

Joy Foss Kandel

You Asked Me, So Here It Is!

This is the way I remember things. It may not be historically accurate; but, rather than repeating “I THINK,” “SOMETHING LIKE THIS,” “AROUND THIS TIME,” I’ll just write, and you should always keep in the back of your mind, “This is the way Joy remembers it. It may not have been exactly like this.”

My Name Is Joy-Baby

I was born on November 4, 1919. If I’d been a boy, I would have been named “Dean Franklin,” after the Judge who married Dad and Mom. But I wasn’t a boy (thank goodness! I like being a woman), so I was named Avis Joy. “Avis” was from a book Aunt Nodie had; Joy had to be in celebration of a healthy child being born to a frail young woman, and particularly because this healthy child was the first grandchild of both the Bells and the Fosses.

At first, I was called “Avis.” As I began to talk, adults would come to me and ask, “What is your name?” and my baby-talk replied, “My name is Vevis.” Said adults would shriek, “Vevis! Who ever heard of a name like Vevis?”

In defense, I changed my answer to, “My name is Joy-Baby, but I not a baby.” So, from about age two, I gave my name as Joy, and everyone called me Joy except my Dad’s Uncle Martin Foss, who called me Avis to his dying day; and my husband would gently tease me, maybe enjoying the family “secret” (not a REAL secret, but something the average acquaintance wouldn’t know), and he often called me “Avis.”

“Avis” means “little bird”



On looking back, I realize it might have been more efficient to legally drop Avis, or use it, because some of my legal papers call me Avis Joy Foss Kandel, and some of them drop the Avis or the Joy or the Foss, and it's still confusing to remember which files use which name. But I've survived, so I'm not going to change anything now.

A Little Sister

When I was two years and eleven months old, my sister was born. She was born with blue eyes, which changed to brown in a year or two. I took this as a personal affront, because I figured she must have preferred to be like my mother (with brown eyes) instead of like me (with blue eyes). When I become easily offended today, I'm horrified at my lack of Christian grace and sincerely try to rectify my attitude; what do you do with a four- or five-year old who is offended?

I would have loved to have babied my little sister, but she was very independent. She was a leader among the neighbor children. She didn't want to be coddled. But there was a big, old lady who lived down the block, and this woman loved Shirley. She would approach Shirley kindly and lovingly, and Shirley would run with fright and cling to me. I was so happy when this woman walked past our house on her way to the store. It was the only time my little sister needed me. I still love to feel needed.

Re-capping

Re-reading what I've written thus far, you may wonder why my parents were married by a Judge. Today, young Truth couples are usually married by an Elder of the ecclesia. But that was right around the end of World War I, and Bible Students were persecuted for being conscientious objectors. One of the many ways the government tried to humiliate them was to say, "You live in sin. You aren't even married. Your ceremony was not performed by an ordained minister." So my parents were married by a Judge. And Ed and I were married by an ordained minister, because that was the way I was taught. Wally and Vi were married by an Elder, and David and Shirley were married by an Elder. But I did several things more like my parents than like my peers, because I was the first grandchild. I belonged to the past as much as to the future.

Mom

I also mentioned my frail mother. When my mother was a child, the ultra-conservative family doctor, Br. George Moe, said she was not strong enough to continue school. I think she had a fourth grade education for this reason.



Probably because she had delicate health (some heart problem, although before she died, she was diagnosed as having a kind of anemia, and then she wondered how much of her extreme weakness was attributable to anemia all her life). Mom was very close to her parents. They tried to protect her from everything.

Dad

When Dad was about fourteen, he finished eighth grade and a year of business school. (Later, for years, HE had to be the secretary of the ecclesia, because he was the only Elder who took shorthand! How many secretaries “take” shorthand today?)

He had felt enslaved to his strict Truth home. In all good conscience, Grandpa Foss beat Dad in his desire to make him a good boy. Grandpa hadn't always been a good boy, and he didn't want his only son to make his mistakes. Dad rebelled. As a child, he HAD hidden his violin under the steps and taken the lesson money to Riverview (an amusement park on Belmont Avenue) and spent it there.

Mom used to say, “If you want to know whom you'll marry, look at the least likely prospect in the Ecclesia. If anyone had said I'd marry that mischievous boy who marched through the Watchnight service in his home ringing an alarm clock to welcome the New Year, I'd have died of shame.”

So Grandpa Foss made a bargain with the 14-year-old boy so soon to become a man: if Irving would attend the meetings for ONE MORE YEAR, Grandpa would THEN release Irving to the world and his worldly desires. During that relaxed year, with an end of the “enslavement” in sight, Dad thought things out and realized his father's way was indeed the best way, and he consecrated.

Dad and Mom

His first service was to go to the PhotoDrama house, where a “family” of brethren lived and worked to show “The PhotoDrama of Creation” in a large auditorium. Uncle Dan and Aunt Nodie were a part of that “family.” Nodie was only twenty, but she'd been married four years so was an established matron. She was the “mother” of the group.

When Irving returned from the store one day and told Sr. Nodie about a cute girl he'd seen at the store, Sr. Nodie advised him, “If you're looking for a girl, don't look in the world. Look in the meetings. I have a sister a year younger than you. Let me introduce you to her.” So 16-year-old Irving Foss met and began courting 15-year-old Hulda Bell.



(Mom always hated the name Hulda, but she was named after Grandma Bell's dearest friend, Sr. Hulda Moe, wife of Dr. George Moe, and didn't feel free to change her name until she was a middle-aged woman and moved to California. Then she became "Holly.")

The Fosses were not pleased with the romance. Such a frail girl! How could she make a good wife? Grandma Foss found another Truth girl for Irving, but Irving had made up his mind. After awhile, he brought his sweetheart home to meet the family. Irving's oldest sister (this doesn't count the Eleanor who died at age six of diphtheria—something Irving had in common with Hulda: her parents had lost their only son Harry to diphtheria at the age of six, before Hulda was born) wouldn't sit at the same table as Hulda. Older cousin Marie Peterson wanted to placate Hazel, so she went and ate with Hazel. It took a few years for Hulda to get over the hurt. Eventually, Hazel was the most gregarious of the Foss "girls" and held us all together with her friendliness. And Marie's extreme love for cousin Irving spilled over onto his children and grandchildren (she knew Alys best) and somewhat to Hulda who was after all involved with the family.

Grandpa Foss wasn't emotional about the romance, but he did ask Irving to at least wait until he was twenty to know his own mind. So, on Irving's twentieth birthday, Irving and Hulda got married—February 25, 1918—and I was born a year and a half later. And frail, sickly Hulda was a good wife (Dad always said, "If I DO get into the heavenly Kingdom, it will be because of Mother"), a good mother (the older I get, the more I value her wisdom), a loving grandmother (all four kids loved her, but the Bruce children lived nearest to her, so perhaps in a way they felt closest to her), and a valued friend to MANY. Particularly after she died, people have crossed the room to marvel, "How MUCH you look like your mother! And how I loved your mother."

Mom died, age 75. She'd always laughed, "I'll outlive you all because I take such good care of myself."

The Foss Girls

I didn't always look like Mom. As a child, I remember Beth Olsen saying (adults don't seem to realize that children have ears with which they hear), "Well, it's all right if Joy LOOKS like the Foss girls. Just so she doesn't ACT like them."

The brethren had mid-Victorian standards of deportment, and Grandma Bell was a prime example of this.



The Fosses were immigrants, Grandpa was a Socialist, he met Grandma at a dance, she became pregnant, they married before Dad was born, but Grandma had to make the wedding meal. Then they found the Truth, took their six-week-old Irving to meeting, and were faithful to the Lord and one another forever after. Grandma Foss said, “We didn’t read psychology books. We raised the children the best we knew how to do it.”

Perhaps their fumbling methods and their new high ideals were confusing. Not only did Irving rebel; so did Hazel and Eleanor. Ethel, the middle sister, was always a quiet homebody, fainted easily, tried to help everyone.

Tom

Hazel had fun with the Truth young folks, and followed the fad of being a colporteur for awhile. But when she had to go to work in an office, she had more fun with the nice worldly folks, highly resented being a high school dropout (“the Kingdom is coming so soon, worldly education is of no value”), was never encouraged to return to complete her high school education, fell in love with Tom Chappell at the office, and after twelve years of patiently adoring him, finally got him to propose; and they lived happily ever after. Hazel’s greatest legacy to us was her fun-loving friendliness toward us; but her financial legacy was also much appreciated by us.

I think of “Betty Boop” and “flapper” when I think of Eleanor. I suppose Grandpa and Grandma Foss realized they’d been too harsh on Irving, their firstborn. They seemed to become a bit more lenient with each succeeding child. So Baby Eleanor was given the least direction.

I don’t think she was immoral, but she certainly didn’t want to sacrifice the things of this world—meaning boys and fun. (Money and culture and education and “climbing the social ladder” and prestige had no lure for her.) But she had no desire to “walk circumspectly.” All the Fosses suspected that refinement was a veneer; they had no interest in being “prissy.” They felt that even Truth Brethren might prefer “the right people,” and be critical and judgmental.

I remember sleeping overnight in the same bed with Ethel (they never wanted us to call them “Aunt” because that would make them seem older, to be aunts of us growing girls). After we were fast asleep, Eleanor (perhaps Hazel, too?) would tiptoe in from a date. They’d have brought their current boyfriend home for a cup of coffee. Ethel would be asked to get up and make the goodies for them.



Ethel was a good cook, but I think Hazel and Eleanor even depended on Ethel to make the coffee!

To while away the twelve years of waiting for Tom, Hazel had many boyfriends, and Eleanor loved fun so had even more. Both Hazel and Eleanor would bring their boyfriends' friends along to date Ethel. Nothing ever came out of any of these dates. There was a young man named Walter who came to see Ethel longer than any of them. She had really met him at a dance, but the "girls" didn't want to tell Grandpa that, so they said Walter was a boy Ethel had known in school. I think both Ethel and Eleanor graduated from high school.

One time Eleanor wangled (didn't take much wangling) a date from a man old enough to be her father just to see if the rumor was true, that he was so desperate to find a mother for his children that he would propose on the first date. He did. The man was not appealing, but I felt sorry for his situation.

As my parents and their friends began getting distressed over the change in the meetings, Eleanor began getting interested in them. She said, "This is great! I like the Kingdom part. I just didn't want to sacrifice. And now you don't have to sacrifice. I want to be a part of the Kingdom on earth." So she began a life which has been more sacrificial than many people I know who are running for the prize of the high calling, which Eleanor doesn't want.

Otto

She met a young brother at meeting, I think his name was Bob Wessel, and he brought along a friend for Ethel. The friend's name was Otto Norten. Otto was a German with an accent, short and pump and curly-haired and fun-loving. He entertained us by wiggling his ears. People said, "You look more like Carl (Grandpa) than Irving does." Dad was tall and dark and thin like Grandma.

Bob may have hung around as long as he did because he and Otto had no money to buy food, and their daily meal at Fosses' while dating Eleanor and Ethel was the only thing they had to eat at this time.,

But Otto fell head over heels in love with quiet Ethel who'd never had a real boyfriend, and surely no one who had fallen head over heels in love with her. Otto worshipped Ethel until the day he died. But she died first, and he fell to pieces then. But while she lived, Ethel knew she was loved as few women have been loved.



[Photo of Otto]

*Mr. and Mrs. Carl Foss
Announce the marriage of their daughter
Ethel
To
Mr. Otto Robert Norton
Friday, November the ninth
Nineteen hundred and thirty-four
Chicago, Illinois*

Maybe I should finish up the “Foss girls” now, and return to Avis Joy Foss Kandel.

