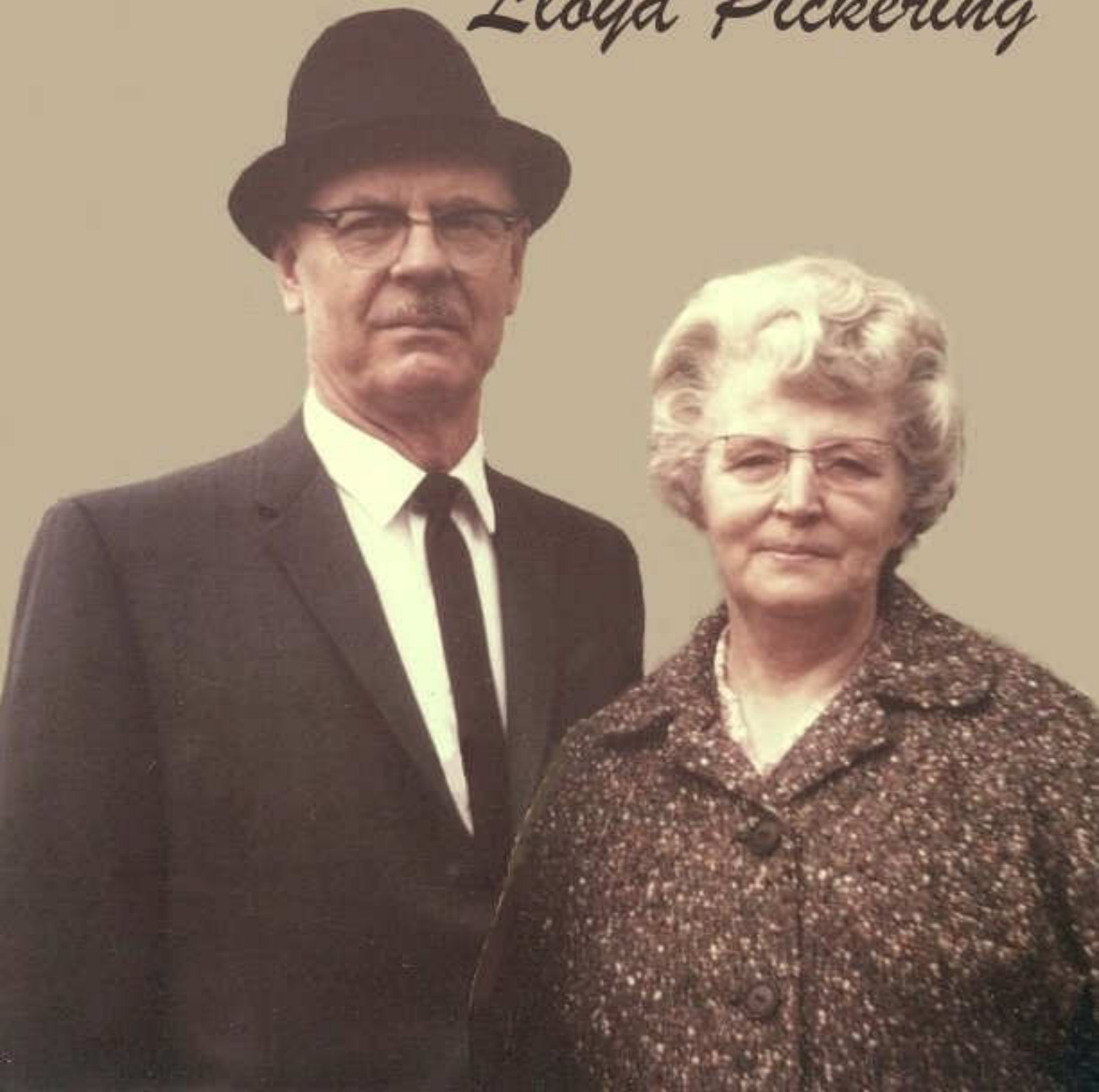


Doris and Leon

By
Lloyd Pickering



THE STORY OF DORIS AND LEON

CHAPTER ONE

THE ROMIG HISTORY

The Romig name is from Roman descent. It was spelled in the olden times as Romich or Raumich. Shortly after the Reformation and during the Thirty Years War the Protestants were driven out of Austria seeking religious freedom. Among them were George Wendel Romig, born in 1666, and his wife, Elizabeth Herner. With their family, they settled in Saxony in a province controlled by Count Zinzendorff. They settled in the area of Heilbron in what is now Germany. This area is southwest of the well-known city of Rothenburg. John Adam Romig was born there February 3, 1689. John Adam married Agnes Margaretha Bernhardt. A son, Johann Frederick Romig, was born to them in Ittlingen, Heidelberg, Baden, Germany on April 24, 1713. They took the family and traveled down the Rhine River to Rotterdam, where they sailed to America on the ship, "The Good Dragon." They arrived in Philadelphia on September 30, 1732. John Adam was a member of the Austrian Family, a coat of arms and seals as used in Austria, and the Romigs in America are entitled to use the coat of arms and seal as they are used in Austria. The Honorable Theodore Romig in his communication with Dr. J. H. Romig in Alaska verified this in 1904. Margaretha died in 1732, not long after they came to America. John Adam died July 11, 1768.



Johann Frederick married Catherine Siegfried on December 25, 1737 in Lynn Township, Lehigh, Pennsylvania. On November 27, 1741, John Adam Romig II was born to them in Bucks County, Pa. The records in the Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. VIII, page 350-351, show that John Adam fought in the Revolution. He was enrolled as a private in the Fourth Battalion of the Northampton County Militia, commanded by Col. Jacob

Stroud and Major Berg Van Camp. He married Catherine Butz sometime in 1780 in Pennsylvania. Samuel Romig was born to them in Emaus, Pa., on August 21, 1794, the eighth child in a family of nine.

Samuel married Catherine Menger some time in 1815. John Henry Romig was born to them August 9, 1824. Catherine died in 1824, so the second wife, Mary Ann Young, raised John. John Henry married Sarah Ann Kuhns at Allentown, Pa., in 1846 and moved to Tiffin, Seneca County, Ohio, where Edwin Jerome, the fifth child, was born to them some time in 1857. Edwin, with his father and mother, moved to West Point, Nebraska. John Henry died in West Point February 1, 1871. Sarah died there on January 7, 1909. A stained-glass window in the Grace Lutheran Church at West Point bears her name.



John Henry Romig

Edwin married Anna Marie Schlaymann on January 1, 1885. She had been born in Hanover, Germany and came here when she was nine years old. William Eugene was born to them in Wisner, Nebraska, November 27, 1885. Eugene was second in a family of eight. He had an older sister, Stella, and six younger siblings, Mary, Fred, George, Helen, Roy and Edgar. Helen died of Scarlet Fever at five years of age. Edwin moved to Petersburg, Nebraska, and lived three blocks north and just a little to the right of the Allen home. He worked then as a clerk in a clothing store. Eugene's son, Glenn Romig, wrote of him,

“Edwin Jerome Romig was my grandfather. He was slightly over six feet tall. His hair was black until he died at age seventy-five. He had a little bald spot on the back part of his head, which seemed natural for him. He had dark blue eyes and when his temper arose he could look right through a person. I never heard him swear or use foul language. He raised seven children with a lot of discipline.

“I never saw him without a white shirt and necktie. The tie always had a stickpin with a jewel in it to hold the tie in place. His shirts had French

Cuffs buttoned together with cuff links. They had jewels in them. He dressed in a black suit of clothes every workday. On Sundays he wore a



Edwin Jerome Romig

blue serge suit. He kept his shoes polished to a mirror finish. He shaved every morning and never wore whiskers. Every time he went outdoors he carried a cane and wore a Derby hat. He didn't need the cane; he just didn't feel he was dressed without it. Wherever he walked he seemed to be in a hurry.

“He worked in a clothing store most of his life. He wore black sleeves over his white shirt and an apron extending below his knees to protect his clothes. After the age of seventy, his sight was very poor and his heart was failing, so he had to retire. He liked good music and he liked to swim, but he was not an out-of-doors man and he cared nothing for sports. He died with T-B at the age of seventy-five in 1931. His wife, Anna, preceded him in death in 1929. He had worked in-doors in a clothing store

all of his life. Store hours were ten to twelve hours a day and the pay was sixty dollars per month.”



Ethel, Zay, and Lottie

CHAPTER TWO

THE ALLEN FAMILY



Grt. Grandma Sanderson



Grandma Putnam



Ida Putnam

Ida Putnam was born on October 12, 1860 at Spring Grove, Wisconsin. She was married in Brodhead, Wisconsin to Theodore F. Allen,



Ida, Lottie, Theodore, and Ethel

who was born August 18, 1854. Rev. Knibbs performed the marriage on March 14, 1881. They lived on a farm near Spring Grove. Lottie Delight Allen was born on December 18, 1886, in Brodhead, Wisconsin. She had an older sister, Ethel, and a younger sister, Zay. The family moved to Petersburg, Nebraska in 1890 where they started in the meat business and later owned a grocery store. Zay died shortly after they moved to Nebraska. Theodore F. Allen passed away July 17, 1902 from a ruptured appendix. On July 22, 1902, five days after his death, his only son, Theodore, known by the family as Ted, was born. Ethel died in 1922.



Theodore F. Allen

The family built a gorgeous house in Petersburg, Nebraska. It has been restored as a Heritage House today.



