The Iowan Century:

The Oral Histories of Fifteen Iowans

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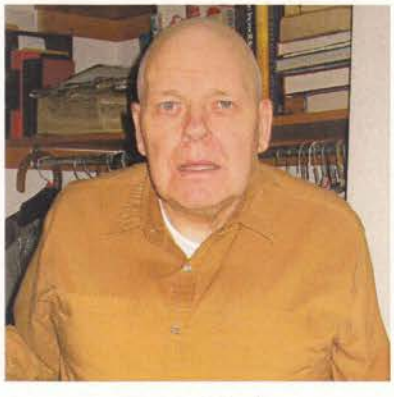

Don Puls

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Not Pictured

Virgil Adams
April 1, 1919

I've always lived within twenty miles of Grinnell. I was born just two miles out northwest of here, on a farm. I've still got a farm out there. I was a farmer, trucker, and jack-of-all-trades. I was a trucker for about forty years. I milked cows all my life. I started driving trucks in about 1960. I'd haul ninety miles down to the river and back. I couldn't sit still. I liked being on the highway. That's why I became a trucker.

There were six boys in our family, and I was the only that didn't have to go to war. And none of them even got killed over there. Only one of them got hit. I stayed home and milked cows for my dad. My oldest brother was about five years older, and the youngest was about five years younger. And I had one sister.

I was lucky I got through the eighth grade. I went to school out in the country all the time. The old schoolhouse is still setting out there, about ready to fall down. I didn't really like school. I was always bashful, what I'd call bashful. I just hated being in those Christmas programs and such, getting up in front of people. I graduated back in about 1934. Then I worked for my dad for several years. In 1941 I started up on my own.

I was born in 1919, and my parents took me to house dances back in 1921. They'd take us upstairs and lay us on the bed while they went dancing downstairs. Later we went dancing every Sunday night. That's where I was last Sunday. Down in Malcom, at the Legion Hall down there. People come from about forty, fifty miles around. They've got the old fashioned kind of dances – two-step, waltz, polka. I had to quit the polka – it got too fast for me. I was always able to get the girls dancing. One guy brings his wife and mother, and while he's getting his mother's drink I'd dance with his wife four or five times. See, I'd trick them all into it.

I like to travel. I always wanted to go to the Golden Gate Bridge. People don't go there like they used to. You don't hear them talking about it. We've been over to Hawaii three times. I

got my picture taken with some girls in grass skirts over there. I always thought I'd like going to New York, but I never did get there.

Howard Burkle
July 15, 1925

I was born in Monticello, Arkansas, on July 15, 1925. My father was a salesman for Goodyear Tire and he was transferred often, so I only lived in Arkansas for about 4 years. I didn't like moving because it took me away from my friends, but sometimes the excitement of moving was strong enough to overpower the breaking of those bonds. After Arkansas, his company sent him to Louisville, KY. I don't remember very much except that there was a girl I used to play with. We only lived there for 2 or 3 years and my little brother Kenny was born in 1929.

We then moved to Akron, Ohio, which was the corporate head of the Goodyear Tire Company. We arrived in the winter-time. My only memory is of a place that sold ice cream that was shaped like a cone. I was four years old then and I fell in love with ice cream. After Ohio, we moved to Charlotte, NC, which had a temperate climate. We had a very nice house and a nice life there. Eventually, my sister, Anita, was born. So, there were three of us competing for our parents' attention. It was at this point that something began which, I learned later on, was called the Depression. Through listening to discussions my parents had about finances, I learned that, although times were generally miserable for people, they would not be for us. My father's position with the company was stable and he would continue to get paid.

From Charlotte, we moved to Albany, NY, right back into the icebox. Despite the cold and the snow, we survived, and liked it. After about a year and a half, when I was in 4th Grade, my father was promoted to Regional Manager and transferred to Baltimore, Maryland. He did quite a bit of traveling along the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay.
We became quite acquainted with a seaman's life. We learned about blue channel crab, had fresh fish available daily in the markets, and took long walks along the beach in the summertime, looking for shark's teeth and shells. We liked Baltimore. I consider myself to be from Baltimore because we lived there for 8 years and it feels like my exposure to the world was prolonged there.

Baltimore, I realize now, was a fascinating place because it was, sociologically speaking, a cross-section of America. Its one million people created a seafaring culture. Waves of European immigrants settled there, so it had enclaves of different ethnicities, particularly Poles and Eastern Europeans, as well as a huge African-American population that lived downtown in the row houses. Each enclave had its own high school. I should have been automatically enrolled in the high school in Roland Park, where I lived, but, in 8th grade, I had to take a course about different occupations. My parents said I was absolutely going to college, so I was given a college preparatory curriculum: Latin, history, math, English, sociology. Baltimore built high schools corresponding to the three tracks: college prep, polytechnic, and manual. Eventually, I went to Baltimore City College High School, across town. My mother wanted me to go to a proper British preparatory private school, full of Anglo-Saxons like me, but my father wanted me to go to school where I could meet all kinds of people.

Baltimore City College High School was all male and all business. It was very tough academically. In grammar school I had never had to take home books or do homework, but at this school kids not only brought home books, but carried their book-bags as a mark of pride. It was a school of 14-year-old intellectuals. I found myself lagging behind in performance, but I liked it.

Then one day my father told everybody that he was being moved to the Columbus, Ohio area. We settled in a charming, little suburb called Upper Arlington. My new school contained Kindergarten through 12th grade and was populated with a large number of charming females, which was refreshing after attending an all male school in Baltimore. The suburb was very friendly and I liked it very much. At that time, males wore jeans, work-boots, and a plaid shirt, and girls wore a plaid skirt, bobbie socks, and brown and white saddle shoes. The academic atmosphere was much more laid back than at my old school. School was fun; it was as much like Happy Days as you could find, although we didn't have any Fonz.

In December of 1943, my father died of a heart attack. We could no longer afford to live in Upper Arlington, so we moved back to Arkansas, my mother's home state. I technically graduated from Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, which is the high school that Dwight Eisenhower eventually integrated.

Back in Ohio, I had gotten to the point where I was in sight of graduating, when the bombs hit Pearl Harbor, so the class of 1943 all left. Leaving actually brought us closer together and now we wouldn't think of missing a reunion. I volunteered for the Navy V-12 reserve, which was an officer training school. I was stationed at the V-12 school in Missouri, because it was close to Arkansas. We received college training at the reserve school and I earned a BA in social studies.

I had originally wanted to be a Naval flier, but they had too many in the pipeline to become fliers and those flying in the war weren't dying quickly enough, so they made us choose another part of the service. I became a naval chaplain. I applied to Yale Divinity school, was promptly accepted, and a few months later I was in New Haven, CT. At Yale I was surrounded by people of sharp intellectuality for the first time in my life. It was breathtaking. I wanted to read every book in the library and was frustrated because I knew I couldn't read them all.

I got my Bachelor of Divinity from Yale and then got married. My wife and I decided that I didn't want to be a clergyman and she didn't want to be a clergyman's wife. I received a Master's of Sacred Theology (STM) in 1948. I then realized that I liked philosophy of religion because of the metaphysical questions related to my father's death. I then realized that I needed to become a teacher in order to make a living, so I started working on my PhD at Yale, which I completed in 1954.

I worked at several colleges before coming to Grinnell. Immediately prior to moving to Iowa, I taught philosophy at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. At that time, the democratic dither of Washington, D.C., gave birth to the House Un-American Activities Committee, which sought out communists. The committee did this by subpoenaing people to

answer their questions. So, they subpoenaed a number of the Dickinson College faculty, particularly an economics teacher named Ray Love-Ollie, and they asked him about his personal and political associations when he was living and working in Denver, Colorado. Particularly, they wanted to know whether he was a member of the communist party. He pled the Fifth Amendment. His trial was written up in the paper, so the faculty at Dickinson learned that he was being interrogated in an intrusive way, which we disagreed with. The president of Dickinson moved quickly and suspended Love-Ollie without pay. The faculty formed an Academic Freedom committee to do some investigating of our own. I was somehow placed on this committee. We decided that it was a violation of this man's rights and unjust to suspend him from work without pay.

At one point, the president summoned me to his office and Ray Love Ollie was there also. I listened to the two of them talk and took notes. The President wanted my notes, but I did not want to give them to him, so he and I fell out. The Love-Ollie situation went on for months. Finally, the College's board of trustees, most of whom were wealthy executives for carpet manufacturers called Love-Ollie up for a hearing. I was at the hearing and unintentionally became involved because I could provide information. Our committee was arguing that the administration had treated Love-Ollie poorly and my notes were important to support that claim. Nonetheless, the trustees up held Love-Ollie's suspension. My contract was renewed for another year at Dickinson, but as a first-year faculty member without tenure, I felt I had no future there and resigned.

I asked Yale University to reactivate my file and two weeks later I had a letter from a faculty member here at Grinnell College. He was about to leave for Thailand and the college wanted to replace him and the position might be permanent. So, I came here to interview. My inquiries led me to believe that the president at Grinnell, Howard R. Bowen, supported democratic principles and that the atmosphere among faculty was good. The administration seemed sane and progressive. I accepted the offer. My wife and I stuffed our two kids and whatever we could carry into our car and drove to Grinnell.
It has been a pleasure to work at the college and live in the town. I even came to like the area. It's now home to me. I wish I could go out and enjoy it.

Reginald Clark
May 6, 1916

I was born on May 6, 1916. I grew up on Gilman, Iowa on a farm, with one brothers and one sister. My father was hit by a train when I was four years old. We had had 300 acres and row cropped corn and beans. We had 32 cats, and one dog. We moved 30 years ago from the farm.

My sister, Deborah is 10 years older than me and was a dietician in Iowa. My brother, Joseph Clark is 14 years old than me is and was a teacher in Grinnell.

