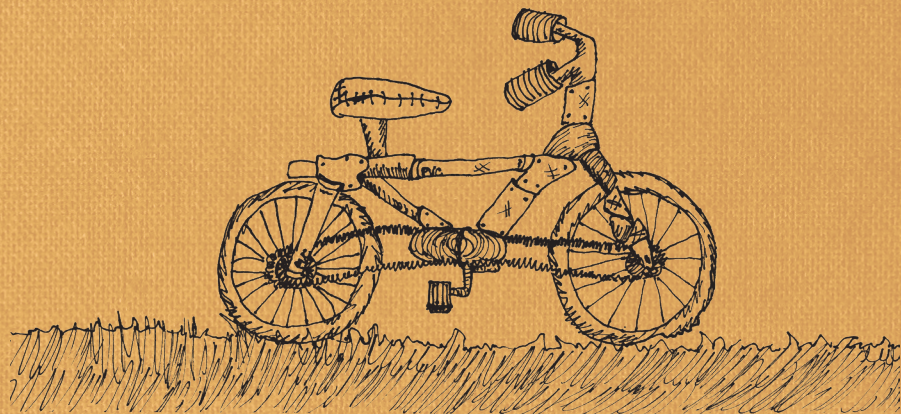


Grannie Annie

Historical Family Stories

Written and Illustrated by Young People



from
*The Grannie Annie
Family Story Celebration*

Vol. 8

The Grannie Annie *Family Story Celebration*

Welcome to the 2013 Grannie Annie celebration of family stories! Students in U.S. grades 4 through 8 and homeschooled or international students 9 through 14 years of age are invited to interview their family storykeepers and write a story from their family's history. The Grannie Annie experience leads young people to strengthen family and community bonds, encounter history in a personal way, and polish their writing skills. Students are encouraged to illustrate their story and then share their work with their family, school, community, and [The Grannie Annie](#).

The works of thirty-five young authors and twelve young artists, chosen to represent the submissions received this year, are included in this eighth annual volume of *Grannie Annie*. This book is also available as a PDF edition.

The Grannie Annie mission—to inspire young people to discover, write, illustrate, and share historical 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 with 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. 8

Historical Family Stories from
The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration
Written and Illustrated by Young People

Saint Louis, Missouri

The Grannie Annie welcomes—and desires to receive and publish—family stories from students of every race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, and creed.

Because the stories in *Grannie Annie, Vol. 8*, 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 illustration by Maggie Morse.

Particular thanks to fiber artist Elda Miller, graphics specialists Josh Hagan and Jeff Hirsch, and researchers Bert Francis and Doug Nolte.

Financial assistance for this project has been provided by the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency.

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Your tax-deductible [donation](#) will enable more young people to take part in The Grannie Annie, and will make the remarkable Grannie Annie [published stories](#) more widely available.

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In memory of Ann Guirrerri Cutler,
whose passion for saving family stories
inspired The Grannie Annie
1944–2007

In memory of
Jens Peder and Kirstine Jensen Pedersen
of Hvam, Denmark, who in the early 1900s
saw three of their nine children
sail to new lives in America—
Honored by donors Louise and Jack McIntyre

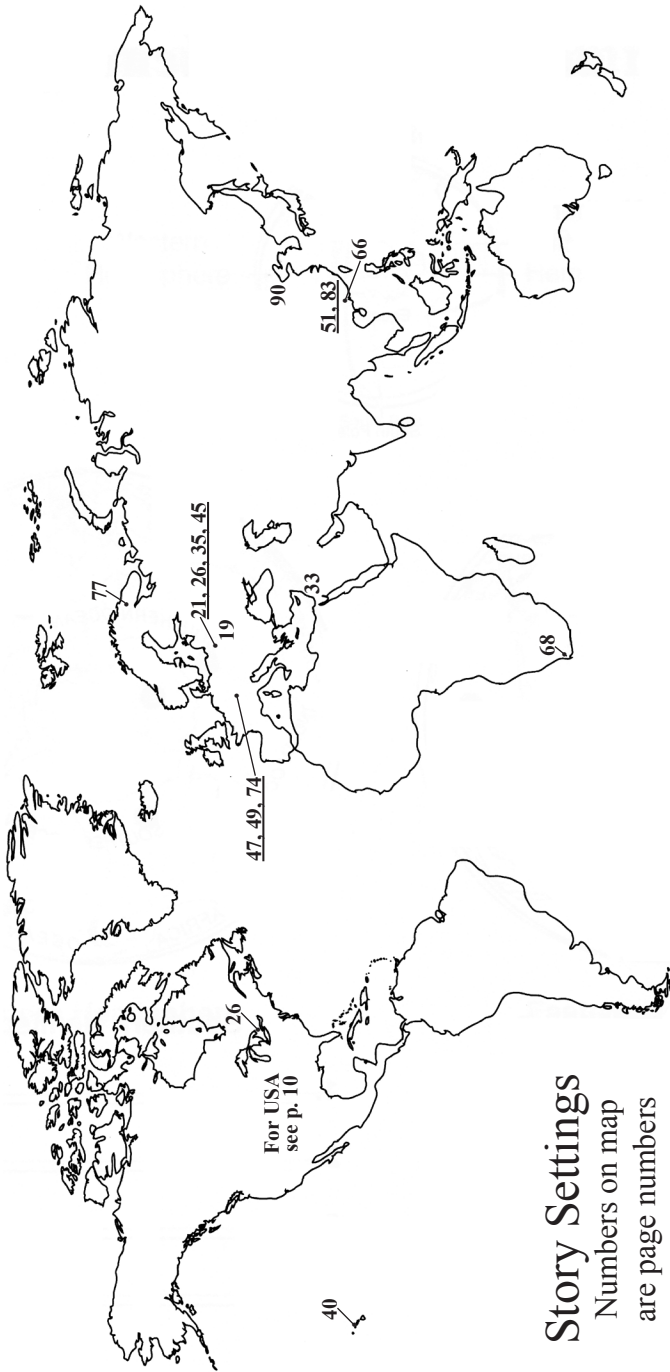
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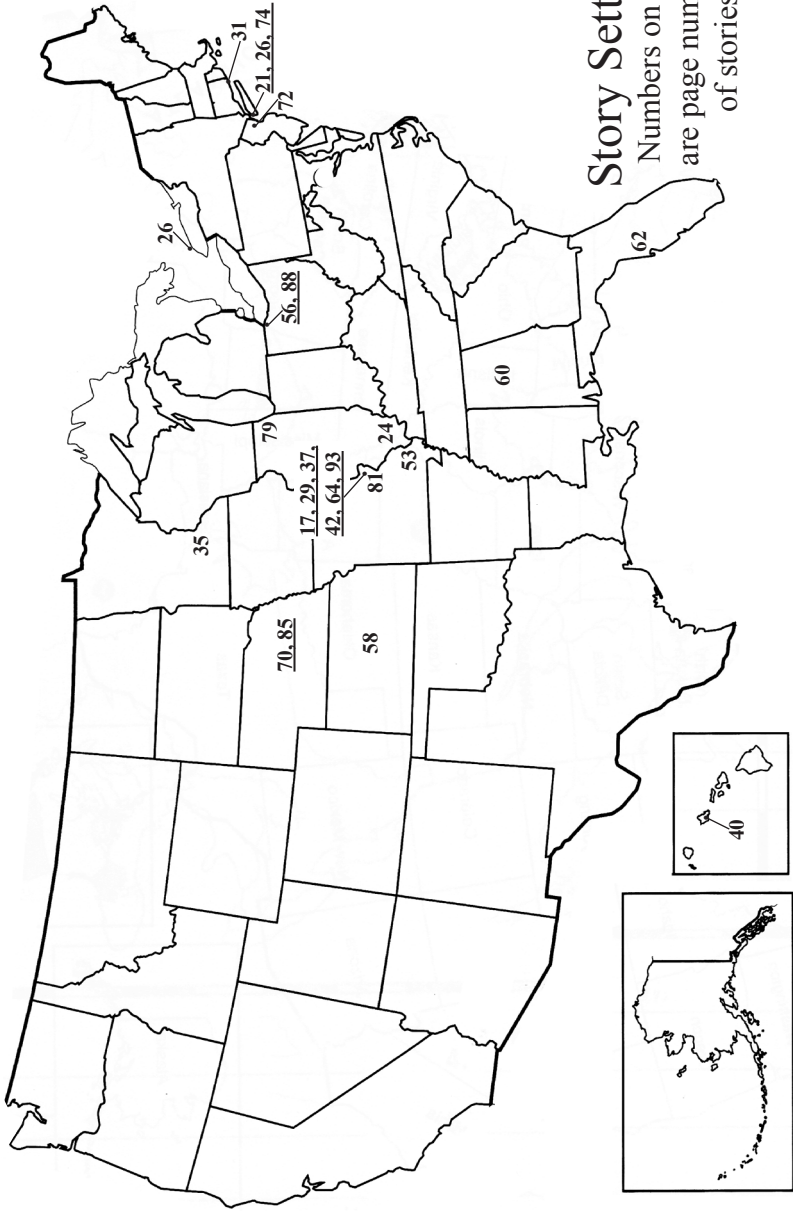
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Story Settings
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 are page numbers
 of stories



Story Settings
 Numbers on map
 are page numbers
 of stories

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.

Ann Guirrerri Cutler
The Original Grannie Annie
April 2006

Note to Parents and Educators

Crawl under, climb through, and run for your life with the family members whose stories are captured in this eighth volume of *Grannie Annie!*

In addition to engaging tales about clever youngsters and life *way back when*, this year's collection provides plenty of adventure. Explore new heights jumping on the first trampoline. Hide, *quickly*—in your closet, deep in the woods, under a stack of mattresses or, miraculously, in a hole in the ground. As disaster approaches, shout *Nooooo!*—in English or Chinese. “Share” your home with soldiers. Survive war; stand up for peace.

These thirty-five historical family stories span nearly one hundred years, from the debut of cotton candy at the 1904 World's Fair to the hilarious antics of one of the greenest dads of the new millennium. The stories circle the globe, taking place in North America, Asia, Europe, and Africa. The maps on pages 9 and 10 will help you locate each story's setting. You can also find the stories and their illustrations in the identical PDF edition and on the Grannie Annie website.

A celebration of families everywhere, this volume is designed for you and *your* family. You may wish to read the stories, however, before sharing them with sensitive or younger readers.

We are so honored to be sharing these remarkable family stories with you. Our hope is that you will be entertained and inspired, and that you will join us again for next year's Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration!

Connie McIntyre and Fran Hamilton
Directors of The Grannie Annie

Listening is an act of love.

—*Dave Isay, StoryCorps*

Grannie Annie, Vol. 8

Surprised at the 1904 World's Fair

1904*
St. Louis, Missouri, USA

In 2013 the Internet has become a dominant part of our lives. I can't even imagine life without the Internet. The Internet was invented before I was born, but to my parents and grandparents, it's still a very new toy.

Back in the early 1900s, all of your news was from newspapers, as even the TV had not yet been invented. People were isolated from everything that happened outside their home state. So imagine the wonders that the people of St. Louis experienced when the 1904 World's Fair came to town. My great-great-aunt Mary and her cousin Nell were eleven and sixteen at that time.

"I can't believe that my mom said yes!" Mary shouted.

"Yes, isn't it grand that we're going to the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair? And just the two of us!" exclaimed Nell.

Two days later they were on their way to the fair with high hopes. When they arrived, they decided to travel down the Pike. The Pike was a mile-long walkway where you could eat anything and just have fun. Mary and Nell tasted their first-ever hot dogs, hamburgers, ice cream cones, and iced teas. They also enjoyed something completely new called "cotton candy." How could they ever convince their parents that cotton was

* 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.

now a candy! The girls strolled down the Pike, trying a little bit of everything—basically stuffing themselves and then eating even more. Along the Pike they also saw international stations, including an “Eskimo Camp” and the “Geisha Girls,” which thrilled them. By the time they got to the end of the Pike, Mary was feeling a bit queasy from eating too much.

Then they saw the Ferris wheel.

The girls hurried over and excitedly gave the carnny 50 cents admission for two rotations. They climbed into a car with fifty-eight other people, the doors closed, and the Ferris wheel started its rotation. They sat together on fancy twisted-wire chairs, holding hands, anticipating the ride of their lives. In 1904 no one had been very far off the ground, because skyscrapers and airplanes had just been invented, so their ride up to 264 feet both thrilled and terrified both of them. At the top, they searched intently for their neighborhood and their houses in the skyline of St. Louis. Unfortunately, Mary’s stomach started churning because of all of the food she’d eaten on the Pike. The conductor on their car was very nice and offered her some water. The ride was really long, taking forty minutes for them to complete two rotations before they were let out of the car.

Mary shared this memory with my grandmother Catherine, who passed it to me. Neither Mary nor Nell is with us anymore, but they live on in our hearts through these loving stories.

Orion F. Jones
Pennsylvania, USA

No Child Left Behind

1919
Bilozirka, Ukraine

The date was January 15, 1913, the day my great-grandmother was born: Rebecca (Ruth) Shochet. It was such a happy day for Mr. Label and Mrs. Mariam.

