The Soldier, the Butcher, the Housewife and Company

An Honors Thesis (HONORS 499)

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Abstract

I encompass the stories of four generations of my family and explain how they were affected and affected the history of their time in this thesis. I have placed emphasis upon myself, my brother, our parents, their respective parents and grandparents. In this thesis I will discuss each family member’s life in general and historical context. The purpose of this thesis to illustrate how the average person is affected by the events that occur within their lifetime and how these events shape the futures of their children and grandchildren.

Acknowledgements

-- I owe a great deal of thanks to my parents, Valerie and Loren Heinlen, for allowing me to spend hours rummaging through old pictures and historical documents and supporting me every step of the way. They also deserve thanks for putting up with my constant questions and for their help in correcting my grammar in each revision.

-- I received pictures from a wide variety of family members and they each deserve individual thanks: Martha and Kenneth Johnston, Karen Dennison, Joanne Johnston, Loren Heinlen Sr., Kim Pippenger, Jacqueline Johnston, Opal Johnston, Melinda Pippenger and Valerie Heinlen.

-- Many thanks go out to Opal Johnston for passing down her diaries, which were a great help in understanding her life.

-- Thanks go out to my Grandmother Heinlen, who because of her secretive nature, made me wonder about my family enough to become fascinated with our genealogy.

-- Thanks go out also to all the people who provided me with stories about their lives and the lives of my various family members, even though they were not directly addressed in the thesis. Some of these include: Marilyn Smith, Joanne Johnston, Melinda Pippenger, Kim Pippenger, Sherri Johnston, Aunt Anita, Jacqueline Johnston and Kyra Overmier.

-- And last, but not least, Dr. Anthony Edmonds for agreeing to oversee this project and making the constant revisions to my grammar and historical content.
Introduction

Born in the small town of LaGrange, Indiana, in 1983, I spent my childhood in the company of my family and the people in the small communities that surrounded my home. From these communities and the close bonds that exist between the members of my extended family, I learned to love the concept of families as clans. This concept delights and fills me with an unexplained happiness. Therefore, it was no surprise that given the opportunity to delve into my family history as a child, when handed our family history book by my grandmother, I jumped at the chance. Several years later, I began helping my father compile new information to add to what we already knew about our ancestors and distant cousins. That father-daughter project has evolved and morphed into this family history narrative. I have attempted to make it as inclusive as possible, including every family member, from every branch that I could find the least bit of information about. In some cases, information was hard to obtain, because of either lost records or the deaths of the only people who would know the answers to family questions.

While my family tree consists of over four thousand individuals, I will be exploring the lives of only twelve, beginning with my brother and myself. In the case of my family, I feel it is easier to understand my ancestors if you first see how they have influenced those who came after them. For this reason, I will start with the youngest people in this branch of my family tree.

Emily Therese Heinlen

I was born in the LaGrange County Hospital at 10:53 a.m. on January 10, 1983, to Loren Edwin Heinlen Jr. and Valerie Joanne (Johnston) Heinlen. I joined a brother, Lucas Ehren, who was born in 1979. Little did I know then that I was entering into a family with a history fraught with danger and adventure. Then all I knew were the river and the channel, which ran next to the
house we lived in, our dogs that my father played with and my mother, with whom I spent the majority of my childhood. At the age of two, my family moved to Kendallville, Indiana, so my father could be closer to his workplace. He was a supervisor at Kraft Foods in Kendallville. Within two years, however, we moved to our permanent home in LaGrange County, due to my family’s dislike of being in close proximity to other people. Neither of my parents enjoys being around large numbers of people at any given time. Therefore, they were not comfortable living in the city, where you could literally touch your neighbor’s house.

For this reason, I was often a child who played alone, uncomfortable in the presence of other children. My toys of choice were the same as other female children my age. The cabbage patch doll was one of the first dolls that I remember receiving. To date, I have two of them, both cherished gifts. According to historian Elliot West, “[u]pdated versions of rag dollars with perky yarn hair – and perhaps a welcome relief from realistic dollars that could cry, eat, crawl, walk and/or talk – Cabbage Patch dolls came complete with adoption certificates.” I can still remember the excitement as I opened the adoption papers that came with my very own Cabbage Patch doll to reveal my new friend’s official name.

The second toy that took up most of my playtime as a child was one that can be identified throughout the world, Barbie. By the time I was 10, my collection lived in a house put together by my Grandma Johnston and placed next to the wooden house made for my smaller dolls by my mother. The house contained an attic, a living room, a kitchen, a porch and a fold out patio and provided hours of fun for me and my dolls. According to West some parents had moral objections to the Barbie doll. “Patterned on a German doll, Lilli, which, in turn, was based on the heroine of a newspaper comic strip, Barbie was slim, but shapely, so buxom in fact that many

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parents at first balked at buying. But preteen and early teenage girls responded with unprecedented enthusiasm.² By the time I stopped playing with my Barbies and placed my house in my Grandma’s attic, I had a collection of Barbies, her boyfriend Ken and many of her friends, including her little sister Skipper.

Another activity that filled my childhood was watching television with my mother. While I watched a variety of television shows that most would not deem to be ‘normal’ children’s shows, such as the British comedies “Red Dwarf,” “That’s My Boy” and “Are You Being Served,” in addition to the cartoons “DangerMouse” and “Banana Man” and the 1960s television show “The Monkees,” I also watched a few ‘normal’ shows for children. These shows included “Fraggle Rock” and the award winning “Sesame Street.” According to West,

[t]he programming interspersed films and cartoons with sketches featuring recurring characters, all of it designed to teach and reinforce basic reading and mathematical skills and to stimulate cognitive development. [Jim] Henson and the others pursued these pedagogical goals through the slickest methods learned from advertising and cartoon animation, spiced with humor that tended sometimes toward the bizarre. Following up on the fact that young children pay at least as much attention to advertisements as to programs, each show was “sponsored” by a number or letter of the alphabet, complete with commercials touting the virtues of the number “6” or the letter “J”.³

The show not only provided me with an opportunity to learn at a young age, but also provided quality time with my mother.

In my parents’ home, and in the family environment of Prairie Heights Community Schools, I began to discover my love of families and clans. The concept of loyalty and devotion

² Ibid., 279.
³ Ibid., 313.
to someone simply because of a birth relationship enthralled me. The school I attended for my entire thirteen years of schooling was a small community school in which everyone knew everyone else and their families. Due to the closeness of the school, often the people I went to school with were related to someone else that I went to school with or someone who worked in the school. Although I didn’t know it until I was in high school, one of my best friends turned out to be a distant cousin, providing an example of the closeness of the community.

I am too young to remember many of the major events that happened in our history during my early life. However, I do unfortunately now know, first-hand, how the process of history making can affect a single person’s life. The war in Iraq started during my junior year of college, making my high school class the perfect age to become soldiers and potential targets for enemy insurgents. To date, I have not lost anyone to the war, but have felt the fear of potential loss as friends have been sent overseas and called up to be ready for deployment to the Middle East.

My family is no stranger to this feeling of helplessness and fear since we have a long tradition of military service in our background. My maternal grandfather was in the Air Force for many years, retiring from the Fort Wayne Air National Guard; my paternal grandfather was in the Navy; my uncle is currently in the Air Force; and our family has ancestors that have fought in every war since the Revolutionary War.

While I hope to never experience the fear that my ancestors felt during these times of war, today’s events have created a bond between my life and theirs that can never be broken. It is with this bond firmly in place that I begin my narrative of those who have formed my family into what it is today.
Lucas Ehren Heinlen

My brother Lucas was born in 1979 and lived the first few years of his life on the shores of the Pigeon River in Mongo, Indiana. My family lived in a small two bedroom home located next to Nasbee Dam. This dam was a constant source of amusement for Lucas, who was always a curious child. One of his favorite pastimes was to jump into the channel beside the house. Eventually, in order to keep him from drowning when he was playing outside, he was not allowed to go outside without a life jacket on.

When Lucas wasn’t trying to jump in the channel, he would attempt to catch the crawdads, which lived in the river channel and dug holes in the side yard. He would then place these crawdads in his little swimming pool and then get in and play with them.

Lucas also loved to play in the yard and climb the trees surrounding our home. Often he could be found in his baseball uniform playing with his bat and ball in the backyard.

Another set of toys that Lucas loved to play with during his childhood was well-known to children throughout the country, Legos. West describes the popular toy one of his books, “[i]ts basic unit is a colorful plastic brick with eight round protruding studs on top and eight hollow tubes beneath. The bricks snap together easily and hold together with impressive stability, allowing the budding structural engineer or architect to construct a remarkable array of buildings and other creations.”4 Legos coupled with Tinker Toys, Lincoln Logs and Erector Sets filled Lucas’s days when he was forced to remain inside the house.

