



*The Grannie Annie
Family Story Celebration*

#16

The Grannie Annie's 16th Collection

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

Saint Louis, Missouri

The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration

Welcome to the 2020/2021 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 share their work with their family, school, community, and The Grannie Annie.

The works of seven young authors, chosen to represent the submissions received this year, are included in this sixteenth annual collection of Grannie Annie family stories. This year's stories are published on The Grannie Annie's website and in this complimentary PDF, and will be shared on social media throughout the year.

The Grannie Annie mission — to inspire young people to discover, write, and share historical family stories — springs from a belief in the transformative power of “story.” The simple, genuine family stories in this collection 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.

Published by The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration, P.O. Box 11343, Saint Louis, Missouri 63105.

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 The Grannie Annie's sixteenth collection 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.

Particular thanks to fiber artist Elda Miller, and graphics specialists Josh Hagan and Jeff Hirsch.

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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. Please mail your donation to the address at the top of this page or visit the donation page of The Grannie Annie's website: TheGrannieAnnie.org/DonatetoTheGrannieAnnie.html

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

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* The time setting of each story is noted in parentheses here and also on the story pages.
A notation of “c.” (circa) indicates that the year is approximate.

Story Settings Map, International

Numbers on map are story numbers.



Story Settings Map, United States

Numbers on map are story numbers.



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

What Are Your Stories of the 2020/2021 Pandemic?

The COVID-19 pandemic is probably the most far-reaching event on our planet since World War II. It has united the world against a common unseen enemy; yet ironically it has isolated many of us in our own homes. Have you been recording your thoughts, feelings, and observations about this unique time in history? Preserving your experience of today's challenges and celebrations will be a priceless gift for future generations — and may someday inspire a Grannie Annie story!

Note to Parents and Educators

The seven stories in The Grannie Annie's sixteenth collection, represent the sixty submissions received this year from young authors in six U.S. states and Israel. The published stories took place in six countries on three continents (and in one ocean) over a span of more than 150 years. Some stories relate a family member's involvement in historic events. Others vividly depict memorable experiences from times past. The stories entertain, educate, and inspire us, reminding us of the resilience of the human spirit.

Our volunteer readers chose these stories with you and your family in mind, yet you may want to preview the stories before sharing them with young or sensitive readers.

We're so pleased that you've joined us! We encourage you to discover and preserve some stories from your *own* family's history. And we hope that you'll join us again next year for The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration.

Connie McIntyre and Fran Hamilton, Directors of The Grannie Annie

Listening is an act of love.

—Dave Isay, StoryCorps

**The Grannie Annie's 16th Collection
of Historical Family Stories**

1. Eye Was Left for Dead

1862–1894; near Minonk, Illinois, and Vicksburg, Mississippi, USA¹

When the U.S. Civil War started, my great-great-great-grandfather Alma Rogers was twenty-three years old. Alma was a farmer in central Illinois. On August 13, 1862, Alma volunteered to fight for the Union Army² in the 77th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment. In September 1862 his army troop began to make their way from Illinois to Kentucky to Memphis, Tennessee, and then down the Mississippi River. Their goal was to secure the Mississippi River so that Union boats could travel safely and cut off enemy supply lines to the Confederacy, also known as “the South.”

The biggest battle that the 77th Illinois Infantry fought was the Battle of Vicksburg, Mississippi — to gain possession of a city way up on a bluff. Vicksburg was an important strategic point for the South, because it meant control of the Mississippi River. From Vicksburg, the Confederacy could bomb Union boats trying to attack from the river. The Battle of Vicksburg was extremely bloody. In the end, the Union Army prevailed at the Battle of Vicksburg, but not before my great-great-great-grandfather had the fight of his life.

During the battle on May 22, 1863, Alma was shot in his left eye. His obituary stated that he had shot his gun so many times with his right hand that his right shoulder got sore, so he switched hands. On the day that he was shot in his left eye, he was firing with his left hand. He fell to the ground, and everyone thought he was dead. Alma went several days without food or water — just lying there, still alive.