Years later, in Russia,* it wasn't so restful. Ruth was with her family and her cousins. They were having their Sabbath day meal when all of a sudden an ear-piercing gunshot interrupted their meal. They heard screams of terror coming from neighbors. Ruth and her family peered out of their snow-covered window, which revealed a horrifying sight. Everybody was running out of their homes, screaming in terror to take shelter from the Cossacks.

Papa said, "Those mischievous Russians! They always steal, and kill everyone that doesn't believe in their religion." He sighed. "Everyone! Go and run away!" he cried. "We want everyone to be safe!"

"But, Papa," Ruth heaved. "I don't want to leave our home." Ruth began to cry.

"Don't worry, Ruthie. We will come back. Now, everyone! Let's go!"

They all ran with all their might, stomping on soft snow, making footprint by footprint. Mama was carrying baby Fagie. She glanced over her shoulder to find the Cossacks running after them, shouting in Russian.

* When this story took place, *Bilozirka* was spelled *Belozirka* and was located in Russia.

Ten minutes later, they all were gasping for breath as they entered a cave with dark walls and horrifying echoes. While everyone was hoping they could grab more of the cold air into their lungs, they heard faint cries, coming from . . . Mama?

“Mama, why are you crying?” asked Ruth.

Mama sniffled and said, “Fagie . . . Cossacks chasing us . . . running . . . Fagie’s cries . . . snow . . .” She started wailing.

“Do you mean . . . ?” asked Papa.

Mama nodded sadly.

They gasped and started talking all at once. “The baby—” “She dropped her in the snow???”

“We have to go back!” Ruth cried.

“No, we can’t. The Cossacks could still be looking. We must stay in the cave,” Papa said.

Hours later they peered out of the cave. The Cossacks were gone. They crept out of the cave. They ran and ran until they found baby Fagie. They all thanked G-d* that she was still alive, but she lost her hearing.

Now always remember: No child left behind.

Rivka Abedon
Maryland, USA

* This incomplete spelling is a show of respect.

Remember Me?

c. 1926–1928

Warsaw, Poland;

Brooklyn, New York, New York, USA

“Gertrude, they’re going to kill you!” Gertrude’s friend shouted frantically.

“I don’t care!” Gertrude Bloustein answered abruptly. Then Gertrude walked off to the very small one-room schoolhouse with a gorgeous façade of oak wood. The wood came out of the façade into an arch. Under the oak arch there was a moderate-size rusty brass bell.

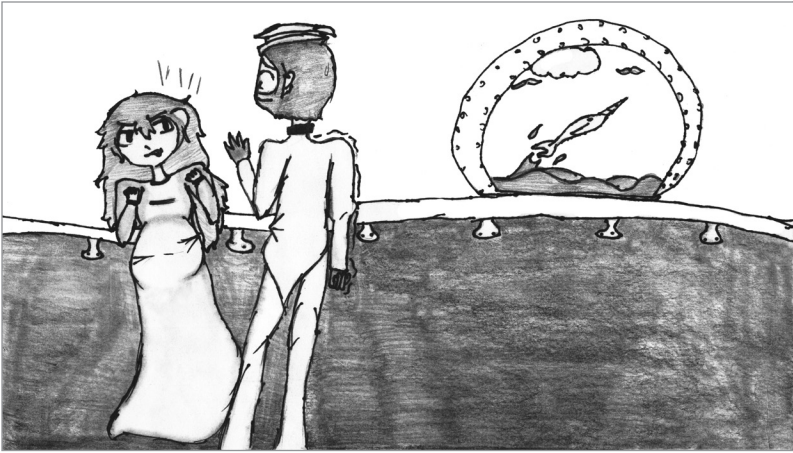
Then the petite sixteen-year-old Jewish girl with brown hair, pale skin, and big brown eyes reached for the rusty old brass doorknob. She turned the knob and walked in. She gaped at the willowy teacher with pale skin, green eyes, and gray hair in a bun. The teacher turned toward her and asked, “What do you want?” Her voice was like a cat’s claws on a chalkboard.

Gertrude went into her best posture and answered, “I want to learn.”

The teacher pointed to an old oak desk as she responded, “Go sit down then.”

Gertrude walked over to the old oak desk and learned.

A couple of years later a Polish man from the New World came to find a bride from the *shtetl*, meaning “small Jewish village.” The man, whose name was William, had brown hair and hazel eyes. He was tall and slender. William, from America, had arranged to marry Gertrude’s cousin, but when William looked at Gertrude,



Autumn Caito

it was love at first sight. The two lovebirds eloped, and by the time Gertrude was eighteen, she was packing to go to the New World.

As Gertrude approached the monstrous ship, she held her protruding stomach and thought about her unborn baby. She gazed upon the huge steel steamboat. Then she looked up at a large smokestack that was puffing black smoke. She boarded third class, or steerage, which was exceptionally cramped. She looked down at the old red wood and realized that she did not feel well and started vomiting.

As three days passed, the hurling got worse. So she went to see the captain. She gazed at the captain with his gray beard, green eyes, and large scar next to his right eye. She looked him in the eye and spoke with a firm voice. "I want to be moved to first class."

The captain was shocked at the tiny Jewish girl. "Okay then. You will be moved from steerage to first class."

Later that day, she got to sit at the captain's table with all the other first-class passengers. She thought about her life in the New World.

They eventually made it to Ellis Island. When Gertrude arrived, she couldn't find William. She realized that he was in the third-class steerage line, and she was in first class. So Gertrude took a lengthy walk and saw William. She tapped him on the shoulder and whispered, "Remember me?"

Miles R. Bassett, great-grandson of Gertrude
Missouri, USA

The Bootlegger

c. 1930s
Harrisburg, Illinois, USA

Bootleggers. They fit right up there with robbers and gangsters. Bootleggers had very interesting jobs. They made liquor illegally. My great-great-grandpa Ira T. Kingsley did just that in Harrisburg, Illinois. He started working on making whiskey in his basement, but he did not know much about the process. As he figured out more and more, he became very good at what he did. After a while he moved the “business” into the middle of the woods and went underground.*

Being a bootlegger was no cup of tea! First off, they were always being chased by the authorities. Second, they had to learn how to draw the tax stamp that the government put on legal liquor,** because back then, if the liquor had no tax stamp, there would sometimes be no sale. Third, they had to perfect their liquor-making skills.

Making liquor was illegal because of Prohibition, the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, banning the making of and sale of alcohol. Even though it was illegal, my great-great-grandpa did it anyway. The reason why is because bootleggers made a lot of money. Back then, \$25 seemed like about \$325 today. So if bootleggers sold each bottle of whiskey for, let’s say, \$10, they would be rich!

* *Went underground* means “took extra steps to keep the operation hidden.”

** The only legal liquor during Prohibition (1920–1933) was for medical or scientific purposes or for religious observances.

After a while in the liquor business, my great-great-grandpa was caught and sent to prison for five years. Near the end of his term, the warden had to make sure that my great-great-grandpa had a home and a job to go back to. My great-great-grandpa had both, so he was free to go.

Not long after being released, he got an offer to sell his liquor recipe to Jack Daniel's, a big liquor company in Tennessee. My great-great-grandpa never accepted.

My grandpa said he found out about all this when he discovered the liquor-making equipment in the basement where it all started. My grandpa is not proud of what his grandfather did, but it will always be part of our colorful family history.

Jenna Pardieck
Missouri, USA

America, Here I Come?

c. 1930–1964
Drohiczyn, Poland; New York, New York, USA;
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

When my great-grandfather Hershel Steinberg moved to America, he decided that he wanted to bring all his siblings over to America as well. He bought boat tickets for all his siblings, but he couldn't get one for his brother Levi.*

“Hershel, when will I get to come to America?”
Levi wrote in a letter.

“Very soon,” Hershel replied. Hershel tried but could not succeed.

He wrote back to Levi, saying, “Levi, go to the port on Wednesday. I have contacted my friend Aron Maksym to take you to America.”

The next day Levi went to the port, and Aron was already there.

“Hello. I am Aron,” he said.

“Hello. I'm Levi, Hershel's brother.”

“All right. I'm glad to meet you. Now, since the ship doesn't leave port for three days, you will be living with me until then.”

Levi enjoyed three days of living with Aron, and Levi lost track of time. But Aron didn't.

“Levi, the ship leaves today!”

“Let's go!” Before they left, Aron took out an empty suitcase and told Levi to climb in.

* Pronounced LAY-vee.

“What? I’m not climbing into a suitcase!”

“You have to!”

“Okay, fine.” Levi climbed into the suitcase. They went to the port, and Aron boarded the ship with two suitcases.

The boat ride lasted about one month.

“Hello, Aron!” Hershel greeted when they arrived in New York. “Safe journey for both of you?”

“Levi is in the other suitcase,” Aron replied softly.

“Thank you, Aron,” said Hershel.

“Of course.” And with that, Aron left.

After about four months of living in America, Levi was getting pretty used to his lifestyle. One day, when he was driving, he was pulled over by a police officer.

“Hello, sir,” Levi said. “Can I help you?”

“Yeah, you were speeding! Show me your driver’s license!” the cop said.

“Sir, I don’t have a driver’s license.”

“Well, that’s a problem. Fortunately, I’m also part of the Immigration Department. So I guess we’ll just have to deport you to Canada. If you try to sneak back into America again, we will deport you again, and then you won’t be able to get a license or become a citizen at all.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Now go pack. You go to Canada tomorrow.”

“Yes, sir.” Then Levi drove back home.

After the plane ride to Canada, Levi found a place to stay. Then Levi called Hershel. Hershel flew to Canada with an empty suitcase, found Levi, and flew home. When they got back, Levi went into hiding under the name “Joe Levy.”

He married a woman named Sylvia Klempner, and they had a daughter named Judy. How Levi became a citizen, on July 2, 1964, is still a mystery. Somehow he came out of hiding and received all the legal documents he needed to use his real name, not his fake name.

Levi died in 2009.

Sophie Pomeranz
Colorado, USA

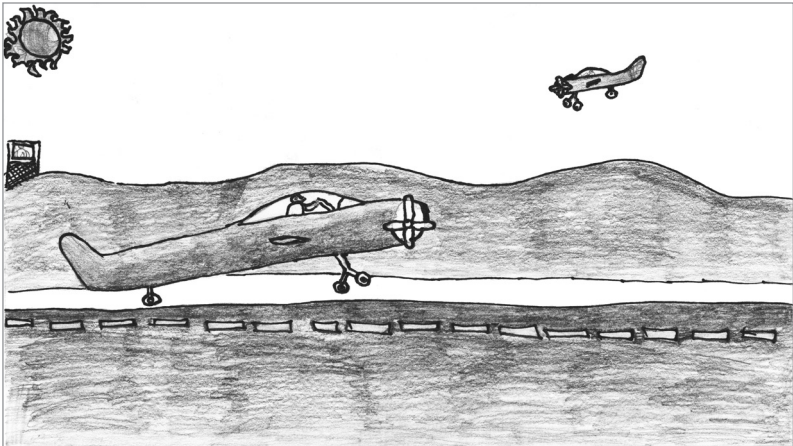
The Pilot

c. 1935
St. Louis County, Missouri, USA

When my step-grandfather Jim was five, he loved planes. His mom and dad would always take him to old Lambert Airport. It was a treat for him. One day at the airport when watching airplanes take off and land, he decided he would learn how to fly planes and buy his own.

So for sixteen years he waited and waited to finally get a plane. Then when he was twenty-one years old, he went to old Lambert Airport and signed up for a private class. He took nine lessons, and on his tenth lesson the actual pilot said, “I am going to go get a soda. You will fly the plane, and you will take off three times and land three times.” Then the pilot left.

Jim was very scared. Then he heard something on the radio. It was the control tower: “You are clear for takeoff.”



Mikael Fett Schultheis

Jim couldn't go—he was too scared. He started thinking about all the bad things that could happen to him—like if he would get lost and never see his family again, or crash the plane and die. Then he heard the radio say again, “Sir, you need to go. There is a great big plane that needs to land.”

So eventually Jim pushed on the gas and lifted into the air.

He did it! He was flying! He was surprised. So he did what he had been told, and he lifted off and landed three times.

Then he went into a room and got a paper. It was an examination about everything he had learned.

Later a man came into the room and told my grandfather that he had passed the written part of the examination. Then the man took Jim outside, and they got into the plane. He now had to do some maneuver testing. He got up into the air and did all the maneuvers very well. They were up there for about an hour. Then he landed the airplane and saw his instructor writing on a clipboard.

Jim was nervous. Had he done something wrong? Then there was a moment of silence. “Congratulations. Here is your license.” Jim was so excited he couldn't believe it. His dream had come true.

So now his saying is “Regardless of what you do, never give up.” And he never did.

Tripp Gatch
Missouri, USA

The Storm That Erased a World

September 21, 1938
Watch Hill, Rhode Island, USA

It was a perfect afternoon—September 21, 1938—as my grandmother, eight-year-old Cathy Moore, was walking home from a perfect day at school. The wind blew at her strongly, but Cathy didn't think about it. When she got home, her mother was talking to her father urgently.

“What's wrong, Mother?” Cathy inquired.

Her mother knit her eyebrows, looking out the window. “Jim is here.” She paused. “His family is not with him.”

