

The following is a transcription of Mom's entries into a book meant for us children to read. The format is questions posed to Mom by the month and she responded in her own words. I have transcribed the entries verbatim without changing anything except adding periods at the end of the sentences. The book was given to Mom from Aunt Patty in May 2001.

A Family Legacy for Your Children

Reflections from a Mother's Heart

Karen Christopher – May 2001 and updated through 2006.

What are your favorite?

Flower: Begonias, roses and peonies **Perfume:** Cachet **Color:** blue-green **Hymn:** "In the Garden"

Author: Maeve Binchy, John Grisham, Anne Tyler **Bible Verse:** Matthew **Dessert:** Chocolate

Vacation Spot: Northern Michigan **Type of Food:** Steak, salad, baked potato **Sport:** Baseball

Leisure Activity: Reading, opera, doll collecting, politics, writing

January

What was your favorite pastime as a child? Did you prefer it alone or with someone else?

One of my favorite pastimes as a child was playing dolls and paper dolls with my sister. We wouldn't play paperdolls with anyone else but each other. We played paperdolls till we were eleven or twelve years old. We both had imaginations.

My sister and I also enjoyed riding our bikes a lot and hiking. We spent many afternoons at the beach every summer and loved to swim and be in the sun. My sister and I also loved to play games and still do.

I loved to read by the time I was nine or ten and it has been a lifetime enjoyment.

Who gave you your name and why? Did you have a family nickname? How did you get it?

My parents named me Karen because of my Norwegian grandmother.

I was named Dayle after a dear friend of my parents Dayle Hall, he died the August before I was born. He drowned on his honeymoon off the shore in Bridgman. He was 29 years old. Dayle Hall is buried in the old section of the Bridgman cemetery and I visited his grave several times.

I always loved my middle name and named my daughter Dayle when she was born in July 1955.

My dad called me "Babe" my mom called me "Kdy Doody" after my initials. Patty still calls me "Doody" sometimes.

Describe your childhood bedroom. What was the view from your window?

My sister and I shared a bedroom. We had twin beds and a dresser and dressing table with a mirror. We had a big closet you could walk into. We used to play in there when we were really little.

We could see my grandmother's house out the window.

We had chenille bedspreads, rose and tan and white design. We had pictures of sleeping babies over our beds. The ceiling light was shaped like a captains wheel. The walls were tan with grooves in them.

Were you baptized or dedicated as an infant? If so, where and by whom?

I was baptized when I was sixteen years old at St. Joseph Baptist Church at their baptistry. I was expecting Dayle at the time. My husband was baptized at the same time. We went to my parents for dinner afterwards. My Mother and grandmother (Nana) attended the baptism. It was on a Sunday afternoon.

When did you first go to church? What are your earliest memories of church?

I started going to Sunday school when I was four or five years old at the Harbert Community Church. I loved Sunday school and I started staying for church on a regular basis when I was nine or ten years old.

I loved singing the hymns. It was a small white church with stained glass windows and a beautiful picture of Jesus over the Alter.

My friend Anita and I always sat together. We often attended evening services with Anita's mother Ester in the summer.

Where did your father go to work every day and what did he do?

My father was in the well and pump business. He drilled wells. Later he was a master electrician. He belong to the IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers).

He was working as an electrician at the Cook Nuclear Plant when he had a heart attack and died in October of 1971.

How did your mother spend her day? Did she have a job or do volunteer work outside the home?

My mother didn't work outside the home she worked very hard at home. The house was always clean and neat. She cooked good meals and made the most delicious pies.

She devoted herself to her husband and her children (my sister and I).

She went to the "Mothers and Others Club" at school.

Sometimes in the spring she would help my grandmother clean houses and get them ready for the summer people my grandmother worked for.

Describe what the family living room looked like when you were a child.

When I was really small our living room was also the dining room. We had a table and chair set for my sister and I that was by the front windows. There was a couch and a chair. The swirl plastic was painted teal. The front door came into the room. There was an arch into the kitchen. When I was ten my parents added on to the house, a very large living room with a big fireplace. We had a picture window to the front, hard wood floors, with pale rose rugs, two davenports and 4 overstuffed chairs, a desk and built-in bookshelves. The walls were pale green plaster.