The Allen house at Petersburg

CHAPTER THREE

EUGENE AND LOTTIE ROMIG

Lottie was almost sixteen years old when her brother, Ted, was born, so he was more like an older brother than an uncle to her children. He was just about three years old the year that she was married. Lottie's mother, Ida, was left a widow at an early age, but she managed her



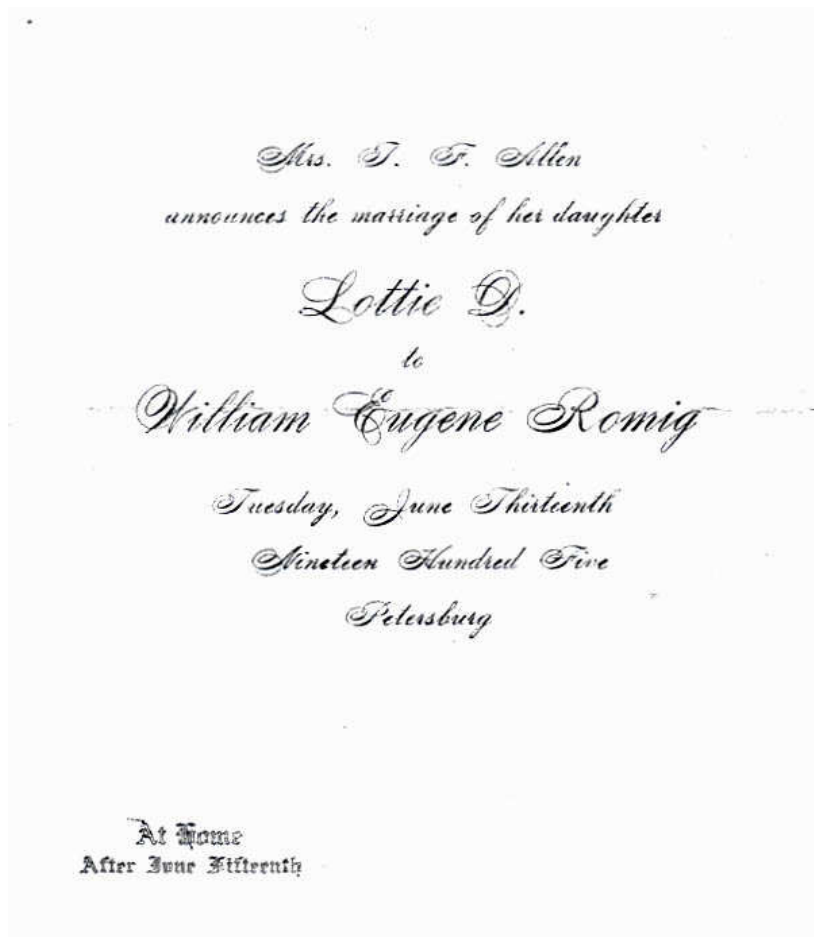
Lottie



Little Ted

life so well that she was able to help her children later on in life. They often came to live with her in the big house in Petersburg. Eugene became acquainted with the Allen family and fell in love with Lottie. They were married in Petersburg in a lovely ceremony on June 13, 1905.

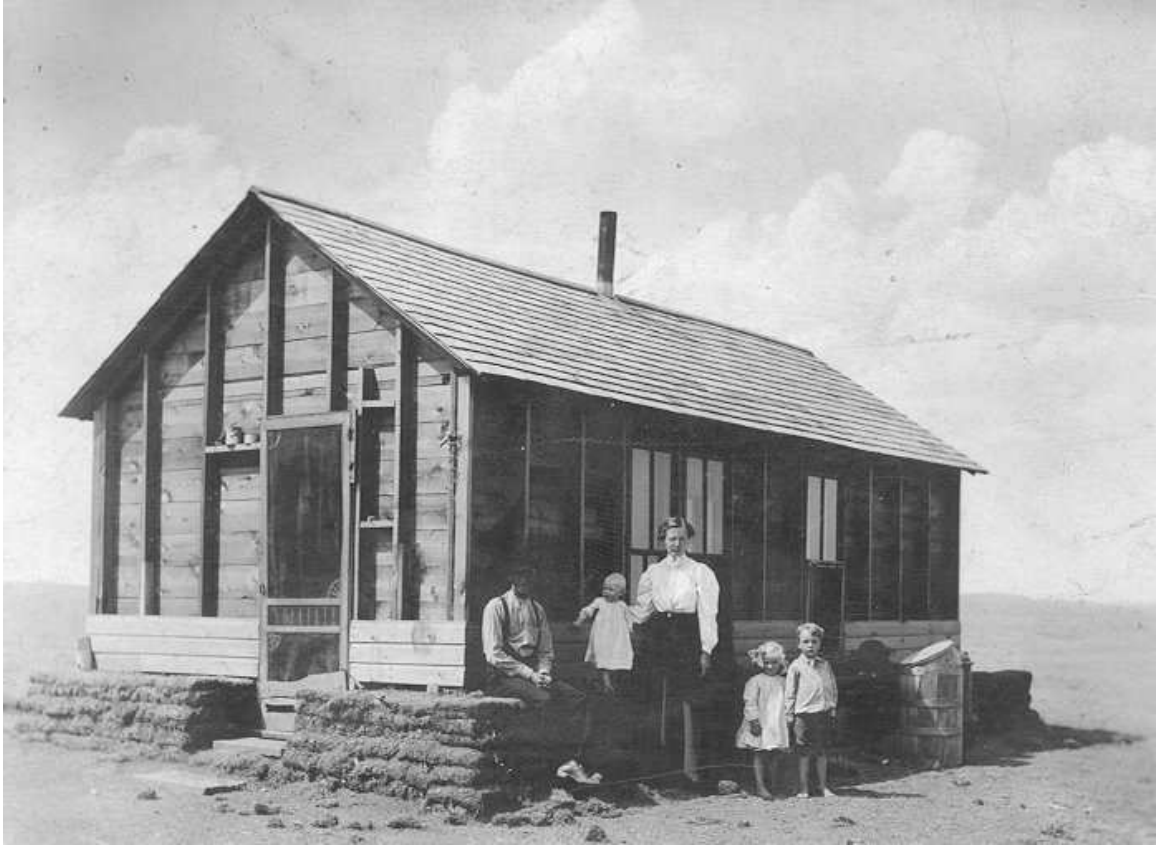
Lottie saved the wedding invitation and it was well preserved through the years when it was found it among her possessions. Though it was browned with age, we managed to reproduce it and show it here.



Glenn Eugene was born to them in Petersburg in the early morning of January 7, 1906. At this time Eugene was working in the flourmill. Several months later Eugene went to work as a track helper for the Northwestern Railroad. Several months went by at this and soon he was appointed as section manager at Newman Grove, Neb. He moved his family to the section house in Newman Grove. Doris Lucille was born to them there

on January 20, 1908 and Gerald Jerome, in 1910.

Glenn wrote, "I liked a hammer and nails so my father provided the equipment and I paved the boardwalk with driven nails. I was just old enough to look out the window and watch the trains go by. As I grew older, I would run away to the neighbors, so Mother tied me by the hips with a clothesline rope to a doorknob. One day I wanted to get away so I chewed the rope in two and wandered downtown, where a carnival was setting up on the street. I climbed up on the Merry-go-round. I was having a good time in my imaginary world when I saw my father on the street looking for me. I called out, 'Here I am, Papa.' When he came to pick me up I gave him a big hug and he took me to the nearby hardware store and bought me a little, red wagon. He put me in the wagon and pulled me on home."



About 1911 Eugene heard about free homestead land in South Dakota. He would be given one hundred and sixty acres of prairie land, but he had to live on the land for at least eighteen months. Eugene and Lottie decided to take a homestead in Newell, South Dakota, which was not far from Faith, S.D. Eugene bought a team of dapple-gray mules, a farm wagon and some farm implements. These things, along with the household goods, were put in a railroad boxcar. Eugene had to accompany the mules in the boxcar because he had to feed and water the mules along the way. A few days later, Lottie took Glenn, Doris, and Gerald and boarded a passenger train that went through to Newell, South Dakota. The family stayed that night in a stockman's hotel. Later the next day Eugene met them at the hotel. It was dusk when they got to the homestead. A sixteen by twenty six house had already been built, but the house was never finished, just the bare studs with the boards nailed on the outside. The sod walls were only four feet high. The picture shows Eugene, Gerald, Lottie, Doris and Glenn in front of the sod house. After about six months Eugene built a sod walled addition and put rafters and some boards over it and made an extra room.

The house was built on the top of a small hill. The barn was dug into the back of a hill with a front that faced a small valley. The well was in the



Lottie, Doris, Eugene holding Gerald, and Glenn on the Homestead

valley, so all of the water they needed had to be carried up the hill. Sometimes the mules pulled a barrel of water up the hill.

Eugene was coming back from town one day and the mules ran into a fence and became so scared they ran away. Eugene fell off into the barbwire fence and cut his forehead above the eye and the skin hung down over his eye. He started walking the long way home and came to the home of a Russian family and they put one stitch in to hold the skin up and then put a cloth over that so it would heal in place. The mules had come home a long time before Eugene got home, so Lottie was crying and scared to think what might have happened to him.

Glenn remembered the time the family lived on the prairie. "Life was comfortable, but there was almost nothing for entertainment. The nearest neighbor was six miles away. Mother taught me how to write my name and a few words and Father would pick up his harmonica at night and play some of his favorite songs. He would often sing to us.

“We had a dog called Sport. He was coal black with short hair. When we called him his eyes would light up and he would wrinkle his upper lip and we were sure he was smiling at us and liked us. Mother made him a doghouse of pieces of sod with poles and sod for a roof. Doris and I liked to play in this doghouse and we played in there and used it more than the dog did. One day Sport wouldn’t let us in. He just growled and shook his head. We went in to tell Mother that Sport had gone mad. She came out and discovered that there was a rattlesnake in the doghouse. She went and got a hoe and let that snake have it. She never let us play in the doghouse again.

“One day in March of 1912 father could see that the woodpile was dwindling, so he hitched up the mules and we set out to find some wood. It was a warm morning filled with sunshine. We took a picnic dinner along. We set off for the Merriam River about five miles from home. Shortly before we got to the river a terrible blizzard started to blow in and the temperature began to drop. The blowing snow increased until we could not see and Father said there was no way for us to find our way home. He tied the reins to the wagon seat and let the mules find the way on their own. Mother took off her underskirt and wrapped Gerald in it and Father took off his coat and wrapped it around Doris. We huddled in the bottom of the wagon to keep warm. We knew from the rumbling of the wagon that the mules were in a hurry to get home. When the wagon stopped with an abrupt jar, Father got out of the wagon to see what happened and found that the tongue of the wagon had bumped against the barn door. The storm was raging so hard that we could not make it to the house, so we ate our frozen picnic lunch with some warm milk from the cows we had bought and we slept all night in the barn.

“That Christmas we had our first Christmas tree. Father had gone to the small hills near our home where there were some Juniper trees and he cut one and brought it home. It was about six feet tall and had a wonderful odor. Mother put popcorn strings on it for decoration. She made Doris a rag doll. That night Father got out the harmonica and played Silent Night.

“The winter was long and it seemed like every day was dark and dreary. Snow had fallen and one could see for miles. At night we could hear the pack of coyotes howling and watch them in the moonlight.

“When spring came the prairie turned beautiful. The buffalo grass turned green and it had a wonderful odor all its own. The prairie was covered with blooming flowers of many colors, but I liked the yellow best.



Glenn and Doris

“One morning Father announced that our money was running short. He said he would have to go out and find work somewhere or we would all starve. The Milwaukee Railroad hired him as section foreman at La Plante, South Dakota. Since this was forty miles from the homestead, he got home only once in every two months. When he did come home, he brought lots of food and we had something to eat besides beans, bread and milk.