Days later, the Union Army started the sad task of picking up dead bodies. They discovered that Alma was alive, and they put him on a boat that took him to a hospital in Memphis. Then they later moved him to a hospital in St. Louis. The doctors stabilized him but couldn’t remove the bullet from his head because it might have injured him further — or worse. So Alma lived the rest of his life without a left eye.

After Alma recovered, he went back to farming in Illinois. He got married to Joanna Kerrick and later had six children. My great-great-great-grandfather died in 1894 at the age of fifty-six years. It was only after his death that the bullet was removed from his head.

Alma’s sacrifice helped to end slavery and make the United States whole again. If Alma Rogers had died during the Civil War, I wouldn’t be here today.

Juniper Colbert; Missouri, USA

1. The setting of each story is noted below its title. In cases where the exact date isn’t known, “c.” (circa) indicates that the year given is approximate.

2. In the U.S. Civil War, the Union Army fought for the United States, or “the North.” The Confederate States Army fought for the Confederacy, a group of Southern states that had formed a new country.

2. The Whale

1899; Bergen, Midhordland, Norway

My great-great-grandfather was named Rasmus Johnson. He was born on March 15, 1889, on an island in Bergen Harbor on the western coast of Norway. His father was a fisherman, and most of the other people in the village were either fishermen or farmers. The Johnson family lived in a small cottage along a fjord.¹ It was a small house, but it was enough for their family.

When Rasmus was around ten years old, his father and the fishing crew caught a whale. The crew towed the whale in with their fishing boat. The whale was probably a bowhead whale, which can be up to 60 feet long and weigh up to 200,000 pounds. Rasmus's dad and the fishing crew pulled the whale with ropes onto shore. The crew of fishermen cut the whale up into pieces for everyone in the village to take home — to either eat or use for its oil.

A whale being caught was exciting news in the small village, so all the children ran to see. Rasmus heard the news and was eager to see the giant catch of the day. He ran excitedly to the beach where the whale was being sliced into chunks of meat. When he got to the beach, a crowd of people were already there, getting their cut of whale meat. Some of his friends were at the scene, and they started to play around.

For an adventure, Rasmus bravely climbed up on top of the whale and walked towards its head. He was not watching where he was going and fell into the whale's blowhole. He almost fell completely in, but luckily he was able to quickly stretch out his arms to save himself. A fisherman saw what happened and rushed over to pull him out. Both the fisherman and Rasmus were relieved to be out of the whale. Thankfully, Rasmus did not get in any trouble when he got home. And everyone was able to enjoy the chunk of whale meat that his dad took home.

Compared to other days in the village, that day was very exciting for everybody, but it was especially exciting for Rasmus. Rasmus learned something important that day: He learned that you need to have adventure in life but you also need to remember to be cautious.

Torch Tebb; Missouri, USA

1. A fjord (pronounced fyord) is a long, narrow glacier-carved valley that lies between steep slopes and is filled with seawater.

3. Shipwrecked

1917–1918; New York, New York, USA; North Atlantic Ocean near France

In 1917 the United States entered World War I. My great-great-great-uncle Michael O'Donnell worked as a steamship engineer on a ship called the *Antilles*. The U.S. Army chartered the ship to transport American troops and ammunition to France to fight the German army.

Before dawn on October 17, 1917, three days after the delivery of the soldiers and supplies to France, Mike was already awake, because another steamship engineer had asked him to start his shift early so he wouldn't be alone before sunrise. German submarines usually attacked around that time, and the other steamship engineer was frightened.

At about 6:45 a.m. a torpedo from German submarine *U-62* hit the *Antilles*. The ship began to sink.

As the ship was evacuated, a fifteen-year-old cabin boy approached Mike and looked very worried. He told Mike that he couldn't find his life preserver and he didn't know how to swim. Mike might have been a little hesitant at first, but then he realized what he had to do: He took off his life preserver and gave it to the boy.

Mike jumped off the ship without a life jacket, the water feeling like an electric shock. Even though he knew he might get sucked underwater by the sinking ship, Mike managed to survive. The *Antilles* sank in about four and a half minutes.

