

# Grannie Annie



Vol. 5

**Selections from**

*The Grannie Annie  
Family Story Celebration*

**An Annual Writing Contest for Young People**



## *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. The Grannie Annie experience leads students to discover and save family stories, encounter history in a more personal way, and hone their writing skills. Students are encouraged to share their story with their family, school, community, and The Grannie Annie. The works of thirty-eight young authors from two age categories, chosen to represent the submissions received this year, are represented in this fifth 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, genuine 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.





*Grannie Annie*  
Vol. 5

Selections from  
The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration  
An Annual Writing Contest for Young People

Saint Louis, Missouri

Because the stories in *Grannie Annie, Vol. 5* were captured from the oral tradition, they represent a unique blend of history, legend, and opinion. Accuracy—historical or otherwise—is not guaranteed, and the views represented are not necessarily those of the authors, directors, or publishers.

Cover design by Harvey Huynh and Josh Hagan.  
Quilt handmade by Elda Miller.

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#### Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Grannie Annie : selections from the Grannie Annie family story celebration, an annual writing contest for young people.

p. cm.

(Grannie Annie ; vol. 5)

ISBN 978-0-9793296-5-4

1. Oral biography. 2. Family history. 3. Family—Anecdotes.
4. Older people—Interviews. 5. Grandparents—Anecdotes.
6. Family folklore.

HQ518 .G72 2010  
920—dc22

2008204710

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

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## *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 Guirrerri Cutler  
The Original Grannie Annie

## *Note to Parents and Educators*

This fifth collection of family stories follows the fine tradition established in past volumes of *Grannie Annie* and ushers in an exciting new dimension.

In the pages that follow, you'll travel across the United States and on to New Zealand and Australia, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. You'll escape from eighteenth-century thieves, a burning helicopter, and the eerie shadows of a swamp path. You'll pick cotton, build a go-kart, and turn around at just the right time. You'll chuckle—and shudder—over mysteries solved.

This year, for the first time, you have the unique opportunity to read the Grannie Annie writings of young people from Australia, New Zealand, and Moldova, who share a glimpse of their part of the world. Their stories will remind you that at their best, families the world over support one another through joys and challenges.

You may want to preview stories in this volume to gather your thoughts about concerns that may surface for some readers: Will I someday have to face drought, natural disaster, the horror of war? Can individuals and races and nations ever learn to live in harmony? When is it appropriate to follow conscience over law?

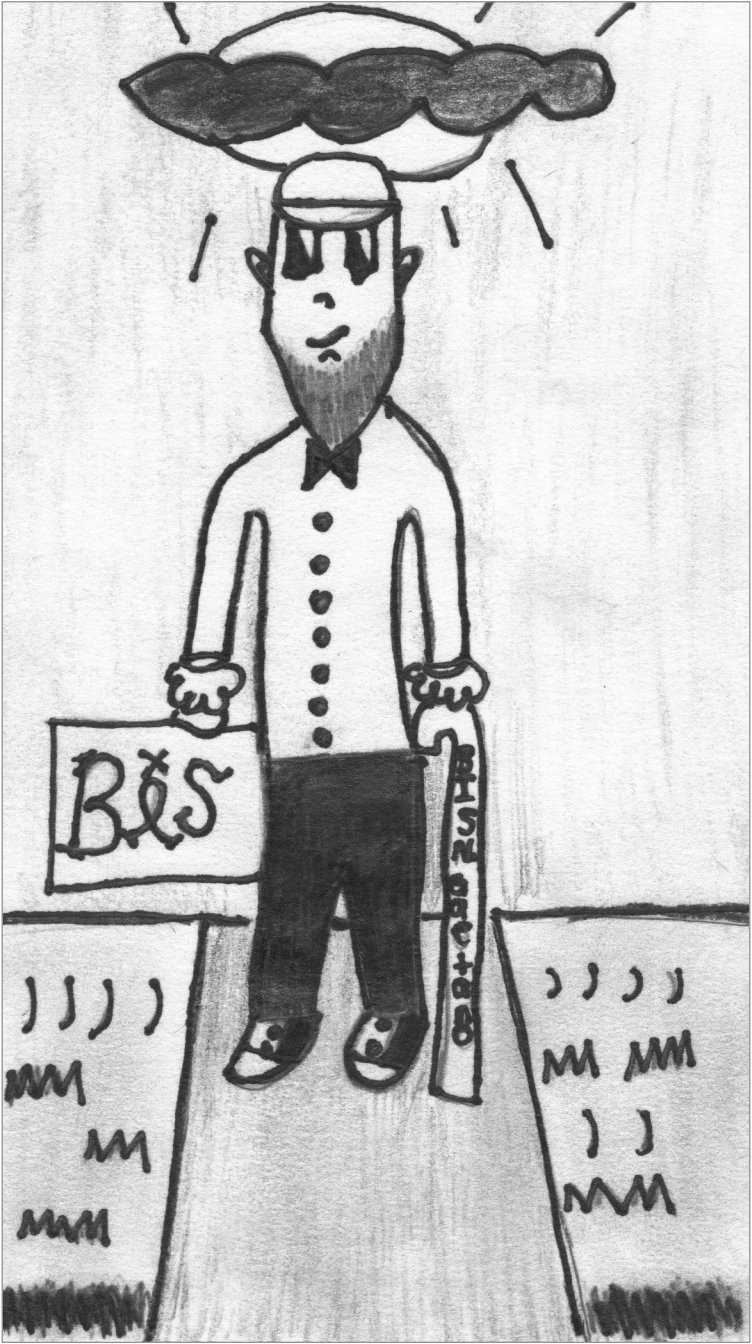
Whether you are a new or returning member of The Grannie Annie family, we welcome you. May these stories enrich your life, connect you with your worldwide family, and inspire you to discover and share more stories of your own. We hope you'll join us again next year!

Connie McIntyre and Fran Hamilton  
Directors of The Grannie Annie

Listening is an act of love.

—*Dave Isay, StoryCorps*

*Grannie Annie, Vol. 5*





# *Bis-Nonnu Gaetano and the Great Escape*

October 12, 1920  
New York Harbor, USA\*

This is the story of Bis-Nonnu Gaetano De Luca. He was my great-grandfather. Although we never met, I have gotten to know Bis-Nonnu Gaetano very well through many family bedtime stories. The most exciting story, however, is about Bis-Nonnu Gaetano and the great escape!

My great-grandfather was born on the European island of Sicily in 1893. In Sicilian, *Bis-Nonnu* means “great-grandfather,” and *Gaetano* translates into the name “Guy.” From very old photos, I can see that Bis-Nonnu Gaetano was a very elegant gentleman. He wore a long overcoat, spats, a bow tie, a crisp white shirt, gloves, and a fine hat—and he carried a very expensive walking stick.

Bis-Nonnu Gaetano was an aspiring shoe designer. He would work day and night creating beautiful shoes. Then one day a famous shoe company invited him to come to America so he could share his beautiful designs with the whole world. After a week-long voyage by ship across the Atlantic Ocean, my great-grandfather arrived at New York Harbor on October 12, 1920. Amazingly, he first stepped foot in America on Columbus Day!

Bis-Nonnu Gaetano proudly walked off the ship,

\* The setting of each story is noted below its title. In cases where the exact year is not known, “c.” (circa) indicates that the year given is approximate.

ready to start a new and exciting life. He was one among hundreds of other immigrants from Western Europe in search of the “American Dream” of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Suddenly he was approached by two men. One asked, “Are you Gaetano De Luca?” My great-grandfather nodded. The men quickly grabbed his arms, took his luggage, and began escorting him away from the other immigrants.

All at once, a group of men came rushing toward them. They pushed my great-grandfather out of the way and tackled the two escorts to the ground. The group of men were undercover detectives. They handcuffed the two escorts and drove them away in a police car. Bis-Nonnu Gaetano was left confused and frightened.

Detectives later explained to my great-grandfather that because of his elegant appearance, he was assumed to be rich. The two men who approached him were what they called “immigration runners.” Immigration runners were often the first people to greet newly arrived immigrants. Most runners were helpful and assisted the immigrants in finding food, shelter, and jobs. However, there were some runners, like the ones who singled out Bis-Nonnu Gaetano, who were criminals. They made a living by taking advantage of new immigrants. They would steal the immigrants’ belongings and often leave them for dead. My great-grandfather explained to the detectives that because the men called him by name, he assumed that they had been sent by his new employers. The detectives pointed out that his name, Gaetano De Luca, was clearly spelled out on his luggage!

Bis-Nonnu Gaetano was a very lucky man to have

escaped this fate! He loved America, and he became one of the country's most well-known shoe designers of his time. He achieved the American Dream, and his legacy is proudly carried on.

Brendan J. De Luca-Rodenberg  
Florida, USA

# *Please Wake Me Up*

c. 1876

Lowndes County, Georgia, USA

One morning in 1876 in Lowndes County, Georgia, my great-great-grandmother decided she didn't want to go to the field to pick cotton with the family. Mamie was well known for her fainting spells, so when she told her mother she was sick, it was like water under a bridge. Mamie skipped out the door, because she was going to fake one of her fainting spells and get a couple of days' rest out of it!

It was a very hot morning, and if Mamie didn't drink any water, her mouth would dry up and she would turn really red from the heat. She waited until everyone was working; then she let out a loud moan and dropped to the ground. At first she thought no one had heard her, because it was so silent and nothing was moving. Then all of a sudden she heard their voices, and it made her glad!

In the middle of the confusion, she realized she was not in the field anymore—and there was a sweet smell, with music playing, and her bed felt too soft and silky. Then Mamie realized that she couldn't move and her eyes wouldn't open—it was like she was frozen—and when she went to speak, she had no voice. Mamie was very scared. She could hear her friends and family comforting her mother and telling her how sorry they were about the quick and sudden death of Mamie. They apologized for waiting so long to get her because they thought she was faking. The minister said when they

picked her up and she didn't move, they knew she had to be dead—because she would always open her eyes and speak once someone touched her—and she had no pulse.

Mamie lay in her burying box trying to scream, “Wait! I'm alive! Doesn't anybody see me breathing? Oh, please, don't put me in the ground.” She was so still.

The minister said because Mamie was so young and had hit her head when she had her fainting spell, the doctor didn't wait the usual three days and told the family to go on and bury her as soon as possible.

Mamie heard the minister speaking about her, and he said very nice things. She realized how wrong it was for her to fake sick and to tell lies. She was sorry—so very sorry!

Then all of a sudden Mamie could move. She sat up real fast and said, “Mommy.” Well, before she could speak again, everyone had jumped up and run out of the church screaming, including the minister. It was a funny sight to see and a happy time, once the fear had passed. Everyone hugged Mamie. The doctor said she'd had the deep sleep sickness but she was all right now.

Mamie never faked again, and this story has been told from generation to generation. I'm so glad she woke up, or I wouldn't be here to pass this story on!

Marieh Arnett  
Maryland, USA

# *Racing Ron*

1961  
Toledo, Ohio, USA

When Grandpa Ron was a senior in high school, he used to take his car out and drag race through the streets of Toledo. He would pull up to a car sitting at a red light, look over at the other driver, and rev his engine really fast. This would tell the other person that he wanted to race. Once the light turned green, the two cars would drive as fast as they could for a few blocks to see who had the faster car. My grandpa explained, "Drag racing was not about going 200 miles per hour; it was about being the quickest off the line and getting to the finish line first."

One Saturday night during the summer of 1961, my grandpa was hanging out with some of his friends at the White Hut restaurant. He was talking to a few guys when one of them bragged that his car was souped up and ran really fast.





Grandpa said, “It doesn’t go as fast as my Chevy!” The two racers jumped into their cars and pulled out of the White Hut parking lot. When the light turned green, the two cars sped off down the road. Grandpa got off the starting line first, but the other car was right on his tail. Grandpa’s speedometer reached 100 miles per hour, and he started to pull away.

Grandpa looked in his rearview mirror and saw the other car fading away. He also saw a second set of headlights. “Is that the police?” Grandpa asked himself. He immediately hit the brakes and turned down a side street. Grandpa backed into a driveway, ducked down low, and waited to see if a police car was coming.

A car slowed down and pulled into the driveway. It wasn’t the police, but it was the man who lived at the house. He was headed right toward Grandpa’s car.

