

The Story and history of my life and youth
The Autobiography of John Roetman

The earliest I can remmember (sic) was when I went to kindergarden at Colbrook School. The only outstanding event was that I had sore eyes which watered all the time. My father was a habitual drunk which made us poor. He was brutal at times and very kind at other times. He was a paper hanger by trade and worked only enough to get money for booze. My mother was very small and timid. She was scared to death of my father. We were always on the move as he never paid the rent. We lived in the North end of G.R. but as time passed we migrated south of the city. I remember going with my dad to work when he had a job as a watchman. All he had to do was keep his eye on a big pile of wood in a wood yard. It was so big it had begun to shift and was about to fall in the sidewalk. He had another job as watchman at the building of the new G.R. waterworks on Grand river at Colbrook St. We used to walk on planks out on the river to check things. At that time we lived on Taylor st, next to Colbrook Creek. I remember wading in the creek.

And my mother would send us to the corner store to buy 10¢ worth of apple butter. It came in bulk in a big wooden keg and the grocer put it in thin wooden tray. We also had to eat meat grease on our bread so the apple butter was a treat. I also remember getting a job with a husker (huckster) on a horse & wagon. He sold all kinds of fruit & veg but I don't remember getting any pay. Guess I ate to many apples. I must of been 5 or 6 yrs old. We also lived on Mason St. which is now Bond Ave. I remmeber (sic) haveing (sic) a bro. Leonard. We both got scarlet fever he died but I survived. We had wooden sidewalks and was alway looking for pennies that fell down in them between the cracks. I remmeber (sic) my dad sending me to the back door of a saloon on the corner of Ottawa St. with a tin pail for 10¢ worth of beer. And how he used to sneak in a blind pig on Sunday. As time went on we moved on Mich. St. hill at Div. Ave. They tore that down so we went to N. Div school a few blocks away. I forgot to mention I had 3 bros beside myself and four sisters. There were Herman, Leonard, & Ernie and my self. I was the oldest boy. Then there was Helen, Gertrude, Lenora & Ruby. Helen was the oldest and Gertie was older than I. Herm was 5 yrs younger than I so I had to watch over him about that time I began to sell news papers on the st. I can still remember going in to the saloons on Campau St. which is now Monroe Ave. There were 15 or 20 barrells of whiskey along the wall. It was sold in bulk, bring your own bottle at that time the press building was on Pearl st. at the Pearl st. Bridge. It wasn't long before they moved to Sheldon & Monroe in there new bldg. I had many happy memories from there. they had a lunch counter in the basement where we could buy a sandwich for 3¢. The man that ran it was named Bill. He was real nice to us. They didn't intend to make a profit. And on Sunday afternoon we went to the Happy hour program in the upper floor of the press bldg. They also had a Press band. Where you could learn to play. If you had any talent and they also had a grade school for boys. My bro Herm was old enough then so joined the school. That gave him a chance to sell the noon edition of the Press on the streets. But Herm was still very young and I had to count his pennys for him. I remmenber (sic) living on Century ave. near the railroad tracks. We use to pick up coal off the tracks to burn to keep warm. My sister Helen got married when we lived on Century St. In the winter we use to slide down 4 st. hill on tobaggons. It was about a four block rides and rather dangerous. We also lived on second

