

# Memoirs of Leonora Bell Morehouse

Interviewed by Alys Schneider

December 4, 1976

**Alys:**

Today is Saturday, December 4, 1976, and Auntie Nodie and I are sitting here at the table. I'm going to ask her some questions about how she came into the Truth back in Br. Russell's day..... Auntie Nodie, how did Grandma Bell get the Truth?

**Nodie:**

Well, when your Grandma, Grandma Foss, was 5 years old, we lived on Madison Street and Br. and Sr. Jones lived across the alley from us. They had a little girl, Adelaide, who was 5 years old, and those two little girls played together. Sr. Jones, who was very zealous, came across the alley to meet my mother. She wanted to know who we were, and she started to talk the Truth to my Mother.

My Mother was a VERY good member of the Methodist Church. She sang in the choir and she belonged to the Ladies' Aid, and Missionary Society, and all those things. She really didn't want to listen to Sister Jones, but she persisted. One of the things she told my Mother was that the Bible did not teach eternal torment. Of course, my Mother said, Well, she didn't LIKE the idea, but it was in the Bible, so she had to believe it. But Sr. Jones persisted, and she finally convinced my Mother.

Then my Mother decided she would leave the Methodist Church. Well, I had joined the Church when I was 12 years old, and I was NEVER going to leave! I belonged to the Epworth League...

**Alys:**

What is the Epworth League?

**Nodie:**

The Epworth League was a group of teen-agers that had special meetings for themselves. Of course, they attended the adult meetings, too. But this was special for young people. So, my Father and I were not going to leave the Church, and we kept going even though my Mother left. We went for about a month. And then we quit.

In the meantime, Br. and Sr. Jones were talking the Truth to my Mother and convincing her all along that she had done the right thing.

**Alys:**

What were some of the meetings like that you first went to?

**Nodie:**

Well, Br. Jones was very good to me. He really helped to teach the Truth. He took me to a study meeting and Br. and Sr. Ropersons every Friday. We went, I guess it was about noon or a little after. We had an afternoon meeting in their home. Br. Roperson worked for the B&O Railroad. He was in charge of the dining room, a Steward. They had a BIG house. We had the afternoon meeting at their home and we had lunch there. It was a study meeting and the first book we studied was the 2nd Volume, and it was very, VERY good! They had a big house with two big rooms joined and it was just FILLED with friends.

**Alys:**

About how many were in the study? 30?

**Nodie:**

Oh, at least! Then in the evening, we went over to Br. and Sr. McPhail's home, and we had supper there. Br. McPhail had been a Pilgrim. He was Laura Hollister's Father. We had supper there, and then Br. McPhail gave Chart talks. That's how I learned the Truth.

**Alys:**

What year would that be?

**Nodie:**

1908 or perhaps a little before that. I was immersed in 1908.

**Alys:**

How old were you then?

**Nodie:**

14. Then after Joneses moved from where they lived across the alley from us, they moved two doors down from Dr. Moe. On Christmas Day we always went to Br. and Sr. Moes for Christmas. Br. Jones came running in, we were all at dinner there. Br. and Sr. Moe (who also left the Methodist Church as a result of their witnessing) and their three boys and my Father and Mother and two sisters.

Br. Jones said to me, do you want to go to a convention with me? And I said, Sure! I didn't know where it was or anything about it. So Mother and I went home, packed my suitcase, and away Br. Jones and I went on the railroad to Racine, where I was immersed.

**Alys:**

Who gave your baptismal discourse?

**Nodie:**

Br. Russell gave the talk and Judge Rutherford immersed me, and two Sisters who were fairly new in the Truth, Sr. Rose Hirsch and Sr. Cora Sundbom, and Charlotte Magnuson helped the Sisters at the immersion service.

**Alys:**

How many were immersed? Do you remember?

**Nodie:**

I don't remember...

**Alys:**

Was that the first time you met Br. Russell?

**Nodie:**

To my knowledge, it was. Of course, he used to come to Chicago quite often to speak. After we had been in the Truth a little while, my Mother started to have the meetings in her home. We had many Pilgrims that came and spoke in our home.

**Alys:**

Did the Pilgrims stay with you, too?

**Nodie:**

Sometimes they did and sometimes they stayed with the Joneses. Joneses had an open house—anybody could come there and stay as long as they wanted to.

Not that they had money, because Sr. Jones told me that many times they got down to their last dime; but they were always very hospitable. And the Friends would slip them a little money now and then, so that helped. They had some rich Friends in the Class. But their house was always open to the Brethren.

**Alys:**

How many Brethren were in the Class back then? Was it the same size as it is today?

**Nodie:**

OH, NO! Oh, much, MUCH larger. We had six hundred in our English Class alone, and that did not include German, Scandinavian, Polish, Colored...those were also Brethren. They all had separate classes.

**Alys:**

Did they ever meet together?



**Nodie:**

When Br. Russell or some Pilgrim who was well-known came to town, as many Brethren as could would come. Not everybody, but as many as could.

**Alys:**

How many week night meetings did the English have, and did they study the Volumes?

**Nodie:**

They studied the Volumes. Another thing we did, we served suppers to the Brethren. My Mother had a meeting on Tuesday night. The Friends would come from work, eat supper, and attend the study. At one time we had meetings on Wednesday night and it was the same thing. Then on Thursday night we went to Br. and Sr. Flanner's and they served supper and had a study. Then Saturday we went to Joneses' house. They served supper and had a study.

**Alys:**

WOW! That would cost a lot of money to feed all those people!

**Nodie:**

Sure it was! They had the same menu each time. My Mother served meatloaf, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, and some simple dessert. On Thursdays and Fridays we had pot roast and a few little things to go with it. On Saturdays, Sr. Jones baked the most wonderful pan of baked beans and she had a special sort of molasses spice cake that she served. The same thing every week, but everybody enjoyed it.

**Alys:**

They probably came right from work...

**Nodie:**

Right...on the streetcars. No automobiles. They came on the streetcars, or walked if they lived near enough.

**Alys:**

It would take quite a while for them to get back home...

**Nodie:**

Oh, ABSOLUTELY!

**Alys:**

How were the conventions back then?

**Nodie:**

Oh...BIG! BIG CONVENTIONS!

**Alys:**

Did you have a yearly convention?

**Nodie:**

Well, we didn't have as many conventions as the Friends have now. But when we did have them, they were WELL attended because not only the Chicago Friends were there, but people from all over! We didn't have the transportation that we have now... planes. Anywhere you would go would be by train. So we didn't have them as often.

**Alys:**

Did you go on that train trip that Br. Jones arranged?

**Nodie:**

I went on one in 1911. We were married in 1910.

**Alys:**

How old were you then?

**Nodie:**

16—I was 16 in February and we went in the summer of 1911. We went on this trip. We didn't have any money, so we worked our way. We served in the dining room. There were many rich Friends who paid for their transportation.

Even the cooks and the waiters, the Colored helpers in the kitchen, they were Truth Brethren. We served the butter. I have a picture of that...the train and us standing around out in front. We made many stops all along the way.

**Alys:**

What did everybody do when you stopped?

