Grannie Annie

Vol. 3

Selections from

The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration

An Annual Writing Contest for *One-of-a-Kind* Kids

The Grannie Annie
Family Story Celebration

The mission of The Grannie Annie is to celebrate family stories! Students in U.S. grades 4–8 and homeschool or international students ages 9–14 are invited to interview their family storykeepers and write a story based on their interview. They are encouraged to share their story with their family, school, community, and The Grannie Annie. Twenty-six stories from two age categories, chosen to represent the stories received this year, are included in this third annual volume of *Grannie Annie*.

The Grannie Annie mission—to discover, share, and celebrate family stories—springs from a belief in the transformative power of "story." The simple and very personal family stories in this book can help us connect with people in today's world and people from times past. In unexplainable ways, these stories foster feelings of unity with people whose lives may seem very different from our own. Quietly, surely, the world moves one step closer to peace.

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Thumbprint Press Portico Books
Saint Louis, Missouri

Because the stories in *Grannie Annie, Vol. 3* were captured from the oral tradition, they represent a unique blend of history and legend. No claims of accuracy, historical or otherwise, are guaranteed by the authors, sponsors, or publishers.

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In memory of Ann Guirreri Cutler,
who was passionate about saving family stories
1944–2007

Contents

Listening is an act of love.

—*Dave Isay, StoryCorps*

A Word from Grannie Annie

Some Native American nations so valued their histories that they designated a tribal storykeeper. My mother filled that role in our family for decades, and before that, our family storykeeper was Mom's mother, my grandmother Randazzo.

Gramma Randazzo lived with us when I was a child. She didn't speak English well; however, at an early age I learned to say "Tell me a story about the Old Country" or "Tell me again the story about the baker's daughter who had dough under her fingernails." Then she would begin, in her broken English that made the stories even more fascinating to me. She told me stories about the olive groves on the family estate in Italy, about Grampa Randazzo's brothers and all their escapades, and about the family's early years as immigrants in Brooklyn. Mom carried on the tradition with her own repertoire of stories—about teaching in a one-room school, about blizzards and floods on the farm, and about rolling up the rug and inviting the neighbors over to dance.

I was fascinated by their tales and still am. I have written down many of their stories, saved them in keepsake books so they won't be lost. They're a treasure to read now, just as I had hoped, but I find I saved more than the stories themselves. Listening had been a way to be close to Gramma Randazzo. When I read Gramma's stories now, I remember sitting near her, hearing the stories from Gramma herself. When I read Mom's stories now, I remember aunts and uncles

and cousins gathering around the kitchen table to listen. By sharing their stories, Gramma and Mom created a sense of family, a sense of closeness and security, that will stay with me forever.

April 2006
Ann Guirreri Cutler
The Original Grannie Annie

Note to Parents and Educators

Grannie Annie, Vol. 3 dips into the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, and dives headlong into the mid-twentieth century. It hopscotches between Asia, Europe, and both Americas, landing most frequently on the coasts and plains of North America. In short, the variety of times and places visited in the twenty-six stories of this year's volume, in addition to the wide range of topics, is sure to keep you turning the pages.

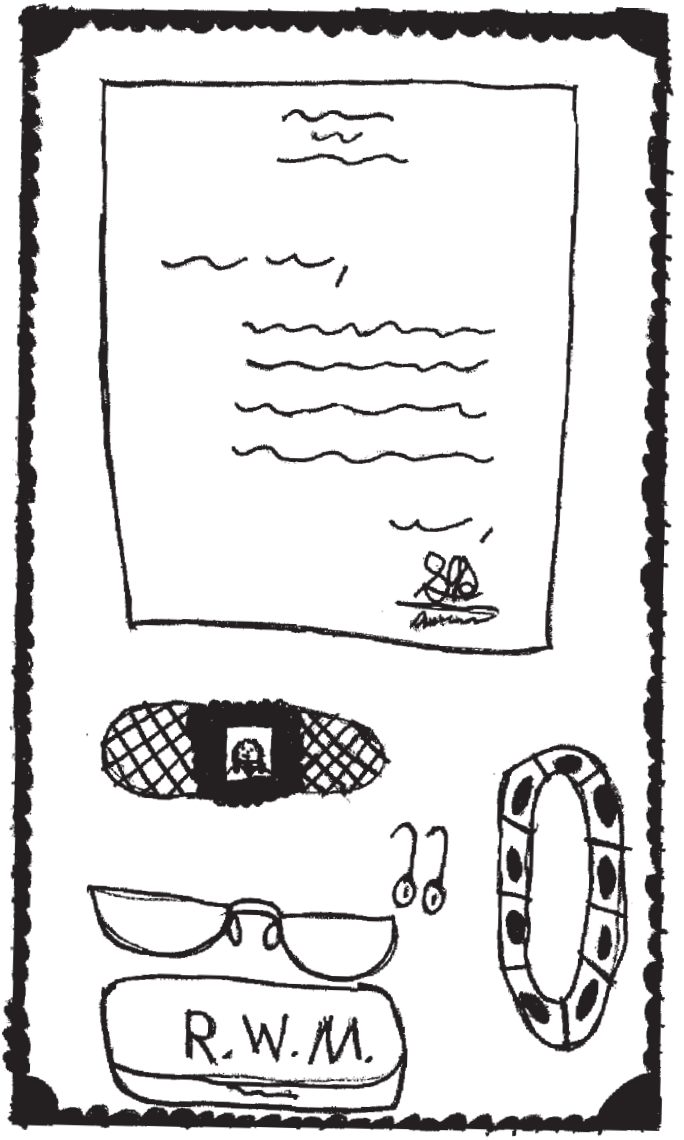
Recognizing that your appreciation of the stories would be enhanced given some historic and geographic context, we have added a new feature to this volume of *Grannie Annie*. The location and year each story takes place are noted below its title. In cases where the exact year is not known, the notation of "c." (circa) indicates that the year given is approximate.

It appears that those events in a family's history that give rise to strong emotion are most likely to be remembered and passed on. The stories published this year include stories of excitement, surprise, and pride. They also include stories of fear, sorrow, and regret. Adults and children make errors in judgment. Governments ask more of their citizens than seems fair or even possible. Disease does the same. Previewing the stories before sharing them with your children may help you guide the discussions that are sure to follow.

We are pleased you have joined the Grannie Annie family. We hope you'll return next year—and also invite others to join The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration.

Connie McIntyre and Fran Hamilton
Sponsors of The Grannie Annie

Grannie Annie, Vol. 3


R.W.M.

Treasures from the Past

1672–present
Middletown, Connecticut, USA

My grandfather died last summer. He left us a box full of old letters, jewelry, and other stuff. I knew there was old stuff in it, but I didn't know it was that old. But I am a history geek. So the moment I saw that box, I knew I was going to need to look at it. I was right; my need for history got the better of me. I just had to look at it. And that is probably the best thing I have ever done without meaning to. Some of the documents are actually pretty old, from about the 1850s.

Inside a small box were several pieces of jewelry. My favorite, and the most unusual, is a bracelet that appears to be made out of human hair. It is very old—from my research, dating from the time of the Civil War. The band is woven from hair, and there is a picture of a young girl with her hair in curls and wearing a cameo brooch. I wonder who she is.

There are five very old pairs of eyeglasses in their cases. They do not look like the eyeglasses you would see today. Several pairs just pinch onto your nose—they don't have earpieces!

Some of the older documents refer to a man named Governor Benjamin Miller. Sounds like a pretty fancy title, huh? Well, it is. Benjamin Miller was born July 20, 1672, in Middletown, Connecticut. He was my distant relative. He and his family moved to Middlefield, Connecticut, in 1701. They were one of the first three settler families. People called him *governor* even though

he wasn't actually the governor; he just seemed very important. If you saw him, you would say that he was an important man. He once got himself into a little bit of trouble. One Sunday he noticed some of his hogs were missing. Since the land was underdeveloped, he thought a bear or wolf was sneaking into the hog pen at night for a midnight snack. That night he sat up with his gun and shot the bear when it came looking for seconds. Now in those days it was against the law to kill anything on the Sabbath Day, or Sunday. Later he was arrested, taken before a magistrate, and fined for disrespecting the Sabbath Day. I'm pretty glad we don't have that rule today. Poor Benjamin!

As you can see, our family has a lot of history. It is not special or anything, but somehow when you think of people from way back then, the 1700s and 1800s, their ordinary lives seem so special to us now.

Samantha J. Lopez
Texas

Stuck on the Farm

1930s
Norwalk, Ohio, USA

I'm here to tell you about my grandma's childhood.

My grandma grew up on a dairy and grain farm near Norwalk, Ohio, in the 1930s. Both her parents and grandparents were also born in Norwalk, Ohio. She was the third of ten children; one died of pneumonia when less than one year old.