After swimming in the dangerously cold water for a long time, Mike was rescued by a ship called the *Corsair*. The sinking of the *Antilles* caused the largest loss of U.S. lives up to that point in World War I. Tragically, the cabin boy Mike had tried to help did not survive.

Back in New York, where Mike had grown up, Mike's family received the newspaper, and they were devastated. The headline read "ANTILLES SUNK. ALL LOST." Everyone thought Mike was dead, but the paper was wrong. Sixty-seven people had died, but 118 had survived. And who would ring the doorbell one month later but Mike! Everyone was quite surprised and so happy to see that he was alive. They all crowded around Mike and hugged him.

After just a little time with his family, Mike went back to work to help America on a ship called the *Tenadores* and survived another maritime disaster. On December 28, 1918, the *Tenadores* hit a small island, which resulted in the ship getting tipped over on its side. The ship was quickly evacuated, and everyone was saved by a ship called the *Hubbard*.

Michael O'Donnell survived the sinking of the *Antilles*, and the shipwreck of the *Tenadores*. I am proud to be related to Michael O'Donnell — not only because of the adventures he had, but most importantly because of his selfless act of giving his life preserver to that boy. He had no idea what would happen on that fateful morning, but in the time of a life-and-death decision, he was selfless and kind.

Brady Clark; Missouri, USA

4. Fish Tree

1944; Halmaheira Prison Camp, Samarang, Java, Indonesia

In the 1930s, Indonesia was a Dutch colony. I lived there with my husband, Ari. In 1941, Japan bombed American ships in Hawaii so they could take over the Dutch East Indies.

My husband wanted to fight the Japanese. I hoped the Dutch Army would win so we could go back to living normally, but Japan was powerful. Soon we surrendered.

Everyone had to live in a concentration camp. The men were separated from the women and children. In a house built for a family of six, the Japanese forced twenty people! Everyone slept on the floor. We had to sleep like salmon in a basket.

The weather there was always changing. Sometimes it was dry. Sometimes it was wet. It was always hot. No matter the condition, we always worked. We dug ditches and planted gardens. I often got huge blisters from all the digging.

Sadly, the Japanese guards prevented us from harvesting the gardens. The plants turned brown and withered away. It was heartbreaking to see things we could have used for food leave us slowly. The Japanese let us cook in a community kitchen — but only porridge. We never had enough, so everyone got only one scoop. I was glad I didn't have children. I felt bad for those mothers who had to watch their children go to bed starving.

We lived on an island. In the middle of camp was a gigantic tree where herons nested. The mother herons wanted to feed their young as much as we wanted to feed ours. Every morning they caught fish. Once in a while, a baby heron was a bit clumsy, and the fish fell from the tree. When that happened, mothers in the camp sent their sons to look for the fish. If a boy saw one, he looked around to make sure there were no Japanese guards. If the guards saw him with a fish, he may not be allowed to eat for two days! If the boy did not see guards, he ran out, grabbed the fish, and ran back to his house. The prisoners split the fish evenly and ate it raw. They couldn't cook the fish, because if they used the kitchen, the guards would smell it and the prisoners would be punished. Getting the fish was such a treat that we did not mind eating it raw.

I was ecstatic when a boy came back with a fish. It reminded me of the Bible story where God promised Elijah that ravens would bring him meat when he was hungry during a famine. God took care of Elijah, and God took care of me.

After the war ended, the Japanese went back to their country. I had been in that camp for three and one-half years, and I was anxious to see Ari again. Thankfully he had not died in the war. Soon we had a daughter. We named her Dorothea, meaning "gift from God."

Annika Railsback, great-granddaughter of the narrator; Colorado, USA

5. Crossing the Border Every Day

1955–1959; West Berlin, West Germany; East Berlin, East Germany¹

Can you imagine going to school in a different country than the one you live in? My *saba*² Adam Pilarski did that six times a week.