Just then Jim, their neighbor, burst into the house. “My family is all gone—all gone, Catherine,” he said to Cathy's mother.

Cathy realized the winds had picked up. The house was shaking. She was going to point it out to her mother when the storm struck. The Great Hurricane of 1938* was beginning its path of pure destruction.

Cathy and her family bolted up the stairs to the attic as a wall of water swept into the first floor. Cathy watched as her father tried to hold the door closed against the sea. It was the first time she believed that her father couldn't protect her from everything—not *everything*.

The whole room shook, but to Cathy it felt like the world was splitting apart. The four walls around her

* This hurricane, which hit without warning, has been called the greatest weather disaster ever to hit Long Island and New England, killing more than 600 people and permanently redrawing coastlines.

broke, leaving behind only the floor, with slippery pipes sticking out. Her family members desperately held on to the pipes as they were thrown into the angry sea on their attic-floor raft.

“Hello, Polly! Hello, Polly!” Cathy’s pet parrot flew down to their raft, joining the family. Cathy cried when she realized her dogs had not come with them.

Geoffrey, her older brother, yelled, shaking her out of sadness immediately. “Sharks! I can see sharks!” he cried out. Just like he said, two hammerheads were circling their makeshift raft. Cathy wondered if they were there because the storm blew them in, or if they followed the scent of blood. She didn’t want to find out.

After several terrifying hours, her father sighted land. They didn’t know it, but they had drifted from their home in Watch Hill, Rhode Island, to Barn Island, just off of Connecticut. Cathy was exhausted after their desperate paddling had pulled them to the island. She sank to the ground just to realize there was uncomfortable, scratchy straw beneath her. She and her family looked back on where they had come from. They saw a glow in the distance. The fires of New England lit up the eerie, silent night.

Cathy woke to find her family shouting for rescue. Geoffrey discovered a shard of broken mirror in the rubble. He sent up SOS signals by catching the sunlight on the mirror. A fisherman in a small beaten-up rowboat saw the signals, came to the island, and took everyone to the mainland. Cathy’s home was in pieces.

The Great Hurricane of 1938 passed, and in its wake stood nothing. It was the storm that erased my grandmother’s world.

Dede Driscoll; Alabama, USA

Kicked Out of Home

c. 1940
Lydda, Palestine

My grandmother Rose Fawal was kicked out of her hometown, Lydda, Palestine, now known as “Lod Airport,” when she was only six years old.

Rose was one of nine children, and her father was a merchant. He was saving up money to be able to build a big house large enough for his whole family. It took a while, but one day he finally did.

When the war* broke out, Israeli soldiers barged into their house, put guns to their heads, and said if they did not give them the second floor of their house for a lookout, then they would shoot the family. Since her father was unarmed, he gave in. Rose was worried, because “bad guys” were staying with their family and she couldn’t do anything about it.

A week or two later the soldiers came from the upstairs and devastated the whole family by saying, “Give us the whole house, or you’re all dead.” The whole family stood frozen and frightened, watching their father think and worry.

Still unarmed, her father hesitated and said, “Please don’t take our home. We worked so hard for it.”

But the soldiers refused violently.

Rose’s father decided that he would rather his family be alive but have to move, than be dead. He was furious. He went to grab a mattress so that on their long

* Israelis and Palestinians fought because both believed they were entitled to the same land.

trip they would have a place to stop and sleep, and olive oil so they could cook on their way.

But the Israeli soldiers said they couldn't take anything. They also said that Rose's father couldn't take his truck, because they wanted it. And they didn't want the family on the highway, clogging up the way.

Rose's father was so angry that he opened his pocketknife and sliced open the can of olive oil. The soldiers gave him a dirty look. Reluctantly, he got his family gathered and started on the road to Ramallah.

My grandmother and her siblings wanted to stay and build another house in Lydda, but they moved for their lives. They were headed toward the road, but the soldiers said they had to take the mountains.

As they were walking out of the house, Rose was still confused—not positive what had just happened and not sure what would happen next. She walked out and asked her mom, “Mama? Where are we going?”

Her mother sighed and responded, “I don't know.”

They walked up and down the mountains and passed pregnant women, babies, and elders who didn't make it. Rose was worried that *she* wouldn't make it. My grandmother and her siblings didn't want to leave, but they did it for their lives.

When they got to Ramallah, they started their life all over. After thirteen years the war got worse. It was time to leave Palestine altogether and go to America. Even though my grandmother would have preferred to stay in Palestine, desperate times call for desperate measures.

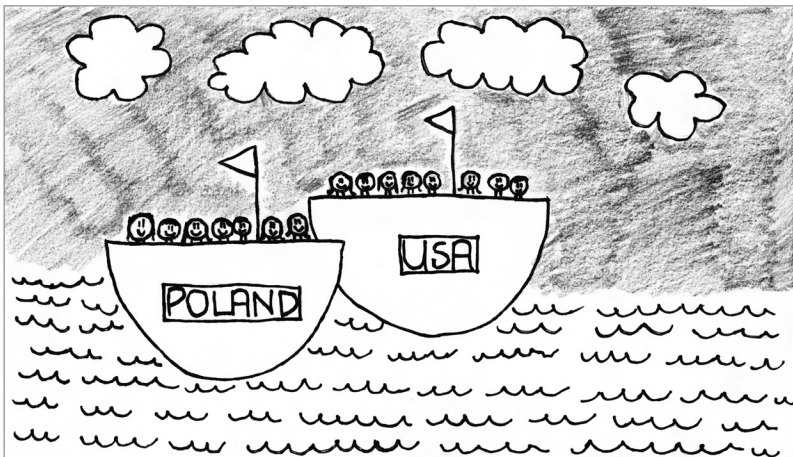
Ella Hartman
Alabama, USA

Passing By

c. 1940s
Warsaw, Poland;
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

My great-great-great grandfather lived in Warsaw, Poland. He saved up money to send his wife and children to the United States to have a better life, but he did not have enough money to send himself. He stayed behind in Poland and saved up more money so he could later move to the United States.

In the United States my great-great-great-grandma got tired of waiting. She saved up money to visit my great-great-great-grandfather as a surprise. By this time in Poland my great-great-great-grandfather had saved up enough money to move to the United States to be with his family. My great-great-great-grandparents were on separate ships and crossed each other's paths at sea but did not even know it.



Molly Andersen

My great-great-great-grandma got to Poland and found out that my great-great-great-grandfather had gone to the United States. She could no longer go back to be with him because of the Iron Curtain.*

Before my great-great-great-grandparents had left the United States and Poland, they had written letters to each other, saying that they would be coming to be with each other. However, back then it took several months for the mail to travel overseas, so my great-great-great-grandparents did not receive the letters before they left to get on the ships to go where they were going. My great-great-great-grandparents never saw each other again.

Makayla Matvick
Minnesota, USA

* *Iron Curtain* is the name for the blocking of contact between people in Communist and non-Communist countries in Europe from 1945 to 1990. It was not a physical curtain.

The Great School Escape

1941
Overland, Missouri, USA

Helen Meives lived across the street from her school and church. “Presentation” was the name of her parish. I want to tell you a story about Helen—and when living across the street from school had its disadvantages.

Helen’s first day of school was full of excitement. It was difficult to be quiet when she was surrounded by all of her friends.

“Delores! What are you eating for lunch today?” Helen asked her best friend. Sister Justa Marie’s eyes met Helen’s in the middle of her question. Helen froze and then flashed an innocent smile.

“Whew!” thought Helen, dodging that bullet.

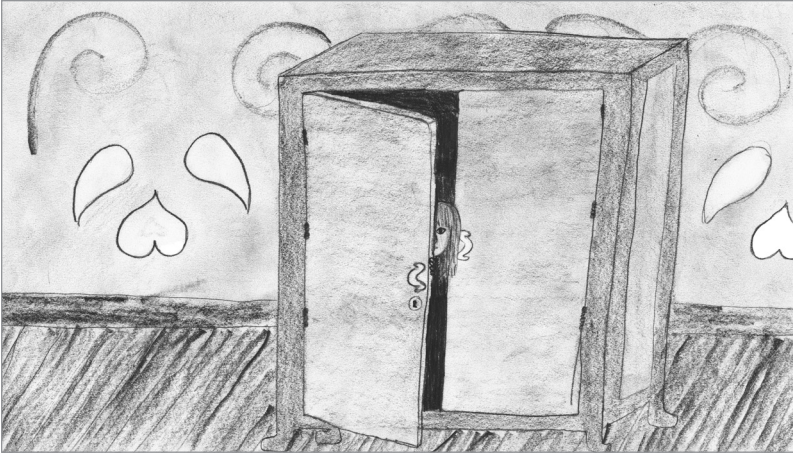
Grabbing Jimmy’s flashy new pencil, Helen tried to whisper, “Nice pencil, Jimmy. Where’d you get it?”

A large, but gentle, hand rested on Helen’s left shoulder. A whisper said in Helen’s ear, “Helen, please stop talking.” It was the voice of Sister Justa Marie.

Helen apologized and promised to not talk, but she wondered if Delores would like to walk home with her after school. She would ask her just one more question, and then she would not talk for the rest of the year.

“Pssst! Delores. How about walking home with me?” Delores’s eyes almost popped out of her head. “Well?” Helen continued to wait for an answer.

Sister had been standing right behind Helen the entire time. “Um, Helen. You will have to stay after school a little while for talking too much.”



Nguyet Nguyen

The class lined up at dismissal with Sister Justa Marie leading. Helen stayed at her desk nervously. When the rest of the class exited, Helen made a dash for the back door, toward her home. Helen zoomed straight to her closet and closed the door behind her.

Ding! Dong! Mrs. Meives stopped her laundry to open the door to find Sister Justa Marie on the porch. “Is Helen here?”

“No. Isn’t she at school?” Mrs. Meives asked in a concerned way.

Ed, Helen’s little brother, came running into the room yelling, “She’s in her closet! She’s in her closet!”

Sister explained to Mrs. Meives, “I’m sorry, but I have to bring Helen back to my classroom. She was a little too chatty today and must stay after. She may look through her books at her desk while I grade some papers and clean up.”

Helen wound up leaving her closet on her own and walked back to school holding Sister Justa Marie’s hand.

She realized, on the walk back to school, that living right across the street might not be all that it is cracked up to be. She may be able to get to class faster than anyone else, but her teacher can get to her house faster, too!

Helen Ann Stone, granddaughter of Helen Meives
Missouri, USA

Raining Bombs

December 7, 1941
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, USA

Imagine: It's a chilly day in early December. The cloudy sky shadows above as you notice the palm trees, wet with dew and rain from the day before. Your pregnant mother is hanging washed garments on the clothesline to dry as you and your two-year-old brother watch with boredom. Your father, a doctor for wounded soldiers at the U.S. Naval Base near your home in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, is getting ready for work. It's December 7, 1941, a day that changes the world forever, and you are in the worst place possible.

The previous paragraph describes that tragic morning from my grandfather's point of view—the morning Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and launched America into World War II. My grandfather was only five years old at the time, but miraculously he and his family lived through it all.

On that day, at approximately 7:55 A.M., my great-grandmother looked up from hanging clothes and saw white planes flying above, with large red dots on their wings. Originally from the South, and with poor vision, she mistakenly cried out, "Look, Carl! Some planes are here with some Florida oranges!"

My great-grandfather Carl ran out and saw the planes, immediately realizing they were Japanese. He grabbed his children and wife, and took them inside while the first bomb dropped. There were screams, but he didn't flinch; he wanted to keep his family safe. He

gathered up all the mattresses in the house and piled them onto his family. Also, giving his wife a gun, he said, “If the Japanese come for you, shoot the kids and yourself. It’ll be better than becoming slaves for them.”

By now, my grandfather, his brother, and his mother had all grasped the awfulness of the situation. The young boys were both in tears, and she was shaking.

Carl had to leave, because he knew that the injured needed him, so he kissed his family one last time, knowing he may never see them again. “I love you” was all they heard as he dashed out the door.

Immediately the pregnant mother started feeding her children and herself, because she knew there was a chance they wouldn’t eat again for a long time if they were captured by the Japanese. Once they were all stuffed, they huddled down into the mattress mass again. They waited there for hours, listening to the screams and gunshots and every other violent sound you could think of.

Finally they heard someone walk in. My great-grandmother shakily reached for the gun and prepared to shoot her firstborn child—when they heard their names being called in a familiar, warm voice. It was Carl!

He was reunited with his family. He knew they couldn’t live in Hawaii anymore, so he moved his family to the safest place possible that he knew of—Huntsville, Alabama. My grandfather, his wife, and some of my cousins still live there today.

Anna Cathryn Brown
Alabama, USA

Sugar, Stamps, Bikes, and Metal

1942
St. Louis, Missouri, USA

I was eight, and it was the time of World War II. This is the story of one week of my life when my country, the United States, was fighting. My name is Al Siwak. If I had written a diary, this is how it might have read.

July 1, 1942

Today my friends and I collected metal. We knocked on doors of the houses in our neighborhood and asked for anything metal: chicken wire, tin cans, or aluminum foil from gum wrappers, which we saved in balls till they were large enough to be collected. Then a truck drove by, and we put all the metal in the truck. The truck driver takes the metal to a collection site, from where it is used to build tanks, ships, planes, and bombs for the war that's going on. My friends and I plan to do this every day until the war stops.