st. off Grandville ave. I had to go to a Dr when we lived there with a huge abcess under my arm. They lanced it and I still have a scar. I went to 2nd Ave School at that time where I seemed to get most of my education. We still kept moving South and the last place I lived before I ran away was on Martha st. off Grandville Ave. I went to Hall st school at that time. I guess I was about 12 yrs old. I still had to go to schools stayed with a friend of my mother who we called Aunt Lena. My sister Gertie was already living with them as she worked at Brooks Candy factory on Ionia ave. Things were not pleasant there as Max Vogt her husband had TB or consumption as they called it then. I had switched to S. Div school by then and was selling papers shining shoes and carrying (sic) Grips down the Oak st Hill to the Union Depot. The st cars came down Div ave and stopped at Oak st. That made it a very nice place to sell papers and carry Grips. We had to fight to keep that corner as the other big bullies would try to run us off. There was a Mich Bakery half way down the Oak st hill where we bought day old bread and other things to eat. We used to wait for the bakery wagons to get in at nite and some times we snatched a pie or cake. It just came back to me that we also lived on Commerce st in the rear when I was real young. I had a boy friend named Perry that had long curly hair. He was about 5 yrs old. I also had a job in one other small bakery. I had to fill cream puff with a filling and got to eat what was left. I over done it and got real sick. I don't want to see another cr. puff to this day. I remmenber (sic) it snowed on the 4th of July while we lived there. I kept on selling papers on Div & Oak. There was a water pump halfway down the hill where everybody stopped for a drink. On Div ave at the head of Oak st was a small meat market run by a Henry Mc Cleary. He had a butcher by the name of Roy Huntington. Henry liked to hunt & fish and left his butcher alone to run things. Roy used to ask me to deliver some meat or groceries now & then. McCleary was divorced and lived upstairs over the market. As time went by I worked more and more at the market. And knowing I was on my own McCleary told me I could stay upstairs with him as he was gone most of the time. I left Aunt Lena's and lived there alone nites which was sometimes scary. I didn't get any pay because I was still going to school. I took care of his horse & wagon. We also had a sleigh and I remmenber (sic) driving way out Wealthy st near the car barns to deliver meat & groceries. Every Sat a man named Decker that lived on Wealthy & Giddings bought a qt of oysters. They were real scarce in those days but we had a dealer just across the way that sold them. The Decker home is still there which I see very often. When I first started to work I had to walk or ride my bike out Cherry st to Padoock ave. Thats where the barn was and where Henry lived before he got a divorce. He had a small daughter that liked to ride down to the store with me. And it was fun when we took the sleigh It was about 5 miles one way. As time went by I picked up the butcher business. I used to go out in the country and buy a flock of chickens bring them in and kill about 25 every week. We had a big wood burning kettle to heat the water in and strung up three chix (sic) at a time on a slip knot over the sewer. As soon as they were dead I dipped them in a kettle of hot water and began pulling the feathers. After the feathers were off I dipped them again in the hot water for a second & then threw them in a tub of cold running water. That plumped them up and they were left to cool. They were sold with the head & feet on, N.Y. style they called it. However we would gut them if they wanted us to. I learned to cure & smoke hams and had to skin calves as they were bought with the hides on. Also the pigs had to be split in half

We used to stop to water the horse at Madison & Cherry in a big store trough. The horse always knew he had to stop there. I can still see the horse drawn hacks lined up along Union Depot. There were very few cars at that time but soon the taxis came along and the drivers were making \$25 a week. A lot of money at that time. I wanted to be a driver but was too young. I also used to take the sleigh over to Aunt Lena's and take them all for a ride. She had a son Carl & one younger named Max. Three daughters Louise, Caroline & (Tootsie) Gertrude. They lived on the far end of Cherry st Hill west and we could look down at the old city market and the Grand River. There were piles of lumber stored up on the hill and we used to hunt Easter eggs in them which we were told the rabbits laid. (Later on the press used to act out the world series ball games on the big board out side the press. hundreds of people would watch and they also gave the election report on the Pres. election. Later they moved it inside where you could sit down and watch the game acted out on a big board. that ended when wireless radio came in.

Getting back to the time I left home on Martha st, I was 12 yrs old. My two younger sisters and my youngest bro Ernie were still living with my mother & father. Things were getting real bad and they finally put my father in a place to take the cure for alcohols. In fact he was in and out several times. It was then that my mother couldnot take care of the remaining kids and the welfare took over and had them adopted out. Before this time Herm who was 5 yrs younger or about 7 yr old was a real news boy often took Ernie with him to help. He also had to count Ernie's money and like I did always hid enough pennies under big stone so they would have enough to buy papers the next day. They knew it would be taken away from them if they took it home.

