I was born November 23, 1916, in Pine County, Pine City, Minnesota, on a farm six miles west of town, known as the Pangerl place. I suppose when I was about two years old, Dad and Mother bought a farm seven miles west of town on the Snake River. We lived on the Kraft place about a year.

They tell me I was a very homely baby. My forehead slanted back and was not developed until later. On October 25, 1918, I had a baby sister, Irene. I don't remember her asking of she could come and live with us, but she moved right in anyway.

The farm was mainly woods, and Daddy cleared the land little by little. As he cleared the land, we would pick up the brush and start brush fires on a nice day in the spring, and we would take a lunch, and sit around the fire and eat it. I remember one time Hugo Saummer, our hired man, sent me home for some potatoes and he threw them in the coals, and when they were done, we ate them. I shall never forget how good they were with lots of butter on them. Later on after most of the land was cleared and made into fields of grain, corn and hay, Daddy bought another piece of land that joined ours and ran along the river. I walked along that river many times to get the cows after old Rover died. While Rover was living we never had to get the cows, because at five o'clock sharp every day Rover would head out for the river and wherever the cows were he would bring them home for milking. He understood mostly Bohemian. For "Come here," you would say "Putsem."

The old brick house we lived in had three bedrooms upstairs, a kitchen, living room, and bedroom downstairs. The bedroom was barely large enough for a bed. So one Sunday when we were quite small yet, I remember, Mother went out in the shed and came in with an ax, a maul and she started knocking the wall out between the bedroom and living room. Of course after she started, there was no other way, Daddy had to help her. Maybe that's where I got my sneaky ideas. There was no bathroom or electricity on the farm. We had kerosene lights, and after supper and Irene and I had the dishes done, and Mother and Dad got in from doing the milking, they would separate the cream right in the kitchen with a separator that sat next to the stove. After that was all done we would take the lamp into the living room and sit around the light. In the winter, there was a wood burning stove in the living room. You had to sit close to that too, to keep warm. You were really only warm on one side, and cold on the other. Many nights when it was really cold, Daddy would take a blanket and lay by the stove on the floor all night to keep the fire going so we wouldn't freeze overnight. During the night it would get so cold in the kitchen after the fire went out in the range the water would freeze in the pail, or in the teakettle that was left standing on the stove. The water was all pumped by hand in an old rundown pump house, and we carried it in and had a pail with a dipper in it for drinking. Water for washing dishes was carried in by the pail and put into a reservoir that was built right into the wood burning cook stove. Then when you washed dishes you used a dishpan, filled it with warm water, and set it on the table and went about your job, until later Daddy built a cupboard in the kitchen with a sink in it and a real drain pipe that you could use. Yes, you could pour the water into the sink and it would run down, but only under the sink, and there stood a pail to catch it and when it was full you carried it out, or

it ran over as it did many times and there was water all over the floor. Later years Daddy built a sewer line into the kitchen sink, and no more carrying water out. What a relief.

After school each night it was our job to fill the wood box with split wood for the kitchen range, and then pile up a big pile on the floor for the heating stove in the living room to keep us warm until the next morning.

There were no cars on the road in the winter. The old Ford we had was put up on blocks, and all winter we got about in the cutter or the big sled. The snow got so high you couldn't see the fences so you drove right over the top of them. The drifts got so high in the yard, Irene and I used to climb up the drift and walk right up on top of the chicken barn roof.

When there was a big blizzard, Daddy would go out in the granary where we kept sacks of butternuts, that we picked in the fall, and he would bring in a pail of these delicious nuts, and crack them while Mother made a batch of fudge. Now that was real good candy. Then we would get out the old black frying pan, and make a big batch of popcorn. Those were the good old days. Those are the days one remembers when you get older.

I don't remember the tornado taking our old log barn, but I remember it taking our good apple tree. The day after the tornado I remember Daddy wading in knee-deep water with hip boots on. I don't know what they were looking for, but they were out in the pasture. Then after that Daddy built a lean-to for the cows, and later built the hay barn onto the lean-to. We spent many days playing in the hay barn, and playing with the new kittens on the barn step in the sunshine. When we were small and weren't any help in the barn we would play imaginary house in the walk way of the barn while Mother and Dad milked the cows, and when we were a little older, we would play school with the cows, and Irene would have so many cows for her students and I would have so many, and we were both teachers.