**Nodie:**

We had public meetings and we had class meetings, and conventions. One time we had an unscheduled stop. One time a Sister said to me, You've never been to Regina, Canada. Oh, yes, I said, I have. Oh, no, she said...you have never.

My dear, I said, you are sadly mistaken, because I was there before you were born. She didn't know whether she wanted to believe that or not. But anyway, that was the unscheduled stop. We got into this town and for some reason we had to stop; I don't know just what it was. So Br. Russell was right on the ball. The Brothers on the train went out to a print shop. They had fliers or notices of a public meeting printed. We put them out like you would put out tracts. Br. Russell gave the talk and we had an unscheduled meeting, a public meeting. And that was in Regina, Saskatchewan.

**Alys:**

Did you have very many public come out?

**Nodie:**

Well, enough to fill the hall...I wouldn't exactly know how many or how large the hall was. But Br. Russell always attracted a crowd wherever he went.

**Alys:**

How long were you on this train trip?

**Nodie:**

Well, it was in the summer. I would say about a month. I don't remember exactly how long. Perhaps this colporteur thing that I have would tell you. We didn't have very much money, so every once in a while Dan would have to go and get a job and work for a couple of months because nobody was paying us for anything.

**Alys:**

What did you do in between time?

**Nodie:**

Colporteur in between. Then he would go and get a job. At one time he was working at Western Electric; but later he worked for Commonwealth Edison and he was having trouble with his eyes. The doctor said, You better get an outside job and not do office work anymore because it seems to be too hard on your eyes. So he got a job driving a milk wagon for Borden Company. We were doing that for a little while and we lived in a little basement apartment. We thought that was just wonderful because we never had anything like that before.

They were looking for someone to work at the PhotoDrama in Chicago. They were able to get hold of an old Theatre. It was called the "Old Globe Theatre," and it was a round building, very much in need of repair, on the corner of 7th and Wabash. So we thought about it and thought about it, and I said, Let's go. So he gave up this job driving a milk wagon and we volunteered, or answered their call for somebody who would go. We went there and I was 20 years old. I did all the cooking, I ran the phonograph for the PhotoDrama, and Dan was in charge of all the cleaning. We had a family of several Brethren who lived there and others who would come in once a week and help in the cleaning.

**Alys:**

Did you live there?

**Nodie:**

Oh, yes, I lived there.



**Alys:**

What did the building look like?

**Nodie:**

Well, it was a round building with theatre seats and rooms on the second floor. Of course, we did an awful lot of cleaning and remodeling and fixing up. We have a book that shows that that was published by Br. Jones. He was sort of like a manager for it, but he didn't live there. But we lived there.

**Alys:**

Who paid for the building?

**Nodie:**

The Class...the Chicago Class. Dan did all the immersing. We had a portable immersion tank that was wheeled on to the platform and there were little steps that went up to it and everybody that was immersed, he did it for them. He was also a Fireman...not a real one. We had one city Fireman who worked there, but he was not in the Truth. That was the City's requirements, but others of our Brethren were Policemen. Two of them were real Chicago Policemen. They rode on horses on State Street. Br. Hall and Br. Evans. They were the Policemen. We had others who wore the uniform, but they were not real policemen. They were sworn in by the city.

**Alys:**

Was this called "The Temple"?

**Nodie:**

Yes... "The Temple."

**Alys:**

How long did the PhotoDrama show at the Temple?

**Nodie:**

Well, we went in there in 1914. We were there 3 or 4 years till we lost our lease. Maybe say 3 years, something like that. And we lost our lease from the building. Then we were looking for another place to meet. We had all our Sunday meetings there, showed the PhotoDrama twice a day...

**Alys:**

Every day?

**Nodie:**

EVERY DAY! Afternoon and evening...

**Alys:**

How many people came?

**Nodie:**

Oh, MANY...MANY! And many came into the Truth because of it. Many Polish Friends and others came into the Truth as a result of the PhotoDrama. But we lost our lease and we had to find another place to meet. We found a place at 31st and Michigan Avenue, 3100 Michigan Avenue, a big gray stone building. So we all went down there, cleaned up the place. I can remember the big cockroaches that were running around on the floor. We scrubbed and we painted and we cleaned and we got it just beautiful, and we had all our meetings there. We had study meetings there.

**Alys:**

Did you have the PhotoDrama there, too?

**Nodie:**

Yes. And by that time Br. and Sr. Jones had given up their apartment and they lived there, too. And Sr. Jones' two sisters. Our personnel changed a little bit. The ones who were at the temple, some left and others came in. But we had much the same set up. We lived there all the time, did all the work. But we had helpers to come in once a week to help clean.

**Alys:**

When you ran the little record player, was it talking like a motion picture? That you had to keep up with?

**Nodie:**

There were three Brothers that ran the pictures. All we did was run the phonograph. There was a screen with a little peep hole, and we could see from the back what was on the screen. From the other side, we were behind the screen, and we had to drop that needle at just the right moment. One time we had nice classical music. When they were singing this hymn about "Fall on Your Knees," I think it was a Christmas hymn, I didn't get the needle down just right. So the hymn and picture didn't coincide, and I got scolded plenty. Usually we did it right. We were so used to doing it, we didn't make very many mistakes.

**Alys:**

How long was each showing? Doesn't it take 4 hours, or something like that?

**Nodie:**

I don't know if it was quite that long. I could tell you a lot more if I could look at the Temple Book. The first showing was in the afternoon, and then everybody would go and the family would have supper. We would start another showing in the evening.



**[FOLLOW IN TEMPLE BOOK]**

**Nodie:**

This is the first General Convention of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in Chicago. This was before my day. The Brooklyn Tabernacle was after we were in Bethel. The Brooklyn Tabernacle was an old church where we had our meetings. These are the various places that Br. Russell spoke.

**Alys:**

Was the Washington Temple like the Chicago Temple? Where they showed the PhotoDrama?

**Nodie:**

No. These were big churches where he gave public meetings. Now this was the Temple. Free PhotoDrama of Creation. IBSA.

**Alys:**

I remember seeing a picture of a wagon going through the streets with billboard signs advertising the PhotoDrama with a horse drawing it.

**Nodie:**

(p 10) History—Bible—Science, 3 & 8 PM, Daily  
(p 14) This is the Lobby.

**Alys:**

That looks like a movie theatre!

**Nodie:**

These are various copies of the pictures they will see.

**Alys:**

Did they sell those?

**Nodie:**

Yes, I believe so.  
(p 16) There's Br. Jones and Irving Foss. He was Br. Jones' secretary.  
(p 18) This is part of the Lobby.  
(p 19) The Balcony and the screen with the piano.  
(p 20) A two-story Balcony.

**Alys:**

It's a huge auditorium!

**Nodie:**

(p 24) This is a convention at Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1913. This had nothing to do with the Temple. This is one at Los Angeles in 1913. It is just showing how many Friends there were that attended.

(p 27) Here are some of the Temple workers. Ben Hollister, Sr. Jones, Br. Jones. They all wore white. The Ushers—the Sisters all wore white.

**Alys:**

Did you wear the “Pax” pins?