Grandpa got out of his car and saw a six-foot four-inch man approach him. The man said he had seen Grandpa drag racing and was going to call the police. Grandpa Ron jumped back into his car, sped off through the man’s grass, and drove down the street.

Even though his heart was pounding and his mind was racing just like his car had, Grandpa drove home nice and slow to his parents’ house. When he pulled up safely in front of the house, he made a promise to himself that he would never drag race again. That was the end of “Racing Ron.”

My grandpa still likes fast cars, but now he enjoys watching them instead of racing them.

Jake Glancey  
Ohio, USA

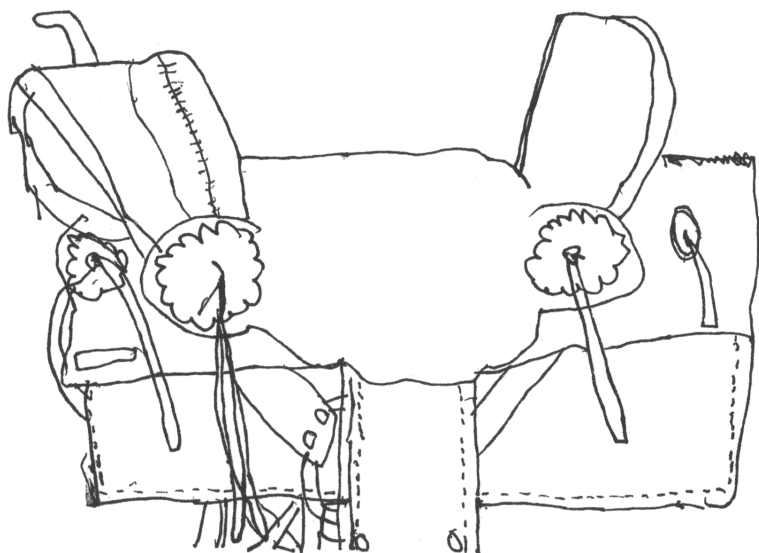
# *Grandpa's Saddle*

late 1880s  
rural Pike County, Illinois, USA; Mexico, Missouri, USA

In my basement there is a saddle, a saddle of great history. Everything about the saddle tells of its history—the smells of the leather, the rust and dust that cover it, and its faded brown color. The lifetime of the saddle dates back to the 1880s in Pike County, Illinois. At that time, people didn't have cars. Riding horses wasn't just a hobby; it was how people traveled. My third-great-grandpa was the person who owned the saddle. He took it everywhere he went.

Great-Grandpa rode on a very special horse with that saddle. The horse's name was Old Mack. Across the Illinois-Missouri border from Great-Grandpa's Illinois farm stands a town called Mexico, Missouri. In Mexico there was a rodeo where many cowboys went to compete. Great-Grandpa went there with his saddle, and he decided he wanted to ride Old Mack. This made all the cowboys excited! You see, Old Mack had never been ridden, because of his attitude. Great-Grandpa climbed onto the back of that horse, into his saddle, and when he did, Old Mack took off running! He was running so fast and so recklessly that he rammed his forehead into a pole. Now, Great-Grandpa was the greatest animal doctor in the area, so all he had to do was pull Old Mack's head around and examine it. He decided the injury wasn't serious, made a deal with the rodeo, and rode Old Mack home.

Old Mack and Great-Grandpa's journey home



ignited a relationship that would last a lifetime. The Illinois-Missouri border is formed by the Mississippi River. Old Mack and Great-Grandpa had to cross the river to get home. Now back then, the Mississippi River was wider and shallower, and flowed with less current than now, making it less troublesome for them to cross. When they got home, Great-Grandpa patched up Old Mack's head. After that, they were so close that Great-Grandpa was the only one who could feed Old Mack

Before long, Great-Grandpa and Old Mack were seen together so often that they became a legend in Pike County. Great-Grandpa looked so comfortable in his saddle that people declared it was like he was in a rocking chair!

In the early 1900s Ford created the Model T, the first affordable American car. Great-Grandpa was one of the first people in the area to purchase one. He was

quite a jokester about it. When somebody asked him how he liked his car, he would say, “I like it just fine. . . . You know, it’s not scared of a thing!” Horses were often scared of the trains that ran through the bluffs of his farm. Even though Great-Grandpa no longer rode Old Mack everywhere he went, Old Mack and Great-Grandpa were friends for life. Now, five generations later, the saddle that Great-Grandpa used when he rode everywhere on Old Mack is in my basement for generations to see.

Andrew W. Malphurs  
Georgia, USA

# *Silver and the Swamp Path*

c. 1960  
Bodalla, New South Wales, Australia

My nanna told me a story about a time she went for a horse ride and got home late.

She was about ten years old and lived on a dairy farm in a place called Bodalla, on the far south coast of New South Wales, Australia. Both her parents were milking, and she decided to go for a ride on her horse, Silver. Part of their farm was bushland\* and backed onto a track\*\* that led into the town of Bodalla. She took this track and rode around the outskirts of the town. It was about 4:00 P.M. by this time; she had started out about 3:00 P.M. There was a river track that joined onto the track that she was riding on.

The river track would eventually, she knew, take her back to the farm. It had started to get late by this time, about 6:00 P.M. It was summertime, though, so it was not dark, and she never noticed.

Nanna was too interested in her ride and the steady rhythm of Silver, and trying to be one with him as she rode. There was a big swamp that drained into the river; the track went straight through the swamp, in a place that was affectionately called “Stony Crossing,” as there were stones that made it easy to cross on foot or by car. By the time Nanna got to Stony Crossing, it was nearly dark and about 7:30 P.M.

\* Bushland is uncultivated, undeveloped land.

\*\* In this story, *track* means a single-lane dirt road, often created by kangaroos or wallabies and then used by people.





The track went straight through a grove of she-oak trees that formed a tunnel, in which were spooky shadows being cast in the almost darkness. To make matters worse, there was an owl hooting at Nanna in the eerie shadows. Nanna was getting quite frightened.

She was longing to gallop off, but it was pitch dark, and Silver would have tripped. “This place is scary enough in the daytime; I just want to get home,” she thought. She started singing and talking to Silver, trying to make herself less afraid.

She finally got home at about 8:00 P.M. She could see the warming lights of home beckoning her. She unsaddled Silver and brushed him, then turned him out and fed him. She gladly walked towards the house (she had not told anybody that she was back). She walked through the door and into the kitchen, where her mother and father were standing with their arms crossed. They had seen her coming up to the house but had not come out to meet her.

“Where have you been, Elizabeth Frances Dickson?” her mother asked her. She knew she was in trouble if her full name was used, because that was the only time it was used. She poured out the story, with many apologies. Her father decided that she needed to be taught to keep track of time, so she was punished and given dinner, then sent to bed.

After this, Nanna never went anywhere without telling somebody where she was going—with or without Silver.

Jenna Jeffery  
New South Wales, Australia

# *A Pig Tail Tale*

c. 1972  
McConnelsville, Ohio, USA

When my mom was about eleven, she would always walk home from school with her cousin Joe and her brother Mark. They would stop by the bakery and buy five-cent cookies. It was around Thanksgiving time when they stopped in one day. After the bakery lady sweetly handed them their chewy cookies, she asked what they would be doing during Thanksgiving.

My mom replied by saying, “Our family butchers hogs on Thanksgiving.”

The bakery lady chuckled and asked them to bring her a pig tail. The kids said, “Okay,” while turning to look at each other.

“Was she serious?” they thought.

As they walked home, they figured, “Well, we always tease each other and play with the unused pig parts, such as the ears, feet, and tails. So why not take the bakery lady a tail?”

When Thanksgiving was over, they wrapped up the pig tail in a fancy jewelry box with a lavish bow. The kids were impressed with their work.

Once school was in session again, my mom, Mark, and Joe took the pig tail to the bakery after school. The bakery lady was astonished by her beautifully wrapped gift. Could it be a necklace? A bracelet? Earrings? Her fingers raced to open the box. As she lifted the lid, she gasped and started turning pale. My mom did not think the bakery lady was actually serious about the pig tail

anymore. Mark bolted to the door faster than lightning. He was scared to come back in. Joe and my mom started to cry. Once the bakery lady got back her bearings, she told my mom, Mark, and Joe that it was okay—she had just gotten scared.

Even after their little incident in November with the bakery lady, the kids still continued to go to the bakery every day after school for many years to enjoy her delicious cookies.

Gretchen Rudolph  
Ohio, USA

# *Secret Escape*

1700s

Jalathur, Tamil Nadu, India

From the hill, Pati watched the sun sink under the horizon. She twirled a blade of grass in her fingers and dug her toes into the ground, taking in her surroundings. Jalathur was a small agricultural village, and her house was one of the few. Atop the hill, she could see all of it, even Kalladitchaparai rocks. Pati frowned.

Thieves often used the rocks as a hideout. Mostly the thieves just passed through, rarely disturbing the village. However, when Pati was just a couple of months old, the village had been raided. Her family had barely escaped with their lives. “What if they came back?” Pati wondered, and then nodded.

That had been taken care of. A tunnel had been built shortly after the crisis. Her family didn’t talk much about it. Pati didn’t even know where it was!

“Pati!” her mother called from the distance. “Pati, where are you?”

“Coming, Ma!” Pati yelled, leaping to her feet. Absorbed in her thoughts, she hadn’t noticed it grow dark. She turned and ran to her house, where her mother was leaning against the door.

“You’re supposed to be back before dark,” her mother pointed out.

“Sorry, Ma. I just forgot myself,” Pati told her, slipping past.

“Don’t forget your chores!” her mother called after her.

Pati finished her kitchen chores and got ready for bed. Feeling more drained than usual, she curled up on her mat and drifted off to sleep. . . .

She woke with a start, hearing commotion around her. Her mom was clutching the box of jewelry in one hand and holding her little brother, yelling her name.

“Pati! Follow me, not a word!” In the dim lantern light, a look of terror shone in her mother’s eyes. “Hurry, the thieves are coming!”

Pati quickly got up and took her baby brother in her arms. To her surprise, everyone was crowding into the kitchen, and her uncle was lifting what looked like a trapdoor. “A trapdoor! In our house!” Pati thought. It had been hidden under a rug until now.

Every mother and child in the family was shoved through the trapdoor, Pati along with them. It was pitch black in the tunnel, and she could feel something furry brush against her foot and skitter past. Pati shuddered.

Up ahead, her aunts had lit torches, illuminating the dark passageway. Pati’s mother was at her side once more, and gently took her brother.

“Ma, what’s happening?” Pati asked fearfully, though she knew very well what was happening.

“The impossible,” her mother replied, setting her jaw in determination. “Come on. We have a long way to go.”

As they set off, Pati watched the torchlight dance across the cave. They walked and walked until their feet ached impossibly and their spirits ached more. Pati lost track of time, her feet shuffling one after the other.

Two days later . . .

Pati tripped, surprised. Having come to a dead end, everyone had stopped walking. Slowly her mother pushed at the ceiling, and it lifted. The tunnel was flooded with blinding light. Pati uttered a cry of joy. They'd made it.

Amudha Y. Porchezian, great-great-granddaughter of Pati  
Missouri, USA

## *“It’s Just Dummy Ammo!”*

December 7, 1941  
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, USA

Splash! Water shooting into the air! “It’s the Japanese; they’re bombing Pearl Harbor!” Everyone screamed.

A short time earlier, at one hour past midnight on December 7, 1941, my grandfather was steering the USS *Vega* on the way to Pearl Harbor. The crew had no idea what was going to happen in the next few hours.

Once everybody docked the ship, they had liberty (permission to leave the ship and do as they pleased). Instead of going off drinking, my grandfather went to a Bible study, for he was a good, honest Christian man. Once the sun rose, it was a beautiful Sunday morning.

At 8:00 my grandfather was swabbing the deck when suddenly GQ (General Quarters) sounded. This meant for everyone to rush to their battle stations. My grandfather thought it was a drill, but why waste a perfect Sunday morning with just another drill? All of these thoughts changed when he saw planes zooming in the air with the Rising Sun emblem on the side—they were the Japanese. Bombs were raining down, and water was shooting into the sky like a rocket.