I must of have worked at the market for 2-3 yrs when Henry got real sick and died. they appointed an old mean man as administrator and he tryed to keep the market going but they finally sold out. The buyer was a Pollock named Pakke. He had a daughter that was sweet on me too. But I was to bashful to look at her. He moved the market over on the west side on Broadway & Fourth and he gave me a job there. But that only lasted a few weeks and he had to close it not enough business. Well, I always had another egg in my basket. There was a meat salesman that came in our market out at Reeds Lake. I went to see him and got a job. I had to go from door to door trying to get an order. I think he paid me \$5.00 a week and my room and board. Again I had daughter trouble. She was wild about me and let me know it. She would lie to her mother and say I wanted to take her over to the park But I was broke and the thought never entered my mine and I was still bashful. She often tryed to kiss me when we were out in the barn. Well that job fizzled out too no business. But I still had friends. I used to use the back house behind the market while we were still in business. One day while I was doing my job I spied my one and only thru a crack in the door. She lived upstairs on the corner and would come out to shake the rugs. I used to visit the back house real often but was too bashful to let her ever see me. Her father owned the meatmarket on the corner and they lived upstairs. Well when the Hilborn Market closed her father ask me to work for him. I got my room & board and \$7.00 a week. When we ate dinner I didn't dare to look up I was so bashful. Her mother was a wonderful women and she had 15 children, one more didn't make any difference. She took me under her wing like a mother hen. She cooked on a wood stove, boiled clothes and scrubbed them on an old scrubbing board. she Done my wash for 50 cents. I can still see the crock of pancake mix behind the stove. She had to keep a starter

in it to keep it working. All the kids slept on the other side of the bldg upstairs and the snow used to come right in under the windows on their bed. Well it wasn't too long and Hattie & I were going to church together. She had a girl chum & I had a boy pal that went with her to church. One day while in church the minister said he didn't want any boys coming to church to steal his Christian girls. I figured he had our number so I didn't go any more. But the four of us still paled around together. We used to skate and go swimming in the Lake. Also we would go over to her chum's house. (Bernice was her name) She had an old phonograph that had O cylinder records. I can still hear it say (sung by Billy Murray)

As I understand my Dad came over from the Netherlands when he was 7 yrs old. I never heard him speak of his folks.. He lived with an aunt & uncle named DeVries. They lived in the north end on Sweet st and the uncle owned a lumber yard on Taylor st and my dad worked for him before he got married. I met the aunt several times. When my mother went to visit her. I think the Uncle was dead as I don't recall anything about him.

I think I worked at the Apsey market for about a year and business was so bad he couldn't afford to keep me.. But his oldest son (who was in the milk business told me where I could get a job down near the car barns. It was a real up to date grocery store, tower's grocery store, and I got the job right away. We were about the only store that sold iceberg hed (sic) lett. from Calif. I used to trim it by the case. I think I got \$9.00 a week to start and had to open at 6 A.M.. Mr. Towers the boss, went to the city market four or five times a week early in the morning and would get back with a load of fresh veg about 6:30 A.M. We had another older clerk and a delivery boy. We were about the only one's that delivered with a car. I had to unload the truck and trim the window everything went in the window and we had some real nice displays of fruit & veg. We were always the first with fresh strawberries, melons. I remember a sign I made. It read (We got the berries). It got a laugh besides selling the berries.

