

CHAPTER 1

My parents were Dick and Gertrude Jansz. They were born in the Netherlands {Holland}. They had two children, Martha and William. Then my father went to the USA Pella, Iowa. After he had enough money he sent for his wife and children.. In my opinion my mother was a brave person, to go to another country with only few words in English and two small children. The boat trip was quite different from home. Martha was four years old and was soon running all over the place. A lady gave Martha some candy and told her to give her little brother some too. So she said that she would, but as soon as she was out of sight she ate it all. Bill was only two and mama kept him with her. He was thrilled with the table service and he would clap his hands and say "Another plate"- only in Dutch of course. A nice young man sought her company and Mom said he was good looking, but that was another era and two children kept her busy and there was very little time for her. When they came into port in the United States they had to go through Ellis Island before going any further. I know from reading, that when you get to Ellis Island you are tested for Tuberculosis or any fevers. Throat, eyes, ears, hearts, etc., are checked and if you have a serious problem, like TB, you are rejected. But, my parents were evidently healthy and eventually arrived in Pella, Iowa. This was home for them for a long time. The beginning was very difficult. The houses that they lived in were small, and furnished with whatever was given to them. A dilapidated stove, which had been in a chicken yard, rusty and covered with chicken manure, this was just one of the things that mother had to clean up and use. Martha was the first to go to school. She spoke no English, but soon was learning it. She took her books home and Mom learned English too. Dad took lessons from a teacher and with the added help of an English/Dutch dictionary they soon were all speaking English. The children fluently and my parents mixed English and Dutch together.

They had three more children, Bert, Cora and me, Marie. We moved a few times but mostly in the same neighborhood. Then my father bought a lot and built a house on it. Did I remember to say that he was a carpenter and a very good cabinet maker? Never had much money but always enough to eat. Even in the Great Depression. But there were no jobs and Bert and Bill would travel around for any job even a temporary one. Neither one of them was married yet. When they finally came home they brought a puppy with them and I was crazy about it. Then one morning when I got up and looked for the puppy, they finally told me that she was sick in the night and had died. We had pets before and at that time no one had fenced yards, and dogs ran free. At one time someone poisoned quite a few dogs and one of them was ours.

Mom was in California visiting Bert and Dot. Cora was supposed to cook for Dad. There she stood in the kitchen wringing her hands. I said "Go on to work, I'll cook for Dad". She said "You don't know how to cook" I said "You don't either." Dad was amazingly patient with me then. (He never was a patient person, and he was the BOSS). I didn't know how to cook anything as Mom never wanted us in the kitchen while growing up. She let me make fudge and divinity and I helped with the dishes. I was better outside picking berries and helping Dad mow the lawn. We had quite a steep hill in front of our house. Dad had tied a rope on the front

of the mower. He pushed and I pulled.

But back to cooking for Dad; one day I accidentally dropped the fried potatoes on the floor and he could see me from where he was sitting. I looked at him and he said calmly, "Just pick them up and bring them to the table." And so we ate them. Fortunately, we had a very nice neighbor lady and when I didn't know how to cook something I would go to the fence and holler, "Mrs. VerHeul, how long do you cook potatoes?" She said, "Oh about half an hour, maybe not that long." And then I would do that part and sooner or later I was at the fence again, calling, "Mrs. VerHeul, how long do you cook carrots?" Somehow or other I managed. I don't know if I fixed a lunch for dad to take to work or not, but I do know that I got up and fixed his breakfast. I had to set an alarm clock and one morning I had been sleeping on my arms and when I reached out for the clock my arms were asleep with no feeling and I knocked the clock around until I got feeling back in my hands. Thank heavens it didn't break.

I had just graduated from high school, good old Pella High. Two of my friends were going to Des Moines to take nurses training. I had always wanted to be a nurse and when Dad heard they were going he asked how much it cost them. I told him and he handed me the money. I said, "Who will be here to cook for you and clean the house?" He looked surprised and reached over and took the money back.

Quite a few of my friends were going to Central College in Pella. I figured I could do the work at home and also go to college and take only two classes. Dad gave me some money and the College said they would let me work for the rest. That miserable DEPRESSION was still spoiling a lot of hopes and dreams. I loved it while I was there. I took chemistry and Latin. I tried out for the acapella choir and much to my amazement made it. But one semester is all I had. They didn't give me any work and I owed them money, which I didn't have. The chemistry professor ran into my sister, and he asked her why I wasn't still there. She told him that I didn't have the money for more college. He said "I'm sorry to hear that. She was a good student."

Another classmate had gone to Davenport Iowa, to work as a nurse's aide. Her sister was a nurse there. I wrote a letter to her and asked if there was a nurse's aid opening and that I wanted the job. Hurray. I got it. My brother took me there, my mother went along and I realized after I had children of my own how she must have felt. I was her baby and my sisters worked in Pella. It seemed a long way from home to her.

I loved the job. I was a floor maid. That part was no bowl (bed) of roses, but I found friends and I liked to talk to the patients. My friends had boy friends and I soon had one too. We double dated and I was never homesick. The hospital gave us room and board. A large house was next to the hospital, some of the employees on the second floor, and some on the third. I lived on the third floor. One night one of the girls on the second floor shouted "FIRE!, FIRE! We all jumped out of bed and grabbed something and ran down the stairs. One girl had her coat, and one a pair of shoes, none of the things taken made much sense. It wasn't a complete

false alarm. One of the girls had come in late and she put a handkerchief over the lamp to dim the light and the handkerchief started burning. She had the fire out right after she hollered FIRE. She stopped us on the stairway and apologized profusely.

Bert and Bill married, Bert to Dot Weaver and Bill to Ruth Vander Linden. Times were hard and Bert and his wife went to California. After some time, he got a job with a streetcar company known as the Yellow Line. I'm not sure of this information. There also was a Red car line. Bert lived in Venice and had to take the Red line to get to work. They built a house in Venice and their lives were much better.

