

Grannie Annie

Historical Family Stories

Written and Illustrated by Young People



from
*The Grannie Annie
Family Story Celebration*

Vol. 10

The Grannie Annie *Family Story Celebration*

Welcome to the 2015 Grannie Annie celebration of 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 from their family's history. The Grannie Annie experience leads young people to strengthen family and community bonds, encounter history in a personal way, and polish 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-five young authors and twelve young artists, chosen to represent the submissions received this year, are included in this tenth 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 with 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. 10

Historical Family Stories from
The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration
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. 10*, 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.

Cover illustration by Andrew Uihlein.

Particular thanks to fiber artist Elda Miller, graphics specialists TJ Jerrod, Josh Hagan, and Jeff Hirsch; researcher Doug Nolte; and translator Graziella Postolache.

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Your tax-deductible [donation](#) will enable more young people to take part in The Grannie Annie, and will make the remarkable Grannie Annie [published stories](#) more widely available.

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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 my first storyteller,
my beloved mother,
Ethel Kingsland Peper
1909–1995

Honored by donor Anne Perkins

In memory of Danish immigrants
Marius and Marie Pedersen Mickelsen,
who met in the Danish village of
Dannevirke, Nebraska,
married there in 1916,
and raised their thirteen children
on rødgrød with cream, and on stories of the Old Country
Honored by donors Louise and Jack McIntyre

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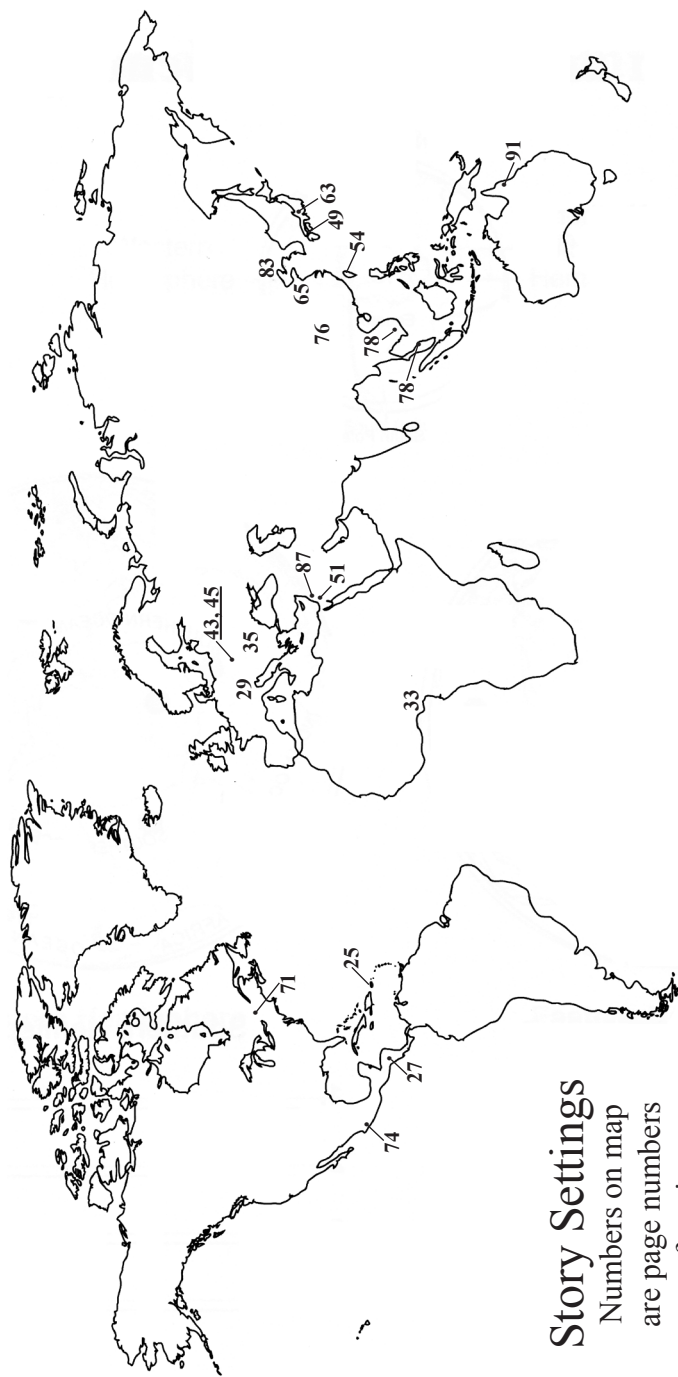
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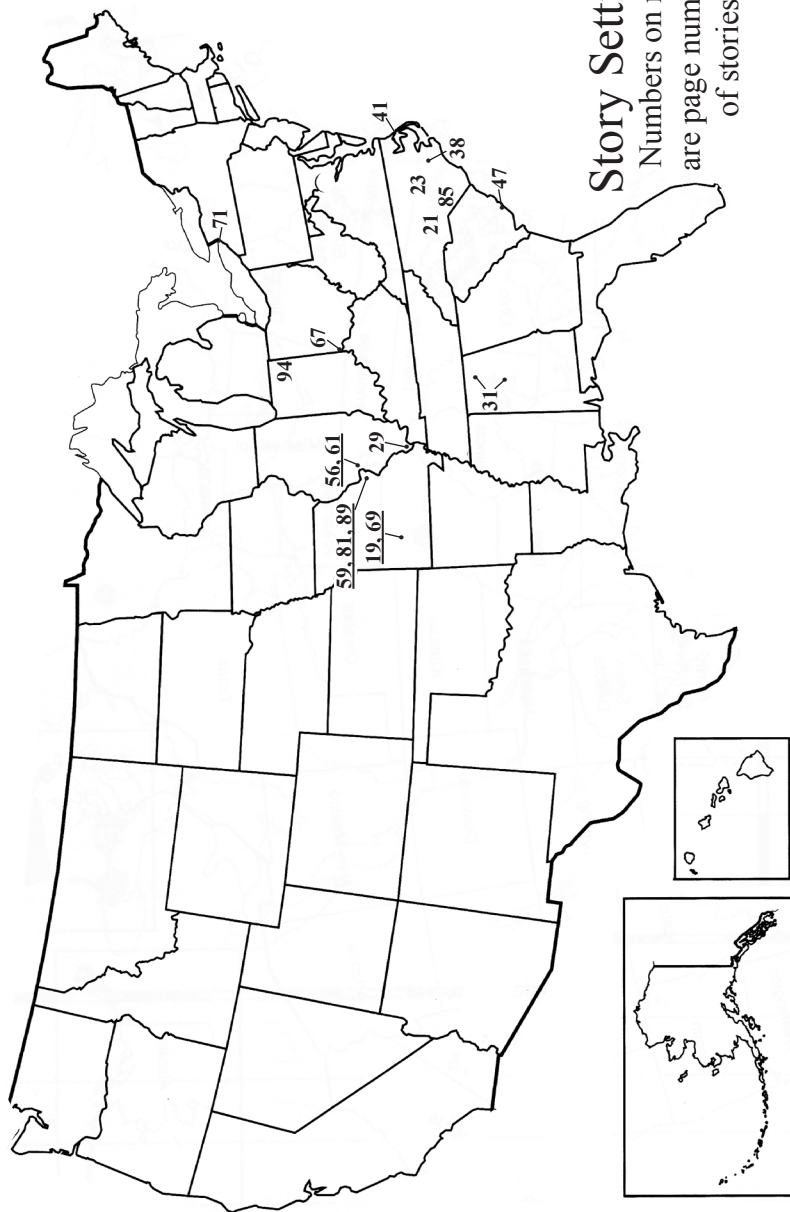
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Story Settings
Numbers on map
are page numbers
of stories



Story Settings

Numbers on map
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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

Your journey through *Grannie Annie, Vol. 10*, begins with a visit from Union soldiers, and ends over a century later with more unexpected callers at the door. Between the two, you'll find family members involved in a world of memorable adventures and challenges, as well as in some hilarious predicaments!

The thirty-five stories in this year's collection will carry you from the United States heartland to Puerto Rico and Honduras; from Nigeria to Israel and on to Europe; and across Asia, to China, Japan, Vietnam, and Malaysia.

On your tour you'll meet some family members who think they're getting exactly what they want, and others who get a second chance. You'll witness some family members acting out of conviction, or fear, or hunger; some acting from the heart, with great courage; and others making sweet deals that last. At times, you'll discover, things are not as they seem. You may find yourself asking what *you* would risk for freedom, or what you would risk on a dare. What would you risk for half a loaf of bread, or to read a banned book?

The family stories in this volume were chosen for you and your family. Still, you may want to read the stories before sharing them with young or sensitive readers. Also please note that these stories and illustrations are in the identical PDF edition and on The Grannie Annie's website.

Happy travels! We trust you will value this visit with family members around the world, and we invite you to join us again next year for The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration!

Connie McIntyre and Fran Hamilton
Directors of The Grannie Annie

Listening is an act of love.

—*Dave Isay, StoryCorps*

Grannie Annie, Vol. 10

The Union Visit

1861*

Lebanon, Missouri, USA

It was a normal day on the Atchley homestead. Martha “Patsy” Atchley (my five-times-great-grandmother) had been living with her twenty-year-old grandson William A. Vernon. Colonel (and Senator) Miles Vernon, Patsy’s husband, had gone away, fighting in the Civil War.** “Shame on you, Miles. I do not support your cause, and I won’t leave with you. My home is here,” she had said. He had left with his slaves to fight in the war with General Price. The colonel was a Confederate officer, while Patsy’s sympathies remained with the North. She remained in her home in Goodwin Hollow with her grandson William.

William had been sitting on the porch with Patsy, who was taking a rest and smoking her clay pipe with a live coal in it, when a group of Union soldiers approached the house on horseback. They had been patrolling the area recently, and knowing that Colonel Miles was a Confederate, they took the assumption that Patsy agreed with him. The Union soldiers decided to hold Patsy at gunpoint. They approached her door, claiming that they knew she was a Confederate.

“You aren’t welcome here. Leave my property now!” Patsy shot back with determination. She then yelled to William, “Get my rifle!”

* 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.

** This civil war was fought between the United States (the Union) and the Confederacy, a group of Southern states that had formed a new country.

“Go inside, little grandma!” the lead soldier shouted back. They then began laying a circular trail of gunpowder around the outside of her house.

William jumped in front of his tiny grandmother to protect her. When a match was put to the gunpowder, the explosion made them leap into the air. The coal from Patsy’s pipe flew down William’s overalls, sending a pain with it. William panicked and then ran out of the house and all the way to the neighbors’ place, assuming Patsy had died in the explosion. After running to the house, he frantically told the neighbors that the soldiers had blown up Patsy and almost shot him in the back.

William and the neighbors ran back to the house, shocked to find Patsy fully okay. She was sitting in her rocking chair smoking her pipe. “Lovely evening we’re having!” observed Patsy.

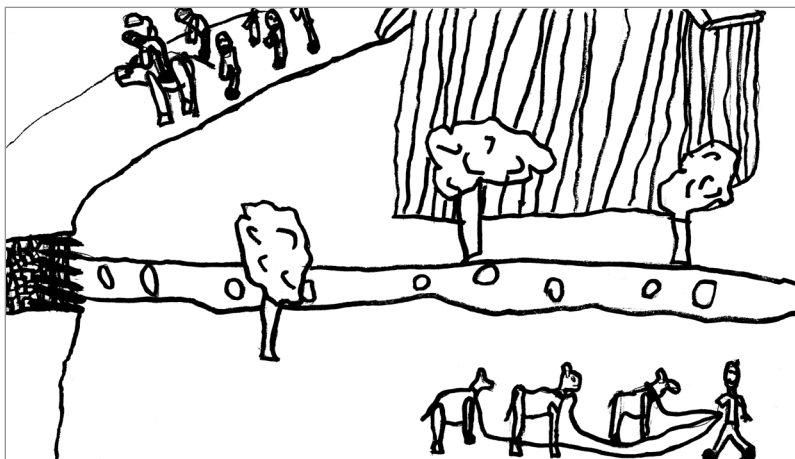
Jackson DiBlasi
Missouri, USA

The First Horse Whisperer

c. 1864
south-central North Carolina, USA

The distinct voices of the soldiers grew louder and louder as the clank of the horses' hooves pounded ever closer. He was lying so flat on the ground that he could almost taste the dirt. The trickle of the flowing water in the creek and the crackling of the leaves in the wind broke the silence he prayed would hide him well. Daniel Thomas was just a young boy in the year 1864, winning the game of hide-and-seek with the Confederate troops that had come to take him and his horses to fight in the war. Legend has it that Daniel whispered to his horses to keep quiet, and they obeyed.

