorite kind of date now would be a dinner date with old friends or new -- a small group 4 to 6 so that everyone can be included in the conversation.

Were you always attracted to the same type of person? Did you like the strong, silent type, the bouncy blonde?

I was attracted to intelligence! I think I was looking for the father of my children! Sense of humor and good conversation was important, too.

Who was your first love? Did you think it was going to last? Who broke whose heart?

My first love was Max Armstrong. He broke my heart

because he was invited by a former girl friend to a party on New Year's Eve and the pinochle club we played in together had a party on New Year's Eve and he went to her party instead of the pinochle club with me.

Do you believe you can be in love more than once?

Probably.

Did you know when you very first met your mate that this would be your life's partner? Did he/she know it?

No. I had met Phil's sister at the University of Nebraska and we had become friends. When Phil came home from the Navy his sister had picked me out for him. I was having no part of it. However, when he called me for our first date, he asked for a date for every week. I guess he thought he'd "sew up" those dates from the very start. So I guess he felt from the start that I should be his life partner. However, my mother didn't want me to marry and that made a decision much harder for me.

Who were the biggest crushes in your life? Name your other heartthrobs through the years.

My freshman year of college I dated Ted Sorensen. We met in an English class. During the summer between my freshman and sophomore years I met Phil James when he came home from the Navy after World War II. We dated for five years. He took a large load of subjects and went to summer school so that he could graduate at the same time that I did. I graduated with distinction. We both graduated in 1949 as Chancellor's Scholars, those who had been listed on the Honor Roll each semester.

What song do you consider the most romantic?

Phil and I always considered "Stardust" our song.

Did you have an engagement ring? What does/did your wedding ring look like? Would you trade it for a bigger, shinier one? Do you wear both rings? Are they inscribed inside?

Phil gave me an engagement ring my senior year the night of the Towne Club formal. However, my mother didn't want me to marry. She had arranged our lives so that I could earn a degree and she wanted me to have a career. Because of the pressure from my mother, I felt that I had to earn some money so that I could pay back what I had borrowed from my parents. So I took a job teaching Vocal Music and English in Pawnee City, Nebraska. I taught there one year and then came back to the University of Nebraska where I earned a M.A. in educational psychology while Phil earned a M.A. in economics.

Parenthood

As a woman, do you remember telling your mate that you were pregnant? As a man, what did you think when she told you she was pregnant? Was it a surprise, or a long-planned-for event? Do you remember telling your parents?

When we moved back to Lincoln and Phil took a job teaching in the business school of the University of Nebraska, we decided that we would start our family. When I didn't get pregnant for several months I went to a gynecologist who suggested that I keep a chart of my

temperature every morning to try to determine my most fertile times. After about 16 months of trying, I became pregnant.

Question for the women: What did your maternity clothes look like? Did you share with your friends? Did you suffer from morning sickness or have other problems?

My first maternity outfit was a skirt and blouse purchased for me by my mother-in-law. I also had pants and tops which I wore casually. During three pregnancies I only vomited once but I felt nausea occasionally.

What are the names and birthdates of your children? What are the names and birthdates of your grandchildren and their parents? Name some of their idiosyncrasies.

Our first child was Margaret Ann James. She was born September 3, 1955. We named her after a friend and neighbor we knew in Philadelphia. We called her by the nickname Peggy. She always had a cheery, bubbly personality who was friendly and outgoing.

Our second child was Barbara Louise James. She was born October 4, 1958. We wanted Peggy to consider this child a member of her family so we decided to let her choose the name from a list that we gave her. She chooses Barbara and through the years she was called Barbie and then Barb. The Louise came from our friend, Louise Maslin, and from her paternal grandmother, Louise James. Barb had the most easy going personality and was always the easiest child to take care of. She was always pleasant to be around. Our third and last child was David Edward James. He was born December 26, 1960. David was a name I had chosen years earlier after reading the novel "Just David". The Edward was named for Edward B. Schmidt, a friend that Phil taught

with at the University of Nebraska. David was shy but creative and an excellent student. Each child had a unique personality and we feel so fortunate to have such a wonderful family. They are the reason for my writing this autobiography. There are many things about my mother's family that I would like to know and she's no longer here to tell them. I hope these memoirs will help my children to understand what their parents lives were like.

We have six grandchildren. Barb and Paul Kelter's children are Seth Benjamin Kelter, born November 27, 1987, and Aaron Philip Kelter, born September 11, 1990.

David and Barbara James' children are Michael Philip James, born April 14, 1991, Clare Margaret James, born January 12, 1993, Katherine Mary James, born September 18, 1995, and Teresa Elizabeth James, born August 9, 1999.

The House You Raised Your Family In

Was the house you raised your family in big enough for all of you? Did your kids share a room?

Our first child was born when we lived at 4122 Holly Road in Lincoln, Nebraska. It was a new house built by a developer. All the houses on the street had the same floor plan. It was a two bedroom house with a kitchen and a bath room. Phil's parents gave us a crib for the new baby. In 1958 when Barb was born, we bought a new bed and Peggy graduated from the crib to her new "big girl" bed, making room for Barb in the crib. In 1960 when David was born we moved the single bed to the basement and bought a double bed which Peg and Barb shared and Dave inherited the crib. My niece, Shari Colton was staying with my mother while

she worked on a degree in Pre-Med but she found that she was allergic to cats. She suffered from asthma and could not live in a house with a cat. Phil finished off the basement of our little house and made it a place for my niece to sleep and a recreation room for our children. We were bursting at the seams and so we decided we would have to look for a bigger house. After much looking we decided to have a new four bedroom house built. We put my niece, Shari into a room. She was soon due to graduate from the University and then each child got his/her own room. This is the house that felt like home. We moved into it when Peg was in third grade, Barb was in Kindergarten, and Dave was three years old. We lived in it for forty years--until we sold it to move into a retirement home.