I remember Hattie used to walk down to our store 3 miles and wait for me to get through work. Then I would ride her home on the handlebars of my bike. I had got a new place to board & room in a nice house on Bagley ave just behind her home and I now had a steady job but was still anxious to make more moves. By that time Hattie got a job at the park in a hamburg stand. I remember she was making \$2 a week more than I was. After a few years I learned to drive the overland truck at the grocery store. I knew the driver was going to get married and I wanted his job. I finally bought him out. That is I gave him my clarinet and some other things for his job. He gave me a pistol which I still have and he left and got a job somewhere else. That was about 1916- I took over his job and got \$15 a week. All this time Herm was having a rough time too so I got him to come & stay with me at Mrs. Clark's on Bagley ave. I also got him a job at Towers grocery but I had more trouble because he wet the bed. He had weak kidneys or something and Mrs. Clark was real mad said he had to leave. In the meantime I taught him to drive the truck. He liked that as there were few people who could drive in those days. It payed off later on when World War One came along.

By that time I was about 20 yrs old and Hattie & I were very much in love. But marriage was out of the question by the time I paid my board & room there was nothing left. I remember how Hattie and I would go down town and walk all over trying to find a

silent movie that only cost 10 cents. Before Herm had come to live with me he had stayed with our Aunt Libby and Uncle Ernie. Uncle Ernie was my mother's brother. He (Herm) had escaped getting adopted out that way and they saw to it that he went to school. He graduated from South High. By now I had worked for Towers Grocery for 5 yrs and World War One was in full force and I was eligible. I knew they would get me in the draft so I volunteer to go thru to draft board because I heard they were sending a special group down to Georgia to train in the Med.Dept. Herm got the job in the truck and I had to leave on March 5, 1918. Mr. Towers & his wife had Hattie and me over for supper before I left. We wanted to get married but it was impossible. I was only 20 but would be 21 the next month in April. Hattie saw me off at the Union Depot and I never saw so much sobbing in my life from the boys' mothers & sweethearts. We traveled about two days and was giving box lunches along the way by the Red Cross. there was a nice group of boys in our car and they tried to laugh & joke as we went along. We arrived in Georgia OK. and was marched a few miles to camp. It was In a Confederate cemetery called Chickamuga Park. We had large tents that slept four men. It was March and the weather was still cold especially at nite. I thought I would freeze. They began to give us shots and we got seven in a short time. My arm swelled and I was burning up with fever. That kept me warm at night. We had to walk two miles to the mess hall and the latrine was up in the woods. They rigged up a cold shower for us and I remember on day I didn't make it back from the mess hall in time and had to take a cold shower & change my clothes. That Made me late for drill and they put me on KP (kitchen police). We stayed at this post for 6 months or until the next July. Many things happened and we were given passes to visit Chattanooga and Lookout Mt. Hattie had met a girl friend of a boy in my company and they decided to come down to visit us before we left for over seas. Hattie had never been on a train before and was real scared. The porter wanted to carry her grip but she wouldn't let go and kept asking where she was and when she would get there. Some of the other boys had ask there wives & girlfriend down too so we had a big dinner for them in the mess Hall. It really was funny the way the other fellows went way-out to cook the dinner and make things nice for them. They got a room together in Chattanooga at a lady's named Mrs. Green. Hattie stayed with Mable Webster who was married to Ralph Webster or (Red Webster as we called him and a girl named Helen Who later married Geo Gerling. Mable lived in Grand Haven & Helen in Nunica, Mich. We wanted to get married while she was down there but the officers said no at that time. So many girls were marrying the service men expecting to get there insurance \$50,000 if they got killed. I knew that was not the case with Hattie but I didn't like the idea of leaving her a widow either. On July 8, 1918 we left for over seas and were sent to Camp Marrit New Jersey. From there we got passes and saw the sights of NY and Coney Island. They let us ride the buses free. We never knew when or where we were going but in a short time we were on a tug that took us out to the big Battle Ship. the Louisian. We were on the ocean for 13 days and arrived in Brest, France. I remember how we were guarded by a convoy of six other ships and submarines and had many drills and scares while aboard. The seas got very ruff (sic) at times. After we arrived in France we were told that we were going to a rest camp. Well the first night that camp turned out to be a corn field. The corn ha had been cut so we just slept in the rows between the stalks. The next day we marched again and finaly were put in French box cars. 40 men & 10 horses. We rode for three