Daniel was only eighteen, but he knew his three horses were all the family had to plow the fields. Daniel was my great-grandfather's great-grandfather, and his



Josh Weihe

plight has been told for generations. My dad tells me the story so I can tell my grandchildren.

On a hot summer day in 1864 a few Confederate soldiers came to Daniel's home place—a small country cabin on several acres. Daniel's family did not own slaves and were simple country farmers that owned a small tract of land straddling the line between Moore and Montgomery counties. Daniel knew that if the soldiers found him they would take him with the family's three horses. When Daniel heard from neighbors that the soldiers were coming for him, he grabbed his three horses and headed for the creek to hide.

On his way to the creek, Daniel had to scramble through the paths least traveled to avoid the soldiers. He could hear them talking about taking his horses, and he heard them say that they knew he was hiding and they were going to find him. Daniel knew the family land and the paths around the creek like the back of his hand. He led the soldiers on a game of cat and mouse in and around the creek until night fell. The soldiers finally gave up and left.

This tale about Daniel has been told through generations, and hits home with me. My passion is riding and caring for my horses, and I truly understand Daniel's motive to save his horses from being taken. I whisper to my horses, and I believe they somehow understand me much as Daniel's horses understood him on that hot summer day long, long ago.

Arden Riddle
North Carolina, USA

The Bear Man

1893

Bagley, North Carolina, USA

My great-great-great-grandmother Mary Godwin lived many tales. Deep in her home in Clayton, North Carolina, she would recite these stories to her daughter, Blanche, who would write them down. I like to close my eyes and imagine them sitting by their kitchen stove—Mary in her rocking chair, Blanche on the floor listening intently.

One particular story took them back to when Mary was a young mother in the small town of Bagley, North Carolina, in 1893. In fact, Bagley was so small it had only two houses—one of which belonged to Mary, and the other to her sister.

Mary had two children, Clarence and Flora, and was expecting a third, Blanche. As most brothers do, Clarence took pleasure in aggravating his sister. To stop the quarreling, Mary would say, “Clarence, stop aggravating Flora, or the Bear Man will get you!”

None of them had ever seen the Bear Man, but had heard there was a man who walked from town to town, leading a bear on a chain. Clarence took lightly upon his mother’s words, not bothering to worry over a man and his bear that probably didn’t exist.

But this, this was different—not some fantasy frightening children into behaving—for as soon as she said it, a strange music drifted down the railroad. They all looked up. To Clarence’s horror, the Bear Man, chain and all, appeared beside the railroad playing an instrument. Clarence dove behind an old pine log, left



Andrew Uihlein

over from building their house, resulting in a mouthful of dirt. The Bear Man did not stop, most likely engaged in trying to get his bear to dance for crowds to his eerie music. This is what he did for a living. Sadly, Clarence did not know this.

Oh, how Flora must have loved to taunt her brother with the idea of the Bear Man and how ridiculous he looked as he dove behind the log! Nevertheless, Clarence always behaved in fear that the Bear Man would return.

Elizabeth Norris
North Carolina, USA

The Hero of Vega Baja

c. 1898
Vega Baja, Puerto Rico

During the Spanish-American War, in 1898, the Americans invaded Vega Baja, a small town on the island of Puerto Rico. My great-great-grandparents lived and worked in Vega Baja. They had twelve children and loved the relaxing atmosphere in the little town. My great-great-grandpa worked at the school as the principal. He finished his work and dashed home from a tiring day at work. He dropped his briefcase on the ground, flung his hat off his head, and plopped down into a nice, comfy chair in exhaustion, waiting for his children to return home from school.

On the sunny, warm day in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico, my great-great-grandparents were sitting at home talking about their day when their children arrived home. All of them slumped down in chairs and on the sofa, relieved because the hard school day was over. That's when they heard loud, terrifying sirens and knew that something was wrong. They were being invaded by the Americans.

My great-great-grandparents grabbed their children and scrambled down the stairs into the cold, dark basement. They leaned in close, lowering their voices to a whisper, and said, "Be quiet—the giants are coming!" The Puerto Ricans named the Americans "the giants" because the Americans were very tall compared to the Puerto Rican people.

My great-great-grandpa was the only person in the town who knew how to speak English. He knew he

needed to do something to help the people of Vega Baja. He stomped up the stairs, marched out the door, and went to talk to the giant American soldiers. He was able to convince the Americans to leave the town. He saved everyone in the town by talking to the soldiers, and he prevented anyone from being hurt or killed!

After the war ended, Puerto Rico became a possession of the United States of America. My grandma moved to the United States as an adult and has remained here. Whenever she tells this story, she can imagine how terrifying the experience was for her family. She is very proud to be the granddaughter of the hero of Vega Baja.

Ashley A. Werdes
Missouri, USA

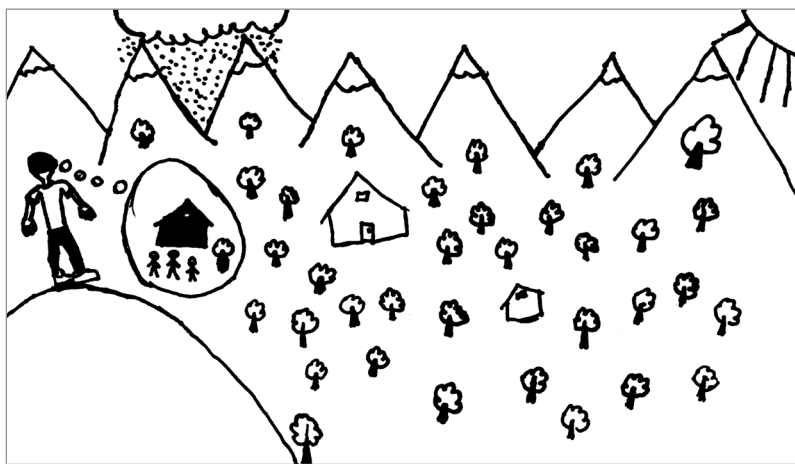
The Land

c. 1900–1979

Santa Lucía, Intibuca, Honduras

Decades ago my great-grandpa Lisandro was born. My great-grandpa was the child of a single mother, and she was the poorest woman in the 300-person town where he grew up. My great-grandfather grew up in a hut in Santa Lucía, Honduras. He lived on one of the highest mountains. As he looked down the horizon, he dreamed of greatness. As he was walking back to his hut, he stepped on a smooth, shining pebble. He picked it up and kept it as good luck and to signify hope.

My great-grandfather went to school to learn to read and write, but he had to quit when he was in third grade. My great-grandpa started working early to support his mother. He used to walk around selling women's hair accessories on the side of the road or in the tiny market.



Cody Cronk

He grew up to be a very smart businessman, and he started trading goods across the border with El Salvador. He became a very wealthy man, and all that land that he used to look at from his little hut became his.

He got married to a woman named Priscilla and had at least eleven kids. The first five kids (including my grandpa Natanael) spent their childhood helping their parents work the fields. None of them wore shoes until they were teenagers. Eventually my great-grandfather became a wealthy businessman and rancher. All of his eleven kids got college degrees and became successful people in their respected fields.

My grandfather Natanael went on to become governor of his state under a military government. (Honduras was not a democracy and was ruled by military juntas.*) After many years of my grandfather being a governor, and under pressure from the United States government, Honduras became a democracy in 1979. My grandfather got elected to a constitutional congress of Honduras. In the current Honduran constitution you can find my grandfather's signature. So my grandfather was a founding father of the modern Honduras.

How you like them tamales!!!

Camila Isai del Cid
Missouri, USA

* A junta (HOON tuh) is a military or political group ruling a country, often after taking power by force.

The Lady in White

c. 1918–1925

Munich, Bavaria, Germany; Cairo, Illinois, USA

Would you believe me if I said I wouldn't be alive if my great-grandpa hadn't had a dream? Well, it's true!

In 1918 my great-grandpa Joe and his mother were living on a German military base while his stepfather was bravely fighting in World War I. Grandpa Joe had just been told the devastating news that his stepfather had been killed and that he and his mother would have to leave the base after the war. Joe felt that he had to help provide for his mother, so he went in search of a job. At sixteen years old, the only job he could find was working as a cook's helper on a merchant marine ship that sailed all over the world. Joe took the job reluctantly, because he didn't want to have to leave his mother, the only person he had left. He may not have known it then, but he was in for quite an adventure.

Upon setting sail, Grandpa Joe met Carl, whom he would later name his oldest son after. He and Carl quickly became best friends, and they told each other everything. After two years of sailing, Grandpa Joe began having a very peculiar dream. In his dream, he was working in the ship's kitchen when a beautiful lady in white appeared next to him. She was frantically telling him that he needed to get off the ship. He had the same dream several nights in a row, and it disturbed him so he confided in Carl. Carl then told him something that would amaze him for the rest of his life: Carl had been having the same dream. They talked and decided to make the risky decision to

get off the ship at the next port, Savannah, Georgia, and not return. Grandpa Joe did not know any English, but he quickly taught himself by listening to others speak. He and Carl worked at various jobs and eventually made their way to Cairo, Illinois.

In Cairo they found work at a meatpacking plant and made just enough money for a pack of cigarettes each week, and room and board. Grandpa Joe met and fell in love with a beautiful girl named Dorothy. After they were married, he decided to write to his mother to tell her everything that had happened.

His mother was astonished when she received the letter, because she had believed Joe was dead. She had received news that the SS *Heinrich Kayser*, the ship he had been on, had sunk on December 6, 1922, off the coast of Newfoundland. When she read that he was alive and well, she nearly fell over from the great amount of joy in her heart. Grandpa Joe continued to write to his mother throughout the years, and he and Carl remained best friends.

Grandpa Joe had always believed God had sent the lady in white as his angel to save him. He taught all nine of his children, and later his grandchildren, to always trust in God and His plan.

Josie Pagano
Missouri, USA

A Mighty Sweet Girl

c. 1918–1988
Birmingham and Huntsville, Alabama, USA

Growing up, my great-grandmother Mary Ennis Smith wished she could know her biological mother. In 1918, when she was only eight days old, her mother had left her with a woman who lived nearby named Mrs. Wilson. Mary Ennis's mother told Mrs. Wilson that she could not care for her child. She promised to return in a few days, but Mrs. Wilson never heard from her again.

After five months, Mrs. Wilson put the child up for adoption. She was adopted by John and Mattie Bridges, who had no children of their own. Following the adoption, Mary Ennis's new parents changed her name to "Jane." They lived in an inviting home in Birmingham, Alabama, and Jane's favorite activity was to go for rides in the rumble seat* of her adopted father's car.

Jane's life changed again when she was thirteen. John Bridges died, forcing Jane and her mother to sell their home and move in with family in Huntsville, Alabama. Because they lived far away, Jane wrote letters to keep in touch with friends from her old school. Every summer Jane went back to Birmingham to visit. While away, Jane wrote letters to Mattie, telling her of all the fun she was having.

When she was grown, Jane married, returned to Birmingham, and had two daughters, one being my

* A rumble seat is a folding outside seat at the back of some early cars.

grandmother. After she had daughters of her own, she once again wondered about her biological family. Who was her mother? Why did she give Jane up? Did Jane have brothers and sisters? To try to learn more, Jane wrote letters, visited county courthouses, and visited the state capital. She learned that her biological mother's name was "Daisy Smith," and that her father had died before she was born. She told this to her daughters and husband. But she did not tell them everything she knew.

Jane's daughters grew up and had families of their own. After Jane died in 1988, her grandson, my dad, found a box of old papers tucked away in her closet. In the box he found letters, birthday cards, family photos, and Jane's adoption papers. One of the letters in the box was written to Mattie from Jane when she was visiting her friends in Birmingham. It is a typical teenage letter, talking about the movies she had seen and the places she had eaten. But some sentences were not typical: "I had lunch at Brittens," Jane had written, "with Daisy Smith."

Without realizing it, Jane had known her biological mother, Daisy Smith, all along. But even after she learned this, she never told anyone. And even though I am named for Jane, I will never know the reason she kept the secret of Daisy Smith.

But I think I understand this. In that letter Jane also wrote, "Mrs. Smith said tell you she thought I was a mighty sweet girl." I think this was Daisy's way of thanking Mattie for raising the daughter she'd had to give up.

Jane Ann Baggett
Alabama, USA

Religion of My Family

c. 1939–1942
Oba, Anambra State, Nigeria

My mom always tells us a story about how unfortunate she is not to have any grandparents. Both my great-grandfather and great-grandmother died before she was even born.