From an early age, Lucas showed great intelligence. One of his favorite subjects as a child was dinosaurs, and by the time he went to kindergarten he was able to recite the names and attributes of most dinosaurs.

4 Ibid., 277.
While part of Lucas’s ability to display his intelligence was because of his genetics, part of it could be attributed to a new type of television show that became prominent during his childhood, such as “Sesame Street.” As West point out, “[t]wo years into ‘Sesame Street’s’ phenomenal popularity, studies showed that its young viewers consistently learned more than those who didn’t watch. They also had larger vocabularies and more highly developed thinking skills. The production techniques apparently sharpened visual and spatial analytical abilities.” This show reinforced the social skills that my parents taught Lucas during his childhood and helped prepare him for his time in the public school system.

Lucas relocated with our parents to Kendallville, Indiana, in the early 1980s and then moved to the house that our parents still reside in at the end of 1986. This house allowed him to spend almost all his school career, except for his kindergarten, first and half of his second grade year, at Prairie Heights Community Schools. While in middle and high school, Lucas became interested in computers, with some help from our grandfather Johnston, and by high school was writing his own code and programs. In high school, in addition to being active in theater and academic bowl, Lucas helped to found the school’s computer club and spent many hours helping the high school computer teacher wire the school for Internet and computer use.

Lucas’s love of computers and computer games stemmed from the early games that he played at our grandparents Johnston’s house during his childhood, the precursors of which could be found in arcades across the country. West notes that,

[t]hey [children] also played with toys engineered with the help of the technologies that were sending astronauts to the moon and revolutionizing the country’s productivity and communication. Video games, some played in arcades reminiscent of those early in the century and others played through televisions at home, emerged as an enormously

\footnote{Ibid., 313.}
popular entertainment for children (and some adults). By 1992, Americans were spending more on these games than they were on tickets to motion pictures.\(^6\)

From the early Nintendo games to the games played on the computers that Grandpa brought home from work, each played a part in forming Lucas’s early love for computers.

Without the invention of computers and video games, Lucas’s life would be vastly different. He went from playing the games to becoming interested in the codes that cause the games to function as they do. This interest led him to the creation of the computer club in high school and later to Ball State University where he received a degree in computer programming. Today, he makes his living working with, and spends his free time in the company of, computers. Since a young child when he was entranced by a computer at our grandparent’s house to today where he runs his own website, writes his own computer games and programs and works for a software company, computers have had a major impact on his life.

Lucas also took an interest in comic books in middle and high school and by the time he graduated high school had become an accomplished artist and had created at least one comic book series. He is currently working on a new series.

Lucas graduated from high school in 1997 and moved to Muncie, Indiana, where he pursued a bachelor’s degree in computer science. He graduated cum laude in 2001 and currently is employed at Ontario Systems as a systems analyst, writing computer codes to encrypt networks and programs.

Lucas lives in Muncie, with his wife, Missy, his two cats, one dog and a variety of fish. In his spare time, he still writes codes, draws and digitizes his artwork and works on a computer game that he is creating.

\(^6\) Ibid., 274.
Loren Edwin Heinlen Jr.

My father was a baby boomer, born on July 27, 1952, in Kendallville, Indiana, during a time of suspicion and constant vigilance against the Soviet Union. The first child, and only son, of Loren Edwin Heinlen Sr. and Bette Lou (Wogoman) Heinlen, Loren would be shortly joined by three female siblings, Kim, Kari and Lori. My father’s family would spend his first year living in Garrett, Indiana before moving to Kendallville where they spent the rest of the children’s youthful years. It was here, in Kendallville, that they would all attend public school.

Some of my father’s most vivid memories of this period were that of the early sixties, including John F. Kennedy and nuclear war drills. In 1963, he was a student at North Side Elementary School. It was a short time before the assassination of John F. Kennedy, and the majority of the country, including dad’s family, thought the president was a great guy.

During this time, my dad was a normal eleven year old boy. He and his dog Duchess found constant amusement in the dozens of slugs that lived under the cement slab porch at the back door of the family home. However, as my dad explains, he understood, even as a small child, that at any moment, everything – his dog, the slugs, his family, Kendallville and very likely everything and everyone else in the entire world – could be incinerated in a global nuclear war.

By this time, the world had already lived through the Cuban Missile Crisis. Dad’s main memory of this incident involves watching the President address the nation on television. While he was too young to fully understand what was happening, he could tell from the way that Walter Cronkite reported the story to his captive audience that everyone was in grave danger.

In his school, as in most schools across the country, nuclear attack drills had become as frequent as fire drills. When the drill was sounded everyone would march into the hallway and
cower against the wall. Dad remembers that during these drills the kindergarten kids sometimes cried because they thought the drill was the real thing.

While the local newspapers often ran articles on how to build a bomb shelter, no one Dad knew had built one. There was a rumor that a local man had built one into his new big home on the edge of town, but Dad had figured out that even if the rumor was true, it wasn't going to do him any good, as he would be dead long before he would be able to get to that shelter. Kendallville had a few public buildings that had been designated by the local Civil Defense as places to be when the Russians attacked, but, unfortunately, the closest building was the Post Office that was located uptown, which did not help Dad since he wasn't supposed to leave his block except to walk to school.

During this time of fear, false alarms of attacks were often reported. However, no one ever knew when one of the false alarms would turn out to be the real thing, making each test seem ominous. One day, just as school had ended, the "attack" finally came. Most of the kids were getting onto buses or starting to walk home. Dad remembers that he had just made it to the corner where the safety patrol kid from the sixth grade was holding the other kids back so they wouldn't be run over by a car. Suddenly, a huge shadow crossed the ground and Dad looked up to see a jet-black warplane streaking across the sky above the school. There was a huge roar and a deafening boom. Dad heard the safety patrol kid holler, "Hit the dirt. This is it!" The girls screamed and everyone, including a few parents who had walked to school to pick up the younger kids, dropped to the ground and covered their heads.

A few minutes later, Dad realized that no one had been incinerated. Instead, they had been buzzed at supersonic speed by one of the jet fighters out of Baer Field Air Force Base in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Everyone got up and walked home, as they realized that it was merely
another false alarm. However, Dad believed it was just a matter of time until the real attack came.

During this time of uncertainty my Dad experienced other aspects of life as most children across the country did in that age. Each Christmas Dad and his sisters waited eagerly for the Sears and Roebuck and J. C. Penney catalogues to arrive on their doorsteps. They would then spend hours pouring over the pages searching for items to place on their Christmas lists. While a lack of funds usually meant that they would not often get very many of the items that they asked for, my father can remember at least two items that he got from the catalogue lists. The first was his very first guitar and the second was a toy train, both of which he still has today. West tells us that

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\text{[t]rains by Lionel were built of sturdy metals and plated in shiny nickel. They had headlines that actually shone, power stations, automatic switches, and whistles; and alongside the tracks were water tanks, train stations, and warning signals, as well as models of well-kept farms and suburban bungalows. Some of these models were astonishingly accurate in details.}^7
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Dad spent many hours watching his train as it took its circular path around the family living room.

Another of Dad’s fond memories of the Sears and Roebuck catalogue involves the purchase of shoes. On a yearly basis he and his sisters would take turns placing their feet on the shoe page of the catalogue. This page contained an outline of a foot where you placed your foot. Depending on where your big toe landed on the outline, it decided what size of shoe you should order from the catalogue.

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^7 Ibid., 106.
Slowly, the world became a less terrified place and my father grew from the boy who was afraid of being incinerated into a young man who focused on other things that occurred in life. Some of the things that he focused on instead, were his developing talents as an actor and artist.

After graduating from East Noble High School, an alumnus of the school’s prestigious theater department, my dad attended the Fort Wayne Art Institute and then attended Ball State University. He would not finish degrees at either school as life’s other pursuits distracted him. He would later, however, receive a bachelor’s degree from Indiana University in general studies and a Masters of Business Administration from Indiana Wesleyan University during the early 1990s.

During the time of the war in Vietnam, my father lived on the fringes of the hippie movement in Allen and Noble counties in Northern Indiana. His time in this counterculture can be seen today in his liberal ideals and in those similar ideals in his children.

In 1970, through a mutual friend, he met my mother and just after the first of the year in 1974, he began to woo her. They were married in 1974, after a romantic courtship that began with a proposal on the first date. While my mother turned down this proposal, Dad’s persistence and romantic nature eventually convinced my mom to marry him in a small ceremony in my father’s parent’s house.