“While Father was away at work a terrible prairie fire threatened our home. Father had plowed several fireguards around the house, but there was enough wind that it threatened to jump the plow lines. Mother told us that if the fire jumped the plowing, we were to go and jump in the doghouse as we felt that there was nothing there to burn. Mother stood with us beside the doghouse and I know she was praying for the wind to shift. The fire came to within a quarter of a mile of us and then the wind shifted and the fire just passed on by. In August of 1912 we returned to Petersburg and went to live with my Grandma Allen.

“Father rented a small house in Petersburg about eight blocks from Grandma’s house. He got a job again on the Northwestern Railroad. My

brother, Duane, was born in Petersburg on August 11, 1912, a few days after we moved into this house. In September I entered first grade. My teacher was Miss Paxton. She roomed at my Grandmother's house. The latter part of October we children were playing outside on a cold day. We could hear the telephone wires humming. When we put our ear to the pole we could hear the humming even louder. I will always remember when Gerald put his ear to the pole he said he could hear Papa singing.

“About Thanksgiving time we moved to Hooper, Nebraska. Home was another section house provided by the railroad. We cleaned up the house and yard and made a home of the section house. At Hooper I was put into the first grade and after a few weeks the teacher sent me into the second grade.”

Beth Beulah was born at Hooper on August 10, 1914. Duane says it was a very nice home and Eugene built a tall fence around the entire property there at Hooper.

On July 19, 1915 a tragic event happened in the family. Gerald was only five years old and he didn't know about the danger of the trains. He got out of the yard and onto the tracks and sat there when the “Flyer” was coming through.

Doris wrote about her early life. “When I was seven we were living in Hooper, Nebraska. We lived near the railroads all of our lives so we were not afraid of the trains. We had a very good friend, an engineer on the six o'clock “Flyer.” If we were out when this train went by, we would always wave at each other and he would blow steam in our direction. The steam was not hot, but cold when it reached us.

“This was the train that killed my five-year old brother, Gerald. We older kids often went to the water tower to watch a man repair the pump. If he dropped anything, he would reach down in the water and bring it up with his toes. This procedure fascinated us. We also went over many times to stand under the overflow from the tank to cool off in the summer. One day Glenn went over to the tank and didn't know that our small brother, Gerald, had followed him to the tank. When my little brother turned to go home again, he was not watching for the train. The six o'clock “Flyer” was coming and he never saw it. Our friend, the engineer, tried to stop, but he could do nothing more than lay on the whistle again and again. This train

almost always went right on through and he was going too fast. The cowcatcher hit my brother and threw him over on the sidetrack. I was up town getting meat for supper when a friend of mine told me that they had taken my little brother into the depot. I went down to look and wished that I had not. The memory of him lying on the table stayed with me for the rest of my life. This was the last time that I saw him until he was buried. Our friend, the engineer, felt so bad that they called another man to take the train on through. He retired and never drove the train again.”

Duane remembers being shown the body of his brother, Gerald, lying in the living room. He was only three years old. There were many tears in family during that time. One can hardly imagine the grief that they must have felt for, whenever they looked out at the spot where Gerald had been killed, they were filled with gloom and sadness. Eugene then asked for a transfer and the Roadmaster gave him the Nickerson section just nine miles south of Hooper. In April of 1916 the family moved into the Nickerson section house. Nickerson was a very small town of about a hundred and fifty people surrounded by great farming country. When they first moved to the new home an epidemic of scarlet fever was raging so they were not allowed to go to school or to church for fear of catching the fever. In June the quarantine was lifted and the whole family was allowed to go out. The family joined the Methodist Church and made many new friends.



Duane, Glenn, Doris, and Little Beth

Eugene hired a man by the name of Parks, who had a family about the age of the Romig children. The two families had many picnics in a beautiful spot along the Elkhorn



Glenn, Lottie, Duane, Doris, and Little Beth

River not far from their homes. To get to this spot they had to cross a rickety bridge over the creek. This was a bridge that had been on the original stagecoach route, but it was no longer used for traffic and there were holes in the floor. The picnic spot was in a cattle pasture that was well pastured so that it looked as though it had been mowed. In summer time there were gooseberries and mulberries to pick and there was also a spot where they could fish.

During the summer of 1917 Eugene had his back injured. He had Italian men working for him and they did not speak English. While he was with a work train unloading rocks from gondola cars near a bridge he said to them, "Hold it!" and walked past the car. They did not understand what he had said and threw a large rock down that struck him in the right hip and broke his back. When the passenger train came through, they unhooked the engine and rushed him to the hospital. He was in a body cast for a long time. A relative persuaded him that he could make a lot of money by suing the railroad, so he sued for \$30,000. He got only \$10,000, which he put in the bank and later lost when the bank went broke in the depression.



John and Ethel Thorin

While the suit was going on, they moved to Petersburg to live with Grandma Allen in her big house.

Aunt Ethel thought it would be better for her take Glenn and Doris out to their ranch in the sand hills near a place called Clearwater, Nebraska. She mothered them there for seven weeks. Uncle John Thorin was Swedish and he liked to sing songs to the children in the Swedish language. They owned a 1914 Model T car, so once in a while they would pack up and drive forty miles to Petersburg so the children could visit their mother.

September came and it was school time again, so the whole family stayed with Grandma Allen. Since the school was right across the road, they did not have far to go. Glenn was now in the fifth grade, Doris was in the fourth and Duane started first grade. Marjorie Ethel was born at her



Duane on Washday

Grandma Allen's house in Petersburg on September 25, 1917. The family stayed at Grandma's house until just before Thanksgiving of that year.

Grandpa Edwin Romig and Grandma Anna Marie were already living at West Point. He worked in Cohen's Clothing Store, which was just across the street from a general store and grocery store owned by a cousin, Eugene Krause. Eugene Romig started to walk again and he went to work for his cousin in the store.

Eugene rented a house in West Point and finally moved the family there and they set up a home again. The first house was a yellow house and it was small. After a few years the family moved into another house. This one was larger and had a bedroom downstairs. The picture of Duane on washday was taken at this second house. They washed all of the good

clothes on Monday, so the children had to dress in their old rags. Duane

remembers that the boards on the porch were worn and full of holes. Eugene's job did not pay well, but the family existed nicely there. Over the



Duane at West Point

store where Eugene worked was an old Opera House. It had been closed down, but the children often went up there to play. Duane says they played hide and go seek and he can especially remember that Marjorie sat on the stage and clapped her hands.

Every Saturday the farmers all came into town with their eggs and sour cream and brought them to the store where Eugene worked. The cousin was drunk most of the time, so it was up to Eugene to take care of everything. The store was divided, with dry goods on one side and groceries on the other. Duane counted the eggs at the store Saturday night. He was seven or eight

years old at this time. They collected the sour cream and sent it on to the creamery at Beatrice, Nebraska.

Glenn wrote, "We planted a large garden and Dad saw to it that we had pigs to feed. We also had about forty chickens, which meant that we had eggs and chicken dinners. I would go down to the grain elevators after they would shut down for the day and pick up the spilled grain to feed to the chickens.

"We lived near a junkyard owned by a man named Henry Wulf. He came to the house one day and asked if I would help him plant beans. I went

to work for him that afternoon and stayed with him until I was sixteen years old.”

Duane remembers the days at West Point very well. He says that the white house was near the Gelster home. In the back of the chicken house was a large piece of property on which they planted potatoes and corn. Every Memorial Day Eugene had a half-day off and that was the day for planting potatoes.

Every fall they gathered corncobs to use for the cooking stove. There was a large barn in the back of the house and they stored the corncobs there. It was Duane’s job to bring the cobs in from the barn and to bring in the coal that they used for heating the house.



Beth and the Chickens



Doris Lucille

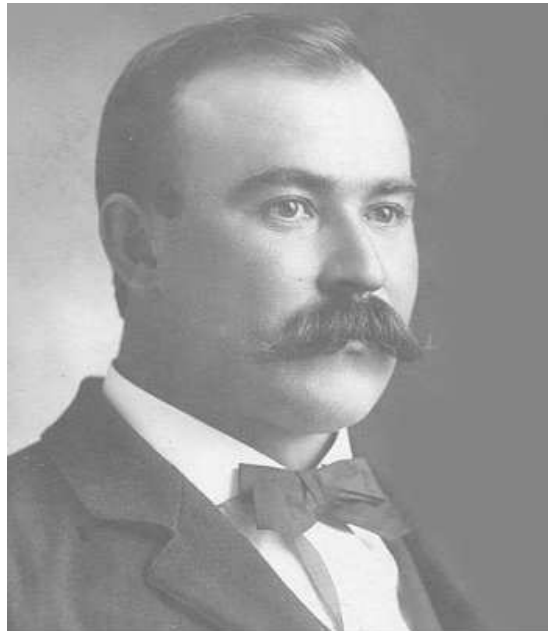
Duane was also working for Mr. Wulf watering the chickens for twenty-five cents a week. He also took the coaster wagon and picked up some dirty clothes to take back to Mrs. Wulf for her to wash. On Tuesday he took the clothes back and for that he received another twenty-five cents.

Duane would also go over to work in Mr. Wulf’s junkyard. Mr. Wulf would have him hold the chisel, which had a long handle and he would slam

down on the chisel with a big mall to split the rivet. “Don’t close your eyes,” he would say to Duane, but Duane closed them anyway.

In June of 1923 Eugene became quite ill. The problem with his back had affected his mind. He had short periods of time when he thought people were trying to kill him. In our day medicine would take care of that, but there was nothing that could be done back then. To get away for a while the family decided to go to visit Uncle George Putnam in Withee, Wisconsin. They bought a new 1923 Model T for \$370.00 and started out. Ted Allen drove the car. They had seven flat tires on the way. Doris and Glenn were left behind in West Point.

While they were visiting, Uncle George talked about how cheap the land was there in Wisconsin. The Owen Land Company had some timberland for sale north of Sheldon. It cost just \$27.50 per acre and Uncle George said they could get that back almost right away by harvesting the timber. Uncle George and a real estate agent, Mr. Servity, from the land company took the family up to see the property. The land agent gave each of the children a candy bar, which was a real treat at that time. Someone had built a sixteen by twenty log house in the forest in the middle of the property and then had let the land go back to the land company. Eugene decided to take the property and paid \$1,000.00 down and took a mortgage on the rest. He should have paid cash with the money he had, but he didn’t do it.



Uncle George Putnam

Eugene stayed and the family went down to Monroe, Wisconsin, near Madison, to visit Grandma Allen’s sister, Nettie Burcalow. They went to the fair at Brodhead and then went back to West Point to prepare for the move.