July 2, 1942

What's really a problem is that most of the metal our country has is being used for weapons, not for cars, so my parents can't buy a car, even though they want to. Also, we are only allowed to buy a certain amount

of food, because the government is sending most food to the soldiers. We have to use food stamps to buy meat, tea, cheese, and sugar. Once our food stamps are gone, we can't buy that kind of food anymore.* I am craving a big, meaty, delicious steak. Ugh . . .

July 3, 1942

Today my mom sent me to the store with a sugar stamp to buy sugar. I couldn't wait to taste my mom's brownies! I was on my way, skipping, when the stamp fell down on the concrete sidewalk. I didn't notice that I had dropped the stamp, so I kept skipping to the store to get the sugar. I went down the aisle, pulled the sugar down, and happily walked to the checkout lane.

The clerk said, "Where's your stamp?"

I reached into my pocket, and it wasn't there. "I'm sure I had it!" I cried.

But the clerk said no. So I sadly put back the sugar and walked home with my head down. I told my mom my story, and I guess that's the end of brownies.

July 4, 1942

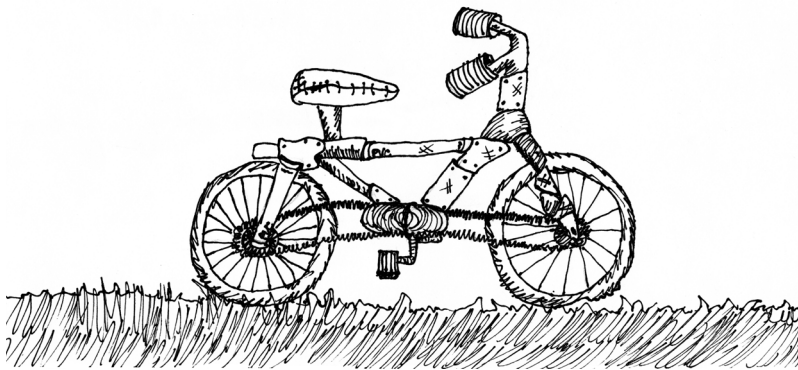
Today is the day I'm old enough to ride a bicycle. It's my birthday! But all metal is being used

* Each person was allowed a certain amount of each rationed food per month.

for weapons, so I thought I wouldn't get one. But then Grandpa Dave found somebody to make a bicycle for me out of used bicycle parts. Grandpa Dave is a little worried that it won't hold up, but I'm not. I love my new orange bicycle, and I'm so excited to get outside and show my friends.

That's a week of my ordinary life during World War II. Now I'm a grandfather myself, and I just bought my granddaughter a new pink bike. And I told her these stories, which she has written here.

Natalie Rose Schuver
Missouri, USA



Maggie Morse

Saved by the Blink of a Statue's Eye

1942–1944
Mosciska, Poland

Close your eyes and imagine having to live in a small, dirty, bug-infested hole in the ground with seven other people for two years.

My grandfather lived in Mosciska, Poland, in the 1930s. His name was Mark Reches. He had a brother named Henry, who is my great-uncle. Their parents, Clara and Saul Reches, were my great-grandparents, and this is their story.

In the fall of 1942 the Germans decided it was time to free Mosciska of all Jews. My great-grandmother knew the Germans were coming and that she had to make a game plan.

She went to her neighbors, who had a farm, and asked if her neighbors' family could hide them. The neighbors said, "We have to ask our mom, and she will get back to you next week."

My great-grandmother knew there was no time and that she needed to have an answer right away. She ran home. The next day she layered herself with her furry, warm coats. She was going to use the coats to bribe the people to let them stay.

When she got there, she asked the girls if she could speak to their mother right away. The mother, Rosallia, said, "As a good Christian, I want to do the right thing. I stayed up all night and prayed to the Virgin Mary for advice. When the eyes of the statue blinked at me, I knew that the Virgin Mary was telling me I had to hide you."

There were two other people, a brother and a sister, who found out that my family was going to be hidden and insisted they come along in order to survive. The brother owned a watch store, and it was going to come in handy.

On the way to the farm they were caught by soldiers. The brother rolled up his sleeves and bribed the soldiers with the watches. The soldiers said, “Go with G-d,*” and let them continue on.

By the time the beautiful sun rose, they had all made it safely to the farm. No Germans in sight.

Rosallia did not know where she was going to hide them. My great-grandmother insisted that she could dig a hole in the barn. That is how the nearly two years in the hole began.

There were eight people that lived in the hole: my great-grandparents, my grandfather, my great-uncle, my other great-grandmother Rivka Gerber, my other great-uncle Mordechai Gerber, and the neighbors who were brother and sister.

They suffered in the cramped, dark hole. They could only sit, not stand. The bathroom was a bucket that was emptied every night. Sometimes it wasn't safe to empty it, so they left it, and the smell was unbelievably bad.

After almost two years, in July of 1944, the Russians marched into Mosciska and freed the Jews. They freed Mosciska of German control. All eight people that were hiding survived this horrific experience.

Yaakov Reches
Maryland, USA

* This incomplete spelling is a show of respect.

Bravery in Battle and Beyond

c. 1943
Germany

My great-grandfather Murray Dronsky was a United States soldier in World War II. He entered the army when he was only eighteen years old, in 1943. He was a foot soldier in the 86th Infantry Division of the army, the Blackhawks. He fought against the Japanese in the Philippine Islands and the Germans in Europe. In Germany he liberated the Dachau concentration camp and captured Hitler's hideaway in Berchtesgaden, where Hitler spent most of his time during the war. My great-grandfather was awarded the Purple Heart medal for being wounded while fighting and received the Bronze Star medal for bravery in battle.

One very scary morning in Germany, Murray and his fellow soldiers were ready for another dangerous day in the beaming hot sun. The sky was gold with a few blue stripes through the clouds. The men got in their army jeep. Everything was quiet until they turned the corner. Something very frightening caught their tired eyes. It was a fire from a German bomb. Immediately they knew what was going to happen. They saw a German sniper aiming at them, so they quickly jumped out of the jeep to go under it to protect themselves. It was too late, because as Murray got out of the car, he got shot in his behind and suddenly dropped to the rocky ground. He was able to crawl under the jeep so he would not get shot again. A German soldier was sent to make sure that none of the U.S. Army soldiers were still alive. As the German soldier

came up to Murray, they locked eyes. Then the German soldier turned around and told his commander that all of the soldiers were dead. Murray thought, “Maybe not all the Germans are bad after all.”

Murray was eventually taken to a safe place, where he waited with other wounded soldiers to be taken to the hospital. They were sitting around a campfire. Suddenly, a German bomb fell in the middle of them and killed all of the soldiers, except for Murray, right in front of his eyes. Luckily, Murray jumped back as soon as the bomb fell and did not get injured. By the time the bus got him to the hospital, his wound was already closed, and the bullet stayed in his body for the rest of his life.

After the war was over, Murray stayed in Germany to help translate for the American army in the displaced persons camps, because he spoke Yiddish. When he got home, he married Marion Davidowitz and had three children. He was involved in organizations that helped Holocaust survivors, and he became a post commander in the Jewish War Veterans.

Some people think that the Germans were responsible for the Holocaust, but Murray felt that the Nazis were the ones who were responsible and not all of the German people. He traveled back to Germany many times in his life.

I am very proud to be the great-granddaughter of a Jewish American hero.

Nili Hefetz
Maryland, USA

The Miracle That Gave Me Life

April 8, 1945
Mannheim, Germany

Miracles can happen anytime, anywhere. We can see them if we just take the time to look for them. One miracle can change the destiny of many lives. The miracle that certainly affected my life is the story of how my grandpa survived World War II.

It was a normal spring day on April 8, 1945. My grandpa Bernard Bermel was with the American troops about forty miles from Mannheim, Germany. They were chasing the German soldiers through brush and fields. Grandpa was near the front of the line. He was assigned to carry a “BAR” with a tripod. (This was a Browning Automatic Rifle.) It was heavy, it could shoot many shells, and it could shoot them fast. The Germans always tried to shoot the soldier carrying this gun, since it could do a lot of damage to their troops.

It was around 5:00 P.M. when an enemy’s bullet hit Grandpa’s shell clip. The bullet went through his hip and stomach, and then lodged close to his spine. Grandpa fell to the ground, bleeding to death. A medic treated his wound by trying to stop the bleeding. When the medic was done, he warned Grandpa not to move or he may start bleeding again and could die. He said someone was coming to get another soldier and assured Grandpa that they would get him, too.

Grandpa lost consciousness. When he woke up, the sun was up, and there was a foggy mist hovering around the clearing he was in. Off in the distance he saw

several deer. Grandpa thought he had died and was in heaven. It didn't take long for his pain to kick in and for him to realize he was alive. He figured he had been lying there for about fifteen hours, and he realized that there wasn't anyone coming back to get him. He had been left on the battlefield to die. Remembering that the medic had told him not to move and risk dying, he had to make a decision. He could lie there and die, or get up and try to find someone to help him.

Grandpa got up, and for three fourths of a mile he pushed himself from tree to tree until he came to a road. He saw people and cried out for help. Thankfully, they were friends instead of enemies, and they got him to a makeshift hospital, where they performed surgery and saved his life. When he was well enough to travel, he was shipped back to the United States. Grandpa was honorably discharged from the army and was given the Purple Heart medal.

It was a miracle that Grandpa didn't bleed to death on the battlefield almost seven decades ago. If he had, I would not be here today to tell you this amazing story. It fills me with pride to be the granddaughter of such a brave, honorable, and wonderful man.

Megan Trushenski
Minnesota, USA

Living with the Enemies

c. 1946
Guangdong Province, China

It was quiet as it had always been. The bright summer sun was shining down on the village in Guangdong Province, China, in 1946. Little Ting Lee, my grandfather, was being a regular infant, crawling on the dirt floor and babbling in baby language. Suddenly, screaming and yelling sounded from the village, and Ying Jung, my great-grandmother, peered out of the wooden door. Fear and worry flooded her face as she ran to her son, gathering him in her arms. She ran to a corner of the small four-roomed house and heard muffled shouting occurring again in Japanese.

With an unexpected blow the door burst open, several soldiers standing in the doorway. They each wore a long coat with a cap and dirt-covered leather boots.

“Spare me and my son!” Ying Jung shouted with panic and terror. The Japanese soldiers looked at her and my grandfather Ting Lee intently, a soft expression crossing their faces as they scanned the mother and her child. Expecting a punishment for her outburst, Ying Jung cowered, protecting her son—but instead, the soldiers walked towards the two and bent before Ting Lee, reaching out to his pint-sized face.

“Look at his little face,” one said in Japanese. They laughed as he rolled out of his mother’s arms, crawling towards them. Ying Jung shouted for her son to return, reaching out for him, but he just kept crawling to the soldiers, who were viewed as dangerous and deadly

by his mother. The soldiers continued to laugh, picked Ting Lee up, and turned him back to his mother. Ying felt relief wash over her, but at the same time, confusion. She questioned why these soldiers were so amiable towards her and her son, as they were supposed to be the hazardous invaders. With Ting Lee in her arms, she slowly walked to the kitchen, aware of the soldiers watching her every move. They followed, their weapons clinking at their side, and filled the small home.

They cooked for themselves, respected the furniture and the house, and wondrously, didn't harm Ying or her son. For approximately a month, they did the same thing: cook, eat, and play with little Ting Lee, while occupying the home. Maybe the soldiers weren't really as murderous as people implied they were, or maybe it was luck. Although nobody in my family knows why the soldiers acted the way they did, they are grateful.

Melina Huang
New Jersey, USA

The Basketball Hoop

c. 1950
Oran, Missouri, USA

If you want to play basketball, you have to practice constantly, and you have to have a basketball hoop. When my grandpa was in grade school, he wanted a basketball hoop. He could not go buy one at the store, so Grandpa decided to make his own hoop. My grandpa knew he could make a backboard and a rim for the basketball hoop, but was not sure how to construct a pole to hold it up.

The next day at school, Grandpa thought and thought, but he could not come up with a solution until he told his friend. My grandpa's friend had a good idea. He said, "I tell you what. Come over to my farm on Saturday, and we'll cut down a tree to make a pole."

On Saturday, Grandpa went to his friend's farm. The farm was big, with wide farmland and deep woods. My grandpa and his friend searched the woods for the perfect tree. There were many trees, but none of them were good for a basketball pole. They kept looking at trees of all different sizes—big ones and short ones—until they found the perfect tree.