At five years old I started school in a two room school house (Royalton School) two miles from home. That first year was terrible. I cried every day, I was so lonesome, so the next year, they sent Irene to school. She was only four, but she kept up with the rest of the class all through school. They only used one room of the school, so there were eight grades in that room, one teacher, and a smoky old stove in the back of the room that didn't do much but smoke. Some mornings when we got to school it would be so cold in there, and the air was just blue. There was a fountain in back of the room, and the boys had to keep that full all day for our drinking water. The toilet was out in back of the school house. You carried your lunch, and we usually had peanut butter sandwiches, sometimes honey, seldom meat. In later years Mother would send a jar of soup along and we would put it in the tank of the furnace where the water was very warm and heat the soup. It would smell up the whole school room. Classes would last about ten minutes and for class you just walked to the front of the room, and stood there during class, then you took your seat, and the teacher would call up the next class, until she had all eight grades completed. That went on all day as she went through her reading, geography,

history, arithmetic, spelling, and sometimes art. School started at nine and was dismissed at four. We had recess of fifteen minutes in the morning, one hour for lunch, and a fifteen minute recess in the afternoon .

Mother or Daddy always took us to school every morning with the horses and sled in the winter, or the old Ford in the spring and fall. In the spring the roads were very muddy and we would get stuck. The ruts would be very deep and you had to stay in the rut or you would slide right off the road. It was slippery clay. Sometimes going up the big hill the clay would stick to the wheels of the car and they would get so big, Daddy would have to get out in the middle of the hill and clean the wheels off so he could go on. They would always meet us after school too, and we would always watch the top of the hill to see the horses' ears come over the hill. Sometimes on a nice day Mother would walk and meet us, and I remember one day, she made cream puffs, and filled them with real whipping cream and met us and we sat down along the ditch and ate those cream puffs. I shall never forget that. Every time I eat a cream puff, I think of that wonderful day. I was a fast walker, and Irene was so slow. Then when she got far enough behind, she would start to cry, and I would have to wait for her. That really bugged me, so finally I decided to tall her stories so she would keep up with me. I would make up stories as I went along about a poor child who had nothing to eat, and no pretty clothes to wear, and then some way or other, she would get rich, and how she would go out and buy some pretty clothes, and how nice it would be. I don't know how the stories always seemed to come to an end when Mother or Dad met us, and we climbed into the wagon or sled.

Oh and then there were the Christmas programs. We practiced plays and songs from Thanksgiving and Christmas. That big night was really a thrill. Mother would curl our hair, and one time she made us each a maroon dress with a cape on it. It was trimmed in black satin, around the cape. They were really pretty dresses. All the people in the neighborhood would come to the school that night, and watch us put on our program. What a thrill. At the end of the school year, there was always a picnic for all the parents, and friends of the students. There would be lots of food, lemonade, and homemade ice cream. After the big dinner there would be races of all kinds, and games. One time at one of the picnics, the teacher took me around the neck and said she had something to show me, and she took me up to her desk and gave me a little red purse with fifty cents in it for perfect attendance. I was really thrilled.

When I was about ten years old, just before Christmas, I was sitting in school, and I got a terrible pain in my chest. The teacher didn't know what to do with me, so she sat me in front of an open window all day. That night it started to snow and blow, and it was just terrible, and I kept getting worse all the time. I had pleurisy. Many days and nights I sat in the big black leather rocker. I couldn't lay down for pain, but that first night I remember laying on some chairs, that Mother had put together, and put some blankets on, and made a bed for me, so I could lay close to the stove. And I could hear Mother and Dad crying while I lay there moaning. But I suppose the next day Grandma or someone told Mother to heat salt in a pillow case and put that on my chest and my back, and that's

the way it was for days to come, until I was ready to go back to school. I didn't miss the school program though, but it was a close call.

There were no televisions, or radios when I was real small, and the only entertainment we had was card parties, in the winter, or picnics in the summer. Other than that we would go to the neighbors' who were mostly relatives. I remember once when I was very small, we took the buggy and went over to see Grandma and Grandpa Pangerl who lived about two miles from us, and on the way home, we could hear the wolves howling in the woods. I was trying to pull all the blankets into the buggy, so the wolves wouldn't get them.

Well, when we went over to Peters' that was a riot. They had a big kitchen, and sometimes the folks would sit in the other room, and we would shut the door in between, and then we would play blind man's bluff. It got pretty noisy, but fun.