The USS *Vega* had death charges and torpedoes that were perfect for destroying ships, but it had only four anti-aircraft guns. My grandfather loaded the five-pound ammunition into the gun and prepared to fire. It was blank, phony, dummy ammunition! Great! They couldn’t even fire back.



The crew ran to get the real ammunition that was deep down in the ship inside a frozen locker. They had to slowly use a blowtorch to melt the ice. If this was not done carefully, the whole ship would be blown to smithereens. Altogether this took thirty-five minutes of valuable time.

Just to top it off, the planes were lined up for Sunday inspection, and many of them were blown to pieces. On the bright side, once the antiaircraft guns were operational, they saved an entire free Dutch ship. This ship had no antiaircraft guns and was being shot at by the Japanese, so the USS *Vega* took the credit for shooting down the planes.

The entire attack lasted about two hours. Although all eight of the battleships were put out of commission and many of the planes were destroyed, the Japanese didn't continue to attack the unprotected Pearl Harbor.



This was a big mistake for the Japanese. Instead, they went back to Tokyo and celebrated.

The United States learned a lesson that day about being prepared, and so did my grandfather. This inspired him to become a missionary. This is the greatest tale ever told to me; this is . . . my family history.

Kevin Van Horn  
Texas, USA

# *My Courageous Great-Grandpa Joseph*

1944–1945  
France

My great-grandpa Joseph Donovan was a lieutenant in World War II. He arrived on Omaha Beach in France on June 7, 1944, one day after the first arrival of the Americans on D-Day. He was in the 29th Infantry Division, U.S. Army. Being a lieutenant meant that he had almost thirty men under his command. My great-grandpa was on his way!

Two days after his arrival in France, enemy aircraft were dropping more than 3,300 tons of bombs on the Americans. Great-Grandpa Joe said, “The Germans were so accurate that if you poked your head out of your foxhole,\* they could drop a bomb right in your pocket.”

As right as he could be, a German plane dropped a bomb not even five feet from his foxhole, and Great-Grandpa Joe got a piece of shrapnel stuck in his head. It was a minor injury, considering the shrapnel went right through his helmet. He was wounded, but he returned to the 29th Division six days later.

As the 29th Division was making its way forward through France, 88s were pounding off shots from long distances. Everywhere, there was the sound of war. The 29th Division was covering one part of France, and they were trying to get that done as fast as possible, because the war was something you did not want to be in.

\* A foxhole is a small hole that soldiers dig in the ground, in which they hide from enemy fire.

One day as they were approaching an old farmstead, they remembered their orders to check out every building in sight. First they went to the house and checked it out. Great-Grandpa Joe sent in two men, and they said that they saw nothing.

After they cleared the house, they went to the barn. Just as Great-Grandpa Joe was about to step inside, a soldier named Mike said, "Joe, stop!"

Great-Grandpa Joe asked, "Why?"

Mike said, "I saw movement in the upstairs window of the barn."

Great-Grandpa Joe told his men to set up a perimeter around the barn. If there were Germans in that barn, they were not going to get out! Great-Grandpa Joe yelled, "Surrender! We have you surrounded!"

After waiting thirty minutes, Great-Grandpa Joe and Mike walked into the barn. They each had an M1 Garand with a bayonet on the end for up-close-and-personal fighting with the Germans. In old French barns like this one, there were big pillars holding up the barn, and the ones in this barn were huge. As Great-Grandpa was turning around, out of the corner of his eye he saw a man coming at him with a knife. With his bayonet, Great-Grandpa Joe sliced the attacker's left ear off. The German went down, and then Joe stabbed him in the right shoulder. He purposely did not kill him. They dragged him out and were going to ask him if there were any more Germans there, when fifteen more enemy soldiers came out with their hands up.

Great-Grandpa Joe had turned around at the right time!

Colin Oakley  
Nebraska, USA

# *A Real Life Lesson*

c. 1940  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

“All Jews are responsible for one another.” That was a lesson that my grandmother, my shasha,\* learned as a child growing up in Philadelphia during World War II.

World War II orphaned a lot of children in different countries. My shasha’s parents believed that every Jew was responsible for every other. They decided to take in a European child named Gusti. My shasha was eight years old at the time, and her sister Phyllis was ten. They weren’t so ecstatic about taking her in, but to their parents, it was “never not an option.”

Gusti arrived in a thin coat, despite the cold weather. My shasha and her sister felt pampered compared to her. They had a closet full of clothes and a shelf full of books, but here was a girl that had almost nothing but the clothes on her back. Gusti had come from a rich home, so my shasha’s parents insisted on giving her my shasha’s big room; my shasha was crammed into her sister’s much smaller room and they had to squeeze all their clothes into a small closet.

My shasha remembers one time Gusti had a very bad cold, which later turned into pneumonia. The doctor recommended that they take Gusti to the hospital for more intensive care.

“Gusti,” my shasha’s mother said grimly, “we

\* *Shasha* is a nickname that comes from *savta*, Hebrew for “grandmother.”

think you might have to go to the hospital for your pneumonia.”

“No! I . . . I have been uprooted once from my home. I’m afraid to go to another unfamiliar place.”

“It’s okay, Gusti. It’ll be safe.”

“No, I won’t go,” Gusti protested. She was very insistent that she stay there.

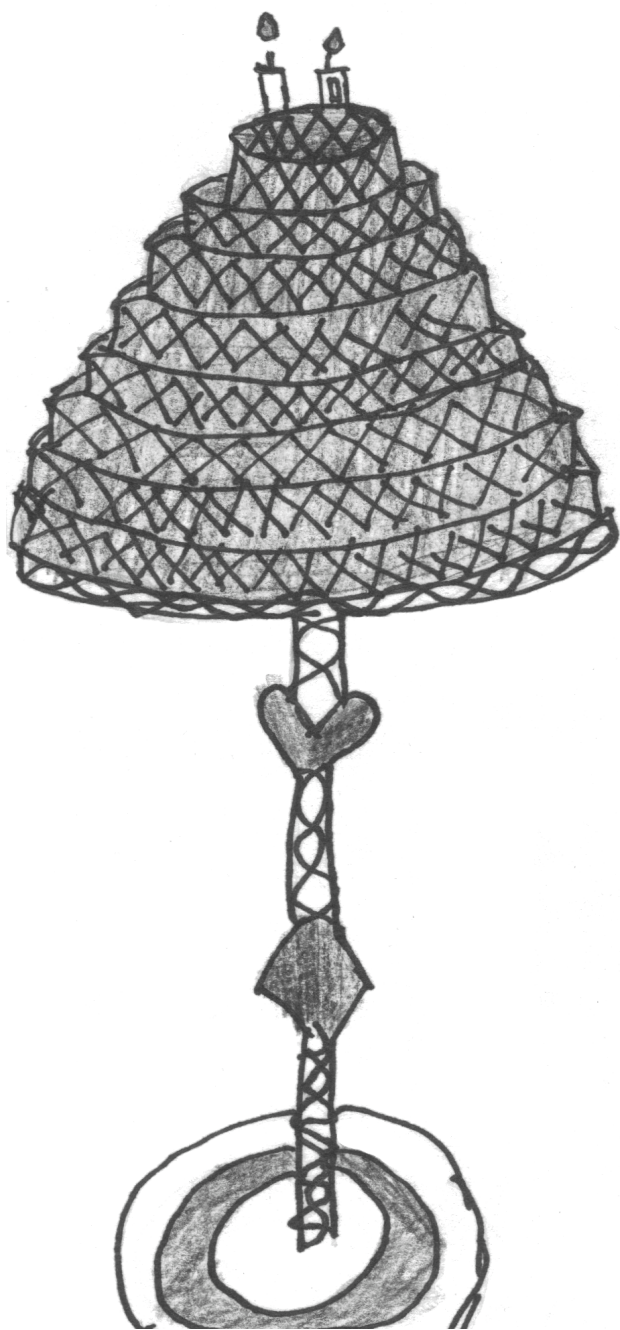
A doctor went to the house every day to check on Gusti’s progress. My shasha’s mother, Od’ Shasha, also became ill with pneumonia but had it much, much worse than Gusti did. It took all winter for Od’ Shasha to recover completely. Gusti became well and resumed her new life in Philadelphia.

At first Shasha and Phyllis didn’t like Gusti very much. They felt that their parents catered to her at their expense. Gusti seemed very sullen, and her long silences frightened Shasha. Gusti seemed to be happy only when she played the piano. Her favorite piece was “Für Elise” by Beethoven.

My shasha eventually came to like Gusti. “Was I able to really understand what she was suffering? Is it beyond the comprehension of a child to grasp such monumental loss as Gusti’s?” she would ask herself. Even today, my shasha thinks of Gusti when she hears “Für Elise.”

This is the first time I’ve heard this story, but it already feels like it’s part of me. This lesson will stay with me forever.

David Kornfeld  
Colorado, USA



# *Lillian's Cake*

August 18, 1882  
Arapahoe, Nebraska, USA

My great-great-grandmother Lillian had waited a long time to turn ten years old. Her parents said she could bake a cake all by herself when she turned ten.

Lillian's family had moved to Nebraska by covered wagon when she was just a little toddler. In those days the pioneers who had settled in Nebraska were used to seeing Indians, and they were learning how to get along with each other.

On the day she turned ten, Lillian was excited to make her first cake.

She got up very early and gathered everything she needed, such as eggs, sugar, flour, and other ingredients for the cake. Then she carefully mixed all the ingredients together, being careful not to let any eggshells plop into the mixture. After pouring the batter into a pan, she let the cake bake. She couldn't wait for it to finish! Her ma would be so proud.

Right when the cake was done, and she was pulling it out of the oven, Lillian heard people in the yard. She went to the door to see who the visitors were. Indians! There were a couple of Indians standing in the yard, talking to ma. They looked mighty hungry. Lillian was afraid.

"They might steal my cake!" thought Lillian.

Lillian ran back to her cake, which was cooling on the little wooden table. She grabbed the still-hot cake and ran to her bedroom. Where could she hide it? She

searched around. The bed! Lillian quickly stuffed the cake under the bed, determined that the Indians wouldn't get her birthday cake. She wouldn't let them do that!

Lillian anxiously peeked out the window and saw her mother give the Indians some chickens, and then the Indians rode away.

When her mother came inside, Lillian said, "I'm glad the Indians didn't get my cake!"

Lillian's mother laughed. "They wouldn't take your cake. They aren't bad or mean, just hungry."

Afterward, Lillian was a little ashamed by the thought of hiding her birthday cake from the Indians and not helping hungry people when they wanted food. But that still was one yummy cake.

Aaron Schnoor  
North Carolina, USA



## *In Anticipation*

1955  
Winterset, Iowa, USA

On a day in 1955, Ron Howell asked his mother if he could take the table scraps outside. She obliged his scheming request and gave him the bowl. He grasped the greasy pot in one hand and opened the back door with the other. A warm, pleasant breeze softly fluttered inside and filled the kitchen with the scent of freshly plowed ground from the family's farm. He stepped outside, shutting the squeaky screen door behind him.

Instantly, meowing echoed through the barnyard as hysterical cats poured from nooks and crannies in the shed and barn. They raced towards Ron, crazed by the delicious smell of roast beef and orange peels. The cats screeched to a halt not ten inches from Ron's feet, leaving large furrows in the dirt. Cats of all sizes and colors stared at the bowl, following its every move. They howled and screamed at the very top of their lungs, begging for lunch.

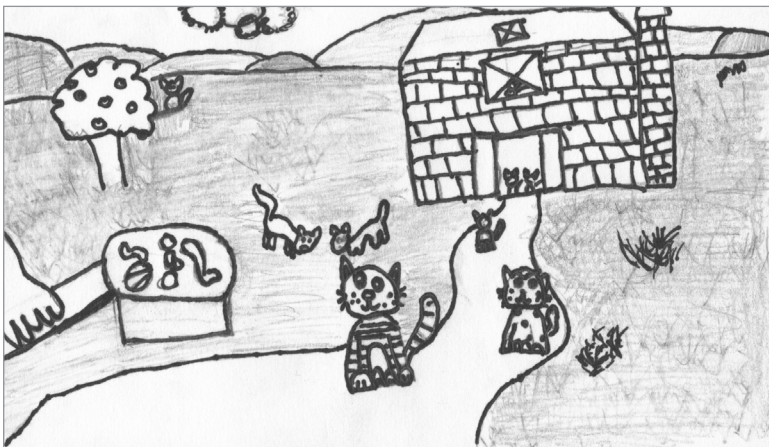
Ron picked up an empty bowl lying on the porch and dumped half of the pilings into it. The cats leapt and clawed at the bowls, trying to pull them down. Ron set one bowl amongst the cats and placed the other behind him. Cats on the outskirts of the chewing mob raced over to the other bowl, using all their strength to reach it first. They all fought over the bowls, and Ron tiptoed out of the crowd, avoiding swishing tails. He perched upon the porch and watched with fascinated eyes at the scramble.

