

# Grannie Annie



*Vol. 7*

**Selections from**  
*The Grannie Annie*  
*Family Story Celebration*  
**Written and Illustrated by Young People**



## *The Grannie Annie* *Family Story Celebration*

The mission of The Grannie Annie is to celebrate family stories! Students in U.S. grades 4 through 8 and homeschooled or international students 9 through 14 years of age are invited to interview their family storykeepers and write a story based on their interview. The Grannie Annie experience leads students to discover and save family stories, encounter history in a more personal way, and hone their writing skills. Students are encouraged to illustrate their story and then share their work with their family, school, community, and The Grannie Annie.

The works of thirty-six young authors and twelve young artists, chosen to represent the submissions received this year, are included in this seventh annual volume of *Grannie Annie*. This book is also available as a PDF edition.

The Grannie Annie mission—to inspire young people to discover, write, illustrate, and share historical family stories—springs from a belief in the transformative power of “story.” The simple, genuine family stories in this book can help us connect with people in today’s world and people from times past. In unexplainable ways, these stories foster feelings of unity with people whose lives may seem very different from our own. Quietly, surely, the world moves one step closer to peace.



*Grannie Annie*  
*Vol. 7*

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Written and Illustrated by Young People

Saint Louis, Missouri

The Grannie Annie welcomes—and desires to receive and publish—family stories from students of every race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, and creed.

Because the stories in *Grannie Annie, Vol. 7*, were captured from the oral tradition, they represent a unique blend of history, legend, and opinion. Accuracy—historical or otherwise—is not guaranteed, and the views represented are not necessarily those of the authors, directors, or publishers.

Particular thanks to fiber artist Elda Miller, language specialist Krzysztof Hyrc, and graphics specialists Josh Hagan, Jeff Hirsch, and Harvey Huynh.

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In memory of Ann Guirrerri Cutler,  
whose passion for saving family stories  
inspired The Grannie Annie  
1944–2007

In memory of  
John and Grace Grizel McIntier  
who in 1718, with their three young sons,  
sailed to the Colonies  
from the Kingdom of Ireland—  
Honored by donors Louise and Jack McIntyre

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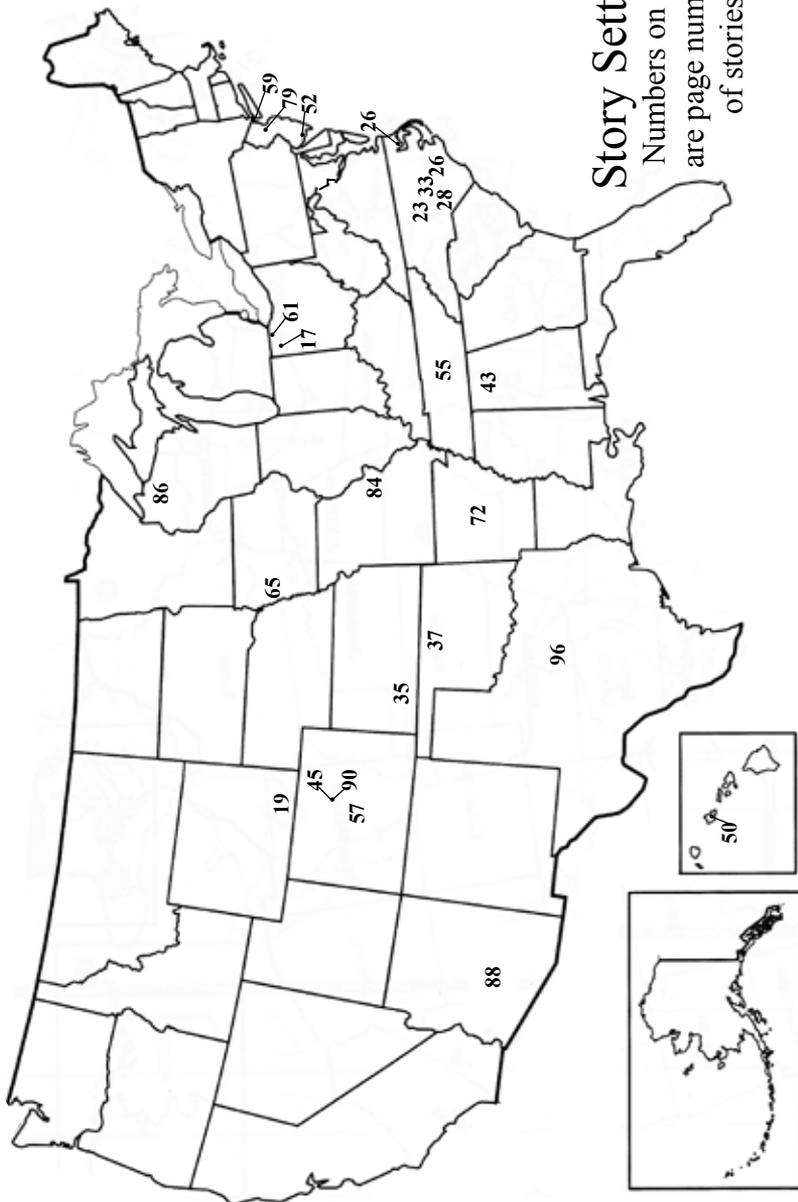
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## Story Settings

Numbers on map  
are page numbers  
of stories



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## *A Word from Grannie Annie*

Some Native American nations so valued their histories that they designated a tribal storykeeper. My mother filled that role in our family for decades, and before that, our family storykeeper was Mom's mother, my grandmother Randazzo.

Gramma Randazzo lived with us when I was a child. She didn't speak English well; however, at an early age I learned to say "Tell me a story about the Old Country" or "Tell me again the story about the baker's daughter who had dough under her fingernails." Then she would begin, in her broken English that made the stories even more fascinating to me. She told me stories about the olive groves on the family estate in Italy, about Grampa Randazzo's brothers and all their escapades, and about the family's early years as immigrants in Brooklyn. Mom carried on the tradition with her own repertoire of stories—about teaching in a one-room school, about blizzards and floods on the farm, and about rolling up the rug and inviting the neighbors over to dance.