An avid hunter and fisherman, my dad spent much of his free time during my childhood in these pursuits. While his supervision positions at Kraft, Inc. in Kendallville, Indiana, did not leave much time for leisure pursuits, he, none-the-less, made sure to impart a love of nature and fishing to both of his children. Many of my memories of my childhood with my father involve fishing for trout and bluegill on the many rivers and lakes that surround my house and searching through the forests in the nearby Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife Area for mushrooms.
Today, my father finds more time to spend in nature due to his new career as a self-employed trainer, hiring himself out to teach management and supervision classes at various local factories and businesses in the area.

My father has also spent much of his life searching for a higher meaning, finally settling on Buddhist and Hindi ideals. These ideals have allowed his children to decide their own beliefs and ideals when looking for their own meaning of life.

A multitalented man, my father has had a wide variety of hobbies throughout the years. Because of his love of music, which he passed on to both of his children, he has sung in many choirs while attending school. He has also taught himself to play a variety of instruments, eventually settling on guitar, and has taught both of his children how to play instruments, his son the guitar and his daughter the autoharp.

My father is also an accomplished artist, having spent two years at the Fort Wayne Art Institute and another three and one-half years at Ball State University as an Art Education major. This artistic sense has manifested itself in his photography and line drawings, which have appeared in a number of local exhibits and often support his hundreds of award-winning outdoor and history articles which have appeared in dozens of regional and national publications.

A love of using his hands to create has led my father to build sailboats, looms, cabinets, guns and a bow, as well as making hand-woven rugs and hand sewn moccasins. He has also thrown pots, tanned hides, backpacked in the Rocky Mountains and trout fished in mountain and local streams. Since my father is very interested in the history of our country as a young nation, especially the “Wild West,” these activities help him, in a small way, to be a part of that bygone history. They also show my Dad’s ability to be more than his environment and become a true Renaissance man in the more than 50 years of his life.
He and my mother still live in the same house that we moved to in December 1986. Today, the orchard on the east side of the house and the forest on the west side, that our entire family helped him plant, bloom every spring with the fruit of the family’s, and my father’s, love of each other and of nature.

Valerie Joanne (Johnston) Heinlen

As the second oldest in an Air Force family, my mom lived in a variety of places throughout her childhood. Born in Rantoul, Illinois, in 1955, she joined oldest sister Jacquelyn to make a family of four with their mother, Martha (Conn) Johnston, a homemaker, and their father, Kenneth Johnston, a member of the United States Air Force and later a computer technician for International Business Machines, better known as IBM. In a few years, the girls would be joined by their only brother, Eric Johnston, and their youngest sister, Melissa Johnston.

My mother and her siblings were born during one of the later waves of the baby boom. While the majority of the boom took place before WWI or after WWII, my mother was born shortly after the Korean War, due to my grandfather’s time in that hemisphere after the war. West discusses the birth rates during that time period: “The figures for the 1950s were the highest since before World War I. Not only were more couples deciding to have children, they were also producing larger families than in the past. Between 1940 and 1960, the birth rate for third children doubled, and that for fourth children tripled.”

My mother’s family fell perfectly into the new concept of families as by the last 1950s, the fourth and final child in their family was born.

When my mother was three and half years old, her father was transferred to an airbase in

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8 Ibid., 173.
France and the family went with him. The family lived in France from 1959 until 1962, first in a little town called Tourna, and then in base housing. Toward the end of their time in France, my mom began school. Just like schools in the United States during this time, the military base schools in France held regular air raid drills. These drills became such a part of everyone’s routine, even including of a small child, that they became part of my mother’s earliest memories.

When the air raid siren would go off, all the students would get into a line and go to the air raid shelter, which was a large building on the base. They would then stay there until they were told that they could return to the school.

One time, however, the drill became more of a treat than the effect of a menacing threat. During this drill, when all the students went to the air raid shelter, instead of simply sitting quietly while they waited for the all clear, they watched the Elvis Presley movie “Blue Hawaii.” All the students thought this was a great treat and it caused them to forget their fears for at least the duration of the movie because as my mom put it, “What could happen to you while watching an Elvis Presley movie?”

After leaving France, mom’s family moved to Fort Wayne when my Grandpa was transferred to Baer Field Air Force Base. They moved into a two story house next door to a family with several small sons. Mom often spent her afternoons and weekends watching the youngest of these boys for their mother, who was often busy. Even at a young age, she had the patience to deal with small children. This patience has survived and helped her in her career at Prairie Heights Community Schools, first as a substitute teacher’s aide, then as the In-School-Suspension teacher, and finally as the secretary for the middle school. This patience also has shown through in her summer tutoring sessions with local students and in the time she spent raising her two children.
During her time in Fort Wayne, my mom was also introduced to the Sears and Roebuck catalogue. The biggest order-by-mail catalogue of its time, my mom fondly remembers the anticipation she and her siblings would have as they awaited the arrival of the Christmas catalogue so that they could make out their Christmas lists for their parents. Oftentimes, each of the children received exactly what they placed on this list as their parents simply ordered the items out of the catalogue that their children requested.

During Mom's high school career, her family moved to Kendallville where she graduated from East Noble High School. While still in high school, she secured a job at the local license branch, and in 1974 she began a romantic, short courtship with my father that began with a marriage proposal on their first date and ending with their marriage in September of that year.

In 1979, she and my father welcomed my brother, Lucas, into the world. Shortly before he was born, she quit her job at the license branch in order to raise her son. Then, in 1983, the family welcomed me into the world. During our childhood, Mom spent her time teaching us the morals and values that would form my and my brother's personalities and attitudes. These values included the love of nature, and other people, and the value of volunteering to help good causes. Every year, during my childhood, my family volunteered for several activities sponsored by the LaGrange County Parks Department including the annual Maple Syrup Days and the annual David Rogers Historical Festival.

Once I began kindergarten, my mother helped our family step out of the traditional age of families and into the modern age, by helping a friend in her house cleaning business, eventually parlaying this job into her own prosperous business. As historians Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg note, "[s]ince 1960 the proportion of children growing up in 'traditional families' in which the father is the breadwinner and the mother is a full-time homemaker has fallen..."
dramatically while the number growing up in single-parents female-headed households or in two-worker, two-parent households has risen steeply.⁹ Due to my mother's new career, her children enjoyed the comforts purchased with the new income and were taught that women were just as capable as men in the work force and should not simply be relegated to the home because they are women.

At the height of her business life, Mom cleaned eight houses a week and still made sure she was home when my brother and I left for school and when we came home. She once said that the reason she loved to clean houses so much was because it was peaceful and quiet. She could work at her own pace and not have to worry about other people. As someone who has always enjoyed her personal space, this job was an excellent choice for her.

My mom's love of her family is obvious in the care with which she raised her children and in the closeness she still shares with both of them. In order to be closer to her children, Mom began substituting at school when I was in the second grade and then went on to work at the school full-time when I began my time in middle school. Now, she is the secretary for the middle school. She also spent time as one of the Spell Bowl Coaches, as a money taker for the athletic department and a drama mother helping the theater department in any capacity needed during the plays.

While my mother no longer cleans houses, she still tutors local school children in reading and math and for many years served as the coordinator of the David Roger's Days Festival Children's Area, sponsored by the LaGrange County Parks Department.

Today, my mom still resides in the house that I grew up in, with my father, their two cats, and multitude of wild creatures including dozens of hummingbirds, a family of rabbits, an old

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groundhog, and an occasional deer running through the yard to feed in the orchard. She spends her free time reading novels, another value that she instilled in her children, and spending time in the outdoors.

**Loren Edwin Heinlen Sr.**

My paternal grandfather was born in Dekalb County shortly before the Depression in August 1925. Loren Heinlen Sr.’s family life was, however, not quite typical of the day. Loren was the third son in a Catholic family and his father owned and operated a grocery and dry goods shop that included a butcher shop in the back. This store was well-known in the community as was its slogan: “Everything to wear, to eat, to use.” While the store brought in a steady flow of cash, the family also had some reserves in place due to their part-ownership in the Albion Chubb factory, which made fishing lures, earlier in the century.

During the school year, Loren, his brothers, and his sister would go to school at Garrett Community Schools, and during the summer, they and their mom would vacation at their summer lake home on Lake James near Angola, Indiana. Their father would come up on Wednesdays and the weekends, when he would close the store. During that time, the family would get a fresh supply of groceries and spend their free time swimming and boating.

Since the family only had one car, when the kids and their mother were at the lake they had no way of getting anywhere that wasn’t within walking distance. Their house was also without a telephone. The children didn’t mind this, however, because their next door neighbor, a wealthy, older lady would let them use the phone if necessary.

As the years went by, their next door neighbor became a more prominent part of the children’s summers as their mother took a job as her chauffeur and maid. Often, the neighbor and
Loren’s mother, Rhodine, would take the kids with them when they ran errands in Angola. These trips were great treats for the children, especially Loren, who could spend some of the money that he had made from his and his brother’s bait business.