I attended the University of Chicago and obtained my PhD in Comparative Linguistics. Directly after graduating I started working in the library and eventually worked my way to the Head of a Library. I worked as Head of Library for 33 years. Over the years I have traveled to Europe, London and France; as well as Guatemala for an archaeology school project for three weeks. My hobbies are enjoying music; I use to play the piano. I have no children and I experienced a stroke two months ago, that have impaired by speech and body movements.

Hazel Crooks
1908

I have an album that describes my life. I was born in 1908. I have only one son and one grandson. And I lived through all of the depression, so I know what that's like. I was born down in Unionville, Missouri, about twelve miles over the Iowa line. When I was 17 we came up here to Grinnell and I've lived here ever since. I grew up on a small acreage. My father did farming work. We raised everything that we ate practically, because we couldn't go to the store and buy fresh produce. And my grandfather had a huge orchard where he sold fruit in the summer. But the family always came first, so we had about everything that grew to eat. We'd preserve it in the wintertime. So we would pull the cabbages up by the heads and turn them upside down. And we would dig a big whole, a trench-like thing and turn the cabbages upside down. Then we would put straw on top of that and then gunny sacks over the straw. And then we'd put another row. We'd leave the root sticking out so that we would know where they were. And then we'd go and dig the out when we wanted them. We had turnips and potatoes and things like that also, but we would dig a separate trench, and they were marked.

I learned to cook and crochet by the time I was seven years old – I could crochet and knit and do hand sewing. And when I was seven I learned to sew on the sewing machine, so that's been one of the hobbies of my life. So I have all of this material left, and I like to show what you can do with pieces of scraps. All of this (pointing to Christmas stockings she is sewing) is just pieces, little pieces. I'm going to put a big piece with it. I've made Christmas stockings for the past several years. And I made my grandson some. He majored in Commercial Art in college, except then he turned out to be a master chef. So I made him one, and he likes to use it to decorate his home.

I had one son and one grandson. My son worked in public relations and he made *Who's Who* in writers and poets and editorial. He worked for Grinnell Mutual Insurance in advertising. He learned how to design, and now he's retired. He writes some for the family – he wrote the story of my life.

At the age of about 18 and a half I was married. My grandmother was from Germany. Each of my parents came from a family of eleven. My grandparents emigrated from Germany, and he claims to be German, but Pickering is a French name, really. That was my maiden name. So my son looked into and thinks we're actually French because in the 16th and 17th centuries there was an uprising in a French town and they immigrated to Germany. And of course my grandmother has a little Indian in her. Of course it's practically gone by the time it comes down to me and my offspring, which was only one. But then, I've had a wonderful life enjoying my son and grandson.

I started working quite early. My parents lived to see their 57th Wedding Anniversary. I had two sisters, just three of us. I've been married twice. My first husband and I were divorced and this is my second husband (points to picture). He died when my son Jim was 21 and I've been a widow since 1949. This is my husband's father, Jim called him "granddaddy".

My son served three years and seven months in World War II. He had enlisted, and so he was in Iowa City in school, and he was only 16 when he enlisted in the army. They were getting desperate for men and the recruiting officer sent him. He had enlisted for four years but only served three and a half. He was head of the biggest PX in the world. That's a place where they can buy wool socks and things and food and whatever people need. After the war was over, they told him they didn't need him any more. And he was discharged saying he was capable of Second in Command. So he went back to school, and then dad died. He was the editor of the local paper for twelve years and then went to Grinnell Mutual where he staid for thirty years.

This is my grandson, his mother died when he was sixteen. Then after about four and a half years, his dad remarried. He used to impersonate Tiny Tim. This says:

Don't walk in front of me, I may not follow.
Don't walk behind me, I may not lead.
Walk beside me and just be my friend.

-Camus

I worked at the Old Glove Factory starting in 1928 until 1964. I made gloves, I started out making riding gloves with horse hide. Then I graduated to making everyday gloves. I worked with a sewing machine that did a crochet stitch. So, that's the story of my life.

Other than that I've done a tremendous amount of travel. I've been to 21 countries: Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. And I've taken several cruises, and I've been as far as the West Indies. And I've had pen-pals from all over. I think that's a big mistake people make. I've had friends of every religion and every race. So, I feel very fortunate. Well, I think I've had an extraordinary life. Of course I've had a lot of sadness along the way, but God didn't promise us a bed of roses. I've had great setbacks, but I've recovered from them all.

I retired in 1964 and then I did some work with people down at the college. So I know the older college people. They didn't come and bring me Meals on Wheels this winter, so I missed them. And then I worked part-time for a local surgeon, Dr. Victor Wilson. I helped them raise their four girls. And one was married just this summer, so I went to the wedding So that's three of the girls that I've been able to go to the weddings. I sit with the family – that's been one of the highlights of my life. I was in the hospital when they were on vacation once, and his partner was working on surgery. When he came back, the first thing he did was race over to the hospital. And, then he stuck his head in the door and said, "What's going on?". Dr. Powers said, "Well, we don't know. She's all yours." And I had hepatitis, that's what had happened. I picked it up in a blood transfusion.

I had some wonderful times traveling. On the cruise ships I was on, just wonderful times. I was somewhere off the shore of one of the major Islands – I think it was Martinique. I was sitting at the table and the Maitre'd, and a couple other guys came in. And I've been white-headed since I was 35. And they stopped at my table and started singing "Silver Threads Among the Gold". And I let them get all threw it. Then when they were done I told them, "You'll never know how much fun I've had getting this white head." So one of them fellows, not too far from my table, said, "That ought to hold you boys. So get to the kitchen and get us some food, we're all hungry." But that old dining room just rolled. They were all

surprised by the answer I gave. We just had lots of fun. And, like I said, I made a lot of friends.

In all of my travels, Switzerland was the most beautiful. And Connecticut, reminds me a lot of Switzerland. In Switzerland, I went up the mountain on a chairlift and came down the other side into Zurich, by the Cogg Railway. And another time I was over, I went to the top of the Eiffel Tower. Then I climbed the Leaning Tower of Pisa. There was an outside stairway, and it circled around. And the next year, they closed it to tourists.

I brought home a lot of souvenirs. Those statues, Hummels, I brought those and gave them all away, but one. They're very valuable now. Of course, I too I took all of the island tours on the cruises. We did everything from touring the nightclubs to going to pineapple and banana fields. We had bananas right off of the plant. That was kind of neat. I've been able to hear all of the best symphonies in the world, like Moscow. I spent 17 days behind the Iron Curtain. Of course then it was under communist rule. They had us under their thumb. They would check us every two or three blocks. If you didn't turn your hotel key in when you went out sightseeing on the bus they would say, "No key, no passport." It was a learning experience, because I didn't know much about communism. And to see those big nurseries – at that time they would take children from six weeks old and put them in a big nursery. They educated the children. All that was so the people could work on the communal farms – so they didn't have to have a babysitter. The guide told us that that happened in Germany too.

I visited one of the German forests. And that was absolutely immaculate- not a twig on the ground. You'd see the women coming out of the forest carrying sticks and twigs, and they'd use them for fuel. And the German people decorate their Christmas trees with cookies. I used to have a free pass on the railroad, because my husband worked for the railroad. His territory was from somewhere on the other side of Omaha, Nebraska to Chicago. I went in to Chicago, shopping, once a month. I had some friends that I'd met traveling who lived there, and I would go and stay a week. Then, every Sunday, we would get up early and go see all of the museums and sights. Sometimes we wouldn't get back until 11 or 11:30 at night, just sightseeing. So one day, there was a delicatessen across the street from the Depot. I always

went to the delicatessen and I bought gingerbread men and cellophane – of course we didn't have plastic bags back then. So I would wrap them up in cellophane and tie a red ribbon around their neck and hang them on the Christmas tree. Because I knew that's what they did in Germany.

I've just had a lot of wonderful experiences. I went back to the state of Iowa, when I grew up we had a button factory in Muscatine, Iowa. They had all sorts of beautiful buttons. And there were pearl buttons that they made there. They would use the oysters that hadn't developed, and they took the inside of the shell and made beautiful buttons. I put them all on the towels, I crocheted tops for towels and put the buttons on them.

I've had a wonderful life, and one of the things I try to instill on people is that no matter what your station in life, you can accomplish anything you set your mind to. If you do a lot of traveling, you can. I had to budget, because I didn't have a lot of money. You just have to remind yourself along the way, that if you want to accomplish something you really want, I've never had to envy anybody because I've gotten everything I want by myself. You see, I've been alone since 1949.

Before we, single women, weren't counted as heads of the house, and so we had to pay more taxes. Well, I didn't think this was fair, so I would write my Congressman telling him about it. And everyone said, "Hazel, you might as well quit, you're just making a fool of yourself." And I said, "Well, maybe I am, but that's how I feel and I don't think you're gonna change me." But then about 17 or 18 years ago they did pass the law that a woman who is left alone is the head of a household. I said, it's me who pays the taxes, it's me who puts the furnace in, it's me to put the roof on. Hazel has to foot the bill.

Bill Doyle
March 3, 1926

I was born in Montezuma Iowa. Well, I moved several places. I was born and raised in Montezuma. My dad's name was Frank, and mother's name was Wilma. I was close to them; I was an only child and a spoiled brat. My dad was from Iowa, and my mom was from Kentucky. My dad was a farmer, but he never owned a farm. He rented one from the Equitable Access Insurance Agency, and he found one up in Grinnell; that's why we moved. I was in high school at the time, and I graduated when I was sixteen. We did everything on the farm. We raised cattle; we grew corn, beans, oats, alfalfa A. I had some pet sheep, and they followed me around. I taught one of them to buck, but that bothered my mom, so it had to go. In the depression, I remember things were hard. People didn't do much of anything, trying to save their money. We tried to conserve things. But, we were better off living on a farm then some of them in town. We had our own meat – beef, pork chicken. We raised chickens and had eggs.