I was fascinated by their tales and still am. I have written down many of their stories, saved them in keepsake books so they won't be lost. They're a treasure to read now, just as I had hoped, but I find I saved more than the stories themselves. Listening had been a way to be close to Gramma Randazzo. When I read Gramma's stories now, I remember sitting near her, hearing the stories from Gramma herself. When I read Mom's stories now, I remember aunts and uncles and cousins gathering around the kitchen table to listen. By

sharing their stories, Gramma and Mom created a sense of family, a sense of closeness and security, that will stay with me forever.

Ann Guirrerri Cutler  
The Original Grannie Annie  
April 2006

## *Note to Parents and Educators*

Be entertained, be enlightened, and be taken by surprise through the engaging family stories in this seventh volume of *Grannie Annie!*

As you explore the pages that follow, you're likely to cross paths with a bear—or two!—or a hard-hearted outlaw, or be swallowed by a cloud of dust. You may be jolted by an explosion or forced down a path you didn't choose. You'll definitely be found out—and be wiser for it. But relax—you'll also have plenty of opportunity to revel in your first snowfall, relive a favorite victory, and ponder the unexplainable.

The thirty-six historical family stories in this book will carry you from the cold winter of 1872 through chilling racial challenges in 1990, with plenty of heartwarming stops and adventures in between. You'll visit seventeen U.S. states and nine countries in Europe and Asia—and sail on the Mediterranean Sea! Turn back to the maps on pages 9 and 10 to find where in the world each story takes place. This book is also available in a PDF edition, and the stories and illustrations—along with ten additional stories—are also published on the Grannie Annie website.

The Grannie Annie stories are chosen with families in mind. You may wish to read the stories, however, before sharing them with sensitive or younger readers.

We're so pleased to be able to pass these stories on to you, and are thankful that you're part of the Grannie Annie family. We hope you'll be inspired to discover and share some of your own family stories, and that you'll join us again for next year's celebration!

Connie McIntyre and Fran Hamilton  
Directors of The Grannie Annie

Listening is an act of love.

—*Dave Isay, StoryCorps*

*Grannie Annie, Vol. 7*



# Who Tricked Whom?

1872\*

Defiance, Ohio, USA

This story is about my great-great-great-great-grandfather Gorman Siler and his encounter with four Native Americans. The story was told to Wesley Sheets (Gorman's grandson) and passed through the generations to my grandmother Jackie Instone. As it is told, sometime in the winter four Native Americans walked up to Gorman's two-story log cabin. The family farm was located in Tiffin Township, near Defiance, Ohio. The year this story took place was 1872.

The Native Americans wanted to take some of Gorman's hard cider\*\* from the barrel that he kept filled in his barn. Since it was so cold out, the men had a hard time finding food so that they could feed their families. Gorman didn't want to give up all of his cider, because he needed it for *his* family. He also didn't want to see the men get sick from drinking too much. So he said he would make a deal with them.

Gorman decided to hand them an old wicker basket. He said that they could take any of the hard cider that they could carry in the basket. He was absolutely sure that they couldn't do this, and indeed the Native Americans shook their heads, took the basket, and walked away.

\* The setting of each story is noted below its title. In cases where the exact year is not known, "c." (circa) indicates that the year given is approximate.

\*\* Hard cider is an alcoholic drink made from fermented apples.

While the Native Americans were gone, they came up with a plan. Gorman was very surprised when they came back. They had dipped the basket into the water of a nearby creek a number of times. When they did this, water froze, filling in all the gaps in the basket. They now had a basket that would hold liquid!

Gorman was a man of his word, so he had to keep his end of the deal. The men filled the basket and walked away with all the hard cider that the basket could hold, happy that they were able to get some at all.

Blaine Instone  
Ohio, USA

# *Cooking for Jesse James*

c. 1875  
Laramie, Wyoming, USA

My Jewish great-great-grandmother Fannie G. Bauman was a wonderful cook who would cook for anyone. She made amazing meals for her family every night. Fannie would also cook for friends. Once, she even cooked for the most famous outlaw in United States history—Jesse James.

One windy day in Laramie, Wyoming, Fannie was helping her two children get ready for school. “Go on, Harry, or you’ll be late. Here, Helene, take your coat,” said Fannie.

She smiled to herself as she watched out the kitchen window as her two young children hurried down the street to school. Suddenly the door opened behind her. “Did Harry or Helene leave something?” Fannie wondered. But when Fannie turned around, it wasn’t her children. It was the famous outlaw Jesse James.

She was going to be robbed, and she knew it. But Fannie couldn’t let Jesse James have her husband Abe’s valuable gold watch, which he had left in the kitchen. Unfortunately, it didn’t look like she had much of a choice. Jesse James had brought a gun.

“Give me all your money!” yelled Jesse James.

Fannie snatched the money they kept in their house and dashed back to the kitchen.

“Bring me all your valuables!” he said. She gathered the silver and ran back, hoping desperately he wouldn’t notice the watch. He took the silver and glanced around for anything else, about to take off like a dirty cat

that saw a bathtub. Then Jesse James spotted the watch. Jogging over, he picked it up and examined it for cracks or scratches. Fannie prayed he would find a blemish and leave the watch alone.

As he was about to take it, all the anger at the injustice boiled up in Fannie. How dare he barge in with a gun and demand their valuables!

In one sentence that could easily have cost Fannie her life, she burst out, “I demand you give me that watch back!” Surprised at herself, Fannie retreated.

Then Jesse James began to chuckle. “Maybe you’re right! I’ve taken enough. Have your watch back,” he said.

“Oh! Thank you!” said Fannie, a little surprised that her demand had actually worked.

“You’re welcome!” Jesse James said, still laughing.

Fannie offered him a pot of coffee. When she handed Jesse James a cup, he refused to drink it. What if Fannie was trying to poison him? He made her drink first, and when nothing happened, he cautiously sipped. He enjoyed the coffee. Fannie really was an amazing cook. Finally, he ran off down the street, and Fannie was left to reflect.

She decided that everybody—even the most evil, hard-hearted criminal—has some good inside. That is still true today, and it’s something I try to live by. If you can remember something positive about the person you’re angry at, it diffuses your anger a little bit.

Though Fannie Bauman is no longer with us, her lessons, kindness, and cooking are things that will be remembered for a long time.

Molly Berenbaum  
Colorado, USA

# *No Objections*

1886

Merxheim, Germany

One day in 1886, my great-great-grandfather Gustav Fried awoke to the cock-a-doodle-doo of a rooster and the smell of oatmeal wafting into his room. He peered out the window, where cows were roaming the flat German countryside. Gustav was usually supposed to take care of the cows, but he was tired of the pasture. He wanted to fulfill his dream to become a young businessman in America.