In 1939, Christianity had just reached the southeast of my country, Nigeria. One morning, as he was going to his farm, my great-grandfather met the missionaries who were spreading the gospel. He was so fortunate that morning to hear the missionary preaching about Christ. He waited patiently to listen to the gospel, and afterwards gave his life to Jesus Christ. Later that week he was baptized by the missionary that confirmed him to be called a Christian. Little did he know that what he did was going to cost him his life.

About two months after my great-grandfather had accepted Jesus, things started changing between him and his brothers and his kinsmen. They were annoyed and hated the fact that he had given his life to Christ; his kinsmen rejected him, because it was an abomination to them to accept another religion. Throughout this period my great-grandfather waxed strong and continued fellowshiping with the Christians.

One Sunday evening, after returning from church service, my great-grandfather sat down with his brother—drinking and eating. However, unknown to him, his own portion of drink had been poisoned by his brothers, who had sworn they would rather see him dead than see him

as a Christian. He drank it, and later died on that Sunday night and was confirmed to have died from poison.

Afterward, great-grandmother raised her two kids without her husband. The boy turned out to be my grandfather, and my mom never stopped thinking how great it would have been for every child to have the love of grandparents.

Since then, southeast Nigeria has changed greatly; people now have more freedom of speech and freedom to practice Christianity without being judged.

Diuto Mozie
North Carolina, USA

Too Much Lekvar

c. 1939
Pelișor, Satu Mare County, Romania

Sometimes you can have too much of your very favorite thing. To illustrate this, my mother told me a story that her grandmother told her. My great-grandmother Leah Perl lived in the town Pelișor,* on the border of Hungary and Romania. She was the oldest, and she had many little brothers and sisters. The biggest troublemakers were her youngest brothers, Yitzchak and Mechel.

During autumn everyone would harvest plums. Everyone could eat as many plums as they wished—but in 1939 there were oodles of leftovers. People had to figure out what to do with them. Even Leah's large family could not eat them all.

What could they do with a million extra plums? Leah's mother made a *giant* pot of lekvar, traditional Hungarian preserves. But one pot wasn't enough. She would cook endless pots of plums with sugar and lemon peel. Once the lekvar was cooled, she would pour it into a *humongous* wooden barrel in their basement, where it would be stored for winter.

Yitzchak and Mechel, who were only five and six years old, begged to taste the lekvar—they were extremely fond of lekvar. They were not allowed. And Leah, who loved them dearly, refused to help them. It wasn't right. Day after day, they tried and failed. Their plans grew more and more complex, but they remained empty-handed.

Until one day . . .

* Today Pelișor is called Lazuri.

Leah was at school, and her mother was outside working on their farm. The boys' *cheder** let them out early. They were alone, with the barrel in full view. They hatched *half* a plan—and they didn't really think it through.

Yitzchak pushed a chair to the barrel. Mechel climbed onto the chair to steal enough lekvar for them both. Mechel leaned over the barrel—and what do you know—*he fell right in!* Lekvar is slimy and sticky, and Mechel was covered from head to toe like a lekvar monster. And their mother was about to come through the door.

Frantic, Yitzchak cleaned up the splatter and put the top of the barrel back on just as his mother walked through the door. He greeted his mother but didn't say a word about Mechel.



Kate Pogue

* A *cheder* (KHAY dər) is a school for Jewish children in which the Hebrew language and religious knowledge are taught.

Don't feel bad for Mechel—there was enough lekvar in the barrel to feed even *his* bottomless need for lekvar. But as time passed, everyone wondered where he was. Yitzchak kept avoiding the question. His family looked everywhere, but Mechel was nowhere.

At sunset it was dinnertime, and Mechel was still missing. Everyone knew that you cannot *ever* be late for dinner. Everyone panicked, and they asked Yitzchak again. Seeing the fear in their eyes, Yitzchak blurted out the truth.

Mechel was rescued. He required hours of bathing (which he hated) to get clean. And then there was the punishment. And his poor stomach hurt for days.

I asked my mother whether the boys still liked lekvar after that day. My mother only remembers that when she visited them in Israel when they were old, they offered her lekvar with her bread.

Abigail G. Harris
New York, USA

A Bad Day for More Than the Goat

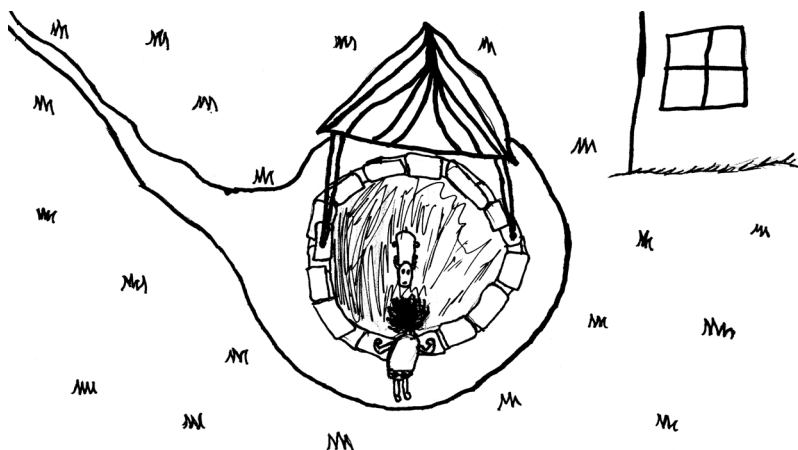
1940s
Kinston, North Carolina, USA

This humorous story takes place in the 1940s, during World War II. The location is a small house in Kinston, North Carolina. This remote house has no electricity, and its only source of water is a single well in its backyard. This well shares the grounds with roaming goats.

On a day seeming like any other day, a wondrous goat becomes curious about what is behind the pile of bricks that the well consists of. Without a care in the world, the goat props her front legs onto the bricks to peer over, but to no avail. From this vantage point, the goat is unable to see past the well's wall of wonder. With this, she promptly decides to move her back legs to where her front legs are, and then jump her front legs forward to the other side of the well. At first this works, but then the goat begins to lose her balance. Shakily she tries to recover it, but is unable to. In a flight of plight, the goat lets out an ear-piercing bleat!

With the grace of an exasperated bull, she rapidly descends to the depths of the well. Much to everyone's surprise, the goat lands without any injuries. From the small abode's kitchen window, my great-grandfather sees this comical atrocity take place. To hide the look of disbelief, he buries his face in his hands.

My great-grandfather then proceeds to rise out of his chair, releasing a sigh that must have been screaming, "Why did this have to happen!" He steps out of the back door, walks over to the well, and peers down to



Lily J. Bredemeier

confirm what just happened. Sadly, he was correct. Now he trudges down to the nearest neighbor's house. He explains to them the predicament he is in and asks for their help in reversing the situation. The father and his son agree.

My great-grandfather and his neighbors gather two pieces of rope. They lower them into the well, sliding them both under the goat's stomach. They begin raising the goat out of the well. The goat is now near the top, so my great-grandfather leans in to pull her the remaining inches over the brick wall. The neighbors then advance to assist in bringing the goat to the ground. In the process, to everyone's amazement, my great-grandfather falls in. Luckily he does a flip and lands more or less on his feet. The situation was indeed reversed, just not as expected.

The neighbors now lower another rope to help my great-grandfather to climb up. At first he struggles, but his motivation wins. Finally both the goat and my great-grandfather are out of the well.

This hectic, almost unbelievable, day has created no real impact on anyone's life, seeing as nothing was gained and no one was hurt. Almost more importantly, it has brought a hilarious story to the table—a story that can be used to ignite family gatherings with flames of happiness.

David Fields
North Carolina, USA

The Summer of Salt, Sand, and German Submarines

1941–1942

Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, USA

I was eleven when World War II began. My mother had died, and my father was very sick. I was sent to live with my aunt and uncle who lived in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. The simple oceanfront cottage was like paradise to me when I arrived. Days were spent combing the beach, searching for seashells, and splashing in the sparkling water.

Then the war began, and everything changed.

There were supply ships coming out of Norfolk, Virginia. The supply ships were going to Europe to deliver supplies to the fighting soldiers. The route they followed carried them just off the coast of Kitty Hawk. German submarines were circling the route the supply ships were taking so that they could blow the ships up and disrupt the supply lines. At night we had to keep the blinds down so that the Germans could not see our lights. We would hear the whine of torpedoes and the boom of explosions as they hit the ships. I was very scared.

There would be wreckage, tar, and oil on the beach the next day. We would see and smell smoke coming from the burning ships. As we would play, we would get tar on our feet. The tar would stick and smear, making it hard to remove. Supplies became limited, and we had ration books, which told us how much meat, sugar, butter, bread, and coffee we could have.

An area of the Atlantic Ocean near Kitty Hawk became known as “Torpedo Junction” because of the number of German attacks there. My final memory of that summer was when three German soldiers were reportedly captured, and authorities found Manteo, North Carolina, movie ticket stubs in their pockets. It was very frightening to find out that German soldiers had actually come ashore and were so close to all of us.

Whitley Anderson, granddaughter of narrator
North Carolina, USA

The Worth of a Diamond

c. 1942
Auschwitz concentration camp, Poland

Have you ever wondered what a diamond is worth?

Yaakov Hirsh was born in 1910 and had eight brothers. He came from a small town in Czechoslovakia. When he was only twelve years old, he went alone to the city of Prague to become an apprentice to a great shoemaker. He learned how to make leather shoes by hand.

Around 1942, when the Nazis crept in, Yaakov was taken away to a concentration camp. Since he knew how to make shoes, they had Yaakov working and repairing leather boots for the Nazi soldiers. (If he hadn't been given a job, they would have killed him.)

One day a German soldier brought Yaakov a pair of boots that he had stolen from a Jew who had been killed. He asked Yaakov to fix and clean the boots so he could wear them. When Yaakov took off the heel of the boot, he had a great surprise! Hidden in the heel of the boot was a precious diamond! It was as shiny as a pot of gold and silver.

Instead of feeling happy and excited, Yaakov was very afraid. He knew that if the Nazis found out that he had the diamond, they would kill him for it. He knew in his wisdom that he had to get rid of the diamond. He sold the diamond on the black market* for half a loaf of bread and a bowl of uncooked noodles. That's how much

* The black market is a system for illegally buying and selling goods, especially rationed goods.

food was worth to him in that time. That is how much a diamond was worth to Yaakov Hirsh.

Yaakov Hirsh was my great-grandfather. He was alive until I was five years old. When I was younger, I was lucky enough to see him often and spend time with him. I was, and I still am, very proud to be his great-granddaughter. Yaakov Hirsh was brave, strong, and very intelligent. He was a survivor. If he had not survived, I would not be here today.

Malka Neuman
New York, USA

Faith in the Darkness

c. 1943
central Poland

“Get to work!” shrieked one of the horrible Nazis. Hurrying and hurrying, a few people were running.

“What’s all this hurry?” thought Yossel, my great-grandfather.

He was in a concentration camp. If you did something wrong, they could shoot you on the spot. He was hired to be a translator for the Germans. This was not a safe job.

One day a Jew came over to him and said, “Passover* is coming, and we have to bake matzahs.”**

So Yossel went up to the head of the Nazis and said, “My people and I want to make a special food for Passover.”

“Okay,” responded the horrible Nazi. “Take all the ingredients you want, but you may only use one of the ovens.”

Yossel agreed in a happy and excited voice. He took flour and water, and made matzahs. The ovens were so hot that the matzahs baked in just a few short minutes. The Jews didn’t have any wine, but when Pesach*** night came, they had matzahs.

The men ate the few matzahs with gusto. While they were eating, the Nazi stormed into the room looking angry, and screamed, “What are you Jews doing?!”

* Passover is a Jewish festival celebrating the Jews’ rescue from slavery in ancient Egypt.

** Matzah (MAHT zuh) is a thin, crisp, unleavened bread, traditionally eaten during Passover instead of leavened bread.

*** *Pesach* (PAY sahkh) is the Jewish word for *Passover*.

Yossel, the translator in the group, explained, “We are eating our special food. I told you it is Passover, and we cannot eat leavened bread. We are eating matzahs. You told us we could eat.”

The Nazi said, “You said you wanted bread. This isn’t bread. You will starve!! Eat the bread!”

Nobody moved to go near the bread.

The Nazi started getting angrier. He turned to an older Jew in the group, Herr Goldshtoff. “Goldshtoff!” he yelled. “You’re smarter and older than them! Tell them to eat the bread! Who knows when the next time will be that you will have food!”

The Nazi saw that no one was going to eat the bread. He began turning red in the face and sputtering, “You . . . you . . . you . . . look at you!! Your G-d* left you! And you are going to be destroyed!! Goldshtoff!! Answer me! Hasn’t your G-d forsaken you?? Hasn’t He left you?? Hasn’t He?!??”