I was in the Air Force, the eighth Air Force in Benjay England in World War 2, the worst one. I was on radar, a repair man, and worked on the operator. I was always busy then, but I handled it well. We traveled a lot to London and to the towns closest to the bases. There are a couple of my friends still in Iowa. Bruce Bailey is one. I haven't seen him for a long time. We were chummy together. I was his best man at his wedding, and he was mine.

My wife graduated high school in 1947, I had graduated in 1947. We didn't know each other. A couple of friends introduced us, and that's how we got to be together.

After the army, I came home and started work with the American Telephone and Telegraph for thirty years. I saw a lot of changes. I worked my way up as a repairman to a supervisor, and I wound up in headquarters in New York office. We lived in middle of New Jersey. I stayed away from the big city; working there was bad enough. I missed the farm. I moved back to Iowa and I got a farm. I have a tenant who does all the work, and I take the money.

It's 160 acres, primarily with corn and beans. We have some livestock, the usual. I still visit it.

In Coralville, I had three kids, Mark, Blaine, Tim and Anne. Mark is a school teacher. Blaine, he's in the police department. He's called the elephant man. Three to four years ago, an elephant escaped in the zoo, and he wound up shooting it. I see them a lot, but they are scattered all over.

Bubs Grosenbach
1922

I grew up in Indianapolis, Indiana. I'm not really from Iowa. I was working in a war plant after high school, living with my mom and dad. My two brothers were in the army and my mom worked in a war plant. My dad was a sergeant in WW1, and guess what I did, I joined the Navy. I about got thrown out of that home. I had actually tried to get into the marines, but I had had tuberculosis when I was a child and couldn't get into the marines because my lungs were scarred, so I ended up in the Waves.

I had actually won a scholarship, to John Harrod art school in Indianapolis. I drew a picture that contained all the letters of the alphabet, but they were hidden within the drawing, so you couldn't see them right away. I entered it in the 4-H fair in Indiana and I won first prize, over my brother. I was proud of that. It's a Ripley's Believe it or Not. My Mom was a little disappointed that I went into the Navy instead of to Art school. But she said, "It's going to be your life, so it's up to you." And I'm glad I went.

In 1953 I went to Hunter College in New York City to start my training. There were about 20 of us from Indianapolis. They took us to Cincinnati, Ohio and shipped us out from there to New York on a train. Every time we moved, it was at night. In fact, we couldn't even take our luggage because we didn't want the spies to know that we were on the move. In New York, everything was just so new to us. We were all kind of scared; we didn't know what they were going to do. Training was quite strenuous; we had to learn about the ship's starboard and things like that, even though we were never on a ship.

While we were in boot training, we got to be in a movie called, Here Come the Waves. The Waves was the women's segment of the Navy. From our window, we could see the Brooklyn Bridge. We'd always kid each other and say, "Wake up we're gonna sell you the Brooklyn Bridge. Put your name on the mortgage." We also got to be in a parade in New York. During training I felt that joining the Navy was the best thing I could have done because I got to go out into the world for the first time.

After training, they sent me to Key West, Florida, to a blimp base. We had blimps in WWII, but a lot of people didn't realize that. We used the blimps to send messages, instead of using submarines, because enemies couldn't intercept our messages from a blimp, but could from a submarine.

Usually the elderly men, the chiefs, who had been in it 25 years or 30 years, they didn't like us women. They just marked us off. They didn't even put us in the same chow hall as the guys. They put us in an officer's office. They were quite protective of us because we were all young girls. Most of the women did office work, but I didn't want to do that. Instead, I became an electrician and worked on airplane parts because women didn't do that. When they found out that I had been working in a war plant, they said, "How would you like to work on parts of airplane?" I said, "Fine, I would like to do that." Of course, I almost said right yes right at the beginning.

The people in Key West were very kind to us. The girls I worked with were from all over the United States and three were from Puerto Rico. Those three were quite interesting. They loved America and said they would come back and live here, if they could. I was friends with a black girl and I used to say hi to her and pat her on the back, but the other girls practically disowned me for that, because it wasn't acceptable in the South. Back then in the South, blacks had different drinking fountains and restrooms than whites. There were a lot of black people back home in Indianapolis, so I was used to blacks and whites mixing and I thought didn't like this segregation.

I took up swimming while in Key West and joined a swim team. I learned how to swim from my brothers. I had two brothers whom I followed all over creation. They went swimming in a quarry hole. They said, "If you follow us one more time, we're going to throw you in here." I said, "You can't do that," but they threw me in. That's how I learned to swim. In Key West, every time we'd go down to the beach, there was a southern gentleman that had a big house on the shore and he'd always wave at us. We didn't realize who he was at first, but eventually learned that he was Ernest Hemingway. He'd always wave and if there was ever a

Southern Gentlemen, he was one. Over the holidays, the officers just left a skeleton crew to run the office and the phone and I was there for one Christmas and Thanksgiving and he invited us over to his home. He had cats, cats, cats, wine, wine, wine, and a lot of cigars. He only smoked Cuban cigars because that's where they made them. I'm sure his hands were manicured because his nails were just perfect. He was very charming and very interesting.

A lot of the people in Key West were Cuban, because Cuba's nearby. We got to go to Cuba twice on 48 hour leave, which was quite a thrill. It's an odd country- a beautiful place, they have big magnolia trees all up and down the city, with beautiful people, but the little kids are either poor or rich, there's no in between.

I got on report once. See, there was a marine on that base and marines and sailors didn't get along that well. He kept wanting to date me, but I didn't like him and he kept calling and calling and I said, "No, I don't go out with marines." One evening after work, I had gone to the commissary to pick up some Kotex. There was a marine base across the road from ours and he saw me and he said, "Hey wave, what you got in that sack?" I said, "Well it's personal, I'd just as soon not tell ya." He said "Okay, I'll put you on report" and I said, "Okay."

If you had to be in any war, I would say the Second World War would be the best. When I went home to Indiana on the train, the people were absolutely wonderful. They would buy our lunches and give us the best seats in the train.

My ex-husband was a sailor who worked on airplanes at the base. We met at a dance. He couldn't dance, even though he was in his twenties. I loved to dance. I won a jitterbug contest on the base one night.

My husband was an Iowa farmer and I was the dumbest city girl he ever met. I had never even pet a cow. We moved to a farm north of Grinnell. When I moved here, all the neighbor ladies wanted to have a shower for me. I had never even met any of them. I said, "You don't even know me." They said, "Oh, we will." And most of them are still living.

I loved the calves on our farm. They had bangs, so I'd get up early in the morning, get my doll brush, and go out and brush the cows' bangs. The calves were so cute, they had big brown eyes and they were very smart. They knew when I came in that barn, that I was going to brush their bangs. So, I was a dumb farm girl. I lived on the farm for about 17 years, until we got a divorce. He was an athlete idiot and was more interested in football, basketball, and softball than in me. So I said, "Good-bye."

I worked at Rags to Riches, the consignment store downtown, for about 14 years. I met Martin Luther King's daughter. She went to the college, but she couldn't make the grade, so they said, "Bye-bye" to her. She was a very nice girl, though. I also met Tammy Ziwicki, the girl that disappeared on her way back to school one year. She used to come in our store. She was a very nice girl. Another gal used to come in. I got acquainted with her. She was about to graduate and came in with her parents, who were both professors, in the south. She said, "I want you to come to my graduation party." But, I didn't go, and now I wish I had.

I have four children, three girls and a boy. My son lives on Pearl Street, in town. Marsha works in the Alumni office in the glove factory. My daughter Sharon Clayton, she's my late potato. I had her when my other daughter was 16. She works in the library and lives in Oakland Acres. Then there's Barbara, who works at Verizon. She has three teenage girls, the twins are sixteen and the third is nineteen- that's Cassie, she goes to Central. She's a saint. That's a good school; you have to make good grades to stay there. I'm still taking care of my babies, the twins. They come and help me do my wash. They've been wonderful helpers to me. We've become very close in these last few years.

My mom died about five years ago, she was 95. She was partly Cherokee Indian. I loved my mom.

On November 16, 2004, I had a stroke. I didn't know what was wrong, because I never personally knew anyone who had a stroke. My doctor, Dr. Dornwall, was flabbergasted because I had low blood pressure and was under weight. He sent me to a hospital in Des

Moines and my family all drove up with me, bless their hearts. I was there a couple months. I had to learn to walk and learn to talk, would you believe it? The nurses work you real hard. I even met Kenny Wallace, who is a NASCAR driver. He's a great, big, tall guy. When we met, he said, "My name is Kenny Wallace, and I worked on the race track." I thought, "Oh well," because I didn't know who Kenny Wallace was.

I'm glad I got out of Indianapolis, because you can stay in one town the rest of your life, and not know anything different, and you don't know how much you've missed. As my granddaughter says, "You've had a super life." And, really I have.

Velma Heinselman

When I was a child, my parents would go to the cemetery at Chickasaw and this house was there. It was an eight-sided, cement block house. You didn't see houses like this that much in those days. Chickasaw is just a little wide spot in the road. We used to go there when we went to put flowers on my grandparents' graves for Decoration Day. I was a little girl then and I'm eighty now. There were people that lived in that house back then. It's gone now, but the foundation still exists. They talked about making it an historical site, but they didn't. It was kind-of an outstanding thing when I was a child. My daughter had a friend who lived in Chickasaw and they used to go and see this house, too.

Some friends in Grinnell had this painting of the house and I wanted to buy it because it was a childhood memory. But they wouldn't sell it to me. They promised to write on the back that I could have it when they died. But they worried that no one would look back there so they had it reprinted and gave it to me.

In the town of Chickasaw, there was a gravel pit. A man used to drive new Cadillacs into the pit and then collect the insurance. And then some young people went swimming there and found the cars and he served forty years for gypping the insurances companies.