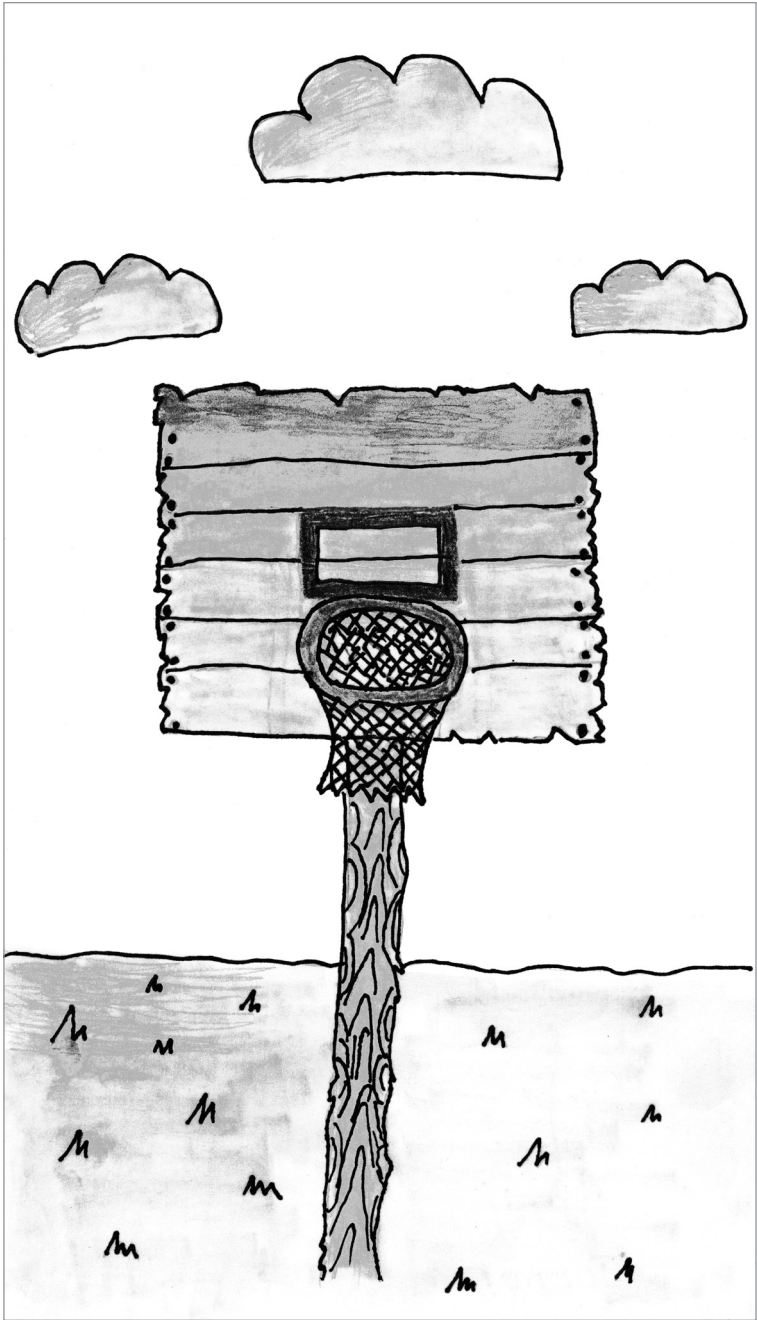
Grandpa and his friend got a handsaw and sawed it down. It took a long time to saw it, but it worked! They picked up the tree and carried it a long way out of the woods. When Grandpa and his friend finally left the woods, they put the perfect tree in a carriage, and a horse pulled it to Grandpa's house. Grandpa's friend charged him only three dollars for the pole. My grandpa

was really excited when he got the tree to use for the pole of the basketball hoop.

The very next day, Grandpa was going to finally put up the hoop. Grandpa cut out a square piece of wood for the backboard and painted lines on it. He used a round piece of metal for the rim and some netting for the net. My grandpa had his dad help him put up the pole and connect the backboard to it.

The basketball hoop was finally finished! My grandpa got out his basketball and took a shot. He missed, but that's what practice is for, isn't it?

Zach Stehr
Missouri, USA



April Turner

Mr. Camper's "Secret" Candy Bars

c. 1950
Toledo, Ohio, USA

I spoke to my grandma and asked if she had any stories to share. She has three sisters, and her mother lived to be ninety-eight, so I was excited to hear some of her history. She told me a wonderful story about a kind man who lived in their neighborhood. It is a heartwarming story, and I could see much emotion in my grandma as she told me about Mr. Camper.

It was 1950, and my grandma was seven years old. She lived in a small, friendly neighborhood. There was a generous man on her block named Mr. Camper. He wore overalls, was round and huggable, and had gray hair and a laugh that was full of life. He didn't have any grandchildren, but the children in the neighborhood saw him as a grandpa and respected him and Mrs. Camper. They would share their large garden with the neighbors, and whenever the circus was in town, he would take the neighborhood children. Everyone loved Mr. Camper, but he had a special place in his heart for children.

One day when my grandma was in Mr. Camper's garage, he asked her what was her favorite candy bar. She said it was a Baby Ruth. He told her whenever she wanted a Baby Ruth, she could open up the second drawer in his file cabinet and there would be one waiting for her. He told her to keep it a secret. She nodded her head.

The next day, after playing, my grandma snuck into Mr. Camper's wooden tool garage. She had to jerk

open the second drawer of the rusty metal file cabinet, because it was old. Sure enough, there was a large Baby Ruth on top of some old magazines. (In 1950, large candy bars cost five cents.) She went behind his bushes to eat the candy bar, then quickly shoved the wrapper into her pocket. For years my grandma went to the garage after school and on Saturday mornings after working around the house. No one knew their secret, and she loved the special treat that was just for her.

Many years later, her older sister told her she was getting a Clark bar from Mr. Camper. Her secret spot was behind some rags in his garage. There were several other children getting candy bars from him, too. As my grandma grew up, she naturally stopped going to get her Baby Ruth. Recently my grandma asked her two younger sisters about Mr. Camper. To her surprise, they both said he had given them candy bars, too.

As an adult, my grandma remembers Mr. Camper's kitchen window facing the garage. It must have been a joy to watch the kids come and go to get their candy bars. My grandma will always remember generous, kind, loving Mr. Camper and their secret.

Jala Ehrenfried
Ohio, USA

Blizzard Sunday

1952
near Marquette, Kansas, USA

Saturday night was bath night. That's the way it was for my grandpa when he was a boy. Growing up on a farm meant you worked hard—not just doing chores, but for the little things like bathwater. You didn't turn on the faucet. There wasn't a hot or cold knob. There was no running water. My grandpa pumped his own bathwater from an outdoor cistern, which is kind of like a modern-day well. He would bring in buckets of water for my great-grandmother to heat on the stove. The bathtub was in the living room. It wasn't like the ones we have today. It was a large steel tub. Grandpa was lucky if he got to take his bath first. They didn't have the luxury of changing the water between baths. Everyone shared! Bath night meant that Sunday was coming and it was time for church.

Grandpa woke to a frigid and blustery Sunday morning in the winter of 1952. It would have been nice to stay cuddled in a warm, cozy bed, but it was Sunday and time for church. But first my grandpa had to do his chores, which meant going out in the cold. Living on a farm was hard work. You had to milk the cows and feed the livestock—all before the sun came up. But once he finished his chores, he could go to church!

It took a long time to get to church—longer than most Sunday mornings because of the snow. There was so much snow it was hard to see the church. Grandpa's church was a one-room white building that looked like a barn, and it blended in with the falling snow. If there

were tracks in the snow, you couldn't see them. The church was on a hill, and it had snowed so much Great-Grandpa had to park the car at the bottom of the hill, and the family walked the rest of the way. That didn't bother my grandpa. He was excited about the bell. Church had a bell tower, and every Sunday when the children arrived, they took turns ringing the bell. It was such a big bell that when you rang it and hung on to the rope, your feet would be lifted right off the floor.

There was an unwritten rule that the first people to arrive built the fire in the wood-burning stove to heat the church. Dry matches, tinder, and wood were always waiting, so Great-Grandpa started the fire that morning. Slowly the church warmed, but nobody filled the pews. Only my grandpa and his family sat faithfully waiting for service to begin. Not another family joined them that snowy morning. A faithful servant to the end, my great-grandpa put out the fire in the stove and slowly drove his family back to the farm during the blizzard of 1952.

Benjamin M. Brock
Colorado, USA

Tump and the Monster of Summer

1952
Trussville, Alabama, USA

His real name was Rupert, but everyone just called him Tump. He had raven hair and green eyes that were like fresh grass. My grandfather was best friends with him when they were in the fourth grade. Tump was nice, polite, wouldn't hurt anybody's feelings, and always said clever things that made people laugh. He was very popular, smart, and extremely fast. Someone once said that he was as fast as a champion racehorse running downhill.

Now there was a terrible monster in those days. My grandfather called this monster "The Polio." He said nobody was safe from The Polio. Even the president of the United States was attacked by this monster and left crippled. But most often, The Polio would attack young boys. Grandfather remembered that as a boy he couldn't see or hear this monster, but he knew it was there. The Polio was actually a tiny germ that destroyed the muscles in your arms, legs, or sometimes both. It was horrible if it got in your chest muscles, because that meant that you would have to be put in an iron lung, a machine that breathed for you. People who had to get in an iron lung would usually have to stay in one their whole life.

In 1952 The Polio was worse than ever. Everyone's parents kept their children inside and would not let them go outside or even play with friends the whole summer. There were no parties, sports, or even sleepovers. Still, almost 58,000 people in the United States were caught

by The Polio that summer—and Tump was one of them. When my grandfather returned to school, Tump wasn't there.

Months passed, and finally Tump came to school in his father's arms. My grandfather said that he looked like a puppet without strings, and he could hardly speak or even move. There was no football, soccer, running—or *any* sports—for Tump. The fastest kid in school would never run again.

As horrible as it was, it was the beginning of the end for polio. My grandfather said that not a single kid in school got it the next year, and soon doctors had a vaccine that defeated The Polio forever. Tump completed school and became a skilled artist, but the best thing was that he never lost his ability to say clever things that made people laugh.

Drennen Weems
Alabama, USA

Spudnut Saturday

c. 1954
Tampa, Florida, USA

Back then, in 1954, everything was good in Tampa, Florida. Gas was 20 cents per gallon. Candy bars and Coca-Cola were 5 cents, and cars were 1,500 dollars. Everybody wanted that kind of stuff. Everybody had a job, too. You either worked with your parents or in the yard, or did chores. TV didn't even come on till 4:00 P.M. It was always funny, too—no murder shows or survival shows, not to mention it was in black and white. That's when a well-known paperboy got an idea.

Every Saturday was payday for the little paper-route boy, who was only around ten years old at the time. He rode around on his Schwinn bike, and threw one of his forty to forty-five customers a newspaper. The lady caught him. At first he thought that she was going to yell at him because he had thrown the paper at her bushes, but instead she asked the boy to go buy her a Spudnut if she gave him some money. A Spudnut is like a doughnut, but it's made out of potatoes. So he thought, "Why not?" When he came back from the local corner store called "Mom-and-Pop," she gave him a quarter.

Back then, a quarter would be like 2 dollars now. The Spudnuts didn't cost that much. That's when the little paperboy got an idea: If he sold Spudnuts on every Saturday morning, he'd have a fortune. So he did. He wasn't afraid to ask anybody anything. So when he went to deliver his paper to his customers and asked if they wanted any Spudnuts, most of them said yes. So every



Steven Griggs

Saturday morning he'd go to the corner store, buy some Spudnuts by the dozen, and sell them to his customers. He made about 10 dollars a week and was known as the kid with all the money.

His brothers were jealous of him because he had all the money. So when they wanted something, they went to him. The little salesman still works as a salesman at a local car dealership today. That's the story of how my grandpa sold Spudnuts to make money.

Audrey Herman
Ohio, USA

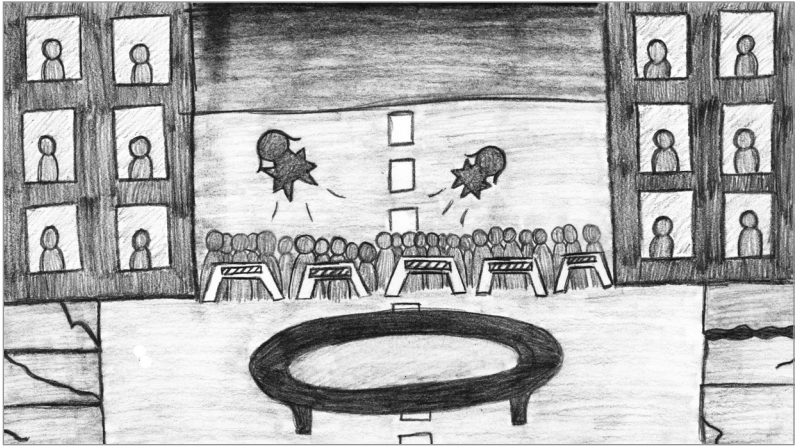
The Police Circus

c. 1957
St. Louis, Missouri, USA

It all started when a friend of my great-grandpa's invented trampolines. My grandma had the first trampoline in the St. Louis area. She exploded with excitement and happiness. All of the neighborhood kids would line up to get their turns on the trampoline. Even my great-grandma would jump on the trampoline in the backyard. My grandma and her brothers and sisters played on the trampoline every day after school.

My great-grandpa was a lieutenant in the St. Louis Police Department. He and some fellow officers were asked to serve on the Police Circus Board of Directors. Several weeks before the circus was to start, my great-grandpa found out that one of the acts had to cancel. He tried really hard to find another act to fill in, but he was unable to find one. He asked my grandma and her oldest sister to take the place of the trampolinist. My grandma and her oldest sister trained at the police station every day after school for hours at a time.