Glenn wrote, “The end of August the kids and Mother returned. They had bought eight acres of woodland and had made the decision to move to a place about four miles north of Sheldon, Wisconsin. Father stayed in

Wisconsin where he was employed by the Owen Lumber Company to build railroad tracks in the woods for the logging trains.



Eugene Working in the Forest in Wisconsin

“When I told Mr. Wulf the folks were going to Wisconsin, he sat down and cried. He said if I would stay with him he would will everything he had to me. He had no children. I was just seventeen and I knew my father needed my help so I made arrangements to leave Nebraska.

“It was my duty at my young age to make the arrangements for a railroad box car and to see that all of the household goods and the items for a farm were packed for shipment.”

Eugene had written to Glenn, “See if you can buy the old delivery wagon from Krause.” Glenn got that for \$25.00. It was used for years around the farm in Wisconsin. Then the family proceeded to put everything into the rail car for the move north. There were twenty-five chickens. They were killed and canned in jars and packed with the rest of the goods in the boxcar. None of them were broken when the car was unpacked. It cost \$700.00 to transport all of the goods.

Ted Allen drove the family back to Sheldon. The roads were just poorly graveled trails. To save the cost of sleeping arrangements, Glenn and Ted rolled up in blankets and slept by the side of the car. Lottie and the children found rooms in tourist parks. It took five days to make the trip. The road through the woods was a muddy, slippery mess. Ted put the low pedal down hard and gave it the gas to bounce through the bad spots in the road. Many times they got stuck. On Sunday morning about the middle of September they finally came to their new home. They stopped the car in a little driveway and Lottie said, "There, see your new home?" It was only a two-room log house. It was almost hidden by the tall bushes filled with raspberries. A path led back to it. Glenn said, "I was down hearted and half sick to think my father would take us away from what we had to this. Uncle Ted took the train back to Petersburg and left us to our fate."

They found that they had only two days to unload their boxcar of goods because the siding was filled with cars being loaded with logs. They worked hard to accomplish that and set up their home in the cabin in the woods. They had a hard time cramming all of their things into the little cabin. There was a small barn and a little chicken coop. All of these buildings were made of logs with the cracks chinked with clay and common tarpaper on the roof.

The house was poorly built. The snow would drift through little holes near the roof in the wintertime and fall into the faces of the children as they lay in bed.



Beth and Duane by the Old Log Barn

Duane started school at the new Linden School

House about a mile and a half away from home. Glenn asked his Dad for permission to go to high school in Ladysmith, but he was told that he was needed too much on the farm to waste time in school. However, life took a turn for the better for Glenn when he attended Sunday school at the Linden School about a week after they first arrived. There was a pretty blonde in

the class named Lola Marie Pickering. She wore a red felt hat. The love bug took him immediately and much later the two were married.

In the eighth grade Duane had Lucy Umbach as his teacher. He remembers that she had he and Rudy Fink throw the wood for the winter into the basement of the school and for that she gave them two O'Henry candy bars. Duane had to quit school just before he graduated from the



Eugene Standing in the Cleared Field

eighth grade because his Dad told him he had to work on the farm. He could have applied for his graduation certificate, but he did not and he went on through a successful life without even an eighth grade graduation.

As the winter progressed, the auto travel just ceased and everyone traveled around in a sleigh pulled by the horses. A heated brick would be put in the bottom of the sleigh so one's feet could stay warm. Logging was a winter job because the roads were so poor the logs could not be hauled out in the summer time.

In 1924 the old log barn was replaced. In the summer of 1926 the family built a new house close to the road near the well. Some good logs had been saved and they were cut into lumber for the house. By



The New Barn



The New House

this time the big timber had been pretty well cut off the eighty acres and getting the stumps out and picking up the rock was the major task.

The new house had four bedrooms. It was not large, just 24x32, but

it had two stories and a basement. Three of the bedrooms were in the dormer upstairs. The house was painted brown.

Duane took the team of horses and started plowing ground with a single bottom plow. He was only fourteen at that time. One day the horses ran away and went down to the Birch farm north of the eighty. The plow bounced up and down behind them until the clevis broke and then they went on by themselves. He went down to get them. On the way back one horse hit the side of the house so hard with his rump that it knocked one of the pictures off the wall. Later they got a team, Molly and Jim, that was much more manageable.



Molly and Jim

One day Eugene didn't come back from getting the cows so Duane went out to see what was the matter. He found his Dad with his head sticking out of a hollow stump and the bull raging in front of him. Everytime he stuck his head up the bull would attack the stump. "Go and get the shotgun and shoot the s.o.b." Eugene said. Duane went back and got

the shotgun and shot the bull at close enough range to draw blood. The bull backed off and never caused problems again.

Glenn told of getting a job working in the sawmill for D. L. Pickering. He said Mr. Pickering didn't have any idea that he had designs on his daughter. He worked there off and on as often as he could and finally was able to buy a car.



Grace, Doris, Aunt Anna, Aunt Net, Eugene, Uncle George, Duane, Glenn, Lottie Marian, Beth, Marjorie, and the Dog, Shag.

One day they had a family reunion and the folks from southern Wisconsin came up to see the new house. They marveled at all of the accomplishments that had been made. This was in 1927.

About this time President Coolidge flew up to Brule River, Wisconsin, and the mail plane for the President flew over the house every day. The economy just kept deteriorating. Eugene wrote a check on the bank in Nebraska and it came back as having no funds. The bank had gone broke and he lost all of his money. When President Roosevelt was elected, they sat around the radio in the evening listening to the Fireside Chat and everyone began to feel better. When Roosevelt got in, there was a bank holiday for five days and after that the government guaranteed whatever you had in the bank.

CHAPTER FOUR

DORIS ROMIG

Doris wrote, “They used to throw beer bottles out the train windows. Glenn and I would go and pick them up. The saloons paid a nickel each for them. I was only six and Glenn was eight, but we would gather them up and he would take them to the back door of the saloon and sell them.



Doris by the Log House

Sometimes we would have as much as fifty cents, which was a fortune in those days.

“We came to Wisconsin in 1923. We left in a Ford car. It had side curtains on to keep out the rain and the cold. On each side were carriers on the running board. In these we carried extra gas, food and our extra clothes. There were no car heaters in those days so we had to wrap up in heavy blankets and quilts to keep warm.

“We had bought eighty acres of land. This was wild land and mostly forested. The virgin forest had been cut off in the 1800’s so

this was second growth timber. The first timber that was cut from this land was virgin pine. The logs were four to six feet in diameter. Railroads were

built all through the pine forests so that the logs could be hauled to the main line and then south to the city of Owen to be cut into lumber.

“When we came, the right of ways still had steel rails here and there that had not been removed. There were also old camps where the lumberjacks had lived when they cut the timber. The second growth timber on our land was a mixture of pine, hemlock, and lots of maple and ironwood. An area had been cut and in the clearing a log house had been built. It was about 20X 24 feet. It was only one story, so it was very small. We could open a window and very nearly touch the trees all around because they were so close to the house.

“We children had come from the large city of West Point in Nebraska, so it was sort of a shock to see that small cabin that we were going to live in.

At night the wolves and coyotes howled. Never having heard anything like that we knew we were in the wilderness and we were petrified. There were also bear in the woods, but by this time settlers were coming in and the bears were more afraid of us than we were of them. We often saw small black bears running up the right of way. One night



Doris with a Fawn

my brother, Glenn, and I had walked two miles through the woods to a party. To get back to our house we had to walk down a small cutout road. As we walked home this evening we could see eyes along the road looking at us. We ran home as fast as we could. Dad wanted to know what was wrong. We told him there were eyes looking at us all the way home. My Dad got his gun and my Mother came along and we went back because wolves did not usually come that close to habitation. When my Mother saw what had frightened us, she began laughing. The eyes were actually what were called

foxfire. It really is damp old wood, which we called 'punk.' When it got a certain dampness and heat it would give off a phosphorescent glow in the dark. That was all that our wolves amounted to.

"We didn't have time to dig a well at first, so we got our water from several old stump holes. These were the places where big trees had blown over in the wind. They had taken their roots with them as they fell and left these holes in the ground and the rainwater and melting snow collected there. It tasted like the soil it came out of and we boiled it to purify it. It was not long until my Dad and my brothers dug a well and we had good,



Beth, Duane, Eugene, Shag, Lottie, and Marjorie

pure water. It tasted wonderful. We also dug a root cellar into the ground to store our vegetables to keep them from freezing in the winter and to keep them cool in the summer. It was not far from the well in the middle of the back yard.

"By then it was winter and we burned wood to keep warm. A man with a buzz saw came by and cut us up a great pile of wood from small logs we had collected. The pile of wood lasted all winter and we had some left

for the cook stove in the summer. When there were large tasks to be done, like cutting up wood, the neighbors would gather to help each other so it was like a party. The women and children also came. When it came time for the noon meal, which we called dinner, the men ate first because they were so cold and hungry. It was ten to twenty degrees below zero at wood cutting time, so it was very cold work. After this the women and children ate. There was always plenty of good food.

“There were no radios or television. There was not even any electricity. We burned kerosene lamps for light. The roads had just been cut through the forest, so there was no gravel on them, just dirt and mud when it rained. In the swampy places they cut wood poles and laid them across the road to provide something to drive on. This was called a corduroy road. In the winter cars were put up on blocks of wood and the tires were taken off, as you couldn’t go any place with a car. The snow was often five feet deep in places. It was rare winter when at sometime we didn’t have a week of forty-five to fifty degrees below zero. On those cold days no one tried to go anywhere. When it



Doris Looking Elegant in Her Winter Coat

warmed up a bit, the neighbors would get together and they would take several teams of horses and a wagon to break through the snow drifts and make a road to town. Sheldon was only four miles away, but in that kind of weather and with the snow, it seemed more like fifty miles as you were breaking through the snow. The women and kids stayed home and the men went to town and bought the supplies needed. At that time people bought for months ahead. They bought four or five hundred pounds of flour.

There was no bread available in the stores and no one would have thought of buying any anyway. Everyone baked their own bread, cakes and cookies. They always had a hundred pounds of sugar and fifty pounds of lard on hand and of course they canned anything they could so they never bought any vegetables. In the winter such things as lettuce and fresh cabbage were unheard of. We put carrots in sand and kept them in the root house so they would last through most of the winter. We made lots of sauerkraut in big jars to keep us going until spring. By the time spring came we were so hungry for something fresh and green that we collected the first dandelion greens that appeared and everyone had dandelion greens to eat and enjoyed them very much. Everyone killed their own pigs and cures their own hams and bacon in the smokehouse. We had lots of venison, but there were game laws even then and we were not supposed to kill deer out of season. The settlers used to get so hungry for fresh meat that they would build a saltlick and lay in wait for the deer to come. When they killed one, they shared it with the rest of the neighbors. This way it would be gone very soon in case the warden showed up.