What kind of prayer did you say before you went to sleep? Who taught you how to pray it?

"Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray thee Lord my soul to take. God bless Mommy and Daddy and Patty and Nana & Rusty"

My mother taught us this prayer and would listen to our prayers when we were little.

I still include this little prayer when I say my prayers at night.

Oh yes, Rusty was my dog, a cocker spaniel.

Where was your childhood home located? Did you enjoy living there?

Harbert, Michigan. A very small town right near Lake Michigan. I loved Harbert. We lived about ¼ mile from the lake.

Harbert had a school, a post office, 2 grocery stores, two gas stations, a Swedish bakery and a restaurant and a church.

It was a summer resort area for people coming out from Chicago.

Describe your grandparents' houses. Did you visit them often? Why or why not?

My grandmother "Nana" lived right next door until I was twelve and we moved. We spent a lot of time with Nana, my Mother's Mother, she was a very special person in my life.

She had a large two story house she had built in 1930. It had four bedrooms, a sun porch, a large living room and dining room and small kitchen. She also had a two car garage with a high pitched roof. The trim was dark green. She had a front porch and back porch with seating. It was a very nice house.

List one special memory about each of your brothers and sisters.

My sister was always there and we did everything together when we were very young and even as teenagers we shared friends.

It is hard to chose one memory. The summer we got our sparkle plenty dolls and coloring books and had so much fun with them. Daddy bought them for us.

We had wonderful times riding our bicycles and one year rode down the "cat ladies hill." A very steep hill that was a thrill. It was near the Prairie Club, in Harbert.

All our days at the beach and hiking through the woods were very special.

Recall for me some of the most important lessons you have learned in life.

That family is the most important thing in life, other things pale in comparison.

That faith in God will always see you through. He is ever present and will never leave you along.

Try to have a job you love, that is more important than how much your earn.

Keep track of old friends, if you possibly can.

Cherish your children.

Have a sense of humor!

February

Share a memory of your grandparents or an older person you loved.

My grandmother (we called her Nana) was very special to us. She lived next door to us until I was 12 years old. She was fun to be with. She traveled with us to Florida and Texas several times and was a great companion. On our journeys.

We went to the Wisconsin Dells when I was about 9 yrs old. That was a great trip and Nana seemed to really enjoy it too.

She had a good sense of humor most of the time, even when we played tricks on her.

My Mother and Nana and us girls often went shopping together.

Who was the first person to talk to you about God? What effect did this have on you?

My taught us to pray

Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray thee Lord my soul to take. God Bless

My faith in God the love of Jesus Christ has made my life complete.

Mrs. Moss and Mrs. Shermack were wonderful Sunday school teachers and Rev. Ed Nelson and Rev. Fenner were both very inspirational too.

When did you become a Christian? How did your life change?

I gave my life to Christ when I was eleven years old. My faith has been the center of my life ever since. I can't imagine living without Jesus in my life. He makes all the difference. He is always with me and gives me courage and strength and faith. The peace that passeth understanding comes from my belief in God. I believe in eternal life. I believe we will all be together someday at home with God.

Who gave you your first Bible and how old were you when you received it? How did it influence your life?

I think my parents gave me a new testament. I earned a white Bible in Sunday school one year. I also had a zipper Bible I earned by selling Bibles and Christian cards.

I always carried my Bible to Sunday school and church.

Describe a memorable Valentine you received.

My Dad bought my sister and I each a small heart shaped box of chocolates one year when I was six or seven.

I always loved Valentine's Day and still do. I have received many beautiful cards from my family and I always treasure them.

Bud bought me a lt. brown purse for Valentine's Day when we were dating. He brought me candy a few times when were married.

I still love sending cards to friends and family on Valentine's Day. I love Victorian style lacey cards.

How far did you have to travel to attend elementary, junior high, and high school, and how did you get there?

I could walk to grad school. It was only about three blocks from home. I took a school bus to junior and senior high school about seven miles to New Troy.

We had a choice of three jr. sr. high schools: Three Oaks, New Troy, or New Buffalo. I went to New Troy with my sister starting in 7th grade.

What scent or sound immediately takes you back to childhood? Describe the feeling it evokes.

