

1927-1945

My Family

The year I was born (*1), 1927, Charles Lindbergh flew his “Spirit of St. Louis” from Long Island, NY, to Paris. And, Ford Motor Company introduced the Model A car.

When I was two, Wall Street experienced the worst crash in stock values in its history. America plummeted into the Great Depression. European countries struggled with fluctuating currency valuation, and recovery from World War I devastation. In 1931 (when I was four) the federal Committee on Unemployment reported 4-5 million Americans out of work.

Unknown to me is how my parents met. (*2) Dad was born in Bolivar, NY. Mother was born in Cameron Mills, NY, and later moved to Richburg, NY. Before I was born, Dad took Mom to Kentucky, because he heard about work in crude oil production. Though my family is from New York State, my birthplace was Glasgow, KY.

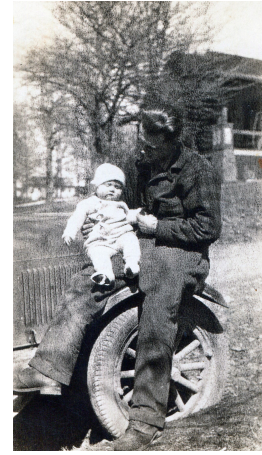
My folks returned to Dad’s hometown, Bolivar, when I was four, or five, and moved into Dad’s parents’ home where we lived about five years. I shared my parents’ bedroom, but had my own bed.

Paternal Grandfather (Robert E. Stohr),
Paternal Grandmother (Winnie Stohr) (*3)
Maternal Grandfather (unknown),
Maternal Grandmother (Leila Owens)

Grandma and Grandpa Stohr’s brown house--with green trim--was on the arterial, Boss Street. Like other clapboard homes built in late eighteen hundreds, it had covered porch that extended along the front of the house, and faced the street. The porch sheltered a swing where I spent a lot of time, often socializing with younger cousin and buddy, Milton. There was not much a kid could play with. Inside this home were many antiques, including an old piano--which children could not play. I never saw anyone play the piano. (I fiddled around on it occasionally.)

Grandfather Stohr was a hard working gentleman. Grandmother Stohr had auburn hair, and came from English stock. (*3) She was a seamstress; she also crocheted. I recall seeing her handmade lace on a pillowcase edge. Grandma doted on her grandchild, me. I named my doll “Carrie Skerrett,” after one of her friends who lived in town.

Across the street lived Mildred. She and I walked to school together: up Boss Street, across Main Street, then down a long stretch to school. I attended Bolivar Central School from



1. Dad and me



2. Mom and Dad: Pauline and C Maynard Stohr



3. Grandparents: Winnie and Robert Stohr

kindergarten through third grade. I liked school. I liked my teachers. Every day, Mother made a cheese sandwich for me, to take to school. School lunches were not available in those days.

Kindergarten was a snap. There were lots of toys to play with, including a dollhouse big enough for kids to stand in. I had few toys at home--one doll, and a child size rocking chair. When I had a nickel, or dime, I always bought color paper. With it I crafted clothing for my doll. Once Aunt Mable gave me paper dolls: Minnie and Mickey Mouse. (Kids were lucky to have anything!)

On the opposite side of Boss Street, up from my grandparents' home, was a feed store. Trucks pulled in and out frequently, so kids were cautioned to stay away. Feed was delivered for chickens, and perhaps cows, too. It was packaged in floral patterned cotton bags. This fabric often was used to make dresses for women and girls.

It appeared no one had money at that time. There were few cars in town. Folks were entertained by occasional visit to the movie house. My first movie experience was when my parents took me to see "Frankenstein." It scarred me.

Economic state of rural New York was poor. Dad took various employment: contractor; carpenter; taxidermist; oil distributor; laborer. He built homes, and cabinets. He milled lumber, and he owned a lumber mill briefly. I remember he left home carrying a dinner pail, daily.

Dad: C. Maynard Stohr

My dad had black-hair. He was oldest of three. Aunt Mabel and Uncle Earl were his younger siblings. Dad's personality was introverted; he was not highly social. He was intelligent, and had aptitude for math, and for constructing things. I believe he was self-taught in everything he did.

When I was young, I recall Dad took Mom and me on a lake, in a canoe he built. I brought a doll so small it fit in one hand. While Dad paddled the canoe, I made clothes for my doll from leaves and natural material.

Dad developed taxidermy skills as a hobby, which he turned it into a modest cottage industry. Behind his parents' house was a huge barn. On the upper level, Dad worked on taxidermy projects. I liked to go up and look around. Some things were creepy--like snakes! I cannot recall his whole assortment of "stuffed" animals, but I do recall pheasants, and deer heads. Dad could make lifeless animals come alive, frozen in a moment. Dad hunted in the surrounding Allegheny Mountains.

When I was older, Dad gave me a "stuffed" squirrel. It perched on hind legs, with feet anchored to a branch cross section. Between

sharp claws, it clutched a nut. Its glass eyes glistened. Dad's exacting work is displayed at New York State fair grounds, in Angelica. Animals are displayed in realistic poses, across five large display cases.

Dad's social skills were not developed as well as his mind. Though he was gentle, he neglected "family time" with his kids. Instead, he spent evenings at a pool hall.

Mom: Pauline Owens Stohr

Mom was sweet, pretty, dark haired. She loved to sew, sewing by hand. In married life she acquired a treadle sewing machine. Mom made my clothes.

Mother was one of 12 children. (Seven sisters. Four brothers, one of which died at birth.) One brother, well off, owned horses. (His wealth likely earned through ubiquitous oil production of the era.) When we visited his home, children were treated to a pony ride. We sat in a cute cart pulled by a pony. (In those days, I had 45 cousins!) When this wealthy uncle visited our home, he usually brought ice cream. That was a treat everyone enjoyed!