Instead of putting on his rubber boots and heading outside, Gustav went downstairs, where his mother and father were eating breakfast. Awkwardly, he eased into the conversation. Finally, Gustav worked up his nerve and blurted out, “I want to move to America.”

Gustav’s parents were shocked; he was to inherit the farm and continue in his father’s footsteps. After a huge argument, Gustav convinced them that he should at least ask Uncle Otto, the family patriarch. He packed a tin of water and set off down the road.

A few hours later, Gustav still hadn’t arrived. His legs were aching, and the sun was frying his back like a strip of bacon. Gustav was so drained that he stretched out on the ground to nap. When he awoke, the sun had set and the sky was streaked with navy and gold. He paced back and forth, debating what to do. Quickly, he turned around and ran home.

When Gustav’s parents asked him what Uncle Otto had said, he simply replied, “He posed no objections.” So

his reluctant parents bought him a cheap boat ticket to New York.

Gustav's friends and family went to see him off, and Uncle Otto was there, too. Gustav's parents greeted Uncle Otto, and they struck up a conversation. Uncle Otto said, "I think that you are stupid to let your kid go on a boat to America when he could stay home and take care of you."

Gustav's parents' jaws dropped. But Gustav's bags had already been packed, his ticket had been bought, and he had boarded the ship. The only thing his parents could do was make snide comments in future letters.

Gustav made his uncomfortable trip to America, where he had a relative in Fairmont, Minnesota. He had scraped together enough money to buy a train ticket and a meal. As he was walking around the city, waiting for his train, he saw a fruit vendor selling apples. Gustav had never seen apples before, so he bought an entire bushel. He considered it a wise investment, because he thought he could resell them for a profit. That was until he realized that apples were common in America and that his money was gone.

So the bushel of apples became Gustav's food. He lived with his Minnesota relative a few years, until he made enough money to move to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and fulfill his dream of becoming a businessman. In Milwaukee, he met his wife and started a family. He ran a successful factory until he retired and passed away.

Maddy Scannell  
Missouri, USA

# *My Grandma's Moccasins*

c. 1890–1895

Randolph County, North Carolina, USA

Today people in North Carolina usually own at least ten pairs of shoes. They can go to the store and buy a pair whenever they want. Today the shoes that we buy could have been made in China, Italy, South America, or Japan. But that wasn't the case when my great-grandma Evelyn Cleveland Moffit was a child.

Evelyn was born in 1885, twenty years after the Civil War. She was named after Grover Cleveland, because he was the president of the United States at the time. She grew up in Randolph County, North Carolina, before there were any cars, and before houses had electricity or running water. She was raised in a farm family and spent most of her time at home feeding the chickens and harvesting corn, peas, and potatoes. She and her sister, Blanche, were the only children.

My grandma Evelyn told my dad a lot of stories about the way things were when she was a child. He has told many of those stories to me, and one of my favorite ones is about an old Indian man who would come around every spring and make shoes for my grandma Evelyn's whole family. The old Indian had long grey braids and wore a beaded necklace, and he would come riding up to her house on a white mule. He carried a lot of leather and tools on the back of his mule.

The Indian cobbler would stay with them for the night. As they sat by the fire, eagerly watching him do his work, he would tell them the latest news from the other farms and neighbors he had visited.



Kyleen Brumit

To begin the task of making their shoes, he would first go out to the woodpile and choose a piece of wood that he would use to carve into a form called a “shoe last.” He would always start by carving the last into a perfect match for the foot of the person who had the biggest feet. After that, he would cover the last with the leather he had brought. He used a special type of leather to make the shoelaces that he would use to pull the leather tight around the wood.

When he had finished making the first pair, he would remove the last and whittle it down to make it match the foot of the person that had the second-biggest feet. He kept doing this until he had carved it down to match the foot of the person that had the smallest feet, which was Evelyn.

The next morning he would eat breakfast with the family. Then they would pay him for the shoes he had made. After that, he would get his tools and his leather, put them on the back of his mule, and go to the next house. Evelyn’s family wouldn’t see him again until the next spring. The shoes had to last her the whole year. Even though she had other shoes, she said that the Indian moccasins were her favorite.

Camryn E. Baldwin  
North Carolina, USA

# *The Whistling Doctor*

1890s–1920s  
Warsaw and Edenton, North Carolina, USA

He was known by his walk and his whistle.

This is a story about my great-grandfather on my mother's side of the family who overcame polio to become a doctor. Can you imagine becoming really sick at age two—your legs so weakened that you couldn't hold your weight to walk—and then not being able to get any real help until age eleven?

My great-grandfather's name was Leonidas Polk Williams. He was born in 1892 on a small farm outside Warsaw in North Carolina to a family that had a lot of love but not a lot of money. My mom tells the story that after her grandfather got so sick, his parents saved and saved for years so they could take him, their oldest son, to The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, where he was finally able to get fitted for braces so that he could begin to learn to walk.

My great-aunt Ruth, who lived to be 101 years old, described her brother, whom she called "Lonnie," pulling himself around their family farm, grabbing onto whatever he could find to get around—weeds, tree trunks, even at times his brothers' and sisters' legs. He would not give up, and he kept his spirits high. There was so much to do on the farm that he wanted to be involved.

He became the first one in that family to go to college and go to medical school. In his good heart and with his thankfulness to his family, he also sent his brothers and sisters to college before he even considered

getting married after medical school. He felt that his sisters and brothers had done more than he had been able to do on the farm, and he wanted to do something for them.

After my great-grandfather finished college and medical school, he became a doctor in Edenton, North Carolina. That is where he met my great-grandmother and where my grandmother Peggy grew up. One of my great-grandfather's patients remembers that when he was sick as a little boy—his house just one block away from Dr. Williams's office—he would always know when the doctor would arrive, because he could hear him walk with his limp down the hallway, and he was always whistling.

My great-grandfather was an inspirational person who felt as if he had been given a second chance. He never ever complained and always had a smile on his face. He was just a happy person, and everybody knew that. I think his determination and happiness on the inside made my grandmother special, and the way she raised my mom has continued my great-grandfather's type of strength. He didn't have a strong body, but his mind and kind heart made up for it. I think he has our family all inspired to always have a smile on our faces and to keep our spirits high. Even though he died a long time ago, I think I can imagine him whistling.