Bert came to Iowa for a visit and we went to Des Moines to pick him up. It was October and unusually cold. His clothes were not nearly warm enough. I was wearing earmuffs. My California brother had completely forgotten how cold it could be in Iowa. He asked Cora if she would like to go to California with him. She couldn't make up her mind; she had a serious boy friend. I asked him if I could go with him if Cora didn't. He said I'd have to ask mom if I could go, she said I could and I did. My sister Martha was on the telephone talking to her friend. She told her that I was going to California with Bert. She said "She's getting her clothes together; the table is full of safety pins."

Dot's uncle Cecil Guthrie drove to Detroit to buy a new car. Then he went to his wife's family' and picked up his mother-in-law to take her to California. She was in her eighties. He then came to Pella to pick Bert up. And now Cecil had me as another passenger. The men took turns driving and didn't stop anywhere to sleep. Of course, Grannie and I slept whenever we felt like it. She had different bags of food with her. She seemed to be eating all the time.

Somewhere in the mountain country most of us were sleeping/ Uncle Cecil, who may have been sleeping too, ran the car into a ditch, a deep ditch. The car turned over. Bert called to me, "Marie, are you OK?" and wasn't he happy that none of us were hurt and he didn't have to call Mom to give her bad news. Cecil was a very tall man and he was still seated in his seat, only now upside down. We all crawled out and there were people stopping their cars and asking if there was something they could do. Several men helped Bert and Cecil put the car back on its wheels.

Cecil drove the car back on the highway and away we went. Several of Grannies food bags had opened and grapes and other things flew all over the back seat. But bless her heart; she went right back to sleep.

This never stopping to sleep made pit stops very irregular, and one time when I needed to stop we were in a residential section, a very nice section. Now I was in dire straits, I said, "Stop the car." I ran up and knocked on a door. A very nice lady opened the door, I explained my problem and she said "Come right in, this way to the bathroom." Every time we had to stop for gas and food, somebody would ask Cecil "What happened to your car.? " Cecil felt bad enough about his brand new car, and he got sick of telling people what had happened to it.

CHAPTER 2

Charles Clyde Ling was Nick's father. His mother's name was Mae. They had three children, Nick, Clyde Jr. And a sister named Sally. His parent's marriage was not made in heaven. Soon Clyde was away from home for long periods, Mae needed child support, and none was given. When she found out where he was she would call the police and have him arrested. Then Hezekiah and Belle (Clyde's parents) would pay to have Clyde released and would give Mae some money. This went on quite a while. Somewhere during these problems, Nick went to live with his grandparents and they left Pennsylvania and went to California.

Nick's real name was George Hezekiah. His paternal grandfather was Hezekiah and was called Nick so the grandson also was called Nick. We met at a Sontag Drug Store in Santa Monica. Clyde was a pharmacist, Nick did some helper work and I stood in the store's entrance and passed out soda fountain coupons. Times were still hard. Neither one of us had a decent job. But we soon were going out for walks, sometimes Nick would borrow his dad's car. A really pitiful car, one of the doors was kept shut with wire. I believe that was the one that when Clyde saw an advertisement saying, "IF YOU CAN DRIVE IT ONTO OUR LOT, WE WILL USE IT AS A DOWN PAYMENT". He and a friend drove Clyde's old wreck down there and ran out of gas just as they were entering the lot, the friend jumped out and quickly pushed the car the rest of the way in. It worked but the new car wasn't much better.

My brothers Bert and Bill had a gas station that they were trying to work in and still keep their regular jobs. They asked Nick if he would like to work for them. It seemed like a miracle, getting a job and not even having to ask for one. So Nick and I got married and spent our wedding night in a pull down bed in Bill and Evelyn's living room.. Honeymoon, HA! Neither the gas station nor Nick's job lasted long. We were living in a little house which was only partly furnished. Somebody gave us a two burner gas plate to use. I either had to sit on the floor to use it or sit on my haunches to cook. Somehow we managed. Then we moved.

Nick and I were living in a small town called El Monte near Alhambra. We were working in a tobacco and candy store that was part of a market. Clyde Ling, Nick's father, had heard that it was for sale and talked his father and mother, Grandma and grandpa Ling to give him the money to buy it, with the idea that Nick would run it. They should have saved their money, it wasn't a success. But we were there for some time. .

I became pregnant. We lived in a duplex with the landlord in the other side. I sometimes helped in the store, usually when Nick went to Smart & Final for supplies. Soon I was knitting a baby sweater. I was very happy about having a baby.

The vegetable section was run by a Japanese family, parents and their children. They came from Hawaii, which is now the fiftieth State and one son called Sax got very angry when he was called a Jap because he said they were Hawaiians. The mother would come and do handwork with me behind the counter; I liked them all very much and wondered later if they

were sent to a camp during WW2. It was a terrible thing that American citizens were taken from their homes and put behind chained fences just because they were Japanese American.

Christmas we didn't have money for a tree but somewhere Nick found some greenery and we decorated it somehow. Anyway we liked the result. For Christmas Nick gave me a washing machine and I was thrilled. My memory has completely forgotten how I did the laundry before.

(Probably in the bathtub, as I did when I lived in Davenport, Iowa where I worked in a hospital)

Oh yes I have forgotten about Thanksgiving. Nick got a live turkey for a prize. I had made friends with a woman, Beulah Rascon, who came to that market, and our friendship thrived. By this time I was showing my pregnancy and she would take me home with her and I'd often eat dinner with her and her children, three boys and one girl. She said that we could bring the turkey to her house. She had a friend with a chicken yard and it could stay there until time to kill and eat it. When it was time to kill it a male friend of Beulah did the killing, thank goodness. I don't remember who cleaned out the insides of the turkey, but I did help pull feathers. The turkey was still warm and I was still pregnant and I didn't think I would be able to eat a bite because that turkey was still warm and the whole business made me kind of sick. However, I was pregnant after all and I was hungry and everyone knows what a pregnant woman's appetite can be like!

Grandma Ling came over and brought some other food with her and she cooked the turkey. Grandma Ling (Belle) was a wonderful cook. She was a very sweet woman. Grandpa Ling {Hezekiah}, according to Nick's mother, liked women and had trouble keeping his hands off them. Nick told me that if he ever touched me I was to tell him and he would take care of it. One time Old Nick brought his current romance home. The neighbors called out "Kick her out Belle."