The cats pushed and shoved, bounced and bustled,

each trying to win the remaining scraps of the quickly emptying bowls. As fast as one cat would be pushed out of the circle, another would scramble into his place. When a cat would get pushed out, Ron could clearly see the greasy face of him. The cat was so bewildered and crazed, gravy dripping from his whiskers, Ron couldn't help but laugh. The cat would then race back into the midst of the others, pushing and bumping to regain his stance at the food bowl. Sometimes he would be successful, sometimes not.

When the bowl finally was licked till it shone as if it were new, the cats trailed off, one by one, to their favorite hiding places. Some straggled off to the old oak tree with its broad and low branches, while some trickled off to the sagging shed, and others plodded over to the nearby bushes, to lie in wait for the evening meal. When Ron opened the door, its springs squeaked, and when he looked back, every head was up and turned. Every single ear was focused, every nose was lifted, and every tongue was licking in anticipation.

Erika Dunkelberger, granddaughter of Ron  
Indiana, USA



# *Grandpa's Close Encounter*

c. 1950  
Madison, Arkansas, USA

This story is about my grandpa. He was a tall man with big hands. He liked to challenge himself a lot, and this story is when he almost died trying to challenge himself.

This story takes place in Arkansas. I can't remember the exact year, but it was hot. You could fry an egg on the sidewalk, it was so hot. Grandpa was walking home from work on this hot day. While he was walking, he came upon a river.

Once again, Grandpa wanted to challenge himself and swim across. The river was like the rapids—the current was very strong. He was on his way across and swimming well—until he was pulled into a whirlpool.

As strong a swimmer as he was, Grandpa could not escape the whirlpool. He was slowly being drowned. Round and round he was spinning. He was hollering and hollering, but no one was around to hear him. Like anyone else would have been, he was terrified. But suddenly he had the strange feeling to dive under the whirlpool and swim to shore. So he took a deep breath, and he dived. He was able to swim out safely.

When Grandpa arrived at home a little late, his family (wife and seven kids) were worried about him. They thought something terrible had happened to him. He reassured them that he was okay, just soaking wet. After that incident, believe it or not, Grandpa didn't want to swim across the river anymore, no matter how hot it was.

This is the story of when my grandpa almost went too far with challenging himself. He has done a lot more exciting things as well, but this is my favorite story. So if you're ever planning to swim across a rapid river, think twice.

Joshua Ward  
Missouri, USA

# *Mimi: A Story of Loss, Determination, and Hope*

1921  
Fort Worth, Texas, USA

The word *determination* has a lot of different meanings to different people. Many people think of it as never giving up. My great-grandmother thinks *determination* means that you either do something at the time or you never do it. Everyone in our family thinks of my great-grandmother as an angel. She's worked hard to be able to be where she is today.

When my great-grandmother was four years old in 1921, she developed undulant fever. Undulant fever, a disease caused by bacteria, can cause temporary paralysis. Unfortunately, my great-grandmother was left unable to walk for some time. She is now ninety-two years old and goes to the gym twice a week. She even drives there by herself, but if you looked back at her life you'd never expect her to end up with this type of life.

Undulant fever is very rare in our modern-day healthy country. Back in the 1900s it was common due to milk being diseased. Milk was often contaminated by contact with animals and contained a large amount of bacteria.\* When my great-grandmother recovered from undulant fever, her body had forgotten how to walk. Due to this, she had to retrain herself to know how to walk again, just like a toddler.

One day when her family had gone to the field,

\* Since the mid-1900s undulant fever in humans has become less common in areas where milk is pasteurized.

my great-grandma was left at home, so she decided that she would surprise her mother when she returned home. My great-grandma practiced all day over and over again to surprise her mother. When her mother returned to their house, my great-grandma surprised her by showing off her newly relearned ability to walk. She walked only a short distance. It was just from her little chair to the fireplace, but her mother was thrilled that her little baby was able to walk again.

That was the day great-grandma's family fully respected her for her determination. Now, in the twenty-first century, she's not able to walk as easily without the help of my family, but she never gives up. She keeps going because of her philosophy: "If I ever give up, I won't ever get up again." Our family has been blessed to have such a courageous woman as an inspiration for our lives. She won't be with us for the rest of our lives, but she will continue to teach us and inspire us until her time comes. I hope everybody can one day appreciate the gift of walking, which we take for granted, as much as my great-grandma does every day.

William Crouch  
Texas, USA

## *Related to a Spy*

c. 1940  
France

Family history can be very interesting. Some things may surprise you. I discovered that my great-great-grandma's cousin was a very famous French spy. Her name was Nancy Wake. She was often called "The White Mouse" or "The Witch" by the German Nazis. She played a great part in World War II history.

Nancy was born on August 30, 1912, in Wellington, New Zealand. She became a nurse for a little while and then became a journalist for Hearst newspapers in France. That is where she met Henri Fiocca. They were married in 1939. Later the Nazis captured him.

When Nancy found out, she was furious and decided to join the French Resistance (this was like a French army). She became an undercover agent or spy. She was sent on many different missions to find captured soldiers in enemy territory. Her most talked-about mission was when she rode a bicycle forty miles nonstop through Nazi territory! She soon became the Nazis' Most Wanted. She was always on the lookout for her husband.

What Nancy didn't find out until after the war was that Henri had refused to tell the Germans where she was. They decided that since he wouldn't help them, they would kill him. Also after the war, Nancy was awarded many medals, such as the United States Medal of Freedom, the French Médaille de la Résistance, and the Croix de Guerre.\*

\* *Médaille de la Résistance* is French for "Medal of the Resistance," and *Croix de Guerre* is French for "Cross of War."

Where is she now? She is ninety-seven years old, living in a special retirement home for veterans of World War II in England. One last thing is I would love to thank all of my family, especially my grandma, who respectfully shared this story with me.

Emilie Barrett  
Missouri, USA



# *No Mattresses?*

c. 1890  
Vishgoradic, Russia

Great idea, but very risky! He could have been put in jail—although he somehow never got caught. He was a great man, because he risked his job and put other people's feelings and comfort in front of his own.

In the late 1800s my great-great-grandfather Zev Steinbaum was the mayor of Vishgoradic, a small town in Russia. He lived near his sons, Louis Steinbaum (my great-grandfather) and Morris Steinbaum. While Zev Steinbaum was mayor, sometimes the town was ruled by Russia and sometimes it was ruled by Germany.

Under the Russian rule, they made a law that said: "If you don't pay your taxes, your mattresses will be taken away." This meant that some people would have to sleep on their cold floor, which was sometimes just dirt. Even though my great-great-grandfather was the mayor, he did not like this rule. First he said, "This is unfair," and also he thought, "Why would making people have a bad night's sleep make them pay their taxes any sooner?"

So at about 9:15 each night, Zev would send his two sons, Louis and Morris, to go give the mattresses back to those people that had not paid their taxes. This was very hard work for Louis and Morris, but they did it each night, and it made them feel good to be helping their fellow townspeople. Zev, Louis, and Morris slept much better, knowing that other people slept well, too. Around 4:00 each morning the boys would go back to each house and collect the mattresses and put them

back into storage. They were very, very careful so no one outside of the town ever found out about the mattresses.

Everyone with a stolen mattress had to keep an absolutely gigantic secret, but they were very thankful, grateful, and appreciative of the Steinbaums' courage and fairness.

Jessie Steinbaum  
Missouri, USA

# *A Place to Call Home*

1943

New Haven, Connecticut, USA

My grandma Muriel Hiller was born June 2, 1932, to Gershon and Ruth Hiller. Gershon, born in a *shtetl*\* in Poland, was in the grocery business. Ruth stayed at home with Muriel and her brother, Arthur. Gershon was a Zionist\*\* and believed that people should be proud and open about their religion and their support for Israel.

Muriel grew up in New Haven, Connecticut, during World War II. Shortly after the end of that war, Israel's War of Independence broke out. My grandma thought nothing of it, not knowing how hard it was for Jews in Palestine. She was fortunate to have been born in America, because she didn't get a taste of war until 1943, when she was eleven years old.

On a foggy, cold day, Muriel was going to get her winter coat in the back closet. Suddenly her mom was jumping in front of her saying, "No, no! Don't go in that closet!"

"Why?" Muriel asked, with a suspicious and confused look on her face.

"I'll get your coat for you," Ruth said dismissively.

After that, Muriel was very curious as to what was behind the closet door. While Muriel pondered the possibilities, her mother kept an annoyingly close eye on

\* In the past, *shtetl* was the word for a small Jewish town or village in Eastern Europe.

\*\* A Zionist is a person in favor of the existence of the Jewish nation of Israel.

her and her brother. She would always put their coats out for them, and she made it clear that if even one toe stepped into that closet, they were going to be in trouble.

Muriel soon found out that behind the back closet door there was a huge stack of rifles. Her father was going around the neighborhood collecting rifles. He sent them to a friend who polished them, fixed them, and made sure they were ready to use. Once a week Gershon would gather all the guns in the back of his station wagon. He drove to New York, where the rifles were loaded onto a ship headed to Palestine to help the Jewish people prepare for the war.

Even though my grandma didn't know at the time what a great thing her father was doing, she looks back on it now and is proud to say he was her father. Gershon did this because he believed in a Jewish homeland. He wanted a place to call home, where people weren't judged on the color of their skin, how they dressed, or their religion. In the end, we are all people, and nothing will ever change that. But when Muriel saw the Israeli flag rise at the United Nations declaring the Jewish people's independence, she knew her dad was part of that and now had a place to call home.

I am proud of what my great-grandfather did. He taught me to stand up for my beliefs. Even though I never knew Gershon, I know he was a great man, proud of who he was. I will never forget the things he did for my family and me. I know that I wouldn't be where I am today if Gershon hadn't fought for a Jewish homeland.

Liana Brown  
Colorado, USA

# *How Life Was in Iraq*

1947–1952

Baghdad, Iraq; Lod and Herzliya, Israel

Until 1951 my grandma's entire family lived in Baghdad, the capital of Iraq. My grandmother's father worked for the government in a very high position. Her family did not suffer until the establishment of Israel.

The family lived in a big house in the Jewish quarter. Her father worked six days a week, according to the government rule. He had breaks for all the Jewish holidays. In Iraq they celebrated the Jewish holidays without fear. They lit candles on Shabbat\* and Chanukah.\*\*

The kids all went to Jewish schools. The Jews were allowed to learn in schools, and when they were done with high school, some even left the country to go learn in Egypt and other countries for medical school.

In 1947 and 1948 the situation changed. The Arabs started chasing after the Jews, and they blamed the Jews for Zionism.\*\*\* The Iraqi government let the Jews leave Iraq, but they made them give up their citizenship. The Jews could not take anything with them besides clothes. The Iraqi government gave 10 pounds sterling\*\*\*\* to each person in the family. My grandma's family could not study in college. The people who worked

\* Shabbat is the Jewish Sabbath.

\*\* Chanukah, also spelled *Hanukkah*, is an eight-day Jewish festival.

\*\*\* Zionism is a movement for establishing or supporting the Jewish nation of Israel.

\*\*\*\* In Iraq in 1947, 10 pounds sterling was about enough money to buy food for a week.



for the government could not work there anymore. All of the rest of the Jews also lost their jobs. They left Iraq by airplane for Israel.

\* \* \*

The airplanes landed in the airport called “Lod” (*Lod* was the name of the airport and the city). The welcome my grandma’s family received was not pleasant. The people who were living in Lod at the time were scared of the people that came from other countries.