Evie Sugg  
North Carolina, USA

# *Hardly Horses*

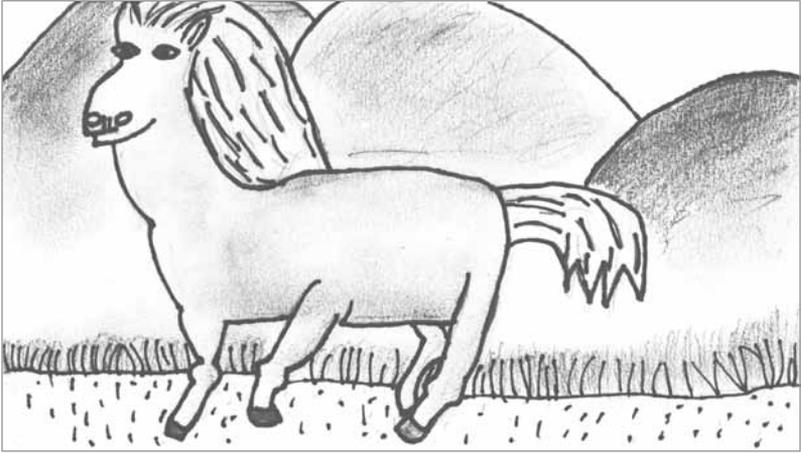
c. early 1900s  
Rockingham, North Carolina, USA

My great-grandmother's name was Lucy Mae Grice Rainwater. For a great deal of time she lived on the Cannonball Plantation on Sandhills Road in Rockingham, North Carolina, across the street from where the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church now stands. She died at age ninety-one in 2010. She will always be loved and missed. She knew her time to pass on was coming, but she was not afraid. She embraced it with a smiling face and a happy demeanor that gave joy to us all until the very end.

Great-Grandma's lively memory was always bursting with stories waiting to be told. I never knew my great-grandmother to tell a lie, and she told this story since she was a child. This story—which is completely true, might I add—was passed down to my grandmother, who passed it down to my mother, who in turn told it to me. And I am here to tell it to you.

It was dusk one day in the early 1900s. My great-grandmother was lying in the dirt road, something she did a great deal, after a long day of playing with her younger brother (great-uncle William) and her younger sister (great-aunt Elmare). It was very quiet—quiet enough to hear a pin drop. Instead of hearing such, my three great-relatives heard hoof beats.

Moments later, a herd of wild horses barreled up the road toward them, snorting and neighing in a frightening fashion. My grandmother jumped up on her



Arifa Klokič

strong ten-year-old legs, taking her siblings with her. A flash of strong muscles beneath a flaxen coat, a whine slicing through the quiet night, and strong hoof beats vibrating the ground—they were going to be trampled.

But the moment never came. Just as Great-Grandma Rainwater thought the end would come, the horses disappeared right before her stunned eyes. It was as if they had never been there. One thought rang clear through her mind: *Impossible!* For a moment, she stared at the space where the horses had been, at the cloud of dust they had never kicked up, the hoofprints they had never made. Then, still holding on to her brother's arm, she raced into her house, already planning what to say to her parents.

After she claimed her story, with William and Elmare as witnesses, her parents—my great-great-grandparents—believed her story. Their belief in the true claim stemmed from the fact that other people had reported seeing the “horses.” Everyone in the small

town had a story to tell about the horses, and some still remember it. Were the horses real? I believe so. What do you think?

Stoney Taylor  
North Carolina, USA

# *Funny Money*

1972

Funchal, Madeira, Portugal

It was a warm summer day scented by all the colorful flowers in my family's garden in Madeira, Portugal. "I don't know, Elsa. Are you sure this is a good idea?" my five-year-old sister, Angela, asked. Angela was very tiny for her age, but she had huge expressive eyes and a huge brain to match.

"Angela, this plan is *genius!*" my seven-year-old sister, Elsa, exclaimed while cutting out paper money from my brother's schoolbook.

"Maria!" my sisters called for me. When I walked into the room, they handed me paper coins and told me that we were going to the candy store. I was very happy. I love candy.

"Now, Maria, when you give the man the money, place it on the counter. Don't hand it to him," Elsa told me seriously. She was a pretty accomplished schemer, even at the age of seven.

After listening to my older sisters' instructions, I skipped into the candy store. It was such a colorful store; it was like every kid's dream. The whole store was filled with every treat a child could crave. I placed the "money" on the counter and pointed out which yummy candies I wanted to purchase. The clerk handed me the bag full of my candies, and I said, "Thank you." Then I ran out of the store like my sisters had told me to do.

My sisters were waiting outside for me. When the clerk noticed I had given him fake money, he ran out of



Zoe Brenizer

the store to confront us, but we were already running home. The clerk then ran after us. He was having a hard time catching us, because he was laughing so hard.

“I’m sorry, sir. Here is the money for the candy my daughter took,” Mom said, handing the exhausted clerk the money.

“Thank you. I just find it hilarious that a five- and seven-year-old could trick a three-year-old into stealing candy!” he laughed.

I didn’t get in trouble, but my sisters sure did. That is one of the few memories I have from Madeira. I left Madeira when I was five, but that is a completely different story for a totally different time.

Ava Elizabeth Mederos, daughter of Maria  
New Jersey, USA

# *A Really Embarrassing Moment*

1974  
St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Everyone has an embarrassing moment now and then. If it's spilling soup down your brand new shirt or accidentally wearing pajamas to school when it's not pajama day, everyone gets embarrassed sometimes. But this is a story about a really embarrassing moment—one that, no matter how hard you try, you can't forget.

My aunt Leeny and her husband, Ed, were at their son Marc's football game. He was a rookie for his team, and this was his first game.

"Look, honey! Here comes Marc!" Ed said excitedly, pointing to the field. Aunt Leeny looked down from the stands and saw that, sure enough, her son was jogging into view. Marc was number 43 and looked very husky in his Vikings uniform. The couple watched proudly as their son got into position as the team's fullback. Despite all of the noise in the crowd, Aunt Leeny and her husband could hear the quarterback make the starting call: "Ready—hike!"

Then, as if in a trance, Aunt Leeny rose to her feet as the quarterback handed the ball to Marc. As Marc began to run toward the goalposts, my aunt began to run down the stone steps that led to the field. Then as number 43 crossed the 20-yard line, Aunt Leeny was straddling the barrier that separated the stands from the field. As the fullback ran down the stretch with the crowd on its feet, Aunt Leeny began running down the sideline, her curly red hair blowing behind her.