Lilacs, my grandmother had lots of lilac bushes in her yard and I always loved the smell of lilacs.

Fresh baked apple pie also brings back memories of my Mother baking her wonderful apple pies, the best you could ever taste.

The smell of fresh squeezed lemons for the ice tea we always had for supper in the summer time.

Strawberries being mashed for strawberry shortcake.

Church bells and train whistles. Water lapping on the shore of Lake Michigan.

I love the scent of lavender.

What was your favorite meal when you were a child? What made it your favorite?

I loved my mother's potato salad because it was so good. Also, fried chicken, we had chicken almost every Sunday for dinner, with mashed potatoes and gravy and biscuits.

Corn on the cob in the summer was so good. I loved leftover meatloaf on sandwiches with Miracle Whip.

Tuna salad sandwiches with shoestring potatoes was a favorite for lunch or to take on a picnic.

My mother's Washington pie or chocolate pie were favorite desserts too.

What was the name of your favorite pet? Why was it your favorite?

Rust, my cocker spaniel. He was five years old when we got him. My father surprised us with him. He lived until he was eleven and it broke my heart when he died. I loved that dog so much!

He was a very friendly dog and he was like a member of the family.

I used to talk to Rusty when I was sad. He was a very affectionate dog and he loved to be hugged and petted.

We buried him in the rose garden. He was blind in one eye from a hunting accident but was a beautiful dog.

What chores did you have to do when growing up? Did you get an allowance? How much was it?

I got 25¢ a week in allowance. I helped my mother set the table and dry the dishes. We learned to make our beds and to dust. Sometimes we mowed the lawn as we got older.

We were always expected to hang up our clothes and to keep things picked up and put away where they belonged.

My mother was always reminding us to wipe your feet as we would come in the door.

Tell me about your first job.

I baby sat for different people mostly during the summer months. I was usually paid 35¢ an hr., some people paid 50¢ an hour.

The Krafts were very nice people and they had three nice children and a big house. They stayed out quite late, 1 or 2 a.m., and I used to feel spooky because the living room had lots of windows without any blind or curtains to draw.

I also babysat for a couple from Chicago in Shorewood Hills that would be gone all day come home and then go out til very late. They paid pretty good but the husband was always making inappropriate remarks to me about my beautiful eyes etc. He gave me the creeps!

Share a story about a severe winter storm.

The first winter I was a school bus driver, Jan. 1967, we had a major snow storm. The snow started falling around 8 a.m. and it snowed heavy all day. We ended up with about 27" of snow. The buses had a terrible time trying to get all the children home. It was stuck several times during that day. It was a huge challenge and I really rather enjoyed it. I didn't get home until after 8 p.m. that evening. My children walked a few blocks to school so they got safely home that afternoon, so did their dad.

Share your favorite dessert recipe.

Hot fudge sundaes, brownies, chocolate pie with graham cracker crust.

Homemade Toll House cookies:

3/4c lt. brown sugar
3/4c sugar
2 sticks real butter
1 teaspoon pure vanilla

Cream until very smooth. Add 2 beaten eggs. Sift 2 cups flour, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon baking soda. Gradually add to creamed mix add 12 oz Nestles semi-sweet morsels and 1 cup chopped pecans or walnuts. Bake at 350° until lt. golden brown.

March

Did the pastor or a visiting missionary ever come to your house for dinner or tea? Share on vivid experience.

Pastor Platt, a very elderly minister, visited with my mother just before I was going to be baptized. I was about ten years old and decided to wait. He was well meaning, but kind of scared little children. He didn't know how to talk to children and he was very old.

Our teacher, Mrs. Kaiser, came for dinner once and we were very excited to have her. I was probably six or seven then. She was a nice older lady.

Did you ever feel that God had a special calling on your life?

Yes, when I was eleven years old I felt called to be a social worker and help people. Many years later I went back to school and earned my degree in criminal justice so I could work with young people who needed help.

Matthew 25:40 was the verse that opened my heart to serve the Lord.

I spent thirteen years working with troubled young people and it was very rewarding, challenging work. I always felt it was what God wanted me to do.

When did you first start to pray? What do you remember about your early prayers?