Mom was close to her sisters--Isabelle, Bernice, Virginia, Gladys, and Helen. She socialized very little beyond her immediate family. And the Owens clan enjoyed getting together for "a good laugh." Once I prompted Mom: "Why don't you invite neighbors in for tea?" ...that did not happen.

Mom was a good cook. And having limited money, she was frugal. I recall meals consisting of potatoes with tuna gravy, or potatoes with hamburger gravy. Vegetables came from our gardens (at various homes). Fruit was not readily available; I did not eat much as a kid.

Maternal grandmother: Grandma Owens

Shawmut railroad tracks ran along lower Richburg Hill, connecting neighboring towns, Bolivar and Richburg. Occasionally, my mother and I hiked along the tracks, to Richburg, and back. We visited Mom's mother, Grandma Owens. She was sweet, a gentle, generous person. Busy attending her eleven children, she had no time for socializing. Nevertheless, she frequently had company in her home. (Grandfather Owens died before I was born.) Eventually, Mom, Dad, and I moved into one upper level apartment, in Grandma Owens house. We lived there six years.



4. Mom and me



5. Grandma Owens in center, with five daughters. Mom, Pauline is at far right.

Life in Grandma Owens' house

Grandma Owens home, on Richardson Avenue, had been a hotel. It was vestige from "oil rush" days, in late 1880s. The apartment we occupied was upstairs, in back. A second apartment, at the front end, was occupied by mother's youngest brother, Uncle Lesley, and his wife, Aunt Hazel.

Later another daughter moved into Grandma's apartment downstairs. Aunt Bernice had contracted polio, and required assistance. She had been living at her mother-in-law's house, with husband and young child, Gaylord. For unknown reason, her mother-in-law withheld Gaylord from Aunt Bernice, when she moved into grandma's apartment. It was unacceptable to my family! To remedy the situation, we piled into Dad's truck and drove to the mother-in-law's home, in Bolivar. Gaylord was asleep in a buggy on the front porch. We "kidnapped" the baby without intervention. (Later someone commented on my behavior: "All you did was stand in the front yard and swear!")



6. Grandma Owens' house

A dramatic event occurred at Grandma Owen's house. No one witnessed it. Mother instructed my brother Clyde (3 or 4 years old): "Go see if your dad is coming." Clyde ran to a closed window to look out. Unknown is why the window broke. Clyde fell to the ground, from the second story. He sustained a broken arm, and a cut on one eyelid.

My family's cramped apartment consisted of (multipurpose) front room/dining room/kitchen, one bedroom (my parents'), and a modest closet.

The all purpose front room had one window. On either side of it, my brothers and I slept on feather tick mattresses--I on the floor, my brothers in beds. In the morning I rolled up my mattress and stored it in the storage closet. This storage closet hid the chamber pot. There was no bathroom. We washed by "sponge bath," at the kitchen sink. (Occasionally, we imposed on Grandma to use her bathtub downstairs.)

The sparsely furnished front room contained: dining table and chairs, a rocker and a radio. This radio provided weekly entertainment from hosts like Bob Hope, or Red Skelton. I regularly enjoyed "Little Orphan Annie" broadcasts.

I acquired a large doll. Her curly hair molded, in relief, into a plaster head. It was painted brown. Her eyes opened and closed. Her torso was pressed straw, covered with cloth. She had no clothes.

I can visualize dresses Mom sewed for me. All three hanged on nails, behind the door to my parents' bedroom. One was a blue sailor dress. One was brown and orange. The third... I cannot recall, perhaps maroon plaid?

After school walks

Other than the playground, or the streets, an old modest town library was the only place where kids could hang out. After school, I stopped by the library to browse, or return books. I enjoyed reading. I read many Nancy Drew adventures. Upon returning home, I frequently gave Mom relief from my brothers. I was ten years older than the oldest one. The younger two, John and Steve, I put in a buggy. The oldest, Clyde, hanged onto the buggy and walked. So we walked all over Richburg. (Returning home with groceries one time, Steve snitched a stick of butter and ate the entire thing!!)

Years later, my brothers remembered my correction tactic, "washing mouths with soap" for using bad words!

Mitchell Putnam

Mitchell Putnam (grandfather of Howard Moses) lived in center of town, on Main Street, in a red brick building. He observed me walking the boys around town. Before we were married, Howard confided to me his grandfather had advised: "That's the girl you should marry."

White House on Evans Avenue

In my sophomore year in high school, my father bought a modest white house on Evans Avenue, in Richburg. It was fairly new. And though it had been occupied, it was unfinished. Missing, at front of the house, were steps leading to the porch. Our family, and guests, entered at the back. Dad added a kitchen sink (also missing). And he added cabinets that extended the length of the hallway, and into the family room. Behind the house was uncultivated natural space where the boys played.

This new home had three bedrooms. And for the first time, I had my own room! Walls were painted lavender. The view from my window was onto Evans Avenue, toward homes on opposite side of the street. (I looked for Howard Moses, delivering newspapers on his bicycle.) With neighborhood kids, I walked to school.

Lower level of our new home contained kitchen, bathroom (toilet and bathtub!), dining room, living room, and den. The den was mine, where I immersed myself in homework. My parents later added a piano. (John recalls he and our brothers stood around the piano while I played. We sang tunes like "Bicycle Built for Two." I briefly took piano lessons. Later, while working in ministry, I felt obligated to teach myself to play hymns, on piano and organ.) What joy our new home brought us. It even had a telephone! I frequently invited friends over.