It was always fun to go to Aunt Bada's. She would so often make fudge, and set it outside to cool, and then bring it in and beat it by hand, and you would just sit there and hope it would get hard pretty soon. One time after the fudge set, we were all sitting around the table, eating nuts and candy, and I was sitting next to Uncle Bill. By mistake I ate his candy, and when he looked down his candy was gone. I was so embarrassed I could have crawled under the table.

Mother's folks lived seven miles east of Pine City on a farm. So when we went to see Grandpa and Grandma Heyda, that was a big day, and a long one. If we went by horse and sled, it was an all day affair. Later when we got a car, it speeded things up quite a bit.

I remember one Easter Sunday when we were all over to Grandma and Grandpa Heyda's for dinner. Aunt Clara and Aunt Polly worked in St. Paul. When they got ready to leave and take the train back to the Cities, it was just like a funeral. We wouldn't see them again for a long time.

Mother always had a big garden, and she would can all summer long. We would have hundreds of quarts of vegetables, pickles and sauce in the cellar. There was always a great big pile of potatoes, cabbage, and carrots, and sometimes apples stored down there for the winter. Then when we butchered a pig, Mother would render out all the lard, and store that upstairs in a room that wasn't heated. Sometimes she would fry big pans of meat, and put that in a crock, and pour the lard over the meat to keep the meat from spoiling. Some meat she would smoke in our smoke house, which Daddy built. Oh yes, and we would make sausage. Nothing better than homemade smoked sausage. We would make our own root beer, and beer, and store that up in the cool room too. We had no ice box or refrigerator, so butter and cream was lowered into the well in a can.

Mother used to plant a lot of peas, and ground cherries, but she never harvested many. Daddy and I were great for going into the garden and eating peas and ground cherries, and there were never any left for harvesting.

Occasionally, the Heydas from St. Louis Park would come up for a Sunday dinner. That was Frank Heyda's, Grandpa Heyda's brother and their family. Oh my what a time. We would have to kill chickens, gather fresh vegetables from the garden and make homemade ice cream. They were all city folks, and had nice clothes and wore makeup, and had their hair all curled. What a thrill to see something like that when I was small.

We always had a playhouse in the summer time in one building or other. When the winter supply of wood was gone in the spring, Irene and I would go into the wood shed, pile the little bit of wood left into a corner, and go to the lumber pile, and carry lumber all day to make a floor for ourselves, then we would get boxes and make furniture, and take our dishes and dolls out there and spend many a day out there. One time after Grandma and Grandpa Heyda sold their farm and moved into town, they came to stay with us for a few days, and we invited Grandma to our playhouse for dinner. We had gone into the garden and picked peas and carrots. We shelled the peas and sliced the little carrots, and put some on each plate. Grandma took her fork and tried to stick it into one of the peas, and it flew across the room, and she laughed so hard the tears were running down her cheeks. She was always game for a good laugh. In the fall Daddy and the hired man would have to go into the woodshed and clean it out, and put all the lumber back, so they could fill it with wood for the winter. Then Daddy built a new granary, and put bins in for the different grains. That was really great, then we had all kinds of rooms, but that too had to be cleaned out before the threshers came and filled them with grain. Then we would move to the corn crib, but it could rain in there so we couldn't play in there too much.

We had many good times in that granary. After we got older we used the upstairs of the granary for dances. They would hire an accordion player, and everyone would bring something for lunch and then they would take up a collection to pay the accordion player. Such fun.

Daddy used to play the button accordion by ear, and Mother strummed on the guitar, and they played for many house parties when Irene and I were quite small, because I can remember going to sleep waiting for the party to be over with. One very dark night when Daddy was going to play at a house party I shall never forget. We were all ready to go, so Mother, Irene, and I got into the back seat of the old Ford. Daddy got in the front seat and then decided he forgot something, so he went back inside the house to get it. In the meantime we decided we had to go potty before we went, so Mother got out with us, and we went to the outside toilet, which was all we had. Then Daddy came back, got in the car, and drove off leaving us all standing in the yard, hollering at him for all we were worth. He got about a mile down the road, and made some kind of a remark to Mother about the lights on the car, and when she didn't answer he looked around to find he had

left us at home. What a relief when we saw him come back, and I can remember how they laughed and laughed about it.