**Nodie:**

Yes. We would give them out to the audience as a souvenir. These are the policemen up here.

(p 28) Here is the movie.

(p 29) Another view of the workers.

**Alys:**

The beginning introduction was a movie of Br. Russell and the rest were slides?

**Nodie:**

Yes, there were some movies between slides.

(p 30) Here were the Elders and Deacons in 1914 in Chicago.

(p 31) These are the sisters. Here's Holly (49). There's Grandma Bell (38); Laura Hollister

(40); Sr. Jones (27); Marie Copeland (41).

**Alys:**

They're all wearing little top-nots on their heads!

**Nodie:**

We all had long hair. There I am (51). These Sisters were the Ushers.

(p 32) This was the Ladies' Restroom.

(p 33) This was the Book Room. This Sister we called Aunt Martha. She was one of the workers. She helped me. I was in charge of the cooking and she helped me, but she also worked on the book room.

(p 34) This is what we called the Reading Room. You could come in here any time and find books to read...sit down and read.

(p 35) This is what we called the Literature Room. There were always tracts to fold. If you worked downtown, and you had an hour for Lunch and you wanted to go over to the Temple and fold tracts for half an hour and eat your lunch while you were there, you could fold tracts there.

(p 36) These are the Friends that came in once a week to help us clean.

(p 37) These are the ones who lived there. Br. Westman, Br. Martz, Ben Boyd, Jens

Copeland, myself, Dan, Aunt Martha, Carrie Upper, John Anderson, Karl Lantau, Br. Rahm, and Irving Foss. So there were only three Sisters who lived there. I did the cooking, and this lady was sort of mentally retarded. She was a darling. She did all the dusting and all those little jobs that nobody wanted to do. The boys used to have to wash the dishes. They had their turns at washing the dishes...Harry, and Irving and all the different ones. Aunt Martha was more my helper with the cooking. Carrie would peel the vegetables and all those simple jobs. She was never a bother to anybody, never really off her rocker, but not quite like the others.

(p 38) These were the special workers...

(p 39) These were the Matrons ... Grandma Bell ... Grandma Foss ... the Matrons took charge of the Ladies' Room.

(p 40) This is our family; the ones who worked there...

(p 41) Jens Copeland and John Anderson were the Operators for the phonograph. Marie Copeland, Enid Hoskins, Adelaide Jones and myself, we took turns...

(p 42) These are the Officers...Fred Evans, who was a mounted Policeman on State Street...George Hall, who was also a mounted Policeman on State Street.

(p 43) These were the Firemen and Fire-Guards...H. E. Baumann, he was the real Fireman...they were around in case there was any trouble with the electrical system. You know there was a crowd of people there, and we were responsible for the people that came in. If somebody should happen to drop a cigarette...you never knew who they were. They were all strangers; we didn't know who they were. Anybody could come in...

(p 44) Now here's the tank for immersion. We had these steps that came up here and Dan did all the immersing. It had wheels on it and it could be rolled off of the platform.

(p 45) This is the Men's Room.

(p 46) Here's Adelaide in the Phonograph Booth.

**Alys:**

How many records?

**Nodie:**

I don't remember.

(p 47) There's Jens in the Moving Picture Booth...

(p 48) [Going through names] ...Anna MacMillan...

**Alys:**

Was Br. MacMillan an Elder in Chicago?

**Nodie:**

No...This was Br. MacMillan's sister-in-law. She was in the Truth, but her husband was not. Her husband was the brother of Br. MacMillan....



**Alys:**

When the Temple was stopped, then what happened?

**Nodie:**

We moved to this 3100 Michigan Avenue and we did the same thing. Only we had a little different personnel. The Joneses and Sr. Jones' two sisters came to live there and others like John Anderson from Topeka, Kansas. We had a change in personnel, some came and some left. But we stayed on all the time. When we moved there, Dr. Jones, more or less, took over. He was sort of a Manager in the other place, but he didn't live there.

**Alys:**

And the next thing that happened, you moved to Bethel?

**Nodie:**

Yes. We were at 3100 Michigan and there was a rich sister who wanted us to go to New York. And she paid our way.

**Alys:**

Was this before Br. Russell died?

**Nodie:**

No, right afterwards. She wanted Dan to go into the Pilgrim work. She was going to put him into the Pilgrim work, she thought. So she paid our way. We went to Pittsburgh. Laura Hollister's brother-in-law, Br. Jordan, met us and we stayed with them at their house. He took us out to the grave and showed us Br. Russell's grave. It was right after he died, so I picked flowers off of Br. Russell's grave and took them home and put them in an envelope and kept them there and never opened the envelope. And then we went to Bethel and they did put Dan into the Pilgrim work. I worked at Bethel.

**Alys:**

I wanted to ask you, the first time that you heard that Br. Russell died, do you remember that?

**Nodie:**

Yes...We all went down as a Class...as many as could, to the station as his body was going through the railroad station. Of course, we couldn't see him. As his body was going through the station, we sang hymns. I don't remember what time it was, but technically the whole class was down there. I suppose people thought we were crazy. We couldn't see him; but we knew he was on that train.

**Alys:**

Were there Brethren going back on that train with him?

**Nodie:**

Yes, I think there were because he died on the train. Br. Sturgeon...I don't know if there was anybody else.

**Alys:**

So then you went to Bethel...

**Nodie:**

And I worked at Bethel. I did housework. I cleaned the Judge's room. I cleaned MacMillan's room.

**Alys:**

What were their rooms like?

**Nodie:**

Well, just ordinary bedrooms. The only thing was, in that old building, they had wash basins. Friends would bring in special food for the Judge. That used to irritate me because the dirty dishes were there on the sink, and I'd have to wash them. I'd think, why should HE have to have special food? All of the rest of us were having plain food in the dining room. But some of the Brethren, you know, made a fuss over him, and they would bring him special food and the dirty dishes were left. I had to make his bed and I had to clean his room and I had to wash the dishes.

Then I had to clean MacMillan's Room. I remember one time he had a real fancy overcoat with a silk lining—Oh! It was REALLY something! And all of our Brethren were POOR. And I thought, Why does HE have to have that?

Those things were going through my head, though I never said anything. I thought, here my husband is going around in rags, and the other Pilgrims are going around in rags, and here Max got this fancy overcoat. I suppose somebody gave it to him. He surely didn't buy it, because he didn't have the money. But I thought, why should he get it and the others not?

**Alys:**

How old were you at that time?

**Nodie:**

22...This was the time before the First World War and everybody was suspicious of everybody else. There were young boys there that fooled around with an old radio and the FBI thought they were sending messages to Germany. The kids were just fooling around. They would come into meetings and the FBI would search people...anybody.

Dan was in the Pilgrim work in the South and our name was Moreheiser, a German name, although his parents and grandparents had been in the United States since the Revolutionary War. They were German only in name. Oh, they spoke a little German in the house once in awhile, to the grandma or something, but they were Americans. They had been born here in America, only they had a German name.

But the FBI thought if you had a German name, you were a spy. So the FBI found out that the Mayor in a little Southern town was named Schwartz. He met Moreheiser at the train. Boy, they had some BIG thing going. The FBI thought—here's Schwartz meeting Moreheiser. They're spies. So they searched his luggage and found letters he had from me written from Bethel. They put him on the train and sent him back to Bethel.