My grandma had a wood stove they used for heat and cooking. She had no running water, so she had to haul the water from outside. Her family did not have a refrigerator, so they didn't keep a lot of food on hand. They stored fruits and vegetables in the cellar and got their milk and eggs from their animals. They had no radio, television, or newspaper, so they got their news from town.

My grandma had to work on their farm before and after school shoveling manure, putting fresh bedding down for the cows, and feeding the cows. She also had to help plant and harvest the crops. In fact, her father made her quit school in the tenth grade and get a job to help support her family.

She liked going to school a lot, and math was her favorite subject. In her school the teacher taught two grades together. My grandma really wanted to finish school, but her father wouldn't let her.

She did not have much playtime or toys, but she liked playing school with her sisters, making shelves out

of cereal boxes and "food to sell" with mud pies. Her grandma would give her pennies to spend at the general store. Her uncle had a red convertible car with a rumble seat in the back. He would take her sisters for rides and to her grandma's house. Her father wouldn't let her drive a car, just a tractor.

Christmas at my grandma's house was special. Even though they did not have a Christmas tree or decorations, they did celebrate Christmas and always got one big present. Her mom and dad would decorate the dining room table with lit candles, small gifts of fruit, nuts, and candy, and a larger present. My grandma remembers her favorite present as being a small cedar chest filled with sewing supplies, because she loved to sew. Her parents made the family attend church services on Christmas Eve and Day. Her parents were very religious.

When my grandma was in the seventh grade, the whole family came down with scarlet fever. (Scarlet fever was a deadly disease.) They had to be quarantined in their house for about two months. They had big signs on the doors warning people not to enter. They had to pass notes through the door to let family and friends know what they needed, like groceries. Neighbors or family had to take care of the farm when they were sick.

I could never live in my grandma's shoes.

Jacob Bores
Ohio

Pigeon Racing

c. 1938
Toledo, Ohio, USA

When my grandpa was a kid, he had many pets. One kind of pet he had was pigeons. His friends also had pigeons, so they came up with a game to use them in. That game was pigeon racing. They would all give their pigeons to someone on a freight train. This person would be anyone they knew, such as the engineer, fireman, or conductor. When the train had traveled between 60 and 250 miles, the pigeons would be let go. When the pigeons were released, they would circle around in the sky a few times and then begin their journey home. Usually the pigeons would fly straight home, but sometimes they would stop to eat or rest. The pigeons might travel about ten miles an hour, so the trip would take at least six hours, not including the time the train would take to get to the release point.

Each pigeon would usually return to where it lived or in some cases to where it had been born. If the pigeon had been captured from the wild instead of raised, it might return to the wild. To keep from losing pigeons, the boys would put their name and address in the birds' ankle bracelets. Then if anyone found a lost pigeon, they would know how to return it.

The boys would figure a rough time for the pigeons' return. At that time they would all go outside

and wait for their birds. It was exciting for them to watch their birds win, even though there wouldn't be a prize.

Matthew Dick
Ohio

My Grandmother's First TV

1940s
Indiana, USA

In the late 1940s hardly anyone had a TV, but my grandmother, Marilyn Vaughn, had one of the first TVs in her neighborhood. Everyone was really excited about it. Even though there wasn't much to watch back then, it was probably really cool to them because they didn't have much. (Today you can probably never find a channel that has nothing on.) The TV unit was very big, heavy wood, but the actual TV screen was very small.

During the week and on the weekend when a show came on, a lot of friends and neighbors would come over to watch TV with my grandma's family. All of the TV shows and commercials were live. Out of all the shows there would be a little news, a little wrestling, and some comedy. They would have an hour of a comedy show starring Milton Berle. That show was on regularly. *The Ed Sullivan Show* started close to the same time as the Milton Berle show, but on a different night. That show had some singing, dancing, and acrobatic acts.

All shows were in black and white. Most of the shows were on during the evening, around 8:00 or 9:00. The shows were not back-to-back like they are today. They were very spread out. Sometimes during the day there would be one or two shows on. Whenever there would be a problem, the TV screen would say PLEASE STAND BY until it was fixed.

My grandmother's brother and his wife, her dad's friends, and her friends would all come over to watch wrestling because there was nothing else on. At that time wrestling was basically the only sport shown on TV. Overall it was very cool to have a TV back then. After more and more TVs came out, more TV shows were made, and the TVs progressed over time and got even better.

Nick Lebin
Indiana

"Shh . . . Turn It Down"

1973
Xiamen, China

Nowadays a TV is the most popular entertainment device for many families across America. In the early 1970s in China, it was a huge deal for anyone to have a TV. I will never forget the story that my mom told me about the reaction they had to their very first TV.

When my mother grew up in China, she had one brother and one sister. When she was about my age, ninety-nine percent of the people in her city didn't own a TV. Those who did, considered themselves very fortunate people and always tried to keep the TV a secret.

One day my mother's uncle, who was a very famous doctor in the Philippines, came to visit her family. He brought with him a thirteen-inch color TV as a gift. Her family was extremely excited to have received such a wonderful gift. They were so amazed that such a little screen could bring the whole world to their small living room and entertain them at the same time.

"Don't tell any of your friends that we have a TV, and when you watch it, be sure you always are very quiet," my grandmother warned, eyeing them all.

So every single time they watched TV, my grandmother would say, "Shh . . . turn it down." They would be sure to crank the sound to nearly mute, in fear that some neighbors would hear, and run over to their house to watch, and never want to leave. Another reason

was they were afraid that someone might steal their precious treasure from their house.

Now there are all kinds of gadgets around our house, and we no longer need to turn the TV down or keep it as a secret. My mother probably couldn't have imagined that even thirty-some years later technology would become indispensable to the ways we communicate and interact with each other and the world around us. It has advanced in ways we could not have imagined at an earlier time. At this point, technology has no limits yet in sight.

Alexis L. Corrigan
Missouri

Mysterious Booms

c. 1960
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, USA

My grandpa joined the United States Navy at the age of twenty-three. He went to Officers Candidate School after graduating from college. He had a love of work and helping others, and because of that he was well liked. Before he knew it, he had become lieutenant jg (junior grade) on one of the naval ships.

A few months later, while they were out on the Caribbean Sea, they suddenly heard a loud bang. So without hesitation they got the artillery ready and prepared for battle. They heard the bang again! As they looked around, they expected to see another ship, but there was no ship in sight! They began to worry that there might be a submarine.

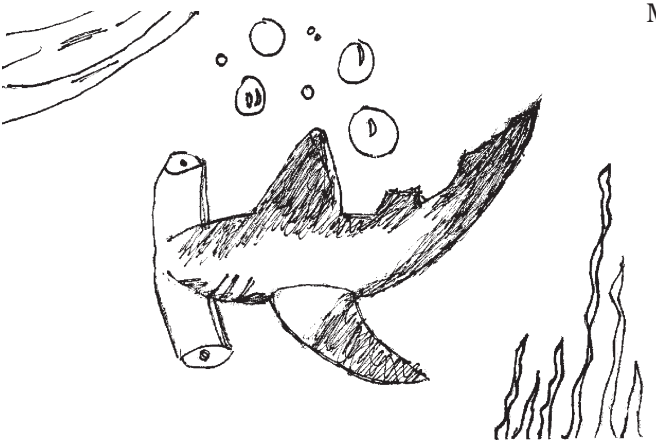
People were scrambling everywhere, trying to determine where these loud noises were coming from. My grandpa began to search the ship in case there were bombs that were going off. BOOM! They started searching as fast as they could, because they were afraid the ship was soon going to sink. The ship was so big that it took them ages to search and find out where the noises were coming from. Next there was a series of booms and bangs coming from all over the ship. My grandpa and the captain had no idea what to do. They were searching everywhere and smelled no smoke whatsoever. This was very confusing for them.

In my grandpa's opinion, whenever there is a bomb explosion there is smoke—simple as that. He had

to think quickly, because there was another series of bangs. Now crewmembers were screaming and running around like crazy people. Finally my grandpa thought to look into the water in case of a submarine attack. "Why have I been so stupid to not have thought to look in the water?" he thought to himself.

Sure enough, he discovered the source of the racket. He ran to the top deck to announce to the crew what he had found. Afterwards he ran back to the side of the ship and saw over one hundred hammerhead sharks just bumping the ship with their noses. The noise was echoing through the metal of the ship. He finally found a very large hammerhead that clearly had been making the excruciatingly loud bangs. It was the biggest shark that he had ever seen in his life, and he had seen many sharks. People all over the ship were laughing hysterically to themselves for being so worked up over a bunch of silly sharks. There had never been an incident like this one previously experienced on a naval ship.