Our old Model-T Ford, probably a 1921, was black with side curtains and black leather seats. The side curtains were made of kind of a black canvas material. They snapped on for rainy weather, surely not for cold weather, because you couldn't use a car in the winter. They had windows cut in them that were kind of like heavy plastic of today. In the summer you could snap the side curtains off and enjoy the summer breeze. Of course the cars were much higher off the ground than they are today, so we had running boards to step on to get into the car. There were no heaters in cars of that day, that was just a dream. Then in 1929 we bought a brand new Plymouth. That cost Daddy and Mother around $900.00, and I can remember Daddy saying he didn't know how they were ever going to get that car paid for. That was a pile of money in that day and age.

When Mother and Dad were married they got a cylinder record player. That was called a phonograph. It was not electric as you might know, but you had to wind it up, and then it would play until it unwound, then it would get slower and slower until it stopped if you didn't get there fast enough to wind it up again. Finally we bought a used one that played those new flat records like we have today. We used to hurry with our chores after school so we could go in the house and listen to records. We didn't have very many but we listened to them over and over. Finally we got a radio, but that was run by the car battery. So when Whoopee John was on the air, Daddy would run out and take the battery out of the old Ford, bring it in, hook it up to the radio, and after the program was over, out the battery went into the old Ford again. Finally we got a battery just for the radio, but when it went dead, that was it.

Saturdays when I was about ten years old were never happy ones. I usually had a dentist appointment and a music lesson, which I detested. My teeth were very bad, and I was always going in to have a tooth filled. I could think of many things I would like to do besides practicing piano.

At the age of twelve we went to catechism. We went to Sunday school, but before we could receive First Holy Communion we had to go every day for about a month. Irene, Grace and I stayed with Grandma and Grandpa Heyda while we were attending daily classes. After we received our First Holy Communion we were confirmed two weeks later because Daddy said we were so far from town we couldn't afford to come in for class for two whole years.

When I was in seventh grade, you were required to take a state exam to pass the eighth grade. After I took my seventh grade exams, the teacher gave me the eighth grade state exam because she had some extra ones. She sent them in to the state and one day they called from the courthouse and told me that I had passed all the eighth grade exams. So consequently I had to go through the eighth grade with very little to do, so I read a library book a day.

There was one Christmas I shall never forget. Mother and Dad had no money, so Daddy built us a cupboard, stove, table, doll bed, cradle, and doll dresser. When we got up Christmas morning it was all setting in the living room by the tree. Irene got a girl doll. It was standing by the stove with a spoon in its hand. There was a kettle on the stove, like she was cooking. I got a boy doll called Buddy Lee, with overalls on, and he had his arms full of sticks, like he was bringing in wood for the cook stove. The furniture was made out of lumber from orange crates, siding from the granary, and whatever was laying around. We never got anything expensive for gifts but always enough to make Christmas special.

Easter Sunday was always a big day too, with the Easter baskets, and after that we would go to grandma and Grandpa Pangerl's where the whole family gathered, and there were many decorated Easter eggs. There we would have contests to see who had the strongest eggs, and each person would pick out an egg, and go around and peck eggs. By that I mean you would hold your egg in your hand and the other person would take his egg and tap yours on top to see whose egg would break first.

Saturday was the day for baths. You didn't just run in and turn the water on and jump in. First you got the ash tub and filled it with warm water, set it in the middle of the kitchen and then one by one you took your bath, and carried the tub out and dumped it. Later on when I was a teenager Daddy tore down the old pump house and built a new one. He put a stove in there with a big water tank on top of it that heated the water for washing clothes, taking baths, and washing the milking utensils. Then we could take our baths right in the pump house. We did all the dirty work out there instead of in the kitchen.

I don't remember much about the old wooden washing machine, but I remember turning the wringer for Mother, and I also remember she rubbed all the clothes on a washboard. First before you started to wash, you had to slice up some homemade soap, and put it on the stove to melt it. Then you put some in the washing machine, and some in a big boiler that sat on the kitchen stove. After the clothes were washed, they were put into the boiler and boiled for about twenty minutes to make them white. The clothes were all hung outside on lines except the dish towels. They were laid on the green grass to whiten. In the winter they were hung out to freeze, and brought in at night and hung over lines that were put up from door to door to dry.