I was very young and prayed a bedtime prayer. My prayers were very simple.

I pray a lot. Now since I am older my prayers are still simple thanking God for all of His blessings and asking Him for the courage and strength and faith I need.

Who was your favorite teacher? Why?

Mr. Lutkas in 7th grade because he encouraged and he made me feel like I could do anything I worked at.

Les Knickerbocker in college inspired me as a counselor. I learned a lot from him.

John Smietanka taught criminal law and criminal procedure and was a brilliant teacher. I had always loved the law and he had a gift for teaching. He never patronized his class. He always made you work harder.

Ralph Datema, also a wonderful teacher. He taught sociology and social problems. A great teacher, he made it fun.

Describe one of your favorite dress-up outfits as a child. On what occasions would you wear it?

I had a beautiful green velvet dress when I was seven or eight years old and I wore it for the Christmas program at church and it made me feel pretty and special.

When I graduated from eighth grade I had a beautiful light blue dress. It had a little bolero jacket. It was ice blue organdy over taffeta and was re-embroidered. It was a halter top with full skirt, ballerina length. Mom bought it for me in a very expensive dress shop and it was probably my favorite dress of all time. I have a picture of me wearing it.

Did you ever have a special hideaway or playhouse? What made it special?

I had a special tree that I would go to when I was in 5th grade. I was very intensely interested in Hopalong Cassidy. I watched all of his shows. He was on twice on Sundays, 1-2 pm and 6-7 pm. I could hardly bear to miss his show. I wore jeans and plaid blouses and shirts and I had a great pair of cowboy boots I got for my 11th birthday, and a cowboy hat and I would wear these when I went to sit in my tree. It was a sassafras tree and I loved to chew on the stems of the leaves. It was my club house no one else knew about.

What extracurricular activities were you involved in during high school? Why did you choose those activities?

Marching Band, Bible Club, Home Ec Style Show

I learned to twirl the baton when I was twelve. I had two friends who helped me practice, Elaine and Anita. Elaine and I decided to go out for band in the fall of 1953. We enjoyed it. We had dark green uniforms with short pleated skirts. Our jackets had gold buttons and trim, of course, we wore white majorette boots.

What was the hardest thing you ever had to do?

Take my mother to the nursing home. It was heartbreaking she was so brave, a very graceful lady.

Going to social services for financial help was very difficult. I was emotionally devastated after being left alone with four sons to provide for. Dayle was already married.

What crazy fads do you remember in grade school?

We had "slam" books, you wrote your name next to a number on the front page of a loose leaf notebook then next to that number all the way through the book you answered the question on the top of that page. All sorts of silly questions. It was fun. I think it was in fourth grade.

We had trading cards you bought them in packages, all different subjects and then traded them. I had quite a collection in 5th grade, then they were out as all fads eventually are.

When did you have your first date? Tell me about it.

I went bowling with Bob Branson. An older friend of Bob's drove us, we were only fourteen. I didn't care for bowling. It was a pretty boring date. It was in the afternoon, and we never went out again. My sister dated him for about a year and a half until she met and fell in love with his older brother Ted.

Bud was the older boy who drove us on my first date. I would end up falling in love with him and we married and had five wonderful children.

What do you remember about your first kiss?

It was sweet and special. I was thirteen.

My neighbor Daniel held hands with me when we were eight or nine. He was my mother's best friend Graces son. We were the same age.

What did you do to celebrate birthdays growing up?

We had cake and ice cream and we'd get a present or two. Usually just Nana and our family.

When I was ten I had a birthday party after school at my house and my mom bought a bakery cake all trimmed with fancy flowers and my name on it. I had about seven or eight friends over. It was fun. One of the presents I received was the book "Eight Cousins." I really loved that book. I had already read "Little Women." I remember we had a lot of cake left over and we enjoyed every bit.

Record here some gardening or decorating tips that you have found helpful:

Always buy things you really love and you will find a place for it. Use your own judgment as to what goes together. Read some magazines or watch decorating shows on TV for more ideas.

I love flowers and always try to plant some every year here at Rivers Run. They add so much to make a place so homey. Flowers cheer me up.

I have a beautiful doll collection that I love, my sister has given me so many of hers.