The room was quiet. No one said a word. All of a sudden, Mr. Goldshtoff looked the Nazi in the eye and answered, “No. He has not forsaken us. *Nisht totalla un nisht uf aiybick*.** Not totally and not forever.”

The Nazi looked around the room in disbelief. Too taken aback to answer, he turned on his heel and walked out of the barracks.

This is the legacy that my great-grandfather left me: G-d will never forsake us.

Not totally, and not forever.

Chava Deutscher
New York, USA

* This incomplete spelling is a show of respect.

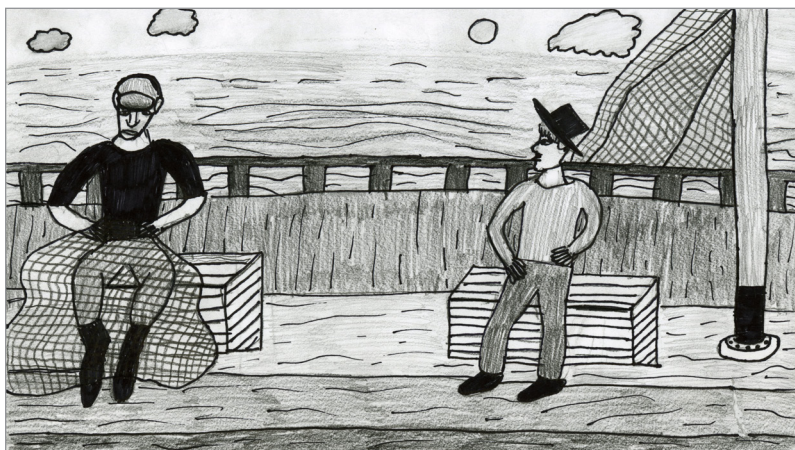
** This phrase is in Yiddish, provided here in Roman alphabet letters.

The German Fisherman

1944
Charleston, South Carolina, USA

It was 1944, and World War II was happening. My grandfather was about five or six years old. He lived in Charleston at the time. His father and mother worked at a navy shipyard. They couldn't take my grandfather with them to work, so they paid a retired Greek fisherman to keep him for the day. The retired old man took very good care of my grandfather. He would talk to him, play with him, and feed him. The old man had a business—making fishing nets. While the old man worked, my grandfather would sit on a sea chest where he stored his toys. Over time he grew to love the old man.

When my grandfather had been with the fisherman for a few weeks, he noticed that some strange guys would visit and go to the back of the shop with the old



Esten Ronning

man. While they were back there, they would speak a foreign language. But one day the police, navy, and other authorities stormed heavily into the shop and arrested the old man.

My grandfather was shocked and confused at the same time. He stayed there on the chest until they said, “Come with us.” They took the old man and my grandfather to police headquarters. Later my grandfather found out that the Greek fisherman was a spy for Nazi Germany. He had been giving food, drinks, and information to German sailors from off-shore submarines.

My grandfather stayed in police headquarters in shock, tears steadily rolling down his face, until his parents came to pick him up and take him home. He cried and cried for the next few weeks, because he loved the old man. It had been hard for my grandfather to see him go.

My grandfather still has that chest where he kept his toys, and he misses the old fisherman to this day. It’s funny how you could love somebody so much, yet you barely know that person.

Isabella Palmieri
Alabama, USA

Clearing the Way

1945
southern Japan

In 1944 my grandfather was an eighteen-year-old young man from the coal mining regions of Pennsylvania. For the first seventeen years of his life he had never been more than twenty miles away from the town where he was born. After taking his first train ride to the big city of Philadelphia, he was shipped to boot camp* in Maryland. Despite having aspirations of being a fighter pilot, given his proficiency in electronics he was designated to be a radio operator. Instead of fulfilling his dream of being stationed aboard an aircraft carrier or a mighty battleship, he was assigned to one of the tiniest ships in the United States Navy, USS *YMS 467*—a minesweeper whose job it was to clear enemy mines before they could damage the larger ships of the American fleet.

Before he knew it, my grandfather was sailing through the Panama Canal toward Hawaii and then Guam. He saw his first combat action off the island of Okinawa. It was there that his ship began clearing mines to prepare for the amphibious landing onto that island. His ship had a wooden hull to avoid the magnetic mines that lay in wait. The ship was 168 feet long and drew a draft of only six feet of water. This small wake helped to avoid detonation of contact mines that floated dangerously below the surface. The sailors also learned how to counteract a third type of mine, known as an

* Boot camp is the place where new members of the military receive their first training.

“acoustic mine,” by transmitting special sonic waves. After overcoming his initial disappointment at being stationed aboard a minesweeper, my grandfather came to appreciate the small but important role he played in the Allied war effort.

After victory at Okinawa, his ship moved to its next assignment, Operation Olympic, the planned American invasion of the southern Japanese island of Kyushu. While his ship was performing its duties there, my grandfather, serving as the ship’s radio operator, received a coded message that said to break off all operations and return to Okinawa! Little did he know that Japan had just surrendered and that the world had entered the atomic age.

A few weeks later a Japanese harbor pilot was on board my grandfather’s ship, pointing out where the mines were hidden in Kure Harbor. My grandfather told me that it sure was easier finding enemy mines when you knew where they were. An advantage of being aboard a minesweeper was that it was one of the first ships to enter the enemy’s harbor and you’d be one of the first to step onto foreign soil.

In September 1945, after clearing the mines from Kure Harbor, my grandfather was asked to escort a senior officer to a town about fifteen miles away called Hiroshima.* My grandfather does not like to talk about what he saw that day, but he tells me that what he saw that day he could never forget, no matter how hard he has tried for the past seventy years.

My grandfather is my hero, whom I love very much.

Molly Kuzma; North Carolina, USA

* Hiroshima is the city where the first atomic bomb was dropped, on August 6, 1945.

Honey for Olives

1950s
west-central Israel

My great-grandfather Avraham Karasik was about one year old when he emigrated from Russia to Israel with his parents, Simcha and Mischa Karasik, and his six brothers and sisters. His family left Russia because his family's rabbi told the ten Jewish families in their village that they needed to move to Israel because the Russians did not like the Jews. My great-grandfather moved with his family to a town called Ramat Gan, Israel. My great-grandfather grew up in this town, and by the time he was seventeen he had become a beekeeper. He loved bees and did not care if he was stung. He had many beehives, and every few days he took the bees to different forests to increase honey production.

One day Avraham went into a forest next to an Arab town and began to set up his beehives. A lot of Arabs from the town began to crowd around Avraham and the beehives. The Arabs from the town curiously watched my great-grandfather. The crowd around him grew and grew. My great-grandfather was very afraid, but he didn't want to move his bees from this forest.

Avraham saw a little boy in the middle of the crowd. Avraham got an idea. He stuck his hand into one of the beehives, and he pulled out a honeycomb full of honey. He handed the honeycomb to the little boy. The boy tasted it, smiled, and quickly ran away. Now my great-grandfather Avraham didn't know what to do. The crowd was just getting bigger and bigger and louder and louder.



Joshua Bowman

Finally the boy came back with his father. The boy's father said, "I tasted this honey, and it had such good taste. Who was responsible for this honey?"

The man's son pointed his finger at my great-grandfather and said, "The Jew gave me the honey!"

The boy's father then said to my great-grandfather, "My name is Mohammed. I own this land, and you are welcome to keep your bees here."

As it turned out, Mohammed had large olive trees nearby. Mohammed grew sweet olives and made tasty olive oil. He took my great-grandfather to his olive trees, and he let my great-grandfather taste some of his olive oil and olives. My great-grandfather loved the olive oil and the olives.

Mohammed and Avraham decided to become trading partners. Whenever Avraham went to Mohammed's forest, he would take vats of honey. In exchange for the honey, Mohammed gave my great-grandfather buckets of olive oil and fresh olives. Both my great-grandfather

and Mohammed took the honey and olives to their markets to sell. Mohammed and my great-grandfather were trading partners for a long time.

Mohammed's family and the Karasik family have been friends ever since.

This story is important to me, because it tells me about my great-grandfather. I learned that even if people are different, they can still get along with each other. I also learned not to judge people until I get to know them.

Sarah Davis
New York, USA

An Independent Woman

c. 1951
Taipei, Taiwan

It was just an ordinary day in the life of my grandmother Lily Tsai. She didn't really go through what we would call the "teenager phase." Instead she willingly obeyed her parents and tended to her younger siblings' needs. She had grown up in a small town in mainland China. Now, living in the large city of Taipei, Taiwan,* she did not have any friends, because she was constantly cooking and cleaning in her busy household, since she was the oldest daughter. Nothing really exciting ever happened to her until one particular day that changed her life forever.

My grandmother woke up at dawn to make breakfast for her entire family. All of her younger siblings raced down the steps to get the delicious food, and she greeted them with a warm, pleasant smile. Shortly afterwards, her parents also came down to eat, but my grandmother was somewhat silent as they appeared. If they asked her anything, she would politely reply, but it had been very awkward ever since her constant pleas to go to high school had been rejected or ignored.

After the kids had gone off to school and her parents off to work, my grandmother was home all day by herself cleaning. It was early afternoon when she decided to take a break from all of the hard labor to go outside for

* Taiwan is an island off the southeast coast of China. It was once a province of China, but it has been a separate, non-Communist country since 1949.

a walk and enjoy the fresh air. As she strolled down the sidewalk, she noticed a newspaper on her neighbor's front lawn that read, "HELP WANTED IN THE HOSPITALS." At first sight, my grandmother knew that this was her one, and possibly only, chance to get out of the environment that was holding her back from living her life. The only reason she hesitated in making this decision was that she would need to confront her parents.

Later that afternoon my grandmother's parents came home. My grandmother had been practicing her speech for hours. When she told her parents about this great opportunity, they were not at all thrilled. They told her they wouldn't support her in this decision and that they still wanted her to be the housemaid, but my grandmother said, "No." She didn't care. She couldn't take it anymore. She had to start living her own life the way that she wanted to. She stomped up the stairs with tears flooding her eyes and packed up several belongings in her suitcase and walked right out the front door.

That experience taught my grandmother a lot about how life worked. She learned that no one should ever have control over your life and the way you want to live it. You have to stand up for yourself if they do. She now knows the importance of following your dreams, because you never know what might happen. After that event, my grandmother's life all went uphill. She became a successful nurse and, for the first time ever, was happy.

Caroline Gaughan
Missouri, USA

Problem After Problem

1952
Collinsville, Illinois, USA

“It’ll be fine!” Richard said to Jack and Bob.

“But you don’t have a driver’s license!” Jack replied.

“Come on! It’ll be fun!” Richard pleaded.

“But . . .”

“No *buts*! My parents are only gone for two days. Come on. Let’s go.”

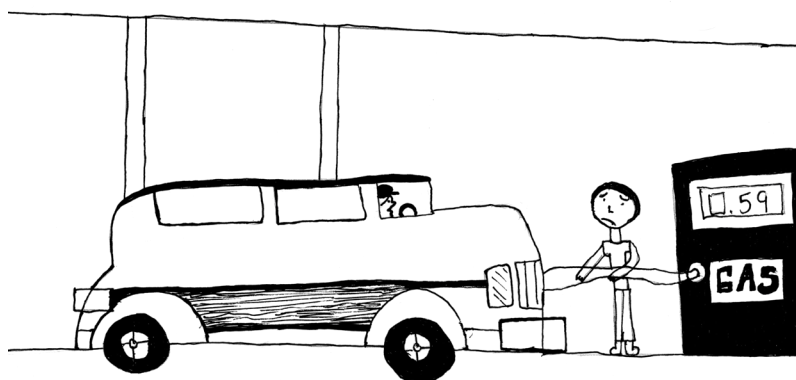
Richard started out toward the garage, where his father’s 1947 Ford woody* station wagon crouched, waiting for a key. He and his friends hopped into the leather front seat. Richard placed his hands on the stitched red leather of the steering wheel. Richard put the shiny silver key in the ignition and listened to the engine roar to life before he gingerly backed out.

The friends rode way out into the country. “See,” Richard said, “I told you it would be fine.” One of Richard’s friends was messing around and accidentally shifted gears. There was a horrible grinding sound. Something was wrong! All they could do was drive in a low gear back to town.

Suddenly Richard realized that his father would notice that a lot of gas had been used over the weekend. “The gas!” he screamed. They stopped to get gas, then chugged home.

Richard was pulling the car into the garage when Bob pointed out that now there was too *much* gas in the car!

* A woody is a car body style in which the passenger area is made of wood.