We lived about six miles from the eight-sided house on a farm. The farm had livestock and corn and beans and oats. My dad built a new house when I was one year old, in 1926. During the Depression, the banks closed and our new house had cost $5000 to build. My aunt lent my father the money so he could keep it.

My uncle, dad and grandfather had eight hundred acres. My granddad had come from Germany as a boy. My great grandmother, Katherine Dorothea (Niemann) Manning, came from Germany. She had three boys. They lived near Chicago. My great-grandfather, John William Manning, was killed during the Great Chicago Fire. She brought her three teenage

sons to Iowa and homesteaded. Franklin Pierce, the President, had signed the deed for the farm.

I was one of the few people raised with indoor plumbing and electricity at my age. We had a Delco light plant and running water. We had to go to the basement and pump about eighty pounds of water everyday. We had a big motor to charge up every night to have lights and water through the night. We had a septic tank. We had an indoor bathroom when I was a girl. One day, a salesman came and stepped in the septic tank ditch up to his knees. We never did find out what he was trying to sell. My mother and I were about on the floor laughing.

In 1912, my dad, John, bought this car. Just like today, when you get a refund if you buy a car, if Henry Ford sold five hundred cars, my dad would get $500 back. And he did.

I was one of four children. I have twelve great-grandkids with another on the way, seven grandkids and three kids. I went to country school, north of Basset, Iowa. There were 35 kids in all eight classes, grades 1-8. Because of that, you learned a lot of things. The classes would recite and you would hear it and somehow it got into your brain. When I was seven or eight, they built a new schoolhouse. It was brick. The old one was so cold we had to stuff rags into the windows, otherwise we would freeze in the winter. It was two miles to school. We walked, unless the weather was bad, and then Dad would drive us. I went to high school in Charles City, Iowa.

I worked at the dime store in Charles City for $13 a week when I was still in school. I worked for six days and one night a week for $13. In 1944, I married my husband of 59 years, Leonard. I got married in Austin, Minnesota. We ran away—eloped—whatever. We didn't want a big to-do. And when we got back, my folks gave us a shower. They weren't mad. You didn't get much for weddings then, because no one had much. We got a set of glasses and some bowls.

After we were married twenty years, my husband couldn't farm anymore because of his back problems so we ran the A&W drive-in. The best root beer in town. Later, Leonard and I built

a dining room on and sold it to Bruce. My kids all worked at the root beer stand. Bruce worked for us since he was eleven. And he always said he was going to own this place, and now he does.

When we moved down here, the kids were teenagers. My son, at twelve, loved horses. I always said "If the horse could wash and iron, the horse would have come to Grinnell. But instead, I came." We couldn't afford room and board for the horses.

We lived here in Grinnell forty years - half my life. After he retired, my husband would refinish furniture. Then we painted houses and I cleaned for people. We kept busy in our old years. We had to move from the old house after his stroke in 1992. So we moved to an apartment—Park Place. We lived there eight years and then moved down here in 2002. I still try to keep busy here.

Esther Hildebrand
August 21,1918

I was born and raised in Sharon, Iowa. It's about twenty miles from here. Not very many people lived there, about 1,400. That's a little large for now. Not many people stayed there, but it's a good little town. I grew up on a farm close to New Sharon. My family had nine kids. I was right in the middle, the fifth kid. My mother and her sister graduated from Drake University, which at that time was very rare for women. New Sharon didn't have any high schools, so she had to go to Drake. There's a lake close to Des Moines where she would have picnics with her boyfriend. Every time we drove to Des Moines, my mom would say, "There's where we had our picnics." My dad had family that lived in Wales. His two brothers were coal miners. They wanted to come to the United States and mine gold over here. They went to Montana, but someone else found the gold, otherwise I would rich today. Then, they came to New Sharon and bought three to four hundred acres to mine the coal.

In high school, we went square dancing. I went to Des Moines; it was a contest for square dancers. All of the ladies would have on big skirts with petticoats underneath them. We would go around and around, and your skirts would fly across the room. That was the most fun I ever had. You made your own fun in those days.

I taught in a country one room school for two years when I was just out of high school. There were twenty kids. It was fun. Two of my students were my little sister and my little brother. I soon met a young man; he was a twin, and we started dating. We decided to run away during Christmas time, but couldn't tell anybody because if you were married you couldn't teach. So, we kept it a secret. I stayed with my folks during the week, and then on the weekends, I would stay with Lesley's family. He lived about four miles from where I lived. At that time, he didn't have a car, so he walked down from his house to my house. He had to cross a river and two creeks. He came over to my house on the weekend to see me and then I'd come with him over to his house. We kept it a secret pretty well. Otherwise, I would have been fired. In the spring, we announced our marriage.

Then, we started farming. We had one cow, chickens for eggs, and a team of horses. We started farming with the help of our folks. They gave us the horses. Then we got a farm of our own. Farming wasn't very profitable at that time; it still isn't. Farming was hard. We sold out at about eight years. Then, we moved to Grinnell. We owned a hardware store. It was called Coast to Coast. It ran for about eight years, but there were too many hardware stores in Grinnell. Then, I started working at Grinnell College in the library. I cleaned because we didn't have any other options at that time. I took care of the Xerox machines. They were always breaking down. I would have to take the drum out, clean it, and put it back in. I didn't mind it. I knew how to do it. Lesley started working in the PE complex. He took care of the sports. He took care of the uniforms when they went to the games, but he didn't have too much to work with. So, he started stringing tennis rackets here in Grinnell. He had a real good business, and they seemed to like his work. He was very particular. If he made a little mistake, he would start all over. He was very well known for his tennis rackets.

We moved a couple of times. We bought a house. Lesley kept up his tennis racket business. Then, I taught school. I started substituting in New Sharon and Montezuma. Then, I started having a family. That kept me busy. Of course, it was a happy time. I don't regret it. In fact, I wish I could go back.

My husband died, and I've been on my own ever since. I sold my house and moved to town, of course I already lived in town. I miss my husband very much.

We had three children. They've been a blessing. My son he went to Cedar Falls for college. Then, he went to Arizona and got interested in sky diving. He would work all week and then sky dive on the weekends. But, it wasn't all fun. One time when he went, his big shoot didn't come out and his little shoot got caught in the big one. I guess he died doing what he did what he liked to do. We also had two girls. Vicki graduated from the U of I, and she started teaching at the high school here. Now, she works at Grinnell College. She married Dan Bunnell. He taught in Montezuma while she was working in Grinnell. He retired from teaching, but he works for the college now as the head of the debate team. He takes them all over for debate. They placed third in the nation one year. Lesley, she graduated from the U

of L She started teaching. She married Bob Melendy. She met him in college and moved to Tampa, FL. There have been a lot of tornadoes down there. They like it down there. I keep hoping they'll move back to Iowa, but they don't like the winters. She goes around to the school and helps with the kids with disabilities. They have two little kids. They just had a new baby. She's so sweet; she's a little girl, Natasha. They were over for Christmas. She's about three, and they have a little boy who's about four and a half. He's very intelligent. He hears and pronounces these words really well. He knows what he's talking about. He still believes in Santa Claus. The little girl, she's so smart. She picks up everything her brother does.

I've had a real good life.

Mabel Jacobs
May 4th, 1908

I was born Malden, Missouri. I lived there until I was married in 1930. I was 26 years old. I was married close by. He [my husband] came there. He was a graduate of Culver-Stockton College in Clinton, Missouri. He lived out in the country on a farm with his family. His mother got all the kids to church always.

The minister of that church, I don't know his name, but they all loved him. And so, whether he [my husband] had patches on pants, it didn't matter, because he went to church. They [my husband and his brothers] liked going there. There was not much else to do or see or know about there. So they went to church every Sunday. That's where I got interested in this man [the minister of the church]. He was one who was educated and he wanted everyone to have a good education. So he put this before them and they [my husband and his brothers] all took hold of it.

But the oldest boy, there were four men in the family, was a very, I'd say, smart man. He went into the Army and that was back during the first World War. He was sent to France and he saw the whole world. He went home and said we all got to go to school because we have to get out to see the world. There's a big world out there. It was really through the oldest brother that got him going. He went to the University of Chicago and taught. All the boys graduated from there. They went to school all the time and became ministers. He was important to them so they followed him and they all became ministers—that was there life.

There were three of them who were ministers in the state of Iowa. One was in a big town, one in Waterloo, Iowa and my husband was a minister in a church in Cedar Rapids. I met him by going to church in the South—he had to travel to different churches to see how he would do as a minister. He went to our town and he didn't like it too well because it was in the South. He wasn't that much in the South. He wanted to be in the North. But we took him in and there he was. He lived there two years. I married him and then we left.

We went back to the University of Chicago. I didn't go to school there, but I was with him. Then he went to a church and they saw what he was doing. Then he had to go to a smaller church than where he was because he had to be a temporary pastor in Nina-Menasha, Wisconsin. Those are two wonderful towns. Both were beautiful places. Ours was the only church in Menasha that was not Catholic. But in Nina, there were a lot of Protestants, too.

He was a wonderful pastor. He never went out and looked for a church or asked to be a minister. They called him always to the church. All four churches. They change the names of them a lot, but it was a UCC –United Church of Christ— he left that church after 16 years, it was about 1971. Then we went to Florida. We lived near Fort Myers for awhile—in a smaller, close-by city, so we spent most of our time in Fort Myers—looking, seeing, eating, doing everything we wanted to do.

There was a little church there that didn't have a pastor and they thought they were going to lose their church. Then the pastor asked him [my husband] to come there and I thought we were suppose to go back home for at least two years. And my husband didn't want to take the ministry away from the current pastor. He didn't want to marry anybody or have funerals or anything. But two years later, he was the minister and it had blown up. It got bigger, lots of new people came—it blew and blew. It was a nice church—we left there. He said we did it [made it grow]. I said no, I didn't do anything. I just have friends and a good time. I'm not gonna work. So that's what we did then. Until he was 75 years old. Then he needed to have some rest. So we decided to go back North.