“In the winter for entertainment we would have parties at the schoolhouse. We had pie socials and box socials. The pies and boxes of goodies would be auctioned off and sold to the highest bidder. The buyer then had the chance to eat with the person who made the pie or box. The money was used for something that the school needed. After the people ate there would be square dances. When anyone had a birthday, it would be a surprise party on them. Everyone brought food and the women visited and the men played cards or visited as well. There was an undenominational church in the school as well, so this was the place we got together. We often had parties just to get together to visit. No one had relatives close enough to visit, so at Christmas or Thanksgiving we had big dinners at the school. The women would compete to see who could bring the best cakes and pies and we would stuff ourselves until we hurt. Then before everyone went home, we ate again. No one had a chance to be homesick or lonesome for loved ones far away because we had our neighbors.

“When the lumber companies sold this land to the settlers, they told them they could pay for the land by selling the wood they chopped down. At that time, wood was even used for fuel in the cities. Many cords of maple, hemlock and pine were sledded to town and loaded into boxcars to be shipped out. Wood lath were also used under plaster, so many of the small logs were cut into four-foot lengths to be cut into lath at the mills. Since

Dave Pickering had a lath mill in Sheldon, we could take our bolts directly to the mill for payment. The mills paid \$5.00 a cord. This was to be used to pay for the land and the taxes. A hard winter's work had to last until the next year because trees were never cut while the sap was running.

“My Mother knew about Maple Syrup, so the first spring in early March we tapped the maple trees that were close to the house. The snow was still two or three feet deep. Twice a day we had to gather the pails of sap. The first year we boiled the sap down into syrup in a wash boiler. After that Dad had a sap pan made of heavy tin and we boiled down in that. We kids didn't know what maple sugar was so my mother boiled the syrup down to sugar fudge in the house.

“The next years we cut off the trees. When all the trees were cut off there were stumps, brush and small trees still left. We piled all this along with the branches from the tree that had been cut down on some of the huge pine stumps left over from the logging. Then we made a huge fire to burn all of this. That was great fun. The remaining stumps were blasted out of the ground with dynamite and horses pulled them the rest of the way out. These were then piled into heaps and burned. Then came the picking of rock. The glaciers had been over this area millions of years ago and had left many, many rocks. Some were so big that they had to be dynamited apart in order to move them. We had stone boats to move the rocks. They were logs with planks placed across them. The front of the log had to turn up a bit so it wouldn't dig into the ground. Horses would pull these stone boats and we children would walk on both sides of the sled picking up rocks. There were so many rocks that even today one can see huge rock piles in the middle of the field. After the rocks were picked came the plowing. That brought even more rocks to the surface and they had to be picked again. This went on for years before the fields were really clean.

“Most of the crops raised were oats and fields seeded to clover for hay. The first couple of years the people just turned their cows loose to browse in the summer wherever they could find something to eat. When milking time came, we had to round them up. Sometimes they had wandered two or three miles before we found them. We were scared the whole time we were looking for them because it was wild land everywhere.

“In small cut over clearings, wild raspberries grew thick, so we spent many hours picking raspberries to can. My mother had us fill our pails on a

Sunday afternoon and then we all pitched in and picked several buckets for we kids and we invited our friends over for games and then for lunch and we had raspberries and cream. The other fruits that grew wild were blackberries and blueberries. The blueberries grew in the swamp and many a hot day we spent stripping blueberries. These were also canned for the long winter. The country was too new for any kind of apple tree to be planted and become a bearing fruit tree and it was too cold for any other kind of fruit to grow so the wild fruits were a very important part of our eating. We would also find a few wild plums, which made good jelly. High bush cranberries were also made into jelly. There were also gooseberries and dewberries for jelly.

“Gardens were hard to grow, as it seemed the land was so closed in that this kept the soil too cold. Sweet corn and tomatoes were hard to raise, but potatoes and rutabagas loved the ashy soil and grew good crops. We could also grow lots of cabbage. Of course we couldn’t keep fresh cabbage, but we made it into huge ten-gallon crocks of sauerkraut. This, with fresh pork, made good eating for us. Everyone worked so hard that, no matter what we ate, no one ever became fat.

“We had a bunch of kids about our age around us, so we would go to one house or the other and play games. One girl’s Dad raised strawberries one year and this was a treat. We had strawberries and cream at her house. If we wanted to go anywhere we walked. Horses were used so hard in clearing land and cutting wood that we seldom were allowed to ride them, so we walked. Two or three miles to some one’s place and back were nothing.

“There wasn’t enough hay yet on our place so my Dad and brother went four miles away and cut swamp hay. When dinnertime came, (we called the noon meal dinner) I carried the food to them wherever they were working. We would get very thirsty, but we didn’t have anything like lemons. We mixed vinegar and ginger water to slake our thirst.

“There were no iceboxes so we had to hang the butter and milk from ropes in the well in order to keep them fresh. We cooked for one meal at a time so that things didn’t spoil. The first winter we were there I remember eating a lot of pancakes and bacon. We also ate a lot of snowshoe rabbits because they were so plentiful. We kids had never tasted wild meat before, so we had to learn to like it. When one is very hungry, it doesn’t take long to learn to eat what is put before you.

“There were no doctors or dentists closer than Ladysmith, which was twenty miles away. It took all day to go that far with horses, so it was like a hundred miles today. It was like a case of being close to death before one went to the doctor. In the summer when we could use the car it was easier, even though the roads were dust and mud. The summer is when one went to the dentist to have teeth pulled and fixed. If we had a toothache in the winter, we used oil of cloves or camphor to stop the ache. If it got too bad then we would walk the four miles to Sheldon and take the noon train up to Ladysmith and come back at five o’clock. This train was called ‘the scoot.’ We rode in the caboose. Even this was an all day process.

“There were no school buses to take the children to school they had to walk. It had to be a very cold day way below zero or a blizzard before you could stay home. Some children walked two or three miles to get to school. Everyone had heavy boots and mittens and warm coats, but they still had cold toes and fingers by the time they got to school. Sometimes an older boy would dare a younger lad to put his tongue on the pump handle when it was very cold. When he did, it stuck and he lost the skin on his tongue as he pulled it away. He went through the rest of the day with a sore tongue and never did that again.

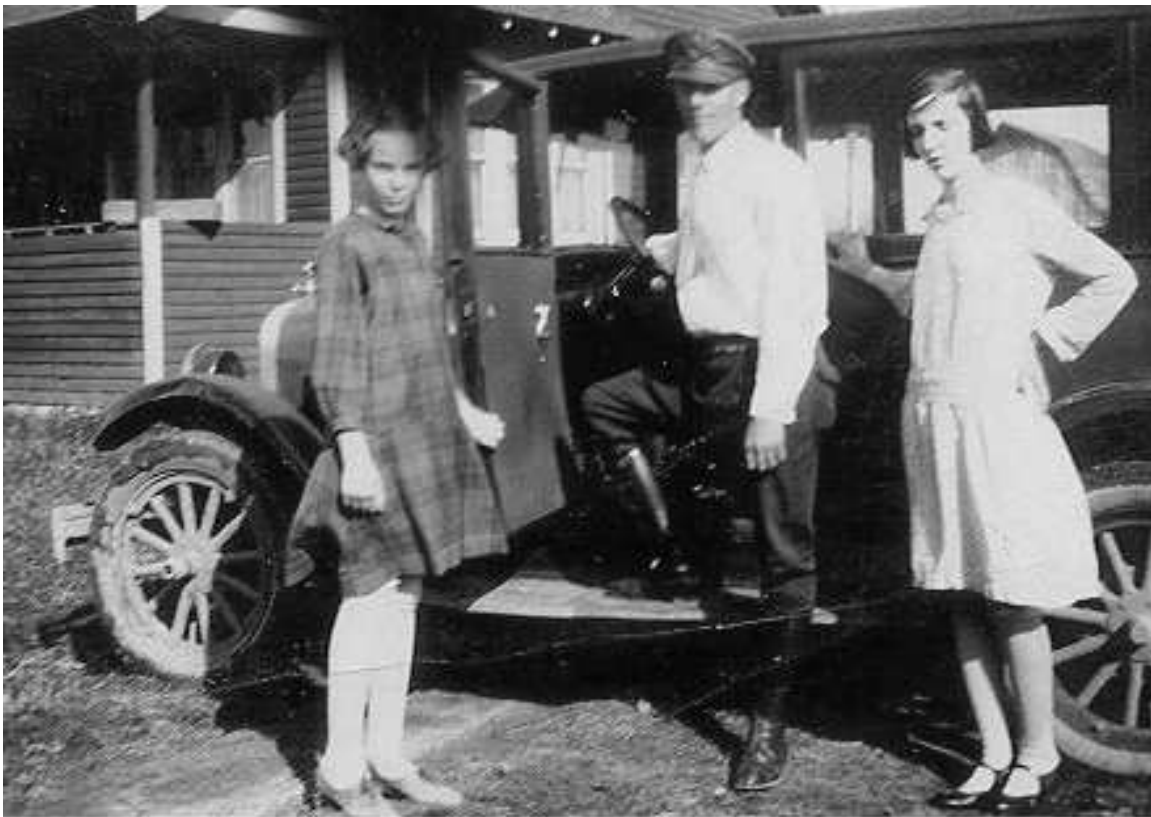
“Water came from a pump outdoors and was carried into the school in a bucket. This pail had a dipper and everyone drank from it. The toilets were outside. If you had to go, you raised your hand to get the teacher’s attention. If you really had to go, you waved your hand wildly to get the teacher’s attention. You didn’t dare go without her permission. You held up one finger if it was just number one, two if it was the other. Then in the winter you went outside in the cold and trudged up the path to the toilet.

“When you milked the cow, cream came from the right side and milk from the left. If you believe that, you haven’t been near a farm. Actually, the milk was the same from all four teats of the cow. To milk you squeezed and pulled and the milk came out. You learned to do that in a rhythm that the cow would enjoy or you would get kicked and might lose your bucket. Some cows just enjoyed kicking and we had to use straps to hold their legs.

“If you leave the milk sit in a cool place, the cream comes to the top and you can skim it off. When you shake the cream in a jar for a long time, it makes butter and watery milk, which we called buttermilk. The process is called churning. Later on we got a wooden vessel with a paddled stick in the

top and we churned more easily with this, but we always churned our own butter. We could also make cottage cheese, but aged cheese like Cheddar was a luxury. We did not have it very often.”