After graduating from Garrett High School at the age of 17, grandfather joined the Navy in 1944 where he served on a baby flattop aircraft carrier. His primary job during his time in the Navy was to put up troops stationed in Korea and return them to the United States. After serving his time in the Navy grandfather attended Tri-State University in Angola, Indiana where he graduated in 1949 with a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration. He worked for the B & O railroad for a decade before taking a job with the International Harvester rising through the ranks to become a supervisor. He stayed at International Harvester until his retirement in the late 1970s.

While in the Navy, Grandfather served in the South Pacific. Loren was not the only person in his family’s generation to join the service. His brothers Jerome and Bob also joined the Navy during their youths. Jerome served his original term in the Navy and then after he was released from duty, he joined the Army National Guard for extra income. Unfortunately, he decided to join shortly before the Korean War started, thus causing him to be called to active duty during the war. It was during the Korean War that Jerome earned the Silver Star. Bob, originally joined the Navy at age 15 after forging his recruitment papers. After being released from the Navy for lying about his age, he joined the Merchant Marines where he stayed for the duration of his military career.

While by the end of the 1940’s optimists saw life improving for America’s youth and young adults, pessimists saw a darker side to family life. It was this darker side that would plague my grandfather’s life beginning in the 1950s. Mintz and Kellogg argue that “[m]any
changes in family life pointed to disintegration and disorganization. Signs of instability seemed rampant – the rising divorce rate; the increasing numbers of working mothers; the rebelliousness of youth...."^10 All of these things would be a part of grandfather’s married life.

In 1951 at the age of 27, my grandfather met my grandmother and began a short courtship that ended in February 1952 when they were married. Due to the differences in religious faiths of my grandparents -- Grandpa was Catholic and Grandma was Lutheran -- the beginning of their marriage saw differing opinions and many discussions as to what religion their children would be raised in (son Loren was baptized Catholic, took his first communion at the Methodist Church, and spent much of his youth in the Lutheran Church choir.) Eventually, they settled on the Methodist church, a compromise between both parents.

In July 1952, my father, the first of four children, was born. He would be joined by three sisters: Kim in 1953, Kari in 1958 and Lori in 1961. During this time, grandfather continued his job at the Harvester, but due to excessive drinking and gambling habits, often he brought home little to support his family.

At the time of his marriage to Bette, the country was still firmly in the grasp of the economic boom that occurred after WWII. This economic boom caused a growth in the American population that would become known as the middle class. It was in this class which Grandfather and his family fell. Elliott West states that

[i]n the 1920s, a decade also known for its prosperity, 31 percent of our population was middle class; in the 1950s, the figure was 60 percent. Another traditional definition of a middle-class person is one who is paid on the basis of an annual salary instead of an

^10 Ibid., 131.
hourly or daily rate, the usual wages for the working class. Between 1947 and 1957, the number of salaried employees grew by more than 60 percent.\textsuperscript{11} This increase did not come without a cost though as many fathers were forced to work long hours and to sometimes have multiple jobs to maintain a comfortable standard of living.

To make ends meet, in the early 1950s, grandfather worked two jobs, at the B & O Railroad and his father’s ice house. While this meant he didn’t often get much sleep, working 12 hour days, seven days a week, with additional driving time in between, he still found time to spend with his children. In fact, he would often take my dad with him when he went to the railroad. Dad would watch the trains and play with an old telegraph key.

Later, my grandfather, intrigued by my dad’s fascination with the telegraph key bought and surprised my father with a complete telegraph set. Grandfather hooked it up to a battery so that when Dad clicked the key, it would click the receiver. Through this method, my father learned Morse code.

My grandfather spent much of his free time hunting and fishing and taught his son the finer points of these sports. He bought my father his first shotgun and his first and second fishing rods. While the rods have long since been busted by ferocious fish, my dad still owns the shotgun. This love has also been passed down to my brother and myself, who often during our childhood could be found fishing with my father or helping him clean his game after a hunt.

Grandfather also loved to help his children build things. My father can remember the basketball hoop and backstop that grandfather helped him construct. They would play one and on one and horse for hours in the backyard. On the day of the Palm Sunday tornadoes, my father and grandfather were at this basketball hoop playing basketball and watching the skies until it was too unsafe to remain outside. While Kendallville was not one of the hardest places hit during

\textsuperscript{11} West, \textit{Growing Up}, 174.
the outbreak of tornadoes, it did suffer some of the damage that was inflicted throughout Indiana. According to The Indianapolis Star, “on Palm Sunday, 1965, 11 tornadoes struck 20 counties in central and northern Indiana, killing 137 people. More than 1,700 people were injured and property damage exceeded $30 million. It was Indiana’s worst tornado disaster.”\(^\text{12}\) According to The Star, “[t]he tornadoes that devastated Indiana were part of an outbreak in which 50 tornadoes struck the Great Lakes region on April 11 – 12, causing 271 deaths and more than 3,400 injuries.”\(^\text{13}\)

An athlete in high school, Grandfather was also trying to promote sports to his son. Even though Dad was never good at sports (he broke his arm in little league and again in recess football), Grandfather never gave up. By the standards of the 1940s and 1950s, he was promoting the correct pastime for his male son, trying to get him fit and team-oriented.

Grandfather often tried to pass on his love of swimming to his children. This was one of my dad’s favorite times with his father. Although he never learned to swim well, he loved being in the water with his dad.

After having his life changed by marriage and a family, grandfather’s life was never a very happy one. He and his wife helped propel forward a cultural trend that had begun in the 1940s by filing for divorce a total of three times (as his wife’s parents did in their marriage as well), the legal limit in Indiana. While a taboo in the beginning of the century, Elliot West points out that in 1946 a trend was beginning that would lead to an increase of divorces throughout the country.


\(^\text{13}\) Ibid.
The grand rise in marriages and births, furthermore, eventually led to an equally impressive increase in another institution – divorce. There was a startling burst of divorces in 1946, nearly 18 per 1,000 married women, twice the rate of 1940. The divorce rate then settled down for more than twenty years before starting to rise again sharply in the late 1960s – just as all those babies born in the boom began maturing and leaving home.\(^{14}\)

However, my grandparents’ divorce proceedings never came to fruition, for reasons never explained to their family, and in 2002, my grandparents celebrated their 50\(^{th}\) wedding anniversary.

While their marriage was a stormy one, their loyalty to each other won out over all the difficulties, and after all the arguments and separations, Grandfather would come back home. In the last years of her life, as Bette’s health failed, Grandfather provided for hospice care so that Bette would be at home in familiar surroundings until it was absolutely necessary for her to stay in the hospital. Once it became clear that grandmother would not recover from her multiple illnesses, he was there by her side, being her comfort and support.

In 2003, my Grandfather became a widower. He now spends his time traveling with his new girlfriend and has fulfilled his dream of moving to a house near a lake.

**Bette Lou (Wogoman) Heinlen**

Not much is known about my paternal grandmother’s past. Bette Lou (Wogoman) Heinlen was a secretive woman, and the only facts we know we derived from conversations with my grandmother, when she was in a sharing mood, and from legal documents. Born on February 24, 1933, she spent the majority of her life in Noble County, Indiana.
Raised by her mother and her grandparents, my grandmother lived in the time following the Great Depression. She often helped her mother in her restaurants and eventually became the manager of at least one of them.

Grandmother was also a patriotic woman. Although unable to purchase war bonds, due to a lack of funds, during World War II, she was able to purchase war stamps. Each stamp cost a quarter a piece and my father can remember the books that were filled with the stamps that Grandmother still had when he was a young child in the 1950s and 1960s.

Holding only an eighth grade education was not untypical for a woman in the 1940s and my grandmother was no exception. However, her lack of a high school diploma never stopped her from helping her children with their homework. My father can remember Grandmother always helping him with his homework, no matter the subject. He can still remember that she helped him write a poem while he was in elementary school. Ironically, the only lines he can remember from the poem are the ones she helped him with, "get a grip or you might fall into some forgotten place, someone might miss your face."

In her later teen years, grandmother fell in love with a man that her family did not approve of. Balking at her family’s opinions, she and her boyfriend ran off to California and eloped when Grandmother was 17. Her mother, Hilda, opposed the marriage and refused to allow it to stand. She traveled to California, forced my grandmother (the details of which were never told in the family) to come home, and Hilda got the marriage annulled.

During her younger years, Grandmother worked at a local grocery store, Maloleys, in Kendallville. Later, as the grocery store changed hands and became Rogers, two of my aunts would work in the same store.

14 West, Growing Up. 174.
During her twenties and thirties, my grandmother was a beautiful woman who, no matter her circumstances, held herself with dignity. My father remembers his pride at knowing his mother was beautiful. This beauty gave her a confidence that no one could shake and opened her life up to options that she might not have had otherwise. Being a savvy businesswoman in a male dominated world, she used this to her advantage.