Emily Stephens
Missouri



Courage's Call

c. 1944
Ardennes Forest, Belgium

After training for and taking part in the D-day landings, I was tired, homesick, and scared. The war had torn me apart, but I still fought for the people of Europe. City by city we moved deep into France, liberating the lives of the many civilians under Nazi oppression. Fear was constant. I just wanted to go home, see my wife, and live life as it had been before the war. Little did I know what lay around the next corner. . . .

The shell whistled through the air as it plummeted toward its target: an American tank. When the shell hit the tank, both exploded, and the tank burst into flames. I found myself running and stumbling. I knew that the Germans were advancing, and we had no air support. "Take cover," yelled one of my leaders. My division and I climbed into old foxholes that had been dug for previous fights. We loaded our weapons and waited for the worst, waiting and praying.

As the Germans neared and we heard the gunshots get closer, the tension began to build. Soon we had to duck as bullets began to fly over our heads. Bullets rocketed from my gun and created the stench of gunpowder. I continued to pray and kept aware of my surroundings. As the Germans neared, I had to change foxholes several times; an end seemed more distant every moment. Cries of pain came from a nearby foxhole. I saw that my buddy had been hit and was calling for a medic. I knew I couldn't leave him or he'd

die. Summoning up my courage, I started toward him. Inch by inch, second after second, I crawled toward his foxhole.

Just as I reached him, I felt a stinging in my shoulder. That's when I realized I had been hit. My heart raced, and for a moment I thought of quitting and leaving him in order to save myself. But after thinking of my own family and home, I continued toward him. In utter desperation, I managed to get him into my foxhole, saving his life. The pain from the bullet began to overcome me. Knowing I had done my duty, I waited for a medic to rescue us both.

I awakened in the Army hospital. I had been bandaged and medicated. "Robert," the doctor said, "you were wounded in your shoulder but will fully recover."

Fear came flooding back into my mind as I remembered the horrors I had seen. I examined the large cast that was on my shoulder. I remembered my friend and asked, "How is my buddy?"

"Fine," he said, "but if you hadn't got him out of that foxhole . . ." He didn't need to finish. He continued, "You should be very proud of what you did for him. You're a hero."

Later I was informed that I had earned a Purple Heart. It was an honor that I, Robert Tecklenburg, had received a Purple Heart in the course of saving a friend's life and doing my duty.

Zachary Pinz, Missouri
Story told by Zachary's great-grandfather

Turn Off the Lights!

World War II
St. Louis, Missouri, USA

When my grandpa was seven years old and living in St. Louis, World War II was in full swing. During that time, there would be air-raid drills in his neighborhood. In the middle of the night a siren would sound, and you would have to turn off all the lights. The drills would happen every month so people would learn to act quickly. Then if the enemy someday flew overhead to bomb the city, they would not know where anyone was. A civil defense man would walk around in a white helmet, white belt, and a lot of badges. He would be checking to see if your lights were out. If you had curtains, you could close them or put blankets over the windows so that you could still have a few lights on in your house.

During World War II you would not be able to get some items like bike tires or even a small rubber ball. This was because much of the rubber was used for the war effort. You also had limits on other items like flour and sugar. My great-grandparents would have to stand in line to get those ingredients with ration coupons.*

On certain days of the month my grandpa was lucky and his class got to go around the neighborhood and collect tin cans and newspaper. Whoever collected

*Rationing gave citizens a fair chance to purchase their share of limited supplies. There were many reasons for shortages: War activity made it difficult to move supplies by ship, factories produced war supplies instead of their regular products, and supplies were shared with Allied countries that were suffering.

the most got a free ice cream cone, which back then was really special to all of them.

At this same time where my grandpa was raised in St. Louis, there were Italian prisoners of war. They were shipped to St. Louis after being captured overseas. Their job was to work in farm fields growing food for the United States. They wore jumpsuits with big letters on their backs that said *PW* and stood for "prisoner of war." My grandpa thought this was odd because those were his initials for *Phil Waldman*!

As the war continued, the prisoners were moved away from my grandfather's neighborhood and were never seen again. Following the end of the war, supplies that had been hard to get became more and more available.

Sarah K. Waldman
Missouri

Meat!

c. 1942
St. Louis, Missouri, USA

During World War II, people had something called *rationing cards*. You would have a card for milk, meat, and other things, because the war made many kinds of food and other supplies hard to get.* Every time you got something, the shop owner would punch a hole in your rationing card, and if you used up your whole rationing card you couldn't get any more of the product until you could get a new card. There were cars, but they were not used much because there was a stop sign at every intersection and it just took too long. There wasn't much gasoline anyway.

Meat was uncommon because most of it was going to the war effort. Therefore, people didn't have much. One day my grandpa was walking and playing with his friends when they decided to go to the deli. He walked in, and he saw a huge juicy steak right there in the deli. He wanted to tell his mom, but he was really far away, so he decided to run all the way back to his house to tell his mom.

He dashed about two miles back to his house. His mom said, "Let's get it!"

They sprinted all the way back to the deli, and luckily no one had taken the meat. They went up to the owner and asked, "Can we buy the meat in the window?"

*For more information about war shortages and rationing, see the footnote on page 30.

The owner said okay. He poked a hole in their rationing card and gave them the giant piece of meat.

They scuttled back the two miles to their house, carrying that giant piece of meat. When they got home, they cooked the meat and had meat for dinner that night.

It is hard to believe that purchasing meat was so difficult!

Noah G. Steinbaum
Missouri

Sweet Without Sugar

c. 1944
Hudson, Ohio, USA

My grandma grew up on a farm during World War II. In that time, people couldn't buy much sugar, meat, fish, gas, or even shoes because of the war.* So in early spring, she would make her own maple syrup! To do this, she had to have lots of tools. She needed to have a special drill to make a hole in the maple tree. Then, when she would drill the hole into the tree, she needed to put a faucet-like thing in the hole to catch the traveling sap and capture it in a barrel.

When she was done with that, she would have about three and a half gallons of bitter sap, not sweet syrup. She and her family got a big kettle, poured all the sap into the kettle, and put it over a fire. They had to keep it there for three days!

After three days, they would finally have syrup, but do you know how much? About two cups! The next day, she would have pancakes for breakfast. A very good surprise it was to have a sweet breakfast. She always saved some syrup to make ice candy. I've tried it—it's good! You pour syrup on a medium-small ice chunk and let it sit for twenty minutes. Then you can eat it. Yum! It is like a syrup-flavored Popsicle!

My grandma said that homemade syrup tastes better and is healthier than regular syrup. And making

*For more information about war shortages and rationing, see the footnote on page 30.

her own syrup saved a lot of sugar—Grandma helped the soldiers win the war. People always did anything they could to save supplies for soldiers and to get soldiers to come home safely. People in communities helped a lot. I know it doesn't sound like it, but I guess making your own maple syrup is a way of helping.

Caroline Goldberg
Missouri

Love at First Sight

1940s
France; England;
Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Do you know how my great-grandfather, Joseph Donovan, met my great-grandmother, Catherine O'Donnell Donovan? On December 8, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared war on Japan after that country bombed Pearl Harbor. The United States was then engaged in World War II. In 1944 Joseph Donovan, at age twenty-three, was drafted into the United States Army. That same year, Catherine O'Donnell, only twenty-one, enlisted in the United States Army as a nurse.

Great-Grandma Donovan was a first lieutenant in the Army. She started out nursing in field hospitals but was transferred and stationed at General Hospital in England. She was in charge of the nurses who cared for the seriously wounded soldiers. She cared for both American and German soldiers. Grandma didn't care where they were from. She treated them all the same and did everything she could to make them well.

Great-Grandpa Donovan was a second lieutenant and was stationed all over Europe. On June 6, 1944, he led three boats onto Omaha Beach in Normandy, France. That was one of the most tragic days in history for the United States Army. The day was called D-day. My great-grandpa said, "I will never forget that day for the rest of my life."

Grandpa did not know how to swim, but thankfully the boat he was on made it to shore. He tried to take cover, but the Germans saw him and shot his knee with an MG42. This was not the first time he had been shot. He had been shot in the head, stomach, and arm—all in earlier battles of the war. He was hurried to a field hospital and then shipped to General Hospital in England. That is where it all began!

At the hospital in England, Grandpa was bandaged up and put on the healing table. His best friend introduced him to Nurse O'Donnell. It was love at first sight! Grandpa and Grandma talked and talked all day long about themselves. After Grandpa got out of the hospital, he was sent to a rehabilitation hospital. They dated, and two weeks after they met, Grandpa asked Grandma, "Will you marry me?"

Grandma thought he was joking, but he really meant it. She said, "Yes!"