Adam moved to Berlin in 1955, when he was seven years old. He moved there because his father was a diplomat for Poland and was stationed in Berlin. But Berlin was cut in half. There was West Berlin, and there was East Berlin. My saba lived in West Berlin but would go to school in East Berlin. Poland had a Communist³ government and was friendly with East Berlin, so Adam had to go to a school where he would be taught “politically correct things” by East German teachers.

From 1955 to 1959 Adam and his little brother, Gienek, would take the subway to their school. It took an hour for them to travel to school each day. Often people would ask them if they were ditching school, because it was uncommon for kids to go on that subway between East Berlin and West Berlin. Adam would say that he goes to school in a different city and country. Most people didn’t believe him and would say, “You have an exam in math today, don’t you?” When the subway would cross the border, there would be soldiers who would search the train for bad characters. They didn’t search Adam or his brother, because they were kids.

Going to school in East Berlin was hard at first for Adam, because he didn’t speak the language. He remembers that on the first day of school he wore a hat, and when he got to school the guards started shouting, “*Mütz ab!*” Adam didn’t know what those words meant and later told his parents that people had yelled at him. The next day his parents took him to school and clarified that he had to take off his hat before he went inside. Adam also didn’t understand his classroom teacher. But by the end of first grade he understood German and the rules.

In school Adam learned the usual things like math, German history, and science. But he also learned a lot of political things. At that time there was a lot of propaganda saying that West Berlin was a horrible place with lots of crime. The kids would ask Adam, “Wait! You *live* there? Is it really so bad?”

Adam would say, “No, it’s really much nicer. The stores are nicer.” The teachers talked to Adam’s parents and told him not to volunteer that information. Adam also was taught how evil the West was, especially America. His English textbook had a story saying that the American children would go door-to-door to ask for breakfast because they were starving.

Adam left Germany in 1959. In 1961 the East German government built the Berlin Wall, which fully separated East Berlin from West Berlin. But before the wall was built, my saba would cross that border regularly.

Katie Pilarski; New York, USA

1. Although the city of Berlin was 100 miles inside East Germany, West Berlin was part of West Germany.

2. *Saba* is Hebrew for “grandfather.”

3. In a Communist system, the government controls farms and businesses, and often limits individual rights.

6. 8,593 Miles Away from Home

1980s; Manila, Philippines; Brooklyn, New York, USA

I have always known that my mom's side of the family immigrated from the Philippines, but it wasn't until I interviewed my *lola*,¹ Amy, that I understood how much she sacrificed to immigrate to the United States with her family.

My lola grew up in a poor family with three brothers in Manila. Life was tough, so she hoped to one day help her parents financially. Celadonio Domingo, my great-grandfather, couldn't afford to send his kids to college. He joined the Philippine Army because they paid for one child's college education.

Out of all the kids, Amy took this huge responsibility and attended the University of Santo Tomas to study nursing. This made her father very proud. After graduating, my lola married and had three kids. Working as a nurse allowed her to support her parents, brothers, and new family.

In the 1980s the United States needed more healthcare workers and looked to foreign countries for help. Without hesitation, my lola snatched up the opportunity and applied when they started recruiting in the Philippines. She needed to pass medical and English exams, and interviews, in order to practice as a nurse in the United States.

With a lot of hard work and a little luck, Amy was offered a nursing job in Brooklyn, New York. She felt like she had won the lottery. But she also felt scared about moving to a foreign country and sad for having to leave her family. With a heavy heart, she accepted the job, because she could earn much more money in the United States.

From the beginning, Amy encountered many challenges. She had a hard time communicating, because Americans talked too fast for her, and her accent made it hard for them to understand her. She felt like she was on a different planet. Everything was so strange in the United States: the weather, food choices, and public transportation. Her new job did not start on a good note, because she had to deal with discrimination from some co-workers.

Feeling alone and isolated, Amy cried every day during her first few months in America. This pushed her to work harder every day so that she could see her family again. Eventually she made friends and found support among other Filipino nurses.

After two years, Amy impressed the doctors, and they gave her a permanent job at the hospital. Because of this, my lola was allowed to bring her family to join her. The days of not being able to hug her children were finally over! Her heart finally felt complete when he saw her kids and husband once again.