In addition, her beauty brought her many suitors, some of which were soldiers in the Second World War. My father can remember Nazi and Japanese memorabilia that my grandmother had received from suitors during the war that she kept and showed to her children many years later.

In 1951, my grandmother met my grandfather, Loren, and in February 1952, they were married. During the first years of their marriage, my grandparents lived in a small apartment above the grocery store owned by Loren's father in Garrett, Indiana. However, this was their home for only a few years and shortly thereafter, they moved to a large white two story house in Kendallville, Indiana.

The marriage was not a happy one, however, and although it did lead to the births of three daughters, following the birth of my father; it also lead to three divorce attempts and an uncomfortable family environment.

This did not stop Grandmother from trying to be the best mother she could, however. For the most part, she was forced to function as a single parent and therefore worked the majority of her adult life, until illness forced her to stop in her later years. She mostly worked in restaurants as a waitress. My father can remember her coming home with over a hundred dollars in tips in one night after a catering gig. While this was rare, it was impressive during a time when many
men were lucky to make a hundred dollars a week. No matter how much money she earned, however, it always went toward her children's needs.

A very goal-oriented woman, Grandmother would save and go without in order to give her children the things they wanted. My father can remember Grandmother saving her money from her waitress and catering jobs for several weeks to buy him his first guitar. It cost only forty dollars, which today seems like a small amount of money, but during the 1950s and 1960s this would often be most of a paycheck for a family. After several weeks, grandmother had saved enough money to order the guitar from J.C. Penney and presented it to my father. Grandmother's unselfishness can still be seen whenever anyone enters my room at home; my father presented me the same guitar on my thirteenth birthday and it now hangs on my bedroom wall.

With four children and an uncertain income, sometimes the money would become tight, which would lead grandmother to have to choose which bills to pay that month. The family's money problems meant that sometimes she would have a tough time getting the money to pay her children's school book fees. However, she made a special point to save even more during these times as she hated being beholden to anyone. As soon as she had saved enough money, she went directly to the school and paid off her children's fees.

A loving mother, she treated her children with tenderness and forgiveness. My father remembers a time when he fell at school in morning on the play ground at recess and ripped out the knees in a new pair of pants. Ashamed of his accident, he ran all the way from the school and into my grandmother's arms. When she saw the ripped pants, she did not scold him. Instead, she merely gave him a clean pair of pants and sent him back to school. She then cut off the ripped pair of pants and made them into a pair of shorts.
Even when it involved defying her husband’s wishes, my grandmother did what she felt was best for her children. My father can remember a time when he had been kicked out of the house after an argument with his father about Vietnam -- my father was against the war, while my grandfather was in support of it -- and Grandmother would feed Dad when Grandfather was at work, even though Grandfather would have been furious with her had he found out.

Grandmother was not just kind and generous with her children. Her love of food and cooking led her to be a well-known cook and loved woman throughout the community. An avid pie-maker, Grandmother was known throughout the town of Kendallville for her award winning pies. Food was a passion that filled her life, probably instilled in her during her time working with her mother in restaurants.

Grandmother’s passion for cooking led her to become an accomplished cook, specializing in the farm cooking that she had learned from her grandmother. Homemade noodles, country dumplings, fried bluegills, roasts, steaks, fried chicken (the best according to my father) creamed potatoes, peas and onions, and pies and cakes that were so good that people paid her to bake them for them. My father can remember spending a good portion of his childhood helping her make meat loaf, noodles, popcorn balls for fun treats and homemade candies. These cooking skills have been passed to her children and to a small extent to her grandchildren, by the traditional way of mimicking while helping to cook.

Grandmother, like many mothers of her generation, found herself drawn to creating a large family dinner for her family each night. This led to a family tradition of never leaving the table hungry and never accepting "no" as an answer for whether or not someone wanted a second helping. According to West,
Surveys showed that in the vast majority of American homes, the evening meal, the heftiest of the day, consisted of some form of meat (most often beef), some starches (usually potatoes or corn with bread), a vegetable, and a dessert. For a special occasion dinner might feature roast beef or beef steak, with whipped potatoes, beans and pie; at a more ordinary dinner, hamburgers, French fries, peas, and Jell-O might be served.\footnote{Ibid., 187.}

To Grandmother a home-cooked meal was the only way to end a long day and offered some stability that other aspects of her family life lacked.

At holiday time, grandmother made sure that the house was spotless and decorated to the utmost. She would also prepare a huge holiday dinner and have displays of food ready for the family members when they arrived. The dining table always looked like it had come right out of a \textit{House Beautiful} magazine. No matter how much the family ate, she always was always ready with another helping. If there were any leftovers after the dinner, grandmother would box up the food and deliver it to neighbors that she knew could use a "little something extra" at the holiday season.

A lover of music, my grandmother passed her passion on to her children and, through them, to her grandchildren. A particular fan of Elvis and the Beatles, she often played music in the house, and my father can remember one special time when she took her children to the Hi-Vue drive-in movie theater to see the Beatles' "A Hard Days Night." She kept the complimentary picture of the Beatles on the refrigerator for weeks thereafter.

My grandmother's love of music was closely tied to her love of dancing. She and her niece Linda taught my father how to dance. They taught him the twist, the two-step and the waltz. The legacy of her love of music and dance can be seen through her son Loren's career in high school theater, where he often had the lead in musicals.
While illnesses later left my grandmother unable to dance, she often loved to go hear local groups sing. When the illnesses left her unable to leave her home except to go to the doctor, she would often listen to the music on the radio that she kept in the kitchen. After battling against illness for many years, grandmother succumbed in 2003 at the age of 70.

**Jerome Phillip Heinlen**

My paternal great-grandfather, Jerome Phillip Heinlen, or J.P. as he was known, was born to a middle class family in Waukesha, Wisconsin on November 26, 1896. The first son of six children, he was a young man when he traveled to Garrett, Indiana where he became a prominent businessman in the community.

In the 1919, J.P. met, fell in love with and married Mary Rhodine Lehmbeck. To this union four children were born, Jerome, Loren, Marilyn, and Robert. In order to support his family, J.P. spent the majority of each day at his store, a grocery and dry goods store that had a butcher’s shop in the back. The family lived in an apartment above the grocery. This allowed them to live close to the shop, made it possible for them to open it early in the morning and gave J.P. extra help from the kids when the store got overwhelmed by shoppers since they were right upstairs.

The shop brought in enough income to let the family purchase a summer home on Lake James near Angola, Indiana. J.P.’s wife, Rhodine, and the four kids would go up to the house at the beginning of the summer, while J.P. only went to the house the few days a week that he could close the shop, Wednesdays and on the weekends. However, his family always looked forward to his visits. His daughter Marilyn would often walk the two miles from the lake cottage to the bridge that her dad would cross on his way to the cottage to meet him and ride a few miles with him in their car.
This type of family separation would not have been possible just a couple of decades earlier, but as West points out with the purchase of automobiles by the common man coupled with the improvement in roads, the movement of entire families on short vacations or visits with relatives was now an easy task. West writes,

[i]n towns and cities as well as in the country, a family with its own motorized wheels gained overnight all sorts of options previously unthinkable. They could go where they wished when they wished (assuming roads were available), and unlike riding on the trolley or subways, the cost was no greater for a mother, father, and four or five youngsters than for an adult traveling alone.¹⁶

The new mode of transportation meant that J.P. could transport his wife and four children to their summer home without any hassle and still be back in the city in time to open his shop the next morning for business. The convenience also allowed the family to come and go according to their own schedules as one government report in the early 1930s, as shown in West’s Growing Up in America, states,

Close at hand and ready for instant use, it carried its owner from door to destination by routes he himself selected, an on schedules of his own making; baggage inconveniences were minimized and perhaps most important of all, the automobile made possible the movement of an entire family at costs that were relatively small.¹⁷

The cost efficiency of the automobile allowed J.P. and his family to experience summer vacations that their ancestors before them could only have dreamed.

¹⁶ Ibid., 100.
¹⁷ Ibid.
A devout Catholic, J.P. raised his family in the church, baptizing all his children and making sure that they received their communions. J.P.’s Catholic roots stem back William Jacob Heinlen who immigrated to America in the mid-1800 from Germany.

From his baptism to his last days on earth, he felt that without a devout Catholic heart and faith, he would not reach heaven. He attempted to impart this faith to his children as well and along the way converted his wife to Catholicism shortly after their marriage. It was with this faith in his heart that J.P. died on 11 August 1953, of a heart attack in Dekalb County, Indiana. He was buried in a Catholic ceremony, as he always wished to be. This being his last act as a Catholic before he moved to the other world that he so strongly believed in.