Grandpa's service time came to an end and he was shipped back to the States, but Grandma still had two weeks left to serve. Grandpa didn't want to leave her, but he had no choice. She promised she would meet him back in Boston.

Grandma kept her promise! Grandma and Grandpa were married in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1946. They had six children and raised their family in Milton, Massachusetts. Grandma continued nursing as a school nurse while she raised the family, and Grandpa worked for the United States Postal Service until he retired. Grandma died on June 23, 1994. They had been

married for forty-eight glorious years. Grandpa Donovan is now eighty-seven and still living.

It's interesting how bad events like wars can bring people together and change their lives for the better!

Colin James Oakley
Nebraska

Sailing Through Smallpox

c. 1880
Aboard a ship between England
and San Francisco, California, USA

In the mid-nineteenth century my great-great-grandpa, Joseph Kleinberg, was living in England as a ship's nurse. Joseph's girlfriend was living in America, so he and his best friend set out on a freight ship to San Francisco. The ship was crowded. Waves crashed onto the flat deck, causing many to be sick. To get to San Francisco the ship had to circle all the way around South America. A trip like that took three months at the minimum, and on such a crowded ship it wasn't long until disease started to spread.

At first it was merely seasickness, but eventually smallpox started to spread throughout the ship. Usually people would move if an epidemic of smallpox was spreading through their town, but on a ship there was nowhere to go. The captain of the ship started throwing overboard anyone with the disease in an attempt to stop the spread. It was of no use though. The disease spread through the ship, and Joseph's best friend caught smallpox.

The captain wanted to throw him overboard, but Joseph protested. He knew a little about medicine, because he was a ship's nurse. He talked to the captain and convinced him to let him take care of his friend in the hold.

The hold was smelly and filled with garbage—not at all an ideal place for someone with smallpox. Joseph

stayed there with his friend and eventually caught a mild version of the disease. Somehow they both managed to make it to San Francisco and jumped onto one of the last trains of the week to New York.

Once in New York, Joseph met up with his girlfriend. He had smallpox scars till his dying day, but he had made it to America.

Hannah Shlaferman
Maryland

The Terrible Disaster

c. 1950
Quito, Ecuador; Nebraska, USA

"Ma'am, I am sorry to tell you this."

These are words no one wants to hear. These are the words, however, that my great-grandmother heard from the officials in Ecuador, South America. The officials said a plane had crashed, with no survivors. Her husband and her son had been on that plane.

My great-grandfather Wayne grew up in a flying family. Wayne's father learned to fly in the 1920s and had his own plane. Wayne's mother was one of the first female pilots in Nebraska, and both Wayne and his older brother learned to fly when they were very young.

When World War II was declared, Wayne wanted to be a fighter pilot. He couldn't because of a football injury that made him ineligible. Instead he became an instructor and taught United States Army pilots how to fly. After World War II, Wayne and some of his pilot buddies bought some airplanes that were war surplus from the Army. They flew them to Ecuador.

Wayne was going to start a business in Ecuador. The business was to fly workers up to the top of the mountains to pick coffee beans. The workers would load the plane with coffee beans, and then Wayne would fly the load back to the town to deliver them.

A few months later, Wayne's family, who were my great-grandmother Jean, my great-uncle Neal, and my grandmother Jerre Lynn, went to Ecuador to live with him. Not long after they got there, they decided to

go on a picnic in the mountains. The day of the picnic, though, two-year-old Jerre Lynn got sick.

"Oh, Wayne, she can't go. She is really sick," said Jean.

"But we have been planning this for so long," Wayne said.

"I know, but she is so sick. She was running a fever all night," Jean said. "You and Neal go. Neal has been so excited about going up to the top of the mountain. He has been talking about the picnic all week. I don't want to disappoint him."

So Jean decided to stay home with the ill baby, and the boys decided they would go anyway.

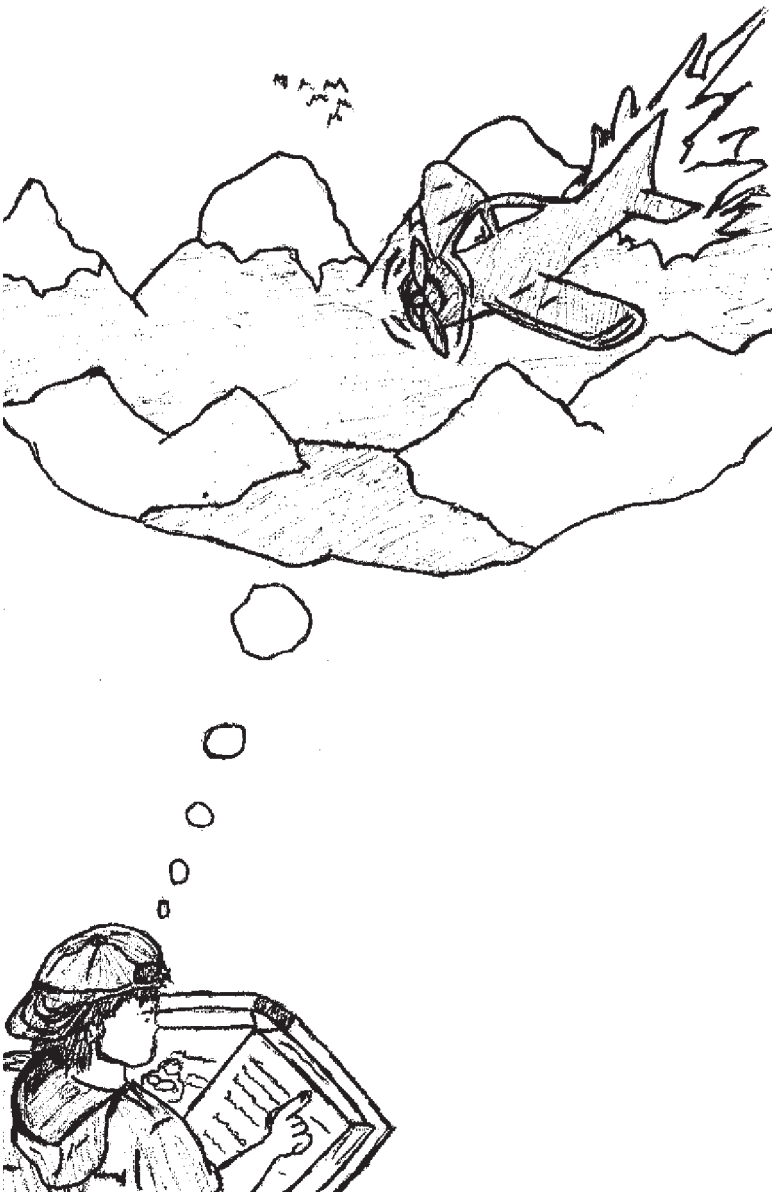
That was a tragic day when Wayne and Neal flew up that mountain. The plane crashed. Wayne, eight-year-old Neal, and all twenty-eight workers were killed.

After the accident, Jean decided to take Jerre Lynn back to the United States to live. They moved back to Nebraska to be near Jean's family. They settled in Madrid, a small town in southwestern Nebraska, which is a long way from the nearest airport.

Jerre Lynn grew up, married an automobile mechanic, and had twin daughters, one of whom is my mother. Jerre Lynn did fly one more time after returning from Ecuador. My grandma always wanted to go to Hawaii, so she and Grandpa flew to Hawaii for their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary.

Airplanes are a big part of our family history, but none of us would be here now if my grandma hadn't gotten sick and missed that flight in Ecuador.

Kara Donovan, Nebraska



The Forgiving Man

c. 1968
Pusan,* Korea

My grandfather, Yoonsoo Lim, was a contractor and was living a good life in Pusan, South Korea. He wasn't poor, rich, or in the middle. He was between rich and in the middle, so he was living pretty high. One day he told one of his workers to get a lot of money (when I say *a lot*, I mean so much that you couldn't imagine it) from a Korean market. The worker got the money and ran away. My grandfather didn't notice until it was very late and the worker didn't return.

Yoonsoo got very mad and went on his tower that he had made with his employees. He thought about the fact that if he died, then he could get rid of all the responsibilities so his family wouldn't have to deal with this problem. Abruptly he accidentally tripped and fell out of the tower. *Crash!* The ambulance rushed toward him and quickly got him to the hospital.

Back to Yoonsoo's family, his wife now had to go out and work. What's worse is that the employees didn't get paid, because the worker had taken the money. So the employees took everything Yoonsoo had, including TVs and fans. Soon the employees wanted the whole house. By that time Yoonsoo's family had nothing and had to start a new life. His wife also had to do all the shopping for clothes, food, and other things that are necessary to survive.