“Go, Marc!” she yelled as she ran.

All of a sudden the crowd’s attention was drawn to the crazy middle-aged woman running down the sideline screaming for her son. Barely anyone even saw the rookie fullback run into the end zone, the ball held tightly in his hands. It was a shame that barely anyone even saw the touchdown, because Marc, in his first game, on his first play, had run thirty-one yards to put his team in the lead. But no, the crowd was watching the woman, highly amused.

“Go, Marc! Yay! That’s my son! His first game! I’m so proud! I love you, my little honey bunny!” she cried.

Meanwhile, Marc didn’t even notice that his mother was going bonkers on the sideline; he was busy being high-fived by his fellow team members. But Aunt Leeny was still going at it, practically doing jumping jacks and yelling herself hoarse.

It was then that the crowd began to laugh. They cackled, they giggled, they howled at this crazy woman.

And then Aunt Leeny woke up from her “trance.” “Where am I?” she thought to herself. Looking around at the crowd roaring with laughter and Marc celebrating in the end zone, she put two and two together.

For good measure, she gave one more “Go, Marc!” and sulked off the field, her head hung low. Aunt Leeny never did anything so embarrassing again. At least, I don’t think she did.

Anya Tullman  
Missouri, USA

# *My Mom and the Birch-Tree Bridge*

1976  
northern Wisconsin, USA

One clear fall day, my mom and her family were closing down the land that they owned on Round Lake in wooded northern Wisconsin. While my grandpa was busy taking down the pier planks for the winter, my mom and my uncle Dave decided to go adventuring.

They had been warned many times by my grandparents to never cross the birch-tree bridge that led to a Native American reservation on the other side of the rocky creek. However, on that warm and sunny day, my mom let her curiosity get to her. While my uncle Dave was smart enough to turn back, my mom walked straight past the no-trespassing sign and into the thick woods.

After a few steps into the woods, she saw a few old trailers, a very large fire pit, and two or three handmade totem poles. Feeling scared because she had crossed the old bridge, my mom turned back and ran home. Unfortunately, someone must have seen the very white blonde hair she had when she was young.

A few minutes after getting back to the family land, a loud pickup truck pulled into the dirt drive-up. Two Native American men got out and went to talk to my grandpa, who was still moving planks from the pier. My mom was worried they were coming to behead her!

Once they pulled away, my very upset grandpa told my mom that the reason the men had come was to make sure she was all right. They had animal traps



Taylor Eaton

planted throughout the woods on their land, and often bow hunted there as well. They were concerned for her safety. After realizing she wasn't going to be on a totem pole herself, my mom decided the punishment for crossing the bridge didn't sound all that bad. By the way, she mastered how to clean out an outhouse for the winter that day!

Nolan Bishop  
Ohio, USA

# *The Downfall of Joey Smernivak*

c. 1977  
Phoenix, Arizona, USA

Joey Smernivak\*—ugh. Even the name gives me chills. Joey was the stereotypical bully at my dad’s old school—huge, angry, and always looking for a way to make your life terrible. But things were about to change. This is the story of how my dad and his best friend, Dano, brought “The Great” Joey Smernivak to his knees.

Some people overlook the true power of old World War I field phones, the only long-distance communication devices at that time. The field phones were very important during the war for transmitting messages from one post to another, as long as the phones were connected by wires.\*\* But my dad and Dano found out that they could be so much more.

During Dano’s family vacation to Canada, he happened to stumble onto one of these rare field phones in an old thrift store, and a whole world of opportunity revealed itself. When Dano arrived home, it was all he could do not to sprint over to Mike’s (my dad’s) and show him the unruly power that the phone held within. But as it was late into the night, he was forced to wait.

The next morning Dano awoke earlier than usual and sprinted out the door to catch Mike before he departed for school. He turned onto Mike’s street and ran until the two-story stucco house was in front of him.

\* This name has been changed.

\*\* The wires were strung above the ground or buried.

He was still out of breath when Mike walked outside, but he managed to utter, “Look!” as he dove his hand into the blue backpack and pulled out the field phone.

Mike became giddy with excitement and asked, “What does it do?!”

Dano suppressed a queer chuckle and told him to hold the ends of the long wires connected to the top of the phone. He then slowly flipped the switch to turn it on and ZAP! An electric charge flowed from the phone into Mike, who through clenched teeth muttered, “Awesome.”

Before they could talk any more, none other than Joey Smernivak strutted around the corner with his posse of the dirtiest, roughest kids in school. He walked over to Dano and ripped the red and blue wires from his hand. “What is this? Just a stupid toy for you two losers? This . . . is . . . stuuupid!” He then took the wires, shoved them up his nose, and turned around to the “gang.” “See guys? It’s just a kids’ toy.”

Time seemed to slow down in those few seconds. Dano glanced at Mike with a glint in his eyes and a joyous smile on his face. The click of the switch as Dano turned the phone on echoed out like the holy chorus, and electricity danced down the wires. Joey yelped, and his hair stood on end. He then ran down the street with the wires still stuck in his nostrils and the phone pulsating wave after wave of electricity through his body. Dano looked at Mike and said with an almost crazed look, “Awesome.”

Will Klenk  
Arizona, USA

# *The Importance of Friendship*

1978

Denver, Colorado, USA

My mom, Ronit, has always told me to cherish my friends. I have always wondered what she meant by that. I realized what she meant when she told me this story.

It was the fall of 1978. Ronit and her family were moving from Tel-Aviv, Israel, to Denver, Colorado. Ronit was seven years old. Not knowing how to speak English was only part of the problem; she also would not have any friends and would have very little family.

On the day before they left, the bags were packed, and the house looked empty. Every picture on the wall was taken down. Every chair was gone. The air felt cold. The rooms felt empty, like an unpainted canvas.

“Why do we have to leave?” Ronit asked quietly.

The room was silent. No one replied.

“Why do we have to go?” Ronit asked again.

Ronit’s mother replied, “It’s for your father.”

After a flight that was twelve hours, Ronit and her family arrived in Denver. The air felt different, and everything looked different. The language sounded foreign. Ronit was confused and didn’t know what to expect.