Nasro Abdi

They'd have to siphon off the gas. They pulled the car out of the garage and got to work, collecting the gas in an old bucket. By this time, Richard was wondering what they were going to do with all that gas. They decided that the little fishpond behind the house would be the perfect place. No one would ever know. They didn't second-guess their plan. They poured the extra gas into the pond. It sat right on top, like a water beetle. They tried to mix it into the water with sticks, but that didn't work.

Jack suggested, "Why don't we light it on fire? Then it'll all go away!" Richard lit a match and threw it into the pond. The gas burst into flames, setting a pine tree ablaze. The boys panicked, screaming and running around in circles like headless chickens. Richard rushed inside and brought out the old fire extinguisher. He managed to put out the fire, but all the branches on one side of the tree were burnt—a new problem.

They found the solution in another tree. They cut off some of its branches and wired them into place on the

burnt tree. In the end, they decided it looked great and no one would ever know. They cleaned up the car and put it back into the garage. Richard tried hard to believe that his father would never notice any of what had happened.

Sure enough, on Monday when Richard left school, his father was waiting there for him. He was standing next to the car, his elbow resting on the hood. All Richard remembers is his father's pointer finger gesturing toward him in a way that could only mean trouble.

Lillian Hayden Ebeling
Missouri, USA

The Fox Stole the Show

1955
on a flight to St. Louis, Missouri, USA

It was a winter's Friday in 1955—in other words, the most humiliating day of Papa's life.

My grandfather, Papa, was comfortably perched in the first row of a forty-seater jet, coming back to St. Louis after an important business meeting in Chicago. He was sitting next to a lady with a magnificent red fox stole draping from a magnificently wide neck. As Papa looked away from the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* crossword puzzle that he had been absorbed in for the past half hour, this smooth Friday afternoon took a turbulent turn.

As for what Papa saw? His unzipped fly. In order to make as little a deal out of this dilemma as possible, he casually laid the newspaper on his lap and zipped his pants—a piece of cake. Afterwards, Papa returned to his crossword puzzle and settled upon “propel” for 11-across. With ten minutes left of the flight, Papa took a little snooze, without a worry in the world.

When the flight ended, Papa was startled awake to the sound of people stumbling to get their luggage. Quick as lightning, he leapt to his feet.

“Excuse me, sir! Just look what you've done!” exclaimed the woman with the fantastic fox stole.

Papa looked around, baffled, not processing that this woman was speaking to him. That is, until he looked down—and saw the great expense lodged into the fly of his beige slacks: the red fox stole! He immediately felt his face grow red hot and his cheeks begin to flush brilliantly.

Papa muttered an embarrassed “sorry,” and bustling about, found himself in the aisle, holding up thirty-nine passengers. Now, fur may be easy to zip in, but the process of getting fur *out* of a zipper is not so simple. So there Papa was, desperately trying to unzip his pants—thirty-eight pairs of eyes all staring intently at his size small men’s slacks, and *one* pair of eyes (the pair belonging to the magnificently wide-necked lady) piercing him with rage and hatred.

Papa yanked and yanked but could not budge the zipper more than a centimeter or so. He tried to step aside so that the people behind could exit, but found this ridiculously hard in the tiny plane. Just as Papa was getting ready to give up and offer the woman a replacement stole instead, the stole ripped loose. Papa hastily grabbed his luggage and briskly strode down the aisle without a glance back, yanking stray fox fur from his pants zipper as he went.

Belle Gage
Missouri, USA

The Not-So-Lucky Shot

February 1959
Belleville, Illinois, USA

It was a brisk February day in Belleville, Illinois, where the temperature had dropped to about 39 degrees. A very innocent ten-year-old boy named Bill Ackermann had received his very first bow and arrow for Christmas in 1958.

Bill was incredibly excited to have obtained the bow—since his neighbor John had one, he'd asked for one himself. The young man had many exciting times with the bow, shooting things outside with his neighbor in 1959. They shot at many things in Bill's backyard in the wintertime. Bill and John hit targets, such as tin cans, with the bows. They sometimes used BB guns. He didn't know this, but something disastrous would happen while experimenting with what seemed to be a harmless idea.

There were many birds outside on that cold winter's day. An American robin, a small bird with a red chest, had arrived on the ground. While Bill was hanging out with John, he suddenly got a plan in mind. This idea was to see how close he could shoot near the bird without actually hitting it. Boy, did he think wrong! Bill placed the arrow in the bowstring and aimed it carefully at the ground. He let it go and . . . BAM! Bill looked at the shot, and his heart suddenly felt a wave of remorse. The boy hadn't hit the ground; he'd shot the bird.

John glanced over at him and excitedly exclaimed, "That was a great shot!"

Immediately feeling terrible, Bill began to cry. He trudged over to the dead bird and pulled the arrow out. He dug a hole and buried the creature that had accidentally met an early and unfortunate demise. Bill put a crucifix on top of the tomb to give the bird a proper funeral. He was so heartbroken, in fact, that he never went hunting again.

To this day Bill, my grandpa, hasn't killed another animal. He thinks back to that shot from time to time, and still feels guilty about it. Be careful when you're using a weapon, even if it's a toy, because you never know if your lucky shot could end up cutting something's life short. Even if you don't have a weapon, your words can have the same effect on people.

Katherine Gaitan
Missouri, USA

Face to Face with an Idol

1959
Osaka, Japan

For many years my great-grandparents traveled to Japan to pick and buy ceramic tiles for their business in Canada. One year they were approached by an important ceramic company and were asked if they were interested in representing its china dishes in Canada and the United States. Of course their answer was yes, because it could make them a lot of money. This firm was a leader in china dishes. They made a deal and a contract. My great-grandparents were invited to the house of the company's owner—this was considered a great honor in Japan.

My great-grandparents were welcomed in his home. He was very polite, and much bowing was done. After finishing the polite chitchat, their host stood up and motioned for them to follow him. They were taken to a beautiful garden—as beautiful as the sunset—where a Shinto Buddha* stood.

As they went out, my great-grandparents were surprised by the huge ceramic statue. Looking at it was quite a shock. As they stood around, stunned and not knowing what would happen, their host stood in front of a huge urn of rice. There he took a large shovel, dipped it into the rice, and tossed the rice into the belly of the Shinto Buddha. He turned to my great-grandfather, smiling. He motioned for him to follow his example.

* In Japan, the traditional Shinto religion is often blended with Buddhism.

My great-grandfather looked at the shovel, and he looked from the rice to the statue. He refused and said, “No.” At that very moment he realized he had just come face to face with an idol.

Their host’s interpreter said, “You are doing a great dishonor to our Shinto Buddha. You must feed the Shinto Buddha. If you don’t, you will lose many millions of dollars.”

My great-grandfather could not believe what was happening, but he firmly explained to the interpreter that his religion does not allow him to serve idols. The interpreter could not believe it. My great-grandfather would rather lose a lot of money than feed the Shinto Buddha. My great-grandparents were sent outdoors. The contracts were immediately ripped up. At that moment they realized that they were in a unique position. They were witnessing, and were being invited to participate in, something rare that does not come along for many people. I feel proud of my great-grandfather for not feeding the idol.

Nechama Feintuch
New York, USA

Courage for Life

1960s

Chai Gou, Shandong Province, China

Back in the 1960s, in the old village where my dad lived, in China, they had their own traditions. Whenever someone was sick, they would light three incense sticks in front of Buddha, and pray for the sick person. They thought that someone became sick when ghosts were around them. Villages like his mostly avoided western medicine, like vaccines, even though a hospital was nearby to help. But my grandmother once stepped into her courage to save my father's life, and ran to the hospital against her mother's will. This story has traveled on for many years, from generation to generation.

Before my father was born, he had a brother. His brother had a sickness that caused his whole body to shake violently—a seizure. Incenses were lit, prayers were said—all in front of Buddha. But this couldn't stop his life from seeping away into darkness, and eventually he died at just three months old. My grandmother grieved for him, even when my father was born. Traumatically, he too had the same sickness as his brother. His grandmother lit incense, prayed, and waited all over again.

My grandmother could not lose another son. She made a decision against her own traditions. She wrapped my father up in a blanket, stepped outside, and ran all the way to the hospital, about thirty minutes away by foot. Luckily a doctor sent from Beijing arrived to help this village. A medicine was given and, in a blink of the

eye, the shaking stopped. My grandmother was relieved, and ran all the way back.

At the same time, her mother had called over other people to pray—then the door swung open, and in came my grandmother. Her mother was angry. “We called over these people, and you just ran away?!”

My grandmother swiftly replied, “Don’t you see? The sickness is cured!” At that news her parents became happy again, and so my father was able to grow up and become my dad.

My grandmother’s courage inspires me. Women didn’t have the same education as men, and they were expected to obey the older generations’ orders. Taking the courage to run to the hospital about three miles away with a child, and to accept western medicine, was not something easy to do. But because my grandmother wanted to save her child’s life, to see him grow up, she stepped out and took her courage to run to the hospital and accept western medicine. Because of my grandmother’s courage and open mind, my father grew up to have later generations. Without my grandmother, my father and I wouldn’t be alive today.

Jenny Fan
New Jersey, USA

The Assassination

November 22, 1963
Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

It was 1963—November 22—and Barbara DeLuca was riding to school on her bus in Cincinnati, Ohio. Barbara was in sixth grade; she was eleven years old. She was dressed not too fancy in her knee skirt and blue cotton sweater, just right for a young middle-class girl. Barbara wondered what was going on with all the whispering. She asked her friend if she knew what the excitement was about. Her friend said that for the first time the entire class was going to get to watch a television program at school. “Even if it’s going to be for educational reasons, it’s still going to be *cool*,” Barbara said, in an elephant voice.

Late that morning, the teacher turned on the television. The boys and girls eagerly watched a show about the ocean. After lunch and recess, the teacher discussed with the class what they had watched. They were talking about the seven seas when the principal came in. He bent down and whispered to the teacher.

The principal strolled out of the room, and the teacher sat with her head in her hands. Instinctively, the class knew something was wrong. They knew the news they were about to hear was not going to be pleasant. The boys didn’t make noises; the girls weren’t talking about accessorizing their cats. Finally, after what seemed like forever, the teacher rose from her chair in a cloud of sorrow, her eyes stung red from crying. The teacher

cleared her throat and stammered, “Our president has been shot.”

The students gasped and began to whisper to one another, but as the reality of this sunk in, they were silenced again for the rest of the day. Many of them spent the remainder of the day crying, and couldn’t wait to get home to their families. On the bus ride home, the only topic of conversation was the assassination of President Kennedy. Everyone forgot about the excitement of the new television.

When Barbara got home, she saw her mom weeping in front of the TV. Barbara didn’t bother to ask if her mom was all right; she knew she wasn’t. She quickly and quietly went to her room to read, thinking that would clear her mind of the assassination. However, all she could think about was how her president had been shot.

When Barbara’s father came home from work, they all gathered around their small new television to watch the continued coverage of the assassination. The news showed the new president being sworn into office. The news also showed a previous speech made by Kennedy. He told the nation that they needed to stay brave in times of total distress. As Barbara listened to this, it strangely made her feel better. She listened intently. This speech inspired her to be like the president. She wanted to stay strong like many people’s hero, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the late president of the United States.

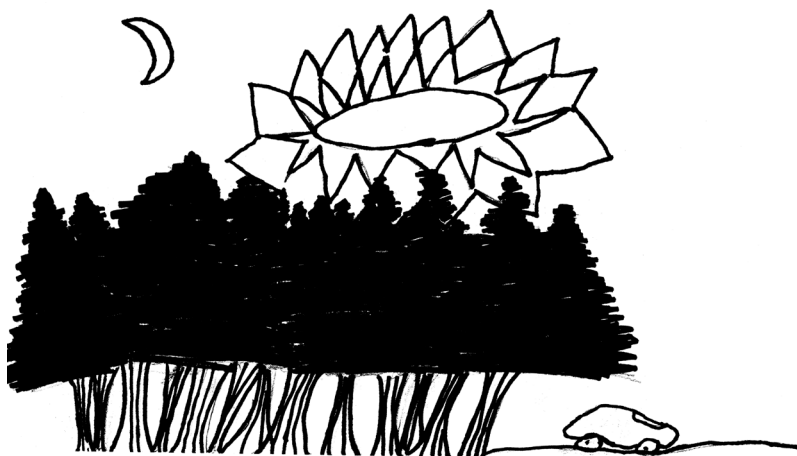
Maddox J. Corbin, grandson of Barbara
New Jersey, USA

Did You See What I Think I Saw?