A few months later, my grandma arrived at the circus, which was held at the St. Louis Arena. Because she was still in high school, Grandma had to take a break to perform. She was shocked when she saw that she got her own dressing room! My great-grandma could not afford to buy costumes, so she sewed sequins to swimsuits instead. My grandma talked to the world-famous Flying Wallendas and many other circus acts during her time with the circus.



Katy Montgomery

My grandma and her sister put on a great show. After the show, they got to go on the trapeze and ride camels. Their act was so successful that they were asked to perform in the circus for three more years. They were also rewarded with two more trampolines to keep.

After performing in the police circus, Grandma also had many public appearances at children's hospitals. Grandma even had to perform on the busy street of Kingshighway while sick children watched from their windows. She and her sister also taught trampoline at summer camp for several years.

My grandma is an amazing lady and has such great stories to tell. Her circus stories are my favorites. It's amazing that she did all of this at such a young age. My grandma and two of her sisters still have the trampolines from the police circus, and I have jumped on them myself. My grandma hasn't jumped in years, but she still insists she can do the tricks.

Sean Britt
Missouri, USA

Way Too Close

c. 1960s
Guangzhou, China

It was a normal summer's day in Guangzhou—the sun beating down on the city like a photon sledgehammer; the buses and cars screeching, honking; and the drivers raging. Little did my grandma know that my uncle would nearly perform the most disgusting act of his life: eating poo.

Grandma was in the kitchen, steaming bok choy and preparing dinner. Uncle Cong was in his baby crib, playing with rattles and other irritatingly noisy baby toys. He also had a diaper on—not some fancy diaper made of the strongest cloth available, but a Chinese diaper, made out of paper. Paper. It was because Grandma, at the time, was in the “upper lower class.” She used to have lots of money from making good investments, but then came the Communist Party, and then some corrupt dictator caused massive inflation by telling the Chinese mint to go crazy printing cash. Anyway, those diapers were incredibly thin, and just about anything could penetrate them, especially what the diaper was *meant* to hold *in*.

HINT

Meanwhile, while Grandma was cooking, Uncle Cong plopped out a piece of poop. It tore through the diaper like a bullet through paper. Then he laughed. He reached out a hand to grab the poo. Then he started moving it toward his mouth. That was when Grandma turned around to see what he was laughing at. As soon as she saw the brown in the crib and the brown in his hands,

she screamed, “NOOOOOOOOOOO!” Well, in Chinese, of course. She ran as fast as her legs could carry her, and when she reached the crib, she snatched up Uncle Cong, jostling the poop out of his hands right before he could eat it. Quickly turning on the water, she threw him into the bath to scrub him clean for the next fifteen minutes. Then she went back to cooking, after washing her own hands clean.

It was then that Grandpa came home from his daily jog. “Anything exciting happen?” he questioned.

“Nope,” Grandma replied.

Nathan He
New Jersey, USA

Apartheid

1962
Cape Town, South Africa

Apartheid*—a policy enforced by the South African government separating whites from darker-skinned citizens. It was a word I had heard my grandpa Herzl say, but I never understood the full depth of it until he told me his story.

In 1962 Herzl was student-body president of the University of Cape Town in South Africa. The one big problem student-body presidents faced was apartheid.

Because the university had a lot of white and “Coloured”** students, Herzl had said, “My goal as student-body president is to see that all students be treated equal. Not to be excluded because they look different.” And that was how things happened at the University of Cape Town. Herzl shut down white-only student organizations and societies. He did this so no nonwhite students were excluded. He did many things; this was just one attempt at racial equality.

In another major attempt, Herzl sent out invitations to every student leader and hundreds of students from all over Cape Town, asking them to join him in a protest against apartheid and the South African government. The day arrived, and not one person did not show. There were hundreds of students from all over with

* Apartheid (pronounced uh-PART-hite or uh-PART-hate) involved many kinds of discrimination against nonwhites.

** In South Africa, *Coloured* refers to people of mixed-race descent and does not suggest disrespect, as *colored* does in many other parts of the world.

the same goal of racial equality. Herzl got up in front of these hundreds and said, “I am glad you all could join me today; we are going to execute a legal protest. I expect that all of you are aware of the law that no whites and darker-skinned citizens are allowed to have social interactions within ten yards of each other. We are going to protest against that law. You have all been given torches; once we step outside, you will all light your torches. One person will walk exactly ten yards off campus, then stop. The next person of opposite race will walk ten yards past him and stop. This will continue to happen until we have a line of torches going a few miles into downtown.”

They stepped outside, and as leader, Herzl went first. He lit his torch, walked ten yards, then stopped. Then the second person did the same. But before the third person could do the same, they heard WE-WOO-WE-WOO. “We are the police. Nobody else is to cross that gate.” And a cop came and cuffed the gate closed. “Hand the torches to me!” yelled a cop.

“Nothing we are doing is illegal!” a student shouted back.

Hours went by, but they held their ground. When the clock struck 1:00 A.M., four hours into their protest, a policeman came up, gun raised, and took the torches and yelled, “Go home, kids. You lost.”

And that’s what they thought—they had lost. But later that night, while Herzl was in bed listening to the news on the radio, he heard, “Earlier tonight a student protest was illegally stopped. *Were* the police breaking the law?” And they had won.

David Friedman
Colorado, USA

The Wolbach Whale

1966
Wolbach, Nebraska, USA

It is 65 feet long, weighs 70,000 pounds, and is 112 inches in diameter. It came into town on two flat railroad cars. It took two days, half a dozen men, several tractors, and some large jacks to move it onto the cement cradle. It was on October 19, 1959, that my great-grandpa Vic Grossart installed a 30,000-gallon propane tank in Wolbach, Nebraska. Because it is as heavy and as huge as a whale, everybody thought it was permanent, stationary, and unmovable.

But six years later, on August 12, 1966, Wolbach got a major blow from Mother Nature. Wolbach received a downpour of rain, resulting in a flash flood.

When the storm hit, Great-Grandpa Vic and his family were on vacation in Silver Dollar City in Missouri. As they were all having fun, Vic happened to watch the television news. He was amazed to hear that Greeley County in Nebraska had received seventeen inches of rain.

After hearing the weather report, they had to hurry up and get back to Wolbach to see what damage had been done. When they reached the tank, they discovered that the water had pushed the tank up onto a bank along the creek, south of Wolbach. The tank had 9,000 gallons of propane in it when the flash flood of water had come through and picked it up. It broke all the lines, and all of the gallons of propane had leaked out. That huge, heavy, permanent, stationary tank had moved!

As the tank had been rushing down the flooded creek, several people had seen it and later said, “It sounded like a whale!” It sounded like a whale, because when it was going down the river, it was turning and rolling. Every time the propane leak was on the top side, it sounded like water coming out of a whale’s blowhole, and when the leak was pulled under the water, it sounded like a whale was blowing gigantic bubbles in water.

A few days later, my grandpa Steve, being only fourteen years old, had to go to the propane tank, open the manhole, and climb down into the tank and clean it out. He had to haul mud and water out, one bucketful at a time. Then when he finally got it cleaned out, they had to figure out how to get the tank back to its original spot. They finally had to build a road over the train track, and then they had to have a company out of Omaha come and haul the whale of a tank back.

Finally, after doing all of that, it was back to its original place. The tank is still in use today. My family uses it in our propane business. We fill our two trucks with propane from the huge tank and then deliver it to customers’ homes and businesses.

Now our area is suffering from a huge drought, but at least we don’t have to worry about our “whale” swimming away in a flood.

Cade Grossart
Nebraska, USA

Turtle Trouble

c. 1970s
Wayne, New Jersey, USA

“Mom, I’m going down to the lake!” I slammed the door shut and rode my bike down to the curb by the path to the lake, about ten minutes from my house.

“Look,” I said to myself, “there is a turtle.” I bent down to pick it up, and it tried to nudge me, but it missed. I rode home as fast as I could with the turtle in my bike basket.

When I showed my mom, she shrieked with fright, but I asked if I could keep it anyway. She replied, “Let the turtle go back to the lake. If it comes back to you, you can keep it.”

I decided to be smart about this, because I really wanted this turtle. I went up to my bedroom and put the turtle down. I reached over to my desk and grabbed a Sharpie marker. While humming to myself, I wrote



Hannah R. Anderson

on the turtle's shell **If lost, please return to Michael Singer**. After that, I wrote my phone number and address. Before it got too dark out, I put the turtle near the curb. Remembering that turtles are very slow, I figured it should be back by the lake in the morning.

The next day I was so exhausted from bike riding for so long the day before that I decided to sleep in a little longer. As I reached to shut off my alarm, I heard my mom scream, "Michael, get down here!" I would have taken a longer time, but she seemed really mad.

"Is this your turtle from yesterday?" My mom looked like she was going to cry, she was so mad.

I answered truthfully, "Yeah, I wrote on its shell so I could find it again."

My mom looked at me and at the guy with a black jacket and blue hat at the door holding the turtle. She told him thank you, took the turtle, and shut the door. My mom told me that since it came back, I could keep it, but I—and only I—would take care of it. I agreed and proudly marched up the stairs with my new pet turtle.

Haley Singer, daughter of Michael
New Jersey, USA

My Dad, Immigrating to the U.S.

November 20, 1971
Mannheim, Germany;
Queens, New York, New York, USA

This story is told from the view of my dad, Jim Cavezza.

When I was only six years old, my dad, mom, and I moved to America. The year was 1971 when I was first told I was moving, and I felt very afraid, because I didn't know what to expect to find in another country so far away from mine. I didn't speak any English, and I was leaving my friends and extended family behind.

On the plane ride to America I kept asking my mom, "Where will I go to school? Where will we live?"

My mom said we would live in an apartment in New York City. I didn't know how to make friends, because I didn't speak English and I didn't know how to play any games. I didn't even know what games they played or what they were called.

When I started school, I didn't know what to do and I didn't even understand what the teacher was saying. It was like I was deaf. I sat in the corner all day, playing with Legos and thinking, "Let me out of this place. I want to go home." When school was finally let out for the day, I ran all the way home, not even stopping or looking back.

One day I was walking back from school in the snow. I ran into the neighborhood bully. He was about fourteen years old and about six feet tall. He started coming after me. Eventually he cornered me. He started punching me and kicking me. After he knocked me down,

I had bruises everywhere. I even had a broken nose. I limped home, and when my mom and dad saw me, they almost had a heart attack.

“Hi,” I said.

“What in the world happened to you!” they exclaimed in unison.

“The neighborhood bully cornered me and beat me up. He even broke my nose.”

My dad rushed out the door and in a couple minutes came back with the bully. My dad started smacking him and saying, “If you are to touch my son again, I will smack you even harder and in a much more painful place!” My dad smacked him one more time and then threw him out the door.

“All right, Dad,” I groaned.

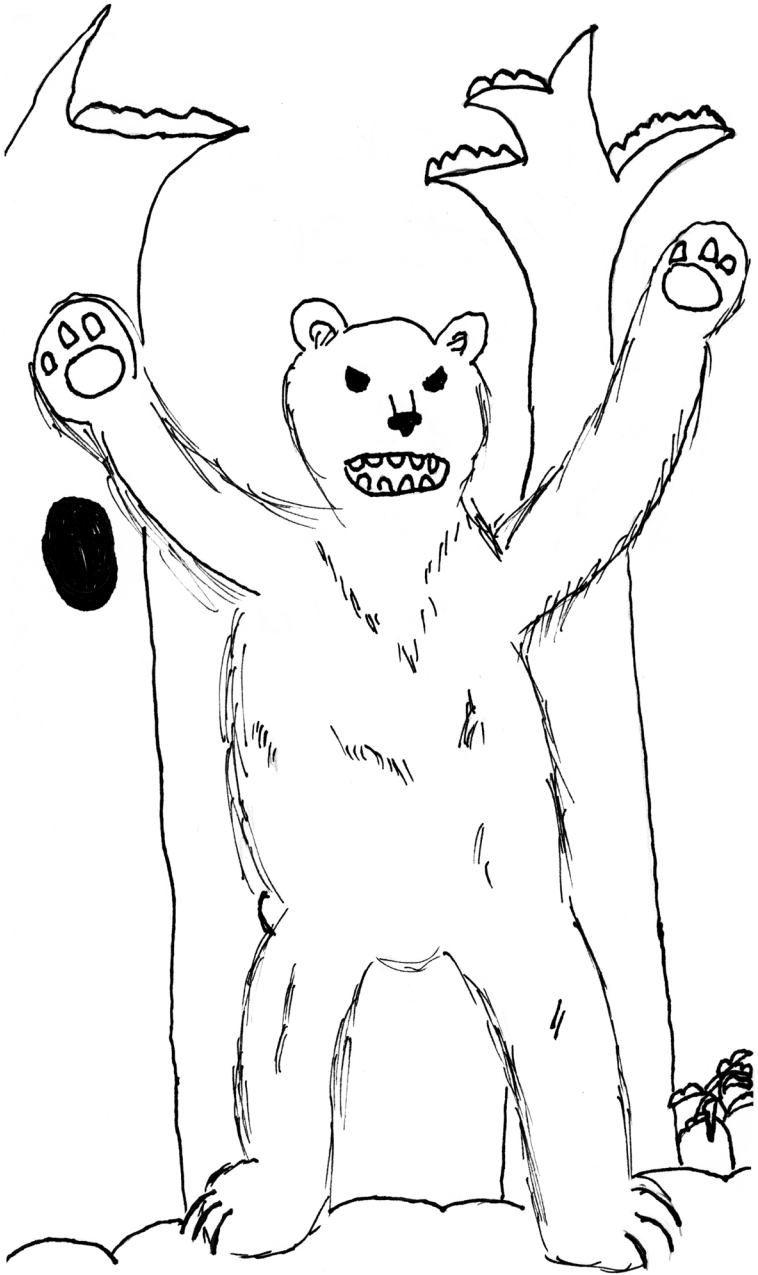
After a few hours had passed, there was a knock at the door. My dad went and opened it. There were two policemen, the bully, and his dad. “Um . . . sir, did you hit this man’s son?” the policeman asked.