School started a few long weeks after Ronit got to Denver. It was a small Jewish elementary school. The building was made of big bricks. The inside was very colorful due to the many pictures and worksheets on the

walls. The building was stuffy, and there were many kids running around the hallways. Even though there were tons of kids and lots of colors, Ronit was not happy.

The entire class picked on Ronit. No one liked her. She sat in the back of the room, not knowing any word the teacher said. Even the Hebrew they learned sounded different from the Hebrew Ronit knew. During recess Ronit sat in the corner crying. She stared at all the kids playing on the playground. She wished she were back in Israel with her friends, playing on the playground.

One day Ronit went to school, and as usual she was sobbing. Soon she heard someone say, “Crybaby!” and point at her. Ronit realized the class had just given her a new nickname. Even though she didn’t know what crybaby meant, she kept on crying harder.

During recess, people approached Ronit but called her a crybaby. Then a girl about her height with freckles and pigtails came up to her. Ronit was ready for her to point and make fun of her, but instead the girl sat down next to her. Ronit was surprised. She stopped crying and wiped her tears.

“Shalom,” she said.

That day Ronit made a friend. From that day on, Ronit was excited to go to school. Even though Ronit and her new friend couldn’t communicate verbally, they used motions and hand movements to communicate. Ronit never cried again.

I now realize that you really need only one friend to be happy. The girl with pigtails was that one friend to my mom. This is also why you have to cherish your friends, because without them you wouldn’t be happy.

Arielle Williamson  
Colorado, USA

# *Snow Sledding*

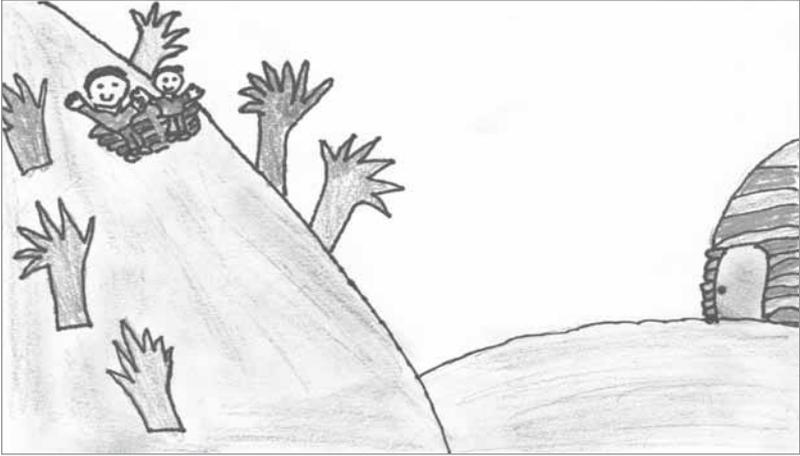
late 1970s  
northeast China

Have you ever had to work for the whole day? No resting, playing, or even stopping to stand for a while? My dad experienced this a long time ago.

During the 1970s my dad lived in Northeast China in a house no bigger than a log cabin. Every day he and his siblings would do lots of chores. During the winter, twice a week, the wood for the fireplace would run out, so my dad and his siblings would go to get some more. They would bundle up and walk outside. Then they would run as fast as they could up a not-too-steep hill, and there would be a small snow-covered forest at the top. The hill was not that far from the house. When they got to the top, they used their little axes, and they would cut down small trees. When they cut enough wood to last about a week, they would start to lug the logs down the hill. Since the logs were very heavy and the slope was very slippery, they would slip and fall down the hill instead.

So they decided that when they left the house, they would each stuff a thick rope into their pocket and take it with them to the forest. Now they would each get out their ropes and tie two logs together. When they finished, they would tie the rest of the trees they cut down onto the two logs. Then each of them would gather three or four small twigs and hop onto the sled they had made. Now they could slide down the hill and have fun!

My dad and his companions all had on thick coats with tons of layers. They would slide down the hill so fast



Yuridia Gomez

with the cold wind roaring in their faces. They would use the twigs they had taken and stick them in the ground to steer them around boulders and sharp rocks poking out of the ground. When they got to the bottom of the hill, they stuck the twigs in the ground to slow them down to a stop. They could see their little cottage. Some warm tea sounded too good to be true. They grabbed the ropes and lugged the logs the rest of the way. This procedure took almost from lunch to dinner, and my dad still had a lot of work to do!

I have learned so much from this story about how you can always have fun while you work. I have used this story in so many situations in my life. This goes with a rule: Work can always go with fun!

Anna Cui  
Missouri, USA

# *Touched by a Saint*

1980  
Rome, Italy

It was a bright, sunny day in Rome, Italy. My mom was living there for two years, because her dad was working for the American embassy. Mom was eleven years old when she went on a field trip with her school. This was no ordinary field trip though; she was going to the Vatican. The Vatican is a city within Rome where the pope lives. The pope is the head of the whole Catholic Church. At this time, the pope was John Paul II.

On the day my mom's school went, the Vatican was very crowded. She was stuck way back in the crowd with her school friends and family. She wanted to get to the front of the aisle so she could see the pope walk down to the altar. Luckily, some kind people let her through to the front. As she emerged, my mom caught a glimpse of the pope walking down the aisle. He was shaking everyone's hand and then shook my mom's. Just like everyone else, she was thrilled!

When he was walking away, my mom shouted, "Kocham Cię!" which means "I love you" in Polish. Pope John Paul II was the first and only Polish pope. My grandma is 100 percent Polish, so this pope was very special to my family. My mom was shocked when the pope turned around, walked toward her, smiled, and put his hand on her cheek. That was a very amazing moment for my mom. The only sad part was that none of her family or friends got to see it.

Then about a week later my grandma got a phone call. It was from one of her friends who had gone to the Vatican. Her friend said, “Did you like that picture of Debbie and the pope?” My grandma was confused and shocked at the same time. Apparently, Vatican photographers had snapped a picture at the exact second that the pope patted my mom on the cheek. My grandma immediately went to the Vatican and bought the picture. To this day we still have the picture hanging up in our house.

Pope John Paul II died on April 2, 2005. He was eighty-four years old. He is on the way to becoming a saint, so because of that . . . my mom has been touched by a saint!

Alli Hanna  
Ohio, USA

# *An Important Change*

1990  
central Texas, USA

As a seventh grader living in the twenty-first century, I can honestly say no one has ever given me a hard time because my mother is white and my father is African-American. I have never endured racist comments coming my way; however, I can't say the same for my dad. In 1990, racism was still a problem in the small Texas town where my parents were attending college. The university was predominantly white, as were the fraternities on campus. It was hard for minorities to feel comfortable, and even harder for them to join a fraternity.