Well, we were all mixed up. We didn't know what we should do. They were so suspicious of everybody. I was getting very, very tired of working on my feet day and night, working all the time. So we said, Let's go back to Chicago. Dan said, I'll get a job and we'll go back and get away from all this.

We didn't know what was going to happen. So we did come back. But he didn't stop going in the Pilgrim work. He didn't go constantly. But every Sunday he went. And we changed the spelling of our name from Moreheiser to Morehouse. The Pilgrim Department said, If you're going to continue on in public work, you've got to change the spelling of your name. So we did.

But I have been in many conventions and meetings where the FBI came in and questioned everybody. Of course, they could never find anything. I remember one Memorial. I was sitting in the back of the hall. Some of our boys didn't know whether they should take the uniform or not. One time the Judge would tell them to do it; the next time he'd tell them not to do it. They had no help. They didn't know what to do. They were all mixed up. They didn't, any of them, want to go into the war. Some of them thought, maybe they could be Conscientious Objectors and wear the uniform and some of them did that. Some of them were taken to camp.

So I was sitting in the back of the hall at the Memorial. And here came these boys that had been in camp. They went AWOL from the camp. They could have been arrested and put in prison. But they got in there and partook of the Memorial and they left the camp and never had any trouble.

The Judge was putting out the 7th Volume. The FBI was against that because they thought it was against the Government. So first they took Br. Hudgings, a young, very



capable Pilgrim, into custody and they put him into what they called the Raymond Street Jail—a dirty old place—in New York. Then, they took all the other Brothers, Br. VanAmburgh, Rutherford, MacMillan. First they took them into prison. I was in the court room when they were sentenced.

**Alys:**

What happened?

**Nodie:**

Well, they thought they were against the Government. They were spies and everybody was suspicious of everybody else, no matter what they did.

**Alys:**

What was in the 7th Volume that they thought was anti-Government?

**Nodie:**

Well, they thought they were against the American Government. They took all these Brothers to Atlanta, to Prison. I was in the court room when they were sentenced. I was sitting there when they walked down the aisle. You could see one after another of our Brothers walking down there. It was terrible. First they were in Jail and then later on transferred to Atlanta to the prison.

But before they had the trial, we had no coal. Our home at Bethel was very cold. We would sit around the table like that living room with our coats on because we were cold. We thought this was the end of the world. We thought this was the time of trouble. We knew our Brothers were going to be sentenced.

They hadn't already gone to Atlanta, but we knew they were going to go some place. We had no leaders. There were the Sisters and the older Friends and young Brothers.

We just didn't know what was going to happen. We sat around there and thought this was the end of everything. The time of trouble. All of our leaders were gone. We just didn't know what to do. There was war.

Everybody was a spy. All the things we had learned about the time of trouble. Well, we thought, this is it, and we're in the midst of it. So when Dan was sent home by the FBI, we decided to come to Chicago. And Br. W. E. Page, who had been the Vice President of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society at one time, was now living in Chicago. He was working for the Great American Insurance Company in charge of the Loss Department. Br. Page got Dan a job there, and he worked there until he retired.

**Alys:**

What was Br. Page like?

**Nodie:**

A VERY lovely Brother. A little kind of heavy set man. He had a lovely wife. He was an Elder. He was just super, I'd say. Both of them.

**Alys:**

Did he stay in the Truth?

**Nodie:**

Oh, Yes! He finally moved to, I believe it was, North Dakota, and he started his own insurance office there. But when we came back he was working for the Great American and got Dan a job.

**Alys:**

When Br. Russell died and Judge Rutherford took over, what did the Brethren think of Rutherford?

**Nodie:**

Well, I've been asked that question many times. As far as I know, the Judge never pushed himself at first. Now he may have had those thoughts in his mind all along, but he never showed it. Somebody said to me when I said he immersed me, Br. Russell thought highly of the Judge at that time. Now what went on in his mind, I don't know. But gradually he began to throw his weight around. Especially after Br. Russell died, he thought he was going to be the successor. It was a natural, normal thing to think. There wasn't anybody else that had that much influence.

**Alys:**

Was he on the Committee of Directors for the Watchtower?

**Nodie:**

Well, he was the Judge, the Legal one. I don't know just what his official position might have been.

**Alys:**

What do you remember about P.S.L. Johnson?

**Nodie:**

He was a Pilgrim—a very good Pilgrim. He was overseas. He seemed to have the idea that, when Br. Russell died, he was going to be the successor. Now, what arrangements they had between them, I don't think anybody knows, really. But the Judge won out.

**Alys:**

Were there other brethren that wanted to be the head, too?

**Nodie:**

Not that I know of. As far as I know, there were only those two. Now, Br. Ritchie, who later went to California, he was very influential. But I'm sure Br. Ritchie never had any aspirations of being the head man or anything, not that I remember. He was a great help to the Brethren. He was a very smart man. He helped a lot. But I don't think he ever wanted to be the leader.

**Alys:**

Do you remember Judge Rutherford saying that he was the Steward and the 7th Volume was the Penny he was giving the workers?

**Nodie:**

He did think the 7th Volume was the Penny. The Brother who wrote the 7th Volume was Br. Fisher, George Fisher. He was the nicest, most humble little Brother you would ever want to know. Every Monday night we had a study on Ezekiel's Temple. We all went from Bethel to that study. He was really a fine little Brother. And he wrote the 7th Volume. There are some things in the 7th Volume that are good, and there are some that aren't. But you see, Br. Russell had said that he was going to write the 7th Volume, and he didn't. He never did. But we were told that we had to accept it as from the Lord. I never could see that. Even before we went to Bethel, when the 7th Volume first came out... Dan would take me to the park, and we would sit and he would read portions of it and try to make me get it, and I just could not see it. But, I didn't fight it because, I didn't know. And many of the Friends were like that.

**Alys:**

You were saying they had Ezekiel Studies? Did they go verse by verse?

**Nodie:**

Yes...

**Alys:**

Did they have any other Bible studies like that, or were they mainly Volume studies?

**Nodie:**

Oh, they were mainly Volume studies. But when the 7th Volume came out, when Br. Fisher, who had written it, had this one study...

**Alys:**

Did you have a Revelation study, too?



**Nodie:**

No; C.J. Woodworth wrote the Revelation part of the 7th Volume. I knew Br. Woodworth, but I was never so impressed with him as I was with Br. Fisher. Now, he's the one that fixed up the comments in the Comment Bible. He was a good Brother, a good student and everything. Woodworth wrote the Comments. Fisher had the Ezekiel part. Woodworth had the Revelation part. Those Brothers were all well thought of among the Friends.

Br. Fisher later died. I remember a convention that we went to very early after the Judge died, that we visited with his (Woodworth's) Daughter up in Washington, D.C., and rode in the car with her. And, of course, she was very disgusted with her father .... The daughter didn't share her father's views. They were gradually getting away from things. But not at first.

