

A decorative title card with a dark background and gold-colored ornate scrollwork. The name "Violet Morehouse Jurek" is written in a white, elegant, serif font, centered within the scrollwork.

Violet Morehouse Jurek

The King Family came from England by way of Nova Scotia. Because Grandma Bell's name was King and Grandpa Bell's Mother's name was Noble, we would say, "We came from the English Kings and the Irish Nobles."

The Kings lived in Chicago before the fire. I believe he was a minister, but he had an illegitimate daughter named Evelyn. She was later known as "Big Auntie" or "Big Aunt Evelyn."

The Kings had a son who married and had several children. At the time of the fire, his wife was pregnant. To escape the fire, she sat in a wheelbarrow and he pushed it down to the Lake. When the fire was over, all he had was the wheelbarrow and the key to his house. The baby was born the day after Christmas and they named her Caroline (for Christmas carols). That, of course, was Grandma Bell.



Grandma Bell's Mother loved to read. She died quite young and Great Grandma King had to raise her children. Great Grandma King was blind, but one of the stories about her was when the children took some strawberries from the icebox and thought she wouldn't know. She had counted the number of berries when she put them in, so she knew how many were missing!

One of Grandma Bell's brothers became a doctor and lived in Iowa. He made his rounds in a horse-drawn buggy.

We went to Danville, IL, to visit one of Grandma Bell's relatives. I think it may have been a brother.

The only relative I really knew was Grandma's sister Evelyn. She was as mischievous as Grandma was "proper." She worked at a hospital in Winfield, IL, and later had a popcorn stand in St. Charles, IL.

Her daughter married a man who had several red-haired children and lived on a farm in Northbrook, IL. At the time, they were not interested in the meetings, but years after we left the JWs they joined them. This included Aunt Evelyn.

Grandpa Bell came from Ireland. He was from Armagh near Belfast. As a young man, he came to "seek his fortune." He had a letter of recommendation to Carson, Pirie, Scott & Co. from some of their friends in the "Old Country." He worked for them for over 50 years. I don't know what happened to Carson and Scott, but Mr. Pirie was in charge for many years.

Grandpa Bell worked in the "silk department," so that meant that his granddaughters wore "silk dresses" made from the remnants that were on sale.

Grandpa Bell would tell us "Irish stories." One was about a man who tried to get his donkey to move by lighting a fire under him. The donkey moved just far enough ahead so the fire got the cart he was pulling.

Another was about taking shortcut home through a cemetery and hitting his shoes together to make noise to scare off the "ghosts." Another was about a play he had seen about a villain who had come to foreclose the mortgage on someone's house. He had a thick "Irish Brogue," so it was fun to listen to him.

When Bro. or Dr. Jones (who assembled the Question Book, etc.) went to Ireland, he brought back a picture of Grandpa Bell's Mother. She told him she wasn't coming to America because she was "afraid to cross the big pond."

When Grandpa and Grandma Bell were married, they moved out to the country. That meant they moved to what is now Pulaski and Madison.



They had a son Harry, who died of diphtheria, and three daughters, Leonora, Hulda, and Frances.

Hulda played with the little girl across the alley. One day her Mother came over and as part of her conversation told Grandma Bell that the goldfish in her bowl were "souls." This, of course, shocked Grandma, but it got her attention. The neighbor was Sr. Jones.

My Father came from a German Catholic family. His Father was from Pennsylvania, and his grandFather had been a soldier and had played the fiddle for country dances.

His Mother's family was from Naperville, IL, where they could see the smoke from the Chicago Fire from their farm. His grandparents are buried in the St. Peter and St. Paul Catholic Cemetery.

When my Dad was a young man, he and a friend owned a sailboat. They had been repairing it, and they had left the hatch off. My Dad, his friend, the friend's girlfriend, and a young boy went for a ride on Lake Michigan. A big wave splashed over the boat filling it with water and flipping it over. The girl and the young boy drowned. While trying to do a "dog paddle" my Dad's finger caught in a metal ring on the side of the boat, and he was able to hang on. Eventually, the Coast Guard rescued my Dad and his friend. One time my aunt showed me the front page of the Tribune for that next day, with a drawing of the scene and an article about the rescue.

While recovering from his experience, my Dad had to stay in bed. He decided to read some books that his Mother brought from someone who came to the door. Br. Oscar Magnuson had sold the first three Volumes to my GrandMother. She only bought them because the neighbor had done so, but my Father read them.