My dad and six of his friends, who were all sophomores in college, decided this situation had to change and that they were the ones who could make this change happen. They met with the president of the university and told him, "Minority students aren't comfortable here. We want to start our own chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha." This organization is an African-American fraternity, and my dad and his friends thought it was important to bring groups to campus that celebrate different cultures. After some discussion with the university president and with the fraternity's national headquarters, their request was accepted.

Starting this fraternity was brave of them, considering the environment of the college and the surrounding town. Just twenty miles away, the Ku Klux Klan, a group that has tormented and killed African-

Americans because its members believe minorities don't deserve freedom or equality, was active. The Klan wasn't that violent in the town where my parents lived, but still, everyone was aware of its presence. The group sometimes held rallies nearby to remind everyone of its existence and its beliefs. Its members yelled slogans like "White power!" just to see if they could intimidate local residents.

Because of the racist atmosphere, my mother and father received dirty looks when they were out in public or on campus. People would say things to them like "You don't belong together!" One time they were in a restaurant, and the waiter refused to serve them food. My dad had grown up on military bases his entire life. No one had ever treated him this way or called him offensive names. My dad thought that bringing in an African-American fraternity would slowly diversify his school, a change the school badly needed.

I can't fathom why people would be racist. As my dad told me this story, I didn't understand why my caramel-colored skin would make me a target of hatred. My skin color does not determine who I am or how I act. My dad showed me this in abundance when he helped start a chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha in a small-minded and slightly racist town.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." My dad and his fraternity embody this quote; they changed their campus and the mindset of the people around them. That change speaks for itself, and I'm glad to share my dad's story.

Gabrielle Lewis  
Texas, USA

## *Illustrators of Volume 7*

- p. 24 Kyleen Brumit; Missouri, USA
- p. 29 Arifa Klokič; Missouri, USA
- p. 34 Kody Hopen; Missouri, USA
- p. 39 Malakai Lewis Hagood; Missouri, USA
- p. 42 Kameron Ricketson; Missouri, USA
- p. 54 Jamie Truong; Missouri, USA
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- pp. 76, 77 Johansy Avila; Missouri, USA
- p. 82 Zoe Brenizer; Illinois, USA
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- p. 93 Yuridia Gomez; Missouri, USA

*Additional Stories Published  
on the Grannie Annie Website*

[www.TheGrannieAnnie.org/Stories.html](http://www.TheGrannieAnnie.org/Stories.html)

Washed Away (c. 1908)

Hayden T. Evans; Ohio, USA

A Success Story Driven by Ambition to Learn

(c. 1920s–1930s)

Raghuram Selvaraj; New Jersey, USA

The Scary Airplane Ride (c. 1923)

Thomas Francis; Missouri, USA

The Definition of a Nightmare (c. 1940s)

Nick Huger; Arizona, USA

One More Survivor (1942)

Caleb Wedgle; Colorado, USA

My Life My Way (1947) (illustrated by the author)

Alison Siegel; Colorado, USA

A Day to Remember (1964)

Jordan Pack; Ohio, USA

Blizzard of '78 in a Small Town (1978)

Robert Nicely; Ohio, USA

The Miraculous Journey to America (1985)

Eden Hariri; Maryland, USA

My Opa Left His Fingers on Kilimanjaro (1990)

Kyle Ehlers; North Carolina, USA

## *Grannie Annie Storykeepers 2012*

Congratulations to the following young people for discovering, writing, sharing, and submitting a story from their family's history!

Avigayil Aaronson • Brandon A. Adam • Heath Akin  
Brennan Albright • Kathleen Alcock • Haley Alldredge  
Thomas E. Andersen • Rex Anderson • Nicholas Aulov  
Frank Bahr • Brianna René Baldwin • Camryn E. Baldwin  
Isabelle Baptista • Danika J. Barr • Delaney M. Barr • Hasani Barr  
Taji Barr • Molly Berenbaum • Josh Berger • Autumn Bergman  
Daniel Berkovich • Max Bernickus • Alice Birchfield  
Samantha Birt • Nolan Bishop • Sydney Blanker • Emily Blochinger  
Maycie Bloom • Jonathan Bonker • Stephen F. Bowen IV  
Elizabeth Brenneman • Faith Briars • Melanie Gayle Brown  
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Emmett Camferdam • Gabriel Campos, Jr. • Maya Cassady  
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Gabrielle Lewis • Grace Chang Li • Iris Li • Jake Liebman  
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Kayla Luney • Tyler Lynch • Kelly M. • Tommy Macrane  
Kaitlyn Madson • Haley Maguire • Jillian Mann • Alex Marin  
Jack Markert • Payton Markvicka • Nathaniel Allan Marsters  
Hebron Marut • Anna Matherne • Kyle R. McClelland  
Andrew E. McCurdy • Allison McGinnis • Zev McMillen  
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Griffin Mendel • Logan Mercer • Hannah Lizzy Metcalf  
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## *Invitation to Participate*

Please join us for the 2012/2013 Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration. The submission deadline for *Grannie Annie, Vol. 8*, is February 1, 2013. Complete details, including the required entry form, are available at [www.TheGrannieAnnie.org](http://www.TheGrannieAnnie.org).

## *Praise for The Grannie Annie*

I would like to thank you for giving Yifu such an encouragement, and working diligently to publish his first article! Our families in China are very happy to hear about this. It is an amazing experience to me that I witness that a part of my family heritage is being connected from my father to my son through the event you support! Thank you!

Yuxing Feng, Parent; Missouri, USA

Thank you so much for creating such a wonderful writing opportunity for young people. I look forward to the students participating each year and reading the published stories.

Amy Del Coro, Teacher; New Jersey, USA

Writing for *The Grannie Annie* helps my students feel confident as writers, which in turn provides their imaginations with a comfortable setting in which to create.

Katelin Moquin, Teacher; Missouri, USA

My son “harvested” several stories from my father, including one that appeared in *Grannie Annie, Vol. 1*. My father has since passed away, and I am forever grateful that my son recorded these stories before it was too late. I doubt he would have done so if it had not been for *The Grannie Annie*.