“Yes, and you want to know why? Come take a look at *my* son!” my dad exclaimed. My dad led them upstairs, where I was lying on the couch. “This is what he did to my son!”

My mom was holding an ice pack over my head. The policeman studied me for a second and then said to the bully’s dad, “I’m sorry, sir, but you can’t press charges against this man.”

“Of course you can’t press charges against me,” my dad said in a sarcastic way. After the policeman left, my dad took me to the hospital. I came back a few hours later and felt better than I had before. I even wanted to go back to school. I couldn’t wait for tomorrow.

Dominic Cavezza; New Jersey, USA



Madison Grady

Attack of the Polar Bear

1972
Olenegorsk, Russia

It was 1972 in Olenegorsk, Russia. My mother, Kate, was only two years old at the time. Her sister, who was five years old, had joined her for the most exhilarating sled ride down a gigantic hill! They jumped off the sled a little dazed, and had a massive snowball fight. After that, my mother's sister forgot about her and went inside. My mom did not notice.

My mom started wandering around the forest's edge. She went inside the forest. When she was about ten feet inside, she heard two frightening booming footsteps behind her. She turned around, and about fifteen feet away from her was a startling 350-pound man-eating polar bear!

She did not know what to do, so she called out her mother's name. No response. Then she called out her father's name a little bit louder—but still no response. After that, she heard the polar bear growl. She screamed out her sister's name at the top of her lungs, and the bear roared. She started to whimper and burst into millions of wet tears. The polar bear finally noticed her boisterous crying and roared. It started coming closer little by little. My mom screamed and screamed, but still nobody heard her.

Back at the house, everybody was worried about my mom outside all alone, and they started a search group to find her. Minutes passed, and the polar bear was about six feet away now. The polar bear and my

mom noticed a rustling in the bushes. Three seconds later a very angry mob of about six to seven people came screaming and swatting the bear away. The monstrous polar bear stood up on its hind legs, roared at the top of its lungs, and ran away as fast as a bull.

The angry mob went over to my mom, picked her up, and cheered as loud as they could! My mom, along with the angry mob of people, paraded back to the house in a triumphant march. They ate a glorious breakfast that included warm boiled eggs and sizzling bacon.

When my mom told me this story, I was in shock for a long time, because it is extremely rare to be seen and almost attacked by a polar bear. If the angry mob of people had been just one minute later, my mom would have been an angry polar bear's breakfast.

Daniel Volobuev
Missouri, USA

The Kmart Disaster

c. 1975
Des Plaines, Illinois, USA

It was my uncle's senior year in high school. For eight months he had been working for Kmart. Little did he know what was in store for him one day. He was working in the gardening department. He was stacking cement mix with a forklift.* That was when it all started.

When my uncle was on the forklift, he put the forklift too high, and it hit the water pipe. SPLASH! The water came out! Since it was winter in Chicago, the water had green water-freeze protection. "Nooooo!" screamed my uncle. "I am going to lose my job." He ran to the emergency phone. "We have an emergency!" he screamed. That was when he saw that hitting the pipe had turned on the water sprinklers. That would not have been so bad if they hadn't been going off in the whole store. The green water was spraying everywhere.

My uncle ran out the door just in time to see two fire trucks, two cop cars, an ambulance, and his father. Surprisingly, his father had been driving by when he saw the incident. He wanted to see what had happened. "What happened here?" said the fireman.

"It's a long story," said my uncle.

Of course, he lost his job a week later. He ended up ruining all the products in the store. The whole cost was over a million dollars, but he was not charged for the merchandise, because it was an accident.

* A forklift is a machine with fork-like prongs used to lift and move heavy objects.

The reason I tell this story is because if you ever have an “accident,” it won’t be as bad as this. You should never feel bad for a mistake like this. It happens to the best of us. Despite this, my uncle grew up to be the dean of Stanford University for twelve years.

P.S. In his next job he dropped a knife in a meat grinder.

Shaun Slamowitz
Colorado, USA

Stuck to the Ground

1978
Oakville, Missouri, USA

It was a sunny day in May 1978. The birds were chirping, the lawns on Sky Hill Drive in Oakville, Missouri, were all green from the April showers. A mischievous eight-year-old boy named Bryan Lucas had just told a doozy of a lie at his Catholic grade school, and it was on this day that the “coin prank” became legendary.

Before Bryan was read his rights by his mom (my grandma) he was asked to bring the brown trash can up from the curb. As Bryan walked to the side of the house, breathing in the fresh air for his last time for the next couple days, he suddenly had a brilliant idea. Bryan would have some fun while being “grounded.”

Bryan went into the garage with a smirk on his face. He proceeded to grab superglue out of the rusty old toolbox and a quarter out of his mom’s powder blue Chevette. Walking proudly, chest out, Bryan strolled down the sidewalk. Bryan squirted a big glob of glue onto the bumpy concrete. Next he pressed the quarter into the glue with all his might. Bryan stood up and brushed his hands together as if he had succeeded at the biggest prank ever.

When Bryan went back into the house, he happily went back to his room to begin his grounding sentence. At this point, Bryan had no idea how long he was going to be grounded, but he knew his entertainment for the duration of the sentence. With his green eyes focused on the sidewalk, with the quarter shining in the sunlight,

Bryan awaited his first victim. Bryan had a great eye-level view from his bedroom as he sat in his beanbag chair.

A person came by and noticed the quarter, bent over, and picked and picked, trying to grab the lucky coin. No luck. Then more and more children and adults came by—people walking their dogs, kids stopping on their bikes—all attempting to become twenty-five cents richer and luckier. Some people shook their head and laughed when they realized the coin was a prank.

My grandma heard lots of laughter coming from Bryan's room and could not imagine what he was up to now. Grandma went into his room, and Bryan confessed to his latest prank. Grandma was unable to be mad, because she thought it was a pretty clever idea. Bryan did receive a lecture and a threat to never lie at school again. Bryan and my grandma sat together looking out the window with their dog Pepper by their side, enjoying the entertainment of all who walked by.

Hailey Peterson, niece of Bryan
Missouri, USA

A Miscommunication

c. 1984
Guangdong Province, China

It was the winter break of my dad's junior year in high school and the time to join his parents, who had gone to Foshan to visit his ailing grandparents.

His parents' friend bought the ticket for him and sent a telegraph to Foshan about the arrival time. At age fifteen, it was going to be my dad's first time on a train all by himself. He took a very thick book and fifteen pounds of tangerines with him, which were from his mom's workplace and signified good luck for the coming Chinese New Year.

The twenty-hour train ride was smooth, but he could not fall asleep, because there wasn't room to lie down. To keep himself busy, he read the book, written by Mikhail Sholokhov.

Finally he arrived at the Guangzhou station. Pushing and shoving through crowds of people, he craned his neck to search for his parents. He knew exactly where to expect them, since he had gone through this train station several times with his parents on vacations. After being jostled by countless people passing through the station, he finally got to the exit. They weren't there!

"Maybe the traffic is bad," he thought.

Trains came and went in a flash, and so did crowds of people. A long, hopeful hour and a half later, there was still no sign of his parents. He was getting anxious. Searching his memory, he vaguely remembered how to get to Foshan, which was twenty miles away. He started to ask almost everyone he came upon.

Several confusing bus transfers later, he finally got to where the buses to Foshan were supposed to be. They were gone! People told him that the bus station had been moved to the west end of the city, because the city's center couldn't handle the heavy flow of holiday passengers. Suddenly, it started raining, and he had no umbrella. He was soaked and was stuck with two not-so-attractive backpacks, making him look almost like a hobo!

An hour later at the western suburb, my dad was once again disappointed. The last bus had just left, and it was getting dark. He was starting to think of how to spend the night in the city when some motorcyclists came and offered people rides. My dad had seen these makeshift taxis many times before but didn't know if he could trust them. In addition, they were asking for twelve dollars, whereas the bus fare was two dollars. With no other choice he decided to "roll the dice."

My dad didn't know his uncle's address but remembered how to get there from the small town's main theater. After the ride in pouring rain, he finally got to his uncle's house and could soak his aching feet in boiling hot water. As it turned out, his uncle had misunderstood the telegraph and thought he would arrive the next day.

My dad would never forget that long rainy day, the feeling of growing up, and being able to handle the unexpected.

Rebecca Tan
Missouri, USA

The Game-Winning Shot

1984

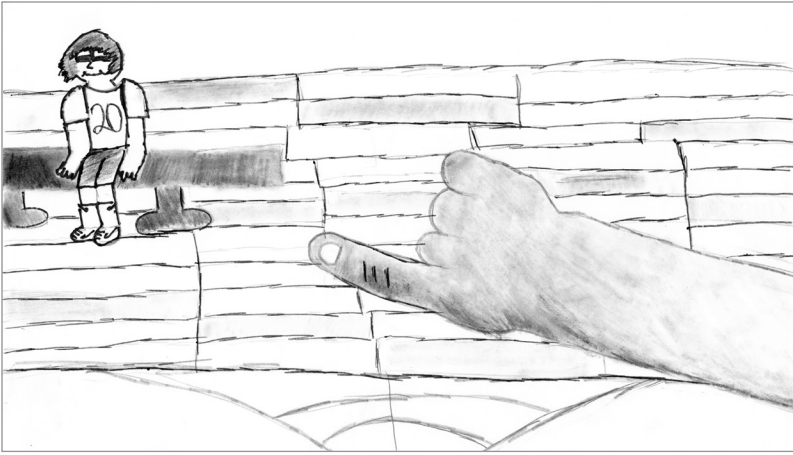
Spalding, Nebraska, USA

My dad came to the basketball game like it was like any other game. But it wasn't. It was the district finals—the game that determined which team would go to the state tournament.

Dad's team, the Greeley Bulldogs, was playing their archrival, Spalding Academy, who had already beaten them twice—by fifteen points each game. Spalding was rated fifth in the state, and everybody thought Greeley didn't have a chance. Spalding even thought it was going to be an easy game. But boy, they were so wrong!

When the game started, Spalding took an early 8-0 lead, and everybody thought it was going to be a blowout. At the end of the first quarter, Spalding was winning by twelve points! Dad's team had their heads down, and their confidence was even lower. Their coach said, "Don't worry! It is only the first quarter, and we still have time. Now get back out there and get back in this!"

Greeley started the second quarter hot. They made five of their first six shots, cutting the lead to two points. But then the gym hushed. Greeley's best player went down in agony. He was so injured that he couldn't play. Somebody had to go in for him, but the coach didn't know who. He looked up and down the bench. Then he finally stopped, looked right at my dad, and pointed at him.



Kelsie Waggoner

At halftime, Spalding was ahead 38–36. Dad’s coach told them, “Just keep doing what you’re doing; play *your* game, not theirs. This is our game!”

In the third quarter, Greeley scored ten points in a row. However, Spalding answered back and tied the game within minutes. But before you could even blink, Greeley was up by six points again. Surprisingly, Spalding would get back into the game. At the end of the third quarter, Greeley was ahead 50–45. Greeley’s coach encouraged, “Just one more quarter!”

At the start of the fourth quarter, the gym noise was earsplitting. Greeley scored the first points of the fourth quarter. Greeley’s momentum was grand, but Spalding didn’t quit. They ended up taking the lead with one minute left in the game. The score was 78–76, but then Greeley made a three-point shot and was ahead by one point. Spalding called a timeout, and in the huddle, Dad’s coach said, “We need to hold them! Get a steal and hold on to it. Don’t let them get easy points.”

Greeley made a two-pointer to make them lead by three points. Spalding struck right back with a three-pointer, and the score was tied with ten seconds left in the game. Greeley threw the ball in. Dad grabbed the ball at the three-point line and shot! The ball sank into the basket as the buzzer went off! Greeley won. Greeley was going to the Nebraska state basketball tournament! The final score was 84–81. That is what I call a great game-winning shot!

Connor Wood
Nebraska, USA

Hands Across America

1986
Toledo, Ohio, USA

When my mom was just about my age, almost eleven, she saw a commercial promoting Hands Across America. She knew instantly this was something she wanted to do.

Hands Across America was a charitable cause to help the homeless and fight hunger right here in America. There were commercials and even a song! The vision of Hands Across America was a line of people holding hands from coast to coast (New York to California). In order to reserve your place in line, you had to make a ten-dollar donation. My mom was very excited, because she remembered how the song “We Are the World” made a huge impact on her and the rest of the world. My mom thought this would be an amazing opportunity to participate and be part of something big! She can remember being over the moon when she received her location and totally cool T-shirt in the mail.