Afterward Eleanor became a zealous Jehovah’s Witness. Our family left the Witnesses. Grandpa Foss eventually came to our independent class (which appreciated the services of the Dawn). He was just experimenting so didn’t want to commit himself to the extent of telling Grandma. This neglect caused an irreparable rift in their 24-hours-a-day “togetherness” which must have broken her heart. She stayed with Eleanor—thrilled to see El’s remarkable progress toward the Lord.



I got married and moved to the L.A. area. Grandpa Foss died. Ed and I moved back to the Chicago area and had two children, and when our second child was about eight months old, Eleanor fell in love.

Charlie

Charlie was a zealous JW, about seven years younger than El. They were happily married, totally active in the JWs for 44 years. Then he died of cancer. He had been sick about ten weeks. Our Foss JW relatives were always pleasant to us. We didn't have as much in common as we'd had when we all were with the Watch Tower. But they were always friendly when we'd go to visit them in Tomahawk, once or twice a year. This was noticeable to us because it was a contrast with the Lenz JW relatives.

Mom's younger sister, Frances (we always called her "Frankie"), married a man who was probably insecure and afraid to be contaminated by us "evil slaves." They never made any overtures toward us, although they were forced to accept our charity during the depression (we didn't have much money, but they were on WPA income), and one time Jureks and Shirley and I visited them in Kokomo, Indiana, when Uncle George was in the hospital. I think Kathie's husband counted us as so many hours of witnessing. He talked to Wally Jurek at length. When Aunt Frankie died, they didn't even tell us. Eleanor learned about it at a JW convention two years later and told us.

The Blue-Eyed Daughter and the Brown-Eyed Daughter

Now, back to Mom's blue-eyed daughter and her brown-eyed daughter. I've always marveled that "uneducated" Mom was so careful to let me know that I was her favorite blue-eyed daughter (and, of course, Shirley was her favorite brown-eyed daughter). I still have a strong tendency to think I'm worthless, but any self-respect I have is due to Mom believing I was "smart." Even then, I suppose I knew I wasn't as smart as Mom (and Dad) thought I was. But now I know my "A's" in school were because I was a conformist. The teachers always said I was "such a JOY to have in the classroom"—of course, I did everything I could to stay out of their way. Really smart kids challenge the teacher, question her/him, are a threat to her/his authority. But Shirley was the happy charmer and Joy was the diligent student. We never rivaled one another. I was the favorite blue-eyed one. Why would I have to be jealous of the favorite brown-eyed one?

Everyone was not so kind, of course. My "big pitcher" ears heard Aunt Evelyn tell Grandma Bell, her sister, "Look at Joy's wide hips. Her breasts will fill out, and it will be easy for her to have children." I was embarrassingly skinny from age five to age nineteen, but I always had wide hips. Mom said, "Lou Molenaar would call that a big back porch."



I was horribly self-conscious of my flat chest and “big back porch.” When I got fat, people mourned that I no longer looked like a regal princess. I never felt like a princess. I felt like a skinny misfit. My only salvation was that I was “smart.”

The Bell Belles

But I was a cute, plump, blonde baby. At first, Dad and Mom and I had a little apartment in Grandpa and Grandma Bell’s big frame house on Madison Avenue, about 4300 West. Aunt Frankie still lived at home with my grandparents. She was about fifteen years old. Aunt Frankie was also plump, and fifteen it was not quite as cute.

Aunt Nodie had been raised to be a good housekeeper and frugal cook. Grandpa was a fine, noble gentleman, but he was not spiritual, although someone (not of the family, I don’t know which of the brethren) talked him into being immersed. But Grandma was in love with the Truth. She was an appreciative wife to this devoted man. But she was more spunky than some women of her era.

Having raised Nodie (Uncle Dan called her that, and everyone then followed suite, but her name was really Leo Nora, nicknamed “Leo”) to be an industrious homemaker, Grandma felt it would be a good experience for Leo to take care of the family while Grandma went to conventions. Maybe this happened once, on a famous “Western trip,” but Nodie resented it. One reason she married early was that, “If I’m going to take care of a house, I’d rather it would be my own, not my mother’s.” Hulda was the sickly daughter, so wasn’t given as many chores. And Frances was the baby. I heard she was lazy. But “lazy” is a subjective word; who knows whether she really was?

When Dad was courting Mom, fat Frances (I cringe to remember I called her “Fatty”) was permitted to be their chaperon by mulling around the living room with the unmarried couple trying to enjoy one another’s companionship. Dad said to Mom, “You are the ‘B-E-L-L-E’ of the Chicago class.” Dear Frances piped up, “Why are you telling my sister she’s the ‘belly’ of the Chicago class?” Dad did not appreciate this chaperoning business.



The Bell Family

When Bells first moved to Madison Avenue, the sidewalks were wooden boards. The location was “way out” from town. Now it’s inner city.

I think this was where Bells lived when their neighbor Mrs. Jones told Grandma that there was no hell fire.

Methodist Grandma was shocked. She had hated the doctrine of hell fire, but she was sure it was God's will. When she was convinced it wasn't, she came into the Truth hard and fast.

Mrs./Sr. Jones was the wife of Dr. Jones, who was a close friend of Br. Russell, travelled with him, and helped in much of his publication work. Their only daughter was Mom's age, and they were chums until Mom married Dad, whom Adelaide considered very inferior. But she changed her mind as Dad proved his worth.

Then Adelaide went to college, taught music in the public schools, and returned to the Methodist church for its music and social life. When she was in her early thirties, she married a Methodist "minister of music." We kept in contact, but our close friends were those involved in the meetings. It was because of Adelaide's example that Mom encouraged my musical talent, and I was sent to college to become a public school music teacher as she was. Ad played for Mother's funeral, and Brad sang.

Grandma Bell's close friends, the Moes, lived on Washington Boulevard, nearby—one of those big, graystone houses. Lena Bohardt was their housekeeper, and she and her husband Roy lived in a basement apartment. They were Brethren in the Truth.

Because Grandpa came from northern Protestant Ireland (angry with his stepfather for having spent his inheritance from his real father) with a letter of recommendation to Mr. Carson or Mr. Pirie or Mr. Scott, I forget which, he worked at Carson, Pirie, Scott's wholesale store. First, he slept on the table, probably a clean-up boy. Most of his life he sold silk there. How he hated the nuns who came to buy! He called them "black crows." Grandpa Bell's life was his job and his family. He loved them both. He worked at Carson's for fifty years, and when he was retired with a gold watch, half his life was taken from him.

Grandpa had fallen in love with the redhead in the church choir, and surrounded her with every comfort he could afford. He was thirty years old, and she was eighteen. Her name was Caroline King, but everyone called her Carrie.

When Carrie's mother had died, leaving six children, her father became despondent and found his solace in liquor. Because he was dangerous to the children, Carrie (in charge) "threw" him out of the house. For the rest of her life, she would suffer when she would see a destitute man, wondering if it was her father whom she had disowned.



Also, because she had seen the terrible results of drunkenness, every time she saw a person vomit or in any way show symptoms she'd seen in her drunken father, she was sure the person was drunk. Often, I thought they were ill from other causes, but I'd never been closely associated with anyone inebriated.

Because Will worked long hours six days a week, he would buy Carrie books. She'd had to leave school in the fourth grade when her mother died, but she was an avid reader. He bought her the whole set of Dickens. She wasn't an educated musician—she couldn't read music—but when Br. Stott had a choir at meeting (when I was a little child), he always wanted Carry Bell's alto. "You can't read the written alto, but your ear tells you how to harmonize better than people who can read music."

The Morehouses

Uncle Dan, Aunt Nodie, Dad, Mom and I all moved to 2424 N. Keeler Avenue. The two couples couldn't afford to buy a home each, so they bought a home together. Dad had a VERY high regard for his older brother-in-law.

Uncle Dan had been a Catholic. His mother had bought some Volumes from Colporteur Br. Magnuson. Uncle Dan was in a boating accident in which a girl drowned because she was too modest to remove her heavy clothing. The other man, and Uncle Dan lived, but contracted pneumonia. While he was recuperating, he read the books which his ardently Catholic mother had inadvertently bought. He accepted the Truth, and asked where there were brethren to meet with. The Morheiser family was a loud and boisterous clan. They felt bad when "Danny boy" left their church. They unkindly called him "Deacon."

Dan Morheiser went into the colporteur work to serve the Lord who gave him such wonderful Truth. Once when he came back to Chicago briefly, Sr. Rose Flanner asked him, "Are you going to marry Leo Bell?" He said, "No." Then next time he returned to Chicago, he asked 16-year-old Leo to marry him. Sr. Flanner took a long time in forgiving him for telling her a "lie."

Uncle Dan was 25. He and his bride were in the colporteur work with Dan's partner Roamie Harrison. Nodie was lonely, and urged Roamie to propose to Naomi Gilbert, which he did. Then there were two couples.

Later Nodie was the housekeeper at Bethel, when Judge Rutherford was in charge. His hypocrisy angered Nodie. While Dan was wearing threadbare clothing, the Judge and his pals were wearing silk underwear. Dan and Nodie left the Bible House, and Dan came back to Chicago and became a milkman.



One time, my little bare feet got badly burned on the floor register in the hallway. It's a family story I often heard, but don't remember at all.

Twenty-one months later, Uncle Dan and Aunt Nodie were amazed and overjoyed to be the proud parents of a little girl, Violet Virginia. Because Vi had no siblings, Shirley and I were almost like sisters to her.

Now We Were Three

By the time we three were all little girls—I'm not sure exactly when what happened—Grandpa and Grandma Bell had bought 2424 N. Keeler and lived there. Dad, Mom, Shirley and I lived at 2335 N. Tripp Avenue, about two blocks southwest of Grandpa and Grandma Bell. And the three Morehouses lived at 2627 N. Springfield, about a mile east of the Bells. (Dan Morheiser was doing some traveling for the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society during World War I, and his German name enraged prejudiced Americans; so he changed his name to Morehouse at that time.) Fosses (Senior) lived about three miles east, at 2727 N. Troy Street.

A Bottle of Grape Juice

Grandpa Bell never drove nor owned a car. He would walk to see us when we were sick, having stopped at the grocery market on our corner to purchase a bottle of grape juice which he would give to us.

We had all the childhood diseases. We had mumps and whooping cough at the same time; that hurt. We often had bronchitis. Mom would make a "tent" of a blanket and put some steaming liquid in there with us so that we could breathe more easily. The dark, closed, steamy space was frightening to me. I hated it! Some of our illnesses would require the Health Department to nail a sign of "Quarantined" on our house door. Because Dad had to go to work, he would sleep upstairs then, if we didn't have all three bedrooms filled with roomers. At night, I was also afraid of the shadow of a tree outside our living room window.

One time I had measles, and that disease left me with a bad heart. I was not allowed to run or play. I had to sit on the stairs with a neighbor girl who had a brace on her leg. We would watch the other children throw snowballs or play games. By now I was a skinny child. When I went to Junior high, age twelve, we changed doctors.



Our new doctor was not old-fashioned and ultra-conservative like Dr. Moe. He said, “She’s outgrown any heart problem she may have had. She can do anything she wants.”

Never having caught a ball in my life, I could not suddenly go to the gym and catch a ball. I was always last chosen for any team. I could not run because I didn’t know how to run. It did not help my totally deflated ego that Mom was trying to save money so sent me to gym in a gym suit given us by “the Foss girls.” Every girl in the entire Von Steuben Junior High School wore a short green gym suit, except Joy Foss. I couldn’t catch a ball, nor run nor do anything every five-year-old is mastering, AND I had to wear a white middy blouse and huge black bloomers.

Mom never knew the agony I endured rather than offend her by telling her of my terrible shame. I now think she might have cut other financial corners to attire me normally. But I bore my disgrace silently. I hated my gym teacher Ann Makowski Lindenbaum. She got married while she was my teacher, and I couldn’t imagine how anyone could fall in love with her. I loved her assistant, Judith Zidek, who was bullied by AML.