April

What were some of the most memorable books you read as a child? What made them memorable?

"Little Women," "Eight Cousins," the Nancy Drew books, the Ginny Gorden series, the Hardy Boys and Chip Hilton series. I read a lot. A whole series of books about American heroes like Kit Carson, Buffalo Bill etc.

I was an avid reader from about age eight or nine. I have always loved to read.

I liked books about young people my age, or a little older, and all kinds of western heroes, and sports stories, and mysteries.

"Seventeenth Summer" was a book I read as a young teen and I loved it. Also, "Blackboard Jungle," it became a movie.

What were your family finances like when you were growing up? How did that affect you?

When I was little and in grade school we were very comfortable financially. Later we were struggling. We didn't have a phone for instance. Things were pretty tight. My dad worked as an electrician and had to go where the work was or be laid off for a while. We had less money for clothes and very little money for luxuries. Most of all, I missed our home in Harbert. We sold it in 1951 but we made it ok and money isn't everything by a long shot. My parents were such good people.

Do you remember your first communion? What influence did it have on you and your family?

I was probably 12 years old at Harbert Church. It was very meaningful to me and I was so profoundly moved.

What mischievous childhood experiences do you remember? How did it affect you?

Myt sister and I painted on my grandmother's freshly painted garage. We put "Royal Canadian Headquarters" in blue paint on the side door going into the garage. We were going to paint on the front of the garage but decided not to. A good decision! My grandmother was not happy! We were pretending to be mounties and that our bikes were our horses. The lettering stayed on the side door for many years. It didn't show from the front.

What meaningful advice did you receive from an adult? What were the circumstances?

My mother used to say "cheer up better days are coming." Which seemed trite, but somehow was true.

My dad would say “keep a stiff upper lip babe.” It taught me to be stronger.

Also, always treat your friends nice, don’t just have one friend at a time, be kind to all.

As a teenager did you rebel or do things your parents wouldn’t have approved of? How do you feel about that now?

I didn’t really rebel. But I got married very young and of course was really too young to make such an important decision. I can’t regret it however because I have five wonderful children and nine wonderful grandchildren and two [written in later “now five”] wonderful great grandchildren who wouldn’t be here today.

I didn’t get married young because I wanted to leave home. I was very happy at home with my parents and sister. I was very much in love with Bud.

When did you first learn about sex? What was your reaction?

My mother told us a little, very little. I was very naïve. I did read some books our babysitter let us borrow, with our mother’s permission. Violet was in high school. I was eleven or twelve, they didn’t tell much.

Some things I talked about with my best friend Anita, but she was very sheltered also. My sister tried to protect my innocence by not telling me what mother had told her because my mother cried when she told Patty. Patty was about 12 or 13 and found it all quite disgusting after my mother’s attempt at informing her.

What things do you wish you had done in childhood or adolescence?

I was always very active as a child. But then in adolescence I wasn’t so active. Not many girls played sports. I wished I had gone out for basketball in a more serious way. I played a little and gave it up because I didn’t think it was very feminine.

I wish I had gone to college. Of course, I did get that chance in my thirties and I enjoyed it so much. I loved it, I could have gone on for years.

What are the things you are most glad you tried?

I am glad I went out for marching band. I enjoyed twirling the baton and it was fun and good discipline being in the band.

I was president of the Girls Missionary Guild at church and it was a wonderful experience for me. It gave me confidence in myself. I was 11 or 12 when I was first elected and served for two years.

Describe your mother in her best dress.

Mother had a beautiful turquoise print dress that looked so nice on her. It brought out the blue of her eyes. It was a skirt waist style dress and my father bought it for her for Christmas one year. She wore it off and on for several years and I always thought she looked really nice in it.

Over the years she had many pretty dresses. She always looked nice.

Describe your father in his work clothes.

My dad always looked nice. He was very particular about his appearance. He wore tan work shirts and pants. My mother ironed them just so. He always carried a fresh hankie usually with the initial A on them.

He wore an initial ring, black oval with a gold letter A on it. He always wore a watch. He wore tan or brown work boots. In the winter, he wore flannel or wool shirts.

What did your family like to do on weekends? Describe one particularly memorable event.