Unfortunately, she never got to wear the shirt. My mom’s cousin Pete, my second cousin, was a marine stationed in Hawaii at the time, so he could not participate. Pete was home on leave the week before the colossal event. He saw my mom’s shirt proudly displayed in her room, just waiting to be worn. He loved it! Pete said it would be a great conversation piece back at the barracks. My mom figured since he was serving our country, the least she could do was give him the shirt. So that’s exactly what she did!



Elizabeth Adams

There were approximately 6.5 million people holding hands! The line was 4,152 miles long! It was May of 1986 when Hands Across America took place. My mom said she didn't think there were enough people to make an unbroken chain, and she could see broken links from where she was, but it didn't matter. It was monumental to my eleven-year-old mother. My mom and grandma watched the news later that night. The newscaster had said that even though hands were not held everywhere, if each person stood four feet apart with their hands stretched out to their sides, from heaven it would look like one continuous line.

In conclusion, I think Hands Across America was a pretty unique and fantastic experience for my mom to see and for me to hear about. To see our country participating in something so humanitarian rather than being at odds with one another would be wonderful. Maybe sometime in my lifetime, our society will come together again for the aid of our own.

Jocelyn Crossley; Ohio, USA

The One-Ticket Escape

June 5, 1989
Beijing, China

June 5, 1989. My mother, father, and four of their colleagues were anxiously huddled in worry and fright in an old subway station. Chaos surrounded the six college students as they struggled to remain together despite being jostled by the crowd. All the buses were down, and outside nothing but tanks seemed to be running—rolling across the unpaved roads in rhythmic parade.

The six colleagues were desperate. They needed to escape the panic of Tiananmen Square,* and their only option was the subway. Everything was gated in, including the waiting area and the ticket booth. But what were they to do with the one ticket they could afford? The adventure began.

“All right,” my mother, Wenli, suggested, “how about we send one of us with the one ticket to climb over the gate and purposely be caught? We have a ticket, and the excuse can be we didn’t know about the gate opening.”

The other five looked uneasy at the idea.

“What if we aren’t allowed past? What if we’re caught?”

Firmly, Wenli answered, “Well, is there anyone willing to try?”

A long moment of silence ensued. Then abruptly her girl colleague, Hong, bravely responded, “I’ll do it.”

* Tiananmen Square was the center of a seven-week student protest against the Chinese government—to which the government responded with military force. To learn more, read “Tiananmen Square Crackdown” in *Grannie Annie*, Vol. 6.

“But what if you’re caught?” my father asked uncertainly, concerned about the overall safety of his friends.

“We can do it,” Hong replied boldly. “We will get out of Beijing and to a place of safety.”

Thus the plan was hatched. Hong was to climb over the fence and distract the conductor, who would open the gate to talk to her. When the gate was opened, the other five were to sneak in and board the train. A simple, but dangerous, plan.

Dexterously, Hong climbed up and over the fence with no trouble.

“Hey!” the one and only conductor yelled. “What are you doing?”

The conductor rushed over, opening the gate at the same time. Hong feigned confusion as she looked at the approaching conductor’s stern figure.

Meanwhile, the other five stealthily headed toward the gate opening, blending into the crowd and remaining alert. They hid their anxiety and hoped for success.

“If you have a ticket, why didn’t you go through the gate door?” the conductor was demanding of Hong.

Hong innocently answered, “I didn’t know there was a door. The crowds hid it from my view. I thought I needed to climb over.”

Reluctantly the conductor let the girl through, and with the other five successful in their part, the entire plan was officially a success. Relieved, they boarded the train, and today they all live in America with this unforgettable memory as part of their history. Often, my parents reminisce about the terror and nervousness

during the historic event. They will forever be grateful for the survival of their friends and themselves.

Julia Hu
New Jersey, USA

Toyota Tercel Trouble

2000

St. Louis, Missouri, USA

My dad is an environmentalist. In fact, he is the greenest guy I know. He keeps his carbon footprint small as an atom and reuses almost everything. My dad bikes to work every day, wears socks that my dog has chewed till there *are no socks*, and owned the same car for twenty-one years.

In 1980, he took ownership of that car, a Toyota Corolla Tercel, one of the “greenest” white cars with blue pinstripes of the time. My dad remembers the car well. He bought it in twelfth grade for \$6,120, with the money he earned by scooping ice cream at Baskin-Robbins for two years. The beloved car had a stick shift, only two doors, and a hatchback. It traveled thirty miles per gallon—pretty green for back then! My dad drove it to college in northern California, to medical school in San Diego, to Arizona, and then from Arizona to St. Louis!

After sixteen years, the car started getting hard to start in cold weather. On freezing days my dad would spray stinky starting fluid into the carburetor to start the rickety car. A couple years later, the passenger door broke. It was too expensive to fix, but my dad made the best of the event, and of course, the green guy kept the car.

In 2000 my dad drove the twenty-year-old car to the dentist. When he parked at the dentist’s office, he tried to get out of the aging car, but to my dad’s dismay, the driver’s door had joined the passenger door in the

land of being stuck. “Well, that’s all right. I’ll just open the window and climb out that way,” my dad thought. So he unrolled the driver’s window and climbed out. At that point, my dad realized that, unfortunately, if he didn’t want his stereo to be stolen, he would need to close the window. So he reached into the open window, cranked up the window halfway, then pulled his arm out. Then he opened the hatchback, which opened and closed only from the outside, and crawled in. He landed on the seats that were spilling over with foam like a glass of overflowing root beer. Next he rolled the driver’s window up from inside the car, scooted back to the hatchback, climbed out the hatchback, closed the hatchback, and joyfully marched to his dentist appointment, basking in the pride of his success.

After the appointment, which wasn’t as pleasant as he had anticipated, he sighed, and then got to work. First he climbed into the car through the hatchback and then rolled down the driver’s window. Next he climbed out the driver’s window, closed the hatchback, climbed back into the car through the open window, rolled up the window from inside the car, and drove away.

My dad didn’t give away that beloved Toyota Tercel until 2001, when, in addition to becoming donated, reusable metal scraps, it had also become the place that an ant colony called home.

Belle Sara Gage
Missouri, USA

Illustrators of Volume 8

- [p. 22](#) Autumn Caito; Missouri, USA
- [p. 29](#) Mikael Fett Schultheis; Missouri, USA
- [p. 35](#) Molly Andersen; Missouri, USA
- [p. 38](#) Nguyet Nguyen; Missouri, USA
- [p. 44](#) Maggie Morse; Missouri, USA
- [p. 55](#) April Turner; Missouri, USA
- [p. 63](#) Steven Griggs; Missouri, USA
- [p. 65](#) Katy Montgomery; Missouri, USA
- [p. 72](#) Hannah R. Anderson; Missouri, USA
- [p. 76](#) Madison Grady; Missouri, USA
- [p. 86](#) Kelsie Waggoner; Missouri, USA
- [p. 89](#) Elizabeth Adams; Missouri, USA

Grannie Annie Storykeepers 2013

Congratulations to the following young people for discovering, writing, sharing, and submitting a story from their family's history!

Rivka Abedon • Yisroel Arnson • Eli Asarch • Yordanose Atanaw
Jane Ann Baggett • Sebastian Baker • Miles R. Bassett
Graeme Baxley • Evan Beck • Shelby Behnk • Tyler Beilsmith
Joseph R. Berglund • Amy Betancourth • Emma Biermann
Eliza Black • Shannon Bock • Haleigh Borich • Taylor Brady
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Matthew Bruenning • Hunter Bruno • Jackson Bry
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John Christen • Phil Christodoulou • Ryan Cilli • Sophie J. Clody
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Clark Cytron • Mitchell Dade • Allison Davis • Hope Davis
Madei Davis • Elizabeth DePalma • Lincoln Dibler
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Matthew Donnelly • Dede Driscoll • Matthew Dubowski
Sophie Dudeck • Jack DuMont • Hannah Dwyer
Jessica Eastlund • Thomas Eck • Jala Ehrenfried • Savannah Evers
David Fitzgerald • Tony Follmer • Madi Foonberg
David Friedman • Kamryn Fuegner • Belle Sara Gage
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Jill Goldwasser • Dacey Goodwin • Cade Grossart • Michael Guber
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Nili Hefetz • Megan Heim • Alex Held • Anya Helmer

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Zane McNeill • Hannah Merenstein • Hope A. Middaugh
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Chester J. Mlcek • Mirabelle Rose Mockler • Sydney Mueller
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Jack O'Connor • Elizabeth O'Dowd • Kenny Oelkers
Lindsay Origliasso • Payton Palazzolo • Jenna Pardieck
Jenna Parmentier • Michael Patterson • Luke Paulus
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Christian Reller • Olivia Rhodes • Elia Grace Rios
Miles Robinson • Saida Robles-Razzaq • Hunter Roggero
Kylie Ross • Kayla Rother • Ben Rovner • Rebecca Sachs

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Tommy Schefers • Parker Schell • Jenny Schmitt
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Lucie Wolfson • Connor Wood • Danielle Wu • Taryn Yaggie
Ben Yao • Julia Young • Katherine O. Zoellner • Natasha Zoellner
Tuvya Zonenberg

Invitation to Participate

Please join us for the 2013/2014 Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration. The submission deadline for *Grannie Annie, Vol. 9*, is February 1, 2014. Complete [details](#), including the required submission form, are available at www.TheGrannieAnnie.org.

Praise for The Grannie Annie

Year after year, my fifth-grade students are eager and excited to submit their work to *The Grannie Annie*. The experience of submitting a manuscript—with the hope of publishing—gives newfound meaning to their learning. The students stand taller when they become cognizant that the world is benefiting from their contribution.

Rebecca Friedman, Teacher; Maryland, USA

Orion's writing a family story was extremely important to his grandmother, who had a serious illness. When he called her to tell her that his story was going to be published, she was as happy as anyone had seen her in months. She read the story to anyone who would listen. I can't even begin to tell you the positive impact that this has had on our family.

Andrew Jones, Parent; Pennsylvania, USA

The *Grannie Annie* is doing a wonderful job of getting kids more interested in reading, writing, and learning more about their families and their past.

Bert Francis, Parent; Missouri, USA

Thank you so much for creating such a wonderful writing opportunity for young people. I look forward to the students participating each year and reading the published stories.

Amy Del Coro, Teacher; New Jersey, USA

I am always on the lookout for ways to share my students' writing and am thrilled to have discovered *The Grannie Annie*. Everyone had so much fun finding out about past family events, and I'm proud of the stories the students produced.

Beverly Miller, Teacher; Alabama, USA

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

The Reading Tub™, www.TheReadingTub.com

I would like to thank you for giving Yifu such an encouragement, and working diligently to publish his first article! Our families in China are very happy to hear about this. It is an amazing experience to me that I witness that a part of my family heritage is being connected from my father to my son through the event you support! Thank you!

Yuxing Feng, Parent; Missouri, USA

Writing for The Grannie Annie helps my students feel confident as writers, which in turn provides their imaginations with a comfortable setting in which to create.

Katelin Moquin, Teacher; Missouri, USA

My son “harvested” several stories from my father, including one that appeared in *Grannie Annie, Vol. 1*. My father has since passed away, and I am forever grateful that my son recorded these stories before it was too late. I doubt he would have done so if it had not been for The Grannie Annie.

Karen Metcalf, Parent; Tennessee, USA

The Grannie Annie challenged my students to go beyond their comfort zone, to write for a broader audience, and to see that learning goes beyond the four walls of a classroom.

Ann-Marie Harris, Teacher; Maryland, USA

The Grannie Annie is a good start for kids to get published. And I love the way The Grannie Annie helps people understand their family history. It also helps children get closer to their families.

Andrew Malphurs, Author of the *Grannie Annie, Vol. 5*, story “Grandpa’s Saddle”

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.

Brian Billings and Laura Amburgey, Teachers; Ohio, USA

Stories connect people in families and communities, giving them a common language and understanding of the present as well as the past. Through *The Grannie Annie*, generations connect as students take time to listen to the stories of their older relatives—and learn from them. Then, as the students write and share their stories, the connections multiply.

Amy Glaser Gage; Children’s author, writing teacher, and consultant to *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.

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*

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*

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; Georgia, USA

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; Nebraska, USA

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.

Jodi J. De Luca, Ph.D., Parent; Florida, USA

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

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 Glodeni, Moldova

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; Texas, USA

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; Texas, USA

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; Indiana, USA

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; Indiana, USA

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.EducatingForChange.com

Grannie Annie Order Form

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The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration

Young People Learning and Sharing Family Stories

[The Grannie Annie](#) invites students everywhere to discover and share stories from their family's history, and publishes collections of their work. The Grannie Annie experience leads young people to strengthen family and community bonds, encounter history in a personal way, and polish their writing skills.

“Year after year, my fifth-grade students are eager and excited to submit their work to The Grannie Annie. The experience of submitting a manuscript—with the hope of publishing—gives newfound meaning to their learning. The students stand taller when they become cognizant that the world is benefiting from their contribution.”

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—Andrew Jones, Parent; Pennsylvania, USA

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