days and the weather so cold & rainy. I remember I swiped a stove out of a watchman shanty and we put it in the box car and made a fire. We arrived in Toul France and made our headquarters in Barns or old buildings. We kept moving from one town to another getting closer to the front all the time. One day most of us got promotions and I was made a wagner (driver) then. I think there were 14 of us that were sent to Marsailles, France to drive ambulances back to the Front. All this time the war was getting real close. I was chosen by the Capt. to lead the convoy with him back to the front. By then most of the boys were weary and were doing a lot of drinking. I didn't drink or smoke and the Capt knew he could rely on me on the way back. The Capt. put the convoy up for the nite about 20 miles from a town. Then my orderly and I got to take him into town. He got us passes and we stayed in a nice room. The mattress was full of feathers. My orderly & I went out to see the town and thought we would bring the boys back a bottle. We bought a bottle of port wine. After we go to our room we decided to take a sip. We took one sip after another and before long it was gone, so were we. The next morning I was so sick I could hardly see. I heaved & heaved. We were supposed to meet the Capt at 9 AM and I was scared he would catch on. I munched on hard tack and got going OK. I don't think the Capt ever knew it. From then on we got to go several places and big towns. In fact the officers & Capt faked orders to go to Paris. there were only seven of us boys that got to go to Paris and I led the way. We drove on the left side of the street and I got shaky at times because I hadn't been driving long. We all got passes to go to the ball game & theater. But we all found better places to go. The boys wanted to see some peep shows and mess around with the girls. That wasn't too hard as you couldn't walk down the st close to a building and a girl would grab you into a hallway and yell ?? musheur (sic). I was still a scared and bashful boy so didn't get carried away. Well after we got back to the front things really got bad. I drove for seven days & nites with just a few cat naps bringing the wounded boys back from the trenches. I slept in the ambulance on a litter at nite and I remember a wounded German that I brought back. He was scared to death and kept trying to tell me not to kill him. Then there were others that begged to be killed. there was a terrible lot of suffering as we could only travel from the trenches to a first aid field sta. then back a few miles to another field hosp in a tent. If they made it to there we went on to the base Hospital maybe 10 miles behind the lines. We use to like to get to a base hosp and they always gave us a good meal. I remember there was a field Hosp high on a steep hill the road was dangerous and steep, none of the boys wanted to go up there because of the smell but we got orders to evacuate some patients so I went up and got them. On the way down all I could do was to keep on the road the brakes would not hold and the shells were bursting all around me so I just let her go. Later on I got a letter of Merit for that deed from the comanding officer. I still wonder how I ever made it. The Lord must of been with me that day. I always carried a small Bible in my shirt pocket. That an old lady friend give me before I left. Her name was Mrs. Rose. We had lots of laughs at things that happened like when one of the boys was on the Latrine and a shell blew it all to Hell. He survived but came running and yelling. I see'd everything. The war finally came to an end on Nov. 11th 1918. But there was still a lot of work to be done. We celebrated by taking up a collection of \$21.00 and bought wine however there were 120 men in our Co. to share it with. One time we bought 5 Ducks and the cook made Duck Soup for 120 men. I was sent up to Esch (sic) Germany with the Army of