Another day Beulah's kids were playing in the street with a football. I was quite pregnant then. I said "Let me show you how I can drop kick". I did and it was a good one, but I realized I had to be more judicious about my actions. I had a few pains fortunately not serious.

CHAPTER 3

When the candy and tobacco store folded, we went to Santa Monica and lived with Grandma Belle and Grandpa Hezekiah Ling. I am probably forgetting some of the places where we lived because we moved every year. We had a new address each time of course and I often wondered if we received all our mail. The grandparents were very good to me and of course to their pride and joy, Nick. They raised him and he could do no wrong. I'm not sure how long we lived with them. One day Nick's Aunt Lethian and I went to the beach. I had on a hideous dress which was far too big for me, but in my condition I filled up the pregnant part. I remember that Grandma had on something that didn't fit her very well and one of her breasts sort of fell out of it. I don't remember what Aunt Lethian had on but it probably was a well fitting bathing suit. She and her second husband lived in Bel Air in a big beautiful house. We all went to their house for Easter. I was having a few pains but not the real McCoy. I went to the hospital two times but no baby. I had already gone to the hospital with false labor.

Then my water broke and Grandma Ling said that it was time to go to the hospital. Labor pains started and Nick went to get my mother and we went to the hospital with Nick honking the horn all the way and not stopping for red lights. If I hadn't had plenty on my mind I'd have been scared to death. I'm sure Mom was... I was glad that mom was there, she stayed with me all the time until they came and took me to the delivery room. And then I had my first baby. There aren't any words that can explain the feeling when they put your baby in your arms. That's why women forget the labor pains and have more babies. With the first baby you know you are pregnant but when the baby is in your arms you're a MOTHER--. Fantastic--. I stayed in the hospital nine days and got pretty anxious to go home. One day they brought Dennis to me and said that I should hold him very carefully because he had had a painful operation that day. I have been told that circumcisions were done at that time without any drug to alleviate pain. Poor little six pound Dennis.

While I and Dennis Roy Ling were getting ready to be released, Grandma and Grandpa Ling and Nick's Aunt Lethian found a house and rented it in our name, then went to a furniture store and made a down payment on enough furniture to make the house habitable. Earlier during my pregnancy Dot {my Brother Bert's wife} had a baby shower for me. The guests all put in money and got me a baby carriage. I got a lot of mileage out of that baby buggy. We didn't have a car so I took Dennis in the buggy to the grocery store {this was before super markets} and on every other errand too.

So here we were in the house in a new neighborhood and Grandma Jansz to be with me for a while. The first bath for Dennis was a horrible surprise. Dennis had a whole lot of blisters all over his body, and Grandma and I decided to call my sister-in-law Dot and she said she would take me back to the hospital. The hospital said it was impetigo and gave me some medicine and told me how to apply it. When we got home again Mom and I applied the medicine which meant that we were to take cotton balls and rub each blister off and then put on the medicine. By the time we were through Mom and I were crying and so was Dennis. They say that new

babies don't cry tears but Dennis proved that was another old wives tale. It took quite a few days before we had that cured we were all very happy when it was over.

Soon it was time for Mom to go home and it was my baby to care for. I seemed to know how. Anyway he did just fine. I didn't have a Dr. Spock book, but I did have a Prudential book, that told all the information about babies, like how to make formulas, how to bathe a baby, what to do when the baby cried and when to take it to the doctor. I remember following the preparation very carefully when I made the formula, sterilizing the bottles and the nipples. Also the nipples didn't come from the drugstore with holes in them. So I finally learned how to sterilize a needle, holding it over the fire and then sticking it through the nipple a couple of times. If holes were not big enough to allow the milk to come thru, Dennis would cry. So I would start all over with the needle and make the holes bigger. Then sometimes the holes were too big and Dennis would start to choke, now to start with another nipple. By this time Dennis' crying was loud and angry, I was a nervous wreck. We didn't have much money so we didn't buy many nipples at a time. So once in a while we had to make an emergency trip to the drugstore

I had lots of laundry, no pampers and no clothes dryers. But his diapers were nice and white. California sun took care of that. Baby girls and boys were dressed in baby dresses then. White dresses and white slips called Gertrude's. I shall probably never get used to the way babies are dressed now in 2000 AD. I don't remember who gave me all those baby dresses but I always had long lines of them and diapers hanging in the sun on washday

It was the thing, in Pella, to wash clothes on Monday. Some years ago ladies washed on Monday, ironed on Tuesday, baked on another day, Anyway there were dish towels that were embroidered with the right day and the proper activity for the whole week. The ladies in our neighborhood in Pella would get up very early so that they would be the first one to have clothes on the line. I embroidered a set of those dish towels when I was in High School. When a girl graduated from high school, if her parents could afford it, she was given a cedar chest, and that was called her Hope Chest. I didn't have a cedar chest and most parents couldn't afford one. After all, this was the great depression and people were in great financial distress. My dad was working only three days a week and of course his pay was lowered as well. But not having a hope chest didn't keep girls from embroidering pillow cases, dresser scarves, table cloths and other things. They were still getting ready for the future even if they didn't have the hope chest. Guess I got off on a tangent there, but doing this is bringing back some memories.

Back to Dennis, I bought white flannel and made his nightwear, and other things. I didn't have a sewing machine and I can't remember if I sewed all those things by hand or if I borrowed a sewing machine from someone.

Another memory; when I was still in the hospital after Dennis was born, I got a package from my sisters Martha and Cora who lived in Pella, Iowa. They sent two little garments, size one. I thought Dennis would never get that big but in the first year babies grow so fast that it was no time at all when he wore them. And before I knew it, we moved again.