After not being able to convince his priest that he had found the Truth, he decided to write and see if there was anyone else in the Chicago area who believed this way. As a result he found the Brethren and started coming to the meetings.

He met my Mother and they were married on September 23, 1910. They immediately went out in the Colporteur work.



Later they worked at “Bethel” in Brooklyn where one of my Mother’s duties was to clean “The Judge’s” room. (That was Judge Rutherford.)

My Dad was a “Pilgrim” and made several speaking trips.

Later they worked at the Chicago Temple. My Mother did the cooking. She said she never knew how many people would show up for dinner. She also operated the phonograph which had to be timed so it fit with the pictures that were being shown at the time to give the impression of being a “talking picture.”

We were part of the group who left the JW’s in August 1933 that became the present Chicago Class.

Violet’s P.S.

I was born on August 1, 1921. We lived at Kostner and Madison. We moved to 2424 Keeler Avenue and shared the house with the Fosses. (Irving, Hulda, Joy and Shirley.)

When I was two years old, we moved to 2617 N. Springfield where I lived until I was married and moved to 1128 N. Springfield.

Grandpa and Grandma Bell lived at 2424 Keeler until they moved to California. Fosses lived on Tripp.

The first thing I remember about the meeting was the Electric Workers Union Hall. My Father would take care of me so my mom could be in the meeting. We would walk up and down in front of the hall, and I could walk on the low cement fences that were in front of each house. Each building in the block had these fences that were in front of each house. Each building in the block had these fences as well as a long cement stairway.

The Class moved to 1016 Dearborn to the IOOF Hall. It was a large hall with a balcony. The dining room was in the basement. We used that for the Sunday School. We would start with the chairs set up in the middle like for a regular meeting. After the hymns and prayer, we would each take our chair and go to the table where our individual Bible Class. The youngest class was inside a passageway leading to the kitchen.



The next class was just outside the door to the kitchen and the book we studied was "The Harp." There were classes at each table. The oldest class studied "Volume One." At the end of the meeting we would bring our chairs back to the center for the closing hymn and prayer.

One time when there was a big snow storm, there were so few out that we all were in the Volume study. The lesson was about "The Ages Overlapping."

The front of the building has been remodeled, but at this time there were two stores with a little courtyard in between. The store to the North was a Chinese laundry. The store to the South was our book store. We also used it as our "Book Table." We stayed at this hall for about ten years. Then we moved a few blocks north.

There was a "Brown Stone" house on the front of the lot. They said that was the "Pioneer" home. The back of the lot had an office building. There was an elevator, and I believe the new hall was on the third floor. The first Sunday we went to the new hall, it had just been painted and looked nice and clean. But there was something I couldn't understand. On the lectern, instead of the "Cross and Crown," there was a big "JW"!!

We had our Sunday School class in the parlor of the Pioneer Home. I didn't like our lessons and I would complain to my Mother that I wasn't learning about the Bible. Everything was geared to getting new members, but the interests were more worldly and less spiritual.

One Sunday they were going to have a business meeting. I knew there was something wrong because Joy and Shirley were not with my Aunt and Uncle in the meeting. (Now I heard they were in the back of the hall with Uncle George, but I didn't see them.)

After a heated discussion when there was a lot of noise because everyone was talking at once, Uncle Irving in his penetrating voice said, "Next Sunday we will meet at the store at 1016 Dearborn that had been our Bookroom." I learned later that Uncle Irving, Bro. Wylam, Bros. John Read and Ben Hollister had had a "picnic" and had discussed the conditions in the Class and what to do about it.



This was in 1933. For my birthday I stayed overnight with Joy and Shirley. That next Sunday, my folks had to come to the “Bookroom” store to pick me up. My Father had not made up his mind until then, but he never went back to the JWs.

They voted to have Bro. Wylam look for a hall, and he found 912 N. LaSalle. The second Sunday we had the meeting there. Bro. Wylam was the first Sunday School teacher in the new class. The first lesson he told us the Creative Week was seven thousand years long and the next Sunday he told us it was 49,000 years long.

Everybody was “rusty” on the Truth. Now our Sunday School lessons were on the Bible and the Class started studying the Volumes again. The testimonies were all about “getting back to the Volumes.” One of the talks I heard was about “digging again the wells of Abraham.” Everyone was enthusiastic and everyone went to all the meetings. The Wednesday night meeting was at Br. and Sr. Hedstrom’s home.

The Copelands left the JWs a year or so later.