7. Steve in stroller.

1945 - Young Adult

High School

In high school I participated in numerous activities. I was a cheerleader. We went to "away games" by bus. (We wore purple skirts with hemline above knees, white blouses, and gray sweaters.) I sang in school choir. I played viola in school orchestra. (The instruments were school property.) School music groups performed regionally. For me, they were exciting events, because without a car, my family did not go places. (Dad owned a truck that was used for work.)

High school friendships: Mary Lou Jennings; Lulu "Dude" Burdick and her sisters, and Kay James. ...ah, and a trumpet player, on whom I had a crush. But, that was before meeting Howard Moses.

My parents did not attend church. One Sunday, when I was young, Grandma Owens took me to Richburg First Baptist Church. I witnessed a baptism. It was unsettling, and I determined I would not be a Baptist.

Howard Moses

Walking to church one Sunday (Richburg First Baptist), I noticed Howard Moses ahead of me. Our paths did not cross much. He was a year ahead of me in school. I called out: "Hey, Howard! Wait up for me." He did. (Years later he teased: "I've been waiting for you ever since.")

We dated. My family, the Stohrs, did not approve of Howard, as they perceived him to be a "religious kid." But Mom liked him. She was acquainted with his family.

Our socializing was simple. We attended Wednesday prayer meetings. For a time, we walked to Bolivar Sunday afternoon, for youth meetings. We liked to go to Bartoo gas station for ice cream. Occasionally we walked to Bolivar and ate at the Sugar Bowl. We walked around Richburg streets. (Without public transit, young people walked or biked.) We liked to walk along a creek in Richburg. There, Howard sang songs--some were love songs. He was romantic.

Howard and I did homework together. I got A's; he got C's. He loved history. I liked English literature, typing, and shorthand.

Howard was ambitious. He delivered newspapers by bicycle. He was a gentleman. He had plenty of friends, and was well liked by peers. Despite quiet demeanor, once he began talking one could not shut him up. (In married life, Howard sometimes followed me around, talking about matters on his mind. I listened while carrying on with household tasks. In groups, I noticed Howard was selective

about what he said. And coworkers listened when he had something to share.)

In the Spotlight

- Howard sang in a talent show with a neighbor Theo.
- Howard and I were elected Maypole king and queen.
- Howard and I had leading roles in the junior-senior class play. (In one scene, his character was scripted to hug me. Howard informed friends he had a plan... he surprised me with an unscripted kiss, on stage!)

Howard's family

Howard was four years old when he was informed he was adopted, as infant. (Adoption was arranged through an agency in Corry, PA, where he was born. Name given him at birth: Vernon Davis.) Nina Moses, Howard's adopted mother, worried he might seek his birth mother. Howard expressed he lacked motivation: my mother did not care for me, why would I look her up?

Howard had three older siblings in his adopted family: Etha (14 years older); Helen (12 years older); Francis (10 years older). (**10) Their dad, Frank Moses, left the family when Howard was 10. Frank was a Christian, attending Richburg First Baptist Church. (**11) The rest of the family did not go to church. (They came to know the Lord through Howard.) Howard grew up in movie houses. His mother "dumped" him there to watch several movies per visit.

Howard's family doted on him. He recalled generous gift giving at Christmas. Perhaps too many? Some disappeared, then reappeared the following Christmas. Howard recognized gifts given him before.

Howard's brother, Francis, would not kiss his baby brother unless "the baby was washed." Francis, was personable, happy-go-lucky, outgoing, comical. His personality contrasted to Howard's pensive introverted style. Francis had girlfriends. Misschiviously, he gave some gals his phone number, referencing Howard's name. When gals phoned, they discovered Howard was a six-year-old kid. In our home, Howard kept a photo on his desk of himself with older brother Francis at his side.

High school graduation

I was assigned the "prophecy" speech, at my high school commencement ceremony. (Speakers were selected by scholastic standing.) The speech traditionally was humorous predictions about what might become of classmates.

With my friend, Kay James (she had drivers license), I went looking for a dress to wear to graduation. After our first stop at a dress shop in Bolivar, we intended to drive to Olean. Instead, we were surprised by Grandmother Stohr. She was looking for me to deliver



8. Howard, neighbor Theo



9. Howard, brother Francis

news: something terrible had happened to mother.

Mother died of heart attack, Saturday, June 16, 1945 (five days after my 18th birthday). My little brothers, who were home with Mom, found her lifeless on the kitchen floor. John (age 6) telephoned Dad at work. (Dad worked six days a week.) Dad instructed John to ask Grandma Stohr to look in on Mom. Grandma went looking for me.

Strange, what one remembers... I recall I wore a store bought lavender dress to mother's funeral. I remember escorting my father, on my arm. He was crushed. My brothers were not allowed to attend Mom's funeral, as they had whooping cough. (Years later, John admitted regret for being denied participation at Mom's funeral.)

Mother always was thin, but appeared thinner over the last three years of her life. (She habitually drank coffee and smoked cigarettes. My conviction was--and remains--her habits contributed to premature death. Sadly, such habits were common among women and men in that era.) Mother's absence, at my graduation, days later, was difficult. Further, it was difficult to complete the New York state regents exam, on the Monday following her death.

I was grateful I organized a party, three months prior, to celebrate mother's 39th birthday (March 20th). Her extended family had been invited to our home. Occurred on a school day, I was able to purchase a special treat, for the event, from Richburg Central School: ice cream!

Family disbanded

Over the summer, after mother's death, I cared for my younger brothers (Clyde 8, John 6, Steven 4). However, I had received scholarship to train at Rochester Business Institute (RBI), in Rochester, NY. So in autumn, I moved to Rochester where I lived with 10 women, in a house owned by RBI. I don't recall much about this dormitory. I remember twice we called the fire department for assistance. Once a cat was stuck in a tree. On the other occasion, two gals and I returned home late, without keys. (Lilacs and lilac fragrance remind me of Rochester, renowned for its lilac festival.)