Earlier School Days

This surely isn’t chronological, is it?

Now I’m back to kindergarten. Mom took me to the **Nixon School** and registered me in the February kindergarten class. One class began in September, then you’d be promoted in February, then you’d be promoted in September, and so on. I guess November 4 birthdays registered in February.

My pretty blonde teacher was named Miss Peterson. I liked the shorter, dark-haired teacher with glasses, Miss Kcrease, but I LOVED Miss Peterson. Twenty-nine years later, Miss Peterson (she married while I was still there, but I forget her married name) was Marilyn Binda’s kindergarten teacher at **Nixon School!** I tried to do everything right, and the fear of my life was that I might “wet my pants” as some kindergarten children did when they were excited.

But I didn’t. In fact, I got double-promoted. (By the time I was teaching kindergarten, we “held back” our kindergarteners if they were not ready for first grade. So I guess the concept isn’t too different.) Instead of going into “high” kindergarten in September, I went into first grade.



In first grade, we learned reading with flash cards. One word was BEAUTIFUL. That impressed me—obviously, for me to remember it 66 years later. I also remember Josephine. I wonder what happened to Josephine. Did she become a genius or did she commit suicide? Surely she could not have become a normal citizen with that treatment she received in first grade. She was always being sent to the closet room because she was so disruptive. She looked dirty, with kinky-curly hair. I don't know what she did wrong, but she was the "bad kid" in the class. Poor Josephine.

When I was in 2A, many of the children were called out of the room to receive some kind of shot—diphtheria, probably. The teacher would call their name, they'd go out of the room, and the next we'd see of them they would come back sobbing. The teacher called my name. I was very surprised because I knew Mom wouldn't subject me to such an ordeal—even if it was a mystery to me, to know exactly what happened out there. Our private doctor gave us necessary shots. We didn't get vaccinations like this, from a public health doctor.

Obedience was so ingrained in me, I trembled my way up to the teacher, and she sent me out of the room—not to a doctor, but to another classroom. I'd been double-promoted again! I think that teacher's name was Miss Sargeson. I loved her so much that I would accidentally call her "Mother" instead of Miss Sargeson.

As I walked to school, I would stop to get Dolorosa Gormley, who lived with her parents behind their basement grocery store. A girl named Elsie gave me a bookmark which said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

In "low" fifth, I had a tall, regal teacher named Miss Johnson. She was magnificent. She told us about her plants at home. She grew them on the roof! That fascinated me. She talked about her father, with whom she lived. She was a spinster. I got all "A's" on my report card, and my family told me to bring my report card home when Randall Lenz would come to visit. Randall was Uncle George's son from his first marriage. Randall and I got along fine (he was three years older than me), but he always called me "Joe." I think he didn't want to admit to anyone that he played with a girl named "Joy." A boy named "Joe" would seem more appealing. But I was uncomfortable about having the family brag about my grades in their misguided efforts to encourage his scholastic efforts.

Meetings

Some things don't change from generation to generation among Truth people. Why would a 22-year-old boy be made an Elder? Answer: because he was married and had a child, of course. Maybe that indicates responsibility? Whatever, Dad was 22 years old with a little baby and a long blanket trailing down to the floor, and he became an elder.



We didn't know much of a life beyond school, the neighbor kids, and meetings. Mom wasn't well, but she always kept the house neat. She didn't have the strength to be a scrubaholic like Ed's mother. And WE ALWAYS GOT TO MEETINGS! And conventions.

Dad lost his job when Shirley was a baby. Mom always apologized for not having as many pictures of Shirley's babyhood as mine. It was because they didn't have the money when Dad was out of a job. (I never noticed a difference in the number of pictures, and Shirley never indicated that she noticed it.)

But one good thing came from a job Dad had then. He had a large black case. I think it was made of some very heavy paper product. Perhaps it contained merchandise he was to sell. Whatever. It JUST fit between the back and front seats of our car. And we would go to out-of-town conventions, and one of us children would stretch out on the back seat to sleep, and the other would stretch out on that case (covered with blankets). It was comfortable!

Sometimes we would caravan with the Fosses. They owned a car. Grandpa got in several accidents. I always heard that he drove slowly. Sometimes we would take Ethel particularly, but occasionally one of the other aunts, with us in our car.

I remember stopping at a restaurant and Mom ordered applesauce. She tasted it, and complained to the waitress, "This has begun to work," meaning it was fermenting. Ethel got hysterical, laughing at Mom's word "work." I felt hurt with Mom at Ethel's ridicule, although I'm sure it wasn't done with malice or forethought.

The Year on Belden Avenue

Back to school. In "high" fifth, I had a teacher, Miss Morrison, an older woman. She said that she would not live into the 21st century, but some of us would. I was always a "good" girl—disgustingly good. I probably wasn't very interesting. But one of my classmates asked me if I knew Tony Chestnut, and, of course, I didn't. So he showed me that you point to your toe, your knee, your chest, and your head, and that made Toe-Knee Chest-Nut.

While I was rapt in attention over that interesting pun, Miss Morrison called me to the front of the room and I had to stand there with a few other talkers who were being punished for talking in class. I was chagrined, but I knew I deserved it.

This was the year we sold our house on Tripp Avenue to a woman named Hortense Germaine and her husband and their little boy.



We were going to build in Sauganash. Even now Sugaanash is a lovely neighborhood. It has never deteriorated, as some neighborhoods do. I think the lot cost \$3,000 and the house would cost \$17,000 to build. Mom was very frugal. We ate a lot of nourishing soup. (I didn't like soup until about ten years ago, I'd had so much.) She made delicious, nutritious apple pie. I remember the treats—chocolate dips—we bought at the school store across the street from Nixon. And Mom loved Hershey bars, and we often had Hershey bars for dessert. I liked gooey things then, as I do now. I'd let my Hershey bar melt in the sun. Mouthwatering, even as I write about it.

While the house in Sauganash was being built, we lived in an apartment for a year. It was a block from Nixon School, much closer than our house had been.

In this short block's walk home, two boys would jump out at me. The cuter, dark curly-haired boy would egg the tall, skinny blonde on to tease me. Perhaps the blonde Rupert really liked me. I didn't know. All I knew was that they made me very nervous.

I was romantic about movie stars and unattainable boys. When I'd been a little girl, I wanted to marry Vollie Brown when I grew up. But I saw Vollie Brown kissing Hazel, and I remembered he wasn't a realistic hope for me, and he went back home to Denmark and married someone we didn't know.

Attainable boys made me squeamish. I didn't have any brothers, and boys seemed mysterious. I would run home and tell Mom about these two boys who kept jumping out to tease me. Mom had never had a daughter before, and her own upbringing had been mid-Victorian, and surrounded by girls. She didn't feel this was proper. So she reported it to Miss Morrison. I died a thousand deaths when Miss Morrison talked to the two boys and me. Somehow I realized I'd handled the matter very immaturely, even though I didn't know what I should have done.

Going to the Movies

Maybe I saw too many movies or read too many novels. Mom enjoyed reading Temple Bailey's pleasant love story novels, and encouraged me to read, and I read them.

I guess the movies mainly taught me that if you just kissed at the end of the movie, you'd live happily ever after. Especially if you got married at the end of the movie, all your problems would be over. It didn't explain how two exceedingly different people from extremely different backgrounds met. It would all turn out all right. No problems. The problems of getting together had been solved in the movie.



Grandma Bell enjoyed the movies of those days: cowboys and Indians and harmless romances. She'd take us to the Liberty Theatre or to the Avon on Saturday afternoons. The matinees would last five hours.

She handed me some candy to eat there in the dark. I hated raisins, but I didn't want to hurt her so I ate the chocolate-covered raisins to make her happy. At least I THOUGHT they were chocolate-covered raisins. After I'd eaten about a dozen, she said, "Where are you throwing the silver wrappings?" She had been giving me Hershey kisses, which I would have loved, and I'd been eating the wrappings thinking the silver taste and substance was the taste and substance of raisins.

Somehow I learned that all marriages don't last happily. So I developed a terrible fear of divorce and separation. Dad would go up to the third floor to pay the rent. The landlords were a dumpy, homely little couple with a dumpy, homely, unmarried daughter. If Dad stayed up there more than ten minutes, I worried myself sick that he had fallen in love with the dumpy, homely, unmarried daughter. I never told anyone that.

It was also while we were in that apartment that Dad became upset with Shirley. She was about seven years old. In his anger, he said, "Do that again and I'll spank you." I laughed. We were NEVER spanked. Mom always said she just had to look at me cross-eyed and I'd burst into tears. I cried a lot. Dad said, it may have been, that I'd learned the trick to get my own way. But to LAUGH at my Dad when he was angry at Shirley was the wrong thing to do. He marched her into the bathroom, and I realized I had taunted him into punishing Shirley. I don't know if he spanked her. I don't think either of them suffered or remembered the incident. But I was devastated, to know I had unintentionally pushed Dad into doing something terrible (I imagined; he probably didn't do anything) to Shirley.

Once when Grandma Bell took us to the Liberty Movie House, we had to leave in the middle of the last of the five movies. There were serials and cartoon shorts and a newsreel and the double features. I hated that. Grandma knew how make-believe things ended, and she had to get home to make Grandpa's supper. She didn't mind leaving.

Piano Lessons

Strange that I remember so many things of that one year. That was the year I began regular piano lessons. From the time I'd been able to reach the keyboard, I'd played little tunes on the piano. Dad would drive Mom and Shirley and me out to Wilmette to Adelaide Jones' house (she was still unmarried). She would give me a piano lesson every six months or so. But that was it. She said I had talent and should be given lessons.



Mom tried sending me to piano lessons at school. Each of us students was given a cardboard keyboard for practicing. It didn't work. I have a good ear for music and can "fake" it well. But playing on cardboard did nothing for me.

Then the meeting sponsored a radio station in a hotel "overlooking beautiful Lincoln Park." I think its name was the Hotel Webster. Dad had a good voice for radio, so was used as an announcer. He belonged to "the Swedish choral group," even though he only knew English and had spoken Danish to his grandmother before he started school. That was fun for us. On Saturday evenings, we'd all go to the choir practice in someone's home and eat a real smorgasbord of Scandinavian home-made goodies. I remember goat's milk cheese.

A pianist was hired for this radio station WORD, and her name was Margaret Zoutendam. The radio station had been on Melhorns' farm previously, but this station in the Chicago hotel involved different Brethren. Margaret Zoutendam was not a Truth girl. But if Dad would bring me to the station early, she would give me a lesson. And I thereby had regular lessons from this time in my life—I was about ten—until I went to North Park College, School of Music.

Sometimes, Margaret would have recitals wherein all her pupils performed. I remember calling "Margaret" to her across the room, and she had to rush over to me and whisper, "These other children call me Miss Zoutendam. Don't call me Margaret in front of them."

Before I began taking regular lessons from Margaret, she came to the meeting one time. Perhaps I was seven or eight years old. I was thrilled to see her, but so embarrassed. I literally hid behind Mom's skirt. That was one reason Mom urged me to perform. It might get me over my painful shyness. It did. I am sure there are people today who wish I'd never made the transformation.

When we moved to Sauganash, Margaret hoped to drum up more students, so she had Shirley and me give private recitals in our home. Shirley hated piano lessons and soon quit.

I played a piece called "Alt Wein" and played the same phrase over and over and over and over. I simply could not find my way out of that phrase. I was somewhat conscious that my audience was a captive audience, and I felt sorry for them. But even now my cousin Vi will tell you how she hated to have to attend those recitals. Our piano was shiny enough so that I could see the reflection of squirmy kids who had been likewise hog-tied to attend.