*Pusan is now called *Busan*

A long time after the accident, my grandfather recovered. His family was doing fine, even without Yoonsoo.

One day the worker who had stolen the money came back to my grandfather to apologize. Yoonsoo didn't make the worker get all of his things back or give the money back. Yoonsoo simply forgave him. He taught the man that the most important thing in life anyone could ever know is "forgiving."

"I forgive you for your actions. I must tell you one thing that is very important. You must learn from your actions in the past—and never do that action again if that action is a bad one. This is what life is all about, to learn from what you did in the past," said Yoonsoo in a calm and gentle voice.

"But why do you forgive me after such a bad action?" asked the worker.

"I just told you. It is because that is what life is all about. Now it is time for me to go, and you, my friend, must go too," responded Yoonsoo.

"Good-bye, Boss," said the worker.

"Same to you, my friend," replied Yoonsoo.

As you can see, Yoonsoo taught the worker who stole his money a lesson that is important to everyone. Everyone will eventually learn this lesson the hard way or the easy way. All in all, my grandfather, Yoonsoo, was a great man who forgave and taught people the right thing.

Andrew H. Lim
Colorado

The Generous Farmers

c. 1935
St. Louis, Missouri, USA

During the Great Depression, my great-grandparents and grandma lived on a farm near a city called St. Louis, Missouri. They had chickens that would lay fresh eggs every day. They also had milking cows that produced lots of milk that was used to make delicious cheese, butter, and whipped cream. There were many other cool farm animals. They also grew juicy cherries, apples, peaches, corn, tomatoes, green beans, and even more!

Every day my great-grandparents and grandma would get up early in the morning and collect the eggs and milk the cows. My grandma would run home from school so she could help her mom and dad with the farm, because she actually enjoyed farm work. After a couple of weeks, my grandma started coming home even more quickly than before! It was because of what her family was doing to help others during the Depression.

The Depression was a long period of time from 1929 to 1939, when jobs were scarce. This means people couldn't earn money to buy things they needed. Even worse, people couldn't buy food to feed their families. This was a horrible time! When my grandma was eight, she found out about the Depression when she heard her parents talking about it very loudly late one night. The next day my grandma asked about the Depression. My great-grandparents asked her how she knew about it. Grandma told them she had heard them talking the night

before. Later that day they decided they would give food to others who were in need. After a week, people were having breakfast, lunch, and dinner with them lots of the time. Often complete strangers stopped by the farm asking for food. My grandma would pack up bags of fresh food for them. The people were always so grateful.

After the Depression, people came back and wanted to repay my great-grandparents and grandma for their generosity. Even though they had given them food, my grandma's family said, "No." This is because they were Christians and wanted to be generous, just as it says to do in the Bible. I think my great-grandparents and grandma were awesome because they were generous farmers.

Amy Whitaker
Texas

Big Red

c. 1968
Brooks, Kentucky, USA

There once was a rooster who was mean and cruel as the devil himself. His name was Big Red. Big Red wasn't your ordinary rooster. He was an aggressive, stubborn rooster. This rooster was so mean that he took on a horse. He clawed the horse between the eyes, and the horse turned around and kicked the rooster with his hind legs. Big Red flew back and hit the earth's hard floor like a jackhammer pounding earth's rock-hard ground. Big Red got back up, shook his head, and charged at the horse. This went on and on and on till my uncle Gary finally came out and grabbed Big Red to stop the fight.

One plain peaceful day, sun shining upon earth's green and luscious meadows and shining blue oceans, my family was inside the house talking and having a good time about the good old days when all of a sudden they heard "Help!" It was coming from outside. Who could it be? They rushed out the door like a stampede of wild buffalo.

Looking over the old rotten fence, they saw my cousin Jimmy hanging from the clothesline pole, hanging on for dear life. As they looked down to see why he was screaming, they saw the demon himself, Big Red, clawing away at the pole. Finally my family discussed a plan, a way to rescue Jimmy—but in a very caveman way. My dad and my uncle Gary picked up two pieces of wood, walked in, and hit that rooster upside the head. The

rooster flew back, got back up to his feet, shook his head and scratched his feet along the earth's dirt, and charged. After several times of beating the rooster and the rooster fighting back, they got Jimmy off the pole.

But getting Jimmy to the other side of the fence was a whole other story. The three of them backed away slowly toward the gate of the fence, Jimmy walking behind my dad and uncle. Big Red clawed the earth and kept his eyes concentrated on the three until they slipped through the fence and out the gate to safety.

Thanksgiving Day came—a day of joy, a day of thanks. When it came time to eat, the family got their plates full. As they ate, my dad asked the question of the day, the question of the week! "Where's Big Red?"

The room got silent. You could have heard a needle hit the floor. Everybody had a puzzled face, wondering the same thing: Where is Big Red?

Then my great-grandma replied, "You're eating him."

Trey Harvey
Kentucky

A Story of a Nebraska Farmer

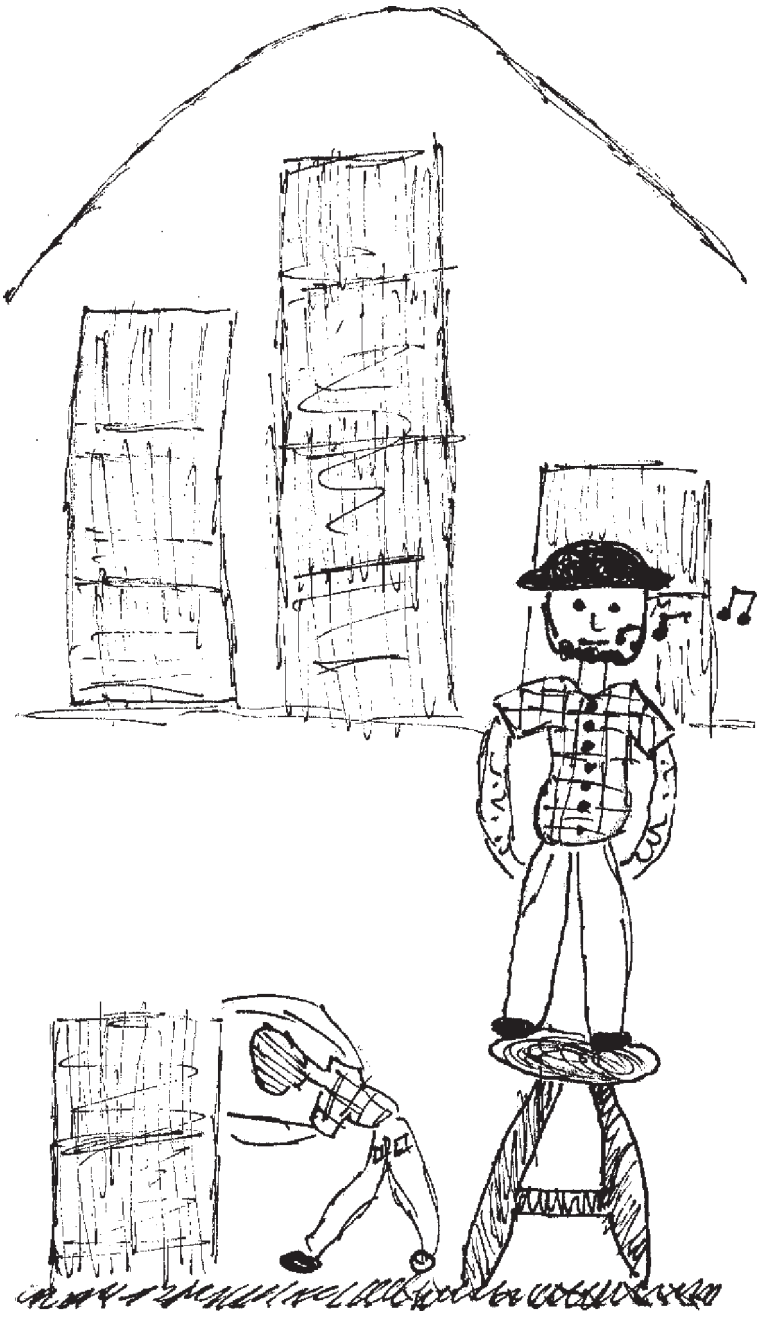
1970
Wolbach, Nebraska, USA

One summer day in 1970 my uncles Rod and Dale were picking up hay bales. It was so sticky-hot that the fronts and backs of their shirts stuck to their bodies. They were in a twenty-acre patch when Rod noticed a row of popcorn clouds in the southwest, a bad direction for a storm to come from. The brothers quickly finished picking up the bales. They got on the tractor and started over the hills to the house. When they got there, Rod called, "We better put the bales in the barn!" Dale nodded. The three hundred bales each weighed about seventy pounds, but finally Dale handed up the last bale and Rod stacked it in the hayloft.