CHAPTER 4

We moved a lot and I can't remember all of them, but I think the next place was West Hollywood in the apartment house where Clyde and Ednamae lived. We lived upstairs and that's where I got acquainted with Betty, Ednamae's daughter. We became fast friends. There were also Betty's siblings, Matt, called Sonny, and Dorothy who was about ten years younger than Betty. There were two apartments upstairs and we had the one with one bedroom. The living room was big and had three sofas in it. At one time Grandpa Clyde slept on one of them. And one morning, quite early for me and Dennis, someone rang the doorbell. It was Mrs. DeWinter and her daughter Ota Margaret, neighbors of our family in Pella. I was embarrassed because I was obviously just out of bed and Dennis had a dirty diaper. I felt like a slob.

The apartment had a porch where I would put Dennis in his playpen so he could get some sun. I also used to put a chair in the doorway between the kitchen and the living room when I did the laundry so Dennis couldn't crawl after me when I went to hang up the clothes. The lines were on a pulley and I had to hang short things first so that they wouldn't drag on the roof of the garage. It was a new experience for me. One day when Ednamae came to see me she later went across to see her daughter Betty and left the front door open. I entered the living room a few minutes later and saw Dennis following her. Thank God he didn't try to crawl down the flight of stairs. It scared me plenty and I reminded her to close the door after that; probably not too sweetly either.

I don't remember how long we lived there but I do know that I was pregnant with Valerie when we moved again. Brother Bill and longtime friend Johnny Van Zee helped us move. Some of the unbreakables were dropped over the railing on the porch. I don't think they broke anything. That move was much easier than any other so far... lots of laughs.

So back to the area where we lived before, near Alhambra and quite near where Beulah Rascon lived in El Monte. So I saw her once in a while. When it was getting toward the time for the baby, Grandma Jansz came to get acquainted with the house and the neighborhood, and the way to the grocery store.

It was almost Easter and we invited Brother Bill, his wife Eveline and the little girls D'Anne and Penny to come for Easter dinner. I had made Easter baskets for Dennis and also for D'Anne and Penny. These were made from a cut down oatmeal round box. Each box made two baskets. Ednamae and Betty showed me how to stretch the paper that we got from the store, only stretched on one side to make ruffles. Then we would fasten it on the box, starting on the bottom and wrap it around with the ruffles all around.

Back to Easter, we had a pleasant time and about the time to sit down for dinner I started to have labor pains. I ate most of my dinner but wasn't at all interested in dessert. Mom didn't have time to get acquainted with much because Valerie was early. Bill took me to the hospital, again the Baurhyte Clinic. This is where Dennis was born just a year before ...This time Mom

had to stay home with Dennis and I really missed her in the labor room.

There was another woman in the delivery room so I had to wait and I was at the place where I was in no mood to wait. In fact I was getting noisy. I got in the delivery room just in time for the Doctor to catch the baby. Then I asked the nurse for an aspirin. She wasn't a bit interested and I still don't like her.

Now I had a little girl and we named her Valerie Jean. Grandpa Clyde came to see her and said she was beautiful. It's always nice to have someone agree with you. Two weeks before, Dot had had a baby girl too. She was named Mary Ellen. Mary was born on her Uncle Bill's birthday, my brother.

Mom wrote to me every day, little things about her days with Dennis. One day he peed in her shoe. She sent her letters along with Nick when he came to see me. She also sent me some of the angel food cake that was the Easter dessert. My mother could make the best angel cake I've ever eaten. When I still lived in Pella and was just in grade school, the oldest girl in the family across the street would ask my mother to make an angel cake for her mother's birthday. They had chickens and she would bring all the eggs the recipe called for. Yes, my mom could make the best angel cakes ever. The girl who brought over the eggs was Ruth Van Vliet, my sister Cora's best friend. For some reason she called mom Tallulah. This was in the days when you didn't call adults by their first name, but Ruth loved Mom and Mom knew it. And I think she kind of liked being called Tallulah'.

Ruth and Cora stayed friends until their deaths, also through several moves of each from Arizona to California. I was a friend to Ruth's younger sisters Jean and Betty.

Now back to the hospital. They used to keep new mothers nine days. On the third day we were allowed to sit up and dangle our legs over the side of the bed. But it was soon time to go home with my little girl. Beulah took us home. Dennis was a little shy with me but it didn't last long. Beulah had on open toed shoes and she was busy talking to me and mom. Dennis crawled over to Beulah and poked his finger into her toe. She hadn't seen him coming and made a little noise of surprise which startled Dennis. He got away from her real fast and didn't get near her again. He was just starting to walk, and if he fell, he'd just crawl the rest of the way. One day when I was giving Dennis a bath, someone came to the door and I wrapped Dennis in a towel and we went to see who was there. It was a salesman and as if on cue, Dennis started to shiver, His whole body was quivering and the salesman said. "I'd better come back another time." Never got rid of anybody that easy again.

Dennis was walking very well by then and soon it was time to start potty training. I tried several ways and not having real success. But eventually it happened

Two babies made a lot of laundry. Fortunately I had plenty of diapers and usually plenty of sunny days. It's strange but I can't remember much about the potty training of any of the

children. I do remember that I was glad when it was over. I was plenty tired of all the diapers.

It was back to the baby carriage again. Only this time Valerie laid in the front and Dennis got to sit in the rear. He liked it fine because he could see everything. Mom used to come from Culver City to see me and the kids. She had to take a bus and transfer to a street car and must have gotten up really early because sometimes I was in the back hanging up diapers and had been up quite a while already. Then a sound came from the house and she asked, "Is that your baby or mine?" She really bonded with Dennis while I was in the hospital. We lived in that house for a while. There was a big tree in the yard that I really liked, a California Pepper tree. It was quite a small house, but we seemed contented there. It belonged to an old couple. They lived in a house right next door. The man had one artificial leg but it didn't stop him from anything he wanted to do; climbing up on ladders to fix a roof, or driving his old Model T Ford. His wife was becoming senile but it was very obvious that they were still a very loving couple. When he left in the car she came hurrying out of the house and he would stop the car so that she could kiss him goodbye. They used to live in the house where we now lived and now and then she would come walking into the house and then, realized that this was no longer her home. Then she visited with me and mom for a while then would go back to her own house.