**Mary Rhodine (Lehmbeck) Heinlen**

The wife of a prominent businessman and the mother of four, my paternal grandmother, Mary Rhodine, lived a life that most people would have envied at the turn of the century. Born in 1899 in Garrett, Indiana, Rhodine, as she was known to all, spent her entire life in Dekalb County, except for the summers that she spent at Lake James near Angola, Indiana, with her husband and children.

Rhodine was born to a Baptist family, but she converted to Catholicism when she married J.P. Heinlen on June 4, 1919, in Dekalb County, Indiana. Her conversion occurred during a time when Catholics were still looked up with disdain and considered a minority group. Despite this discrimination, Rhodine chose to raise her four children in the Catholic Church as her husband wanted.

While Anti-Catholicism had first strongly become apparent in the mid 1800’s during the mass influx of Irish immigrants to the port cities of the East Coast, it had mostly died down by
the 1920s. However, as historian Julie Byrne points out, just as Rhodine and J.P. were starting their young family new groups emerged determined to fight against those they felt were tainting the blood of America with their Catholic ways.

Other times the pressure to Americanize came from the external world. Anti-Catholic prejudice was alive and even rejuvenated in some quarters in the twentieth century. Protestant "fundamentalists" and other new Christian denominations revived anti-Catholicism as part of an insistence on "original," pre-Rome Christianity. The Ku Klux Klan resurgence in 1915 included Catholics along with blacks and Jews as victims of their hate attacks. As late as 1949, a bestseller called American Freedom and Catholic Power by Paul Blanshard argued, again, that the Catholic religion undermined the basic tenets of American society.18

By the end of the Second World War things were beginning to look up again for those of the Catholic faith. According to Byrne, three things turned the tide of discrimination away from the Catholics in America,

1. First, Catholics served their country fighting in two world wars in the first half of the twentieth century, after which their patriotism could not so easily be called into question.
2. Second, "mainstream" Protestant religion was becoming increasingly progressive and liberal; as Will Herberg argued in 1955, it was becoming more important to "American identity" to have SOME religion rather than any particular religion. Catholicism and Judaism, Herberg wrote, had woven themselves into a triple-threaded "mainstream" with Protestantism.

3. Third, the Church itself started to gain a reputation for social responsibility and public leadership. Catholic people and priests were heavily involved in labor struggles for decades; Dorothy Day and other Catholics interested in social justice opened homes and shelters for society's poorest poor; and the Catholic bishops' national conference published a plan for post–World War I social policy that was universally lauded by progressives.\textsuperscript{19}

While these events took place after most of Rhodine's children were past their childhood, it helped provide them with opportunities to become hardworking members of the American middle-class during their adult years.

Rhodine spent her married life working alongside her husband in their store and later became the chauffeur and maid to her family's wealthy, elderly neighbor at the Lake James cottage.

After her husband died in 1953, Rhodine lived alone in their family home in Garrett until her son Robert came to live with her. As a lover of music, Rhodine always made sure she was ready to entertain company and therefore, had a grand piano next to the grand staircase that lead to the second story of her house. While the grandchildren were never allowed to play this piano, its mere presence became a fixture of her house and their impression of her always seemed to include this piano.

Rhodine died in 1987 and was buried in the county that she made her home for the majority of her life.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
Franklin Mason Wogoman

My paternal great-grandfather, Franklin Mason Wogoman, was born toward the end of 1908 in Goshen, Indiana. Frank became a butcher in his younger years and later became a supervisor at the Sterling Casting Company in Bluffton, Indiana, where he remained until his retirement.

During his time at the casting company, Frank bought and managed a farm on the outskirts of Kendallville, Indiana. It was there that he raised his two daughters, Bette and Patricia, with his first wife, Hilda Mathews, whom he married in 1930.

During World War I, Frank was drafted and joined the military. (No one currently knows what Frank’s job was during his time in the military as those family records have been lost and no one is alive today to provide the information needed.) His time in the military caused a strain on the family and that added to the problems that Frank and Hilda were already experiencing at home.

These problems soured their married and on June 26, 1942, October 12, 1945, and August 16, 1948, Frank and Hilda filed for divorce. Eventually, they would go through with the divorce and on July 31, 1949 Frank married his second wife Helen L. Keipper, with whom he had two more daughters. Even though his children from his first marriage were several years older than his children from his second marriage, Frank occasionally took his children from the second marriage to his daughter Bette’s house to play with her children, who were just a few years younger than Bette’s half-siblings.

Frank’s life was marred by illness, having survived bulbar polio and eventually dying from emphysema. His death came in 1986 at the age of 78 at the Veteran’s Hospital in Fort Wayne, Indiana.
Hilda E. (Mathews) Wogoman

A resident of Kendallville, Indiana, her entire adult life, my paternal great-grandmother, Hilda Mathews was born on August 31, 1911, in Cassopolis, Michigan. At the age of 19, Hilda married Frank Wogoman and three years later they were blessed with the birth of the first of their two daughters, Patricia. A few years later, she was joined by her sister Bette.

While Frank and Hilda’s marriage was not a happy one (for reasons not know today), Hilda tried to make the household as pleasant as possible for her children. Throughout her life Hilda owned and operated a variety of restaurants. Often, her daughters would help her in her restaurant business, although it is not known in what capacity since her daughter Bette was unwilling to discuss her past with her family. Later in life her daughter Bette would manage at least one of these restaurants for her mother.

Hilda’s ability to own and operate her own restaurants was due partly to the shortage of men in the workforce caused by World War II. Hilda used this shortage to her advantage, to teach her daughters the ways of business. Her daughter Bette would also use these skills to her advantage throughout her life. As Mintz and Kellogg point out, this shortage of men also helped create a pattern that my family has followed ever since, of mothers working outside the home.

Before the war, most women who took jobs outside the home were young and unmarried. World War II altered this pattern, unleashing married women’s labor. Three-quarters of the increase in women’s employment was made up of married women. Between 1940 and 1944, the number of mothers with young children in the labor force jumped by 76 percent to 1.47 million. For the first time in American history, more than half of all women
workers were married. The middle-class taboo against a working wife or mother had been irreversibly repealed.\(^{20}\)

With her husband, Frank, in Europe fighting the war, Hilda’s new occupation not only gave the family a new form of income, but also helped take their minds off the fate that could have awaited Frank in the battles of the war.

World War II also placed a hardship and strain upon the family. Hilda and her family, like families across America, as Mintz and Kellogg show, were forced to use ration coupons for the goods that they needed.

Every month, each man, woman, and child in the country received two ration books – one for canned goods and one for meat, fish, and dairy products – and coupons from their local schools. Three billion ration stamps were passed out each month – red stamps for meat, butter and fats; blue stamps for canned foods; and black stamps for gasoline. Meat was limited to twenty-eight ounces per person a week; sugar, eight to twelve ounces; and coffee, a pound every five weeks.\(^{21}\)

While the rationing did cause some lean times in the family, Hilda was resourceful and found other ways to obtain the items that her family wanted. Occasionally, this meant purchasing the items from a black market source. To Hilda it was more important that her family have what they needed to survive comfortably than to follow the law to the letter of the word.

A lifelong member of the Lutheran Church, Hilda raised her two daughters in the St. John’s Lutheran Church in Kendallville. While this would create problems later on in Bette’s life, during their childhood, it created a stability that the children needed.

\(^{20}\) Mintz and Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions*, 161.
\(^{21}\) Ibid., 159.
In 1935, Hilda became the legal guardian of her uncle William Hutt, after his wife passed away. The reasons surrounding this legal guardianship have been lost throughout the years and today no one knows quite why she became his guardian. William died in 1961.

After divorcing Frank in 1948, Hilda married Zeus Campbell in 1960. They were married for five years before Zeus died in 1965.

Hilda died on Thanksgiving in 1975 at the Lamplighter Apartments in Kendallville, Indiana. She was found by her granddaughter Kari, who had come to pick her up for Thanksgiving dinner that was to be served at her daughter Bette’s house. Hilda was buried beside her husband Zeus in the Lakeview Cemetery in Kendallville, Indiana. At the time of her death Hilda had seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Kenneth Gene Johnston

Born the first child of Luther and Opal Johnston on September 10, 1930, my maternal grandfather, or “Gamp,” as I call him, was, from an early age, interested in airplanes. He could be found putting together model airplanes and flying them around the neighborhood. In November of 1948, Gamp set out to fulfill his dream of working with airplanes. Gamp was a wry man and because of this, his dream almost didn’t become a reality as he failed the weight requirement test the first time he attempted to join the Air Force. However, the recruiter was impressed by Gamp’s determination to join and told him a trick to pass the test. After eating enough bananas and drinking enough water to gain the weight needed to pass the test, Gamp was accepted into the Air Force in November 1948.