They took the newcomers in Israel to a camp. My grandmother was in shock that her family had to sleep in tents with other families. The food was terrible; there was no electricity or running water. From the camp, they sent the families to different places in Israel. My grandmother’s family was sent to Herzliya. My grandma’s two sisters were sent to a kibbutz.\* This was a suggestion of my grandmother’s uncle, who had lived in the kibbutz since 1937, but because my grandmother was young, she stayed with her parents.

In order to start learning in school, my grandmother had to learn the new language, and there was no *ulpan* (*ulpan* is a special school for immigrants to learn Hebrew). In a small room, people who had come from different countries were sitting together and starting to learn the alphabet.

The family lived in the tent for about two years, without running water or electricity. The family went

\* A kibbutz is a village or farm in Israel where resources and labor are shared by the people who live there.

from a nice life to a life of torture. It was easier for children to get used to the new life, and much harder for the adults. It was a few years before my grandmother's father started working. Her family moved to an apartment; they had running water but still no electricity. Although it was hard, my grandmother finished her studies, went to college, started a family, and had three kids. One of them is my dad.

Oren Shmueli  
Colorado, USA



*During the Time  
of War and Famine*  
*Excerpts from Stories by Students in Moldova*  
Translated from Romanian

1939–1948  
Petrunea, Glodeni, Moldova; Ukraine; Poland

For a long time, people lived in small houses with straw or thatched roofs. They would wear simple clothes during the workdays. But for celebrations or on Sundays, they would change and put on better faces. . . .

from “Untitled”  
Ionela Golban; Glodeni, Moldova

During the Second World War . . . people didn’t have boards with which to make floors; instead they just had dirt. People didn’t have carpet at that time; instead they just used straw. Every night they would lay out the straw, and in the mornings they would burn it. . . .

Women during the war didn’t have soap to do their laundry. Instead they used ash to clean clothes. . . . The way they would do the laundry was to first put the clothes in a barrel, then put the ash on top and pour boiling hot water over all of it. During the war, women would make all of their thread by hand in order to make shirts, pants, and rugs.

. . . During the war, people ate weeds and different kinds of grass. People also didn’t have bread to eat; they used to eat cornmeal. Cornmeal mash sometimes had the stalks from the corn put into it, too. When making soup,

they would also add this mash for flavor. Because they didn't have food, they would eat weeds from the garden that weren't really meant for eating, and sometimes people would get sick. . . .

from "During the Time When the War Passed"  
Nadea Tcaci; Glodeni, Moldova

After the Second World War, there was a great drought. During this time many people died of hunger. Rich people would hide their food left over from the end of the war under the floor, in their couches, and under other things made of wood. . . . However, people who had less money, and didn't have anything to eat, would put grass in a little boiled wheat bran and eat it after it had swelled a little. People who couldn't do this died. . . .

from "How It Was During the Time of Hunger"  
Cristian Goncearuc; Glodeni, Moldova

The time of hunger took everyone away from home. They had a very hard life. My grandfather's father had five kids and nothing with which to support them. The oldest of the five kids stayed home in the village among the neighbors, but the other kids left with their mom and dad for Ukraine, hoping that there they would find a better life. However, when they got there, they found that they could not live much better than they had in Moldova, so they left for Poland. . . . In Poland the parents worked very hard in order to support their kids. The clothes that they had brought with them from home had to be sold to help feed the children. They only

had one pair of clothes each. During the workdays they would wear the clothes, but before celebrations their mom would wash them all and the kids wore only a shirt until everything dried. At that time they lived wherever the parents found work.

Every day the parents would find themselves different places to work and carried their kids on their backs. . . .

from “During the Famine”  
Sorina Gutsuleac; Glodeni, Moldova

[When my great-grandmother] found out that her husband had died in the war, she cried for a long time. She remarried after a few years of loneliness with her daughter.

Living in peace and understanding, she had eleven children—seven girls and four boys. By the time she was eighty-seven years old, she had twenty-seven grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and even one great-great-grandson.

She is very happy when I go over and kiss her on the cheek, wrinkled from all of the years of crying and smiling. . . .

from “A Story About My Grandparents That I Love”  
Anastasia Bejenari; Glodeni, Moldova

# *My Papa Gene*

1932–2002

Tennessee, USA; Cleveland and Toledo, Ohio, USA

When my grandpa (Papa Gene) was a kid, he lived in a sharecropper shack in the cotton fields of Tennessee. A sharecropper is a person who helps raise crops on farmland that they do not own, and they are allowed to share the crops that they grow. A shack is a house with little or no value except as shelter for the people who live in it. My Papa Gene's shack was so small that there was only enough room for one bed for him and his siblings to share, so they had to take turns sleeping in it.

When Papa Gene was a toddler, his mother would tie an old frayed rope on a dirty old burlap sack and would tie the other end around her waist and would pull him through the cotton fields like he was sitting on a sled. At the end of each row there would be a big bucket of water and a ladle, and each person would get one drink at the end of each row.

A few years later Papa Gene's dad moved to Cleveland to work in a factory. He bought bus tickets for his brothers and cousins with the money he made, and one by one they all moved to Cleveland and worked together in the same factory.

When they all made enough money, they brought each of their families to Cleveland to work in the factory. After they made enough money, they bought a house and all of them lived in it together.

Once in Cleveland, Papa Gene went to a real school and eventually became the first in his family to go to

college. Before he finished college, he served in the Army for three years during the Korean War. After his time in the Army, he went back to college at the University of Toledo. He was the last nine-letter varsity athlete, and now he is in the Hall of Fame for the Toledo Rockets.

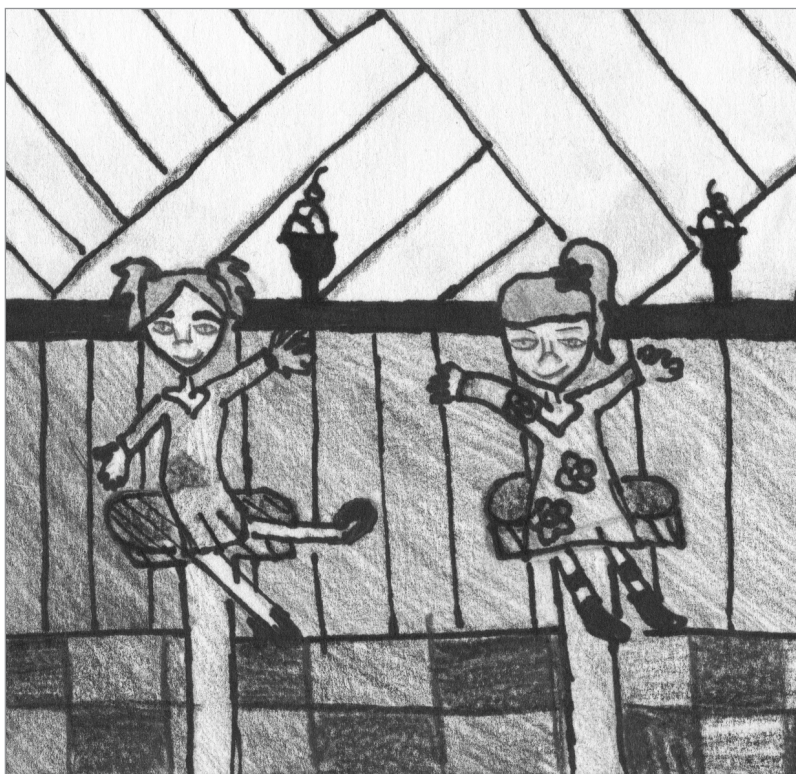
My Papa Gene was the first in his family to graduate from college. He met my grandmother at the University of Toledo. They had three kids, and my dad was the second person in his family to graduate from college. Papa Gene served his community on the Toledo City Council for thirty years and as general manager of the Toledo Mud Hens. Sadly, he passed away just before the new stadium opened, but his dream for downtown Toledo had come true.

Delaney Cook  
Ohio, USA

# *Good and Bad Times at Roy's Diner*

1979  
Louisiana, USA

This story is about my mother, Latrice Smith, and her grandfather. The story takes place back in 1979. My mother visited her grandparents in a small town in Louisiana every summer. As my mother told her story, she started to cry, because she was thinking of the happy times she had shared with her grandfather and how close they had been. They would get up at the crack of dawn and



walk across the railroad tracks to a small diner in town to have a delicious breakfast every morning—hot cakes, sausage, and scrambled eggs. My mother remembers going into the diner and always having to sit in the same booth by the kitchen.

One day she asked her grandfather could they sit on the shiny red stools at the counter, and he answered, “Someday we will, but not today, because the counter is for grown-ups.”

Another day there were two little girls my mother’s age sitting at the counter eating breakfast and twirling around on the shiny round red stools, laughing



and smiling. My mother asked her grandfather if they could sit at the counter, too, but he answered, "Someday we will, but not today, because the counter is for grown-ups."

"But the girls are little like me," my mother said, "and they are sitting there." My mother's grandfather grabbed her hand, and they went back to the booth, but my mother started to cry because she wanted to have fun like the other girls. My great-grandfather picked my mother up and sat her next to the little girls at the counter.

My mother was so happy, but soon she was scared because the man behind the counter was yelling at her and her grandfather, telling them they could not sit there and they had to move. My great-grandfather did not move and kept eating his breakfast, but soon the guy started calling them bad names. The police then came and told them that they had to leave the counter or leave the diner and never come back. On the walk home my mother asked her grandfather why they couldn't sit at the counter. He said, "It's because of the color of our skin. Some places won't let people our color sit anywhere they want to." My mother saw how sad my great-grandfather was.

My mother was sad, too, because she had enjoyed walking across the train tracks to go to the diner to get her favorite breakfast, but the tradition was no more. My mother said she understood many years later her grandfather's courage and the sacrifice he had made to make her happy by letting her sit on a big shiny red stool at the counter. My great-grandfather has passed away, but Roy's Diner is still around, so when my mother goes



to visit, she has the same breakfast and sits at the counter that she could not sit at as a child. She says she feels that her grandfather is smiling down on her saying, “Eat your food.”

Dallas J. Thomas  
Missouri, USA

## *Dreams of a Better Life*

1882–1960

Budapest, Hungary; Chicago, Illinois, USA

My great-great-grandmother Celia Greenman was an outstanding woman. She was born in Budapest, Hungary. The year was 1882. Celia had a brother named Charles. When Celia was young, Charles traveled to the United States of America in hope of a better life. When he reached his destination, he met a shoemaker, Charles Prosk. Charles Prosk and his wife, Rachel, had three children. The oldest child was Julius; next, a little girl, Mae. Max was the youngest. Unfortunately, Rachel died when her children were young.

The two men knew the children needed a mother. Celia's brother sent for her, telling her she would have a wonderful education and would love living in the United States, if only she would travel there. Believing in her brother, Celia set out alone at age sixteen for America. It was the year of 1898.

After she landed at Ellis Island in New York Harbor, she traveled to Chicago to meet up with her brother. Little did Celia know that she was heading for an arranged marriage—*her* arranged marriage!

On April 13, 1899, she became Celia Prosk. She and Charles knew nothing about each other. Charles was fourteen years older than Celia. Julius Prosk, the oldest son from Charles's first marriage, was ten years old. Celia was only seventeen. To top it off, Celia and Charles could barely speak to one another. This was because they spoke different languages. Charles spoke Russian, and

Celia spoke Hungarian. Thankfully, they both spoke a little Yiddish, the Jewish language.

Every day Charles would go to work making shoes, and Celia would stay home to care for her new family. Later that year she gave birth to twins, Sarah and Rose. She also had four more children—Bernice, Lillian, Anne, and Gerry. One of her children was my great-grandmother Lillian. Celia was twenty-six years old when Lillian was born. Celia's days must have been busy as she cared for a total of nine children.

Charles Prosk died in 1936. Celia still had goals after her husband's death. She wanted to become a United States citizen, and she did so in 1955. This was very difficult for her, because she had never received her promised education. Celia died in 1960, at age seventy-eight. I am extremely proud to be one of her descendants. She was filled with courage!