When we ironed we used iron irons. You had to put them on the wood stove to heat them up, and when they cooled down you replaced it with another one, and used that until that one cooled down. Later on we got an iron that had a tank on the back, and you filled the tank with gasoline, then you could iron for about two hours before you ran out of gas. All clothes had to be sprinkled and ironed. There was no permanent press fabric.

The soap used for washing dishes was bar soap, and it was not like the detergent we have today that surrounds the grease and takes it away. By the time you got done washing dishes the water was so greasy and curdly, the grease just stuck to the edge of the dishpan.

The floors were mostly wood, either painted or varnished. Some were just unfinished, and you didn't just wipe them up. You took a bar of soap and a brush, and scrubbed them until they were shiny clean.

When Daddy started clearing the land the fields were small and he had a walking plow that was pulled by one horse, and you walked behind and guided the plow as it plowed one furrow at a time. As the fields got larger they bought a sulky plow. I remember Goldie and Queen our two horses we had for many years, but I don't remember much about the other horses. Goldie and Queen would do anything you told them to. If you went to the neighbor's and wanted them to go home you just tied the lines up and they would go home.

Haying was much different. First you cut the hay with a mower. After it was just right you raked it up and put it in piles so you could come around with the wagon and throw it on. If it rained before it was raked up, it had to be tedded, which was a machine that kicked it up and turned it over. Some people had to do that by hand. After it was on the wagon, it was hauled to the hay barn and we drove the wagon right into the barn, and part of the cows' stantions were removed, and the horses came out the front of the barn, then they were hooked up to the hay fork which lifted the hay up into the barn, and a man was up there to spread they hay around.

Grain was cut and after it was cut it came out of the grain binder tied into bundles. They were all put into shocks in the field until all the grain was cut then it was loaded on wagons and pulled into stacks. It stayed there until the threshing machine came around. Joe M. Pangerl had the threshing machine and when he was done with a job he would blow the big steam whistle on the steam engine, and then you knew he would be coming to your place.

It was so much fun to see and hear that steam engine pull into your yard. It sounded so big, and so powerful. The threshing machine was pulled in between the stacks and the bundles were pitched into the machine. There was a man along the machine with grain sacks that caught the grain as it came out. That was hauled into the granary and dumped into the bins. The straw came out a big blower and was piled up for bedding for the cows and horses in the winter.

I don't remember how the corn was cut or what was done with it but I do know that it was in shocks in the field and on nice warm days in the fall, we would go out and break the cobs off by hand and take the husks off. They were hauled into the corn crib. In the spring some of the cobs were run through a machine to shell it, and that was used for planting. They also fanned the grain in a machine which threw out the chaff and the kernels were used for seed.

The farm work and the field work remained the same until I was a teenager, but the house work became much easier. Daddy and Mother got a Maytag washing machine with a gas

engine to run it. They first got a kerosene stove to use in the summer time so you didn't have to use the wood stove in the heat, and later got a gasoline stove. We even got a gasoline lamp and lantern. We thought those lights were so bright, and I guess they were in comparison to the kerosene lights. We didn't get electricity until after I left home. The telephone hung on the kitchen wall and we were on a party line with about twenty other families, so you had to wait for your ring, but you could tell by the ring who they were calling. You could lift up the receiver and listen in on any conversation. The rings were in codes, you might say. Our ring was one short ring and two long rings.

When I was about eight years old, each morning before we went to school I would get up, make all the beds, dust the furniture and take a dust mop and dust the bedrooms, then I did the same in the living room. Irene got up and made breakfast. After breakfast we were off to school. I always did the cleaning, and Irene always did the cooking. Maybe that is why Irene turned out to be such a good cook, and I couldn't boil water when we got married. But Mother always helped with the field work, and spent a lot of time with her chickens. She dearly loved every chicken in that barn, and they all knew her.

As we grew up we learned to sing many songs. Mother was always singing. So while Irene and I did the supper dishes we would pick out three songs, and we had to be done with the dishes before we would finish those songs. Sometimes we made it and sometimes we didn't.

As our farm grew and so did we, we had to help with the milking. Irene started before I did. But one sad day Daddy told me there were too many cows for the three of them to milk and I would have to learn. I think I hated the thought so bad I never forgot that day. It was May 20, 1928.