Gamp’s love of the military stems not only from his fascination with airplanes, but also from a long history of military service. Several of his mother’s brothers, including Charlie,
Robert and Delbert, would visit the family home together when they were on leave from the military. This family heritage fueled Gamp’s love of anything military and can be seen in the hours that he spent watching rain fall as a child. While that seems to be unrelated to the military, to Gamp it was not. As a young child his mother, Opal, told Gamp that the large drops of rain that were falling and splashing on the road were really soldiers marching. Gamp would stand on the couch and watch the drops fall for the entire duration of the rainstorm, fascinated by the soldiers.

Shortly after joining the Air Force, Kenneth met the woman whom he would later make his wife, Martha Conn and at the end of 1951, they celebrated their wedding in Whitley County, Indiana.

Gamp’s Air Force duties kept him and his new family on the move. While he and Gam’s first child was born in Whitely County, Indiana, their next three were born at Chanute Air Force Base in Rantoul, Illinois. While Gamp traveled without his family to many of the places around the globe where he was stationed, in the late 1950’s his family accompanied him to France, where he was stationed for three years. During this time his family experienced air raid drills and the beginning of the cold war.

Shortly after the Korean War ended, Gamp was sent to the Philippines where he was stationed for a year. During this time he remembers the poverty level of the natives of the Philippines and was often dismayed at what they would accept in barter from the military men. One of the most precious items, Gamp remembers, was chocolate. He often tells the story of the day he was walking down the road, just having come from the military grocery store where he had purchased a chocolate candy bar. Seeing a mother and daughter on the side of the road, obviously poor and without much food, Gamp gave them part of his candy bar. He said the look
they gave him was that of awe and astonishment, it was as if he had just given them a bar of gold.

In the 1960s, Gamp was stationed in Reykjavik, Iceland, his favorite station (for reasons unknown to his children and grandchildren) during his military career. He and several other men kept the lone outpost functioning for their six month tour of duty where he performed the duty that was his for the majority of his career in the military, a weather observer and forecaster. On leave he would travel to nearby towns and occasionally purchase gifts to send back home to his family.

After he and his family returned from France in March 1963, Gamp began night school and earned degree that allowed him to begin his job with IBM as a computer engineer in December 1963, while he still continued to be a member of the Air National Guard. In July 1976, Gamp retired from the Air National Guard with the rank of Master Sergeant.

Having gotten a job with IBM just as computers were starting to make their appearance in history, his grandchildren were blessed with the opportunity to experience the amazing abilities of computers from their youngest days. Often he would bring home a broken computer, just in time for family gatherings, and his grandchildren would spend hours tearing it apart, examining every microchip and transistor on the motherboard.

One of my earliest memories at Gamp’s and Gam’s house was the old computer, although extremely new at the time, on which we played DOS games off of five and a half-inch floppy discs. This was the first computer I had ever seen, but it wouldn’t be my last. Grandpa was constantly upgrading the system that he had and as we grew and matured, so did the computer industry, so that during my elementary and middle school days, I was playing games at Gamp’s and Gam’s house first on 5 and a half inch floppy discs, then on 3.5-inch floppy discs,
and then finally on the hard drive. This exposure to computers at a young age has had a lasting effect on all of Gamp’s and Gam’s grandchildren, three of which are now computer analysts and software writers.

Computers were not the only gift that Gamp passed on to his children and grandchildren. From a young age all his children and grandchildren knew that a Honda was better than a Ford and his son and several of his grandsons can take apart and rebuild a car from scratch. Often during my childhood, you would find Gamp, my uncle Eric and my male cousins outside working on, or admiring, someone’s car.

Another hobby that Gamp passed along to his children and grandchildren was his love of airplanes. Gamp never grew out of his model airplane phase and to this day continues to build a wide variety of the models in his basement. As youngsters all of his grandchildren accompanied him to, and competed in, model airplane competitions with planes that he helped them build. The favorite model of choice was, of course, the P-30 as it was lightweight, easy to wind and easy for a child to learn how to throw. As his grandchildren grew however, a few chose to move to the harder models, including electric, radio control guided model airplanes, a motorized model that is controlled from the remote control held by the flyer on the ground.

Having been born in 1930, Gamp spent the early years of his childhood living through the Depression. While his family didn’t have much during this time, they had enough to keep their children happy. Gamp can still remember his first real “toy,” given to him by his grandmother, to many people it may have looked just like a Clabber Girl baking power can with marbles inside and covered with a plastic lid (allowing it to have a noisy rattle when shook), but to Gamp it was whatever his imagination wanted it to be. Even though he lost it one day while playing in a field,
Gamp still fondly remembers the many hours he spent by himself playing with his simple toy, an experience he might not have had if the Depression had not hit the country.

This story, told to others may seem simply like another depressing experience from the Depression, but to someone who knows Gamp, it helps to more explain the depth of his imagination and ingenuity.

Gamp still lives in Kendallville, Indiana with his wife of 53 years, in the house that they moved to in July 1971.

**Martha Imogene (Conn) Johnston**

An Air Force wife, my maternal grandmother’s life was very busy, but never easy, often having to raise four young children while her husband was overseas. However, she always kept a smile on her face and in the process taught her children, and later her grandchildren, the importance of a positive outlook on life.

Born in 1932 to a steelworker and a school teacher, Martha was the oldest of four girls, only three of whom would survive past infancy. After graduating from Churubusco High School in Churubusco, Indiana, in May 1, 1950, Martha became a clerical worker at INM in order to support herself.

In 1951 at the age of 19, Martha married Kenneth Johnston, the man who is still her husband 53 years later. A couple typical of their generation, according to Mintz and Kellogg, they married young and started their family in a short amount of time. “Born in the late 1920s or 1930s, when birthrates were depressed, they faced little competition for jobs at maturity and
were financially secure enough to marry and have children at a relatively young age."22 To this union was born three girls and a boy, Jacquelyn Ann, Valerie Joanne, Eric Lee and Melissa Sue.

As Mintz and Kellogg show in their research, this household followed the pattern set by their generation’s idea of the family and epitomized on television. “Over 70 percent of all American households in 1960 were like the Nelsons: made up of dad the breadwinner, mom the homemaker, and their children.”23 Even when Martha’s husband went to serve his military duty overseas, the family make-up stayed the same.

While her husband’s military duties often kept him away from his family during those first few years, during the late 1950’s, Martha and their children accompanied him to France where they would live for the next three and half years.

When not accompanying Kenny to his areas of deployment, Martha lived with her mother. After Kenny was transferred to the Fort Wayne Air National Guard Base at Baer Field, they lived in a house in Fort Wayne, Indiana that was purchased for them by proxy by Kenny’s parents.

When Gam did work she continued her work in the clerical sector which had started before she married. She worked at Lincoln Life, the PX in Chanute, Illinois and at Shelton’s grocery in Churubusco.

Then in July 1971, they moved to Kendallville, where Gamp was transferred to by IBM so that he would be closer to the customers that he serviced. It is in this home that they still live and in this home that Gam baby-sat her grandchildren when they were sick, cooked and created amazing family dinners for every holiday, raised four teenage children and has enjoyed visiting and playing with her seven grandchildren and now one great-grandchild.

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22 Ibid., 206.
23 Ibid., 203.
Having survived the Depression as a child, Gam worked very hard to instill in her children the need for conserving your money and your goods, without sacrificing your happiness. A wonderful grandma, Gam has been known to purchase things for her home solely for the enjoyment of her grandchildren, including a Nintendo in the early 1990s and a play station at the end of the 1990s.

Always ready to attend any event that her children or grandchildren are in, Gam has always been a solid pillar in the lives of her children and grandchildren, teaching them love, patience and loyalty, as well as how to cook and take care of a household.

Luther Kenneth Johnston

A quiet, laid-back man, my maternal great-grandfather, Luther Johnston was often found, both in childhood and in his adult life, fishing at the lake or river. Born just after the turn of the century on August 19, 1903, in Allen County, Indiana, Lute, as he was known, was the eighth of seventeen children.

Shortly after high school, Lute took a position at the International Harvester in Fort Wayne, Indiana, one of the most prominent and prolific employers of the time in Fort Wayne and the surrounding areas. He stayed at the Harvester until he retired.

At the end of 1929 in South Bend, Indiana, Lute married his first and only love, Opal Cripe. To this union would be born four children, two boys and two girls. He often took his sons with him during their younger years, when he went fishing, instilling in them a love of nature that has lasted through their entire lives.