Occupation. It was just outside of Metz which was in no man's land on the time. All I had to do was carry the sick or wounded in my ambulance if that should occur. I got to see some of Germany that way and we soon were given our orders to fall back. This took several weeks and we fell back from town to town. What a good feeling it was when we finally got back on the boat. However they wouldn't let up on the drilling and guard duty. Even had to guard stuff on the deck. We were eleven days coming back. We arrived in New Port News Va. and I will never forget the faces of the little children that followed us as we marched along. I felt like the Pied Piper all the children in France were in rags or had been wounded some way or another. We often had small boys as mascot around the camp. They were orphans and had no place to go with there mangled bodies Some of the officers did get to adopt some. From New Port News we went by train to Camp Custer, Mich. We were only one day getting mustered out and getting our backpay. I got around \$300. The first thing we did was to head for a Chinese Restuarnt (sic) for Chop Suey. There was four of my buddies Ray Hoffer from GR; Red (Ralph) Webbster from Grand Haven, Geo Gerling from Nunica Mich and Elmer Short from Bear Lake Mich. We could never find Elmer and there was quite a joke about it. It got to be a pass word (where's Elmer) Red Webbster has passed away and my best buddie Elmer Short. We had many pleasant times visiting each other after we were married. I was mustered out on July 8, 1919 and came back to East G.R. I stayed at Hatties home for a while and got a job right away. Hatties bro John the milk man wanted me to work for him. Tower's Grocery wanted me back but would only pay \$17 a week. John offered me \$21 and 3 cents commission on every dollar I took in. So I took the job I had to get up at 2-3 AM and ride my bike about 3 miles to the barn. I drove a old horse and milk wagon and delivered milk from door to door. Seven days a week. All kinds of weather. Hattie & I decided to get married and were wed Dec 6, 1919. We rented a house in E.G.R with a hard coal stove and an outdoor back house \$15 a month Hattie had got a job downtown in a Drug store. My buddie Red Webster and his wife Mable stood up for us. We were wed in our home and all I could give the minister was \$2.00. I didn't have enough money to buy a diamon (sic) ring so bought a pearl ring. Twenty years later I did buy her a diamon (sic). We lived at this place for six months and then we got a chance to buy a house on Wilcox Park Dr near the barn Hatties Bro John bought the house for cash and then sold it to us on a contract with only \$300 down. All he wanted us to do was pay the interest 6% but I couldn't see that and we payed him every penny we could every six months. It took us 12 years to pay \$3,700 and interest. In the meantime our daughter Betty was born July 8, 1920. She was born at home and I've put the bed in the front room where things would be handy. We had the doctor spoke for and I had learned a bit about what to do before the Dr came. Well here it was in the middle of the night when Hattie began to get pains. We didn't have a phone. So I got my bike and rode up to the car barns about two miles away. called the Dr and hurried back just in time. The baby was coming and was completely out before the Dr. came. I was busy boiling water and the Dr gave me hell because I put my finger in it. Well he said we had done a good job and only charged me \$15.00. It was supposed to be \$25. I tried to get Hatties Mother but she had no way of getting there so I think we hired a lady to take care of things. I still had to stay on the job and I held it for nine years. during this time Eleanor was born at home and I can't even remember who the Dr. was. Then along came Mary Ann almost on my Birthday. But

they changed the time at 12 PM so she was born on May 1st at 1 AM fast time. During this time my bro Herm had married and I remember him stopping me the morning Mary was born and said they had a baby boy but it turned out to be a girl. The only one he ever had. Herm had a good job and was making out real good. He bought a house on Crescent St. and got it payed for. Later on he built a new home on Maryfair Dr NE where his wife still lives. Herm passed away Ten years ago and his wife remarried.