About 1929 the great Depression hit and the price of everything went to pot. There were no jobs. Many people lost their farms. The folks hung on for dear life. We didn't have anything fancy to eat, but we lived on our garden vegetables. That as I remember was tomatoes, tomatoes, and some more tomatoes. I couldn't look a stewed tomato in the eye for years. I can remember one day Daddy gave me a little notebook, and told me to write in there that (I believe) eggs were nine cents a dozen and cream was eleven cents a pound. Mother would gather her eggs and take them to the Greely store where she traded them for sugar, flour, and the things we weren't able to raise. But they always managed to come home from the grocery store with a little bag of candy, ten cents worth, which is probably what you would get today for a dollar.

It was during the Depression that I attended high school in Pine City. I stayed with Aunt Clara and Uncle Ray. Uncle Ray worked as a butter maker in the creamery. Daddy would haul wood to them and I am not sure what arrangement they had for my staying with them. On Friday night after school was out Dad and Mother were always there to get me and take me home over the weekend, then back to town on Sunday night.

My high school days were not happy ones. I was so shy and if I was asked a question by the teacher and I wasn't sure if it was correct I would say I didn't know, rather than say it and be laughed at for having it wrong. I was always so worried about my lessons, all I did every night was just study. One night a week there was a family show at the theater, which Uncle Ray, Aunt Clara and I always attended. It as cheap, and it was a series, "Rin Tin Tin." Boy were they ever good. I was an average student you might say, never broke any records, but never flunked either.

Over the weekends when I was home, we would take the sled and go to someone's house for a card party, or a house dance. Just before I graduated Daddy came to get me one day after school on a Friday night and after we got out of town, he stopped, got out of the car, walked around and got in on the other side, and said, "This is it, you are going to learn to drive the car." I drove home, and that was my lesson. From then on I drove the old Plymouth all over.

Finally graduation came. I thought it never would. For the prom, I wore a green taffeta dress in my junior year, and in my senior year I wore a long white dress to the prom, then Mother shortened it so I could wear it to commencement. I also wore a big brim white hat to baccalaureate.

After graduation I had no job and nothing to look forward to, but one day Daddy came home from town and said he had talked to the man that had something to do with a relief program they had to help out farmers who had no feed for the cattle, and he said I could come to work there on Monday morning. I was thrilled to death to have a job, and scared. On Sunday night the folks took me to town to stay with Aunt Clara and Uncle Ray again. Monday morning I got up and had the red measles, I guess, anyway they were the bad kind, and was I sick. Aunt Clara did everything to make me comfortable. She made me sour soup, and fed me blueberry sauce which really hit the spot. But my job was gone.

After that siege, I went back to the farm broken-hearted. Then Irene, Grace Pangerl, and I decided to go to St. Paul to do housework. We got a job right away. We stayed with Daddy's sister Aunt Katie, and Uncle Gust. Irene and I didn't work too far apart. Irene just hated her job and wasn't going to stay. I never could believe that to do housework, they could find something for you to do every minute of the day. We didn't even do that on the farm. Well, we worked for one week, and we got paid on Thursday. I got my week's pay on Thursday night which I believe was twelve dollars, and I thought I was really rich, but on Friday morning I woke up and had the mumps. They had four children there, so the lady of the house asked me to leave before any of the children got up, so I did. I called Irene, and told her my situation, and she never said a word to anyone. She just went and packed her clothes, ran out the door, and met me at the streetcar. We went back to Aunt Katie's and called the folks, and Daddy was right down to get us. I guess I wasn't supposed to have a job, and I cried half the way home.

Finally Daddy said, "Maybe it is supposed to be this way because I think you have a job waiting for you at home." He told me that Gust Bergstrom had asked if I would play piano for his orchestra. I had only taken those few lessons, and hadn't played any since. But I took the job. Finally I got the hang of it, either playing by notes or by ear. But Gust insisted I buy an accordion from him, so the folks bought me one and I paid them back with the money I made playing piano.