Rebecca Summerlin  
Idaho, USA

# *Sfîntul Andrei*

Romanian

1946

Petrunea, Glodeni, Moldova

S-a întîmplat într-o zi de iarnă cu geruri cumplite și omete mari. În ziua aceea se desfășura sărbătorea „Sfîntul Andrei.” În satul Petrunea, ca și în multe alte sate, este un obicei, ca în seara acestei sărbători băeții să fure porțile fetelor. Aceasta s-a întîmplat și cu străbuneii mei, Sofia și Gheras.

Venind seara, Sofia, ca și multe alte fete, a hotărît să se vrajească. A stins lumina, s-a pus lîngă fereastră și începuse vraja. Conținutul acestei vrăji consta în aceea că primul băiat care îi va fura poarta va fi și ursitul ei, adică partener în viață. În timp ce ea se vrăjea, auzise un zgomot afară. Repede aprinse lumina, ieșise afară și văzuse că poarta dispăru.

Nu peste mult timp după întîmplarea aceasta, ei au început să fie împreună. Trecuse ceva vreme pînă cînd se aflase că băiatul care i-a furat poarta Sofiei era Gheras.

Toată viața sa ei au petrecut-o în înțelegere și armonie.

Și așa spiritul Sfîntului Andrei a cuplat două persoane.

Felicia Bernic  
Glodeni, Moldova

# *Saint Andrew*

English Translation

1946

Petrunea, Glodeni, Moldova

It did happen one winter day with deep frost and thick snow. That day the Saint Andrew holiday was taking place. In the Petrunea village, as in other villages, there was a tradition that on this holiday evening the boys would steal the girls' fence gates. This happened to my grand-grandparents, Sofia and Gheras.

In the evening, Sofia, like many girls, decided to cast a magic wish. She turned off the light, sat by the window, and started the magic. Her wish was that the first boy who would steal her gate would become her life mate. During the time she was waiting and wishing, she heard a noise outside. Fast, she turned the light on, went out, and saw that the gate was gone.

Not a long time after this happening, Sofia and Gheras started dating. Some time passed until everybody found out that the boy who had stolen Sofia's gate was Gheras.

Their whole life was only understanding and harmony.

And so the spirit of Saint Andrew brought together two persons.

Felicia Bernic  
Glodeni, Moldova

## *Meant to Be*

1950s

Spalding, Nebraska, USA

Have you ever wondered what your life would be like if your grandparents or your parents would never have met? Well, my grandparents had known each other all their lives, but if they had not been at the same place at the same moment, I would not be here to tell this story.

My grandmother Jean and my grandfather George had grown up together and had dated in high school, but when they left for college they had drifted apart. They had not seen each other in five years, but fate brought them back together.

George was on his way to a jewelry store to pick out an engagement ring for his girlfriend, who was, in fact, not Jean but another woman. My grandmother just happened to be sitting on the hood of her car, right in front of the store, waiting for her friends to arrive. She did not know at the time that George was getting a diamond ring for another girl, but seeing each other again after a long time brought back all the feelings that they had once had for each other.

“George, wait up!” called Jean as she recognized the man walking in front of her.

“Why, Jean, what are you doing here?” asked George, surprised to see his old love.

They talked for hours on end, and soon George forgot about his soon-to-be fiancée. Their feelings for each other in high school appeared again, and before long George was going to the jewelry store once again to

pick out a diamond engagement ring, this time for Jean. When he proposed, she said yes, and they were soon married.

My grandparents have been together since then, and recently celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. They have seven children—two daughters and five sons, one of which is my dad. All of the children grew up in a country house about ten miles outside Spalding, Nebraska. George and Jean have also been blessed with many healthy, happy grandchildren. My grandpa is a farmer and raises cattle, and my grandma spends all of her time cooking and sewing. They still farm out by the farmhouse they raised their kids in, and they are very happy to this day.

So what would have happened if my grandpa had walked down to the store five minutes later than he did? Or what if my grandma had not been there at exactly the same time? Well, that is not really the point. The point is that they both *were* there at the same time and in the same place, and that is how I know they were meant for each other.

Sydney Pfeifer  
Nebraska, USA

# *Finding Family*

1972, 1994

Bath and Lacock, England

A long time ago my great-grandma Norma went to England. When she went there, she found someone related to her with the last name of Self. Then my great-grandma came back to the United States but still kept in touch with her new friend and family. They became pen pals and wrote to each other a lot.

Then a while after that, my grandma and my dad went over to England in search of their relatives, the Selfs. They stayed for a while in a city called Bath, England, with my dad's cousins, because that was where the Selfs lived.

One of my dad's cousins said that the Selfs moved to Bath but were originally from Lacock, England. So my grandma and my dad got into their car and drove to Lacock. They looked around a graveyard for the family name of Self but didn't find it, so they went into the church.

When they walked inside, there was a picture on the wall of a soldier whose last name was Self. While they were looking at the picture, an older lady and two boys came in and were putting up Christmas decorations. My dad decided to explain what they were doing inside the church and that they were looking for relatives with the last name of Self.

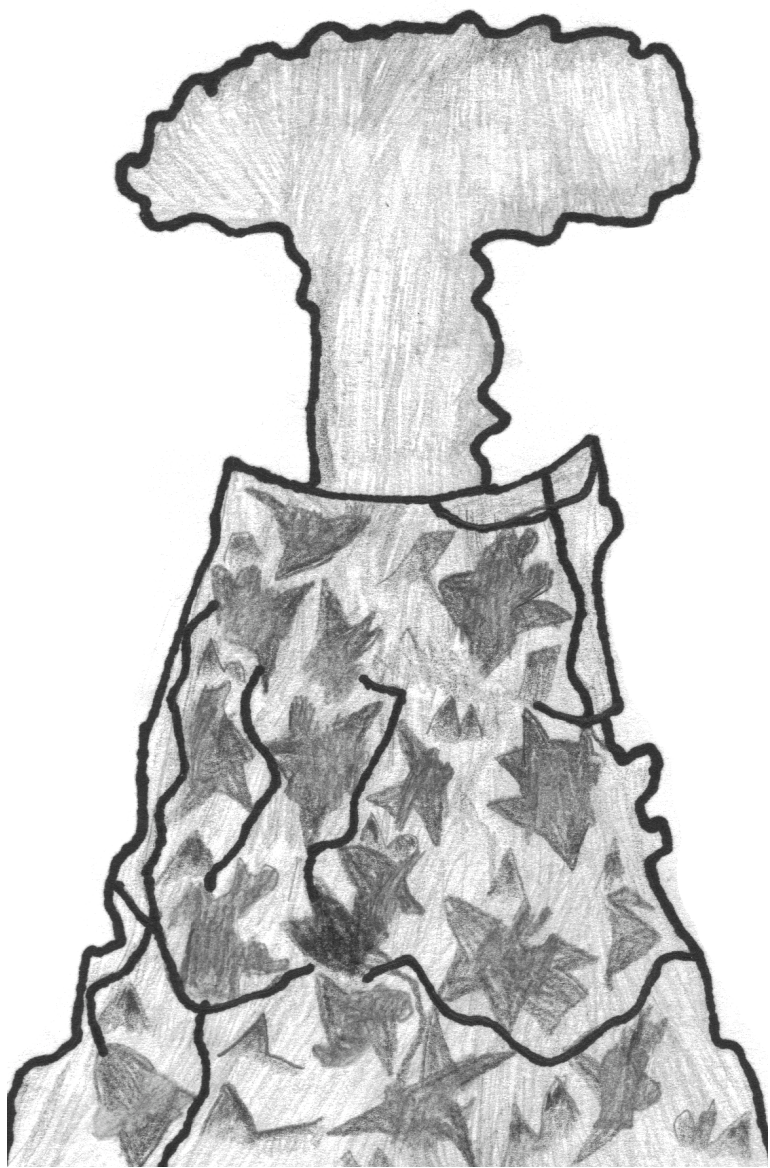
Then he pulled out an old photograph with people standing in the background and a woman in the middle holding a baby. After that, the lady said that she was



a Self and that she was the baby in the middle of the picture and knew the names of all the other people in the picture.

It was a miracle. They go to England, start in Bath, are guided to Lacock, and the only person they ask is the person who knows—and is—the family that they were looking for.

Bradley W. Woods  
Ohio, USA



# *The Eruption*

1991  
Subic Bay, Philippines

It was May 1991, and after being on Okinawa, Japan, for four months, my dad and the rest of Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 24th U.S. Marines were redeployed as the ground combat element to Subic Bay, Philippines. When the company arrived, right away they began to hear rumors about Mount Pinatubo being close to erupting.

On June 10, 1991, the United States evacuated Clark Air Base, which was at the foot of Mount Pinatubo and about thirty kilometers away from Subic Bay.

A couple of days later my dad was told that the volcano was erupting, so he stepped outside to see. What he saw completely astounded him. There before him was a mushroom cloud reaching tens of thousands of feet up in the air. It was from the volcano.

They had to move the planes away from the volcano, but they couldn't take them up high, because the dust and ash from the mushroom cloud would tear the engines apart. So there was one solution—to fly low. As the siren sounded over the base, the planes started their engines and began to fly so low to the ground that if they dipped a wing it would have probably touched the ground.

Later the cloud faded away from my dad and the base.

But the next day the same thing happened.

The third day, Friday, the volcano erupted again,

and this time it began to rain. But it wasn't precipitation that was coming down; it was ash. The ash was very fluffy and didn't really do much damage. That night it went pitch black and didn't get light again until Sunday morning.

The next day was Saturday and again the same thing happened—this time for hours. There was a mushroom cloud (which you couldn't see because it was pitch black), and it was raining ash. Then a typhoon swept through, and it began raining water, too. The water mixed with the ash and became a heavier material with pebbles and sand mixed in that began to rain down. Because this was heavy, any flat-roofed buildings were destroyed and all of the leaves and branches were ripped off the trees. My dad and his company were lucky, because they were staying in Quonset huts on a hill over an airfield. Quonset huts have curved roofs, so they didn't collapse like the roofs of most of the buildings did. Because of the collapsing buildings, the men were ordered to keep helmets and flak jackets on at all times.

On Sunday it got light again, and the men could see the devastation of the last few days. There were collapsed buildings everywhere, and there were ships so loaded down with ash that they were tilting. There was a DC-10 that was tilted up by the ash, and so much more.

For the next few days my dad and his company guarded the camp from looters and from the monkeys who wanted food. This is my story of my dad and Mount Pinatubo.

Hunter Mortemore  
Ohio, USA

# *My Father, My Hero*

1991, 1994

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Monrovia, Liberia

In 1983 my dad joined the U.S. Air Force. He was happy to start off as a second lieutenant and an officer instead of being a private and frontline soldier. Eight years later, when the Persian Gulf War broke out, he had advanced to the rank of major.

In 1991, during the Gulf War, Major Brian Storck was stationed in Saudi Arabia. He was working in the capital of Saudi Arabia, and he had some great living quarters. He got to live and sleep south of town in beautiful homes. The homes were originally made for the gypsies. The king of Saudi Arabia did not like the gypsies roaming around, so he made them homes. The gypsies liked moving from place to place, so they refused to live in the beautiful homes. When the war broke out and the government needed a place to put U.S. soldiers, it was the perfect opportunity to use the homes. My dad really enjoyed these living quarters.

Some of the worst missiles that Iraq used during the Persian Gulf War were called “SCUD\* missiles.” Luckily, the United States had the Patriot missiles. The Patriot missiles were used to seek and destroy other missiles. The SCUD’s controller used a joystick and a screen. The Iraqis would send the SCUD missiles toward the U.S. troops, but usually the Patriot missiles would destroy them in the air. SCUD missiles were used a lot during the Gulf War.

\* *SCUD* is an acronym for “Subsonic Cruise Unarmed Decoy.”

When my dad was in the locker room one day, he heard the SCUD siren. A normal soldier would run to their bunker. Instead of running for safety, my dad and about twenty other men got on the roof. They saw about five SCUDs high in the air. Behind them at the Patriot missile battery, they heard BOOM! BOOM! The first boom was the Patriot missile coming out of its tube. The second deafening boom was the missile hitting supersonic speeds. My dad watched as the missiles rose, hit the SCUDs, and blew them up.

