

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
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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.

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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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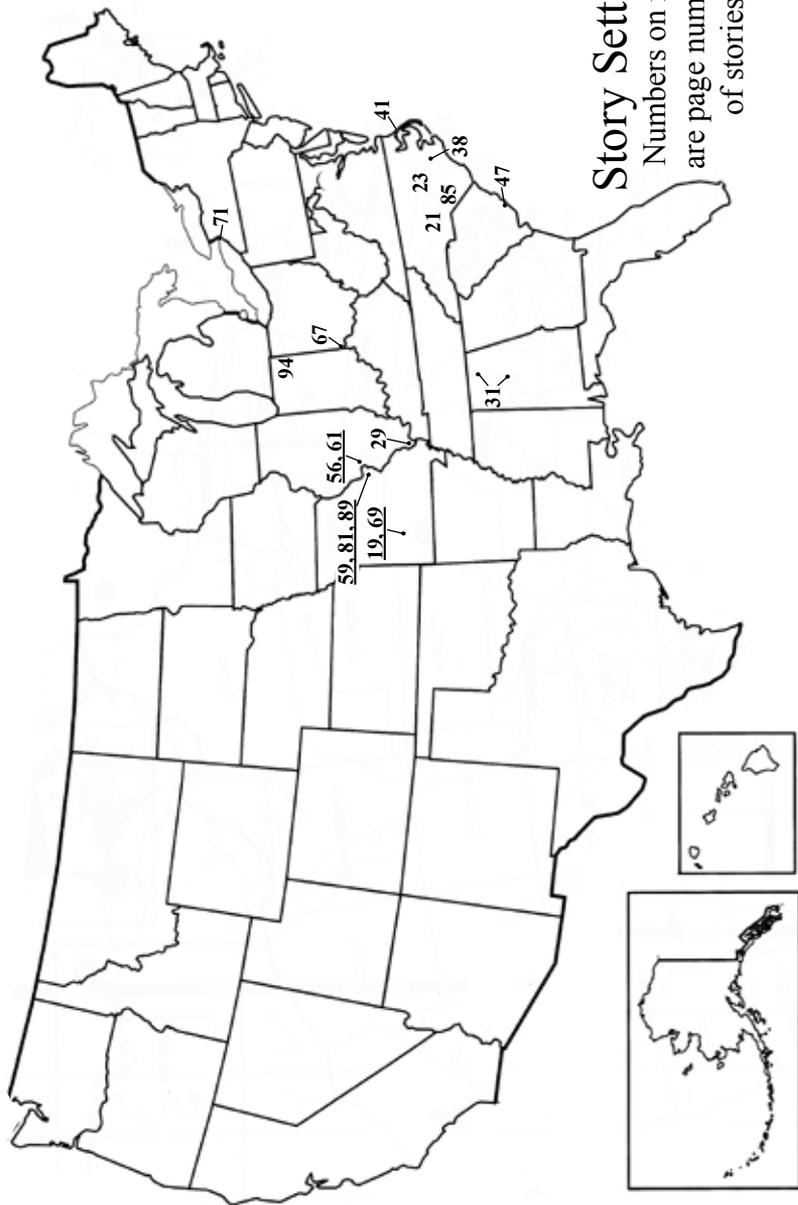
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Story Settings
Numbers on map
are page numbers
of stories



Story Settings

Numbers on map
are page numbers
of stories

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 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.

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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Sarah Frances Bailey • Cathy Baker • Jayden Baker
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Ava Bidner • Mia Biermann • Christopher D. Bishop • Jeff Bland
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Natalie Christiano • Jelani Christmas • Daniel Clear
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 Drew Hollman • Ava Hollmann • Dresden Holmes
 Patrick Horstman • Emily Howell • Gitty Howitt • Kami Howse
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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

Grannie Annie, Vol. 10 – Paperback edition
\$14.95 each for 1–4 copies; \$10 each for 5 or more;
\$10 each for participating families and teachers

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and can be sent by fax (toll free) to 888-641-5353.



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

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—Daniel Liu, Parent; New Jersey, USA