I've been asked about the Judge, when he immersed me. As far as I knew he didn't have any ambitions. He might have had them all the time, but he surely didn't say anything.

**Alys:**

Do you remember hearing a story about how Br. Russell dismissed the Judge before Br. Russell died? And told him to leave?

**Nodie:**

No; I don't remember that. It may have happened, but I don't remember it. See, I didn't work there while Br. Russell was alive. I was there immediately after he died.

**Alys:**

Were the elections for Elders and Deacons the same as we have them today?

**Nodie:**

Oh, Yes.

**Alys:**

For conventions, how were those Elders chosen?

**Nodie:**

I really can't tell you. We had what we called the Executive Committee of the Elders. (In Chicago.) They were the most knowledgeable, or the longest in the Truth, or the most experienced in the Truth...and they were on that Executive Committee. And they wrote their recommendations to the body of Elders. And the body of Elders would approve or disapprove of it, instead of now, at our business meetings, everybody talks, whether they know what they're talking about or not.

But we had 6 or 8 Elders on the Executive Committee. They made their recommendations to the Elders. The Elders would make their recommendations to the Class. We had a big Class, and it took a lot of people to run things.

**Alys:**

Did they say the Vow and Resolve?

**Nodie:**

Absolutely. I have my original Vow that I have signed. This was before I was married. We had a podium and there were sheets of paper, and we walked up to the front of the meeting and signed our name.

**Alys:**

Did you have to say it out loud?

**Nodie:**

No. We had to sign our names. And I have a book mark with my name on it. It says, Leonora E. Bell, this was 1908. I don't think they published our names, but they would say how many in Chicago signed it.

**Alys:**

What was Br. VanAmburgh like?

**Nodie:**

Very nice, very nice. Tall, rather slender, very gentle and kind. Smart. Very smart. All of our Brethren were exceptionally smart. Those in public office. The Pilgrims were very intelligent men. I don't think we have many to compare, not really. Not that they were so educated; some of them were. You know, Br. Russell was not a college graduate. But he had a knowledge of people and things from the world. And they were like that, too, the ones he chose for pilgrims.

There were a few—I remember one Brother who had been a Minister. A few had been ministers. There was one by the name of Erickson. Some of them had had a little college training. But college wasn't like it is now. Now everybody thinks you have to go to college or you don't know anything.

**Alys:**

Do you remember John Edgar?

**Nodie:** Oh, Yes! Very much so. He made a trip to the United States. I never met his wife, but I met him and heard him talk. On this trip, when we went in 1911 with Br. Russell, his brother Morton and his sister Minna were on that trip. We had to wait on tables in the dining room, and Minna thought it was so funny. She used to always call me the "Baby Bride" because I was 16, and here I was married. That was her pet name for me.

**Alys:**

Did you meet Aunt Sarah?

**Nodie:**

No. I don't think she ever came to America.

**Alys:**

What was John Edgar like?

**Nodie:**

Well, I would say like John Read. Very nice, kind, intelligent. A little dignified, and yet if you got to know him, very friendly. I think English people are like that.

**Alys:**

What about Br. Hirsch?

**Nodie:**

He left the Society after all this mix-up with the Judge, and so on. We did not hear of him for a long, long time. After the Judge took over and we became the International Bible Students, we were told that Br. Hirsch had gone out of the Truth, and so on, but really I don't think he did. But he didn't agree with things and you just separated yourself. We'd hear little things about him, but we didn't know anything. It wasn't until several years later that we found out where they were and what they were doing.

We lost track of all those Brethren. Because when we were with the Society, we didn't know what other people were doing. I met her again after not seeing her for years. She still believed the Truth.

There were a lot of Pilgrims that we would know vaguely. Like it is now in our Class. A Speaker will come, but you wouldn't really know him. It was moreso then, because we had so many Speakers and Pilgrims. Some of them you got really well acquainted with and others you didn't know well. Now, of course, like Dan Toole, he lived in my Mother's house, he and his wife.

My Mother...we had a big old frame house with bedrooms upstairs. We were always taking in poor Pilgrims or boarders. Anybody that didn't have a roof over their head. My Father would go with holes in his shoes to give them food. My Mother ran him ragged.

My Father was immersed at someone's urging. Like in the Temple book, he was always working for the Truth. We had meetings in our home and everything. He believed the Truth, but I don't think he understood very much of it. But the Brethren



thought the world of him. So I always figured that Grandpa would be well on his way up the highway of holiness because he was very good to the Brethren.

**Alys:**

Did you know Br. Robison?

**Nodie:**

Yes. He is the one that went to prison with the Judge. They all stayed with the Society as far as I know....

One of the things that annoyed me when the Judge came into power, he was gradually letting people go. Giving them their walking papers. And one was a little Sister who had been a doctor.... She had money and she had given it all to Br. Russell, and he had promised her a home for life, which was a normal thing to do. She had given everything she had to the work. But the Judge pushed her out. I thought that was terrible. I was working there. I didn't say anything, but things like that were gradually getting me disgusted. But I never said anything because I didn't have the authority to say anything. I don't know what ever happened to her. She had no means of support as far as I know. That irritated me so much.

There was a brother at Bethel who had a girlfriend and his own wife used to come to my room. The girl that I roomed with was a friend of hers. They were from Toronto, Canada. And she'd tell us her tale of woe all about her husband. There was quite a bit of that going on. And of course, the Judge had a girlfriend.

**Alys:**

Was Sr. Rutherford there?

**Nodie:**

No. She did not live there. She would not live with him. I saw her twice. I saw her once at a convention with her son Malcolm and the Judge. But this time she had to have surgery. She came back to Bethel to have the surgery. I was the only one in the whole place that had an electric heating pad. So after she got out of the hospital, they borrowed my electric heating pad for Sr. Rutherford. But as soon as she got well enough, away she went to California. She wouldn't live with him. He had this little lady on the side that was his girlfriend, and I knew her, too. All these things were going on right under your nose. But you don't say anything. You don't know if it's really so; you think, maybe I'm imagining it, you know.

**Alys:**

Did you know Sr. Russell?

**Nodie:**

No. I never saw her. She was gone by the time I was there. I don't know anything about her except what I've heard. Sarah and George Wilson knew her quite well and they saw her one time in Florida. George's mother had known Br. Russell when he was a little boy. When he was a little boy he sat on Br. Russell's knee. They were from Pittsburgh.

**Alys:**

Did you know Sr. Herd?

**Nodie:**

Sure! She was Bethel, too. And Br. Herd.

At Bethel we had a room where, if you were tired of wearing something, you would put it in a box. The next Sunday I would come out with a new sweater. That's where I picked up a book on how to give Chart talks. We exchanged clothes that way. Nobody thought anything of it. We didn't have any money. You'd wear somebody else's hat or dress or coat or something. One thing I did take was this outline of the three charts. Another thing was a silver cream pitcher—and I have it in the cupboard over there. There are initials on the side of it. I think it belonged to Sr. Gates. Those were the only two things I took.

**Alys:**

What was Br. Pearson like?