I immersed myself in secretarial training, and held a clerical role at the institute. After I completed training, I worked for Allegheny County Oil Company, back home in Bolivar. There I enjoyed dual roles: telephone operator, and receptionist. And I enjoyed comradeship with two women on staff. (My future father-in-law, Frank Moses, frequently visited the office to attend to oil leases.) Unfortunately, Allegheny County Oil Company closed four or five months after my employment began. Oil industry in the region was dying.



10. With brother Clyde



11. At Rochester Business Institute

When I moved to Rochester to attend RBI, Aunt Mabel (dad's sister) and her husband Uncle Harry took my brothers into their home. They raised Clyde, John Steve with their adopted daughter Winona.

Dad sold our beloved white house on Evans Avenue, and moved into his parents' home, again. Later he relocated to Bolivar Hotel where he lived most of his adult years. Having good health, he never went to a doctor. However having been exposed to asbestos at construction sites, he contracted leukemia in his senior years. He ended his life. He was 80 years old.

Howard enlists in Army Air Corps

Howard completed high school in summer 1944. Over the following months, he labored in Richburg "oil fields," maintaining oil derricks. His brother Francis was self-employed in speculative oil production endeavor. He paid his assistant, Howard. (Howard claimed it took an hour to clean up, from extremely dirty work, before he could visit me.)

Like his peers, Howard was motivated to enlist in the military, to halt Hitler's subjugation of European countries. So in January 1945, he went to Buffalo, NY, and enlisted in the Army Air Corps. (In June, he was permitted special discharge to attend my high school graduation.) Howard trained in air traffic control, in Wisconsin, then he was deployed to Germany. WWII ended May 1945. Dad was discharged in August and returned to Richburg in September. We were engaged in November.

Howard had strong commitment to train for Christian ministry. He was determined to train at Moody Bible Institute (MBI), in Chicago. Moody required newly wed students to be married at least six months, before they could enroll. This condition forced a decision. To us it was unacceptable to defer Howard's training one year, due to marital status. Therefore we moved our wedding forward to January 22, 1947. (My hope, for a big June wedding, with many relatives in attendance, was dashed!)

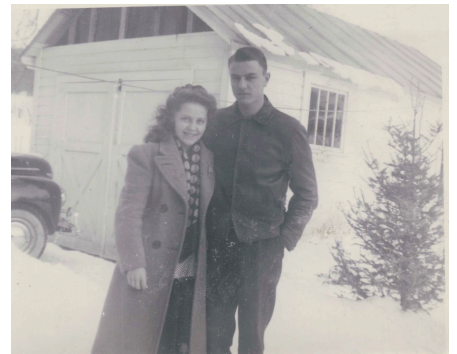
Wedding

Realistically, there was no way I could have a big wedding. Neither Howard nor I--nor our families--could finance one. (And, my family was not fond of Howard.) Instead, Howard's brother Francis and his wife, Bernice, drove us to the home of Reverend Mason, in Hume, NY. He had retired from ministry. While our minister at Richburg Baptist Church, he promised to officiate at our wedding. We made good on the offer. I wore a gray suit, with corsage. Howard wore a suit, with boutonniere. Francis and Bernice, sole attendees, acted as witnesses, too. The ceremony was simple, without reception or photos.

Solely to Aunt Mabel did I reveal our intention to have a private



12. Clyde, Steve, John, and Winona.



13. Donna and Howard

wedding. Yet, my secret was exposed. Someone discovered Donna Stohr had ordered flowers from Nicholson's Flowers, in Bolivar. Information was shared. While we socialized in Rev. Mason's living room, we noticed a car drive up. Several of our friends piled out, intending to join in the event. While we socialized, someone (I know not who) secretly disabled the guests' car. (I know not how!) Our guests could trail us no further.

The uninvited guests were able to return to Richburg, in "wee hours of night," according to Nina Moses Brown (now my mother-in-law). She recounted: "At 4 AM, a car circled my home, and was tooting the horn!!" Apparently the uninvited guests assumed Howard and I would be at Nina's. Not so.

Instead, Francis and Bernice delivered us to Wellsville train depot. We hopped a train to New York City, for week long honeymoon. It was delightful, full of new experiences for a small town girl! We ate at restaurants, visited Rockefeller Plaza and watched ice skaters. We explored Macy's. We attended a live Christian television broadcast.

Chicago

Newly married, we lived with Nina, Howard's mother, several months. And in August we set out for Chicago, in an old car purchased from Nina.

Chicago bewildered this small town girl. Howard thought I was unreasonable when I asked him to stop the car, immediately! A wind gust snatched a brand new lampshade out of the car, through an open window in the back. Heavy four-lane traffic made it impossible for Howard to pull over. The lampshade was crushed, in a traffic stream behind us.

I do not recall where we stayed, upon arriving in Chicago, that is until Howard purchased our first home, a 25-foot trailer. While inspecting tailors, I was drawn to one that had pictures on interior walls. It looked "lived in." This became our home, for three years.

We were invited to park the trailer on property owned by South Side Baptist Church. Because it was many miles south of downtown Chicago, and Moody Bible Institute, Dad had a long train commute.

We enjoyed WMBI radio programs in our home. We would have welcomed fellowship with other Moody students, yet the long commute hindered social connection. We made friends, and participated in functions, at Hyde Park Bible Church.

Extreme temperatures, normal in Chicago, caused the trailer interior to become hideously hot, or cruelly cold. I remember strolling outdoors near midnight, because home was unbearable, and we could not sleep.

Howie, first born

In our first year at Moody, Howie was born (November 5, 1949), at Swedish Covenant Hospital.