Well, we lived on Wilcox Park Dr for 23 years and an awfull lot has happened. As I said earlier my younger Bro & sister were adopted out and I was anxous (sic) to find out where they were. I wrote to Coldwater for information and was told they could not reveal there whereabouts but would forward my letter to the foster parents. By this time Ernie was in his teens I gave them all the information they wanted about me and one day to my surprise they looked me up. They lived on a farm in Allegan and wanted to raise a boy to help on the farm. From then on we visited back and forth and it so happened that Ernie knew where Lenora was so we found her and she also had the whereabouts of Ruby. Lenora was in Adriane and Ruby in Coopersville just 15 miles away. She had been adopted by an old maid who wasn't too sure she wanted us to see her. However things turned out OK. By this time Betty was going to nursing school and by 1940 was a R.N. Ruby had followed the same course and is a RN too. The same year Betty married. Eleanor had an office job and Mary Ann worked for the Phone Co. After 23 years on Wilcox Park we decided to sell as we had a chance to buy a bigger and better home. We sold for \$4,900 and bought the newer place for the same amount cash. We sold the old house to St. Thomas Church as they had built next to us and it was a very desirable property for them. Well we lived on Carlton Ave for 10 more yrs. During this time Susie was born 13 yrs after Mary Ann. She was the only one to be born in a hospital and got spoiled from the start. But she was a blessing to us as it kept Hattie on her toes. Beside we rented out tourist rooms and one yr made \$300. As time went on Eleanor and Mary Ann had both been married. Eleanor moved to Muskegon where she had a bad time making ends meet. Her daughter Susie and son John were born there. Mary Ann lived in G.R. for a while and had two sons Kenny & Donnie and a girl Linda. They bought a house in Grandville and in later yrs build a beautiful new house in Grandville. Eleanor and her husband Russ had moved to Detroit where he got a fairly good job. However Russ was a drifter always looking for something better, but wanted to start at the top. They finally moved to Tampa Fla where he did land a good job as a crack salesman. I remember he got mad because they couldn't fill his orders. He had gotten all the Disney World business. We made a trip to Fla every winter to see them for a week or two. One year we took Susie who was about 10-12 yrs old down to Mexico. My Army buddy Elmer was down there so we went to visit him. Susie had a lot of fun but we all got sick. Each yr we went back to Fla to see Eleanor. They had bought a nice home in Temple Terrace.

To get back to my job after 9 yrs on the milk wagon and John sold out. he got us a job with the G.R. Creamery but I only worked 6 weeks & quit. We had two men to each truck and what a bunch of crooks they were. By this time Hattie's two bro were doing fairly well in the market & offered me a job which I took \$35 a week. But no nites or Sundays. I got back in the Butcher business and worked there several yrs. Finally the chains drove them out and I got a job at Norwood Foods. Where I learned a lot about the

meat business. I worked there for 11 yrs when I retired at 65. I worked part time in a couple other markets.

By this time we had sold our home on Carlton Ave for \$11,000. We bought a rather new bungalow on Richard Dr in E.G.R. We paid \$14,000 for it but got talked into taking over the mortgage. We didn't know at the time but found out it was a 30 yr mortgage and we would have to pay a penalty of 1% to pay it up. It wasn't long before we were paying \$50 and month to live in our own home. Hattie was very disappointed and we finally paid the mortgage up. She still was not happy with the house and her health began to fail. So we sold again for just what we paid and bought another on Boston Ave in GR. I think we paid \$12,500 for that. It was a real homey house but had the bath & 3 BD up & Hattie got so she couldn't make it up & down the stairs, so we sold again for \$13,500. We found a nice bungalow with the BR-bath all on one floor for \$15,000. We paid cash for it as we had some money in the Bank. That was on Belfast where I still live after 16 years. Hattie & I still made our trip to Fla each winter & took Susie along until she got married. she now has two boys and a girl and live in GR. Hattie's health began to fail more & more. Each yr while in Fla she had a checkup in the hospital and they were not sure about anything but they thought she had Parkinsons (sic) disease & sugar dibe. Finally in 1969 she got so bad she had to use a wheel chair and could not stand alone. We took her to the Hosp again and found out she had cancer of the bowels & throat. Our only hope was to operate but she was too far gone to take it. She kept alive for about 20 days in a nursing home. We flew her body home as we had a burying lot in GR. I carried on alone for the last five years. I rented my home in the winter and came south in Nov. Russ, Eleanor & I drove home in my Chevy. It was March and still cold. When we reached Atlanta the clutch burned out and we had to put up in a motel while it was getting fixed. We had a bad time finding anybody to fix it as it was Sunday but the garage man took it apart at night and for another clutch plate the next morning but it was noon before we got started home. However we got back in time. Since that time I have spent my winters in Fla each year staying about an extra month. Of course I have had a few love affairs or flings might call them because at my age it only amounts to vacant love. However my good friend Mary had been a real pal to me. We have had many trips together including one to Nassau in the Bahamas. We get along very nice together and never quarrel or had any harsh words. We would marry if things were different like family affairs & living on SS and pension which she might lose. So I am going back to Mich and see what another year may bring. This year had been the nicest one I can ever remember.