**Nodie:**

Oh, he was my dear friend. He was a millionaire. He was a florist, and they lived in Connecticut. He was a little short Swedish Brother. We girls used to think the world of him. He was so nice to us when we were kids. We'd go to conventions and he'd buy us an ice-cream cone. I guess it wasn't an ice-cream cone then. He'd give us a dish of ice-cream or a candy bar or something. He was so nice to us. And here he was a millionaire. But he used his money for the Truth all the time. You'll find his name in the old Towers. He wasn't a speaker to my knowledge; I never heard him speak. But he was always at conventions, always around.

**Alys:**

He was on the Board of Directors.

**Nodie:**

Well, I'm not surprised he was.

**Alys:**

And Br. Ritchie?

**Nodie:**

Oh, Br. Ritchie I knew very well and Sr. Ritchie. I knew both of them very well.

**Alys:**

When you left Bethel and you came back to Chicago, how long did it take before the Class in Chicago left the Society?

**Nodie:**

Well, Vi was 12 years old. She was born in 1921 so she had gone to be with her cousins, her aunt and uncle. They were going to have their first meeting. Grandpa Foss got up and announced it and others said, Yes. So they had that first meeting. We had to go pick her up because she had been there all night with her cousins. They brought her; and Br. John Read gave a talk. There was a very, very small handful that left. The Wylams and the Fosses.

We had to go back to the hall for some reason to pick up something. So I said to Dan, well I'll go back with you, but I'll never believe it. We went back and picked up the thing and we never went back. We stayed up night after night talking and wondering, because we thought the Society was the "Channel." We were always told that was the "Channel"; the Lord was using it. So we thought, if we left them we were doing wrong. And yet, one by one, things were piling up so we could hardly take it any more. We left them and joined up with this little group.

Previous to that—her birthday was in August—previous to that, they had had a picnic. Br. and Sr. Hooveler from St. Louis, Irving Foss, I guess Br. Read and Hollisters, I don't just know who was there. We wouldn't go. They invited us to a picnic. But what it was, was an outing in the part to make the decision that they were going to leave. We were slow about doing it because we were so afraid we were making a mistake.

**Alys:**

But you went to the first meeting they had, didn't you?

**Nodie:**

Oh, Yes, yes. We did...

**Alys:**

How did this Elder or representative from the Society come in to Chicago to convince the Brethren not to have elections?

**Nodie:**

I have a letter from Sr. Carpenter writing to me about this man that came in that was going to be the dictator...



“Dear Girl, Not until today at meeting did I learn that you were in the hospital. I hope that the worst is over and that all you need now is to grow together again and rest.

I hope you are in a hospital modern enough to have no hospital smells, and I hope you have a light and pleasant room.

“If all these hopes are realized, you can rest when the pain is over. Well, we will be thinking of you.

“There was a full house this afternoon, though several were missing. Sr. Schinn and Sr. Schwann—and they are both sick. Isn’t this cheerful? But misery loves company, they say.

“Do you know of the new regional director of the JW’s in Chicago? I understand it is Alexander H. MacMillan. What do you think of that? Don’t know where he lives. They have no pioneer camp now. A Greek Sister who can speak but little English, called here recently. We kept her and talked to her a long long time and how little she knew of the fundamentals. Never heard of the High Calling. All they know now is Hierarchy, Jonadabs, and so forth. I know all these things will be ironed out. Some day they will find out Character Development does count.

“Our love and very best wishes, Br. and Sr. Carpenter”

[She didn’t date it. Just “Sunday evening.”]

**Alys:**

That’s when the first representative came here. How did he convince the Brethren to...

**Nodie:**

Well, he just came in there and said who he was...

**Alys:**

That was MacMillan?

**Nodie:**

Well, that’s who she says, Alexander MacMillan. We had another one, too, that came and threw his weight around. Maybe MacMillan was the first one and then this other one followed. This must have been when I was home and sick, and I wasn’t in on it.

**Alys:**

It's hard to believe the Brethren would agree not to have elections. I guess...Chicago was one of the last Classes this happened to.

**Nodie:**

Chicago was a big class. We had a lot of speakers who were really good here, knew what they were doing. It was an old established Class. They couldn't push us around too easily. A lot of us resisted. And a lot of us wanted to resist, but didn't know what to do. So they had a little trouble with us.

They couldn't really push us out—we walked out. Of course, like I said, to begin with it was only a small handful; but we gradually grew in numbers.

**Alys:**

Auntie Vi said she remembers when she went in one day and they had taken the Cross and Crown off the podium and put a big "JW" on the podium.

**Nodie:**

I don't remember that at our meeting, but I remember when we were at conventions in Selrun, New York, I believe was the place. She was just a baby and Grandma Bell took care of her, and Frankie and I went to the convention. And they said, there's going to be a big surprise, a big something. We didn't know what it was. I can remember there was a truck...everything was all mysterious. Something big was going to happen. So when we walked into the auditorium, there was this big JW." That's when they started to call themselves "Jehovah's Witnesses." Of course, everybody... "Yes, Yes," ...you know.

**Alys:**

I read some where that was the Penny. When they changed from the 7th Volume to "Jehovah's Witnesses"—that was the Penny. What about the other Classes in Chicago—like where Martin Foss was?

**Nodie:**

Well, Martin Foss, Carl Foss, and Br. Fries were going along with Robert Hirsch. What they believed exactly, I do not know. They didn't go in with the J.W.'s anymore. Some went with the Herald group, who left the Society; some with Robert Hirsch; then when we left, we didn't want to join up with anybody. We thought, we don't know what these people believe. So we had a meeting. We said, we're going to ask all these different groups, to each one, to send us a representative, one of their brethren, to give us a talk, so we can tell if we want to join up with them, or we want to be on our own. Everyone that came, we were disgusted with; we didn't like any of them. We said, We don't like this. We're just going to start our own little group. And we did.

**Alys:**

And you studied the Volumes...

**Nodie:**

Oh Yes! We had never thrown our Volumes away. But we didn't study them. Our first meetings were in homes. We went to Sr. Nelson's once a week, we went to Hedstroms' once a week.

At first we studied the Bible. We went through Hebrews, Romans, two or three books...they were good, nice, we got a lot out of it. But then we said, this isn't right. We ought to get our Volumes out. We should be studying our Volumes. So we did.

**Alys:**

They weren't studying the Volumes when you were with the Society?

**Nodie:**

No, not by that time. I don't know if they threw them out or what they did. I know that we had a set of old Towers, and we gave them away to Br. Johnson. (Not P.S.L. Johnson!) Br. Johnson in the Class...he came and got our old Towers because we didn't want them anymore when we were with the J.W.'s—we gave them away. Then afterwards I said, Why were we so dumb? We weren't using them.

**Alys:**

Judge Rutherford encouraged that, didn't he?

**Nodie:**

Sure, he did. It wasn't that we didn't want the books. But when we moved to Bethel, I had bushel baskets of books, Al, I wish I had now. Tracts—old tracts, and newspaper articles, all kinds of stuff. I couldn't move everything to Bethel. I had a big wooden box, and I moved all my Reprints in there. Moved it to New York; moved it back again, by train, by freight or express. You couldn't keep everything...you had no place to put them.

**Alys:**

You had to share a room at Bethel?