Another time, after the Gulf War, there was a war in Liberia. Americans and some Europeans were trapped inside the American Embassy. My dad's mission was to go in and rescue the people at the American Embassy. It had to be done secretly, because the Liberians would not let the people out. My dad's force flew in with helicopters, landed, and rescued only some at a time. Then they flew out over the ocean under fire. All of the lights on the helicopters were turned off so they would be a harder target to shoot at. They rescued hundreds of people in that mission.

My dad finished his long military career in 2007 when he retired as a colonel. He's told me lots of stories, but these are the most exciting.

Robert J. Storck  
Nebraska, USA

# *“Mayday!”*

2003  
Saudi Arabia

“Mayday! Mayday! Mayday!”\* It had seemed like a normal day for the U.S. Army’s Screaming Eagles. My uncle Ted Hazen had never thought he would be shouting for help through the radio on such a simple training exercise for the Apache helicopter.

One hour earlier Ted had been hanging out around the hidden base in Saudi Arabia. It was one of the few bases used for launching attacks into Iraq. With all the skills of the pilots and the technology in the Apache Longbow, most training and attack exercises were done in the dark of night.

“Hazen!” his captain called. “You’re up tonight for the training exercise with your copilot.”

Ted obediently got into his Apache Longbow pilot seat with his copilot behind him. “Checklist is complete. All systems go,” said the copilot.

Ted took off for the training field. “Missiles ready!” the copilot said.

Ted then shot missiles at the intended target. Ted also shot the next target with his machine gun, not knowing what was about to happen.

KA-BOOM!

“Holy—!” Ted screamed as the helicopter caught on fire from the explosion and shrapnel. The machine-

\* *Mayday* is an international distress signal. It comes from the French *m’aidez*, which is pronounced “MAY-day” and means “help me.”

gun fire had hit a hidden pack of explosives the enemy had buried under the sand. “What happened?!” Ted screamed.

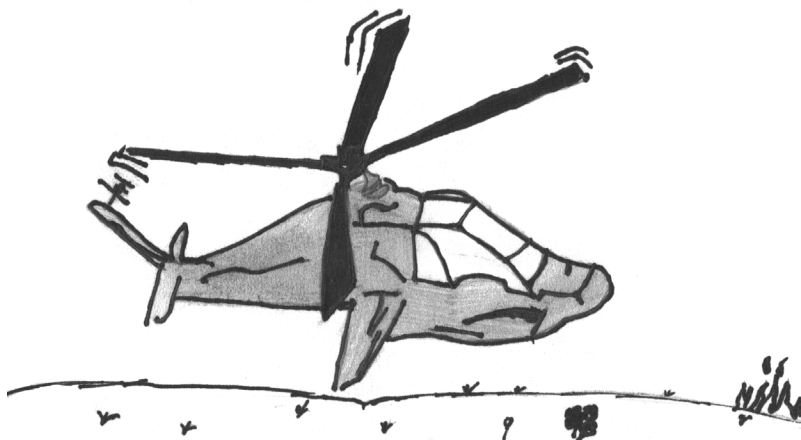
“We’re going down! We’re going straight down!” the copilot shouted.

“Mayday! Mayday!” Ted called to base.

The helicopter crashed straight down onto the training field in flames. Due to the sandy terrain of the region, the crash landing was softened. Ted and his copilot jumped out of the helicopter, fearing for their lives.

Luckily they both made it out alive, although the helicopter was trashed. They escaped with minor burns, cuts, and bruises. This is one of the many near-death experiences Ted Hazen has had in his twenty-eight years in the Army. I’m proud he’s my uncle, and I’m glad he’s still alive today.

Leighton Solomon  
Texas, USA





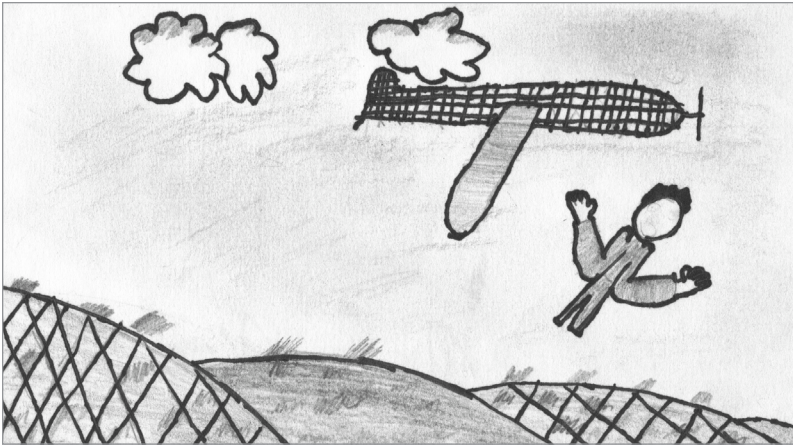
# *Dreams of Flying*

1874–1960  
Barberton, Ohio, USA

Michael J. Paridon was my great-grandfather's cousin. He was born in 1874 in Barberton, Ohio. At a very early age he dreamt of building and flying his own airplane. At age eighteen he started working as a shop helper and then became a designer and drafter for The Diamond Match Company, where he would work for fifty-two years. While working for the match company, he developed many designs and inventions.

Mr. Paridon's most memorable invention was the airplane. He began designing an airplane about two years before the Wright brothers' first flight. He organized a stock company to finance the development and construction of the airplane. In June 1910 he made a successful flight of about 100 yards at a few feet above the ground and circled gracefully back to the starting point. A few hundred of his friends witnessed the successful flight.

In July 1910, during what would be his last flight, Mr. Paridon soared 100 feet into the air, but his controls did not work properly. He began to loop around, and then he pancaked into the ground. Mr. Paridon and his wife had two small children at the time. Because flying was so dangerous, she threatened to divorce him if he flew again. Mr. Paridon kept his word and never flew again. He returned all the money to the investors and continued to invent machines for The Diamond Match Company and to design improvements for the airplane.



When his designs were not accepted fast enough to suit him, he offered to include the name of one of his immediate supervisors on all future patents. From then on, his dreams became reality in rapid succession. Mr. Paridon is credited for inventing the first matchbook-packing machine, still used in a modified form by The Diamond Match Company. He also designed some sixty-nine other machines that were patented for and by The Diamond Match Company.

Michael Paridon was very passionate about fulfilling his dreams and creating machines to make life easier for a lot of people. I hope that I am able to pursue my dreams and be as passionate about life and my ideas as he was.

Maddie Speer  
Ohio, USA

# Speeding

c. 1950  
Kent, Ohio, USA

My grandpa really reminds me of myself, not just because he's the smartest man I know, but also because he always wants to make or build something big and creative. For example, one day he was really bored, so he and his best friend, Billy Fagoel, decided to build a go-kart.

Luckily, Billy's brother had actually won the Soap Box Derby two years earlier. The Soap Box Derby is a national race where cars with no engines race down a huge hill. My grandpa and his best friend decided to use Johnny Fagoel's winning Soap Box Derby car to build their go-kart.

They took apart a lawn mower and used its engine. They put the engine on the engineless Soap Box Derby car. They used a rope and pulley to connect the engine to the wheel and axle of the Soap Box Derby car. Soap Box Derby cars do not have very good brakes. The brakes are just a piece of tire attached to a lever, and when you pull the lever, the tire hits the ground and the car comes to a screeching stop.

Anyway, they tested the car, and it turned out that the car actually went sixty miles per hour! So they went speeding down the neighborhood going sixty miles per hour with bad brakes. To make matters worse, Billy accidentally turned onto the highway. Suddenly they heard something in the distance.

It sounded like sirens. *It was sirens!* The boys

tried once more to stop the car. They flipped the switch on the engine and yanked the lever, and the car came to a screeching stop. The cop car pulled up beside them, and Sergeant Bowman stepped out, looking like he had just starred in a really old movie with a cop in it. He was wearing a Smokey hat, aviators,\* long boots, a belt with an old-fashioned revolver, and a really old badge. He said, “Boys, you aren’t allowed to drive this vehicle on the highway.”

“We’re not. We’re just driving it around the neighborhood,” they replied.

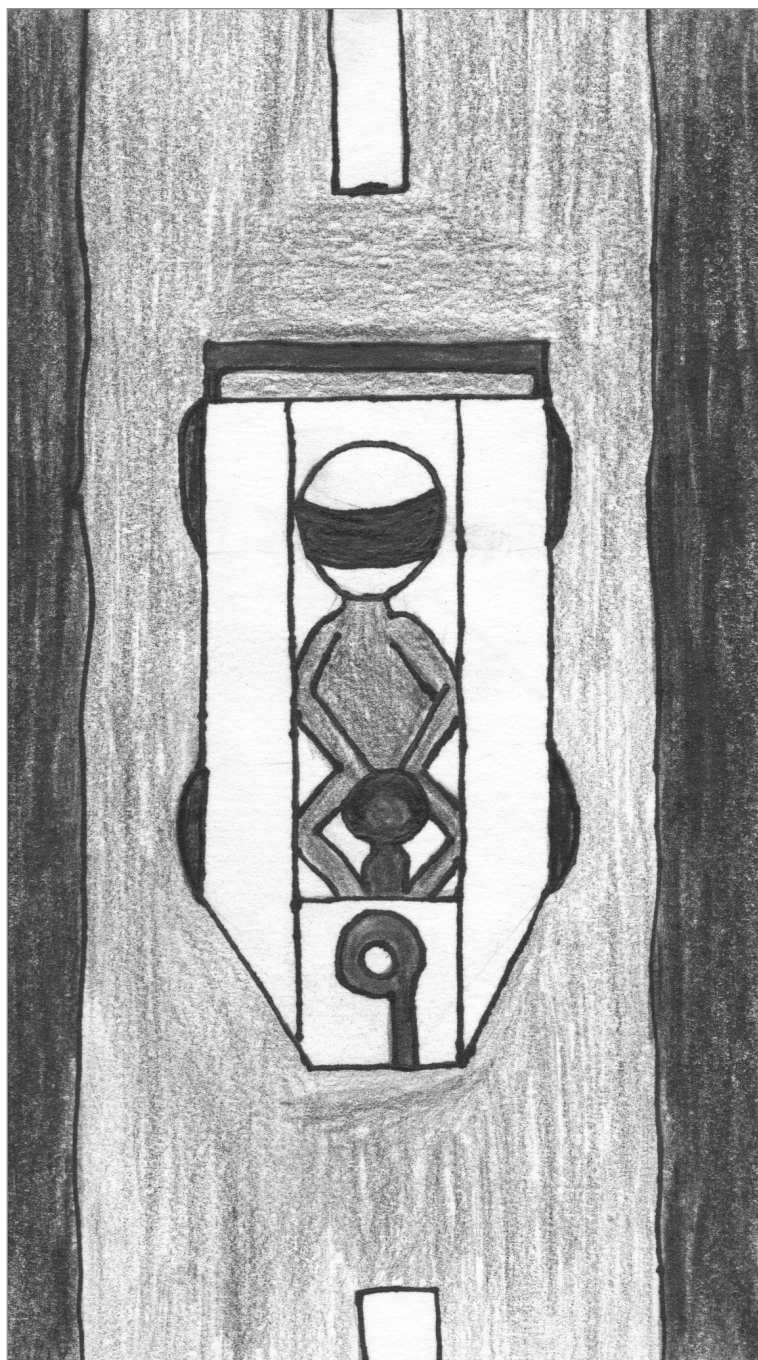
“That’s the highway!”

“Ohhhhhhhhh!”

My grandpa and his best friend got to know Officer Bowman very well. They always found a way to get into mischief.

Ethan Lochner  
Missouri, USA

\* Aviators are sunglasses that resemble goggles.



# *The Hitchhiker*

1962

Rochester, New York, USA

On one cold night in 1962, my uncle Bob was twenty-two years old and was driving outside Rochester, New York. While driving home from work in a blizzard, my uncle saw a man alongside the road who was struggling to make it through the elements. The man was wearing a hooded sweatshirt and baggy pants. He was a strange-looking person.

My uncle stopped and asked if he needed a lift, and without hesitation the man accepted. As they were driving along, the man suddenly started pounding his fists on the dashboard of the car, and my uncle asked, “Hey, buddy, are you okay?”

The man stopped, but just moments later my uncle noticed a fifteen-inch swordlike blade on his hip. After a few minutes my uncle said he didn’t feel comfortable, and the man complied—he let my uncle put it under his seat.