They hurried into the house just as it started to rain. Marble-size stones of ice hit the ground. Dale worked at the co-op in town, so he left before the roads got too muddy. Soon the hail was as big as baseballs, and the wind roared across the prairie. The family watched helplessly as the storm raved outside.

Later Dick Peetz, who lived three miles east of them, rode over on his old beaten-up tractor. "I came to tell you the storm washed some of the bullheads out of the farm pond," said Dick.

Rod went out with a bucket to pick up fish out of the pasture for supper. It's the first time he had ever gone fishing without a pole! Talk about flying fish! The high winds of the storm had picked the fish out of the



water and thrown them into the pasture. There were fish everywhere!

As Rod walked out over the once-green cornfield, all that remained were stubs. The corn that had been almost up to his waist didn't even come up to his knees now. The wind and hailstorm had destroyed the crops in just a matter of minutes. The oat field looked like the pictures from the Dust Bowl days of the 1930s, barren and hopeless.

"Oh, no! Mom's garden!" Rod thought as he quickly turned around. He saw his mother's garden, where she had worked so hard for so many long hours. The devastating storm had erased the tomatoes, cucumbers, beets, carrots, and all her flowers. Sick at heart from all the destruction, Rod didn't even try to gather any fish.

The sun was going down, so he started back to the farmstead. As the sun set, he knew he and his family would have to work extra hard the next several weeks. Rod sat down and watched the sun disappear.

Rod and Dale no longer farm, but they both know firsthand the joys and sacrifices of being a Nebraska farmer.

Jacob T. Killinger
Nebraska

Danger in Vietnam

1968
Chu Lai, Vietnam

The United States took part in the Vietnam War between 1955 and 1975. Philip Thompson, my grandpa on my mother's side, was nineteen in 1968 when he was drafted. He was from Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey. There were about half a million U.S. soldiers in Vietnam. Phil's camp was called a fire-based camp. His camp was on a mountaintop surrounded by sandbag bunkers to protect the soldiers if enemies tried to shoot at the camp. There were guards keeping watch each night. Every night before bed, the soldiers threw all their garbage into the fire to burn it. One time when Phil was near the fire, hanging up his poncho liner to dry, a can of peanut butter exploded all over his chest. He tried to wipe it off, but he just smeared the scalding peanut butter over a bigger area. His friends watched in amusement as he danced around and yelled.

In the jungle it was always warm, and the soldiers needed their poncho liners to protect them from the mosquitoes. The ground was also filled with blood-sucking leeches that the soldiers tried to avoid. The soldiers had only one set of clothes that they wore during the day and to bed, so they got wet and muddy. Phil, who was a medic, advised his platoon not to wear socks or underwear because when it got wet, they could get athlete's foot or jungle rot rashes.

One day Phil and his platoon went marching along both sides of a small river to find the enemy, the

Vietcong. The Vietcong were hiding in a tunnel and began shooting at both sides of the company. This caused the Americans to shoot at each other. They thought they were shooting at the enemies. Phil tried to dig a foxhole in the sand with an entrenching tool about the size of your forearm. He was digging and digging, but the sand kept caving in. Phil could hear the bullets whizzing right above his head. Finally, on the soldiers' radio, they heard a message from the captain: "*! @#$*! Stop shooting at us!" Then it got quiet very quickly. Fortunately no one had gotten hurt. The Vietcong had tricked the Americans into shooting at each other!

Phil hated the Army. When the veterans arrived home, they called it returning to the "Land of the Big PX." *PX* stood for "post exchange," where people could buy their goods cheap. The veterans were glad to be out of the jungle and have the comforts of life again!

Christian Rock Miladinovich
New Jersey

Crates Then Coal

1945
Illinois, USA

Bang! Whap! If you were my grandma at age eight, this is what you would be hearing. My grandma had no television at that age and was often bored. To have some fun, she and four of her siblings would tell all of the younger kids of the family they wanted to play a game. When their parents left, my grandma's family would place two or three younger kids of the family on top of their shed about ten feet tall and give each youngster an orange crate they had brought from the grocery store. The younger kids would stand them up, like a wall or barrier. After getting them set up, a few of the older kids, including my grandma, would take coal, which they would usually burn for warmth, and grab it for ammo to hurl at the crates. My grandma and her other four siblings would do this a few times, but only when their mom and dad were gone.

Now, specifically in June 1945, my great-grandma had gone to the post office. Of course, to my grandmother, this meant crate targets and chunks of coal. Once everything was set up, the assault began. Coal was slung and hurled as fast as cars on highways. The crates were slammed hard against the projectiles but surprisingly didn't break. This lasted about ten minutes before an older child cried out, "Mom's coming!" The kids dashed over to the youngsters on the sheds and lowered them down.


Mommy! Help me!

My grandma noticed that one brother, Harold, was still on top of the shed. He was only five at the time, and what do you think he did? He started panicking and screaming, "Help, help!"

My grandma rushed over to help him down, but she wasn't tall enough. She was dazed and said to Harold, "Just jump! I'll catch you!"

So he leaped off the shed. What do you think happened next? If you think she caught Harold, you're wrong! The five-year-old couldn't jump far enough and fell ten feet down from the shed! He wailed and let out a blood-curdling shriek. My grandma, in awe, silently observed, too shocked to move.

Just then her mother scrambled to where she heard Harold's cries of agony. Of course, my grandma had to explain the incident to her mom. Harold was rushed to the hospital, and the doctor pronounced his leg broken. My grandma's punishment for this outrageous act was that she wasn't allowed to play with her friends outside. Instead, she had to pull Harold around in a red wagon.

Garrett Vieira
Missouri

Big Mistake

c. 1945
Japan

One day when my grandpa was only in first grade, he, his brothers, and his cousins were upstairs secretly smoking. In those days there weren't any laws against smoking, and they didn't know how bad cigarettes were for your body. They were passing the cigarette around, taking turns and having fun—something that only a bad boy would do. The boys thought that it was real fun, and cool. They weren't thinking of what would happen if they were caught.

When it was my grandpa's turn to try, many things were rushing through his mind. Then the boys heard my grandpa's mother coming up the steps. *Thump . . . thump*, they heard. "Hide the cigarette!" said one of the boys.

"Okay," said my grandpa.

As his mother came in, she saw something suspicious. It appeared that smoke was rising from behind my grandpa. She probably smelled it, too! Right then, she knew that they were smoking.

Guess what happened next! My grandpa was thinking of all the consequences. Instead of yelling at the boys, his mother knelt down in front of the Japanese god, closed her eyes, and began to pray, "Thank you very much, Lord," she started to say in Japanese. "Thank you for finding these very bad boys smoking." My grandpa felt his face get hotter.

His mother told the boys to never smoke again. My grandpa felt very bad. That day my grandpa learned a lesson, a very big lesson, and never smoked again. He learned that there are consequences to everything that you do. Remember to do the right thing even when no one is looking.

Ayako W. Takai
Missouri

Spitting Shades of Red and Orange

c. 1937
New Jersey, USA

It was a breezy, comfortable night when the family of my grandmother Frances was told the news of their new arrival that was soon to come. Her family was overjoyed with the thought of a new little bundle of bubbly fun. Soon they were to find that the little bundle was going to mark a moment in history for their family.

Frances and her brother, Frankie, were waiting on their rather hard floral couch for their mother to return from the hospital with their little sister, Betty. Betty had been born very early and was premature. She was no bigger than the hand of a grown man and was bundled in blankets to keep her warm on the chilly night.

When Frances's mother walked through the door, the children jumped up as fast as locomotives breeze through the station. Their mother quickly stepped back and scolded the children for their disgraceful outburst. The children were instructed to stay away from the fragile child unless they were checking on the warmth of the baby.

Frances's house did not have any central heating, and Betty, the baby, needed to be kept warm all day and all night. Her fragile body fit in a shoebox filled with fluffy cotton. This box was placed on the door of the open oven. The oven was heated by burning wood.*

*The fire in a wood-burning cookstove is in a separate, closed firebox. Before central heating, infants were often placed on an open oven door to keep them warm.

One brisk winter night my grandmother's family was in need of more firewood to continue to heat the oven. Frances's mother decided that she would take on the task of getting more firewood from the yard. While her mother was out of the house, the cotton the baby was placed in caught on fire. The baby was asleep at the time, so she did not cry out.

Frankie, Betty's older brother, had been in the kitchen trying to sneak some tasty sweets before his mother returned from the yard. Suddenly he smelled something burning; he sighed and turned to see what was causing the smell. He turned around, and his eyes became stricken with fear. To his disbelief, the box his little sister was lying in was spitting shades of red and orange flames. His heart and mind stopped for a split second, and then he jumped into action.