Lute’s love of nature did not just extend to fishing; he also had a deep-seated love for all of nature’s creatures. His son, Kenneth, can remember one night when the family came home
after dark; they stopped outside of the fence that surrounded their rental home in Churubusco. At first Kenny didn’t know what his father was doing when he got out his nickel-platted five cell flashlight, but then as Lute shined it on one of the nearby gateposts, Kenny saw a large owl sitting there. Lute shined the light into the owl’s eyes and then got the owl to sit on his arm. He then brought it over to the car to show the family the owl up close. After showing it to them for a few minutes, Lute took it back to the gatepost and sat it back down and the family then continued on to their house.

In addition to fishing, Lute loved tinkering in the family garage. In the late 1950s and 1960s, his grandchildren would often come over for dinner with their parents and they would sometimes fight over the chance to pick up the intercom phone in the kitchen that was attached to the intercom phone in the garage to tell Grandpa that it was time to eat supper.

Luther was a proud father who saw both of his sons join the Air Force and serve overseas, three of his children have their own families and even lived to hold the first of his several great-grandchildren. Luther died in May of 1983 and was buried in Eel River Cemetery where his parents before him had been buried.

**Opal Gladys (Cripe) Johnston**

A Christmas present to her parents, my maternal great-grandmother, Opal was born on December 25, 1910 in Boswell, Indiana. The second oldest child of Earnie and Bertha Cripe, Opal learned early in life how to care for others, especially children, as every few years another brother or sister was added to the family. By 1932, the last of the children, number sixteen, was born, two years after Opal, herself, gave birth to her first child.
Opal married Luther Johnston at the end of the Depression in 1929 and throughout her marriage not only raised four children, Kenneth, Karen, Jackie, and Joanne, but also worked for the Sears and Roebuck Company in Fort Wayne and then for the Whitley Company in South Whitley, Indiana. Opal’s jobs, along with her husband’s job at the International Harvester, allowed her family to have a comfortable life.

A constant member of the Evangelical United Brethren Church during the first part of her life, Opal later joined the Methodist Church, for reasons not known today. No matter what church she attended, Opal also made sure that her children were active in the church, as she enjoyed the stability and morality that it helped teach her children.

While she and Luther, or Lute as she called him, spent the first years of their marriage in Fort Wayne, Indiana, they later moved to Churubusco, Indiana, where they would raise their children and eventually both would live until their deaths.

As was the tradition in the 1920s and 1930s, Opal joined a philanthropic and social group known as the Pythian Sisters. The group carried out charity events and activities for the less fortunate members of the community.

When Opal wasn’t doing the household chores, working, or participating in activities with the Pythian Sisters or at church, she enjoyed sewing, crocheting, going to the movies and dining out. She was a meticulous person about her wardrobe, especially her shoes as she thought that if a person had on a dirty pair of shoes it meant that the person was careless. Opal also loved to accent her outfits with a wide variety of jewelry and was very rarely seen without a full array of necklaces, rings, earrings, bracelets and watches on. Many of these items she gave as gifts to her granddaughters and great-granddaughters in order to pass down her fashion sense and care of appearance.
After her husband died in 1983, Opal lived exclusively with her oldest daughter Joanne until her death in 2003 at the age of 92. She is now buried in the family plot in Eel River Cemetery in Churubusco, Indiana next to Lute.

**George Conn Jr.**

My maternal great-grandfather, George Conn Jr., lived a life full of a variety of careers and hobbies. Born on the family farm south of Royal Centre, Indiana, on September 11, 1896, George was the sixth child of George Conn Sr. and Emma Francis Frushour. He experienced sorrow from a young age when at five months old, his twin sister Grace died. However, this sorrow didn’t stop George from having a life full of excitement and happiness.

On November 6, 1926, George married Vera Gretchen Brock in Marion, Indiana. He and his wife spent their married life in Royal Centre, raising their three surviving children, Margaret, Martha and Ruth. Their daughter Georgia was born stillborn in 1937.

George had a variety of careers during his life including steelworker, accountant, and postal worker. During World War I, he joined the Army Engineer Corps in order to follow in the family tradition and protect his country in time of war.

In his free time, George spent hours playing piano and concert guitar, hunting and fishing and teaching his children a wide variety of card games in his card room. George, like many people of his generation, learned to make their own fun and entertainment during the times of the Depression and passed this value and tradition down to his children.

George’s life was cut short in January of 1950, when he was run over by a truck while delivering mail. He is buried in the family plot at Royal Centre, next to his wife.
Vera Gretchen (Brock) Conn

Born just after the turn of the century on March 20, 1901 in Amboy, Indiana, my maternal great-grandmother, Vera Gretchen Brock, was a youngster in a time of plenty and spent her first years as an official adult in a time of suffering and despair.

Owning a Model-T Ford was not a usual occurrence for a woman during the first few decades of the 20th century, but Vera didn’t let this stop her from purchasing one for herself, with money she had saved from her teaching job at the local school. Having earned a driver’s license as a young adult, one of Vera’s favorite pastimes was driving her Model-T on errands. Later in life, the car became a playhouse for her children, who could often be found sitting and playing in the car.

Married during the Depression, Vera raised her children to be conscious of value of hard work and money. These values were so instilled in her children that they have been passed down for generations and can still be found in my generation of the family.

After living through the Depression, Vera never forgot the hardships that she faced as a young wife and mother. One of her unique ways to combat the fear that still lingered from the Depression was to purchase material in large quantities and hoard it for times of need. She kept this material in her spare room. Her grandchildren could often be found in this room, perusing the material that filled the shelves that went from floor to ceiling on one wall. Today, the material that was still in the room at the time of Vera’s death has been passed down to her children and grandchildren, many of them still have their bundles of cloth stashed in attics and closets.

Vera was a school teacher in Rochester, Indiana, and during her years as an educator she saw many laws change the way that school was taught. She saw education for women go from
sewing and home economics to science and math. During her time she saw desegregation force communities that had lived in hatred of each other since before the Civil War, to spend their days sitting side-by-side. She also saw the disappearance of the teaching of evolution from her classroom and the teachings of the Cold War and anti-Communist sentiment.

Having lived through the horrors of World Wars I and II, and the Cold War, Vera was no different than many of the women of the time who worried about the safety of their children and husbands during a period of uncertainty. One way she and her husband took efforts to protect her family was by building a bomb shelter under their family home. While they were never forced to use the shelter for its intended purpose, it did provide fond memories for her grandchildren, as they would play in it when they went to her house for Sunday dinner.

She showed the same discipline and care to the children in her classroom as she did to her children at home. The wife of a blue-collar worker, she always had breakfast ready and a lunch packed for her husband and children in the mornings, supper ready every evening.

Vera passed peacefully into the world beyond on Jan 1981 in Logansport, Indiana and was buried in Royal Centre, Indiana shortly thereafter.

**Conclusion**

All of us probably want a happy existence in which we can feel that we have accomplished something helpful and good so that when we die we will not feel that their life has been a waste. I believe that each person in my family tree has fulfilled this life goal, no matter their occupation or role in the family. Not only has each been influenced by, and played a part in, history no matter how small, they have also influenced who I have become.
Historians have placed great importance on those people who have accomplished deeds that influenced or affected a large number of people, deeds that tend to be placed in newspapers and be spread by gossip. However, I feel that the more important events in life are the ones that never get reported -- a mother helping a child with his homework, a father taking on two jobs to help make ends meet, a wife giving birth to her eighteenth child. All of these things have great meaning to the people directly related to the event, but they will never be reported by the media of the time and while the news might flow on the gossip stream, it won’t be nearly as important as the next major political or world event that appears on the horizon. However, without these events, our families would be empty. Lives would be less gleeful. Children would have no one to look up to and families would fall apart at the seams. The small events in life are what make this life worth living.

Traditional history documents major events, and genealogy is filled with small events. When we combine the two, we finally get to see the picture as a whole and finally get to understand why life has turned out the way that it has. By studying both the historical aspects and the every day aspects of my family’s life, I hoped to understand more clearly who I am and where I came from. In reality, I learned much more than that. I learned that if we try to find the silver lining of every situation, our lives will be, if not happy, at least bearable, no matter the situation. I also learned that money does not buy happiness, only a good heart and a kind thought can do that, hard work and sacrifice are sometimes the necessary evils to be overcome in order to secure the life that we want for ourselves and our family, and there is nothing wrong with being short on cash as long as you have what you need to survive and love in your heart.

My family has survived countless generations without money to buy their way through this world. We will make it through countless more in the same fashion and with the same joy in
our hearts, if we only remember that while wars, sorrow, heartbreak, death and disease come and go, our lives will be worthwhile and joyful as long as we keep those that we love close to us and close to our hearts. World Wars, tornadoes, Cold Wars and Missile Crises cannot defeat the true spirit of joy if it resides in your heart.
Bibliography