We often took drives on Sunday afternoon. Sometimes we would take a picnic lunch with us. Nana went with us sometimes. We would drive out into the country in late summer to get peaches for my mother to can or apples for pies.

One time we went to Posey Chapel with a picnic lunch. It was a little chapel on a hill with a cemetery. We could see for miles around. We looked at all the old markers and it was a nice memory. Nana was with us. I have returned there many times over the years.

Share one of your mother's best recipes or a recipe for one of your childhood dishes.

Mother made a wonderful pot roast in the pressure cooker. She browned a nice rump roast and then put salt and pepper on it and cooked it in the pressure cooker with onions until it was so tender. She would make wonderful gravy and serve it on mashed potatoes.

She always made wonderful fried chicken.

May

What toys did you like to play with? Why those particular toys?

My dolls. I always loved dolls and now of course I have a doll collection along with teddy bears.

I also loved to play games. We used to play Chinese checkers when I was little, with Mom and Dad and nana and of course my sister.

My sister and I loved playing paper dolls. We also liked to color and read. We loved riding our bikes as we got older. We played ball and croquet. We also loved playing with our wooden blocks.

How old were you when you understood that God loves you? Recall your early thoughts about God's love.

I was probably about seven or eight years old. I always went to Sunday school. Mrs. Shermack taught the girls class.

I grew up feeling God's love and I gave my life to Christ when I was eleven years old. It is the single most important thing in my life, my faith in God.

Describe a time in your life you feel God led you in an unusual way.

When I was eleven or twelve years old I felt called by God to do some kind of social work to help others. Later, when I went back to school I fulfilled this promise and worked with troubled teens for many years.

Matthew

Did you ever go to a dance? Tell me about it.

We went dancing at the House of David Gardens. It was an outdoor pavilion with tables and chairs and a nice size dance floor.

My sister was a good dancer. I never really learned anything but the two step.

What kind of car did your family drive? Were you proud of it or embarrassed by it? Why?

We had several cars and my dad had a truck when he was in the well and pump business. It said "Ackermans' Well and Pump Service – Call Lakeside 2179." It was a green pickup truck.

Earlier, when I was really little, he had a red truck and in the back of the truck built in cubby holes to put all of his fittings and pipe. We used to ride in the back of the truck (it was enclosed like a car) on little chairs and it smelled of grease from the fittings

We had a new gray Oldsmobile when I learned to drive. My dad taught me when I was eleven.

Did you attend family reunions? Share a memory of one.

I don't remember any real reunions. We did get together occasionally with family.

Did you go to church or community potlucks? How were they important to you and your family?

We attended potlucks at school a few times. It was fun seeing all the families from school.

We had fall festivals at school and everyone participated in setting up booths and having fun

Tell about someone who influenced your life profoundly.

Of course, my parents and my sister were a tremendous influence on my life. They were wonderful. Outside the family, George Anderson, the Transportation Director at the St. Joseph Public Schools, was a great influence on my life. He was my boss for nine years while I was a school bus driver. He was so patient and kind, so intelligent and bright. He was a pleasure to work for and he taught me so many things. He was a man of faith and he lived it. He used to say I was his "right hand man." I was the union representative for forty bus drivers for eight years and George was a great source of inspiration.

I drove a school bus 1966-1975.

Where did you go to grade school? Junior High? High School? Tell me about your best childhood friend.

I went to grade school in Harbert. It was two room brick school house with a fenced in playground. My best friend was Anita Erickson. We were very close friends from age seven to age 13.

I went to New Troy for junior high and my first two years of high school. I dropped out to get married in 1954.

In 1968, I got my GED after attending night classes for three months.

I also attended several different schools in Florida when we spent the winter there during 4th grade, 7th grade and 8th grade. Bradenton, Fort Myers and Lake Worth.

If you went to college or to a career training school, where did you go and why?

I went to Lake Michigan College when I was 36 years old. I studied very hard and was an honor student. I loved all my classes. I especially liked psychology, sociology and criminal law.

I had several excellent teachers that I will always remember. They were inspiring, Les Knickerbocker, Raph Datema and John Smietanka.

I received my associate degree in criminal justice in May of 1977. Bernie and I graduated the same day! Larry was attending LMC too. Both would go to Western Michigan University to become teachers.