But we didn't quite get back North. We stopped at Grinnell—where I live now—my daughter lived there with her family. They were being transferred from Grinnell to New York, not the City but to a beautiful part of the Finger Lakes. So we knew we they were going there so we got a little apartment in Grinnell. And we stayed there until we knew that they left.

My husband became ill. We never got back to Chicago—we were going back to the Chicago area but that's not what we did. So I said we'll have to stay here. He stayed in several

hospitals for a long time—for four years. And then he passed away at 1979. I was not going back to Chicago by myself. I had friends there but no relatives at all. I thought I better stay close here where I am—at Mayflower. I've lived here ever since.

My daughter is no longer here. Her children grew up. She lives in Atlanta, Georgia. They live down there with their own children now. They live in two different areas and have a long drive between them. But they like it a lot.

I have one son and one daughter and that's all I have left. I'm an old lady. The son in our family was well-schooled. He taught in schools and he knows how to handle money. He does my money for me. I don't do anything at all. It's nice. I'd like to have my own money, but he takes care of everything I need. He lives in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. He built a beautiful home for himself there. He works in Chicago-he drives there.

Now that's our story. It's not a great story but it's what we do. And now I don't do anything because I can't see or read. And that bothers me terribly. I always did the things I wanted to do, but I can't do it now. I can see people, but I can't see their faces. But I'm almost a hundred years old. A lot of people have the same conditions, but they are ten years younger.

I am not sure how I stayed healthy—I am just a healthy person. All the recent doctors have said there is nothing wrong with me. But I know there is something wrong—it's in here [my head]. [Compared to] a group of people my age, I have forgotten all the candidates for Presidents of the United States. But now it's coming back. Roosevelt and Carter and Truman—my memories of these people are coming back. I learned about them by reading the paper. And Carter had some good books, too. He's a favorite of mine because he did so much for people. Especially black people. He built houses for them.

I missed out because I was ill. I became ill after living for 17 years in Grinnell. I had something, I lived at Mayflower. I became ill one night all of a sudden. They never found what I did or had. They put me in the hospital. Somebody said I was never going to live anymore and people thought I was just dying. And even now they said they never thought I

would be back. There was a young doctor and he knew something about an operation in the loin. He took part of it off. We don't know what it was, but I cured. And the now the doctors said there is nothing wrong with me.

I live in BeBee Hall, not in an apartment anymore. I used to cook for myself in the kitchenette. I like fish so much. I think I could eat fish all the time. When we used to live in Fort Myers, Florida, there was wonderful fish all the time. And oysters. And I loved it there. But I can't get it now. Now I eat anything. Especially green things—vegetables. I eat what is good for me. I eat what I should have. And I like it. Most of the time now, the food is very very good. They [Mayflower] do the best they can do. They have a wonderful… not a cook, but he's been to the cooking school in Cedar Rapids. He manages all the dining rooms. And that's a lot of people to feed. He arranges it all and it is good. I hope we can always keep him. Lots of people would like to have him.

They [Mayflower] don't do a lot for me but give me one pill. I can't always button my clothes. And my knee hurts and they made my leg a little shorter because I fell. I do what I do but it isn't what I want to do.

I can't sing [anymore]. I was a musician. I played piano and organ. My mother was one of eight girls. She had dark red hair. [Describing my mother's sisters:] The oldest girl had red hair, the second was black hair, the third was red hair, the fourth was black hair, all the way down. But the two youngest babies passed away, so there was just six girls. But all the red hairs were musicians. They were good at that, and the others were not. I was a red hair. That's what I had to give up. I can't play, and I can't see the music. I'm old now. I shouldn't be doing that [now]. But I still would like to be doing that.

Sally Johnson
1927

I lived in Northern Iowa and grew up during the Depression. I was born in Titonka, which is about 50 miles north and west of Mason City, not that far from Minnesota. I lived on a farm. We had all horse-drawn machinery, pigs, cows, and baby chickens. Well, we were poor. I didn't know it, I mean nobody told us. We just had a battery radio. Dad would listen to certain news or market reports, but you didn't just turn in on and have it for noise all day. We didn't have electricity until I was in eighth grade. Didn't have running water. We had a little outhouse out back, and a little path. We took our baths in the brown washtub in front of the kitchen stove in winter, the old black kitchen stove. We burned mostly corncobs in the kitchen stove. That was my job, as soon as I was big enough to carry cobs in. I was an only child. Morning and night, put them in the basket and carry it into the house. I had a little red wagon and I got to pull it until I was big enough to carry it on my back. Well, they made a nice hot fire, and they were cheap. We didn't have a lot of wood to burn up there. But the for kitchen stove, one place I had to get the corncobs was in the hog lot, after the pigs would get thrown ear corn. And then they'd gnaw it off and of course stomp it around everything that's in the pig lot, and you'd have to get some of the dried ones and carry it by the edge, but they also made good burning, and they didn't smell. We had a heating stove in the living room where you had coal, but there were a lot of mines in Southern Iowa, not in Northern Iowa. But Dad would buy coal, that was one thing he did buy, so it was warm in winter. After a few years, I was probably eight years old or so, we got an oil burner for the living room. It would burn hay or something when we didn't have coal or coal dust, nothing. We didn't have any storm windows, the house wasn't insulated. I don't know how we ever survived. In the mornings I slept upstairs in an unheated room and when I woke up in the mornings beside my room where I'd breathed, the moisture made a stiff place of ice on my pillowcase, because there'd be snow on the windowsill sometimes. You'd run downstairs and dress behind the cookstove because it was warm. My folks had to get up when it was cold out. I think of that now that I'm older. Oh, I didn't think of it then. They'd call me to get ready for school after the fire was burning and my mother was getting breakfast. That's when they'd call me to get dressed.

The farm had one deep well, located about thirty feet from the back door. There was a pump out there, and you'd pump by hand for general use and there was a pump-jack. There was an old building that was called the pumphouse, and it was just the washhouse. The washing machine was out there. That had an engine in there, and a belt that ran to a jack. And we could start that up and it would pump a lot of water. I mean as long as we didn't have to pump that part by hand. But there was also a pit, a well-pit, under a platform, and down in there somewhere, Dad could turn something and it would connect to the pipes down to the stocktank, to water the stock, so we didn't have to carry water down there. And when the tank was full and then you'd have to notice. It would just depend on how many cattle you had. He didn't have a lot, but the cows and horses drank it. So that was the way we got water down to the cattle. The pigs liked it if the tank ran over, because the pigs love to wallow in the mud. But Dad wasn't really happy if that happened.

I went to country school. I walked a mile. Uphill both ways as the saying goes. In high school I had to walk a quarter mile up to the corner and then they took you on the high school bus, as country kids. You had to go to the country schools that were located every two miles. You went to the one closest to where you lived. I graduated from high school in 1945. I was valedictorian, out of a class of 18. My mother, ahead of me, had been salutatorian for her high school class. After that I went in the United States Cadet Nurse Corps, because the war was still on. I didn't have any brothers. Everybody was sending their sons to the service and all that. I couldn't join the WAVEs or the WACs. You had to be 21 to get in that. I was far from that. You could get in the Cadet Nurse Corps at seventeen and a half. So then we basically had three years of training in two and a half years in an accelerated course. I didn't live too far from Rochester, Minnesota, so that's where I took that, at St. Mary's Hospital. We had a lot of busy work, but then we worked hard, too. We had classes but then after the first six months we worked several hours a day on the wards, because most of the nurses that were there had joined the, were overseas or something. They established this Cadet Nurse Corps to have help in civilian hospitals. Of course, the war was over quite a while before I graduated, but they did take my class, that September 45 class through. They paid our tuition and our books and board and room and our white uniforms to wear at work. But anyway, we

could be put it military hospitals within the United States. But then the war was over, and just ten percent, I think there was eighty-some in my class to begin with, just ten percent was allowed to work in military hospitals. That's all they needed then, because nurses were coming back. So, they only took those that really wanted to. And I did not. I elected to stay there in Rochester my last six months. We got to be assistant head nurses in whatever category we were interested in. I took three months of pediatrics and three months of obstetrics. That was kind of what I was interested in.

After that I took the State Boards and became an R.N. I got out of training in 1948 and I've been in Grinnell ever since. Two girls came down here from Rochester that were the year ahead of me. During the war there was a great shortage of men. There weren't any men that took nursing in those days. There was this ad in the nurses' journal that it was a college town and lots of guys around, you know. So those two came down, and I was going to go into public health, and was going to University of Minnesota, but I couldn't get in until spring quarter, so then those gals said, "Oh, come down here and work awhile, they need some help." They had a house right beside the hospital that the nurses lived in. They provided our room and board, and we made something like, $25 a month.
We worked six days a week, just had one day off. There was eleven of us lived in that house. There was always somebody coming and going to work. I think we worked around 48 hours a week. I didn't go to U of Minnesota, because then I fell in love. Before I met my husband he worked on telegraph lines in Nebraska, and had cut himself and ended up in the hospital. He said I gave the best shots, so he asked me for a date. A year later we got married. We had three kids. Fourteen years later he had a heart attack and died. So I raised three kids and had a job at a doctor's office. Eventually I got them all raised, then I worked at the hospital again, after the doctor retired in 1976. I worked in O.B. And then I opened a daycare. I had that for about twelve years until I had my stroke. By that time I was about seventy, and so I retired.