I got my first “high heels” while we lived in the apartment. I remember we got a new (to us) car here, and went to Martin Foss’s son’s wedding. This youngest son was named Harold. He married Charlotte. Harold and his sister Erma were good citizens, but he was not Truth-oriented, and Erma married a non-Truth man Paul, so devoted her life to him. When he died, she took comfort in Marie Copeland (another cousin) reminding her of the Kingdom promises their parents had taught them. I think Uncle Martin’s other sons followed in his pre-Truth, drunken footsteps. Maybe Uncle Martin’s drastic conversion to holiness (though sincere) was more than they could handle.

Swedish Practice

I spoke of the Swedish choir. While the chorus was practicing, their spouses and children had to entertain themselves, waiting for the goodies to follow. Esther Olsen was a widow who took in roomers for a living. (She and her boys also had a newsstand on some corner of Austin Boulevard.) One of the roomers was Conrad Werner, who had a son named Bertle. Esther finally married Conrad. “Connie,” as we all affectionately called him, would take all us kids to the movies. Can you guess why? Well, partly to get us out of the way, and partly because he liked kids, but MOSTLY because he LOVED to hear Shirley laugh! Shirley would laugh so merrily at the comedies that everyone in the theatre would look at her and enjoy her laughter, and Connie LOVED to hear that happy laugh! Mom used to call Shirley her “Shir-merry,” and she mourned when Shirley matured and didn’t laugh with glee any more. Mom always loved to attend Shirley and David’s gatherings and enjoyed their hospitality. But she missed her little Shir-merry with the happy, happy laughter.

I fell in love with Irving Olsen, Esther’s tall, thin (he had a 26-inch waist, I was told) son. Of course, he was twenty and I was ten. But who worries about such details? And he was smitten with a sophisticated daughter of Truth parents, Ruth Anderson. And Solveig Sommerud was smitten with Irving. It was an interesting scenario for me to watch. At Swedish practice, the girls would throw their arms around one another, to let everyone know how fond they were of one another. But Solveig would rather have killed Ruth, while Ruth enjoyed it all. But finally Ruth married a sophisticated worldly man, and tall, cute Irving married tall, lovely Solveig, and they had a lovely little boy and he died of crib death. I remember the little child in his white satin suit in his little casket.

Solveig and Irving’s sister Florence were my role models. They were so friendly to everyone at meeting. I wanted to be like them (although Florence was short and plump like her mother, but I saw that friendliness is more important to sad souls than outward appearance). If I developed any friendliness, I’ll give them all the credit.



Dad became gregarious and well-liked, but I always heard how the young bridegroom always wanted to leave a party early, and it was Mom who was more sociable. Of course, “sociable” meant fellowship with Brethren. That was their life.

When I passed to “high” sixth, we moved to Sauganash. There were four students in my grade. Young Margaret Timberlake may well have been teaching her first year, and here there were three grades in our portable room—fifth grade, low sixth, and four of us in high sixth. Shirley was probably in third grade. I know she was in one of the other portable rooms.

I must have done fairly well in school. One day I received a paper I’d done, and it was marked “60%”! I was in tears. But I was getting old enough to know that kids don’t cry over bad grades. So I was very fortunate. I happened to see a small drop of blood — probably I’d scratched myself a bit. I went up to Miss Timberlake and asked to be excused to go to the washroom because I had a bloody nose. She was very understanding, and let me leave the room, although she did not look too concerned about my “bloody nose.”

One day I went on a boat excursion, and I saw Miss Timberlake and a boyfriend. It was always intriguing to realize that teachers had private lives. Less happily, I learned of Mrs. Sayre’s private life. Mrs. Sayre was Shirley’s teacher, and her daughter was in her class. Mrs. Sayre got a divorce. I felt very bad about that.

Von Steuben

In the fall, I passed on to Von Steuben Junior High School, on Kimball near Foster Avenue. The student population seemed to be half Jewish and half Swedish. On Jewish holidays, all the Gentile children stayed home from school, knowing there would not be normal classes with only half the children there. Most of the Jewish children came to school. They enjoyed the fun of the half-empty rooms and games and relaxed atmosphere of these days.

Dad wanted me to know shorthand because it had been his “Open Sesame.” I, therefore, took a Business Course which was NOT intended to be for college-bound students.

But whenever I could choose an elective, I would choose a subject that WAS college-preparatory. I did not think about college. I just liked that kind of subject. During the summer I would have gone from Low Ninth to High Ninth grade, Chicago changed its Junior High Schools. No longer were there 6-3-3. Now it was 8-4.



So I didn't "graduate" from sixth grade (maybe because it was in the middle of the year, or maybe Sauganash children were expected to go on to college so sixth grade was not worth celebrating, or maybe because there were only four of us?). So I didn't "graduate" from Junior High.

One year, my Algebra teacher Miss Wagner urged me to train to become a math teacher. The next year, my geometry teacher Mr. Otto Curly (of COURSE, he was totally bald) kindly gave me a "D" because he felt sorry for me. I COULD NOT understand geometry. I still don't. But then, I never tried again. I'd endured enough agony standing up at the blackboard, asked to recite, and not have the slightest idea what it was all about.

I squeaked by in science. Our teacher was old and not particularly appealing, but she didn't embarrass me for not being specially good in her subject. A scientist should be curious and adventurous. I was a conformist. The highlight of that class was when a child asked the teacher, "Why does my mother have varicose veins?" I thought that was a cruel thing to reveal about your mother. The teacher answered, "Because she's been working very hard for you." I thought that was beautiful. The teacher had made ugly varicose veins a thing to be admired.

A boy by the name of Max sat behind me. He was as big as a man, so didn't enjoy finding school difficult. I knew the answers in that class. He asked me what meat market had sold me my brains; he'd like to go and buy some for himself.

Anne McGrath was an English teacher, and English was my best subject. She had given me "E" for "Excellent" in my report card booklet. She said she had made a mistake and I should erase the "E" so she could replace it with an "S" for "Superior." I was so zealous in my erasing that I made a hole so nothing could be written. Much as she liked me, and I liked her, it was embarrassing when she said, "I could have erased it THAT well."

I had one young teacher who was wearing a "silhouette" dress when they had gone out of style. "Silhouette" dresses were short in the front and long in the back—down to your ankles. I was embarrassed for her that she couldn't afford to throw such an outdated style away.

Mom always dressed us well—too well for our comfort. Grandpa Bell could bring home "remnants" from his wholesale silk department at Carsons. So most of our dresses were a scrap of material for the top and a different color for the skirt part of the dress, making the dresses look like a blouse and skirt.



When there was more material, Mom would make a whole dress of the material. But they were always silk! No school child, except Shirley and I, wore SILK! How I yearned for a little cotton dress!

The bane of my existence was Mary Jane Hoppe. She was tall and very, very homely. That was probably why she scornfully laughed at me much of the time—the trashy novels I read in contrast to the classics she read, the way I walked, and my clothes were some of the things she laughed at. I had no desire to be like Mary Jane Hoppe, but I was embarrassed by her ridicule. Do you notice how often I was embarrassed?

Another teacher didn't like to be interrupted by a messenger from the school office. She danced across the room, wagging her thumb like a hitch hiker, telling the student messenger to get out. She was trying to be funny, but I was shocked. I thought teachers should be sedate and composed. I didn't SAY anything, but the teacher looked at me and said, "I shocked you didn't I? I'm sorry." I am not an actress, nor a hypocrite. I WISH I were more diplomatic. Yet, some people seem so diplomatic that no one knows what they're thinking, and I don't admire that, either.

I had a Civics teacher who was an older man. He was sleazy. I didn't care for him. It was my senior year, and we went up to the desk and the teacher would write our grade in our report book. He wrote "A" in my book, then looked at me. He asked, "Did you expect an 'A'? Do you think you deserve an 'A'?" I said, "No." He said, "At the prom the other night, when they announced that you were voted 'Most likely to Succeed,' I thought, 'That's what Civics is all about, being liked by your peers because they think you have the material for success.' That's why you're getting this 'A'." I decided he had some appreciation of decency, after all.

I did go to the prom. I was tall and skinny (tall in those days was 5'5"), and a neighbor boy was tall and skinny. Bob Malwitz and I went well together. We were not in love. We didn't even have a crush on one another. But it was very convenient to like a boy who liked you well enough to invite you to a prom. He would wait for me after class and act like a boyfriend should. It did not break our hearts that we never saw one another after we graduated. We were there when we needed a date for those senior activities.

Thinking of a Career

I did enjoy the Library Club in Junior High. Miss Helen Faulhaber was the red-headed librarian. I gave a report to explain one of the sections of books (the 900's), and it was outstanding (for that group). But I hated to repair and mend broken bindings. I stayed with the Library Club for awhile in Senior High, but dropped out eventually. Miss Faulhaber was gone.



Dad had been bypassed time after time after time by college graduates who came into Eversharp (the company that made pens and pencils), who learned the business from Dad, and who went on to promotion, leaving Dad with his eighth grade education plus one year of Business College behind. He decided I would not have that experience. I would have a college education.

They are not idle words when I say, "My favorite career is retirement." Dad wanted me to have secretarial skills so I could earn a living, no matter what. I worked summers while I went to college in winters, and took temporary jobs whenever Ed and I needed a new car or the kids needed a tonsillectomy or whatever.

One Monday morning, I sat taking dictation from an employer who spoke very slowly. I actually fell asleep during his dictation. After that, I tried not to get too tired over the weekends.

It was common for young Bible Students to go to conventions for the weekend. I didn't go as often as most because my Sundays were committed to playing for the Community church. Toward the end of those years, the church paid me money which paid toward college expenses.

In that same office, I tried to witness to an older divorcee (she was probably all of 35) about life after death. She said, "Joy, I couldn't care less what happens after this life." That jarred me. I thought people were worried about hell-fire.

One of her peers was getting married. It was a sticky situation. She should have been an ecstatic bride, but her chum was going through a divorce and the bride-to-be was old enough to be very concerned about the possibility of the same thing happening to her.

Mom wanted me to be like Adelaide Jones Bradburn, a career woman, a music school teacher.

Margaret Zoutendam wished she'd had the education to teach music in school. Depending on private pupils was precarious. Margaret arranged an audition for me with her teacher at the Cosmopolitan School of Music. I was going out that evening and had to make a choice of cutting my fingernails to play well or leaving them long to look well. I left them long. The teacher was not impressed with my ability. I became ill from nervousness.



I would have loved to be in Social Service or full-time service for the Lord or something noble. Going to college was “things of this world” which I had consecrated to leave behind when I’d been immersed.

On one of our many Wisconsin vacations with the Foss family, I met and was greatly inspired by one of Sr. Brown’s daughters. The Browns owned the island across from the vacation property Fosses bought in Tomahawk. None of their family was in the truth except Sr. Brown and her sister Sr. Caruthers. Sr. Brown was very refined, very pretty with her pure white hair. The Browns lived in Elmhurst. The Fosses were not crazy about Sr. Brown and her refinement, but neighbors are neighbors, and they went back and forth.

Sr. Brown’s daughter worked for the Salvation Army as a social worker (not connected with their religion). I would have LOVED to help all those down-and-outers she talked about. Mom was scared. She said, “Joy, you’re not the right kind for that kind of work. You’d feel so sorry for each bum, you’d marry the first one and melt over each succeeding one.” As time has elapsed, I know she was right. Dad and I passed a drunk one day, and I said, “I’d love to help him.” Dad said, “You will. In the Kingdom.”

Then I wanted to go to the Dawn to work. I knew I wouldn’t be a good colporteur. But full-time service at the Dawn office would be something I could do. Sr. Hoeveler visited our home. She worked at the Dawn. She strongly advised against it. “That neighborhood is not where a young lady should be.” So I was not permitted to go to the Dawn.