Did you ever move? Was that particularly hard on anyone?

The move was probably the hardest on Peg. She was (and is) a vivacious person and had been very popular in her class. We moved into a brand new school where all the children were "jockeying" for status. She was accustomed to being the center of attention among her classmates. Barb had only had one semester of Kindergarten when we moved to the new house and entering the new school was just a matter of adjusting to the school, classmates and teacher.

What was your address? What was your phone number? What color was the house? Was your house a one-story or two-story, stone, wood or brick? Did you have a garage?

What was the floor plan? Can you envision each room and certain things that went on there? What was the view out your front window?

The house on Cottonwood Drive was a combination of brick and wood siding. It had 4 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, a living room, dining room, kitchen with eating space, fireplace and eventually a recreation /computer room. It was two stories with an attached two car garage. It had a porch on which the children played. The porch was on the west side of the house and there was a lovely red bud tree in front of the house so that the porch was shaded both morning and evening. Phil and I frequently ate lunch on that porch.

Was your neighborhood that of single family homes, apartments or rural? Were you friendly with your neighbors? Did you ever have a quirky neighbor? Explain.

Our house was in a neighborhood of single family homes. The area had been developed around the new school and there were lots of children for ours to play with.

Did anyone, except you, do chores for the upkeep of the household? Did you insist everyone make their own beds everyday?

The children were asked to put away their toys and were encouraged to make their beds. However, one has to be realistic! After neighborhood children had been there playing while the mothers had coffee, they simply had to have some help in picking up.

Where did the homework take place? Did you help any child with big projects?

Each of the children had a desk in his/her room. However, most of the home work was done on the kitchen table. The children did not have great amounts of home work. All three children took piano lessons. Peg took oboe lessons, Barb took viola lessons, and Dave took violin lessons. Peg and Barb took dancing lessons--ballet and tap. They had to be encouraged to practice. Peg would usually practice on her own but she and I played lots of piano duets to encourage her practice. I played clarinet(which I had played in high school) while Peg played oboe, as a motivational technique.

One thing I learned from having children practice on musical instruments was that playing the oboe requires more than musical skills. An oboe player must learn to make reeds to be successful and a person talented musically may not be talented at making oboe reeds!

Did you ever undertake a big remodeling job? If you had a basement, what was it used for? If you had an attic, what was it used for?

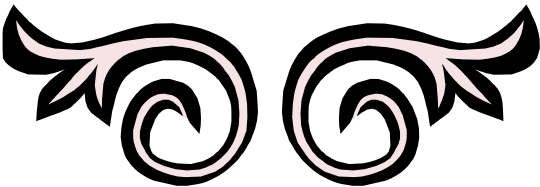
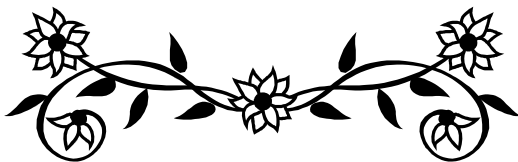
I did painting and paper hanging in our house. After my niece, Shari, left I let each child help to choose wall paper and I redecorated their rooms. I wall papered one wall of their bedroom and painted the other three to coordinate. The girls got new furniture and I antiqued Dave's furniture with blue paint and antiquing to go with his red, white, and blue wallpaper. Phil put paneling on the basement so that it could be used as a recreation room. Later when the children were grown and we got a computer we used that room as a computer office as well as a recreation room.

Was your house a gathering place for your children's friends?

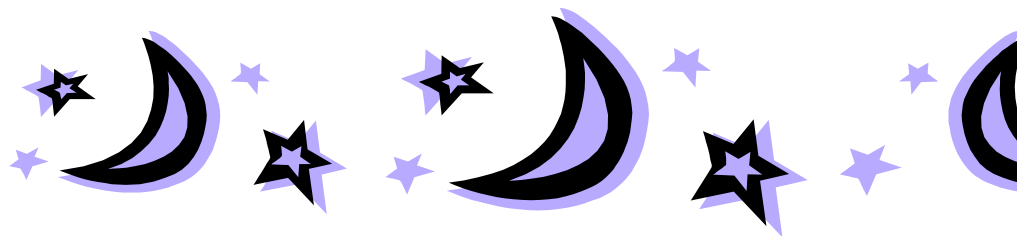
I served as leader for Blue Bird and Camp Fire groups for

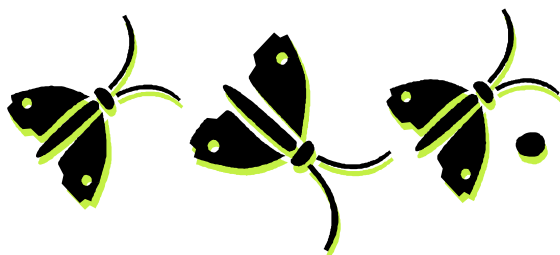
Peg and Barb. These groups met in our home every week. When it came time for Dave to participate in such groups, he wasn't interested. He did, however, go to Indian Guides, a program of the YMCA with his Dad. I think he was afraid he'd hurt his dad's feelings if he didn't participate because this is a father-son organization.

Choose a Page Break



NIGHT LIFE







Examples of Backgrounds