Laverne Clyde Jones
November 27, 1917

Clyde is my middle name, most people call me that. I hate it. It's my uncle's name – he's dead, but I used to work for him. He liked me, and I liked him. It's my middle name, but the bank down at Lynnville, where I was born, and where a semi-famous…

Sometimes I use the wrong words because I lost a lot of them. I try to get them back, but I know you can't get them all back. The teacher told me that. I had a teacher that would guide me for an hour, and he did that for a month, twice a week. He would give me books and assignments for me to do while he was gone. I would do everything he assigned me, and I did pretty good. I passed 74%, but I went down 50%. So anything I did went from 50% to 74% - so I made a book out of that, but now it's gone. People that move around a lot and sell their house and so forth, it seems to me they lose some of their things. I know I did, I don't have a carload of stuff from my life. You might say I sold it. My nephews sold it for me. Anyway, I've got that book, and it has most of the information about me. It has pictures – and I was in the Navy and a lot of my life was Naval.

There are pictures of the men in my ship, and I was the captain of that about six months or something like that in Japan. I took some ships from Japan back to the United States. And I asked them what I would do if I stayed in, and they said we'd send you back out there and do what you just did. Well, I said, "No you won't." I would've taken all of the things I had to get out – and I did get out of the Navy. Then I taught school for about 24 years in Lynneville, the place where I was born. A place where, this famous guy lived, and I'll bet you, you will have seen his name: Huck Wagaman. He was a big guy, he wasn't very big, about as big as I am. But he was born about four months before I was born. We lived a block apart until we went through our regular school and then we went to college together. We went to a college in Pella. We both graduated at the same time, and he became a captain. He took my girl – for three years he ruined my high school for me, because he took my girl from me. Her name was Mary, and she died in here at the Mayflower. She died first, and

about a month later he died. Everybody in this place that has been here for a few years knew Huck Wagaman. Everyone in this town that has been here very long will know it. He was a good golfer. He made it. He almost made it up to be a genuine guy who could be something. But he was a good golfer. He always beat me, and that's how I measured people, anyway. In some things I beat him, but mostly when I talk about him, it's what he did to me.

My wife was from a family in a farm. She was kind of well known because there were three or four girls and everyone of them got married. Then she got married to me. And then she died, she was tough. She smoked, which was bad. I always kind of blamed that for causing her to die. We got along good. She would sit there and say, "I like you" or something. I would be sitting there watching TV and she would say that before she went to bed. We got along really well. Her name was Eva Lena, but she had a lot of nicknames.

Irene Kelley
December 16, 1904

Now there's enough people that live in here at the Mayflower that's cooked all their lives. I been cooking since I was a little girl making mud pies. My mother was a good cook. She could make the best biscuits and cornbread I ever eat. My brother-in-law, he'd rather have her cornbread than cakes. But you try to eat something of them dried beans they serve here and they're not cooked... that's the last thing you want. They just put some hot water on them. Anyways, I told 'em I can't eat it, and they don't do a thing about it. So I just brought it to them to eat. I told them to eat it. They didn't do it. Well, somebody had to say something. There's poor people getting up and going out without eating. Girl told me yesterday, she says, there's at least half of them people walked up and got out without eating a thing. Well, they couldn't eat it. And them dried beans... they had chili, and it seemed like they just put some dried beans in while they was cooking it. Well, I just picked all the beans out and ate the chili. Had to eat something. I just decided to speak up. Somebody had to. And the older people wouldn't do it. Well, I'm old enough, I'm 91.

Before there was a couple that was diabetic eating at my table. They wasn't feeding them enough. I know they on a diet, but there must be something they can eat. They brought a great big plate and in the middle of that plate they took a ice cream dipper and had a mixed up bunch of something, probably chicken or something and veggies in the middle of that plate. That was my supper. I said, "Is that all you bringing me for supper?" I says, "If this is good enough for me, it's good enough for you." He took his finger and he ate it. And me and him got along, after that. Anyhow, I didn't want to go off on the cooking, I just wonder if it's enough for a person. And they didn't have nobody wouldn't speak up for 'em. I did. If I get kicked out, I'm on my own. My folks is all dead now, except two daughters. One of them took off, I don't know where she is. So, I come here.

I was born and raised in Arkansas. Well, you know where Texarkana is? I was born between there and Little Rock. Yeah, I was raised there. But, oh we lived in Texas, all over Iowa, different places. Father was hunting a place where the land was richer. The land wasn't...

well, there was places in Arkansas, down close to the river, that the land was good but it flooded so bad. So I've lived in Iowa for quite a while. I was out of school when I moved to Iowa. My brother, he got married in Iowa.

We was talking about Arkansas. There was a sawmill there. And, well, it went out of business now, but it was going then. They'd move them sawmills up down where the timber was and put 'em up till they'd cleaned all the timber up. And then they'd move on to another bunch of timber. Setting trees out all the time, then they'd get ready and make it into lumber and they'd move the mill to it. And save having to haul it so far.

Oh, they talk about Arkansas, but they had good points too. I haven't been there in years. I have cousins there, but I wouldn't know 'em. And my family is all dead, except the two daughters. And the one of them I don't know where she is. And my husband, he was in the service, but he caught the Alzheimer's and that's what got him. And the one daughter, she's power of attorney, and here I sit. I don't have to worry about paying bills or nothing. It's a good place. My daughter comes up here, and brings coffee and doughnuts, every Sunday. She oughta take me to her house, get me out of here once a week. But she don't want to cook.

My husbands are both dead. I married twice. I was married to the one of them about seven years, and he died. They dropped a bomb on him. He was in World War II. And the other one died of that Alzheimer's. We were married 53 years. But he died and I ended up here. I had a home. But it's gone. I couldn't live by myself cuz I was falling. I give my car to my granddaughter. My husband, he had a pick-up truck. He give that to the grandson. I'm 91 years old. Anyway, I do pretty good, as long as I stay warm and don't get outside. Oh, I's always somebody to stand up for the truth, don't care who it is. I don't believe in telling stories. Them old people need somebody to stand up for them. You can't stand back and let somebody else take it up for you. You've got to do it yourself. Cuz if you won't how can anyone else help you.

Eloise Otto
June 23, 1922

I was born in a town they call Kellogg. It's north of Grinnell. I have several brothers and sisters. My brother lived in Grinnell and then moved to Los Angeles with his wife. They both went to college. He worked at the radio station for about ten years in Grinnell and then went to Iowa City. They offered him a job in Australia. He went and took his wife. I could write a book about them. She's an artist and does all sorts of work. For instance, she put up the Wall of China around her house – up on the walls of her backyard. She's made all kinds of things to be sold to the public. She's sold furniture that she's made. She made pencil boxes, one she sold for $2,000. They have a cabin up in the mountains and they go up there on the weekends and go sailing on the water. My brother does a lot of things for people that need to have surgery on their ears. He calls home every three or four days.

My daughter works at the funeral home in Grinnell. Her name is Kathleen Mckeowen. She has an oldest girl who is engaged. And her other daughter plays piano for different things in town. I have a sister who recently bought a tombstone. She had some money and didn't know how else to spend it. She has a girl and some boys. My sister lives in Grinnell with her husband. They both lived on a farm in the country and then they sold that and bought a house here. They spent a lot of money fixing it up and putting new things in it and then they both had a stroke – one day after the other. One had a stroke one day and the other had a stroke the next day. They're still in the hospital in Des Moines as far as I know.

When we were growing up, when we were told to sit down, we would sit down. We were to do as we were told and that was it. My dad would either give us a spanking sometimes or make us sit in our own chairs if we were big enough. When it got nice enough for us to play outside we'd go out there. We had swings and stuff. And, this is kind of funny. We never liked to hear the talk that wasn't good for kids to hear. And so when they talked about going to the bathroom – we found out that when they needed to use a word that we couldn't hear they would say they needed to go to the bathroom to potty. Some people can't seem to use

pleasant sentences. We never did let our kids say those kinds of words. If they did use them we would correct it and not let them do it again. I still think that's the thing to do.

My husband's name was Robert. He served in the army for 4 and a half years. He went overseas to Japan, China, and all of the states out there. So I was home alone when he came home from service. I'd been home all the time by myself. So when he came back we had a baby here. Then we had some more children after that. I am 83 years old, and still going.

It was murderous to live alone when Robert was away. But, I always worked. I worked at every store in town. I liked selling things: clothes, of course. I did sell a lot of them. The first boss I had came and asked me if I would be his secretary. And I said, "I can't do that." And he said, "Oh, yes you can." But his daughter had a disease where she couldn't feed herself. Then his older daughter got married and had a child, and everything went well with them. Anyway, I liked selling clothes and I liked selling food. But I've had kind of a hard life. I've had several accidents. Right now I have a broken hip. Sometimes you wake-up and realize that something's happened to you. I hit my head against the wall twice. It sounded like a balloon bursting, it hit the pole so hard. The doctors thought there was cancer in the breasts, and they worked on that, but hopefully it's alright. The doctor came in the room a couple days after they checked and said, "Well I just wanted to tell you that I got a note from so-and-so and they didn't find anything."

My grandmother was a hundred and some years old when she passed away. She died easily. That was in the late 1930s. We took her to California with us to visit her older daughter. Neither of them were well, so we took them out. There was an earthquake while we were there. Of course, we had a lot to tell our folks when we got back.

I've lived in Grinnell since I was about twelve or fourteen. My husband lived in Marshalltown, and we knew his family. I went up to stay with his mother because she got cancer and her husband was going into the service. So I stayed and took care of her. It was a terrible experience. She had cancer alright. She was a good aunt to me.

Robert, my husband, tells the story that, the first day I got to high school, I came down the steps, and when I came down he said I had on the cutest dress, and just went on and on. He and his friend wrote a letter to each other and were going to try to get me for a date. So they wrote and, I didn't know the one very well, but I knew that he was a friend of my husband's. I said, "No" to that one. He got a hold of the note and then sent it back to Bob. Then they wrote some things on it saying they could pay for the date, and so on. But, when they came to ask me, they were still pretty timid, but they both wanted to date me. Finally, I went with Robert, and he accused me of pushing him in the river that night – trying to drown him. I had known Bob for seven years at this point, so I chose him. Bob worked for his mom and dad at Fisher Governor Company which is a place that makes ironware. He was a nice man, I tell ya'. He was good to his children and to me. He was good to his sister, Marsha. She liked to come visit us.