Maybe I couldn’t have taken living with Brethren and learning their faults. Maybe my slowness would have driven THEM crazy. My secretarial teacher always gave me “A”s because of my spelling and grammar and accuracy. But no one my entire life ever gave me an “A” for speed. And that could be a big drawback. I have to think the Lord could have gotten me to the Dawn if I belonged there.

No one discussed my getting married. I wasn’t interested in baby-sitting as Shirley was. The Fosses gave us a new doll every year, and I never played with dolls. I played school, but I didn’t play house.

College

So I went to North Park Junior College on Foster and Kedzie, just a couple of blocks from Von Steuben. They were waiting for me to become the accompanist to their Women’s Glee Club. I don’t know how they heard about me. Other young ladies were better pianists, but perhaps they were needed for their voices.



I didn't sing specially well. It was fun going to banquets to play, and playing for soloists in recitals, and going on concert tours. As we traveled by bus, the Mission Covenant girls joked, "Look for the shabbiest church in town. That's ours."

My piano teacher, Mr. Harold Reeve, scolded me for not practicing enough. I said, "I want to have fun. I don't want to practice all the time." He said, "No one has more fun than musicians AFTER we've practiced." But I just wasn't that interested.

One church asked me to play a solo, and I'd brought nothing. A girl by the last name of Gavert gave me her "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring." I had never heard it, and sat down and raced through it as fast as I could. After all, it was written in 9/8 time, and most of the notes were eighth notes. The girl explained that it was to be played much more slowly. I've loved it ever since.

Her sister was my organ teacher. The older sister waited until she was 25 to marry because their father promised them a diamond ring if they would wait. Then she married her sweetheart, and they had twins and they lived happily ever after. The younger girl was too much in love, or too impetuous, to wait. But I thought it was a good idea, to give a girl an incentive to think things over, take her time, be sure the man was more valuable than a diamond ring.

In Bible class, we were assigned, "Write down who you think Jesus was." I wrote down, "Jesus was a perfect human being, the son of God." The girl next to me was a Mission Covenant. She wrote a long treatise to prove he was part of the Trinity. She and I got along very well, but she was disgusted that we were graded equally on that, "ACCEPTABLE." One time she borrowed an evening wrap from me. I needed lots of formal gowns, etc., for all the concerts. Mom's sewing came in very handy. But one time Mom decked me out in an outdated fur coat that had been Ethel's. I died of chagrin when I wore it, but I wouldn't say a word.

On a concert tour, a hostess asked me what religion I was. I said, "My family is undenominational." She said, "Well, I guess that's OK as long as you're a Fundamentalist." I think my roommate on that trip told her I wasn't.

One time, I was called in for an interview. I guess they wanted to save any unsaved soul. But the young seminary student only asked me about my religious life. He asked if I was a pre-Millennialist or a post-Millennialist. I didn't know what those words meant, but learned I'm a pre-Millennialist. Jesus' return occurs BEFORE the Millennium, not AFTER. I remember he suggested family altar worship, which I agreed was an excellent idea, but I still have not begun it.



I usually attended banquets as the date of the soloist I was accompanying, but one time I needed a date for some such occasion, and a girl friend, Gwen Wedlock, said, "I'll get my brother to take you."

There were three of us girls who went together that first spring: Lenore Reeves was an efficient redhead who wore glasses and sang and played particularly well. She became the accompanist of the chief director of the school of music. Her father worked at Santa Fe with Hazel, and we had met at Christmas parties to which employees brought their children. Hazel took Shirley and me.

Lenore's girlfriend was Gwen Wedlock, more sophisticated in her ambitions, but also more scatterbrained. I don't know what happened to Gwen. Lenore eventually married one of the young violin teachers, Edgar Borup. There was also a young man who ate lunch with Lenore and Gwen and me. His name was Art Clarke. Twenty-five years later, I was surprised to hear him play in a concert I attended. The four of us would eat our pickles and other smelly sandwich fixings in the studio of a voice teacher. She HATED that, although Lenore became friendly with her when Lenore became a piano teacher at the college, and I liked her when she was my voice teacher. I thought that voice teacher was a career woman, but she left and quit to get married without giving notice, which angered the school.

Anyway, that was how I met Paul Wedlock. When I met him, I thought he was the homeliest person I'd ever seen. But we "went together" for over a year, and I probably would have married him if he'd been in the Truth. He went to the Sunday meeting with me, and he wouldn't smoke in my presence. But I knew he wasn't a consecrated Truth boy. When I broke up with Paul, it was hard for me. I'd always had ONE boyfriend at a time, but they weren't lined up at my door. Shirley was far more popular.

About the time I broke up with Paul, I ran out of money to continue college. I am sure the folks paid for my tuition. Dad remembered that I did. Maybe I contributed a little. I did work summers.

That second summer, I had to keep working. The folks saw to it that I returned to school as soon as possible.

North Park is now a four-year college, but then the main school was two-year, and the music school had an arrangement with Northwestern. We could go to the less expensive North Park for three years and go right on to Northwestern for our fourth year.



People who never heard of North Park, where I was happiest, have been highly impressed that I have my degrees from Northwestern University in Evanston. As a middle-aged woman teacher, I returned to Northwestern to put me higher on the salary scale, and of course Northwestern couldn't admit their graduate's credentials could be questioned, so I returned without any entrance exam.

When I decided to go to Northwestern for my Master's, I needed my North Park credentials for some reason, so I phoned North Park. Now I was about 40, having left North Park when I was about 19. The man who answered me said, "Is this Joy Foss? I recognized your voice. I'm Occie." Occie was Oscar Olsen, one of our more mature friends in school, now a part of the faculty.

When I returned to North Park after a semester off to work, I had no boyfriend, no friends at all. Paul was going with Lenore, and when they broke up, he married someone else. The Women's Glee Club had found another accompanist. It was a doleful time.

I saw a newcomer, sitting all alone in the restaurant across the street, and sat with her. She never forgot my welcome help to her. Her name was Elaine Poltrock. We went from North Park to Northwestern together. She had a boyfriend, Stan Shaver; and the three of us lunched together. It was better than being alone.

We learned that Elaine's sister was a friend of Ruth Carpenter Dawson, daughter of old Br. and Sr. Carpenter. Elaine and her sister came to one public meeting, but much preferred a beautiful church with a beautiful choir. Elaine didn't approve of my marriage to Ed. When I graduated from Northwestern, I forgot about her. Then she got my address from Ruth and sent me a Christmas card every year. She became a librarian in the public schools like her sister and Ruth were.

Now she lives in Des Plaines on Thacker. I wondered if the Lord was telling me something, having me pass so near to her condo every time I go to Alys'. So I went to see her once. She'd had a stroke. I thought she might be receptive now. But she wasn't. She's one of the many persons of my past who make me think, "Thank You, Lord, for the way You've led me. But for Your grace, I might be where they are."



Sauganash

In Sauganash there was a girl at the end of our block on Knox Avenue, and her name was Muriel Swanson. We got along fine, but if Mary Jane Hoppe was available, Muriel was not interested in me. Mary Jane was a very homely girl, slightly older than Muriel and I were.

Mary Jane was very intellectual. She made fun of my walk and of my reading habits. Half of me thought, "I don't want to be like her, either," but half of me was embarrassed as she ridiculed me. The last I saw of Muriel was when she was the wife of a serviceman during WWII, with a little baby. She seemed to guess we were pacifists. We had little in common by then.

Next door to Muriel were the Johnsons. There was an older, handsome blond boy named Robert, and then the two girls were adopted. Phyllis was closer to my age. She was a challenge to her adoptive parents. Winnie was closer to Shirley's age. She was a tomboy. Mrs. Johnson asked me what Shirley thought of Phyllis. Shirley had strong opinions and was not shy about them. I hedged, "I get along fine with Phyllis." Mrs. Johnson said, "Well, of course YOU would. I'm interested in Shirley's opinion."

There was a very pretty girl named Betty Smith who lived four or five blocks east of us. She was newer in the neighborhood. We got along well. After we spent time together, we would "walk" the other one home. Then we would walk back to the first home together. We might do this two or three times before we said, "Goodbye." Betty had several boyfriends. At one time, she dated Fritz Kulieke. Fritz was a good friend, if not a romantic interest. When she was through dating him, he would ask me out. I went. Betty said, "I hear you're dating Fritz Kulieke. Didn't you know he is interested in me?" I said, "Yes, but you don't want him, so I didn't think you'd care." She accepted my candid reasoning as true and practical.

The Community Church

Nowadays, we are not kind in our feelings toward the terrible nominal church. But the Community Church seemed more like a social club than a religious church. I was asked if I'd play for its services, and someone thought the practice would be good for me (Margaret Zoutendam?). So I played for its tiny congregation for a couple of years. When I began playing for the church, we were dissatisfied with the Watch Tower Society and did several unusual things, which we didn't have time for when we were in our little, active ecclesia.

The first year, I didn't get paid. To thank me for my faithful service every Sunday and every choir practice night, the choir presented me with a gift for Christmas. It was some gold jewelry, very pretty. They thought and hoped I would squeal with delight. But I was never a squealer. I always took things in stride, calmly.



When I accepted this gift, the choir was terribly disappointed. I must have guessed that they would give me a gift? No. It was just my characteristic to stay calm. I SHOULD have pretended I was a squealer. It would have made them so happy. I didn't think.

Another way the church thanked me before paying me was to invite me to attend their girls' camp free of charge. Shirley loved camp life and the camp crowd. If she had a trial, it was that she loved it too much.

I remember a snipe hunt at that camp. We were told to sit in the cornfield with bags to catch snipes. The joke was that there are no snipes, and one by one the girls would return, realizing they'd been fooled. I was so used to honesty and integrity and perseverance and obedience that I stayed there alone until the counselors had to come out and get me and explain that it was just a hoax.

One year, Laura Hollister asked if her niece could attend the camp. The girl was unusually homely and a total misfit. I'm not sure what was basically wrong with her, but she died a few years later. She was such a problem at camp that a rule was thenceforth established that this camp was not intended to handle people who needed therapy—it was just a fun camp. Roberta Hollister (now Buss) who was another niece of Laura's, phoned me and asked me how the girl had gotten along at camp. (Roberta was Uncle Ben's niece; the other girl was Laura's sister's daughter.) I said, "Just fine," and tried to remember anything normal she had done. I glowed too much. Roberta said, "Now, tell me the truth."

The church loved the way I played the piano. Later, they built a beautiful new building and bought an organ, and both they and I lost interest in our relationship. But at the beginning, all went well. The first Good Friday service for which I played, there were no comments, and I ran home, sure they'd been disappointed in me. Later, I learned it was like Lincoln's Gettysburg Address: my playing had put them in such an appropriately solemn mood that they didn't think of complimenting me, but they were very moved by the music.

The choir especially was dedicated, good people. Mr. Kulieke was the main unofficial lay assistant. I asked the minister and him if they had any books disproving evolution for a thesis I was writing in high school. I knew they believed in evolution, but I was not prepared for their reply. "How could we? There is no book that can disprove evolution." I didn't care about "Rev," as we called him. I knew he was a higher critic going to the University of Chicago. He differentiated between being a believer in Jesus and a follower of Paul. He wanted nothing to do with Paul's teachings.



The one good thing about “Rev” (religiously speaking, he was a good community leader and provided clean activities for children) was that he was a pacifist. I wonder if he remained a pacifist when World War II came along. But Mr. Kulieke seemed like a holy man. And yet he believed in evolution.

The Truth and Me

Once, the last year we were the Society, I went from door to door trying to sell their books. I wasn’t good at it, and I hated intruding on people.