Conveniently, South Side Baptist church had a fenced back yard. Yet, it did not deter little Howie from climbing over. Our toddler wanted to play with the neighbor girl, who was about his age. I had to retrieve Howie once or twice. On another occasion, I found my baby boy painting the trailer exterior. He discovered paint we carefully hid out-of-sight, under the trailer.

While Howie was a toddler, I enrolled in Moody evening classes. Rides, to and from Moody, were graciously provided by the Blackfords, who also were enrolled in night school. Our friendship lasted long after we parted. (Blackfords supported ministry in Germany.) Another couple, Kenneth and Dorothy Webster we regarded as good friends. Life-long relationships began in Chicago.

On the evenings I was in class, Howard/Dad attended our youngster, while attempting to study. I typed Dad's homework, on a secondhand typewriter. (It was not accidental Dad's grades went up, when his homework was corrected and typed by me. He had scrawling indecipherable handwriting. That black Royal typewriter we owned until I retired in 2008! It had to be tossed out—along with other things—that could not be brought back to America upon retirement. Over decades, the typewriter made documents presentable for the whole family: prayer/personal letters; sermons; school reports; essays, etc.)

While enrolled at MBI, Howard worked several jobs to support us. For a while, he was employed packaging pharmaceutical products. In another endeavor, he sold Vita-Craft cookware. (He was his best customer!)

In summer of 1948, we towed the gray trailer home to Richburg. (A mechanical breakdown detained us one night.) Upon arriving, we set up—then occupied our trailer—in Nina Moses Brown's back yard.

Nina Moses Brown, mother-in-law

Nina was known for her strong personality. She was direct, outspoken, strong willed, a tease, and sometimes difficult. (If she liked you, things were fine. If she didn't, well...) I got on well with her. Perhaps the relationship succeeded because I made my boundaries clear with her. One day Grandma teased little Howie, who was about 1.5 years old. In humor, she threatened to toss him down the ornamental well in her back yard. I expressed disapproval of scaring the child: "Mother, you cannot say that to Howie!"

Missions program



13. Donna with first born, Howard Moses, Jr.



14. Sisters-in-law, Helen and Etha, Mother-in-law, Nina May Moses Brown

From 1947 until 1950, Dad was immersed in world missions program, at Moody. Upon graduating, he participated in an ordination process. The purpose--and challenge--was to defend one's beliefs before a committee of forty ministers. When the ordination was complete, Dad and I applied to Baptist Mid-Missions (headquarters in Cleveland, OH). We were accepted as missionary candidates. Dad began deputation meetings January 1951. These meetings entailed presenting need to establish Christian churches in Germany, and raising support for such ministry. Several ministers, who were on Dad's ordination committee, invited him to speak at their churches.

Before we left Chicago we expanded our family with a second child, on June 26, 1949. Polly was named after my mother (Pauline Ardys Owen Stohr). In the front room of our trailer, Dad built a bed with a cover, for changing diapers. We put a gate in place while baby Polly slept.

Loose ends, departure

We sold the trailer and left Chicago. In Richburg we lived on lower Richburg Hill, in modest 3-bedroom house. (From Main Street, it was situated behind Wightmans' house. Wightmans' house was located behind Nina Moses Brown's home.) A third child, Patty, was born September 12, 1951.

I recall Dad (Howard) shot a deer, in autumn hunting season. He hauled it home in Howie's little red wagon. Cutting up, and canning, the carcass was my staggering task.

Dad and I had a shared goal: we would sail to Germany in May the following year. Consequently, Dad spent much time traveling, for deputation meetings. He visited churches in New York, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois. I disliked those absences, and recall the longest one lasted six weeks! Nothing could be done about it. We kept in contact by telephone. No matter how far Dad was from home, after his final speaking engagement he drove through the night to return home. That certainly worried me!

While Dad travelled, making presentations at churches, I collected personal things and household goods to pack in boxes. Each box required a content index, for shipping. Each was addressed to Bill and Katie Grimes, future coworkers already living in Munich. (I recall simultaneously typing lists and nursing baby Patty.)

Departure for Germany

May 19th, 1952, Dad and I, and three kids, drove to New York City. Dad sold the car. (I know not where, or how.) We met three single missionary women at the ship loading dock. Travel companions, and future coworkers, were: Winnie Shelito, Bea Fedelick, and Edna Appelt. They had offered to collect our passports. Our relief

was great, seeing those passports in their hands!

Passage cross the Atlantic, on ocean liner Neptune, took thirteen days. Upon docking in Bremerhaven (on the North Sea), we were grateful to God to finally stand on German soil! Our conviction, that God wanted us to minister in Germany, never waivered, despite numerous trying experiences, and a lengthy transition.

Misadventure

Before de-boarding the Neptune, we repacked suitcases and trunks. This rearranging stuff produced a surplus: two sacks of shoes. Rather than attempt to fit them in the trunks, Dad carried two shoe bags in his arms. We women hurried ahead, eager to stand on terra firma. When we looked back, we saw Dad struggling down the gangplank, with shoes falling from plastic bags. As he stooped to retrieve a dropped shoe, a shoe fell from the alternate bag. It was an amusing sight, causing us women to laugh so hard. Annoyed with his predicament, Dad was mad. And he was not amused at being laughed at. (I think that was the angriest I ever saw him.)

Doris Rothelsberger, a single missionary with two years experience living in Germany, met us at a train station. Despite having a guide, we managed to board a train heading in the wrong direction. The train terminated in Fulda, about halfway to our destination (Munich). At this terminus, we found no station, no shelter, no heat. So, in frigid darkness we walked to keep warm. Patty was nine months old, Polly was three, Howie was four-and-a-half. A later long train ride finally delivered us to Munich.