We loved to travel. We went everywhere that we could afford it. Even if we couldn't afford it, we still went sometimes. We went over to Omaha, Nebraska to the Zoo and the Library and all of those places. Then we went to Texas and saw a friend of mine. She was there for school, but she was there with her husband to be. Then we went to Minneapolis to enjoy ourselves and buy a few things. We went to Chicago several times. The kids were grown enough that they knew how to ask for things. So we would be driving on the highway and the kids would tell us they needed to potty. But there would be a big sign that said you can not turn to the left and you can not turn to the right. So we couldn't get off the highway. So we'd have to find another way to get off. Then we'd get back on the highway and they would want a drink of water. So, we had to get them that. We went to Louisiana, and I was with Bob down there in the service for about two years, until he got called to duty. We also went to several places in the Western part of the United States.

We had such a good time up in Minnesota, fishing at the lake. We always had a good time when we went to California. It was kind of expensive, so we didn't go there often. We had a holiday down in Georgia and Alabama, but it was so hot in there. We just liked every place we went. Of course, we didn't have kids then.

We enjoyed each other, had a good time. He didn't smoke or drink, and he liked dogs and cats, but not in the house. We had a dog for my son. That dog wanted to be in the house so badly, and so we talked about it. Mark, my son, said, "Well, I'm going to bring that dog in, because I want that dog to be with me, I want it to be my dog." So I let him bring it in. When it would thunder and storm the first place he'd run for was Mark's bed. I didn't want him in the bed, so I'd jump up and take him out in the kitchen or porch, but he didn't like it. Mark would say, "Let him alone, Mom, just let him crawl under the bed himself."

The house where I was born has since burnt down. I had grown up, and my dad said, "How would you like me to take you to the house where you were born?" I said, "I'd like that very much," because he was always busy in field with something. So he took me over to the house, and here it was, all burnt to the ground.

The first time we left Stephen alone by himself because he was about 16 or 17. When we got home the burners on the stove were standing up on the air. He must have been cooking, and he'd left the burners on and they were so hot. He had his motorcycle up at his girlfriend's house, and as we passed by, you could have heard that motorcycle roaring in Mississippi. So I said, "You get home and get that kitchen cleaned up." He didn't say anything. We finally got the new burners put on there. He had let something cook on there and it got too hot. He could have burnt the house down.

All my kids had to work to help out because my husband was ill for awhile. I took care of him clear up until the day he died. He had emphysema and arthritis really bad, plus a whole bunch of other stuff. The doctor left him alone for quite a while before they finally took him to the hospital for good. I went out there one day to see him, I got within a couple feet from him and the nurse pushed me back. I said, "What's the matter?" And the nurse just said, "He just left." That was about seven years ago. It was, it is hard. He liked singing. I wanted to be sure that there was music. He wanted Stephen, our oldest boy, to give the end of the service. He sang, "How Great Though Art" to his dad.

We would like to go out by ourselves and drive around the countryside – around town and all that.

We had an old man that lived across the alley from us. There was a fence that had been put up there, and it was from New Amsterdam. They would come over from time to time, and their two grown daughters would fix my hair. She would get the water boiling on the stove and put this slimy stuff in the water. It would get slippery. Then they would comb it through your hair and it would keep your hair nice and curly. I would do that often times in the country. That's what girls and boys do in the country when nobody's around. We would do that, and play baseball. I got hit in the face with a baseball bat once.

Well, my daughter once sang at the festival in Pella. She had graduated from high school and we were all there trying to find a place to sit down. Pretty soon some fellow came along in the crowd and he was dressed up in a costume. He said, "How come you are sitting back here? Don't you want a good seat?" And we said, "Yeah, we want a good seat." So he asked me what I was doing here, and I said my daughter had been asked to sing for the opening. So he said, "Well you just tell her to bring her boyfriend and you all can sit right up in front." And so she sang, and it was kind of funny because I had a tape recorder and I thought I would record her performance. I played it later, and you should have heard it. All you could hear were all of the old people like me singing. They were all singing along with her. She sang all the old songs, like "America the Beautiful". She did it.

Homer Perry
November 14, 1911

I'm 94. I was born on a farm in Corning, which is in Adams County, Iowa. I called that home base for almost thirty years which means that I grew up on the farm at a time when we farmed with horses. In fact, we raised our own colts. Spark Plug (Sparky) was kind of a favorite. Her mother was Topsy, and Topsy was a family favorite. I think Topsy had been my Grandfather's horse. I remember one time she went down with the heat and Grandfather was very concerned.

We grew everything on the farm—we had horses and cattle and sheep and hogs and chickens—and we raised corn (actually, soybeans had not come into vogue yet). My father used a rotation of crops—corn, corn, oats, clover. He would sow the clover seed with the oats. After the oats was harvested, the clover was harvested and we made hay. We had two different farms—I actually grew up on two different eighties—eighty acres would be a half-mile long and a quarter-mile wide and there would be a road between the two eighties. And they lay in the shape of an L. We had a cow barn on the North eighty and a horse barn on the South eighty. We put up hay in both barns. The hay we put up with a hay loader, rack and a fork that came through the barn to the rack and into the hay mountain. We pulled it with the horses. I started working on the farm when I was eight years old.

One thing I enjoyed on the farm was thrashing. My dad was on the separator—the big thrashing machine. My brother was on the straw stack. The last years I was on the farm, I not only stacked the straw (where it blows out the blower after it was thrashed) at our place, but at two or three other farms. That is one of the hardest, dirtiest jobs a person can do. You have this dirty stuff blowing on you all the time, but you're walking in soft straw so every step, your legs go down and up. And it's really hard work. And they did give me extra pay for this.

I've done every job on the thrasher crew—we haul in bundles from the fields, you pitch off the bundles one at a time into another container, there are also pitchers in the fields that throw them up, out of the shocks onto the hayracks. There are racks that load them, bring

them in and then unload. There are also wagons that catch the grain when it comes out. It's a lot of work. The women of the run feed all of us men—there are about twenty men on the thrashing crew. That was hot work because in those days there was no air-conditioning. You are heating in the kitchen all day and it is a big job for the women as well as the men. There were no refrigerators.

I went to country school that was a mile and a half from us. It was a one room schoolhouse where my dad had gone to school and I think had taught there one winter term as he was growing up. He taught all the subjects. Sometimes there would be a dozen pupils and sometimes twice that many. The teacher was expected to teach all grades. And also sweep the schoolhouse out and make the fires to keep it warm in the winter time. I went there for eight years. We started with the primer, then the first grade.

I was not particularly found of farming, but when I get away from it, I find it's in my blood. I've done gardening ever since, primarily vegetables. Until this year, I was able to work in my garden. I did some planting, but I have a good friend who did most of my gardening across the street.

From eighth grade, I went to high school at Corning High. An interesting fact—my senior year, I had a favorite math teacher. One time, when another math teacher was ill, I was pulled out of my classes and I taught all of the other students math on two different occasions. Of course, that couldn't happen today, but it did back in those days. I enjoyed mathematics.

Before I went to college, I knew the Lord had called me into ministry so I followed that in my college work—both English and the Bible at Simpson College. My sophomore year I began preaching at a little country church North of Indianola. There was a little Methodist church that had no pastor and one of my friends lined me up with it. I dropped out of school one year then and worked for my dad on the farm. I think perhaps he gave me a new suit of clothes for working. And then I went back to Simpson. Junior year, I worked for my room and board. I worked for a lady in the West part of Indianola—I did gardening and housework. I also preached at that same little church and another church. But I got no salary.

If they had any money, they would give me the offerings. Sometimes that didn't even pay for the gasoline to get there.

My senior year FDR had established a student relief emergency. I worked part-time for the English and Bible teachers—correcting papers and giving examinations. The next year I taught high school. There were two other teachers—a superintendent and one other teacher. I taught five courses a day and had a study hall to oversee every period I wasn't teaching. I also had the playground after school and I was the declamatory coach and the junior class sponsor, which means I had the junior play to coach and oversee and the junior-senior band. This school was on the South line of Iowa—Pleasants and South Lyons. I got $65 a month and I also preached at three Methodist churches that a friend had preached at before. I had no time to prepare for classes. I read the material and that was about all before the classes. I was not the best teacher and was not hired the next year. But in the meantime, I learned that I could get a scholarship to a seminary in New York City.

In 1936, I went to New York City and lived there for four years. That was quite an experience: from this little town of maybe a hundred people, I moved right into Manhattan—235 E. 49th Street. When I went there, there was an elevated train on 2nd Avenue and an elevated train on 3rd Avenue. And we were in between them. I think the first night in New York I heard every train on both Avenues. But I became accustomed.

I had work in a Presbyterian church for the first two years and worked in a reform church in Queens the last two years. Bonnie and I had kept company for seven years and when I was home for a brief vacation in 1938, I told her I thought we'd have to get together—closer—or give up. I was surprised when she gave up her job and came to New York in January of 1939. She was dietician in Des Moines at Ester Hall. After, she had taught home economics for three to four years.

We were married at the Seminary on Baccalaureate Sunday, which means the room was already decorated. I had gone to do my Sunday school work that morning, then I was picked by a man from that church, and then I preached in the absence of the minister. In the

afternoon, I took a nap and Bonnie did her afternoon work. We both sang for Baccalaureate Service and our wedding was after that. Our families did not come.