My lola is an inspiration to me, because her sacrifices ensured that her children and extended family would have a good life. She paid for all of her nieces' and nephews' education, which guarantees that future generations will be taken care of as well. My lola's story shows her incredible strength and selflessness.

Sarah Lamb; Missouri, USA

1. *Lola* means “grandma” in Filipino, one of the languages used in the Philippines.

7. The Mystery of the Lucky Coins

c. 1990; Tianjin, China

My mom ran about outside on a freezing New Year's Eve¹ in China, setting all the firecrackers off. *BaM bAm baM!!* As they went off, all the other children plugged their ears with their fingers.

"That was *awesome!*" one of the kids exclaimed.

"Yeah! Let's do it again!" Mom said. At that time, she was a kid, along with all the other children.

Mom ran inside the house to grab some more firecrackers, only to be greeted by her mom (my grandma), who said, "The dumplings are ready!"

That afternoon, Grandma and Mom's five aunts had been busy at work, while her five uncles and her dad had been playing card games. They had to work all afternoon because there were twenty-six other people to serve, not to mention themselves.

As soon as Grandma's words were in Mom's head, she shot off outside like a rocket.

"The dumplings are ready!!" she screamed.

All of the other kids got super-excited and began talking to each other nervously.

"Do you think you'll get a lucky coin?"

"I don't know. What about you?"

"I don't know! I just hope I'll get one."

"Yeah. Same."

When the aunts and my grandma make the dumplings, they occasionally put a lucky coin in some of the dumplings. If you get a dumpling with a lucky coin, that would mean that you'll have good luck for the new year! That's why the kids were so excited.

When the kids ran into the house, they shook off their jackets, washed their hands, and sat down at the big wooden dining table to eat their dumplings. When Grandma opened the utensil drawer to get a pair of chopsticks, she saw that the chopstick bin was empty!

"My, my," she said, "there sure are a lot of kids here." Then she grabbed a fork and sat down to eat with the kids.

Then all of the adults gathered around the table to eat.

The adults talked about finance, shopping, and all the usual things that adults talk about.

But on the other half of the table, where the kids sat, all was abuzz about lucky coins.

"Hey! I got one!"

“Me too!”

“Me three!”

In the end, all the kids got lucky coins.

The kids said, “How in the *world* could it have happened?”

All Grandma did was laugh, and the other adults did, too.

Then Mom realized that the cooks must have done it. It definitely was not a coincidence.

Roger Huang; New Jersey, USA

1. Chinese New Year is the most important holiday in China. The celebration begins with the new moon that occurs between the end of January and the end of February, and it lasts about fifteen days — until the full moon appears.

Invitation to Participate

The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration invites you to discover, write, and submit a story from your family's history. Your story can be humorous, tragic, inspirational — it can be about *anything* that happened in your family before you were born. The annual submission deadline is February 1. Complete details, including the guidelines and required submission form, are available on The Grannie Annie's website: TheGrannieAnnie.org/SubmitStories.html

Praise for The Grannie Annie

As a writing instructor, I encourage my students to enter various contests throughout the year. They have submitted stories to The Grannie Annie every year for many years. Thank you for the writing prompt and for reading their submissions. I have enjoyed the remarkable stories that many students have uncovered.

—Janine Edwards, Instructor; New Jersey, USA

The Grannie Annie is a writing opportunity with meaning and purpose. As students discover and share their family's stories, they come to realize the power of their pen to connect members of their family, stir the imagination, and touch hearts.

—Martha Stegmaier, Grannie Annie Board member and volunteer extraordinaire; Missouri, USA

Thank you for this great honor to be included in The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration. I took my daughters to South Korea this past summer to meet extended relatives like my grandmother, who is from North Korea. It is very special that the story of her family can be memorialized in this way so that Esther and her sisters can appreciate their heritage.