Doris went to work for the teacher of the Linden School, Mrs. Bretag, that first winter. She was thus able to earn extra money to share with the family. The second winter she went to work for Mrs. Fritz, whose husband owned a liquor store in Ladysmith. They were wealthy and had a cottage in Couderay. It was pure luxury to go up to the lake cottage with them. Mrs. Fritz’s daughter, Helen, was a good friend so she enjoyed the time that she worked for them. When Mrs. Fritz got well again, Doris went to work at the Cozy Café on Main Street in Ladysmith. When her brothers and sisters came in to see her, she treated them to an ice cream cone, which was a great luxury. She also used her extra money to buy them candy at Christmas and Easter. That was an added treat to their lives as well.



Marjorie, Duane, and Beth

Eugene gave Duane the 1923 Model T Ford. He used it one summer and then traded it in on a 1925 Chevrolet. He paid \$250.00 besides the old car. His Dad and Mother signed his note. His Dad said, “If you will stay with us for the winter, we will cut the basswood bolts. In eleven days he cut

enough to pay off the car and he stayed the rest of that year. He was just fifteen years old. After that he traded the Chevy for a 1926 Chrysler and he couldn't pay off the balance so he had to let it go back. He soon bought a 1924 coupe because he had to go down to help his Dad on the farm. During this time he had lots of girl friends. Not only was he a good looking young man, but he also had a car most of the time. For a little while he went with Evelyn Pickering. The folks were saying, "Not another Pickering in the family." Evelyn introduced him to Anna Deming at the Tabor Hotel, which was just north of where the Lumber Yard stands today. They fell in love and were later married.



Several times Grandma Allen came up to visit. At this time she was a little over sixty years of age, but she was very good looking.

Grandma Allen

Duane says, "Grandma Allen was kind, but she was very strict. If she told you that you were going to get a licking, you got it. Probably it was when you were lying in bed at night. It was not a hard slap; just one to let you know you deserved it. One time I put a pie pan in my pants and it bonged when her hand hit it. She laughed and let me go."

Chapter Five

DORIS AND LEON



Leon at High School Graduation

Doris had many friends. One of them was a handsome young lad named Leon Pickering. Leon was a brilliant young man, probably approaching a genius. He graduated from the High School at Neillsville, Wisconsin, in 1920. His sister, Darthea, was a sophomore at Neillsville that year. The caption under his picture read, "A being darkly wise and widely great, with too much knowledge on the skeptic side." In the "Senior Class Jingle" the author wrote, "What if Leon would forget to talk, And when asked to recite would start to balk?" One would never have guessed that in later years he would become

reticent and quiet. He was in the Glee Club as a junior. He played basketball as a senior and was in the Class Play that year. He wrote a long poem for the school annual titled "The Seniors." These are a few lines from the poem:

"Have you seen the mighty Seniors,
Seen the wise and brainy Seniors
Come to school at early morning,
Study hard at all their lessons,
Pass unto their various classes,
Speak aloud what books have taught them,
Take their hundred or their goose eggs?"

But when all have passed from this earth,
Will there be so great a difference?
When all has changed to ashes and dust,
Changed to earth line all before us?
When our small life span is ended
And we, passing into darkness,
See the eyes of death glare at us,
Would that we could leave behind us,
Things to help make this earth brighter.
Things to help those left behind us.

Leon owned a Harley motorcycle with a sidecar attached. Leon and Duane became good friends and Leon began to have an interest in Doris. He came often to see her, but she wasn't sure if it was to see her or her brother, Duane. In the winter Leon would put skis on the front wheel of the motorcycle and a ski on the sidecar wheel and he and Duane would go



e David, Freeman, Beth and Leon

through the forests on the old logging roads. The motorcycle skis fit the old sleigh tracks, so they could go almost anywhere they wanted.

Just before he got married, Leon borrowed the 1921 Overland car from his Dad and he took a trip out to see Myron and his family. He especially enjoyed visiting with David, Freeman and Beth, Myron's children. He was twenty-three years old that summer.

Leon bought forty acres a few miles south west of the Romig farm and built a cute little one-bedroom house on it. Then he proposed to Doris and they went up to the Justice of the Peace on October 26, 1926 and got married. They went to their little home to live. About the third or fourth night a group of old friends with brother, Duane, decided to give them a "chivaree." They gathered outside the house and made lots of noise by banging on pots and pans. The young married couple was supposed to come out to give them a treat or invite them in for some coffee and cake. Leon and Doris did not come out, so one of the young men decided to put a board over the chimney to smoke them out. Leon came out and gave them a dollar

to go to town and buy some candy, which is what they wanted. A few days later brother, Glenn, brought his group for another “chivaree.” This group brought oysters and milk and they had oyster stew. Doris had to round up all of the pots and dishes she had in order to feed them.

Doris wrote about the first winter, “We didn’t have a car to travel in; we had a motorcycle with a sidecar. I rode in the sidecar. The motorcycle was rather temperamental in the wintertime. Leon would put the skis on the front wheel and the sidecar and sometimes it wouldn’t start so at five o’clock



Jean and the Motorcycle

in the morning we would push this up the hill near us and I would give it a push so it would go downhill and as it went down the motor started and Leon was off to town to work. I would go back home and crawl into bed for awhile yet as at first we had no cows or anything for me to take care of outside and I had no children yet, so there was not much to do but heave in some wood to the cellar and keep the furnace going so I would not freeze to death.

“We all burned wood, so in November we had a cutting bee. At this time Leon had gotten an old Ford engine from a car and made a buzz saw cutting rig. He buzzed wood for people in our

territory. They paid him to do this and this is how we had money so we could eat. Everyone would cut enough wood to last them through the winter and the following summer. To supplement the wood during the summer we

went out and gathered pine knots. These made a very hot fire. We also gathered some of these to save to use as kindling for starting the fires in the



The Woods at the Farm

wintertime. Whenever the crew came to buzz wood they would have to be fed. I had been married only a month when Leon came and said it was our turn to buzz wood the next day. What to feed them on such short notice? I had baked bread the day before, so I had plenty of that. I also had cans of salmon, some apples, and Dave Pickering brought some salt pork. I baked the apples and at the last minute whipped an egg white and sugar to put on them and browned it just a bit. Then I baked beans, potatoes, a salmon loaf and corn for a vegetable. I couldn't bake a pie because I had never made a piecrust. Of course, here was the new bride and everyone asked their husbands what I had made. The baked apples were what the men talked about and my good bread. I lived in a different neighborhood than my folks and the people living around us were from Bohemia. They didn't have go out as much as my old neighborhood.



Doris Reading

“Leon had planted potatoes with his Dad, but we had such a wet fall that they rotted in the ground and we didn’t have many. Since we did not have our own garden that year, we did not have any vegetables of our own so we went to an auction sale and bought a bushel of potatoes and a half-bushel of dried onions. We had fried onions and baked onions with our potatoes.”

Doris loved to read. When she was young Lottie would say, “Doris, the dishes need to be wiped.” Doris would go right on reading. Lottie would say again, “Doris, come now and wipe the dishes.” By the time Doris got there the dishes would be all wiped and put away. Doris loved to read.

Doris helped out on the farm and had a mishap with the pitchfork, which she told about. “When we first went to farming, we cut hay from between some trees. I had never handled a pitchfork before and in forking some hay, I ran a pitchfork tine into the top of my foot. I soaked it in hot Lysol water and after a week the swelling started to go down.” Doris complained that everyone called her a dunderhead because she hurt herself and Leon would not help her with the chores. “He wouldn’t help, he just said it doesn’t hurt that bad. He didn’t have my foot. I had a hundred baby chicks to catch and put down for the night and I had to crawl on my hands and knees to do it. They were our bread and butter for the coming winter and they were mine, so I took care of them. Leon had no work until the lath mill started up again the following spring. His folks never paid him very much money and we never seemed to have any, but I never questioned it.”

The fact is that Doris and Leon did not get along too well when they were first married. She told about getting so angry with him that she threw dishes at him. He said he was all right as long as he stood still. If he ducked the wrong way, she might have hit him. Leon was an only son and did not learn compassion until later in life. He was a perfectionist in most of the things that he did mechanically and he expected everyone else to be perfect in their life as well. Fortunately, that dissipated as the years wore on. He



Four Generations: Ida, Lottie, Doris, and Jean

never had the patience to teach Doris how to drive a car, so she never learned.

Doris wrote, “The one thing that I missed was having my own money. I had worked in Ladysmith and earned five dollars a week. Of course the dresses and shoes cost a good deal and I had to buy my own

uniforms at the Cozy Café. Any money I had left, my Dad would see I bought things for the family, so I never had any money saved up.

“In the summer of our first year Leon hired my brother, Duane, and they cleared off about fifteen acres of our land. I had a baby girl the next year and that was the start of our family.”

Darthea Jean was born on July 3, 1927. Lloyd David was born in a heavy snowstorm on January 26, 1929. Leon plowed through



Doris on the Farm with the Children

the snow with the horses and went and got his Aunt Martha to be the midwife. Florence Maxine was born on August 31, 1931. There were some problems with her birth, but she was a healthy little girl.



Lloyd and Jean

were put down in salt to make salt pork. The ham and bacon pieces were put in brine for a few months and then taken out to the smoke house to be smoked. These would last all summer, but we had to build a fire and smoke them every couple of days to keep the flies off.

“Then I had pears, peaches, apricots and blue plums canned. We also canned vegetables in the fall of the year. One had to boil the jars for four hours and then take them out of the boiler and seal them very tightly to keep the vegetables from spoiling. Most of my canned food kept very well because I was so careful about the canning. We canned corn, peas and carrots. We also put carrots down in sand to keep them. We also always had a big crockery jar of sauerkraut made. Then, I made all kinds of pickles and canned them. We also picked wild Jim cherries, high bush cranberries and choke cherries and made jelly. We picked wild raspberries and went

Leon worked for his Dad in the mill, but he never received much money so Doris helped out by raising chickens. She wrote of the hardship of those years, “When we were married we were so very poor. We had \$35.00 to last us from November until the middle of March, when the mill started up again. That sounds terrible until you know that we had bought four hundred pounds of flour, fifty pounds of lard, one hundred pounds of sugar, three pails of brown syrup, fifty pounds of salt and a number of other small things. Then we bought a large pig to slaughter. I had to help cut it up. We made some sausage that we fried down; put into quart jars, poured hot lard over it and sealed them up. The pork chops we cut up and fried and placed in a crockery jar and covered with hot lard. This sealed them from the air so they didn’t spoil. Some of the fat pieces

into the blueberry swamps to pick wild blueberries. When the frosts came, we went into the swamps and picked wild cranberries. We also grew lots of tomatoes to can and had a big bin of potatoes, which we put in the basement every fall.