I had preached as a summer minister the year before that in a Presbyterian church in Brooklyn and was re-hired that summer. When the minister's wife found out that we had just been married, she said you've got to come to New Hampshire. It's so beautiful in the springtime, for your "honeymoon". I drove their Plymouth car from Mount Claren, New Jersey to New Hampshire. When we arrived, we took all the boards off the windows of the cottage. I got the water system working and we took all the covers off the beds and chairs and things. And for the three or four days that we were there, we washed all the windows inside and out, I cut all the grass with a handsaw (and blistered both hands), Bonnie scrubbed the floors, dishes and bed clothing. That was our "honeymoon." Isn't every honeymoon a surprise?

One afternoon the minister's wife and her maiden sister made us drive up into the Green Mountains and saw the old man of the mountain. One afternoon, Bonnie and I went down by Newfound Lake and there had been a storm. We skimmed off birch bark that had fallen because of the storm and took it home. We made all of our Christmas cards—she painted or wrote on the bark.

We stayed at the Seminary one more year after that. That was 1939-1940. The World's Fair was there. Bonnie was teaching vacation Bible school out on Stanton Island. One of the things we did was take her 50 pupils, most of whom were black and all a delight to me, on subway trains to the New York World's Fair. They worked in pairs and reported to us every hour. And never were all fifty of them there until it was time to go home. We went on a subway train to go back to Stanton Island. Never will I do that again.

After graduation and work was done for the third year in Brooklyn, we came back to Iowa. I was the pastor at Sloan, past Sioux City. Our first daughter was born there in 1942. In 1944, after Pearl Harbor, I had signed as a conscientious objector. That played on my mind—that I had privileges that other people didn't. So I volunteered as a Chaplain in World War II. And

actually D-Day, June 6th was my date of active duty. I started at Chaplain's school at Harvard University and then was assigned to San Luis Obispo, which is typical of the Army—assigned from the East coast to the West. I was assigned to 97th Infantry Division Artillery. We trained amphibiously on the West Coast. We were on orders with the outfit that went to Okinawa and Iwo Jima but they canceled our orders and sent us East for New York which was a blessing.

Bonnie and my two year old daughter came out at Christmas time. We were still in the states so they came out for about a week. Then we went by train, with the 9th Infantry Division, to the East Coast, and landed at Le Harve, France on March 4th, 1945. We went into battle on Easter Sunday morning across the Rhine. There were pockets that surrendered for my outfit. They we went to Czechoslovakia, fighting all the way. On VE Day, I was outside Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. We had very brief occupation in Germany and then came home for thirty days because we were combat troops. The atom bombs were dropped while we were at Fort Bragg, North Carolina—where we reassembled. We then went through Spokane, where my Chaplain's assistant lived, to Seattle and went combat loaded—the whole division, 15,000 men, all expecting to fight our way into Japan. That war ended while were on the Pacific Coast.

But I was in Japan for seven months doing occupation duty. It was a very pleasant experience because I was able to get into some of the homes and work with young people in the church there.

At the end of that time, the 97th Infantry deactivated and the boys came home. But Uncle Sam didn't think I had enough points, so I went on to Korea for five months occupation duty. That was quite awhile before the war in Korea, although we were fearful all the time as one of the chaplains had warned us—any day in 24-hour notice we might get asked to take the field. That was when I left in August of 1945. The war didn't begin until the following June. We came home under the GI Bill. I went to Andover Lutheran Seminary in Newton Centre, Massachusetts for 6 months where I did hospital work among other things in Boston.

I then came back to Iowa at a little church in Marion. I commuted for most of three years to Iowa City and got a master's degree under the GI Bill. From Marion, we came to Newburg—I was a pastor of a church there from 1950-54. From there we went to Madrid—I was a pastor of the church there from 1954-64. From there we went to Wilton, called Wilton Junction in those days. I had one church in Wilton and one in Moscow, Iowa. It was a little rural church. I was there until 1970.

During that time, I became a Chaplain and worked in Civil Air Patrol. I'm still a Chaplain but not active in the Civil Air Patrol. Whenever a plane goes down, usually they call a Civil Air Patrol to help locate it. And it is a very active and wonderful program for young people. I'm a Lieutenant Cornel without pay. Each plane is looking on a separate grid and then we report back. One time we were on a grid in the Iowa City area and just as we had finished at the North West corner of our grid, it was raining, sleeting, we hit an updraft—we went straight up for about thirty feet. And the pilot said "Luckily, it was an updraft and not a downdraft."

From Moscow, we went to Mapleton and Castana—again a double charge. We were there ten years until 1980. In 1980, we moved to a little country church, where we had three acres of land, a huge garden, eight apple trees and strawberries and rhubarb and blackberries and raspberries. We loved it. We'd both grown up on the farms. We lived there seven years. The month I turned 76, we retired and we came to the Mayflower Home. We came to Mayflower because when I was at Newberg, I knew Doctor Montgomery—we had first met in 1928. The Mayflower home was founded when we were in Newberg. I always said that's where I wanted to be.

We had always lived in rentals. At the Mayflower home, we bought into, with the Mayflower, our home on 1st Avenue across the street. I had a nice garden there. It was the first home we ever owned. We've lived there 17 years.

Now I go to the [church] services. For many years, I was on the visitation committee of the United Church of Christ. For many years, I was on the Chapel Committee.

Our daughter had said that she didn't want us to have to cross 1st Avenue to go anyplace, so we made arrangements to move to an apartment up in Buckley. But my wife said this is our home so we are not moving. So the last Saturday in August, she had a stroke. She is now in the Health Center. I moved to the big apartment in Buckley.

Don Puls
1941

Here's an interesting story for you: My Dad used to combine beans and corn. He was coming into a hill one day and there was a little girl right in the middle of the road. He stood on the brakes and managed to stop in top, even though he didn't have much room. Her mother was out looking for her too and was glad to get her back.

I've lived in Poweshiek county my whole life and lived on a farm from when I was born in 1941 until I moved into the Mayflower. The first farm I lived on is south of Malcolm on 63 and then East about a mile or three-quarters. My family doesn't own that farm anymore. We moved from down there up onto Newburg Road, the first place on the south side after you turn west. We went in with two of mother's brothers, one of whom was Uncle Herb. At Malcolm we only had 160 acres; at the new place we had 280. We had a lot of it in hay-ground and pasture, including one pasture down by Deep River. We raised Angus Cattle and grew beans and corn. My favorite thing about the farm was the cattle. I didn't like shoveling the snow because we had two big driveways, but I had to because Dad couldn't stand the cold.

I was never married and I don't have any kids. I grew up near the girl I would have liked to marry. We were both only children and both lived on farms, so we played together. She married a guy by the name of Mintle and they lived down in Searsboro. She died young, in her 40s. I forget how she died, natural causes, I think. Her husband's still alive. I think he lives here in Grinnell.

When I was still down on the farm by Malcolm, Grinnell had a JC Penney and several other businesses. But since then, they've moved out and Wal-Mart has taken over. I do and don't like Wal-mart. I liked the other stores better. You could get men's clothing at a place downtown. You could usually get what you wanted, but if they didn't have it they'd order it. This clothing company was small. We also used to have a Ben Franklin's variety store downtown. You could get anything you needed.

For a while, I worked at Case International Harvesting and put corn-pickers on farm machinery. It's located at the corner of Penrose and 6th, near the Dairy Barn. Dad and I used to go there to get repairs. We also got several tractors there.

After that I worked for Wiltfang. He had apartment buildings and a house in Grinnell. He had one great big one, one small one, and he had a house or two that he rented out. Before Cunningham's closed I used to meet in there for coffee every morning with Stanley Ahrens (Ahrens Park is not named after him) and another person or two before I went to do my mowing.

There was another Ahrens who used to own a trucking company out on the west end of town, so he got a lot of money. He was worth, I don't know, several million dollars. Well, he couldn't take it with him, so he might as well do something with it, so he gave it to the town and it became the park.

I didn't have any brothers or sisters, so I was close to my parents. My father, Walter Ward, had to have his voice box taken out because he was getting cancer. It was either take out his voice box or die. He could still talk, though. He had a hole in his neck and wore a duck bill that he could breathe through. My mother, Dorothy Box, was from Ottumwa. She went to Grinnell College for two years in the early 1930s. She dropped out because she couldn't afford it and because she only needed two years to become a teacher. After college she taught at rural schools out by Chester Center. After she and my father married, she taught in Brooklyn and Malcolm. Dad just passed away in September. He was 90 and a half-years-old. Mom lives in St. Francis Manor and I see her once a week or so.

A boy, Dick Flanigan, used to work for us on the farm. His mom had died when he was born and his father was a drunk, so he had no one to look after him and came to work for us when he was 17. He was 11 years older than me, but he was like a brother to me and like a son to my parents. When he first started working for us, Dad let him drive to Malcolm in our pickup. After he graduated from high school in 1948, he joined the Seebees. At one point, he

was stationed in Africa and called us in Iowa, but reversed the charges, so he didn't have to pay and we did. We didn't care, though. My parents would have liked to adopt him, but they didn't try too hard because they had me. I think would have tried harder if they didn't have me already. Dick lives out East with his wife whom he met after he got discharged from the Seabees. He drove 20 hours from the East Coast for my father's funeral. We still keep in touch with him; he calls mother about once a week.

I ended up at the mayflower because it's close to downtown. I was living on the farm when father died, but I didn't drive and mother had gone into St. Francis, so Dick thought I'd better move into Mayflower. I live in Beebe hall in an apartment. Nobody lives on the farm right now. We have to get the house cleaned up and get rid of the furniture and stuff. My family only owned a third of the farm. I'd be in favor of keeping the farm, renting it out and selling the buildings. Then I'd always have an income. You see, my cousin Jim, is an attorney in Ottumwa, he and his brother, Bob, and, I think, Betty, their sister from Cedar Rapids, own one-third of it. They're part of Uncle Herb's family. Another cousin from Illinois, Kathy Greaseman, owns another third. I don't know just what they'll do with the farm, though.