November 1968
southwest Missouri, USA

It was four o'clock in the morning when my grandpa and his friend Bob departed to drive the last two hours to their cabin in southwest Missouri. They were going deer hunting. Both of them were having a good time—shooting the breeze, playing music, and laughing the whole way there.

They were on a narrow road, about thirty minutes closer to the cabin where they would stay that night. The area was forested all around the property and the road. My grandpa maneuvered the car down the dark road. They kept anticipating the deer they were going to get on this trip. All of a sudden there was a bright light above the treetops. This light was so bright and magnificent—it stung their eyes to look at it. The light kept coming



Willow A. Hanff

towards them. It got so incredibly close to them that it stunned them into silence. The car immediately went dead. Everything shut down. The light briefly hovered over the car. When my grandpa and Bob turned around, the light was gone. The light had come at them and then was gone—just like that. Both of them were just sitting there in silence. After a couple of minutes my grandpa started the car, and everything worked and started up fine.

My grandpa said, “Did you see what I think I saw?”

Bob said seriously, “I never want to talk about this again.”

My grandpa said, “Okay,” and was silent the rest of the way to the cabin.

They got up the next morning, and my grandpa said, “That wasn’t a dream yesterday, was it?”

“No!” Bob answered. “I told you that I never want to talk about it again.”

Three days later my grandpa and Bob were on their way home on the same road, and they noticed that about a mile-wide stretch of treetops had been sheared off. My grandpa said it was frightening and drove home. The next week in the newspaper there was an article about various sightings of something strange in the sky in southwest Missouri.

To this day my grandpa is unsure what that light was. He says it was a great big oval shape. I’d never heard this story until my grandpa told this to me. When my grandpa talks about this scary story, he has the same frightened feelings he had when he saw the light above the treetops.

Drew Hollman; Missouri, USA

The Coin

1973

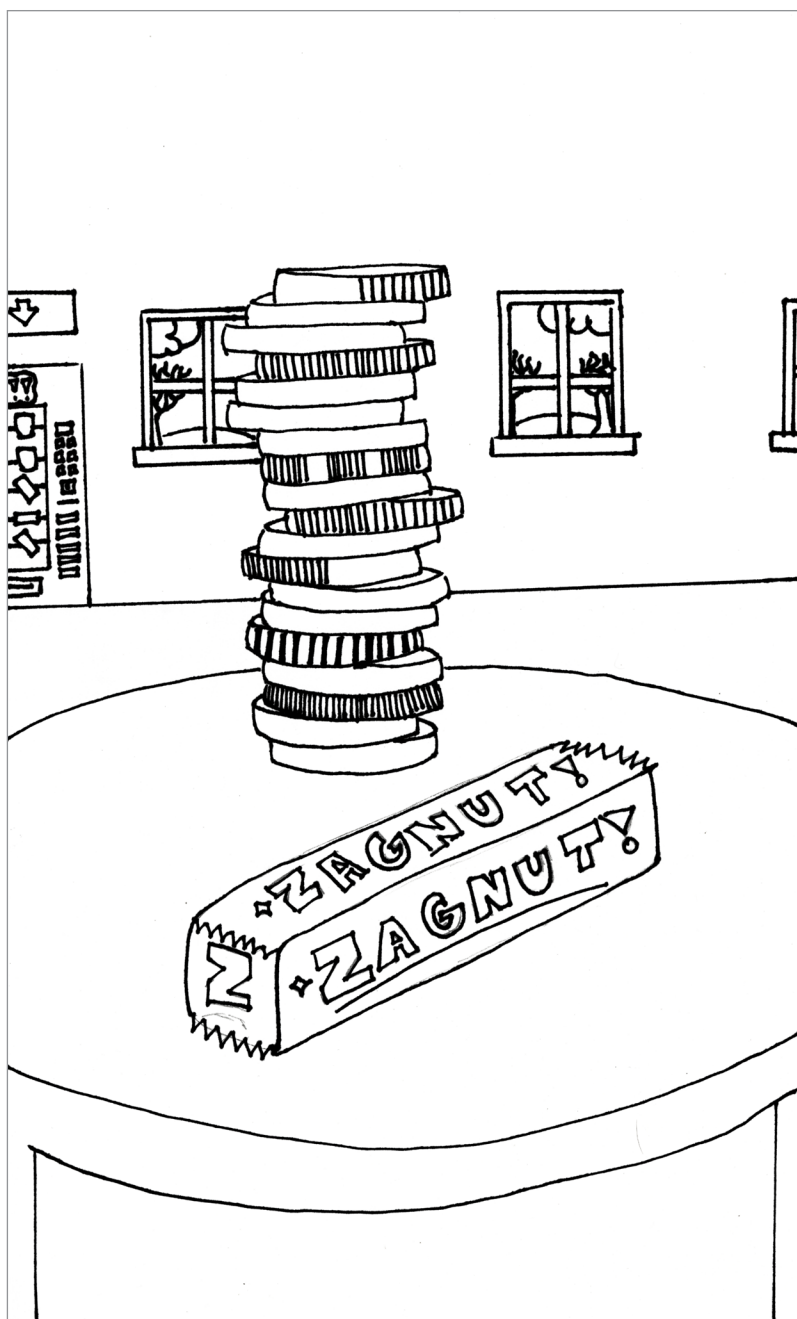
Buffalo, New York, USA; Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Gary was seven years old, and it was the summer of 1973. He was in a hotel lobby in Buffalo, New York. He wanted a nutty, crunchy Zagnut bar from the hotel vending machine. He was on a family vacation that went from Buffalo, New York, to Canada. Gary had a pocket full of rare coins that his grandfather had given him. And he really wanted that candy bar. However, he didn't have any regular money. All he had in his pocket were his rare coins.

"I don't want to spend them, but it's only ten cents, and I have a rare ten-cent coin," he thought to himself. When Gary's parents were checking into the hotel, there was nobody watching him, so he traded in his rare ten-cent coin for a U.S. dime at the counter. Then he spent the coin on the candy bar.

Gary devoured the whole thing in less than five minutes. Then he started to worry. He worried that someday somebody would ask to see his rare coin. He got sad, too, because he had lost a part of his rare coin collection. "I wish I could get my coin back," he sobbed.

Later in the vacation, Gary was in Canada. He went to another hotel. In the hotel there was another vending machine. This time his mom gave him a one-dollar bill. He had to trade in the one-dollar bill because the machine would accept only coins, so he went to the lobby and traded his one-dollar bill for some coins. When he was looking through the coins, in the pile was his rare



Olivia Gravette

ten-cent coin that he had traded away in Buffalo, New York.

The chances of this happening would be like winning the lottery. Gary's wish *did* come true. Getting that candy bar wasn't the right thing to do, but making mistakes is part of life, especially if you're a child. Sometimes when you make mistakes, you can get a second chance.

Lena Podbielski, daughter of Gary
New Jersey, USA

My Papa's Journey of Faith and Love

1973–1976

Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico

The pain in his arms and legs had him feeling he couldn't get out of bed. He felt sadness, because his body couldn't go as quick as it once had and he was unable to look up at the birds or trees while walking with his crutches. Imagine having doctors tell you that you have only three more years to live, knowing you have a wife, two young daughters, and many dreams for your life. This is what my papa experienced in February of 1973, when he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, or "MS."

Multiple sclerosis affects the central nervous system, and not much was known about this in 1973. The disease causes damage to the brain that can affect many of the body's functions, like walking, seeing, balancing, and coordination. One known fact is there is no cure.

My papa was twenty-eight years old when he was diagnosed with MS. He was in medical school and struggled with many things, like writing, seeing, and walking. He experienced pain, and struggled to lift his legs and arms. Walking and getting out of bed kept getting harder to do. This was difficult for him, because he had always been very active and independent, but now he had to rely on others at times for help. My grandmother attended classes on the days Papa couldn't get out of bed. She tape-recorded the classes for him, and then later helped him write the notes. Doctors didn't know how to treat this disease, which is why they gave him only three more years to live.

Papa struggled to use crutches, and would fall often in the school hallway and at home. He had many friends, but they became uncomfortable and would watch him fall without offering any help. However, the school janitors would see him fall and rush to his side to help him get up.

Papa relied on my grandmother and a small group of friends for support, because he was going through so many changes. He also was a devout Catholic and put his faith in God that he was going to get through his illness and be there for his family. He prayed daily for strength and understanding. He didn't want to give up his dream of being a doctor—and he didn't. In June of 1976 he graduated from medical school, where he had studied physical medicine and rehabilitation.

Papa was a doctor until he was sixty-eight years old, and often saw patients with disabilities and other limitations. Some would tell him that they looked at him as a role model because he had followed his dream and had never given up, even with his disability.

Papa is now seventy years old and has been living with MS for forty-two years. Even though he continues to face struggles with his MS, he gives a lot of the credit for getting him through those struggles to my grandmother's strength and love, and more importantly, to his trust in God.

Sierra Creek, granddaughter of Papa
Missouri, USA

A Father's Legacy

c. 1975
Chongqing, China

This story told by my father is about his legacy to me.

The first time I was called “crazy” was when I was eleven. Well, actually, I had been called “crazy” many, many times before, but this time I didn’t understand why.

“Why?” It was a question I asked everyone I met and anyone I knew. I desired answers. Under Communist rule in China, knowledge and books were closely restricted by order of the government. And owning those “dangerous,” “mind-washing” books was illegal.

However, little did the government know that there were hundreds of thin, yellow-stained pages—all forbidden handwritten books and essays—in a secret room in the attic of my uncle’s house. I guess you could say the “intolerance of rules” runs through the family.

Every month I raced upstairs to that wonderful oasis and devoured book after book. Much to the dismay of the government, ideas and ambitions started developing. I dreamed of escaping China and going to America, a world of prosperity. I dreamed of helping others discover themselves and the world.

I could express myself. I had an unbreakable spirit. My life wasn’t under anyone’s control but my own. As I read about the life of Anne Frank, or the peaceful revolutions that Mahatma Gandhi led, or the successes of Alexander the Great, or the everlasting energy of

Winston Churchill, I realized I have a strength in me. I learned about the beauties of nature, and appreciated life more than ever before. I learned that I could knock down barriers and restrictions, and finally . . . I could soar, freely, with my new wings.

Now, me being called “crazy” isn’t something that you would ponder too much. I was always bursting with knowledge, sharing illegal fables from Aesop or facts from the Renaissance. This particular time, I decided to share a story of Napoleon.

I remember the last traces of winter had faded away, and spring was slowly creeping upon us. Boys raced across the schoolyard’s lush meadows that were bathed in brilliant golden sunlight and smelled of the sweet fragrance of blossoming poppies.

“Did you know that Napoleon was barely twenty years old when he became a general?” I enthusiastically said.

“Who is this *Napoleon*?”

“Is he from the *West*?”

“Ha, that’s impossible.”

“You’re crazy. You have absolutely no idea what you are talking about.”

Such *positive* feedback, and *what* a crowd-pleaser.

Looking back, I realize that at age eleven I wasn’t “crazy” or “a trouble-maker” or “an insane boy who deserves to be sent to a military camp.” Those were the comments I often heard. Instead, I was *learned*. Now I know that those stolen minutes in the dim library—the hidden crumpled pages—helped me become who I really am. And to leave a mark on this world—for the better.

Lauren Liu, daughter of narrator
New Jersey, USA

Where to Go?

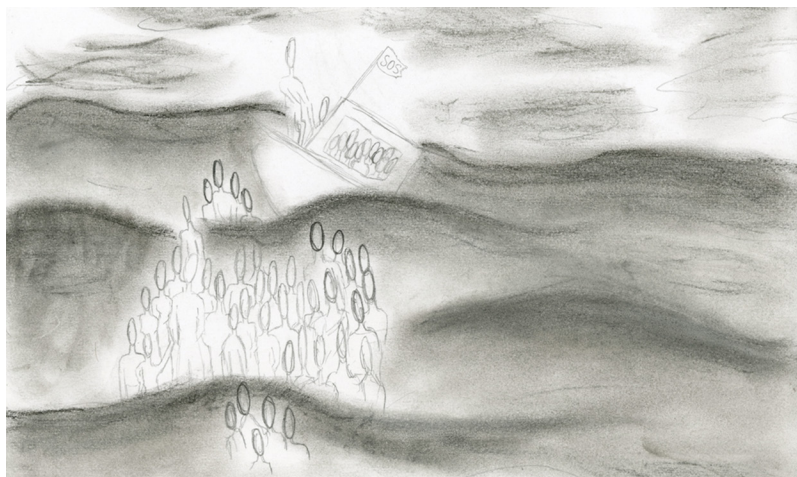
1979

Mỹ Tho, Tien Giang Province, Vietnam,
and Terengganu, Malaysia

April 1979—the Vietnam War was over. North Vietnam had been victorious over South Vietnam. My mom was ten years old, and was getting ready to get on a boat to escape to freedom. Her parents dressed her in layers—pajamas, a day outfit, and a red suit. On the boat, people weren't allowed to bring anything but what they were wearing. They were all scared that the government would find out they were leaving and put them in jail.