Less than a year after I got the accordion Irene and I went out entertaining at meetings. Irene played the guitar. I did too when we just sang, but I soon gave that up. Finally we were hired to play every Sunday afternoon at a big house in Brunswick, called Pierson's Ranch. there were many big rooms, and they served beer and danced. Finally the crowds got so big, they decided we should play Saturday nights, Sunday afternoons and nights. Finally one day she said they had decided to build a big dance hall, and we should enlarge our orchestra to five. So that was our start in orchestra work. At first we had Orval Tobek on the banjo, Irene learned to play the drums, I think Irene Cort on the piano. I had the accordion, but I can't remember who else. Finally we got June Madison on the piano, and Gladys Nordenstom on the trumpet, Audrey Nordenstom on sax, Irene the drums, and I on the accordion. Then we had an all girl orchestra, and we got bookings from Wisconsin, way up by the Canadian border, and all over northern Minnesota. We played together until Irene and Arlow got married.

When I went back to St. Paul, and got a job at Brown and Bigelow's before Christmas making Christmas cards. After that big rush I was asked to stay on. Then the Second World War started and many of the boys had to go to service and orchestras were hard to get so I had to go home every weekend to play. That was when we taught Arlow to play the drums, and Irene to chord on the piano. I worked at B & B for quite a while, but then got pretty disgusted with the floor lady, and walked out. From there I got a job in a plant dipping parts in acid, but I only lasted a week there. It was night work and I was scared out at night, so I quit that. Then I got the job of my dreams. I was working with figures doing bookkeeping at Wards. I stayed there until I got married. Starting wage at Wards was forty cents an hour.

While working in St. Paul, I had a sleeping room on Sherburne and Lexington with O'Shaunessy's, then I moved to Lexington at the Schultz's. They were both lovely families, but I had to eat out all the time, and with all that greasy food, my stomach went to pot. So the doctor told me I had to eat baby food until I got it cleared up. Then I found a one room apartment, two blocks from work, with cooking facilities in it for $15.00 a month. That room was so dirty I could have just died, but I made up my mind there was only one thing to do, so I started scrubbing, and washed everything. That is where I lived until I left to get married.

Having an all girl orchestra was not all bad. One night while playing a dance at Finlayson I met a young fellow out in the middle of the floor. We made a date right there, and that was the beginning of a long romance. But it was disrupted by the war. I think that was the saddest day of my life when Al had to get on the bus and leave for the

service. And it was a long three years. After he left, he never got a leave to come home and was shipped to Africa in a very short time. I used to lay in bed at night and look at the moon and wish I could be up there so I could see him. I could hardly believe that he was so far away and yet that same moon was shining on him that was shining in St. Paul.

One day after Christmas we were laid off for a few days, and I went back home. We had gone over to see Aunt Mary Alex that afternoon, and our ring sounded on the party telephone. I went and answered, and there was a telegram from Alton Youngkrantz some place in Africa. It read or they said, "Merry Christmas." I started to cry and everyone thought there was something terribly wrong. Aunt Mary had just baked some fresh biscuits, and I dropped the plate of biscuits right in the raspberry sauce, and I have never lived that one down. The next three Christmases were very sad for me, and I wouldn't even wrap the presents I bought for people. I remember one year I took all the presents home before Christmas, and Christmas Eve, there were all the gifts I bought wrapped in wallpaper. Irene had wrapped them all, and they were really cute.

One day while at work, someone brought me a newspaper, the war had ended, and there was Al's name in there, that he was landing in New York on a certain day. I think that was in October. I walked right into the office and told them I was taking two week's vacation. So I went back to Pine City to wait for him. On the day he was supposed to come through Pine City, Mother would not let me out of the house, and so I stayed right by the phone, but while Mother and Dad were milking, I lay down on the couch by the phone and Al called. Well I had fallen asleep and later in the evening Aunt Loretta called, and asked where I was. She said Alton had called when he went through Pine City, and of course being on a party line, she answered when I didn't. Then I had to wait until the next day to hear from him, and when he said he would be down that night, we all tore around there like the King of Sweden was coming. We were all so excited, and after that I went back up to Duluth with him, and came back with an engagement ring which we purchased on Columbus Day when the banks were all closed. We were going out for supper after we got the ring but it rained so hard we couldn't get out of the jewelry store, but we noticed an eat shop next door, so we dashed in there, but they sold nothing but hamburgers, so hamburgers was our supper.

We were married June 18, 1946, in Pine City. That was right after the war and you just couldn't get anything you wanted. We made all the dresses, had to dye some material to get the colors to match. Just nothing went smooth.