One day I was outside with Dennis and I thought I saw him put a piece of glass in his mouth. I tried to get to him before he swallowed it. But I was too late. I called my landlord, { I wish that I could remember his name } and I told him about it and by that time I was very worried, so he fired up the Model T and he took me to a doctor. The doctor said that he couldn't see anything and I was not to give Dennis any liquids but bread and other things that could push the glass, if that was what he actually did swallow. Believe me; I spent a few days of anxiety. Dennis was very thirsty by that time, but he always was a good little kid and didn't cry about it. That landlord took Mom and I and the two children in the Model T all the way from Alhambra where we lived, to Mom's house in Culver City; lots of traffic but no trouble at all. As I have been writing this I couldn't remember his name. Now it comes to me. Mr. Hanson and the dearest landlord we ever had.

Dennis was always watching Valerie and I suppose he wanted to play with her. I had her on my bed and went away to get something, probably a diaper, when I heard her cry and I hurried back to her. Dennis had reached her and pulled her off the bed. She didn't seem hurt. Usually when I went to get her bathed and dressed, she would put her arms up for me to take her. But the morning after she fell off the bed, she could only raise one arm. When I tried to move her she cried. I wrapped her in a blanket, we all got into the little coupe we had then and started to try to find a place that was open on Sunday where we could find someone to help us. We drove all over the place but it was many miles and a long, miserable time until we found our way to the Children's Hospital in Hollywood. The doctors there were very nice and after examining Valerie they said she had a dislocated shoulder. I have no idea if Nick paid them or even if they asked for payment. Valerie had a dislocated shoulder two or three times when she was older but it never was as severe

While Valerie was still quite a young baby, Nick and I wanted to go to a movie. He asked his younger brother Clyde Jr. and his girlfriend Jeanne to come and stay with the children. Jeanne was glad to babysit and I told her how to fix Valerie's bottle. She already knew how to change diapers. I put Dennis to bed before we left. When we came home Jeanne was holding Valerie and seemed to be distressed about something. It seemed that Valerie had the hiccups and Jeanne thought that she had done something wrong. Incidentally, she and Clyde were married later, and had two little girls.

Back again before Valerie was born. We didn't have a car and decided to take the bus and the streetcar to Culver City. We had to take Dennis' bottles and diapers plus some other things. The bottles were in some kind of a case and as we transferred from the bus to the streetcar, we dropped the case, it fell open and one of Dennis' bottles broke which meant that one of his meals or feedings was gone. I sterilized the bottles and nipples each day. Mixed his formula and filled the bottles with enough for one day. So now we were one bottle short and a feeding short. If my memory is correct, I cried most of the way to Culver City. My memory is coming back but some things are still missing. I know that Dennis didn't starve because of that accident but I cannot remember any more details. My sister Martha was in Culver City on a visit and she remembers how upset I was.

CHAPTER 5

As I've said before, I can't remember all the places where we lived and in what order, but the funny little house where we lived when Valerie was born, as I said before, was right next to our landlord's house. The first night we lived there, we were asleep and this extremely loud noise woke me, and I sat up and finally realized it was a train. The track was only about a quarter of a block away and the engineer always blew the whistle going thru our neighborhood. However, it was no time at all until we became so used to it that we only noticed it when we were talking or listening to the radio, before TV of course.

Radios had their own charm. You could listen and do your housework at the same time. The soap operas were only fifteen minutes long and I soon had my favorites; "Vic and Sade, "who had a son that went to the store to get beef bunkles for his mother. I decided that it must have been stewing beef and called it beef bunkles for a long time. One day I went out of the house for some reason and stayed too long. My beef bunkles were more than browned and I had to work with them quite a while to make them edible, (this is one of my failings. Leaving things on the stove and forgetting about them).

The first time I did it was not a case of forgetting, but not having any experience. I put a pan of prunes on the stove to cook. I turned the gas under the pot very low and went off to college. Cora came home before I got back and found the prunes were charcoal. She took the pan outside and ran water in it, but I don't know what happened to it. As I remember that pan was history and a lesson to me. But it happened again. In 2001 when my sister Martha was visiting me I put three eggs on the stove in a pan of water. I lit the burner and Martha and I went to the other part of the house and forgot about the eggs. I smelled something and went to the kitchen. The eggs had boiled long enough to dry the pan. I rushed it to the sink and ran some water in the pan and the eggs exploded. It really scared me. But it happened again about a week later. Sam, my husband at the time, tells me often, "Don't leave the kitchen while you're cooking".

While Valerie was still a small baby we moved again and that was to Culver City. Dennis got very sick and I took him to the Dr. He prescribed some medicine that I was to give him every six hours. I did. The Dr. told me to call him the next day, which I did. He said "Did you give him his medicine every six hours night and day?" I said, "You didn't say at night." Well he was very upset and told me, "Every six hours day and night, and call me tomorrow and tell me if his temp has gone down. If not, you will have to bring him back to my office." My mother took care of Valerie. We only lived a couple of blocks from her. When Dennis would cry I would sit in the rocking chair with him and then he would be content. He was such a good baby. That rocking chair was made for the kids by Bert. I was able to fit in it then. Now it would be another story. I don't remember that Doctors name, but he committed suicide.

About this time Dennis was having trouble breathing when he was in bed. Off to the clinic. The Dr. said his adenoids were swollen and needed to come out and his tonsils too. So again Dot took us to the hospital. They took him away and he was fine about that, but when the ether

cone was placed on his face he called "Mama." Those are the hard times; he wasn't two years old yet. The Doctor came to me after the surgery was over with a cloth in his big hand with the tonsils and adenoids in it. He said, "No wonder he was having trouble breathing this was taking up a lot of space. The surgery went well, and he will have some pain swallowing. Give him ice cream, not things he has to chew and he will be fine after a few days."