“I raised chickens. At one time I had five hundred to raise from little baby chicks. We had purebreds and we trap nested for eggs to find the best layers. The others got culled and we shipped them to Chicago. We sold breeding stock and eggs. The breeding stock was shipped all over the United States. The chicks were raised in tubs indoors with a hot jug of water to keep them warm. We mixed the feed by hand and mixed in cod liver oil to make them healthy. If you think that wasn’t a lot of work, try it!”

“Because there were such heavy snows, they had to buy their food ahead. There were no snowplows to keep the roads open. The horses either walked on the frozen crust or wallered through the snow. Soon after they were married Leon bought the 1921 Overland from his Dad, but cars were put up on blocks for the winter and they were not used until the frost went out in the spring because the mud holes were so bad the cars would get stuck.”

Doris’ brother, Duane, was only fourteen years old, when he came down to help on the farm, but he knew how to work. He and Leon would use dynamite to clear out the stumps and sometimes would use dynamite to blow up rocks. There was a rock out in the middle of the field east of the house. Duane says it was as big as a horse, about eight feet long. He put six sticks of dynamite on top of the rock and pasted it down with mud. Then he sent Doris to warn people coming down the road in front of the house and lit the dynamite and ran to warn



Jean, Doris, Florence, and Lloyd

people coming down the road from the cemetery. The blast broke the rock to smithereens and he spent a lot of time picking up the pieces.

Doris wrote again, "We built a house before we were married. Most people either had a log house or a shack type tarpaper house, so our house stuck out like a sore thumb. About ten acres of our land had the trees cut off, but it was filled with raspberry brush and willows. Our house was sort of set down in it, but Leon had cleared the brush away for a couple of acres. We were dumb in picking out a house plan from the book--only one bedroom, a kitchen, living room, big closet for a bathroom and too much space taken up for the entry and the back door. We put a big stock tank in the attic and we could go to the pump and put a cover over the nozzle and pump water from the backside of the pump into the tank. Thus we had cold running water and that beat carrying it in by the bucket full. When we wanted to keep things cool, we had a hole in the well platform and we suspended a pail on a rope down into the well. We never had soda pop, we couldn't have afforded it, but we did have root beer. We bought root beer extract, put sugar and yeast in with water and we sealed it in jars and let it sit where it was warm for a few days. Then we had root beer. In the summer time when it was so hot I mixed bread at night and got up a couple of times in the night and punched it down. It was ready to put into the pans when I got up at five so I could bake it early in the day. I almost always baked a cake at the same time.

"There were no combines to thresh the grain as it was cut. We mostly raised oats and we cut them with a scythe and stacked them in sheaves. Manly Pendleton owned a big threshing rig. There was a huge steam engine on wheels and it dragged the threshing machine on behind. The wood-burning boiler provided the power for the thresher. One would never know for sure when the threshing crew was coming. There were eight to ten men with the threshing crew and we women had to be in readiness to feed them. One year we raised our own wheat, threshed it and took it to Boyd where we had it ground into flour. This was new wheat, so I had to learn to make bread with it. It made very moist bread.

"I remember my first garden. I was so hungry for fresh vegetables that when the carrots got as big as pencils I pulled some and we had some fresh carrots. I remember how good they tasted. After that time we had big gardens and I never was hungry like that again.

“Leon said we didn’t have money to buy meat, so we ate some of the chickens and we always had eggs and we were not hungry for protein. In the fall he would get a deer so we had deer meat. I canned this. We had to boil it for four hours in the glass jars so it would keep. Then we got a couple of cows and we had milk and butter. A little later we had four cows. I read those stories where one cow made all the butter and milk and had plenty left as well. The ones that wrote that never had a cow. I had learned to milk when I was a kid and went to the milkman to get our milk. One of the girls was my friend and she taught me to milk a cow. I thought it was great fun. When one milks four of them by hand the fun goes out and it is work. It was a hard and busy life and it’s for sure I never had any time to let any weeds grow under my feet. We separated the cream from the milk with a hand separator. You had to turn the crank to make it work. The calves got the skim milk or I made cottage cheese with it and we sold the cream to the creamery for butter. Sometimes we would shake the cream in a jar to make our own butter. The cows were mine and I got the milk checks to use for the house. We sold the milk to the Sheldon Creamery. The barn work was also mine to do.

“We never bought bread or cookies. There wasn’t anywhere to buy that kind of stuff. I made everything we ate. When summer time came and I started canning stuff for winter, it was a busy time. I raised the produce, prepared it and canned it. Each jar I put away for the winter I would gloat how nice and full my shelves were getting.



Duane and Annie

“In the winter a man would get fish from Lake Superior and peddle fish. When he came, I bought enough for several meals. In summer a meat man would come with a truck to peddle meat. They kept the meat cold in the truck with cream cans full of ice. I always bought some. He gave our dog a wiener, so he had a friend. The meat tasted so good as it was fresh. In later years we killed our own beef in the winter and I canned some and we had that for the summer as well.”

When Jean was six years old and just starting to school Doris and Leon decided to put an addition onto the house. Since were three children now it was hard to make room for all of them. Duane came down to help out and

Leon borrowed Jim Novak's horses to pull the slip to get the dirt out for the basement. Lloyd was delighted because he could watch what was being



The New Addition at the Farmhouse

done. They found a huge rock in the basement and had to use dynamite to blow it apart. That was exciting. Everyone had to stand far away so flying debris wouldn't hit them. The blast lifted the tin off the window in Lloyd's little bedroom and broke the glass. It was just a little tiny closet just off the big bedroom. The house was big with four bedrooms. Two of those bedrooms were upstairs along with a huge attic to play in. The children loved to go up there on rainy days and play. Leon also dug a sewer and put in a septic tank so they could get a bathroom hooked up. No more freezing to go to the little house out back in the winter. It was many years before Leon finished siding the new part of the house because then the taxes would go up. No one minded having a house that was partly sided with tarpaper.

The family went often to visit Grandpa and Grandma Romig. Sometimes they went in the evening and Doris would visit with her mother while Eugene would talk to Leon about Russia and Stalin and how he probably was the Anti-Christ. Leon would sit in the lamplight reading the newspaper and saying, "Yes" every now and then. The children had a nickname for Grandpa and Grandma Romig. They called them "Pa" and



“Pa and Macaroni”

“Grandma Macaroni.” In the summer they each got to spend a week on the farm and enjoy their company and help to get the cows and watch while they milked them.

Doris wrote again about the time during the World War, “The farmers planted commercial peas. We had a pea vinery in Sheldon where they threshed out the peas. After the peas were cut, the neighbors asked me if I wanted to glean the peas. Yes, surely, as many were left fastened to the low vines. During the Second World War they had German prisoners of war at Camp McCoy. These prisoners were brought to farms that needed help. They came to the field to load the peas onto the truck. They were

happy men and laughed and sang. Anyway, they used to try so hard to talk to us, but no use, we could not understand them. We had lots of peas and we shelled and canned them.”

“Grandpa Pickering had the sawmill and planing mill. When they trimmed the boards there was lot of firewood left. The family would go down on Saturday evening and pick up all the wood that had accumulated. Sometimes the board pieces were long enough for the children to use them to build a house around the trees. Nails were a cheap toy for them to use. They kept themselves amused for hours this way and we had very little quarreling.”

Lloyd writes, “Well, I do remember that there were times we were promised an ice cream cone if we picked up the trailer load of wood. Maybe Dad didn’t have the money and didn’t want to tell us, but sometimes we would just drive right on by the store on the corner and go home without our ice cream cones. We would kick the back of the seat because we were so mad, but it never did any good. Those were great big three dipper cones and we had to keep licking it fast so it wouldn’t melt all over, but they were so good. Sometimes Mrs. Tainter would get a new flavor and we would get to try something we had never had before. Jean remembers the time I started

working at the lumberyard and Dad said, ‘Well, Lloyd is earning his own money now, so he can pay for his own cone.’ I made about ten cents an hour and that is what the cone would cost, so I decided I didn’t want any and went on home without one while everyone else had a cone to lick. It didn’t bother me enough to remember it, so I guess I enjoyed being a martyr.”



Florence, Jean, Pat and Lloyd

The front porch had a vine that grew up every summer. It was screened in and it was the place where everyone would sit to chat or to shuck the peas or to snip the beans. The family who came out for dinner would work at that in the afternoon. Everyone chipped in, including the children.

Doris kept the cows herself. She wrote, “I had a small red bull. He was just a yearling. I brought the cows up one night and he didn’t see me come. I had shut the pasture gate. He came up and he couldn’t get out and proceeded to tear the gate all to pieces. I was in the barn in the haymow. I had shut the barn door, but he was so mad I was afraid he would smash the door down. The children were alone in the house and I was afraid they would come out. The bull roamed around for a bit and then took off for the woods again. I was out of the haymow and the barn so fast and ran for the house. I did not get my chores done that night until Leon came home from

work. I also raised a big white bull. He was two years old. He would get out of the pasture and Jean, who was ten, was the only one who could get him back. She would get a big slice of bread and butter and lead him back in. He followed her like a dog.

“My kids walked a mile to school so it was up early in the morning and early to bed at night. They were tired so no problem. No matter what the weather was they went to school. One time a bad blizzard came up. I didn’t know what to do as I had a baby at home, but one of the neighbors came by with his sled and horses to get all the kids that came his way. He had a large family in school. By the time he got back to our place the horses could just slog along the snow was so bad, but my kids were safe.”

The children weren’t a bit worried. It was a great adventure. There were times they walked to school in snow that was so deep they had to take turns breaking a path. If they didn’t keep the scarf bundled around their face in the bitter, cold wind, they would arrive at school with a white, frozen spot on the face. The teacher made them put snow on it until it thawed out. Then it would get bright red when the blood came back.



Lloyd, Pat, Florence, and Jean

The family dog was called Pat. He was a good dog and very protective of the children. Duane had a 1935 Plymouth car at that time and the

children decided to have their picture taken with Pat while they were sitting on the running board.



Florence, Byron, and Lloyd

Leon bought two white rabbits. Since the children wouldn't eat them, there were a lot of white rabbits. There were also quite a few cats. For some reason, the cats didn't eat the rabbits. The children decided that it would be nice to have their picture taken with the cats.



Byron and Jean

Again Lloyd writes, "We had the 4H club. I had a calf as my project and I bought the feed for it and tended and watered it and changed the rope so it had grass to eat. Florence had chickens as her project and she had to take care of them. We



Florence and Her Chickens

had meetings at the schoolhouse and talked about farming, though we knew even then that we would never become farmers.”