Alton and Arvid bought out Star Express and Transfer, so we rented an apartment in Farmington and lived there about three years. When they sold out the transfer business, Al went to work for Gamble's, and at the same time we built a house on 7th Street, and lived there for 18 months. The Gamble store was sold, and Al went to work for Delano Monument Company and his territory was southern Minnesota. So we sold the house and moved to Dodge Center. Monument selling was not Al's cup of tea, so he put his application in at the Legion Club as the manager in Pine Island, and he got the job.

Therine and Jacqueline were both born in the apartment in Farmington. Therine started kindergarten in Dodge Center, and first grade in Pine Island. Jeanie was born in Butch Neis's house in Pine Island.

I never went to work after we were married, but things were pretty skimpy. When Al and Arvid had Star Transfer, we took $15.00 for groceries, and I would sit and make out the menus for a whole day, to make sure it would last all week. With two little girls I had a lot of sewing and ironing. They were always dressed alike in starchy, ruffled dresses, and sometimes I would have as many as 25 dresses to iron a week.

But housekeeping was easy then in comparison to when I was small. We had everything electric, and I wasn't much of a cook, but I blamed it on the old goofy stove we had in the apartment. The one day Al bought a used stove in Rosemount and brought it home. That was really a big thrill. It had a gauge on it so I could set the temperature in the oven and bake something. I could no longer blame my poor cooking on the stove. Those pie crusts were tough enough to wear for shoe leather, so was everything else. But since Al came home for supper anywhere from ten to midnight he didn't know what it tasted like because it was so dried up. I hated cooking because I didn't know how, but since I have learned something about it, I enjoy every minute of it. I enjoy taking recipe books and going through them and picking out something that sounds good and making it. Al has been a real good guinea pig too.

I was never sports minded, but enjoyed sewing, crocheting, and knitting, or playing the accordion. But now that I have an electric organ I enjoy that the most.

After we moved to Pine Island, we ran the Legion Club for about two years, then Al went to work for Moorman's and one day when he was home for lunch, I mentioned that Burt Bunns had their grocery store for sale, so we decided to go up and look at it. When we told Burt what we were doing, he opened up the cash register, took out his money and walked out and said, "It's all yours." Wow, no money, no nothing. Jeanie was just a babe, so she stayed with us all day at the store, until Therine and Jackie came from school, then they took her home.

When Jackie was about ten years old, she got nephritis and was hospitalized for some time. It was really a happy day March 17 when they said we could bring Jackie home, but keep her flat on her back. So we got a bed, put it in the back room of the store, and put curtains around it, and tried to fix it up the best we could. Then he teacher would bring her lessons over, and pick up her work. I prayed and prayed that she would get better, and soon they told us she could be up, but not to run. She was an active child and hard to hold down, but it wasn't too long before they said she was okay. That was harder on me than anything because I couldn't get over the fact that I didn't have to watch every move she made. I spent a lot of time with Jackie, and Therine though not very old was a big help too.

Finally after so long in the grocery store, we went broke. We had built an apartment in the store, so we didn't have to make house payments, but you could charge groceries and then at the end of the month they would come in and say they couldn't pay this month, and down the drain we went. So we put in clothing but there wasn't enough of that, and finally Al went to work, and I went to work for Peoples Natural Gas in Pine Island. Jeanie was in the first grade then. After the year was up and the job was closed in Pine Island I was transferred to Rochester. I worked there for about seven years. Then I came home and opened up the Yesteryear Shoppe, and collected gas bills. After the gas company moved out, we made offices in the building, rented them out and I answered telephones for two of them, and also for Butman's Painting and Shingling.

Al retired at 63, took up golf and is enjoying his retirement. For many years now we have enjoyed camping. First we had a pop-up camper, then we bought a pull type, then a fifth wheel which we parked at Red Wing, and now we have a motor home. We took it through eleven states last fall (1980) and had just a wonderful time.

We went through a lot of tough times, but we weathered them all. When things got real bad Al would say, they can't get any worse, they have to get better, and little by little they did. But regardless of all the hardships, we had a lot of laughs and life has been very good to us.

Now we have six wonderful grandchildren, and all the girls and their families live close by, and it is such a pleasure to have them stop in from time to time.

MAY GOD BLESS THEM ALL

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This autobiography was written in 1981. Alton Youngkrantz died in Rochester, Minnesota, on April 1, 1987, after a long battle with lung cancer. Eleanor Youngkrantz died of an aneurysm in Rochester, Minnesota, on May 13, 1995, after a short illness.