**Nodie:**

I shared a room with Mable Cambell. She married a boy that came from Pennsylvania. Then later I met a Brother down in Florida, his arm was cut off at the elbow. He came from there, Ducane, Pennsylvania. And I said, did you know Mable? He said, Oh Yes. I said, Well, she was my room mate at Bethel. He said, I sold my house to her. Every question I asked about Mable and Harry, he said, Oh yes, I knew her... She was a very nice girl. We got along fine.



When I went to Bethel, Dan went out in the Pilgrim work and I was supposed to room with this Sister. I didn't know anybody. This Mable Cambell was the Judge's secretary at that time. So she said, Who was I going to room with. I said, I don't know. She said, I want Nodie. She chose to have me be her room mate. We got along fine. She always called the Judge 'Daddy.' She said, Now, Daddy, I want Nodie.

**Alys:**

Did you call him Daddy?

**Nodie:**

No, I didn't.

**Alys:**

He didn't seem to me like the Daddy type.

**Nodie:**

No, I wasn't that friendly with him, Al. He was in charge of everything. One Christmas, we all put together and we bought him an overcoat...and we gave him a Christmas card. I worked in the dining room...always got stuck with house work.

**Alys:**

Do you remember when they thought the Ancient Worthies were going to come back in 1925?

**Nodie:**

Well, I think he had that idea...but he didn't push all those things just at first. I know that he later on did think that. But when I was there, he wasn't pushing his ideas. He might have had ambitions to be the leader, and he might have had some ideas that were different, but he didn't push it. He was smart ... he was a lawyer...he didn't try to force too much. The only thing that irritated me was when I had to clean his room he had all his fancy food brought in, that kind of stuff bothered me. But I never had any kind of difficulty with him.

**Alys:**

When you were there, was he drinking?

**Nodie:**

No, not that I know of. I never cleaned up anything like that. Br. and Sr. Moyle went there after I was there, and Sr. Moyle told me...when she came to Chicago and she stayed at our house...that she would find the booze bottles and had to clean them up. I never saw that when I was there. Maybe he was careful, I couldn't say, but I never to

clean that up. I did have to wash his sink and his dishes and his silk sheets. I did have to do those things, but I never saw any booze. That would be in 1917 or 1918 or late 1916. Up to the summer of 18. I think we were there about a year and a half, two years.

**Alys:**

So when all this 1925 stuff came out, you were in Chicago, and Chicago didn't swallow it...

**Nodie:**

No, we didn't swallow it. We were far away and we weren't so much influenced as, I guess, people were who were around there. By the time we left the Society, we sent to all these different Classes around, the Herald and different ones that we knew of that were meeting separately to ask them what they believed, send a representative, so we'll know. We didn't know what anyone believed. When we were with the Society, we didn't know what anybody was doing. Like Robert Hirsch...he probably believed the same all the time, but we didn't know it. We knew that Martin, Br. Fries and Carl were with him. Then after we got established as a Class, Br. Fries came to our meetings. Br. Carl Foss came to our meetings. Uncle Martin would never come...he would never come.

**Alys:**

I wonder why? Was it German meetings they had?

**Nodie:**

He did have German meetings.

**Alys:**

Did he believe maybe the Door was Shut?

**Nodie:**

Well, I think that's possible that he did. I don't really know what he believed. But Br. Fries and Uncle Carl came with us. They were in our Class till they died. We'd see him on occasion and we'd see his children, Irma and Harold. The older ones, they'd gone...we didn't know where they went.

**(Going Through Memory Box)**

**Nodie:**

This was a clipping from the Ladies Home Journal, November 1905, two famous songs sung by Charles M. Alexander, and one of them was "Oh, that will be Glory." I tore it out of the magazine when I was a youngster. I was 11 years old. That became a favorite song after awhile.

**Alys:**

Oh, What interesting cards they had in those days!

**Nodie:**

Oh, they had beautiful cards!

This was from William and Grace Hollister in 1947...

Baby cards...Virginia Noble...who Vi was named after...

**Alys:**

Br. Russell liked her a lot...

**Nodie:**

Oh, Yes. And her sister was lame...Oh look, here's Vi's hair. "March 10, 1924, Violet Virginia cut this hair off and Mama told her her pretty hair was all spoiled. She sadly said, 'Like the sausage.'" I suppose there was some sausage we had...

**Alys:**

Did you ever meet Br. Barton? What was he like?

**Nodie:**

Oh, Yes! Very, very nice. ...

**Alys:**

Was Br. Barton married?

**Nodie:**

No....

**Alys:**

Boy, did they have fancy handwriting back then...

**Nodie:**

Yes, it was beautiful...we used to write a lot of letters. I used to correspond with 30 girlfriends all over the country... We were in the colporteur work with Br. and Sr. Magnuson awhile. They were very nice. He was the one who sold the books to Dan's mother.

**Alys:**

Tell us how Uncle Dan got the Truth...

**Nodie:**

Well, he lived on the North Shore and he and his friends built a sail boat. They went out one day in May to sail the boat. The friend and a girlfriend, she was a very beautiful girl, and they were all Catholics. There was a neighbor boy standing on the shore. It wasn't built up and everybody knew everyone else. This boy might



have been 13-14 years old. He said, could he go along? They said, Yes. So the girl, her boyfriend, this young boy and Dan went out in the boat. And a strong wind came, and the boat tipped. The girl was very modest, she had long petticoats on. She was a very good swimmer, but she would not loosen her petticoats and take off her skirt and swim in her underwear because the boys were there. So she floated out to sea and was drowned.

**Alys:**

Did they ever find her?

**Nodie:**

No, well—they may have later on, I don't know...the young boy drowned. And Dan and her boyfriend were saved. When the boat turned over, Dan caught his finger in a screw-on in the boat and held on with his finger in the screw-on. He had a turtleneck sweater, a heavy white sweater and that kept his chest warm. The Coast Guard had seen these kids go out, so they searched for them. They had a newspaper article about it.

So he got pneumonia from that and was recuperating when he was home. Br. Magnuson had sold the first three Volumes to his mother. And the way Br. Magnuson sold was he was a great talker. He would say these are very good books, nice religious books.

In those days, if you had religious books on your table, it was a prestige...like having a Bible. Not that they would read it, but you had it. He said, Now, your neighbor over here, Mrs. So and so, bought them, and you ought to buy them. So she bought them. Well, she didn't want to read them. But Dan picked them up, and he started reading...and he thought it was pretty good. The more he read, the more he liked it. He said to his Mother, where did you get these books? Oh, I don't know, some man sold them to me. When she found what it was he was reading, she burned them. He had been smart enough to get the address, so he wrote to Br. Russell and he got a new set.

He had a boyfriend and they were both going to study for the priesthood. So they were walking and he was telling this boy what he had learned. And the fellow said, Dan, you're leaving the Catholic Church. But he was absorbing this all the time.

So, he took the three Volumes under his arm and went up to the priest and told the priest, I can't call you father anymore because the Bible says to call no man father. The priest was arguing with him and he was telling the priest all he had learned. As time went on, more and more, he thought, he was leaving the Catholic Church.