When Valerie was eight months old, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. A lot of changes had to be made. I was still smoking and cigarettes were hard to find, especially the popular brands. I smoked any brand that I could get. One kind, I can't remember the name, but they had a sweet taste and although I smoked them, I didn't like them much. I think how stupid I was to spend money on cigarettes when we had so little. Everyone received little books of stamps. For butter, meat, sugar, shoes, I can't remember them all now. When you went to buy one of these items you had to give the stamp that applied. I gave my mother sugar stamps and she would give me shoe stamps. A lot of men were drafted and some enlisted so they could pick which branch of the service they wanted. Nick was working nights. One night they said all lights must be turned off. Dennis and Valerie were asleep so I grabbed my book and went to the little hall and closed the doors to all the rooms and sat on the floor and read until I was ready to go to bed. It turned out to be a false alarm.

When Valerie was a little over one year and Dennis was a little over two they shared a room. Two baby cribs. He could already climb over the side and then he had to be put back to bed. This was getting to be a pain, but then Valerie learned to put her foot on the top of her crib and with determination would manage to get herself over the side and she would fall to the floor. Now there were two babies to put back to bed. However I got tired of that and just let them play awhile. When it got quiet in there I went to see if they were asleep. Yes, but they had pulled all of their blankets off their beds and they were both in Dennis' bed asleep. I made one bed and put Valerie in it then made Dennis' bed with him in it. This was a regular routine for some time and I guess they got tired of it.

At about a year or two later, I was making little baskets for a little party for Dennis' birthday. Even to finding something to make a handle for them and covering the handles with crepe paper. I took one of them across to my neighbor to show it to her. Back I ran and found Dennis' had cut the handles off the rest of the baskets. This is also the house where Dennis' threw a big bar of soap in the toilet. Not good for the plumbing so I had to reach in and take it out. The toilet had more in it besides clean water, Ah, the joys of motherhood.

While we lived there I joined the choir at the Methodist Church. That was the church where my mother attended services. I bought a new Easter hat and on my way to church my hat got stuck in a low tree branch and I just walked right out from under it. I did go back and untangle it and wore it to church. It was wonderful living so close to Mom. She baby sat quite often and she and I went shopping together. She would take Dennis' hand and I would take Valerie's hand. I don't remember how old Mom was but she would get tired and was ready to go home much

sooner than I. One night about that time Nick and I went to the movies and Mom babysat. When we got home, she was standing by the front door with her coat on. As we went in, she came out. She'd had enough of Dennis and Valerie that night.

My mom made a little red cape for Valerie and I bought her a red bonnet. The kids got a lot of attention from people we met. They must have been about three and four years then.

Nick was a milkman then and delivered milk to some wealthy people who lived in a big beautiful home on the beach in Malibu. It was Christmas time and they asked Nick to bring the children to see the decorations in their home.. They had wonderful decorations. Dennis and Valerie went from room to room looking at them. The host and hostess offered us a drink and we were in the big living room facing the ocean. I was very proud of Dennis and Valerie. They just looked and didn't touch anything. Then Valerie came to the doorway and said. , "Mama, I have to go poop." The hostess said," Well, when you have to go, you have to go." She showed me to the bathroom and as I recall that was the end of our visit.

CHAPTER 6

We moved again, back to the apartment house where Clyde and Ednamae lived. Nick was drafted. I went to work at the Oldsmobile garage in Beverly Hills. The service Manager said he'd stop for me on his way to work. I had been going on the streetcar. I worked as a clerk in the service department and sometimes I helped in the business office. I liked my job. I always liked my job it seems I liked it much better than housework. Of course I still had to do that too. Ednamae took care of the kids. And my salary helped as the money given to wives of service men was nothing to brag about. Betty was again across the hall. She was married to Andy Brakke and he was also in the service.

Ednamae bought us tickets to the opera Carmen. The singers were not great. Singers get drafted too. But we enjoyed it a lot and sang songs from the libretto on our way home on the streetcar. The funny thing was that the streetcar was full and we weren't even sitting together!

Betty and I worked crossword puzzles together, and played word games. Her brother Matt was overseas also in the army. We were sure lucky that Ednamae was always ready to watch our kids. We used to go to evening classes at the High School, never did stay long. Betty's interest span was short. We went to the radio show "Queen for a Day." Neither of us was chosen. I knew what I would have picked as a prize if I had been chosen; new shoes for all of us. We could never buy each of us shoes at the same time. It would have been so nice to go into a shoe store and come out with new shoes for all. But it was even nicer that we could pay our bills each month. Some years back we bought Dennis little brown and tan shoes. They were so cute.

About the time when Valerie was about a year old and Dennis was about two, my sister Martha sent Mom and I and the kids round trip train tickets to Pella. We had seats facing each other. Mom seemed able to sleep sitting up and the kids slept too but I just couldn't get to sleep. So I went into the ladies room which was empty at that hour and slept on the floor. We had a great time in Iowa. It happened to be the time when Princess Juliana from Holland was visiting Pella. There was a luncheon for Juliana and when those in charge of those invited to attend, heard that Mom was in town and they included her. She went with Martha.

Dennis started school while we lived in West Hollywood. It was quite a little hike to the school, and he had to cross Santa Monica Boulevard, a very busy street. There were no crossing guards at that time. The mothers took turns meeting the kids there and walking them across. There were two lanes on each side of the median, and to complicate the problem both sides had lanes coming and going. There were quite a few big boulevards like that then. One day I was driving home from Mom's house when I was crossing one of them and I hit a car broadside, an old, old car but in very good condition. The running boards were wooden and I ruined one of them. I was probably crying. I said that all the money I had was a twenty dollar bill and he accepted that. I hated to drive home because I was a nervous wreck and I knew Nick wasn't going to be very happy about it. He was mad about the money, because the man could sue us for much more. I'm afraid that I'm still ready to believe people in similar

circumstances.

Dennis was always curious and ready to stop on his way from school to watch or explore something. He would put down his lunch box and forget it. He would come home late and I would get extremely anxious. Again and again he would be late and finally one day it was getting dark. I called the police and they found him. The police man gave him a scolding and he promised he would never do it again. But there was still a time or two when he couldn't resist. One day he came home without his sweater. It was the only one he had. That time I took him by the hand and we went back together to the place where he had stopped that day. There were some large metal pipes where the men had been digging to put them in the ground as sewers. I asked, "Did you go over there?" He said, "Sure I did." So I picked my way over there with him leading the way, and quite a way into one of those pipes was his sweater. I'm reasonably sure that he got a spanking when we went home.