During initial six weeks in Munich, we lived in a tacky, smelly hotel room. Bill and Katie Grimes looked after us, and fed us. Then we moved to Ottobrunn (outside Munich), to live in a home owned by the Dietrich family.

Dietrich home, Ottobrunn

German economy remained gloomy, seven years after WWII ended. Mr. Dietrich, a tailor, was saving money to build a shop. To reach his financial goal, he and his wife committed to a challenging lifestyle. They moved into a “chicken coop” behind their house. It was a small, compartmented wooden shed in which chickens had been kept. Mr. Dietrich collected rainwater in barrels, and he bathed outside--after dark of course. (Later when Dietrichs were moved out of the coop, they asked me to feed a turkey kept there. I recall natural light in the interior. And I clearly recall that turkey was a mean old buzzard.)

We rented Dietrich’s house one and one-half years. It had one entrance, two bedrooms--one upstairs, one downstairs. Each room was heated with small coal heater. I learned to cook on a coal-and-wood-burning stove. Fenced yard provided vital play space for



14. Back: Howard and Donna. Front: Polly, Howie, Patty

three kids. Dad built a sturdy sand box for the children, and painted it red. We all enjoyed the yard.

Cousin Milton

My cousin, Milton Rogers, enlisted in the US military and was stationed in Germany. He determined he would visit us, unannounced. With address in hand, he located the Dietrich house. He did not bother ringing the gate bell, but marched to the front door to knock. I was so surprised to see him! He stated he was certain it was our home, when he spotted the red sandbox. No other house had such a thing!

Novel Neighbors

We were novelty for the neighbors. Some people liked us. Others may have preferred we were not present. Perhaps they disliked Americans. Others may have perceived us as religious fanatics. Overall, people were kind, showing compassion for our displacement and awkwardness. They helped us “Auslander” (foreigners).

A Ford van we purchased we parked inside the fenced yard. More than once, Dad discovered car tires had been cut. Though frustrating, we felt we had to tolerate the menace. Dad repaired tires. (Back then, car tires had inner tubes. More than once, Dad unintentionally left screwdriver, or other item, inside a tire. He undid his work to locate the missing item.)

An American military base was stationed nearby. We occasionally invited soldiers and their families to our home. With Dietrichs permission, Dad built bonfires so we could roast wieners and marshmallows. Those events were enjoyed by all us Americans. The spectacle entertained neighbors. We were not your typical Deutsche Familie!

American Kindergarten

Through friendship with American soldiers, we received invitation to enroll Howie in kindergarten on base. We accepted. Dad drove Howie to a specified location to meet a school bus, that transported Howie to kindergarten.

One morning Dad was outside starting the car, while I combed Howie’s hair. (The engine turned over by a crank, attached to front of vehicle.) I stuck my head out the door to determine whether it was time to send Howie to Dad. What I saw surprised me: Dad was driving away! When he returned, Dad informed he arrived at the bus stop. But when he opened the door he found the kid missing! The bus driver was surprised also. (Our household didn’t need TV, or movies, to make life interesting! Likely, Dad was preoccupied with chaos and problems of our fledgling ministry.)

Groceries



15. Cousin Milton and wife.

Lacking German language skill, grocery shopping was a challenge. We pointed at items we wanted. The grocer did all he could to discern what we wanted. (Once the elusive item was raisins!) To purchase milk, we carried metal 3-liter milk cans to a dairy store. (It may have amused Germans, as they drank beer at meals.)

First Camp

In 1953, while living in Munich, we organized our first summer camp. We rented a farm in Emroud, outside of Munich. It was being converted to hostel-guesthouse. For the first camp, our primary objective was testing whether coworkers--Westes, Grimes, Pals--would commit to this form of ministry. (Memorable moment at Emroud farm. Polly, age 4, charged excitedly into the dormitory. She reported she had been chased by a deer. In fact, the deer was a goat.)

Camp site

Dad and coworkers focused on establishing churches. Simultaneously they sought permanent site for camp ministry. Coworker, Wolfgang Kersting and Dad scoured southern Germany over many months, having that goal in mind. Intended camp location had to have sport possibility nearby: mountains, hills for skiing or hiking; a place to swim. And public transportation was needed. (They reported enjoying Wienerschnitzel on travels.)

In a small town 80 km south of Munich--Bad Heilbrunn--a bungalow met requirements. It was separated from an arterial road by a large field. Next to the bungalow was a family home. Both buildings sat on the edge of sparse woodland. A single unpaved lane ran along the front of the properties. On the opposite side of the arterial road, rose a mountain to 4000 ft (Stallauer Eck). A 20-minute walk in another direction took one to a small lake (Stallauer Weier). Initially, bungalow owner-farmer did not want to sell the property. Later, when faced with divorce, he changed his mind. (Baptist Mid-Missions purchased the property, owning it several decades.)



Home, Bad Heilbrunn

Dad and I were resolved to build a spiritual retreat, a Christian camp. The dream captured us in teenage years. Dad and I spent summers with church youth at Odasagih Bible Conference (Machias, New York). It was there Howard was saved.

In a green secondhand sedan (with crank motor, purchased from coworker, Doris Rothelsberger), we drove the family to the modest Bad Heilbrunn bungalow, on a snowy day in February 1954.

The quaint bungalow contained small kitchen, combination dining room/living room, and two modest bedrooms. A cramped bathroom had toilet (with elevated water tank and pull chain), and a small sink. There was no shower, therefore we bathed kids in a large basin, on the kitchen floor. (Later the bathroom was expanded to

include a modest shower.)