As much as Frankie despised the thought of another girl in the house, he loved his sister dearly and could not let her suffer such a death. Without another thought, he stuck his hand into the burning box and gently but quickly pulled Betty out of the box. Even though it was a brutally cold day, sweat dripped down his face as he examined the unburned and still sleeping baby.

Frankie was a hero and would later use this story as a way of joking around with his sister. Every time he got in trouble because he had taken something of Betty's or had hurt her in some way, he would say, "Ahh, if I had just left you in the shoebox!"

Lindsay Braviak
Maryland

A Standing Ovation

c. 1940
Missouri, USA

"Bobby, start her up!" In obedience to his uncle Charlie, young Bobby pulled the throttle of the tractor hauling the threshing machine. Nothing happened. Bobby looked to his uncle, as did all the men gathered there to thresh grain.

"I know what's wrong," Uncle Charlie sighed. "A bolt fell out inside the machine, and it's too hard to reach from outside. We'll have to take the front off and go inside."

"But that will be a whole day's work!" protested one of the men. "We won't be able to thresh today."

"That will throw us behind schedule," rose the complaints. "How will we finish in time?"

"I know, I know." Uncle Charlie looked grim. "But it's our only choice, unless . . ." His gaze shifted to Bobby. "Unless . . . Bobby, I have a job for you."

Bobby climbed down from the tractor, switching it off. What did his uncle want him to do? Whatever it was, he would do it. That was the way it was. Bobby knew that it was necessary that everyone always do his part. And if he could help, he would.

"Bobby." Uncle Charlie drew his nephew aside. "I need you to fix the separator."*

"Me?" asked Bobby in surprise. How could he fix the enormous machine?

*separator = threshing machine

"Yes, Bobby. See that little door on the side of the separator? None of us grown men can fit through it. But you can, Bobby. You can save us a whole day's work. I'll explain everything to you, but I need you to go in there and do it."

"Yes, Uncle Charlie," breathed Bobby.

"Here's the new bolt and the tools you'll need." Uncle Charlie handed the equipment to Bobby, who stuffed it into his pocket. "Are you ready?" he asked his nephew.

"I'm ready." Bobby pressed his lips together. "Here goes."

All the men watched Bobby disappear into the threshing machine. The boy crawled through the dim light, grateful that the machine was off. "Ouch!" A hayrack* pricked his leg sharply. It was only the first of many. Bobby struggled to remain focused on his mission. He was almost there. Carefully he replaced the bolt and tightened it. Then he began to creep back out. The air was musty, and the child feared sneezing in the uncomfortable silence. His legs and arms were sore all over from the prickly hayracks, which he could scarcely see. Bobby gritted his teeth and tried to ignore the pain. Soon he would be back outside, in the sunlight, with no hayracks. Finally he reached the door.

Thinking of fresh air, he was surprised to hear applause. Around the threshing machine stood more than a dozen men rising to their feet, standing, cheering,

*hayrack = a row of wood or metal fingers that carries the straw through the threshing machine

applauding—applauding him! Grown men were giving a ten-year-old boy a standing ovation.

Bobby was touched by the men's appreciation and proud that the separator never broke again. He afterwards carried this story in his heart and told it to his granddaughter—namely, me.

Alissa Klein
Missouri

The Family Piano

1920s–present
England; USA

In the late 1920s in England, my great-grandmother was twelve. She had two younger brothers, and her dad was a factory worker. By some miracle, in their tiny house they had a piano. Nobody in their family could play it, but none of them seemed to care except my great-granny. She didn't ask for lessons, because she knew that her parents couldn't afford them, but she still wanted to play.

One day she walked to the local cinema, where she knew there was a man who played the piano for the silent movies. She walked up to him. "Excuse me," she said.

"Tickets are sold over there," he answered, waving a hand in the correct direction.

"I'm not here to see a film," she replied. "I'm here to play the piano."

"To play the piano?" he asked.

"Yes. I was wondering if you would have time to teach me."

And so my great-grandmother learned to play the piano.

She got a scholarship and a good job, married a football (soccer) player, and had two children. The older one was a girl. My great-grandmother wanted the best of everything for her children, as most mothers do, so she enrolled her four-year-old daughter in piano lessons. My grandmother was the youngest child in the county

of Oxfordshire to take the first piano exam, and she did quite well. As my grandmother and her mother left after the exam, my grandmother said, "Mummy, I don't like the piano."

Her mother made a deal with her. "You be a good girl and play the piano now, and when you are sixteen you can quit if you like, but I'll bet you'll love the piano so much then that you *can't* quit."

"I quit," my grandmother said, with stubborn finality. She looked around the room, at her mother and her piano teacher. "It's my sixteenth birthday. You said I could." She turned around and walked out the door. She never played the piano again.

My grandmother grew up and had two children. The older one was a girl. When *my* mother asked if she could have a piano in their house, and lessons, she was told there was no room. The discussion ended there. My mother didn't find out until she was much older that her own mother had ever even played the piano.

My mother grew up, married and had three children. I am a twelve-year-old girl, and I have two younger brothers. Sound familiar? Fortunately, my mother has learned from our family history. She took me to my first music lesson when I was only six months old, but she never forced me to learn to play any particular instrument. She told me that I couldn't choose to play an instrument until I was eight years old and would be responsible for practicing by myself. The family history with the piano probably ends here. Me? I'd rather play the bagpipes.

Astrid K. M. Lundberg
Maryland

Right-Side Up

c. 1968
Guangxi Province, China

"This is an exciting story, Lucy. Good job!" my mom encouraged as she put down the last page of my story about a girl going on a dangerous and magical quest. To my surprise, my mom smiled and said, "When I was a young girl, I experienced adventures just as terrifying and exciting as the one you wrote about."

I laughed and said, "Yeah right, Mom."

"Well, let me tell you a story," she began. "I was born and raised in a big city in China, but when I was a teenager, the government forced many people to go work in the countryside, and I was one of them. Going to the countryside meant that I would stop going to school and help build roads in faraway villages.

"One day several friends and I had to travel on mountain roads and head toward a village, because that was the place we were going to build roads. The mountain was so steep! We were so high I could only see the tiptop of the trees, and I had no idea how high I was because I couldn't see the ground. We climbed and climbed until my legs started to hurt. My feet grew heavy, as if two big stones were stuck to my feet. I kicked at a brick, and it flew into a yellow bush. Almost every plant on the mountain was yellow because of the intense heat. I started to think about all the good stuff I ate in the city and then remembered that from now on I would have only vegetables and rice to eat, and hardly ever any meat.

"Suddenly we reached a bridge we would have to cross to get to the other side. But it was hardly a bridge at all! It didn't even have a rail to hold on to. It was just a narrow log. And if you stepped onto it, there was no turning back because the log was so narrow that you couldn't turn around. If you tried to step backward, you might fall down into the endless trees.

"None of us dared to cross the log. Finally I decided that we had to cross the bridge before the sun set because there were wolves in the mountains, and they were always hungry for human flesh. As I took a step forward, I looked down, and my knees instantly went weak and turned into pudding. I kept on telling myself to keep going. The only way to not look down was to look forward. When I finally got to the end of the bridge, I fell down on my butt because my knees were so weak. My friends followed me, and we all made it across the bridge. Looking back at the log, I was so glad that I stayed right-side up."

My mom had finished the story, but I was still amazed. I couldn't believe these were her real life experiences. "Wow, Mom, I should write stories about you!" I exclaimed.

Lucille Man
California

Growing Up German, Part II
Living Post-World War II

c. 1947
Germany

My *oma*[*] was born in Kunau, Sudetenland, on May 18, 1934. She has three sisters. All three are still alive today. When World War II was over, Czechoslovakia took over Sudetenland and ordered all the Germans to leave at once. Each person was allowed to carry only forty pounds of "stuff." The Germans were loaded onto boxcars. Each boxcar held fifty people. They did not know where they were going.

Their first stop was Augsburg, Germany. Some people got off there to stay. Oma's family was taken on to Memmingen. There they got off the train with two hundred other people and stayed in a very large building like our gymnasiums today. The *bergermeister*[**] of each of the surrounding villages told the villagers to "make room" for fifty or more people from the trains to live in their village.

After a few days, Oma's family was sent to Westerheim to live in their assigned house. Oma's family was given two bedrooms and their own kitchen for the six of them to live in. In the bedrooms there were only bed frames with sacks filled with straw to lie on. In the kitchen there were only some chairs and one table. They used crates to store their kitchen items and used the

[*] *oma* = grandmother

[**] *bergermeister* = mayor

wood-burning stove to cook. Everyone in the house shared the bathroom.