This reminds me of a time when he was so young that he didn't talk much yet. I had him with me in a big department store in Los Angeles. I let go of his hand to pick something up and when I looked he was gone. In those days the big stores had bargain basements. That's where we were. I looked up and down the aisles, went up to the ground floor, even went outside and looked up and down the street. Then I asked the store manager to help me look. After some time, I was told that they had found a little boy by the escalator and he was in the office and told me where that was. Sure enough it was Dennis. Then I really cried and hugged him. Crying made my nose run and I didn't have a handkerchief so I wiped my nose on his little coat.

Valerie and Dennis had a lot of friends when we lived there on Ranglely Ave, in West Hollywood. Some of the people had TV sets and, let the children who didn't have sets in their homes come to their house to watch. That's when the sets were very small and of course black and white. All the lights were turned off when the TV was on. It was like magic. When I think of the shows they had back then; they were so pitiful but people's eyes were glued to the screen. Hopalong Cassidy was one of the favorite shows.

This was the summer that Dennis had a bean shooter. A lot of the kids had them and had, a great time with them. But Dennis fell down with it in his mouth and he was bleeding a lot, I took him to Dr. Tainter and thank heavens it wasn't serious. Then one of the kids hit Dennis in the head with a rock... more bleeding... again to Dr. Tainter. He had to have stitches this time. Another time there was a big Dalmatian dog running around the neighborhood. The dog seemed friendly, but some idiotic woman came out and gave him a bone. And a dog with a bone doesn't want to be bothered by little kids. And guess who got bitten in the mouth... DENNIS THAT'S WHO! Once again back to Dr. Tainter. But this time I told Dennis' father that it was his turn to take him. I was a wreck. Dennis didn't exactly have a happy summer. And as I recall, nobody had a bean shooter anymore.

At this time in this neighborhood Valerie had it lucky. Most of the little girls were about her

age. On one of her birthdays, I took her and her friends to a movie, everyone enjoyed the movie, except one little girl. She sat on my lap through it all.

One of the women in the neighborhood made Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy dolls. They were simply beautiful. I don't know how much money she asked for them, and I really couldn't afford them, but I had to have them for Valerie for Christmas. She loved them and still loves those dolls. She has a Raggedy Ann on her bed now. 2001.

Dennis was younger than most of the little boys in the neighborhood and one day I was looking at the street and I saw three or four boys pummeling Dennis all over the place. It was always my feeling that children should learn to handle themselves without crying and calling on their parents and getting everyone mad. But this just made me so MAD! I ran down the stairs and up the street and I chased those kids around the block (away from their own homes) and told them what I thought of big kids picking on a little one and not one of them but the whole bunch and they ought to be ashamed of themselves. And you know, they didn't do it again. I think Dennis was really surprised because that wasn't something I would normally do, but I was mad. Like a bear protecting her cub,

Nick came home every chance he could from the base, always with a big bag of laundry. One day he rolled a hand grenade across the floor at me. That was a joke? Not to me. Betty and I went to Hollywood Blvd on VJ day. There were hundreds of people, on the sidewalks and in the street. A lot of service men, some of them had been celebrating for some time and some were drinking. We saw one young sailor asleep in a doorway,

Soon Nick came home. He found a job and things came back to normal. I was pregnant and had morning sickness all day. This was something new for me. I didn't have it with either Dennis or Valerie. I wanted another baby, but the first months were miserable. I lost a lot of weight and Betty's husband Andy asked "What's the matter with Marie. She looks like a plucked chicken." The stuff Nick put on his hair, Vitalis, had a smell that for some reason made me sick. Everything seemed difficult and I cried easily, One day when Nick and I had a few words, Dennis said, "You made my mommy cry." Then the sickness stopped and food looked good to me and I started to gain weight.

Then Clyde Jr. came up with this {according to him) wonderful opportunity. Selling advertising to business's that would help them to make a lot more money. Clyde said that the company gave him the entire state of Illinois and that Nick could have the entire state of Iowa. It looked to Nick that it was too good to pass up. I was to stay in California until he could afford to send for me and Dennis and Valerie. But I had two sisters in Iowa and I wanted to go too. Nobody had good sense; it was a tossup as to who was the most irresponsible. We packed clothing and other essentials, and left the rest for a moving van.

CHAPTER 7

We went to Cora's house in Pella, and were received with open arms and that night after we went upstairs to bed, I realized what a fool thing we had done, I cried a long time. Cora and Elvin were good to us. I was always hungry and when we all sat down for dinner if there was anything left in any of the bowls they would pass them to me and I'd eat the rest.

Then Nick and I bought a little tract house using his Veteran's Aid. There weren't paved streets on that block, and no grass. But we had two bedrooms and a full basement. When we unpacked the boxes left with us from the moving van, I couldn't find our dishes. But we had a lot of laundry and I went down to the basement. I opened the washing machine and LO AND BEHOLD there were the dishes. I got busy with the laundry. I had to put up a clothes line. The hook on one side of the house was pretty high but I managed to reach it, and then out to the clothes pole, and that went well. It had rained and it was slippery underfoot but I made it to the hook on the other side of the house. The hook was even higher and I couldn't reach it. Then like an answer to a prayer, Cora's husband Elvin came around the corner in his car. He could see at a glance that I was in trouble. He parked and came to my rescue. He fastened my rope and asked if I had a clothes pole. I said yes, in the basement and he went and got them. Soon I had the lines full of clothes. With a sigh of relief I went in the house. A little later, I heard a knock on the back door. There was one of my neighbor's. And she said "One of your sheets fell off the line." I thanked her and went back thru the mud to get my filthy sheet. I washed it again but it never was really white again.

We were soon settled. Dennis and Valerie were enrolled in the Lincoln School. The same school I went to from kindergarten thru sixth grade, also my sisters and brothers.