That same year, I went tracting with a young Brother named George Foley. He was shorter than I, but cute, with dark, wavy hair. When we left the Society, he left, too. He was very bright and was said to have a photographic memory. He idolized me. I thought that was very funny. His mother was said to be a spirit medium. He took Dad and Mom and Shirley and me to a settlement house where he was taking piano lessons. I had never seen a settlement house before, nor been that close to poor people. As I became ruder and ruder to him, my Grandma Bell said, “That’s not the way we should treat human beings. He has feelings.”

When George saw he had no chance with me, he tried Martha Wohn (Kostelancik) and the Filip girls. They were smarter than I, older, wiser than I had been when he liked me (although they are not older than I am). They wanted nothing to do with his aggressive ways. They more than ran from him, the harder he pursued them, until they were greatly annoyed.

George was very lonely. He finally met a girl on the beach and married her and moved to her home in Brooklyn, Iowa. They had five children—one was named Joy. He was driving his family across a railroad track and a train hit them. The wife was killed.

This left George in Brooklyn, Iowa, with five children to raise. About a year later, he married an older, very attractive waitress who felt sorry for the family. I often wondered what happened to George, particularly spiritually. He knew the Truth too well to have forgotten it. Is he one of those spirit-begotten in the nominal church?

My father tried to help the Polish and Lithuanian young people because he was asked to do this. He didn’t enjoy it, the way Bros. Wylam, Schiller and Uncle Dan did. But they were going to put on a play about Queen Esther. So they came to our house in Sauganash to practice.



Boys and girls would go into our bathroom together to have their smokes. They would go out into their cars to “neck” or “pet.” My parents wondered what the value would be of my marrying “in the Truth” if these werethe Truth boys available. I later learned that Szutiaks did not want Lucille to have anything to do with this crowd led by the English Brethren becausethey were so immoral.

Bro. Karl Ekroth would have liked his sons to be interested in me, but they were college men and I was naïve sixteen-year-old. Roy had nudes all over his wall which he had drawn in school. He became an architect and very active with Laymen’s Home Missionary. I invited him to a couple of college functions after I broke up with Paul Wedlock, but we had nothing in common. Harold, the younger boy, took me to a dance, which was a disaster for both of us. I couldn’t dance, and I wasn’t as chic as the girls he usually dated. I don’t think he has any religious interest now.

I attended testimony meetings at Sr. Celia Nelsen’s with my parents and many of that first little group which had left the Society. Many of the testimonies by the older Brethren were about their experiences of twenty or thirty years pervious. I remember sprawling out my skinny arms and legs and saying, “All I can say is that I give the Lord my future.”

I was immersed when I was sixteen. A group of Brethren left the Watch Tower meetings when I was fourteen years old. Our first new meeting was at 1016 N. Dearborn in what had been the book store when the Watch Tower meetings were held in the building. There were sixty brethren there, and Bro. Read was chairman. We sang a capella, “If I in Thy Likeness, O Lord, May Awake.” It’s still my favorite hymn. The small room barely held sixty occupants. It was announced that the next Sunday’s meeting would be held at 910 N. LaSalle Street. Later this number was changed to 912 N. LaSalle Street.

In a couple of years, some had returned to the Society meetings and others had added to our meeting. But the attendance was roughly sixty. Perhaps a half dozen sisters had consecrated since they had left the Watch Tower whenever they became dissatisfied with it, but they had never had the opportunity to symbolize their consecration. So an immersion service was planned. Besides Sr. Anna Pierson and Sr. Alice McGlashen (I can’t remember them all), now that the service was announced, more brethren decided to be immersed: Ted and Elsie Marten, Aunt Lizzie Gomboc, Adam Miskawitz.

My parents had to go to Sr. Alma Edlund’s for some reason. She was a dear old sister, rather large, who once came to the meeting in her black slip and coat. (She forgot to put on her dress!) While we were in the car, I said I would like to be immersed. My parents were not overjoyed. I was so young. It was so serious a matter. But they did not discourage me nor encourage me.



I made a lot of dumb mistakes in my life, but this was not one of them. I often felt unworthy to partake of the Memorial, but I always did, figuring, "It's the best thing I ever did. In spite of all my mistakes, it wouldn't advance my spirituality to not partake."

One of the interesting things of that year was the honor of accompanying Br. John Read, who had a beautiful, professional bass voice. Many Polish young people came to the English brethren for help, and Uncle Ben Hollister would often marry couples, Bro. Read would sing, and I would play. I played for Helen and Marty Swollock's wedding and Joe and June Dalesandro's, never dreaming I would one day be their shirt-tail relative.

I was around too many professionals at school to think I was great, but I probably was the best the meeting had. The best thing about playing for meeting was all the brethren I met that way. At one time I was the only organist permitted to touch the large organ at the large Dawn convention. Mom saw to it that my legs were hidden by plants so that Brethren wouldn't be distracted by watching me play the foot pedals of the organ. Other brethren remember Mark running up to me while I played. He was about two years old. One day he got lost on the grounds of the big convention. Mary Litwin found him by hearing the Terrible Two-year-old saying, "No!" Of course, he wasn't any more terrible than any other youngster at the Terrible Two stage. He was really a beautiful blonde curly-head.

When we'd take the train to visit the folks, who had moved to California when Alys was born, strangers would advise me to enter him in the movies. Alys learned to dread that train ride, as gregarious Mark grew older, found a boyfriend before we left the Chicago depot, and ALWAYS brought a sister for Alys to entertain.

I always thought it was interesting that Bro. Wylam reviewed our departure from the Watch Tower again and again. They may have been the happiest days of his life. My dad, who was equally responsible for our present ecclesia, did not talk about it much. It seems to me that Dad lived for the present and, of course, for the future's wonderful promises from God. Many people have told me I'm like my dad. I like that compliment. In some ways, I know I am. One way is that I don't waste time regretting the past. I recognize my past failures, and I hope I learn by them. But I don't say, "If I had only done this," or "If I had only not done that."

The first year the Young People's meetings were organized, suave, sophisticated, worldly Florian Szepanski was its president, and Lucille Sternberg its secretary. The next year, Henry Dzierzawski and I succeeded them. Henry was not as bright nor charming, and I was immature. We weren't a tenth as good a team. Henry resented me.



There was a Valentine party, and he gave me a Valentine that said, "You're only a plumber's daughter. Don't think you're so high and mighty." I laughed good-naturedly, but of course it made me wonder if I acted high and mighty without realizing it. What was even more disconcerting was how embarrassed and upset the Durka girls were about that Valentine. That made me wonder if it were, indeed, true.

As more serious young people came to the ecclesia, they were rigid and strict in the morals of their Polish background. Doctrinally, curiosity was not encouraged in those days. The Jezuit brothers and the Hack brothers were very zealous and enthusiastic, and disappointed that the English Elders were not like their foreign parents. About 1940-41, the more liberal English brethren separated and formed an ecclesia which used the Herald as their source of help. About 1948, the rigid, critical younger element voted out all five Elders, and put in Bros. Rostad and Sheppelbaum, two deacons. Br. Rostad withdrew after the class re-established, but Albert remained an Elder forever after. Adam and Leo were the next deacons to become Elders. They fit into the older, more mature element, but represented the Polish young element, too. In 1943-44, my parents moved to California, privately uncomfortable in such critical surroundings. Their best friends (the Hollisters and Br. Read) had left the class in 1940. The L.A. Class had more Brethren their own age and background.

Ed

I began dating Ed as a result of a trip to a St. Louis convention. Morehouses were so happily married themselves that they wanted everyone else to be as happy, and they often filled their convention-bound cars with young couples. They invited me to go to St. Louis with them, and I asked who my partner would be. They said, "Gene Jezuit." Fine. He was too young for me, so there'd be no thought of romance. At the last minute, Gene got a job (just out of high school, he needed it badly) and could not go. So they invited Ed Kandel. I had seen Ed Kandel, and he looked harmless enough.

I was impressed by his interesting conversation along the way. He had hobbies and could talk Truth well. He was not silly. He had enough money to pay for me—a sundae or soda or whatever. I'd been to his home for meeting. It was a brick bungalow in a decent neighborhood. He didn't have a Polish name.

Some of the young Polish Brothers were uncouth, murdered the King's English, had accents, and generally despised courtesy as being a veneer. Ed was polite, drove his father's big new Buick to all the conventions. I could relate to him better than to most of the young Brothers of Polish descent.



We dated. Several of our dates were going to tract rallies. I really liked that. I had looked around and had seen that unmarried brethren could not serve the Lord as well as married brethren. They didn't fit in. I was enough of a misfit as it was. Being unmarried would make me a real freak. Ed loved Dad and always brought him cashew nuts. I have never liked cashew nuts. Finally, Ed said, "I wouldn't waste my time just dating anyone. I date with the end view of marriage." He never did propose to me.

Ed liked to tell the story about seeing a girl's picture in the paper, and saying, "I'd like to marry that girl." It was my picture. I was one of the graduates whose picture was in the newspaper. We met two or three years later, and he thought it was a miracle.

Ed's dad cried when Ed told the family we were going to get married. Maybe it was the emotion of having his only son leave the nest. Maybe it was disbelief that he would marry so soon after the younger daughter Gertie died of a ruptured appendix and pneumonia. I thought it was because I was not the family's choice.

I had never been aware of insecurity versus security, having enough to eat versus not having enough to eat. If we'd had a financial problem, Dad and Mom and Shirley and I, the grandparents would have tided us over. I don't know if that happened, but it could have.

Ed's parents were first-generation immigrants. They'd learned you don't trust people. People take advantage of immigrants. They learn how to bargain when they shopped. Maxwell Street expected you to bargain. Matt Kandel worked very hard as a cooper, and there were no benefits, no retirement funds. From my naïve perspective, I thought they were money-hungry, worshiping the almighty dollar. Now I realize it was because they had to, in order to save for better times.

When Ed and I got married, he was making \$30 a week, a respectable wage even if Laura Hollister advised her niece not to get married until her fiancé was making \$35 a week.

Ed's younger sister, age sixteen, had died in May. She was the life and light and laughter of the family. They were despondent without her.

Ed and I got married in October. I was not allowed to invite anyone to my wedding except Violet, my cousin. That concession was made because Ed's cousin Walter Lankheim would stand up with him.

My mother had hoped to have the reception in a small banquet room in a hotel; but if she'd done that, Ed's parents and sister would not come—they could not think of celebrating five months after their daughter had died. So Mom cleaned the house and made the wedding dinner.



In cleaning the bathroom, she did a dumb thing which she'd often done before. She stood on the bathtub to hang the curtains around the bathroom window. She slipped and fell and injured a ligament that the doctor admitted was more painful than a broken limb would have been. When she was carried to bed, she screamed with pain. When she was set down, she laughed hysterically at the ridiculous situation. She stayed in bed.

Dad and Shirley (my maid of honor), I guess Ed's dad and sister Frieda, Violet and Walter Lankheim, Ed and I drove the half mile to the minister's house and we were married. Ed's mother stayed home with my mother.

It was a Monday evening. It was raining cats and dogs. The minister's wife was very sad about this wedding. When she heard I was engaged, she commented, "It's because he's in your church that you're marrying him." That's what Paul Wedlock had said, too. Nelda Richard, the minister's wife, had a very pretty voice and I often played for her. Now she sang, "I Love You Truly," accompanying herself, just to make it seem more like a wedding. I remember thinking, "I'll have this experience of marriage for two years, and then we'll be in the heavenly Kingdom." That was 1940. Later, we looked forward to 1954 for more academic reasons.

Ed went to work that night. We went on our honeymoon to the Pittsburgh convention the following weekend. An ambulance came and took Mom to the hospital after the wedding.

Ed's mother looked at our honeymoon studio apartment, which I thought was sophisticated, and said, "You don't get any sun. You have a northern exposure." I was never home in the daytime, still going to Northwestern in Evanston. I hadn't noticed.