At this point my uncle had had enough and pulled over at a gas station, where he called the police while pretending to get gas. After a few intense minutes, multiple police units showed up and struggled to arrest the man, because he tried to run away.

Once they put the man in the police car, the cops came over to my uncle to speak with him. One of the officers said to my uncle, “Thank goodness you called us. We’ve been trying to catch this guy for years.”

It turned out that right before my uncle had picked



him up, the man had murdered two people in the process of robbing three stores. My uncle said he was glad to help the officers and walked back to his car to leave.

As he went back to his car, he had to pass the criminal, who was sitting in the back of the cop's car. As he walked by, the criminal pointed at my uncle with his fingers as if to say, "I'll get you."

To this day my uncle thinks about his scary night outside Rochester, New York.

Molly J. Miller  
Ohio, USA

# *The Case of the Haunted Chicken*

1958

St. Louis, Missouri, USA

My great-grandpa Aloysius Steffen was a motor patrolman for twenty-two years. He rode a Harley-Davidson motorcycle and wore a dark blue police uniform. His job must have been extremely exciting. Furthermore, Great-Grandpa Aloysius was an interesting person with a zest for life.

Without a doubt, Great-Grandpa Aloysius was a great man. He looked a lot like my father, Greg Steffen. He was six feet tall and weighed 220 pounds. He had a muscular build with strong legs, thick arms, and broad shoulders. He was a motorcycle policeman for the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department and was proud of his occupation. He may have been tough, but he was a loving father and grandpa. Indeed, Aloysius was a remarkable person.

Imagine what it would be like to come across a haunted chicken. Well, Great-Grandpa Aloysius Steffen had that experience. While on duty, Aloysius received a radio call for a disturbance at an Asian market on Grand Avenue. When he arrived on the scene, there was a crowd gathered around the building. Since he couldn't understand what anyone was saying, and was unsure of what he would find, Aloysius drew his gun and entered the market.

Inside the store, it appeared that nothing was amiss. Suddenly he heard a strange sound coming from the kitchen. With gun drawn, Aloysius cautiously



approached the kitchen and was shocked by what he saw. A dead chicken was sliding its way across the counter, seemingly on its own. Unsure of what to do, he lifted his revolver and fired six rounds into the poultry. Confident that he had stopped the haunted chicken, Aloysius decided to take a closer look. After closer examination, he realized that a rat had crawled inside the chicken, and as it was eating, kept pushing the chicken across the counter. Shaking his head, Aloysius picked up the chicken, took it outside, and gave it to the store owner. In a word, dealing with a haunted chicken turned out to be pretty funny.

Certainly when Grandpa Aloysius encountered the “haunted chicken,” it impacted his life, but it has also impacted my life many years later. My dad told me this story, and I realize that it has affected the way that I look at certain situations. He told me to always examine everything carefully. The customers who were gathered around the store were afraid of the chicken because they didn’t examine it closely. Sometimes you need to face a problem head-on, look at it from all angles, and come up with a solution. Aloysius’s experience helped to shape my life.

Obviously Aloysius will always be remembered by my family and by me. He was valuable to the world because he was a good policeman and a great role model. He took all cases seriously, no matter how funny they were, and he proudly served the citizens of St. Louis until the day he retired. In the end, Aloysius was not valued just by our family but also by everyone he served and protected.

Megan Steffen  
Missouri, USA

# *The Grape Story*

c. 1978  
Missouri, USA

One day in a small town in Missouri, my grandma (Nema), my uncle Joe, and my aunt Sandy were driving back to St. Louis when they saw a fruit market on the side of the road. Uncle Joe and Aunt Sandy loved markets, so they decided to stop and take a look around. They were looking at vegetables and fruit when they came across the grape section. There were lots of bushels of grapes to choose from. The bushels were huge! Uncle Joe loved grapes, so he bought a big bushel. He picked up the heaviest bushel and took it to the counter to buy it.

When Aunt Sandy and Nema were finished shopping, they met Uncle Joe at the car with his bushel of grapes. It was too large to put in the back seat with Nema because she had too many other packages, so he put it in the trunk.

They drove for over an hour before they got home. Uncle Joe dropped off Nema and headed home with Aunt Sandy. It was very late when they got home, and Uncle Joe forgot to take the grapes out of the trunk.

The next morning while on his way to work, he heard a buzzing sound and couldn't figure out what it was. He turned on the air conditioner when he noticed little black and gold things flying out of the vents. They were bees! Uncle Joe's car was filled with so many bees that he had to pull over and roll his windows down. A lot of the bees flew out, but there were a lot left. Uncle Joe finally made it to work. He cracked the windows so the

rest of the bees would have a way to escape while he was working.

On his way home, more bees were coming out of the vents and other small spaces in the car. He couldn't figure out where they were coming from. When he got home, he told Aunt Sandy about the bees. She asked him if he had ever taken the grapes out of the trunk. Uncle Joe had forgotten to. When he went back out to the car and opened the trunk, hundreds and hundreds of bees were flying around the trunk! Uncle Joe ran inside and got Aunt Sandy. Aunt Sandy told him the bees had to be coming from the bushel of grapes. Uncle Joe took the bushel of grapes out of the trunk and dumped them on the ground. When he dumped the grapes on the ground, a beehive came out along with the grapes.

The beehive explained the hundreds of bees in Uncle Joe's car. The grapes were the reason for the beehive. It took Uncle Joe over a week to get all the bees out of his car. Nema loves to tell us this story over and over again. Nema calls this "the grape story," but I think it should be called "the bee story."

Reilly Ahearn  
Missouri, USA

# *Wheeling Through the Years*

1900–1970  
North Island, New Zealand

Once upon a time, there was a motorcycle with an excellent sidecar for passengers. Undoubtedly its owner (my great-grandfather Clive) was proud of it. There was just one slight difficulty: Dorothy, his wife, would not ride in the sidecar because doing so would mean raising her leg in order to get in. This may not seem like a problem today, but then it would have been considered most horrifically unladylike, and Dorothy was a very ladylike lady. Fortunately, they discovered a means of getting around the irritating conundrum thus presented: Dorothy sat side-saddle on the motorcycle, and Clive remained standing in the sidecar, leaning over to get to the handlebars to steer. They must have appeared peculiar in the extreme!

Some years later, Clive and Dorothy's daughter, Frances, was endowed with a tricycle. Unfortunately, the tricycle was not equipped to take passengers. However, securing a banana box to the back of the aforementioned vehicle solved this problem most satisfactorily. Frances's younger sister Florence would sit in the box while Frances pedaled around furiously. There were, sadly, certain flaws in the design. It is not my intention to malign the technical skills of my relatives, but perhaps it was an unfortunate impulse that had them career down a hill near their home, at the base of which was a rather unforgiving expanse of gravel. The chief flaw in this scheme manifested itself rather soon,

with the inevitable upset of the tricycle and ensuing expulsion and injury of its young occupants. According to Aunt Frances, an objectionable young person lived nearby, and he took the opportunity presented by the bedraggled appearance of my unfortunate great-aunts to be objectionable, asking if “the rats had been biting” them. Aunt Frances conveniently neglected to inform me of how she responded to the taunt.

Some more years later, my father had a bicycle, and used it as most children would: as a means of transport to and from school. If this sounds fairly harmless, it is because I have not yet mentioned the passenger. My uncle would take a ride by sitting on the crossbar, steering the bicycle while letting my father do all the hard work. I have seen the path down which they rode every day in order to get to school, and it is somewhat steep. It is a wonder that there were no injuries sustained in the course of travelling\* to and from their lessons.

I now have a bicycle of my own and, no doubt, there will be plenty of stories told by my children about their mother’s strange use of her bike. I could probably tell a few myself, but that, as the best storytellers say, is another story.

Lena M. R. Dailey  
North Island, New Zealand

\* *Travelling* is the British spelling of *traveling*.



## *Illustrators*

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Attack on the *Goodhue*

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The Bike That Turned into a Unicycle

Emily Cislo; Missouri, USA

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Wyatt Harman; Missouri, USA

One Little Twig, One Big Difference

Kaitlyn Wood; Nebraska, USA

Oops

Ellie Richmond; Missouri, USA

A Stolen Childhood

Adina Halzel; Colorado, USA

The Table Piled High with Candy

Lisa Joanne Kehler; Nebraska, USA

(continued on next page)

Tenth Birthday

Lindsey Bronder; Ohio, USA

The Terrifying Typhoon

Gabrielle Fabrikant-Abzug; Colorado, USA

Tom and the Razorback Piglet

Ben Schultz; Missouri, USA

## *Invitation to Participate*

Please join us for the 2010/2011 Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration. The submission deadline for *Grannie Annie, Vol. 6* is February 1, 2011. Complete details, including the required entry form, are available at [www.TheGrannieAnnie.org](http://www.TheGrannieAnnie.org).



## *Praise for The Grannie Annie*

The Grannie Annie is remarkable in its goals and in its approach. Recording and sharing the stories of preceding generations goes to the heart of education—it teaches us who we are as family members, citizens, and members of human civilization. The interviews have the dual benefit of preserving the history of our ancestors and giving our younger generations the chance to ask the questions and consider the issues that are important to *them*.

Matthew Lary, Co-author of *Victory Through Valor: A Collection of World War II Memoirs*

The Grannie Annie is all about connection. As it hearkens back to the original Grannie Annie, it continues her tradition of oral storytelling to link generations and cultures. Grannie Annie family stories written by young people illuminate a long span of history, often revealing family values honed from adversity or triumph and tempered by humor and love.

Janet Grace Riehl, author of *Sightlines: A Family Love Story in Poetry & Music*

Although most students in our Eastern European village live next door to family members from earlier generations, The Grannie Annie prompted them to talk with their grandparents in new ways—and to discover the customs and challenges of times past. In addition, stories from the Grannie Annie books have given my students a glimpse of the world outside their village, where differences may abound but the underlying human condition remains the same.

Martin Ellinger-Locke, Peace Corps Volunteer in Petruncea, Glodeni, Moldova

As I'm sure is the objective of The Grannie Annie, this was a lovely experience, and now memory, for Andrew and his grandpa. There are no words for that.

Susan Barton Malphurs, Parent  
Cumming, Georgia

The Grannie Annie offers my students an excellent opportunity to record and share stories from their family histories. By interviewing relatives, the students learn to appreciate and experience the triumphs and the troubles of their ancestors. These stories should be preserved for these students and for future generations, and The Grannie Annie provides this worthwhile opportunity that benefits all generations.

Susan Jewell, Teacher  
Wolbach, Nebraska

Since first becoming involved with The Grannie Annie, we look forward every year to the truly unique and heartwarming stories each student brings to the classroom. It reminds us that we are all connected by the fabric of family and should cherish the life experiences/lessons learned by past generations.

Brian Billings and Laura Amburgey, Teachers  
Whitehouse, Ohio

It is a privilege to be a part of The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration. This wonderful anthology helps to shape our children's identity by providing them with the opportunity to understand and value their ancestry.

The infinite power of hope, valor, perseverance, and compassion are present in these endearing and eloquently written stories. These significant character-building qualities of generations past can only contribute to strong family foundations today and tomorrow.

May the legacy of The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration continue for generations to come!

Jodi J. De Luca, Ph.D., Parent  
Tampa, Florida

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

The Reading Tub™  
[www.TheReadingTub.com](http://www.TheReadingTub.com)

*Grannie Annie* is a beautiful collection of stories—educational, funny, exciting, touching. . . . 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*

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](http://www.PatriaPress.com)

We had an incredible time working on [our daughter's *Grannie Annie*] story. 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.

Ruth Whitaker, Parent

Dallas, Texas

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

Thank you for starting such a heartwarming project where *all* the kids are winners, whether their stories are published or not.

G-g Metzger, Teacher

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*

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.

Karie Millard, Parent  
Indianapolis, 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*

Teachers and parents, if you want to motivate students to love writing, ask them to write for The Grannie Annie.

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



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You may also order online at [www.TheGrannieAnnie.org](http://www.TheGrannieAnnie.org) or call/fax Portico Books at 1-636-527-2822 or (toll free) 1-888-641-5353.

# *The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration*

Young People Learning and Sharing Family Stories

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