Cora took me to Oskaloosa to see a doctor. He taped me around the middle, I couldn't figure out why he did that. The tape was very uncomfortable and Cora and Martha took it off after a few days leaving a big red sore around my midsection. I didn't go back to that doctor. Pella didn't have a hospital then, so the next place we went was to Knoxville. The doctor there was very nice and I liked him from the first. He also was nice enough not to ask me why I waited so long into my pregnancy before I saw a doctor. He checked everything and found me in fine fettle and the baby too.

I had completely forgotten how cold the winters were in Iowa. One day it was not only cold but also windy. Dennis and Valerie started home from school for lunch and they started to cry. Their noses ran and the wind blew the tears and mucous over their cheeks and it froze there... Such a sorry sight. I kept them home that afternoon.

But the snow was fun too. Someone gave us a sled and I pulled the kids all over.

There was a big pond where young and old skated. Mrs. Sophie Guertz called me and said Dennis was watching the skaters and it was starting to get dark. She said, "Shall I tell him to

go home?" I said, "Yes please and thank you very much". When he came home he went to the basement to take off his outer clothes. Then his feet started to warm up and that was very painful. He also went home with Sandy one day and her mother Dortha Vogeler Klein called and asked "Did you know Dennis was here?" That's the way small towns are. Everybody knows everybody else. They know everything about each other, good and bad. But in this case I was glad that she knew who Dennis' mother was. She called me and we agreed on the time when she was to send him home.

My mother came to be with me when I had the baby. So when my labor started, she was there to take care of things while I was gone. On December 1, 1946, Martha Lucinda was born, 7lbs 1oz. The nurses always waved her hair before they brought her to me. She had a lot of beautiful hair. I hadn't had much luck breast feeding with Dennis and Valerie so this time I decided to go the bottle way from the start. I slept night and day; well I did come up for air some of the time. But one day when the Dr. came in to see how things were going, he gave me a little slap on the rear and said "Don't you do anything but sleep". There were three of us in that room and we talked a lot but I doubt if I'd have recognized them later when they were dressed in other clothes..

We were soon at home again and Mom said she would give Martha the night bottle. I didn't even hear her cry that first night. I can't remember if it was the next night or later that I did hear her cry and cry and cry. I got up and Mom was sleeping. So I heated the bottle, changed the diaper and fed her. Poor Mom was just too tired. She should have been taking naps in the daytime but naps weren't her style. I don't know when Martha slept thru the night, which was like from 10 o'clock to about 6:00am. But mainly she was a good baby. Mom had to go home again and I'm sure she was glad to get back to warmer weather. But I missed her a lot.

One of my neighbors called one day and asked me to come for teatime. I rolled Martha like a little sausage in many blankets. I could hardly find her when I got there. It's a good thing it only took me about five minutes to get there; her oxygen supply in all those blankets couldn't have lasted forever. I should have said for my neighbor to come to our house. Zero weather is not for taking new babies out in. I know there's something wrong with that last sentence. I've long forgotten most of my grammar. Like participles and such. I believe participles dangle.

Some time along the way we got a dog. He was such a good animal. We were very fond of him. I'd say to him "Are you going to sing for me?" And he'd oblige, with a long howl. About then I became friends with my next door neighbor. She was an English war bride. One day she came over for a little visit. She spoke with a British accent and said the word "laugh". Sounded like 'lauff' Dennis was sitting next to her on the couch and said "It's called 'laff'" She said, "Well, OK then laff". And we all laffed together. She and her husband took our dog when we went back to California. I was always homesick for California. Betty and Edna called and sometimes I cried thru the entire conversation. Martha couldn't understand why I wanted to go back to California when I had two sisters in Pella.

CHAPTER 8

And so, back to California. Nick drove back with Valerie and Dennis. I flew back with Martha. That was some flight. First of all it was called a “milk run”. That meant that we stopped at every city along the way that had an airport, well it seemed that much. Then we landed in Denver I had to transfer to another plane. I asked where, and they pointed and I walked and walked with Martha and whatever luggage and walked and walked and walked and finally got to my plane. I boarded the plane. We took off and pretty soon Martha began to cry and cry and cry. The attendant came over and said, “It’s the best thing she can do. We’re up so high that there’s less oxygen.” I was very glad to reach Los Angeles. My brother Bert was there to meet us. That flight took hours. Sure different now.

Ednamae and Clyde welcomed us and we lived with them for some time. Nick and I had to sleep in a single bed. They started to make a little apartment in one half of their garage but we never had to live in it. Betty and Andy moved to Inglewood and we moved into that apartment. It had two bedrooms, but not a huge living room like the other apartment.. We lived there for some time...WE HAD COCKROACHES. But we got rid of them.

I was pregnant again. I could hardly make myself let Martha and Cora know. We could just manage from payday to payday. But somehow we kept our heads above water. Then on Sept. 23, 1948 I had another little girl. We named her Cynthia Louise. I was breast feeding and doing really well. Then one night I started hemorrhaging and went to the hospital in an ambulance. The nurses tried to get the Dr., but weren’t able to find him. I lost so much blood that I couldn’t lift up my legs and I wondered where my children were. My mother took Martha, and their grandma Ednamae took Dennis and Valerie, and my new baby went to Inglewood where Betty and Andy lived. Dr. Tainter was finally found and he soon had things under control. He was a great kidder and said to me “Who did this abortion on you”? After he and the nurses left, the woman in the other bed said to me “Don’t tell him anything. It’s none of his business.” I told her that I didn’t have an abortion. That the Dr. was only kidding me. She didn’t believe me. Then I started to cry. My kids were all over the place and I wondered if Betty knew how to make the formula. However I calmed down and after a few days I could go home. I had to take it easy for a while and Clyde and Jean came to do the cooking and other things. And Betty came bringing Cynthia with her to visit me. I really was happy to see her and hold her.

Soon I was well again had all the kids back. Cynthia was a crier and I would hold her and rock her until she fell asleep, I’d put her in her bed and the minute I had my head on my pillow she would start to cry again. But fortunately that didn’t last long.

The end

Dennis here... I have done some editing, but this is as far as mom got. So if you remember anything from this point on, please add it. Don’t worry about the chronology of it all, I’ll sort

through anything you can remember and put it in its proper place.