So he wrote and found out there were people that met in Chicago. So he went and met where they had meetings in an office building where we had some meetings. It wasn't a church like he was used to going to. Finally he went. I just started going to the meetings. Later I was introduced to him as 'this young German Brother.'

Then he worked at Western Electric for awhile and I used to go out there and meet him at Western Electric and then we would go to a study meeting together. Then we used to come to our house, because our house on Madison Street was near enough...

**Alys:**

So you got married when you were 16?

**Nodie:**

Right...

**Alys:**

How old were you when you met him?

**Nodie:**

Well, I joined the church when I was 12; I was immersed when I was 14; and I was married when I was 16. So, somewhere in there. I don't know exactly when he started to go to the meetings.

**Alys:**

Who was the "Blind Auntie"?

**Nodie:**

Blind Grandma...she was my Mother's Grandmother. My Mother's Father was a drunk and he neglected his wife and my own Grandmother. Grandma Bell's Mother died of appendicitis and left all these little kids. And the Blind Grandma and Aunt Evelyn, who was a maiden lady who worked in a sewing machine shop and ran a sewing machine making button-holes...they raised my Mother's family...that was her son's family...Grandma King's family. I remember her, the Blind Grandma.

**Alys:**

Did she go to the meetings?

**Nodie:**

No, although in that picture in that Temple Book of that first convention, she always said that she thought that her Grandma was in that picture. Now, I don't know. But

Grandma Bell always thought that. Grandma King belonged to the United Brethren. Her husband has been an Episcopalian Minister, and he had a girlfriend on the side, and she was blind.

The grocery boy delivered groceries to this girlfriend and came and told my Grandma that he had this friend. They had a daughter, and we met her and she was a lovely person. She couldn't help what her parents did. She was at our house one time and I have pictures of her. Her maiden name would have been King. She was big. All the Kings were big—broad shouldered...like John and Ted Trzyna...they were all big like that. Aunt Evelyn, the maiden one that lived with the Blind Grandma, Uncle Fred, Aunt Minnie (the one that was illegitimate)...they were all big. One time we had Aunt Minnie and Uncle Fred at our house and she was a lovely person. They lived on the south side. This was when we lived on Madison Street.

**Alys:**

What books did you colporteur?

**Nodie:**

The first 3 Volumes for 98c. It wasn't much to live on.

**Alys:**

Did you have to send your hours in?

**Nodie:**

No...Well, we made a report, I guess, for our own books. We didn't get our books free, we got them wholesale. Nobody got them free. We paid for them.

**Alys:**

Judge Rutherford didn't have anything to do with the Pyramid, did he?

**Nodie:**

No...That is the first gift that my husband gave me for Christmas. It was beautiful...it looks terrible now. A little doodad. That was the first thing he gave me.

I was always collecting poems and clippings...I was as bad as you, Kiddoo...

**Alys:**

The Brethren were poets in those days...you don't hear it too much any more.

**Nodie:**

No...we were always cutting things out of magazines...



***(Reading Clippings)***

Here's how to make a rug...

***Alys:***

I guess everyone used to sew in those days...they don't do that any more either...

***Nodie:***

Yes, yes...Oh, Look, this is the Judge...

***Alys:***

"Jehovah's Witness chief expires in San Diego. Judge Rutherford, head of Jehovah's Witnesses dies, San Diego, January 11. Joseph Franklin Rutherford, 72 year old leader of the Jehovah Witness religion was dead since Thursday it was discovered here today as preparations were made for private services.... 1 million to 2 million followers in 36 nations. Death came to the internationally known leader in a House of Princes, a 20 room Spanish type mansion which he built here for King David when David returns to earth...giving as the cause of death a stomach ailment...he died at his palatial home after extended illness it was learned. The doctor said he had suffered from a malignancy, but said that further details would have to be announced by the order...aside from Dr. Stevenson's confirmation, circumstances of Judge Rutherford's death were locked in unusual secrecy."

***Nodie:***

Oh, Here's something. We were given these VDM Questions. And here's mine... you were supposed to answer them and then you were marked on your ability...

***(End of Tape)***

## P.S. To Auntie Nodie's Tape

### By Joy Kandel

I laughed and cried and enjoyed this tape thoroughly, especially (I suppose) because I remember many of the stories or the people involved. But I mentioned to Alys, "One point is not the way I remember it." So she said, "Write a postscript the way you remember it."

This tape states that my Grandfather, Bro. Carl Foss, left the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society when Judge Rutherford replaced Pastor Russell. As a matter of fact, my Great-Uncle and Great-Aunt, Uncle Martin and Tante Marine (Br. Martin Foss and Sr. Marine Peterson), did meet with a tiny group which we identified as "The Bruecker Group," from the time of Judge Rutherford's ascension to power.

They (Bro. Louis Fries met with them, and he was Uncle Martin's fellow-Elder there) believed the door was closed, and they were faithfully embroidering their robes, waiting to be called to the marriage with their Heavenly Bridegroom. Tante Marine and Bro. Fries then became acquainted with our group and recognized spirit-begettal within our group, so they left the "Bruecker" Group, but Uncle Martin never did.

As for Bro. Carl Foss, he was the leader of the German Class affiliated with the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society in Chicago. I would guess that group knew little of the problems in the English Class or the Society's Headquarters. They could conduct their meetings as they wanted, teaching the same truths they'd always loved in the manner they had always used.

My Father, Br. Irving Foss, was active in forming a group which left the Watchtower in 1933. He urged his Father to recognize the wrongs of the Society and join us in meeting elsewhere. His Father, of course, defended the Society, and got excited. After we went home, Grandpa Foss had a heart spell (to which he was subject), and my Father's sisters told him he must never discuss religion with Grandpa again. My Father had to comply, because he did not mean to make my Grandfather ill. We continued to visit back and forth as a family but we never discussed our differences.

I think it was a year or two after our class was formed that Bro. Jens and Sr. Marie Copeland (my Father's cousin) came to our Class to see what it was like. This was a drastic step for people who had been loyal to the Society all their consecrated lives, and it was only because the Copelands were desperately disappointed with the

Society that they dared walk into our Hall. Within a very short time, they were ardent supporters of our Ecclesia and Br. Jens was an Elder. But the family still spoke of our Ecclesia as “Irving’s Class,” because he was the first of the family to become part of it.

It may have been around 1940 that Grandpa Foss had taken all he could of the Society’s ways. I think the German meeting had been disbanded by orders from headquarters, and this forced Grandpa to see what was being done in the English Class. Morals, methods and doctrines were not to his liking. One Sunday, he put on his hat to leave his house.

Grandma, his 24-hour-a-day companion for many years—his precarious health had made him retire early and his hours were spent with Grandma caring for income property and in “full-time service”—asked him where he was going. He said, “To Irving’s meeting”

This was a terrible shock to Grandma, and she never forgave him. He had not consulted her, nor even asked her to accompany him. Perhaps he was not sure of what he would find at “Irving’s meeting,” but he loved it, and became a beloved and helpful Elder there until his death in 1941. Grandma never left the Society, but stayed there with their two younger daughters, although the family stayed together in everything but religion.