Handy Man

An immediately necessary repair focused on a small coal heater. Its exhaust pipe did not extend to the ventilation hole, high up in the wall. To raise the heater, Dad laid bricks under it. This was sole heat source of the bungalow. (Three Little Ones ran around in a cold bare home!) Coal embers smoldering the evening before, were cold in the morning. Winter temperatures dropped low, freezing water pipes. From a shallow ravine, in woods behind the bungalow, Dad drew water from a creek. We used it for drinking, cooking, washing.

Dietrich house, our prior home, was furnished. This bungalow had no furnishings. A makeshift table was created with board laid across two sawhorses. (I do not recall how furnishings eventually were acquired. We did not know what we were getting into! Our compelling faith and intentions— sometimes circumstance--drove us swiftly forward.)

Nancy's Finery

Three months after we moved into our bungalow a fourth child, Nancy, was born. Somewhere in her first nine months, we determined to introduce the baby to friends and relatives (in US), through photos. With effort we dressed and posed her in various dresses gifted to us. Dad took photos, and delivered the camera to a photo shop, for film development. To their astonishment, the attendant discovered Dad's camera contained no film!

Reading Lessons

By September 1954, our ministry was in full swing. And school began. Howie was in local Volksschule (primary level through middle school). Polly had pneumonia, so we did not send her to school that first year. As Howie learned to read German, Mom and Dad were useless tutors. (We had not yet comprehended German roosters cry "kickeriki," not "cock-a-doodle-doo"!)

Postman

Adhering to local tradition, our mailman arrived on bicycle, with a bugle slung over his shoulder. Through a bugle cadence he announced his arrival, at top of the dirt road sloping toward our home, and the neighbor's. (Black bugle on yellow background remains German postal symbol.) Once acquainted with us, this friendly chap did not knock before entering our home. On some visits he assisted Howie with reading (clarifying animal vocalizations). To Howie's parents he explained other conventions. Communication had to be acted out, pointing, gesturing.

Telephone

Nineteen long months passed before we had a telephone in our home. Phone wires had to be installed. I worried about kid safety,

prior to having a phone.

Washing Machine

It was an exciting occasion, years later, when a new clothes washer started its initial cycle. Installed in the kitchen, curious children watched clothes spin behind appliance glass door. Prior to this, I washed clothes in a manually cranked wash machine. All the years we lived in this home, clothes were dried on clotheslines, running along side the bungalow. Children were recruited to assist with this task, particularly in sudden rain shower. (Frequently drying clothes had to be collected because clouds cooled while rising over the mountains.)

Walk to School

Our kids walked to school along two-lane arterial. The rural road lacked sidewalk. When older, they took a path through the woods, behind our home. The light filled forest, comprised of slender evergreens, and sparse bushy undergrowth, had inviting character. It was not intimidating.

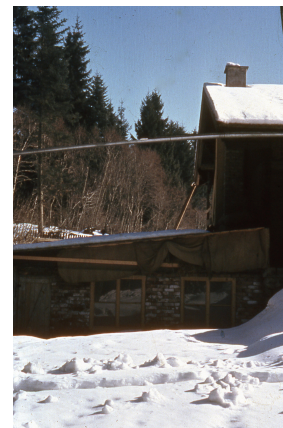
Camp Ministry Begins

Camp ministry initially received moderate support from coworkers; over time they became enthusiastic. In summer 1954, our initial camp program was held in our bungalow--literally. Boy campers slept upstairs, bumping heads on roof rafters. They slept on burlap covered straw mats. Girls slept in our home below. Four kids and I moved to Munich to stay with coworkers, the Pals family. Warren Pals and Dad directed camp.



Camp Expansion

After months of delay, municipal building permits were obtained for additions to the bungalow. Directly behind it, Dad, colleagues, and volunteers from nearby American army base, excavated a huge pit. It was dug out solely through manual labor, with shovels and picks! This earthen pit progressively transformed into combination dining-meeting room with fireplace, and large kitchen. Daylight windows allowed light into the underground structure.



A later building phase, added chapel and restrooms over the underground level. Still later, a third level was built on top of the chapel, and extended over top of our home. Third level comprised dormer rooms. Two free standing structures were added. One gave us garage space at front end, and two additional dormers at back end. A simple cabin without plumbing, later housed guest speakers. So, we created a modest, rustic conference/camp facility over several years. Our team of missionaries named it "Maranatha" (transliteration from Aramaic to Greek. Meaning: "Our Lord, come!" or "Come, O Lord".)

Bible Study Meetings

Through friendship with an American army officer, Dad arranged

church services at Park Hotel, in autumn 1954. Park Hotel was a resort for American soldiers, in neighboring town, Bad Toelz. Through these meetings we made acquaintance with an older German couple--“DPs”--refugees from northern Germany. (Displaced persons, through war.) We later met a young couple, Bjorg and Annie, who had been praying for a church. They were delighted to learn of our intention to build a local church. We added bible study meetings at another German hotel, the Bad Toelz Kurpark. (Bad Toelz population swelled in summer months when particularly seniors visited for therapeutic iodine baths. German word Bad translates as bath.)

Skirt Incident

While pregnant with our fifth child, Heidi, I was playing a portable pump organ in church service. At close of service I stood up from organ bench, and my skirt dropped to the floor. Having my coat on, I simply stepped out of the skirt, leaving it where it fell. I held coat close to me, and said not a word. I don't know whether anyone noticed.

Place of worship

Eventually, we rented a modest meeting room in Bad Toelz. We hanged curtains, and commenced Sunday worship services. Several people attended regularly. Years later, that ministry was closed due to diminished attendance, particularly of younger people. Thereafter the German fellowship affiliated with worshippers on an American military base. After a few years they disassociated, concluding the American group was fanatical. Instead, they held services in the same facility, at an alternate time.