Doris added, “We knew we were going to disband as the Second World War was on and some of the boys were going so we decided that we could have a party at our home. We wondered what to do with the leftover money so we all decided to invest in ice cream and have all we could eat. There was a large group so we got five pails of ice cream. We ate and the children went out and played ball in Novak’s field and then came back and ate some more, but we could not eat it all. Since we had a

refrigerator with a large freezer, we stored it away and everyone came back the next Sunday and finished it up.”

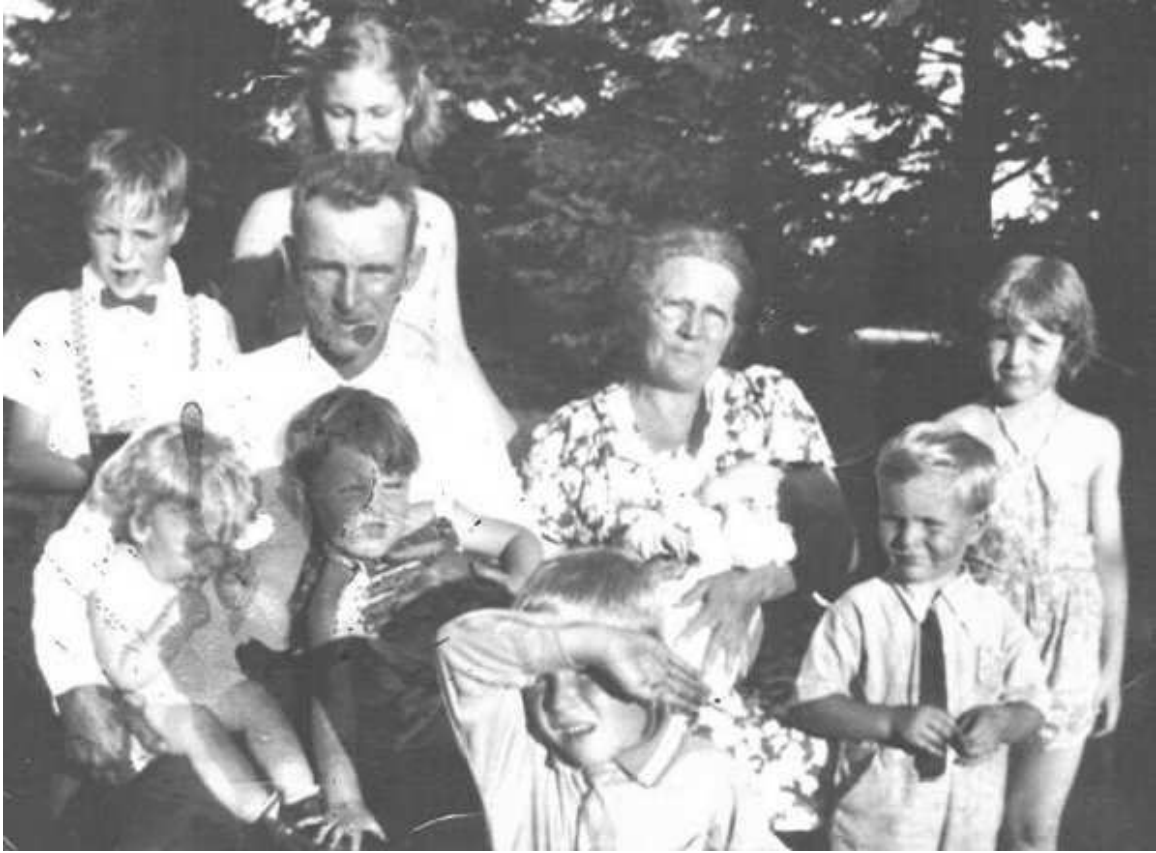
Florence remembers the day that Byron disappeared. He was just a little guy at the time. She writes, “Everyone was in a panic and began to search. One went to the barn and someone went to the creek and the house was given a thorough search. I was looking around outside the house. Dad had brought home a large box for us to play in and that box moved. I looked inside and there was little Byron. He was giggling so hard that the box was moving. He was delighted with his game.”



Little Byron

It was always lots of fun to gather at Grandma and Grandpa Romig’s. Grandma really knew how to fry the chicken. With the gravy and mashed

potatoes, and some vegetables from the garden there would be a wonderful meal and it didn't take a whole lot of money to do it.



Back Row: Lloyd, Jean Middle Row: Eugene, Lottie holding Gail, and Florence
Bottom Row: Byron, Gary, Ted, and Darrell

The picture above had some ink spilled on it, but because it was such an important picture, we decided to use it anyway.

Florence remembered the glory of Christmas. “At Christmas time there were new dresses for dolls made from leftover scraps. When I was five, I got a big doll and a buggy. Lloyd always got books, but I was a poor reader so I never got any. Our favorite times were looking at the Christmas Wish Books. Lloyd asked for a toy farm and Santa brought it on Christmas Day. Much of Christmas was new robes and sleepwear. Some Mother sewed and some she bought. She milked the cows so the money she earned from that was hers to spend as she wished. Dad always took us for a tree. It was often not perfect, but we would just turn the bad side to the corner so that it couldn't be seen. We put candles on the tree, but we only lighted them for a little while on Christmas Eve because we knew it was dangerous. In our

stockings were an orange, an apple, a banana, a package of gum and a small sack of candy. On top there was a popcorn ball. These were great treats in the post depression era of the thirties.”

There was a large family gathering at the Romig farmhouse one day and it was evidently Leon that took the picture because he is not in it.



Back Row: Duane, Annie, Lloyd, Doris, Lottie, Marie, and Glenn
Front Row: Gary, Eugene, Ted, Gail, Florence, Nancy, Darrell, and Byron

There were especially enjoyable times when Uncle Bill and Aunt Ann came to visit. The children would run up the road to meet them when they saw the car coming. A lot of times they got fooled because Uncle Bill often changed cars just as he had when he was younger. Leon liked to give people nicknames. He called Doris “Tottie” and Lloyd “Bunky” and Byron was called “Beeky.” Florence was “Flissy” and Jean was “Jeanie,” but her first name was Darthea. Duane was always “Uncle Bill “ to the children because he had been called that name by a neighbor when he was young and Leon always used that name for him. On many Sunday evenings the family would

gather at Leon and Doris' place for dinner. Doris usually provided the meat and once in a while someone would bring a cake, but mostly everyone thought it was a wonderful thing to enjoy the good cooking. They would gather around to listen to the radio and Aunt Darce would play some games with the children. One afternoon the family had their picture taken.



Florence, Byron, Leon, Doris, Jean, and Lloyd
David Sanford in Jean's lap

David Sanford was the son of Leon's sister Evelyn. She was ill at the time the picture was taken and Doris was caring for little David.

Byron was born on May 31, 1938. He has many pleasant memories of the years on the farm. "My first memory was of being in the wide-slatted crib that was in the folks bedroom. I woke up one evening in the midst of a family disturbance of some sort, a memory short-lived, but very real.

“Others followed over the course of those first years. World War II was very real to our family. Dad's first act on coming home from work was to turn on Edward R. Morrow for the latest war updates and daily news. This was after I had spent time fiddling with the dial, trying to get ‘Captain Midnight’ and ‘Little Orphan Annie’ on the old console radio that stood in the living room. Even the toys were war-oriented. I was occupied with puzzles of ‘Midway’ and the ‘Gremlins,’ which were rumored to haunt the planes of WWII. My first major toy was a windup battleship that shot sparks and rolled across the floor.

“The older children did their share to take care of me as well. The circular pattern of the house made it a track for my tricycle and, even before I could pedal it on my own, it was great fun to have big brother Lloyd push me around from room to room. ‘Horsey,’ riding on his back, and ‘Annie, Annie, I over,’ a ball game at the slab playhouse, were great experiences as well. As busy as he was with the lumberyard and farming, Dad got involved in the play. The time we built and flew the big box kite was memorable.

“There were quiet evenings on the banks of the Little Jump River waiting for the spring run of Red Suckers. The meat was often soft and very boney, but it was a good source of free and nutritious food for the family. Sundays were picnic days when the extended family showed up for dinner. The swing in the huge old Maple out front was active in those times. All the children wanted to fly up into the wind.

“When everyone was busy, my imagination took over. I had an imaginary friend that was with me in play; Florence called him ‘Yahoody.’ He was an easy companion to play with and occupied many hours which otherwise could have been lonely.

“Dad would sometimes take me with him to the mill when he had extra work to do. It was a great time to climb up on the lumber piles and feel very important. These were lean, but good times, and through the years, Mom reminded me that, when we traveled to town or to visit the family, I always smiled and was happy when we turned the corner by the mailbox and saw the house. I liked being ‘home.’”

Duane and Leon were good friends throughout the years. Leon would tell Duane jokes until he would almost cave in laughing. Duane came down often to visit the farm. At Easter he would bring candy for everyone. It was

the only Easter candy the children would have. It was fun for the children to go and spend a week with Duane and Ann in Ladysmith because they could get their first treat of an ice cream sundae or an ice cream soda. All of the children loved their Uncle Bill and Aunt Annie. This is a picture of Annie by the green Ford Coupe they owned during the war.

The latter part of August 1944, the farm was sold for \$3,000.00 and Leon took his old shop building and split it in two and built in between for a house. He had to do that because there were restrictions on any



Annie



Leon at the Cupboard

buildings because of the war. The family first moved into the store on the corner and put in some partitions to make temporary living quarters. This was the old Tainter store where they had stopped to buy their ice cream cones. Shortly after Thanksgiving the family moved into the new house in the mill yard even though the inside was not finished. This is a picture of Leon at the cupboard in the new house. He never cooked very much, but he is moving a hot pot in the picture.

Leon and Doris lived in this house until all of the children married and moved away. During this time they acquired a cocker spaniel. They called the dog Teddy and spoiled him as if he were an only child.



Leon with Teddy



Leon and Doris

DEDICATION

I was nine years old when I first held my little brother, Byron, in my arms. In that first year of his life, we thought we would lose him because he caught Scarlet Fever and was very sick. Now, in August of 2003, he has done all of the graphic work in this book. He repaired and toned all of the pictures and placed them in the right position and put the text underneath. This took many hours during the month. We have spent a lot of time together in our later years and we have never had a word of disagreement about anything. During this summer we took walks in the woods and reminded ourselves how Dad would have enjoyed the trees. Thank you, little brother, for all of your help over the years and for being the kind, gentle and loving person you have been for all of your life.

Brother Lloyd

THE MAJOLICA WARE PITCHER

On the back page is a picture of the pitcher that Theodore and Ida Allen took with them in the covered wagon when they moved to Nebraska in 1890. As you can see, it is in very excellent condition considering that it is so very old.