When Grandpa Kandel died suddenly (from a stroke or heart attack) in February, I threw my arms around Grandma at the funeral home and assured her, "You won't be alone. We'll come and live with you." My mother often said, "Joy, you're brilliant, but you don't have any common sense." It was a catastrophe.

Unprepared for Marriage

While we were living with Grandma Kandel, she tried to teach me to iron shirts, I remember. But I had no interest in being like her or being what she wanted me to be. Aunt Hazel's marriage was more the way I wanted mine to be—have a maid come in periodically, and send shirts out to the laundry.



Of course, I was still going to Northwestern (took the “L” from Grandma’s home at 63rd and Karlov up to Evanston from February to June), and we never could have afforded a maid. But poor Ed got a lot of new shirts those first few years, when I didn’t get one washed and ironed in time for him to have one to wear. When I was working, we could afford a maid-for-a-day, Ed wouldn’t trust one to come into the house.

Neither he nor I realized the effort necessary to clean a house. So he preferred no guests to getting ready for guests. That was a disappointment for me. It did take me a long time to clean, and the first large group I had didn’t get enough to eat because I planned too little (I never made THAT mistake again!) but I wanted guests and was willing to take the time, and learn from my mistakes. Not Ed. We had few guests until the children began bringing their friends home.

The summer after we were married (in October) and moved to Grandma’s (in February), Ed heard of a job in California which would wink at his lack of years as a die sinker. (There was a hierarchy, beginning with apprenticeship and becoming a journeyman or whatever. I didn’t know much about factory jobs.) Because of World War II, die sinkers were in great demand. The pay would be \$100 a week. I was very sad. I didn’t think worldly riches should lure us into anything. But I was having a bad time living with my mother-in-law, so California sounded pretty good. My parents hoped to move there some day, too.

Fifteen Months in California

I loved California. Bro. and Sr. Lorenz and son Edward took us to Mt. Baldy. They were very kind to us. We learned that they were critical of almost everyone else, but they were very pleasant to us.

Bro. Lorenz had a brother named Ferry, who was married to the former Clyde McCoy (one of the many down-and-outers whom Grandma Bell had housed, much to Grandpa Bell’s disgust). Br. Lorenz would have nothing to do with Br. Ferry because he had left a wife and five children in the Midwest. But Ferry was a remarkable witnesser. He had a reputation of being too friendly toward the sisters, not restrained as most Bible Student Brethren are, but everyone admired his willingness to talk Truth to any stranger he met.

Clyde and Ferry were very hospitable. They had a small rabbit ranch, and we often went there to eat rabbit Sunday evenings, with several other Brethren. We had a good time.

Californians in general were friendly. They all took us in. Art and Helen Abrahamson would invite a group over every Christmas, and I went there while we lived in California. Later, my parents were part of that group.



Bob and Marie Nash (she had been a girlhood friend of Adelaide Jones and Mother) often had us at their home. They took us under their wing. Russell and Pauline Pollack had us in their home and were very good to us.

One day, Russell asked me to come downstairs at meeting to see the Elders. When I got down there, Clyde Lorenz said she thought the “in” crowd had evil-spoken against her and Ferry because we were now traveling with Pollacks, Browns, Nashes, Abrahamsens, Rippers, etc. I assured her this was not the case. It was just that everyone was so kind to us.

As a matter of fact, this crowd often went to 116th Street after Sunday supper together. There was a little church at 116th Street which the L.A. Elders would serve. I would play for the services, and a pimply-faced young man named Freddie Farnner played the violin beautifully.

Several second marriages came to California to leave the past. Bro. Ernest and Sr. Villa Arland lived “across the alley” from the apartment Ed and I lived in. Some people wouldn’t shake their hands because they’d been divorced from their first spouses. Arlands were very kind to Ed and me. (It wasn’t actually across the alley, because there were no alleys. I guess you’d say “across the back way.”) One day I came home from work and Villa had a surprise for me. “Bro. ----- came to see you today.” I’d never heard of him. Villa said, “He knows you well. He told me all about your family. I loaned him \$10.” None of us ever saw the man again.

There was a Revelation study in Arlands’ home. Jessie and Florence McKissick attended it and loved it. I’d been prejudiced against prophecy and Revelation by Uncle Dan. (I don’t think he ever SAID a word. It was just his strong influence in sticking to the Volumes. Jens Copeland even downplayed the Reprints because he felt Bro. Russell thought aloud in the Towers, whereas he wrote his studied conclusions in the Volumes.) So I didn’t go across the way—so close—to that study. Ten years later, I wished I’d had that foundation. Br. Earl Fowler led the studies, and he followed Br. Streeter’s guidelines which were very close to Br. Russell’s. Most of Bro. Fowler’s talks referred to the Book of Revelation. He was a pleasant man. He and his sons owned a nursery/greenhouse. They always provided the flowers for the 4th of July conventions in L.A.

Ed and I attended a midweek meeting where we sat around the table. Br. Corrigan was there. I remember how he would cough all over us and explain that nothing would keep him from attending a meeting of the Lord’s people. Bro. Corrigan had no money and no skills. Russell Pollock would pay Bro. Corrigan to tract during the week, an arrangement that Br. Corrigan liked.



John and Esther Hull also attended this meeting. We found that they had been married the same day as we were, October 14, 1940. We celebrated our first anniversary together at this meeting.

We had wonderful times with the “in” group and also with the “little ones,” a marked division. George and Alice Ripper were among the “ins.” His sister, Elizabeth Fowler, and her husband Earl (though an elder) were with the “little ones.” I learned from both.

Alice’s arthritis (?) became so bad that she finally had to be in a wheelchair. She wrote poetry. She said, “I feel useless, but I always keep the home serene so that George can serve.”

Elizabeth said, “I have two wonderful sons, but my sweetheart is Earl.” You would have to see Earl to appreciate my fascination in wondering how anyone could love baldheaded, large-nosed Earl so much. But I’ve never forgotten Sr. Fowler’s sincere priorities.

Besides sons Paul and George and husband Earl, there were the cats. The cats attended the meetings in Fowlers’ home more than the sons did. They roamed at will, along the back of the couch we sat on and everywhere.

Another conversation sticks with me. Russell Pollack’s brother died. Bob Nash had the funeral. Bob and Shirley and I were tracting one day, and later in the car Bob talked about death. He said, “For a saint, it’s like opening the door to the next room—except that in the next room will be the Apostle Paul and the Lord Jesus and the Heavenly Father.” Not a frightening unknown, but a wonderful prospect!

I’ve kept many of those friendships, even though most of the older generation have now gone through that door. But Naoma Bizeaux and Bro. Prosser are a part of the Sacramento Dawn Class, and Naoma attended the meetings in the Fowler home with her mother, and Br. Prosser attended the L.A. Conventions. I often see Esther Hull and her sister Bettie Young. In those days, Bettie was Elizabeth Whitehouse, not yet married.

Ed went to see his mother that Christmas. While he was there, my Grandpa Foss died. By the time I was aware of what Grandpa Foss did for a living, he’d had to give up his job because of a heart condition. From the platform, in a talk, Jens Copeland used Grandpa Foss as his example of true sacrifice. He said that Grandpa took a job shoveling manure so he could have more time for the Truth. I don’t doubt that, but I’d never heard it before!



All I remember was that the “Foss girls” had enough money to invest to buy a three-flat on Lawndale Avenue besides the two-flat in which they lived on Troy Street. Grandpa and Grandma kept up these two buildings by working together—kind of like janitors.

Grandpa Foss was the generous one of the Fosses. Grandma Bell was the generous one of the Bells. One Christmas, Grandpa Foss gave one of “the girls” all the pennies he had saved through the year, one all the nickels, and one all the dimes. I figured the money was really theirs, so hoped they appreciated it. They all got a little miffed at all the down-and-outers Grandpa brought home from meeting for a meal.

Grandpa Bell worked hard at Carson’s wholesale store, and he did it to provide for his family. But Grandma Bell often brought in someone from meeting to stay with them until the new folks got on their feet financially.

I expected to stay in California. My parents expected to come out to live there. Shirley came ahead of them. One day a letter came in the mail to Ed. I innocently opened it. It said, “Your application for employment has been accepted.” In my happiness, I had not realized that Ed’s California employment was just a temporary measure to advance in his field of work, and that his mother and he fully expected him to return to her. It was during Ed’s Christmas back in Chicago that he had made the application, not mentioning it to me. At first, I was so stunned I didn’t want to go back to Chicago with him.

Back to Chicago.

But, of course, I did. When we returned, I was not only crushed to think I hadn’t been consulted about returning—it was Ed and his mother’s desire—but I was not happy with her gift to us of Archer Avenue’s two-flat. She’d loved it as a young matron. She told me she had cried with joy when the sunshine flooded her kitchen. Those had been Grandma’s happiest days—three little children, a husband.

Next door was Auntie Pulkos, who had been Auntie Endzel until her first husband died. They went to the Polish Lutheran church together in spite of Aunt Lankheim (Grandma’s sister) trying to get Grandma to attend the Bible Student meetings.

When Walter Lankheim “talked Truth” to Ed, he began coming to the Bible Student meetings regularly, and with him came Frieda and Gertrude, and finally Grandma attended the Polish meetings more and more regularly until she left the Lutheran church altogether.

I hated Archer Avenue passionately. But my kids have happy memories of it, and I pray and believe time has mellowed me somewhat.



Ed and I both loved the children; he was always happy to watch them or play with them. He would have loved Mark to be interested in ham radio or any electronics, and bought a train set that he loved. Ed had wanted to be a Boy Scout when he was a boy, so was eager for Mark to be one. Mark was not that interested in Ed's interests, but now that I ask Mark where he learned something, he often says, "From Dad."

One fun thing I remember was Mark's morning ritual of going next door to Auntie Pulkos and kicking her door (too small to reach the doorknob and open it). He'd call to Auntie Pulkos, "Open the door, Richard," which was a popular song of that day. She would happily open the door and let Mark in and they would have their coffee together. His coffee was a teaspoonful in milk.

A Different Role at Meeting

Ed loved his accordion. When I was fourteen years old, I saw and heard him playing in the Lankheim basement when Joe and June got married. I was playing classical music on the piano and was at the wedding to accompany Bro. John Read.

Bro. Wylam loved culture and refinement. He had been a Christian Scientist before coming into the Truth. He tried to teach the brethren how to sing accurately. Sr. Wylam played the piano, and he had a nice voice. But he didn't think an accordion was appropriate for the meetings, although he encouraged other instruments. This hurt Ed, of course.

One Memorial on the third floor at 912 N. LaSalle, Bro. Wylam had the service. No one was at the piano, and I was the assigned pianist on that evening, so I figured Bro. Wylam had forgotten to ask for a pianist. I walked to the piano to play. Bro. Wylam announced that we would be singing a capella that evening, as Jesus and the apostles did.

My father was an elder, my Uncle Dan was an elder, my Uncle George was a deacon, my Grandpa Foss was totally active with the German work in Chicago, Dad's Uncle Martin was an elder in his own little class which had broken away from the Watch Tower when Bro. Russell died.

I was surrounded by uncles and aunts and parents and grandparents who were associated with the meetings. Sr. Nindel told me, "You don't know how lonely it is to be outside your inner circle." I learned.



My husband was never an elder nor a deacon. Today, it's just my son and my daughter and a cousin whose life is centered in her husband and a sister who has her husband and children and grandchild. I've had to use my own advice. "If you're not invited to the party, have a party and invite the others who aren't invited." Actually, it works out most often, "If you're not invited to one party, go to the party where you are invited." I am not lonely. But, of course, I am healthy, used in services (WHAT a blessing!), and I drive a car. My peers who don't have these blessings do have a problem.