Oma and her family earned their stay by going from house to house and village to village to beg for food. This wasn't easy. No one wanted to help them or give them anything to eat. The villagers were very unkind to the new families. They didn't want the new families to live among them. The farmers would make Oma stand at the edge of the wheat field and wait all day until the farmer was done reaping the wheat. Then the farmer would let Oma find what little was left to glean. The weekly ration of food for Oma's family was very small. There wasn't enough food to last all week for all of them.

School was hard for Oma and her sisters because the students didn't like the new families either and made it very hard for Oma to make friends. The kids were mean just like the adults.

Oma's family and other families were not welcome in a country that they were made to live in. The villagers were told that they had no choice but to make room for the "German immigrants." There were no choices on either side about the post-war way of life. Oma had to give up her childhood house and possessions and move to a strange place among people that didn't want her family there and wouldn't do anything to help them.

This sure makes me appreciate how rich my life is now in Indiana, and all the freedoms and privileges that we have in America!

Sean Millard
Indiana

Wilhelmina's Great Escape

c. 1943, 1990
The Netherlands; USA

World War II was a horrible, yet victorious, time in our history. During that time our soldiers fought against the Axis powers. In the Netherlands, Queen Wilhelmina was threatened by the Nazi takeover and had to leave her country under harsh conditions. A mission to save her from the Nazis was organized, and she was flown from her home to safety. John Richard Evans, my grandpa, was on that plane.

Queen Wilhelmina stood for peace and justice. When the Nazis came to the Netherlands, she and her family had to escape as fast as they could so they would not be killed or imprisoned. The plane flew her out of the Netherlands while the Nazis tried to shoot it down. They were unsuccessful.

My grandpa was a civilian pilot during World War II. On his uniform, he had half a wing, which stood for being a civilian. At first when he was asked to fly an important person from the Netherlands, he was not aware that it would be Queen Wilhelmina, but he was honored and took the offer right away. Once he and his crewmembers arrived, the queen entered the Lockheed Key Constellation, the plane, and thanked them for risking their lives to help keep her safe.

After this heroic deed, the crewmembers were each presented with a golden ring, the Queen's ring. This ring was very special, especially to my grandfather. It had a *W* with a queen's crown on the top of it. The *W*

stood for *Wilhelmina*. My grandfather wore the ring while he flew people across the world. That ring stayed on his finger. He always was a superstitious man and had two or three things he always carried with him. One of these was a silver dollar that his mother had given him when he was a young boy. He would wrap it up in a handkerchief and would keep it in his left pants pocket. Then he always wore that significant ring on his finger. He loved that ring; it reminded him of something he did not only for his country but also for Queen Wilhelmina.

Shortly before Grandpa died in 1990, the ring accidentally fell off his finger and could not be found. My mom had been thinking of burying my grandpa in his pilot uniform, with his silver dollar and the ring, but she could not find the ring. However, a few weeks after the funeral, my mom and my uncle were outside the house talking about the loss of the ring. When my mom looked down at our unpaved driveway, something caught her eye.

My mom went over to it, and as she examined it, she realized it was something very special. She called my uncle over, and they both thought the same thought: The ring was not lost forever. It had fallen onto our driveway for our family to find and keep as a memento of Grandpa's bravery. It goes to show that you never know how history will touch you or how you will touch history. History touched my grandpa.

Brigid C. Rosendale
New Jersey

U.S.A.

Illustrators

p.14 Samantha J. Lopez, Texas

p. 21 Scott Gmoser, Missouri

p. 27 Cameo Biggerstaff, Missouri

p. 35 Meira Cassorla, Missouri

p. 43 Sadija Lilic, Missouri

p. 48 Hanh Bui, Missouri

p. 52 Petra Petermann, Missouri

p. 57 Alyson Yawitz, Missouri

p. 69 Scout Olivia Sale, Missouri

p. 75 Kyle Rogers, Texas

Honorable Mention Stories

The Amazing Day
AnnaLisa Glenn, Nebraska

A Dangerous Ride
William Keating, Missouri

The Devastating Barn Fire
Lindsay Marie Lammers, Nebraska

The Fire
Kaitlyn Louk, Iowa

Frank, the Crazy Rooster
Stella Bernstein, Maryland

Frozen Fear
Kimberly Wood, Nebraska

The Funeral
Alexander Lee Coulson, Idaho

A Man from the 1800s
Bryce Wood, Nebraska

Mouse Attack
Chelsea Trombley, Arkansas

The Storm
Edward Graff, Nebraska

Turf
Sarah Reddy, Ohio

Invitation to Participate

Please join us for the 2008/2009 Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration. The submission deadline for *Grannie Annie, Vol. 4* is February 14, 2009. Complete details, including the required entry form, are available at www.TheGrannieAnnie.org.

Praise for The Grannie Annie

Grannie Annie is a beautiful collection of stories—educational, funny, exciting, touching. The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration reminds us that everyone is a storyteller, and who better to share our stories with than our children? When youngsters learn their family stories, they get a sense of how they themselves fit into history, they become more closely bound to older relatives, and they are more likely to recognize their ancestors as three-dimensional people who will amaze and delight them.

Linda Austin
Author of *Cherry Blossoms in Twilight: Memories of a Japanese Girl*

Our son's *oma* is overwhelmed that her "story" is in print in *Grannie Annie*. She is thankful for the opportunity to tell it! Every family member and family friend has a signed copy. I know many will be ordering future volumes—they have enjoyed all the stories, just as we have.

Karie Millard, Parent
Indianapolis, Indiana

Thank you for starting such a heart-warming project where *all* the kids are winners, whether their stories are published or not. Each student who participates in this worthy event learns a wonderful family story and becomes better connected with family members, society, and history.

G-g Metzger, Teacher
Dallas, Texas

This book should be on the bookshelves in all elementary and junior high schools. . . .

The Reading Tub™
www.TheReadingTub.com

We had an incredible time working on [our daughter's *Grannie Annie*] story. I had never told Amy about her ancestors. She was thrilled to learn that they were farmers, since she dreams of being a farmer when she grows up. It was a great way for Amy to learn about the rich heritage from which she comes—and to get more writing experience to boot. . . . Thank you so much for providing this one-of-a-kind learning experience.

Ruth Whitaker, Parent
Dallas, Texas

Perhaps the greatest value of the Grannie Annie stories is something not written in the book. When a child interviews an older relative, the child gets to know a person he or she may have taken for granted. The relative gets to tell a story that might have been lost. A bond is created or strengthened. A story is recorded for posterity. New memories are woven, and—just maybe—a writer is born.

Lulu Delacre
Author/Illustrator of *Salsa Stories*

When kids learn details about what life was like decades ago, the past comes alive for them. History becomes real—and they want to know more! The Grannie Annie provides an opportunity for kids to be inspired by their own family's history—and to share it with the world.

Florrie Binford Kichler
Patria Press, www.PatriaPress.com

Sharing family stories helps people see what they have in common—and helps them discover their roots as well. Without a doubt, The Grannie Annie is a great idea.

Michael Terrien, President
Play for Peace

The Grannie Annie offers students real writing in a real setting. Teachers and parents, if you want to motivate students to love writing, ask them to write for The Grannie Annie. Students not only write their stories, they write their families into history—with a payoff of possible publication.

The Grannie Annie offers readers true stories that expose the human heart and create space for conversation about what truly matters in life. So give yourself a gift: Sit down with a copy of *Grannie Annie* and share these stories with your family.

Bonnie M. Davis, Ph.D.
Author of *How to Teach Students Who Don't Look Like You: Culturally Relevant Teaching Strategies*, www.A4Achievement.net

The Grannie Annie proved to be a valuable experience for the students in my school. . . . When the children shared the stories, some students who are normally quiet or reserved got to shine because of something really neat that they wrote about.

Dianne Elson, Teacher
Carmel, Indiana

Taking time away from your technology-filled life to join in The Grannie Annie is like trading fast food for Sunday dinner at Grandma's.

Debra K. Shatoff, Ed.D.
Family Therapist and Author of *In-Home Child Care: A Step-by-Step Guide to Quality, Affordable Care*

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The Grannie Annie
Family Story Celebration

Young People Learning and Sharing Family Stories

Grannie Annie *is a beautiful collection of stories—educational, funny, exciting, touching. The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration reminds us that everyone is a storyteller, and who better to share our stories with than our children? When youngsters learn their family stories, they get a sense of how they themselves fit into history, they become more closely bound to older relatives, and they are more likely to recognize their ancestors as three-dimensional people who will amaze and delight them.*

Linda Austin, Author of *Cherry Blossoms in Twilight: Memories of a Japanese Girl*

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Florrie Binford Kichler, Patria Press

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Karie Millard, Parent

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