Karen Metcalf, Parent; Tennessee, USA

I am always on the lookout for ways to share my students’ writing and am thrilled to have discovered *The Grannie Annie*. Everyone had so much fun finding out about past family events, and I’m proud of the stories the students produced.

Beverly Miller, Teacher; Alabama, USA

The Grannie Annie challenged my students to go beyond their comfort zone, to write for a broader audience, and to see that learning goes beyond the four walls of a classroom.

Ann-Marie Harris, Teacher; Maryland, USA

The Grannie Annie is a good start for kids to get published. And I love the way The Grannie Annie helps people understand their family history. It also helps children get closer to their families.

Andrew Malphurs, Author of the *Grannie Annie, Vol. 5*, story “Grandpa’s Saddle”

Stories connect people in families and communities, giving them a common language and understanding of the present as well as the past. Through The Grannie Annie, generations connect as students take time to listen to the stories of their older relatives—and learn from them. Then, as the students write and share their stories, the connections multiply.

Amy Glaser Gage; Children’s author, writing teacher, and consultant to The Grannie Annie

The Grannie Annie is remarkable in its goals and in its approach. Recording and sharing the stories of preceding generations goes to the heart of education—it teaches us who we are as family members, citizens, and members of human civilization.

Matthew Lary, Co-author of *Victory Through Valor: A Collection of World War II Memoirs*

The Grannie Annie is all about connection. As it hearkens back to the original Grannie Annie, it continues her tradition of oral storytelling to link generations and cultures. Grannie Annie family stories written by young people illuminate a long span of history, often revealing family values honed from adversity or triumph and tempered by humor and love.

Janet Grace Riehl, Author of *Sightlines: A Family Love Story in Poetry & Music*

Although most students in our Eastern European village live next door to family members from earlier generations, The Grannie Annie prompted them to talk with their grandparents in new ways—and to discover the customs and challenges of times past. In addition, stories from the Grannie Annie books have given my students a glimpse of the world outside their village, where differences may abound but the underlying human condition remains the same.

Martin Ellinger-Locke, Peace Corps volunteer in Glodeni, Moldova

As I'm sure is the objective of The Grannie Annie, this was a lovely experience, and now memory, for Andrew and his grandpa. There are no words for that.

Susan Barton Malphurs, Parent; Georgia, USA

The Grannie Annie offers my students an excellent opportunity to record and share stories from their family histories. By interviewing relatives, the students learn to appreciate and experience the triumphs and the troubles of their ancestors. These stories should be preserved for these students and for future generations, and The Grannie Annie provides this worthwhile opportunity that benefits all generations.

Susan Jewell, Teacher; Nebraska, USA

Since first becoming involved with The Grannie Annie, we look forward every year to the truly unique and heartwarming stories each student brings to the classroom.

Brian Billings and Laura Amburgey, Teachers; Ohio, USA

It is a privilege to be a part of The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration. This wonderful anthology helps to shape our children's identity by providing them with the opportunity to understand and value their ancestry.

Jodi J. De Luca, Ph.D., Parent; Florida, USA

This book should be on the bookshelves in all elementary and junior high schools. . . .

The Reading Tub™, [www.TheReadingTub.com](http://www.TheReadingTub.com)

*Grannie Annie* is a beautiful collection of stories—educational, funny, exciting, touching. . . .

Linda Austin, Author of *Cherry Blossoms in Twilight: Memories of a Japanese Girl*

When kids learn details about what life was like decades ago, the past comes alive for them. History becomes real—and they want to know more! The Grannie Annie provides an opportunity for kids to be inspired by their own family's history—and to share it with the world.

Florrie Binford Kichler, Patria Press, [www.PatriaPress.com](http://www.PatriaPress.com)

The Grannie Annie proved to be a valuable experience for the students in my school. . . . When the children shared the stories, some students who are normally quiet or reserved got to shine because of something really neat that they wrote about.

Dianne Elson, Teacher; Indiana, USA

Perhaps the greatest value of the Grannie Annie stories is something not written in the book. When a child interviews an older relative, the child gets to know a person he or she may have taken for granted. The relative gets to tell a story that might have been lost. A bond is created or strengthened. A story is recorded for posterity. New memories are woven, and—just maybe—a writer is born.

Lulu Delacre, Author/illustrator of *Salsa Stories*

Thank you for starting such a heartwarming project where *all* the kids are winners, whether their stories are published or not.

G-g Metzger, Teacher; Texas, USA

We had an incredible time working on [our daughter's *Grannie Annie*] story. It was a great way for Amy to learn about the rich heritage from which she comes—and to get more writing experience to boot.

Ruth Whitaker, Parent; Texas, USA

Our son's *oma* is overwhelmed that her “story” is in print in *Grannie Annie*. She is thankful for the opportunity to tell it! Every family member and family friend has a signed copy.

Karie Millard, Parent; Indiana, USA

Taking time away from your technology-filled life to join in *The Grannie Annie* is like trading fast food for Sunday dinner at Grandma's.

Debra K. Shatoff, Ed.D., Family therapist and author of *In-Home Child Care: A Step-by-Step Guide to Quality, Affordable Care*

Teachers and parents, if you want to motivate students to love writing, ask them to write for *The Grannie Annie*.

Bonnie M. Davis, Ph.D., Author of *How to Teach Students Who Don't Look Like You: Culturally Relevant Teaching Strategies*, [www.EducatingForChange.com](http://www.EducatingForChange.com)

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# The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration

Young People Learning and Sharing Family Stories

*I would like to thank you for giving Yifu such an encouragement, and working diligently to publish his first article! Our families in China are very happy to hear about this. It is an amazing experience to me that I witness that a part of my family heritage is being connected from my father to my son through the event you support! Thank you!*

Yuxing Feng, Parent; Missouri, USA

*Thank you so much for creating such a wonderful writing opportunity for young people. I look forward to the students participating each year and reading the published stories.*

Amy Del Coro, Teacher; New Jersey, USA

*Writing for The Grannie Annie helps my students feel confident as writers, which in turn provides their imaginations with a comfortable setting in which to create.*

Katelin Moquin, Teacher; Missouri, USA

*My son "harvested" several stories from my father, including one that appeared in Grannie Annie, Vol. 1. My father has since passed away, and I am forever grateful that my son recorded these stories before it was too late. I doubt he would have done so if it had not been for The Grannie Annie.*

Karen Metcalf, Parent; Tennessee, USA