The Wylams felt like outsiders. The other elders were Irving Foss, Dan Morehouse, Jens Copeland (Dad's cousin Marie's husband) and Carl Foss. Even if they weren't all elders at the same time, you can see why Wylams felt "out of the family."

So Wylams were very good about taking care of Sr. Nindel, Sr. Colberg, and all the "little" people. Barbara Majka loved to be invited to Wylam's "parties." She said, "They don't pussyfoot around and call them 'gatherings.' They're parties."

Ed didn't care to attend these parties, but I was happy to, and I did. I felt, "I was very careful to marry in the Truth. I haven't changed. If Ed doesn't want to attend meetings or fellowship with Brethren, that's his problem, not mine."

Bro. Wylam told me, "Your enthusiasm about accepting our invitations is refreshing to us. Some of these Polish young people don't give us an answer either way, and some never come." He was talking about Ted Trzyna. Angeline Majka explained recently, "We weren't educated in etiquette. We didn't know how to be refined."

Now I look back and appreciate my dad's wisdom when he said, "Happiness is not a condition, but an attitude." He would quote Hymn 94: "Prisons would palaces prove, If Jesus still dwelt with me there." Just last Sunday, Donna Mathewson commented, "I guess it's all in our attitude."

Dad also quoted to me often: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though something strange thing happened unto you." But I was struggling to figure out what I was supposed to do with my life (in looking back, I guess that all I was supposed to do was to submit and try to become something I could never be?), conditions were trials, and I felt imprisoned.

Now, I try to curb my naturally negative perspective. I'm a pessimist and realize I evaluate my circumstances with a minus sign whereas others would have similar experiences more casually.

Adjustments

Ed made very good wages as a die sinker, but they were often on strike, and he stayed home on the average of once a week to rest up from the long hours he worked.



He sometimes worked 72 hours a week. Ed bought his hobbies (electronics, mostly) according to the hourly wage he earned, not calculating that he didn't earn anything when he wasn't working. Once in winter, I went to meeting barelegged because I couldn't afford stockings.

We bought groceries at a neighborhood grocery store that would "put it on the cuff." Auntie Pulkos recommended this to me, and I had to take advantage of it, but Merrily Wesol was thrilled with a store where you "didn't have to pay" for your purchases. I have never been a good bargain hunter. I probably should have been more thrifty.

I learned how to drive a car because both children fell asleep on my arms on a bus, coming home from visiting Br. Carpenter. I almost dropped them. When I drove, they could sleep in the back seat safely.

One time we were in California, two-year-old Mark fell from the folks' patio/porch onto some cactus. Have you ever tried to remove cactus from a toddler's tender armpits? We took him to the doctor who put a salve on the cactus and the stickers came out easily.

When we decided to sell Archer Avenue and build in Elmhurst, the children and I went to California to live with my parents, waiting for the house to be built. Ed got very lonely and came out to get us during Christmas vacation. He had been living in Pakulskis' basement.

Mark missed his dad when we stayed in Pasadena from September until December. He clung to every man he saw.

On the way back from California, there was a terrible snowstorm. We didn't know how long it would last, and didn't have enough money to stay in a motel indefinitely, so we kept driving to Chicago.

On South Western Avenue (way, way south—maybe 150th?) the car stalled. We saw a light in the blinding snowstorm, and finally realized it was a train approaching. I got out of the car with the children, who were sleeping in their stocking feet. I carried five-year-old Mark, and pulled eight-year-old Alys along with me (she was Alice until Becky Hack—now Gray—urged her to change the spelling when they were in high school).

The snow was deep, and we had no idea if the terrain was swampland, a lake, or a valley where we'd sink down. It was frightening. We had to know the Lord would do what was best for us.

Of course, we told brethren about the experience. (Before the train came, Ed was able to rock the car off the tracks, so he and the car were both saved.



He kept his eye on the train, which must have been moving slowly, and would have jumped from the car to save his life if he couldn't save the car.) Ted Hack seriously pondered the matter, and concluded, "I guess you weren't ready to make your calling election sure."

Being Thin—Getting Fat

Jenny Craig says, "Thin people CAN'T eat when they're nervous and frustrated. Fat people eat MORE when they're nervous and frustrated." How true! When did I change?

When I was in first grade, Dad took the day off from work to come and see me narrate "Hansel and Gretel." It was the most important part in the presentation. The actors pantomimed what I read. I did very well at all the rehearsals. When it was time to perform, I got so nauseated that I had to sit with all my doting relatives in the balcony while someone else (the teacher?) narrated for me. Disappointing to the doters, embarrassing to me as I look back, at the time I was too sick to care.

I LOVED school. Each grade was my favorite while I was in it. But every autumn, the first day of school, my anticipation was so great that I became sick to my stomach. I was the thin person who couldn't eat when I was nervous.

Still skinny at sixteen, I had an AWFUL crush on one of the "Polish young people" who came from the Polish classes and met upstairs of the English class and were led by our English elders—particularly Br. Schiller, Br. Wylam, and Uncle Dan. Every time I SAW this young man, I had to head for the bathroom and throw up! It's easy to see why the Lord led me out of THAT crush—imagine, spending the rest of your life throwing up!

Although I wasn't madly in love with Fritz Kulieke, I was still skinny. We'd stop at The Buffalo, on Irving Park and Pulaski, for ice cream after our dates. I would take about two swallows of my malt and COULDN'T TAKE ANOTHER BIT. Oh, for those days!

Then, I got married, and we ate. We ate when we wanted to celebrate, we ate when we were frustrated, we ate when Ed was hungry, we ate when I was hungry.

I hadn't dreamed that housekeeping would be so difficult. Mom always kept things so neat. Ed would sleep in the bedroom off the kitchen, which had no door. I would take the children to the park to keep the house quiet for him, Ed's mother would come over and see the house a complete mess. She would tell Auntie Pulkos who told me.



“I get sick when I see Joy’s housekeeping.” Grandma took great pride in her own housekeeping. One time she told me, “I was really jealous, seeing Sr. Filip’s home. It’s cleaner than mine.” As soon as Grandma left, I’d head for the refrigerator and eat and eat and eat. The terrible pain in my stomach would disappear. Years later, my slowness had only to cope with Ed’s hobbies all over the house; the kids were gone. The house was some neater. But I’d learned the panacea of eating.

The Happiest Day of My Life

We had been married 37 years. People pitied me when Ed had his stroke, but in many ways it was much easier. He couldn’t go where he wanted because he couldn’t drive, legally having had a stroke. So he began to come along with me to meetings again. He received a disability check from the government, and he could spend it any way he wanted. Sometimes he would borrow money from me, but he always paid it back on the day his disability check arrived. My paycheck, even when it was smaller as an office worker (in contrast to teaching), went to pay bills, and for the first time in our married lives bills were paid on time.

I would have liked to attend the New Brunswick convention, but when Ed didn’t want to, I said, “OK. I’ll stay in Chicago, but I’m not going to sit around the house or work. I’m going downtown as a tourist.” Ed said he’d like to go along. Fine!

We ate at Berghoff’s, I think it’s called—a German restaurant downtown. I love ethnic food, surroundings, restaurants.

We went to the Water Tower Plaza. The glass elevators were fun. I can’t remember exactly what we did there. I’m not a window shopper. But just being in the elegant plaza was a treat. When we left, I had to turn my headlights on to see my way in the underground parking lot.

Then we went to the Museum of Natural History. We both enjoyed museums very much. Ed saw some colored glass hanging—like a wind chime. He loved it, but didn’t like to spend money. I said, “Your birthday’s coming up, and I never know what to get for you. Let it be my birthday present to you.” He liked that idea, and bought it.

When we came out to the museum’s parking lot, the car wouldn’t start. In that bright sun, we hadn’t noticed that I had not turned off the car’s headlights. Ed should have been angry. We had to call for help, and paid \$10 to a service man to give the car a jump.



I marveled at the glorious day we'd had. I couldn't remember ever having such a happy day together.

In two weeks, Ed was dead. I have always thanked the Lord with all my heart for that wonderful day. It was a perfect memory. I hadn't yelled at him, which I often did from frustration. He hadn't yelled at me—from frustration, too. Everything had been just perfect. Thank you, thank you, thank you, Lord.

The "wind chime" hangs over my kitchen sink. I love it, and the memory it signifies.


Ed's Death

It is almost unbelievable to people who have only known me since I have been overweight. When I was a skinny kid, I was rowing a boat in Wisconsin, and the family took a picture of me, but they spliced it away because it was so embarrassingly skinny. When I was twenty, I finally went up from 100 pounds and everyone was so thrilled to see that the chocolate malts of all those years were finally filling me out a bit that they urged me on and on and on. Then one day my fan club shouted, "Enough!" but by then I was in the habit of eating and I couldn't stop.

The day Ed died, he was urging me to go on the diet Joan Stromberg had found successful. The day before, at meeting, she had explained it to him. I said, "I'd also like to walk to the train. The exercise is important, too." It was July 17th, a HOT day.

Ed and I walked up past Vallette and he realized he'd left his wallet at home. I said, "I'll give you money for your coffee at Paradise Restaurant. I don't have time to go home. I'll miss my train." But Ed ran home the half mile, and back again to me. By then his heart was beating fast and his blood pressure had risen. I urged him to sit down.

But he tried to keep up with me, until we got up to the parking lot of the funeral home on York Street, just south of the tracks. He said, "Go get my boyfriend at Paradise and tell him to drive me home." Instead, I went to the taxi at the depot, and went back to Ed in the taxi, and we both went home. I knew he was not well, and didn't want him to have to go home alone.

A photograph of a hummingbird in flight, hovering over a cluster of bright pink and red flowers. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a garden or natural setting. The hummingbird's wings are spread, and its beak is pointed forward.

After an hour I called the office to say I'd be late. I asked Ed if it would be all right to leave. He said, "OK, but phone to see if I'm OK at nine o'clock." I phoned at nine o'clock, there was no answer, and I came home and found him dead.

If you were to ask, "What ONE thing do you think of when you think of Ed?"

I would quote Isaiah 40:31: "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." It was his favorite scripture. He was blessed when Jens Copeland quoted it to him, and he blessed Marie Copeland with it when Jens died.

Living Alone at Three Score and Ten (Plus)

I always thought it would be nice to leave Chicago. I didn't want a chicken farm, as my dad did. But I thought Colorado would be a healthy place to live; and when Ed got the job in L.A., I would have liked to have stayed there. But we were back in Chicago in fifteen months, and I'm still here.

I constantly marvel at my blessings! Perhaps I've learned how to be happy, but I love doing things I like to do.

One of my happiest activities is participating in senior water aerobics daily at the "Y." When I entered Von Steuben Junior High School, I was far behind my classmates in athletic prowess. But most of them had not learned to swim before then, so I was on an equal footing with them in the pool. I never became a great swimmer, but I always enjoyed the water. One more thing to be grateful for, as I hear of people who are afraid of the water.

It's a wonderful miracle to me that Ed's older sister Frieda and I are good friends today, and also Ed's cousin Carrie Lankheim Newell. The Lord has blessed me with many loving friends, for which I thank Him. My children are my best friends, although I blame myself for their unhappiness and mistakes.

My marriage was not ecstatically happy, but I take the blame. I never wished I'd married anyone else. I just wasn't a good wife, and wouldn't have enjoyed the confinement of marriage to anyone. I didn't know I would find housework so difficult. I'd always been somewhat successful at the things I endeavored. I was a failure as a wife, and a terrible daughter-in-law. These failures make me compassionate toward others who have shortcomings. Things are probably hard for them, too. I couldn't have chosen a better husband and father for my children.

I pray I've learned some lessons, and grown more pleasing to the Lord through it all. Life isn't over yet, but He has seen me through thus far. I know he will stick with me all the way.