The day finally came; they left on a small boat. My mom remembers that the day was very humid—plus she was wearing three layers of clothes. First they arrived at a farmhouse, where they would stay until nightfall. Later they would board a bigger fishing boat that would take them to Malaysia. They had to board the boat at night so the government wouldn't find out.

It was pitch black, and my mom was climbing onto the boat when one of her shoes slipped off. She was so sad. She tried to look for it, but it was nowhere to be seen. It was the only memento she had of her cousin, who had the same shoes. When she sat down in the boat, she heard about people who had hidden their jewelry and money by sewing it into their clothes, in case they encountered pirates. A sick baby was also aboard. Many people tried to calm him down, but he wouldn't stop crying. The next day my mom found out the baby had died during the night from a seizure.



Megan Nguyen

A day passed, and they encountered pirates. They were Thai fishermen trying to make some extra money. My mom had heard stories about pirates who would take the money of everyone on board and then kill them—or the pirates would destroy the boat's engine so all the people would be adrift and die. Fortunately the pirates were intimidated because they were outnumbered by the men who had lined up on the deck. They left the boat unharmed.

After three days and four nights the boat reached an island in Malaysia. My grandfather told the captain to poke holes in the boat so that the soldiers on the beach couldn't send them back out to sea. My grandmother and my mom didn't know how to swim, so my grandfather had to carry them to land. My mom said she saw soldiers who whacked people, even old men, with long bamboo sticks. That night they had nothing to sleep on, so they slept on the beach. The next day they were transported to a refugee island camp called Pulau Bidong.

Eventually the Red Cross gave them the supplies they needed to survive. They were given blankets, tents, and weekly rations of food and water. My mom described the water around the island as crystal clear. She could walk almost a mile out and still be standing. My mom's family spent five months on the island until they got their immigration papers to go to the capital of Malaysia. From Kuala Lumpur they took a plane to the United States, where they began a new life.

Megan Nguyen
Missouri, USA

The Dirt Bike Dare

1980

St. Louis, Missouri, USA

“Quick! Ride it in!” my dad’s friend yelled.

My dad was in eighth grade. He loved his dirt bike. The day before “the ride” happened, his friends had dared him to do something he would regret. It was lunchtime at school, and they were all sitting around a green circle table outside. All of them were daring each other to do stupid stuff. They dared my dad to do something extravagant.

The day the ride happened, he and his friends gathered in the neighborhood to walk to school, as they did every day. They were tired, but ready to go to school. When they got to school, they were in the same classes, and they talked about the dare. My dad couldn’t back down now.

It was lunchtime, so Dad ran home to get his dirt bike. My dad put his helmet on and started his bike. His friends were waiting outside by the fence at school and began to run alongside the dirt bike. When they got to the front of the school, his friends opened the doors.

The dirt bike was so loud in the halls. School was now in session. His teacher was taking attendance when she heard the roar of the engine and saw the bike speeding through the halls like Speed Racer. She called the principal. Everyone in the school chased my dad. He went into the library and the gym, and even across the playground. He rode the dirt bike home, and his friends

followed. They all walked nervously back to school, yet felt kind of cool.

When they got back to school, the teacher, principal, and even the cops were waiting to tear into my dad and his friends. My dad went to the principal's office. He was not afraid until they called his mom! The principal made him talk to his mom on the phone and, of course, his mom was so mad. He was suspended for a week, and he got his dirt bike taken away for a month.

My dad didn't regret one moment of that day.

Roman Weaver
Missouri, USA

How to Steal a Potato

c. 1980
Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China

About thirty-five years ago China was not the rich toy-making, factory-filled, polluted, and overpopulated country one encounters today. This story takes place long before all those images became reality—when China was selfish and poor, when schools did not feed children properly and teachers had no respect for anyone. When my mom, Liu Chang, was thirteen, she was sent to boarding school in Beijing. This is her story.

“I hope it tastes better than it smells,” I whispered as I looked down at the slimy green goop that was plopped onto my plate. I had acquired it as I had passed the vegetable section of my new school’s cafeteria.

“I hope so, too,” a voice said behind me. When I walked up to the checkout, I had gotten the green goop, moldy bread, and purple chocolate milk.

At the checkout, the lady in the pink apron took a bottle of good-looking fresh water and gulped it all down. Underneath her scowl her black teeth showed. “Two yuan”* the lady barked at me, sending saliva all over my face.

Li Ling and I walked outside to the benches and sat down in the windy weather. I took a sip of the chocolate milk and almost threw up. Li Ling looked at me. “Is it eatable?” she asked me. I shook my head fast.

* In 1980, 2 yuan would have been about \$1.33.

After class Li Ling and I walked back to our room in hunger. In our room, eighteen other girls were getting ready for bed. When we were all in our beds, which were spread around the enormous room, with the lights out, Gao Hong got up and pulled out a bag of dried mangos. “You guys hungry?” she whispered to us.

Some of us got up and lumbered toward Gao Hong. “Lunch was horrible!” Jian Mei cried as Gao Hong handed us that were still awake a piece of the dried mango.

Suddenly the strong scent of potatoes entered our room. “Teachers’ dinner is so much better than ours.”

Our noses led the way in the dark to one end of the room. “Wait, guys,” Liu Ning whispered as she reached into her pocket. A dim light appeared in Liu Ning’s hand. “Pocket light,” she said. The light shined at the area where the potatoes smelled strongest. At the very top corner was a huge vent, body-sized and glittering in the dark.

“I am going to sleep,” Ming confirmed to us as she left seven of us spread around the room.

“I could climb up and unscrew the vent,” Liu Ning whispered excitedly.

We all looked at each other’s starving faces and nodded. We quietly crawled through the vent to the other side, where there were small peepholes where we could smell and see the potatoes. As soon as the teachers left the room to go to sleep, we unscrewed the vent and hopped out into the room, grabbing handfuls of potatoes. The taste was savored in my mouth when I crawled back.

Day after day my little “group” crawled up there—every day stealing food, never getting caught.

Amber Wang; New Jersey, USA

The Shooting

1983

Pembroke, North Carolina, USA

Bobby Maynor was a young man, age twenty-one, a junior at the University of North Carolina. He lived in a small town in North Carolina called Pembroke. It was deemed a bit sketchy, and dangerous things seemed to happen there regularly.

One Friday night Bobby drove in his old car with his two sisters and a girl from school who needed a ride home. He stopped at the girl's house and got out of the car to get her luggage. As he did so, a drunk man yelled angrily in the yard of a mobile home amidst a freshly cut cornfield across from the girl's house. Bobby simply shrugged and grabbed the luggage. This was Pembroke; this kind of thing was normal.

Gunshots pierced the air. Bobby looked up in surprise to see a man in the doorway of the mobile home, a .22 caliber rifle aimed steadily at the stumbling drunkard. Ten shots were fired through the empty field—until the man fell, face down.

Bobby turned to his sisters and groaned, unfazed. “Well, isn’t this great. Now we’re gonna have to go to court.” He found that all three girls had already run away.

Bobby lifted his head to the sound of a little girl crying. She was standing left of the dead man, staring. She looked to be only five, or six at the most. He looked back at the man in the mobile home, who stood silently watching.

“Sir, you mind if I get that little girl?” Bobby said, a bit concerned.

“Sure, son. You get her, an’ I’ll go call the police,” the man answered, walking back into the mobile home, his gun resting on his shoulder.

Bobby took the little girl to his sisters, who had cautiously stuck their heads out of the house. He walked to the dead man, bullet holes stitched across his back. After waiting about forty minutes, with no appearance of the police or an ambulance, Bobby went home, not wanting to make his mother worry.

For the next couple of days Bobby and his family awaited the arrival of the police, for questioning and such legal things. But no one came.

Sunday afternoon not the police, but the dead man’s niece, came to their house. Bobby told her everything that had happened Friday night.

“You know, the weird thing is the police haven’t contacted us at all,” Bobby finished, scratching his head. It seemed a bit odd; this was, after all, murder.

“Not really. That man who killed Uncle—he’s the sheriff’s brother-in-law. I wouldn’t worry about it,” she said, sighing.

Two months later, Bobby Maynor stood once again in the cornfield. There was no mobile home. There were no people. All that remained was a rusty water pipe, sticking out of the bare earth.

Sydney Maynor, daughter of Bobby
North Carolina, USA

The Siren Sounds

January 1991
Haifa, Israel

War is a hard thing for a fourteen-year-old girl to go through, and my mom experienced it head-on.*

“Look, today we got to decorate our boxes,” my mom, Shanit, called. She held up the shiny metal box, which contained her gas mask. Her parents and her three sisters turned away from the television.

“Go put it in the room,” answered her mother. Shanit dropped the box near her parents’ bed in the middle of the main bedroom. The room was dark because of the taped windows. All the windows had to be taped because the Iraqis were firing chemical bombs into Israel. Shanit didn’t enjoy not being able to see the world but seeing only the black tape that covered the windows. It was for their safety. Luckily the bombs were fired only toward Tel-Aviv and not toward Haifa.

Shanit came back and sat next to her older sister, Idit. They watched the news quietly on the couch. My mom was only fourteen at the time, second oldest of the four sisters. There was Idit, the oldest, who was seventeen. Then there was Shanit. Then Viki, who was twelve, and youngest was Shiran, who was only seven years old at the time. They sat in silence.

Then Wooooooooooooo! Wooooooooooooo!

My grandfather sprang up from the couch. “Get in the room!” he yelled. My mom quickly got up and ran

* This story took place during the Gulf War.

to her parents' bedroom, along with her mother and her three sisters. Not far behind followed my grandpa with a bucket of water, tape, Shiran's gas suit, and the EpiPen.* He dropped the stuff in the room. My mom and her sisters strapped on their gas masks. My grandmother helped Shiran get into her uncomfortable gas suit. My grandfather placed a wet towel in the crack under the door and taped the sides.

"Does everyone have their mask on?" asked my grandfather. The children nodded. My mom was shoulder to shoulder with two of her sisters, Idit and Viki. It was very hard to breathe in those gas masks. It took a little getting used to. The family listened to the radio and waited until they could leave the room.

To entertain herself, my mom drew pictures. She always loved drawing. That was her favorite activity.

After the family had waited a long time, the building started to shake. They heard a loud rumbling noise. At that time Patriot missiles were being fired to intercept the chemical bombs.

The building shook as the Patriot missiles flew right over the building. This was even scarier than the siren. After another half hour of fear, the radio announced that it was safe to leave the room.

This was the first time the siren sounded in Haifa—and the first time my mom's family thought they were in danger.

Daniel Oesterle
Colorado, USA

* An EpiPen can immediately provide medicine to treat a severe allergic reaction.

Finally Home

1994
Chesterfield, Missouri, USA

Sharon Lampros has been dancing since she was two years old. When she was eighteen years old, she decided she wanted to move to Kansas City to fulfill her dancing dream. Before she left, her dad told her that he didn't want her to go quite yet. He wanted her to get a college degree before she started dancing professionally. Ignoring her father's wishes, she left for Kansas City. Now she is returning home for the first time in six years.

Twenty-four-year-old Sharon Lampros drove down the street she had last driven down six years ago. She rolled into the tar driveway she had missed so much. Sharon had been dreaming about this day for years—the day she would finally get to see her family again. After years of traveling the United States, it was time. When she reached the front door, she hesitated. The last conversation she'd had with her father wasn't exactly a great one. Sharon placed her shaky hand on the frozen doorknob and swung the door open.

Sharon was greeted with a loud "Welcome home!" from her four siblings. She couldn't hold it back anymore. Tears streamed down her cheeks like a river as her siblings ran in for a hug. Next her mother arrived.

"Sharon. You've grown so much," wailed her mother. Her family walked her into the kitchen. Standing behind the sink was her father. Sharon's face stiffened. Her father walked briskly to the doorway.

"Sharon, come here. I want to talk to you," he

proclaimed, grabbing her hand and taking her to the library. Stiff as a board, she followed along.

“I’ve missed you so much,” he sniffled.

“I’ve missed you, too,” she replied.

“I know I wanted you to get a college degree before you left, but now . . .” He couldn’t continue.

“I’m so proud of you,” he belted out.

Sharon’s face softened. “You are?” she asked, shocked.