—Sandra Sohn, Parent; Ohio, USA

My family has really loved the whole Grannie Annie process — the interview, the research, the editing, and of course the honor of having our family's story selected for publication. It's been such a pivotal writing experience for Aidan, who has just finished fifth grade.

—Mindy McCoy, Parent; Missouri, USA

Participating in The Grannie Annie offers my students a wonderful opportunity to learn about their families' history by interviewing a family member, and an authentic audience for their writing.

—Kathy Lewis, Teacher; Missouri, USA

Thanks for such a great opportunity to write powerful stories and to showcase our work!

—Carol Fitzsimmons, Teacher; Missouri, USA

The Grannie Annie has brought all 51 children in my language arts classes closer to their families — and to each other. When they discuss their stories, they notice similarities between their own stories and their classmates' stories. The Grannie Annie is a valuable program that has provided my students and me with a powerful learning opportunity.

—Elie Bashevkin, Teacher; New York, USA

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*

My daughter, Sophia Rose, contacted my mother in Germany after her language arts teacher suggested that she write a story about my mother in World War II. The two had a wonderful e-mail and phone correspondence over a couple of weeks. When I saw the final draft of my daughter's writing, I read a story my mother had never told me. My daughter created a new memory of my mother's life through her writing. What an amazing gift The Grannie Annie gave our family!

—Petra Swidler, Parent; Missouri, USA

The Grannie Annie gives students and their parents a chance to reflect on the varied experiences that weave together their family's identity. Many people have brokenness in their family history, and by identifying and writing about hard experiences, our children learn to see the strength and restoration of our loved ones. We're grateful to The Grannie Annie for providing an opportunity to publicly show honor and respect to our family members who have persevered.

—Christan Perona, Parent; Missouri, USA

Because of The Grannie Annie, I have been motivated to continue writing and am now working on my first novel!

—Aaron Schnoor, Author, *Grannie Annie, Vols. 5, 6, and 7*; Grannie Annie Selection Committee 2014 – 2017, and 2019; North Carolina, USA

When young people participate in The Grannie Annie and discover, and then reflect upon, their family's stories and the family stories of others, the experience can create in each of these young authors an enhanced sense of appreciation, understanding, and "connection." Thank you to The Grannie Annie for giving our communities young people who will see our diversity as an asset rather than a deficit, will recognize the sameness even in our differences, and will bring to our world a bit more compassion.

—Dr. Phil Hunsberger, Senior Partner, Educational Equity Consultants

This is my daughter's first time submitting her writing outside her school. It's very encouraging to her. She loves reading and writing. I believe this experience will have a great impact on her.

—Daniel Liu, Parent; New Jersey, USA

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

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

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

Publication of our daughter's story is special to us for so many reasons. . . . Both my mother and grandmother passed away a few years ago. Growing up, I heard this story countless times from my grandmother. It's wonderful seeing that story told through my daughter's words.

—Andrea Rominger, Parent; Alabama, 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 provides the perfect opportunity for students to start asking questions about their families' past — not just the facts, but the stories. Then as they write, students begin to understand how *telling a story* differs from *writing a biography of facts*.

—Mark Futrell, Teacher; North Carolina, USA

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

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

—The Reading Tub™, www.TheReadingTub.com

My students were so excited to write their family stories! Since the stories were written during our immigration unit, the students had even more reason to ask their families questions. The stories really enriched our classroom discussions and helped the students to connect to the concepts being taught.

—Amy Del Coro, Teacher; New Jersey, USA

Since my mother died recently, I have been cleaning out her house and going through her things and wondering, "Who made this quilt? Who's in this old photo?" Trying to remember the family stories that she told me has really driven home the need to preserve family history. It is so wonderful that The Grannie Annie encourages this continuity of memories.

—Beverly Miller, Teacher; Alabama, 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"; Georgia, USA

Our son's *oma* is overwhelmed that her "story" is in print in *Grannie Annie*. . . . Every family member and family friend has a signed copy.

—Karie Millard, Parent; Indiana, USA

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

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

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

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.

—Florrie Binford Kichler, Patria Press, www.patria-press.com

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*

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*

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

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*