Furlough

August 1956 we returned to America. We sailed from Amsterdam, on a Dutch ocean liner, coming down the St Lawrence River into Montreal. The trip took about 8 days. Uncle Bill, Aunt Etha (Howard's sister), Winnie and Elson Putnam (Howard's cousin and wife) met us at the terminal. Nancy (two years old) did not speak English.

Dad was on the road every time we were on furlough. He prearranged speaking engagements at supporting churches. Travel took him across states lines. The family could not join him, as children would miss school. (Once whooping cough kept children housebound.) The family participated at Dad's local engagements. We wore German folk costumes (dirndl) and sang German choruses. On a trip to Kentucky, Dad brought Howie along for companionship. They were gone several weeks. On this first furlough, we lived in the Hattie Allen house across the street from Richburg tennis courts.

In August 1957, after a year in the United States, Bill and Katie Grimes accompanied us as we sailed back to Germany, on the

“America.” The trip lasted 5-6 days.

In 1959 the children all had mumps. Dad also was very sick. It was my responsibility to shovel coal into the basement furnace, to keep our home warm.

We hired a local woman, Frau Jenatchge, to assist with care of our kids. She read German stories to them.

In 1962 we returned to the US, on the “America”. (Nancy reminded me the kids were surprised by strange directive: they were instructed to go to bed with clothes and shoes on. Normally shoes were not allowed on furniture. This act avoided chaos and stress, typical of family preparation-for-departure (sharing one bathroom!). We had to depart in wee hours of night to reach Rotterdam (Netherlands), to board our ship timely.

Dad alone in Germany

1963 We purchased a Ford Taunus van, in Germany, and were assured it would be no trouble finding parts in the US. Wrong. After the car developed mechanical failure we discovered no mechanic could remedy its malfunction. To solve this problem, Dad drove to New Jersey--his top speed 20 mph. He boarded the blue Taunus on a ship, and with it returned to Germany.

For this interim period, Dad lived at Maranatha with coworkers, the Bunjer family. Acting on suggestion from mission leaders, Dad enrolled in language school at Goethe Institute, to enhance German speaking ability. Much later, Virgil Bunjer confided Dad had struggled with the void of his absent family. (Dad was happy with pictures the children drew.) We kept in touch by phone during that period.

Benediktbeuern, 1964-68

Knowing I love strawberries, Dad phoned ahead to ensure the town bakery/coffee shop had strawberry Torte. They did. Our family of nine--unusual in German society--descended on the modest restaurant. I remember kitchen staff stepping into the dining area for a look at the Moses family. They appeared amazed children could behave decently.

Casts

Don broke shinbone of his right leg, in a skiing accident. That same winter Nancy dislocated her right knee while skiing. Both were inconvenienced, in overlapping weeks, by plaster casts. Plenty of snow, and hills readily accessible, it seemed everyone in southern Germany skied. Skiing accidents, and casts, were common—not prompting much sympathy.

Headaches

1966 Howard struggled daily with intense headache misery. He

often napped for relief. Our kids were admonished to keep noise down. Because he did not get effective help from German doctors, Dad returned to Cleveland to consult Cleveland Clinic physicians. Dad learned his headaches were influenced by problems in teeth and jaw. A single parent to seven children, his month-long absence was challenging for me.

Dad was a great guy. Once he became sick he was not the same as before. The older kids could recall his jovial self. Dad's headaches gave intense stress.

Howie completed high school at an American school in Munich (one hour drive by bus). This school served children of military parents. Howie obtained employment at an American army base working as short-order cook. He purchased a secondhand motorcycle to ride to work. He disassembled the bike to paint it a garish bright turquoise. Wearing a purple "letter jacket" (from playing soccer on Richburg Central School team) he was conspicuous on German roads. (One day he returned home with watermelon tucked inside his jacket.)

Dad had no interest in cooking, but he could fry an egg, and boil tea.

For decades Dad wore a casual, patterned sweater. Yellow background with brown motifs knitted into midriff, cuffs, neckline.

At Moody, Dad was prepared to speak at a prayer meeting. Shortly beforehand a mustard packet he was opening sprayed mustard on his shirt and tie. Dad remained at our host's home while our host and I, frantically sought to buy a shirt for him. His jacket required dry cleaning, too.

Back in Richburg, in 1968, we lived in the Claire Miller house, opposite Richburg cemetery, and next to Richburg First Baptist Church. And while the church was without a pastor, Dad filled in. He performed a wedding one Saturday while we attended Saturday chores. Don and I were burning papers in an oil drum, in our back yard. Flames leaped out of the drum, igniting grass. In a flash we had a grass fire. Equally quick, we phoned the fire department. It took little time for fire trucks to arrive, with sirens blaring. Fire was put out quickly. Yet, embarrassment lingered for commotion contributed to a wedding ceremony underway.

Adjustment and Embarrassment

--I was requesting ground beef (Hackfleisch), which is sold in grams and kilograms. I unintentionally requested a kilometer of Hackfleisch. (Hmm, a mile of ground beef?!)

--In a sermon Howard wanted to convey Jesus as a gift from God. He used the word "Schinken" (smoked ham), intending "schenken"

(to give). No doubt congregants had a laugh over that boner. People were kind, respectful toward us.

--While living in the Dietrich home, I invited Herr Dietrich to join us for dinner. Though intended, the invitation did not explicitly include his wife. Mr. Dietrich showed up alone. We were embarrassed.

--Early on, when I served Germans pumpkin pie, guests refused it. Pumpkin was considered a vegetable.

--Coworker, Doris Rothelsberger, was red-faced explaining she had slept well on her new mattress. Instead of using German word for mattress (Matraze), she used Matrose, which means sailor.

--Our wedding bands shifted to left hands, as is German convention for married folk. On the right hand, a wedding band indicates engagement. We had several children in tow.