“You took your own path, followed your heart. That’s what every parent wants to say about their child.”

Proud. Her father was proud. Sharon and her father walked hand in hand back to the kitchen, where her younger siblings were waiting at the table with their plates in front of them.

“Wow! You must’ve really missed me to have actually waited to eat,” she smiled.

“Can you just sit so we can eat?” Bill puffed. Sharon grabbed her food and sat down at the head of the table, right next to her father. One after the other, the questions rolled in. After hours of stories, she fell asleep on the living room couch. Her father quietly tiptoed in and set a blanket over her.

“I’m so glad you’re home,” he whispered in her ear. You would never realize how big Sharon’s smile was unless you were sitting right there. Sharon sighed and let her eyes close slowly.

Sharon Lampros is my mother. Though I’ve heard this story too many times to count, it means more and more to me every time I hear it. My parents have always told me to follow my own path and let my heart lead me. That’s the way I’m going to choose to live out my life.

Lauren Bohlmann; Missouri, USA

Shark Week

1994

Cairns, Queensland, Australia

In Cairns, Australia, June 20, 1994, John, my dad, had paid extra so he could take a scuba diving trip with his friends. A boat took them to the diving spot—the Great Barrier Reef. The boat stopped about 100 miles out to sea. The first dive was called a “controlled shark feed.” It was controlled because two of the scuba instructors had wooden bats. The bats would be used to beat the sharks if they got too close.

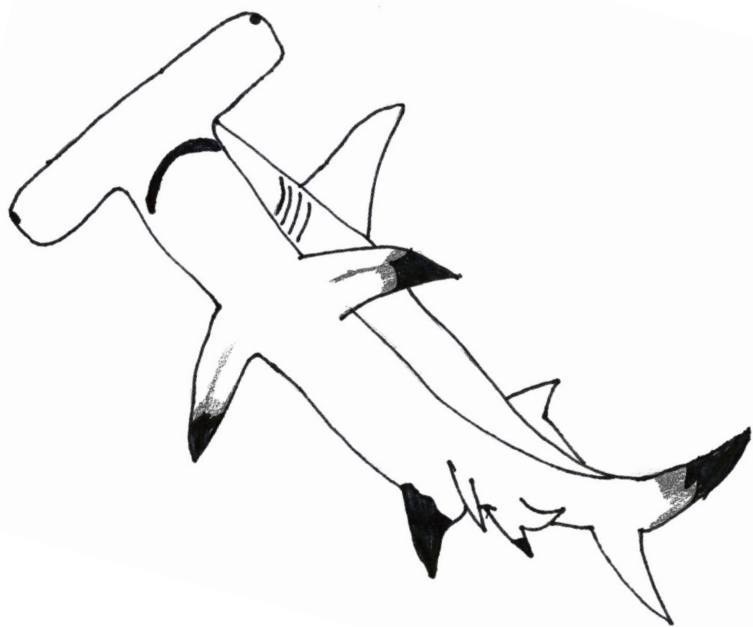
When the boat got to the drop-off spot, it anchored. All the divers, including John, jumped into the water. They dove forty feet. When they reached the sea floor, they put their backs against some boulders and sat in a line. That was for safety—they didn’t want sharks to attack them from the back.

After all eight of the divers were ready, the two men on the boat started chumming* the water. When the two men threw in the blood, sharks like black tips and white tips came. These sharks were only five feet long.

Then after a while of black and white tip sharks feeding, a seven-foot bronze whaler came in. It was a dark gray. The smaller white and black tips got scared and swam away.

Then John’s friend elbowed him and pointed to the left. The instructor on the left was pointing behind the boulder. Out of nowhere a nine-foot hammerhead came

* *Chum* means to put fish parts or blood into water in order to attract fish.



Teagan LeVar

into the feeding grounds. All of the other sharks were threatened by the hammerhead's size and swam away.

The hammerhead swam around for a while, and then exited behind the boulder. Right after the hammerhead left, the two men on the boat threw in a huge piece of tuna. Of course, it floated down right in front of my dad. He automatically realized that the hammerhead would smell the tuna and come to eat it. He tried kicking the tuna away, but it just floated around in circles like a Ferris wheel. It didn't help that he was wearing flippers.

The hammerhead had circled back around the boulders and was coming into the feeding ground again. It was hovering over the ocean floor, and that's when it picked up the smell of the tuna. The hammerhead turned and faced my dad. My dad picked up his feet and was ready to kick the shark. The shark was coming in at full speed and fury. The instructors couldn't react fast enough to hit the shark with the bats. It was just the shark and my dad.

To my dad's surprise, the hammerhead stopped and picked up the tuna. It was shaking its head back and forth violently. It was ripping the tuna to shreds. After the hammerhead finished its meal, it gracefully swam away. After, the instructors thought it was getting too dangerous and told everyone to swim up.

When my dad got on the boat, one of the instructors shook his hand and said, "You truly got your money's worth."

Zoey King
North Carolina, USA

A Game-Day Surprise

1997
Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA

When my dad was a pro-hockey goalie for a team in Indiana, my mom decided to plan a surprise for him for Christmas. His sister, Lee Ann, and her husband, Stef, would drive thousands of miles from Canada to make it in time for one of my dad's home games.

After my dad had left for the rink and my mom had fed the cat, she called Lee Ann to see how far away they were (since my mom had to leave to attend a Christmas party that evening). Mom told my aunt and uncle that the house alarm would be off when they arrived, and to not let the cat out. My mom was nervously excited about hosting the out-of-town guests for two weeks, thinking to herself, "What could possibly go wrong?"

While my mom was at the party and my dad was at the rink preparing for the game, my aunt and uncle arrived at the house. When they walked in, the alarm went off. My mom had forgotten to *not* turn it on. It was just automatic for her. My aunt said, "Uh-oh," as the beeping grew louder and louder. They didn't know the alarm code or how to turn it off.

As it continued beeping, two policemen barged into the house. When the police did that, the cat slipped out the door. My aunt, out of instinct, chased after the cat. A policeman ordered, "Freeze!" because he thought my aunt was trying to escape from the house. She quickly scooped up the cat and tried to explain the situation to a now annoyed officer. The policeman said my aunt was

lucky he didn't arrest them right then for breaking and entering.

My aunt and uncle convinced the police officers to let them try to call my mom on her cell phone. Back then, cell phones were the size of a slab of meat and not very reliable. My aunt and uncle had no luck reaching my mom. Then they tried showing the officers pictures of themselves, which were on the mantel. This was not enough to convince the officers that my aunt and uncle were telling the truth.

Finally my aunt suggested the police officers call my dad at the rink and talk to him. Getting a call in the locker room was highly unusual and made my dad very nervous—especially receiving a call from the police just minutes before game time. When the policeman on the phone asked my dad if his sister was staying at his place, my dad replied, “No, she lives in Canada!”

Lee Ann yelled in the background, “We are here to surprise you for Christmas!” Once dad heard Lee Ann's voice, he asked the policeman if he could speak to her. My aunt explained everything. The good news was that the cat was safe inside, and more importantly, my aunt and uncle did not get arrested. The bad news was that the Christmas surprise was ruined.

Logan Racine
Missouri, USA

Illustrators of Volume 10

- [p. 21](#) Josh Weihe; Colorado, USA
- [p. 24](#) Andrew Uihlein; Missouri, USA (Also on [cover](#))
- [p. 27](#) Cody Cronk; Colorado, USA
- [p. 36](#) Kate Pogue; Missouri, USA
- [p. 39](#) Lily J. Bredemeier; Colorado, USA
- [p. 47](#) Esten Ronning; Missouri, USA
- [p. 52](#) Joshua Bowman; Missouri, USA
- [p. 57](#) Nasro Abdi; Missouri, USA
- [p. 69](#) Willow A. Hanff; Colorado , USA
- [p. 72](#) Olivia Gravette; Missouri, USA
- [p. 79](#) Megan Nguyen; Missouri, USA
- [p. 92](#) Teagan LeVar; Missouri, USA

Grannie Annie Storykeepers 2015

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

Elaine Abrams • Aubrey Adair • Hayley Adair • Noah Adair
Malky Adler • Gabriella Shira Aizenfratz • Anu Akinyede
Alan Alderson • Caleb Allen • Lexi Jo Alm • Avigayil Alpert
Caroline Anderson • Whitley Anderson • Eloise Appel
Varsha Arun • Mackenzie Axford • Noa Bachar • Nina Bacon
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Lucy Bland • Hunter Blount, Jr. • Shulamis Blum • Hunter Blythe
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Invitation to Participate

Please join us for the 2015/2016 Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration. The submission deadline for *Grannie Annie, Vol. 11*, is February 1, 2016. Complete [details](#), including the required submission form, are available at www.TheGrannieAnnie.org.

Praise for The Grannie Annie

When young people participate in The Grannie Annie and discover, and then reflect upon, their family's stories and the family stories of others, the experience can create in each of these young authors an enhanced sense of appreciation, understanding, and "connection." Thank you to The Grannie Annie for giving our communities young people who will see our diversity as an asset rather than a deficit, will recognize the sameness even in our differences, and will bring to our world a bit more compassion.

Dr. Phil Hunsberger, Senior Partner, Educational Equity Consultants

This is my daughter's first time submitting her writing outside her school. It's very encouraging to her. She loves reading and writing. I believe this experience will have a great impact on her.

Daniel Liu, Parent; New Jersey, USA

When I showed my student his illustration in the book, the whole class gave him an ovation. Thanks so very much for providing him with this opportunity to succeed.

Clayvon Wesley, Teacher; Missouri, USA

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

Publication of our daughter's story is special to us for so many reasons. . . . Both my mother and grandmother passed away a few years ago. Growing up, I heard this story countless times from my grandmother. It's wonderful seeing that story told through my daughter's words.

Andrea Rominger, Parent; Alabama, USA

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

The Reading Tub™, www.TheReadingTub.com

The Grannie Annie provides the perfect opportunity for students to start asking questions about their families' past—not just the facts, but the stories. Then as they write, students begin to understand how *telling a story* differs from *writing a biography of facts*.

Mark Futrell, Teacher; North Carolina, USA

Year after year, my fifth-grade students are eager and excited to submit their work to The Grannie Annie. The experience of submitting a manuscript—with the hope of publishing—gives newfound meaning to their learning. The students stand taller when they become cognizant that the world is benefiting from their contribution.

Rebecca Friedman, Teacher; Maryland, USA

Orion's writing a family story was extremely important to his grandmother, who had a serious illness. When he called her to tell her that his story was going to be published, she was as happy as anyone had seen her in months. She read the story to anyone who would listen. I can't even begin to tell you the positive impact that this has had on our family.

Andrew Jones, Parent; Pennsylvania, USA

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

My students were so excited to write their family stories! Since the stories were written during our immigration unit, the students had even more reason to ask their families questions. The stories really enriched our classroom discussions and helped the students to connect to the concepts being taught.

Amy Del Coro, Teacher; New Jersey, USA

Since my mother died recently, I have been cleaning out her house and going through her things and wondering, *Who made this quilt? Who's in this old photo?* Trying to remember the family stories that she told me has really driven home the need to preserve family history. It is so wonderful that The Grannie Annie encourages this continuity of memories.

Beverly Miller, Teacher; Alabama, 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"; Georgia, 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

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*

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*

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

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

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.

Florrie Binford Kichler, Patria Press, www.PatriaPress.com

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

The thrill of holding a book with my story in it is a feeling that can never be matched.

Aaron Schnoor, Author, *Grannie Annie*, Vols. 5, 6, and 7;
Grannie Annie Selection Committee, 2014 and 2015; North Carolina, USA

Our son’s *oma* is overwhelmed that her “story” is in print in *Grannie Annie*. . . . 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*

The Grannie Annie Order Form

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The Grannie Annie Family Story Celebration

Young People Learning and Sharing Family Stories

The Grannie Annie invites students everywhere to discover and share stories from their family's history, and publishes collections of their work. The Grannie Annie experience leads young people to strengthen family and community bonds, encounter history in a personal way, and polish their writing skills.

“When young people participate in The Grannie Annie and discover, and then reflect upon, their family's stories and the family stories of others, the experience can create in each of these young authors an enhanced sense of appreciation, understanding, and “connection.” Thank you to The Grannie Annie for giving our communities young people who will see our diversity as an asset rather than a deficit, will recognize the sameness even in our differences, and will bring to our world a bit more compassion.”

—Dr. Phil Hunsberger, Senior Partner
Educational Equity Consultants

This is my daughter's first time submitting her writing outside her school. It's very encouraging to her. She loves reading and writing. I believe this experience will have a great impact on her.

—Daniel Liu, Parent; New Jersey, USA

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