During our married life we often went out to some lake in the summer. We rented a cottage first for \$50.00 a month. The party wanted to sell it for \$500 and would give us credit for the \$50 rent. We only had to pay \$25 a month which was not easy. After a few years we for a chance to sell for \$1000. We sold. But we liked cottage & fishing so we found another cottage at Little White Fish Lake. It was a dandy, which we rented for a while. We finally bought it for \$3,000. I went in 50-50 with my bro Ernie who lived in Pa. but liked to visit us in the summer. We kept that a few years and then sold it for nearly \$7,000 which we split. Well I still was not happy without a cottage and got a chance to buy the one next door for \$2,700. I fixed that up and liked it very much but again Hattie felt it was too much work and we didn't get to much time to enjoy it as I was

working full time. So again I sold and got \$6,800 for it. It is now worth \$15,000. We used that money to get a nicer home each time so came out OK.

Mary & I have taken trips up north several times. We stop to see Hattie's bro and have been over to Canada. We also have been to Penn in the mts. Last year we went to Washington DC and over to Arlington, Va Where I had a nefew (sic) who showed us the town. We also visited Penn State College.

Two years ago when I came to Fla I stayed with my daughter for a few weeks.. Then I got a chance to rent a one BR trailer across the st from her. \$100 a month. In the meantime my Bro Ernie and his wife Isabel wanted me to find them a place to stay as they had been to Fla before and had Fla sand in there shoes. So they came down and lived with me for a month. Then we got a chance to buy the trailer. It wasn't much but had a nice fenced in yard, 100 X 70. The man wanted \$6,000 for it. Ernie wanted to get in on it 50-50 so we offered the owner \$4,000 cash. He took it. We made it do for that year but later turned the trailer in on a nice 72 mobile home. It has 2 BR, 1 1/2 bath, LR, kit & Dining R. I have my own bed room 12 X 15 with a full size bed. My own Toilet & Bath and Vanity. Wall to wall carpet, Bay windows. We have central air & heat. And Ernie had their BR and full bath on the rear end of the trailer. Isabel does the cooking & housework while we keep busy outdoors. We have added a screened in Varanda (sic) and a car port and intend to build another car port next yr. We might improve the yard 100% planting flowers, trees & shrubs. We had a grapefruit tree, 2 lemon trees a tangelo a marcus orange a navel orange and two other orange trees. We have a avaacoto (sic) tree & a Jap plum tree besides we built cement porches and stps & sidewalks. All this may sound wonderful and it had kept me busy so that I had little time to think of the past. Some how I am still a lonesome soul and there is still something missing in my heart with my hearing loss. I can not hear the TV unless it is on loud which disturbs others so I try to live in a world of my own. I don't mix with the neighbors as I feel they don't want to bother with me at my age and I don't feel too much at home here even if it is half mine, so I plan to go back home in Mich in another month as my grand daughter will be giving up my home there.

My daughter Eleanor had planned to get married in June and had moved from across the st. I have been busy helping her get her new home fixed up.

In a few days I will be 78 yrs old. I am in good health and quite spry. I ride a bike every day and I love to work. I can't decide if I should sell my home in GR or try to rent it. I will have to live alone and will miss Isabel's home cooking but I have done it before and I still have three daughters who will keep and eye on me. If I make it I will be back next winter as I don't like that dam (sic) cold weather But I don't like to be a pest and depend on some one to take care of me. It ain't just right without some one to love you and care. Like the song says: You ain't nobody till somebody loves you. See you next year.

Pop.