Where did you live when you were going to college or developing a career? Describe an unforgettable experience from that time in your life.

I was living on Broad St in St. Joseph.

I remember getting accepted at Lake Michigan College and getting a Pell Grant. I was excited and thankful.

What were your youthful goals and ambitions for life? Which ones have you been able to fulfill?

I always wanted to do some kind of social work so when I went to college, years later, I got my degree in criminal justice with an emphasis on working with juvenile offenders.

I worked two years at the Link Crisis Center in St. Joseph. We did crisis counseling with troubled youth and I was the Activities Coordinator. I worked in juvenile detention at both Berrien County Juvenile Center (6 years), I was the Group Leader, and five years at the Allegan County Juvenile Center. I loved working with kids it was a very rewarding experience.

Share some insights from Scripture that have guided your spiritual journey:

Matthew 25:40

John 3:16

June

If you learned to play a musical instrument, tell me your memories of lessons, practice, and your music teacher. If not, what instrument did you want to play and why?

I took piano lessons for about a year when I was about ten years old. I liked it at first but then lost interest.

When I was in Junior High, I took baton lessons and learned to twirl the baton. I was in the New Troy High School Marching Band. My sister's best friend Elaine and I decided to go for band as twirlers (majorettes). We had a lot of fun that year. Mr. Menza was our band instructor and he was very nice. We marched in the Blossom Parade in 1954.

Our uniforms were green wool with gold braid trim, short pleated skirts, white boots.

What fashions were popular when you were in high school? Did you like them? Why or why not?

Stiff Crinoline Slips under full skirts were very much in style and I loved them. Sweaters with white collars underneath. I had navy, dark green, pastel blue, mint green and aqua sweaters and I liked wearing them. We wore white bucks and saddle shoes and ladies Levi's were all the rage in 1953. My father gave me the money (\$5.00) to go to Michigan City and buy my first pair. I went on the bus with my friend Anita and bought them at the Ladie's Shop, a nice clothing store. \$5.00 was quite a bit to pay back then.

How old were you when you met Dad and what attracted you to him?

I was fourteen and he had beautiful blue eyes.

When did you first know you wanted to marry him? What made you feel that way?

By the summer of 1954 I was very much in love with him. He was handsome and smart. He seemed to be very much in love with me.

Share a memory about the way he proposed to you.

We just seemed.

What did you wear on your wedding day?

I wore a turquoise dress with white collar and cuffs studded with rhinestones. It was an A line dress that buttoned down the middle. It had a peter pan collar and short sleeves. It was street length. I wore black suede high heels. I had a rhinestone barrette in my hair.

I changed into a new turquoise tweed jumper and plaid jacket to go away in. I wore a black velvet hat with it. My grandmother made this outfit for me and it was very nice. The jacket was a bolero length with a stand up collar. The jumper was A line style.

Tell me about your wedding day, from beginning to end.

I was up early. Mother and Nana went shopping in St. Joe for a new nightie and robe for me.

My Aunt Dena stopped by with a wedding gift, a beautiful light pastel blue blanket. Bud stopped to see me for a few minutes. I went to the church in the afternoon (right next door to us) and talked to the ladies preparing for the wedding reception. I saw the flowers (yellow mums and a fall bouquet)

I was ready before the rest of my family. We arrived five minutes before the ceremony. I was very excited and happy and a little nervous. It was a very nice ceremony. We really had fun at the reception. We had delicious food and cake.

Did your wedding ceremony include a special vow to each other? What was the significance of it?

Just that our rings stood for eternity

Where did you go on your honeymoon? Share one humorous incident.

To the Golden Door Motel, near Michigan City. It was a pretty new motel and we spent one night there. Aunt Patty (my sister) and her friend Bob went with us to see Marilyn Monroe in "How to Marry a Millionaire" the second night we were married.

We were excited about all our lovely wedding gifts so we returned home the next day after having lunch and going for a drive through Grand Beach. All our presents were at my house so we took them to the cottage in Bethany Beach where we lived the first year of our marriage.

What was your first house or apartment together like?

The cottage in Bethany Beach

Do you remember one of the meals you fixed after you were married? How has your cooking changed since then?

It has improved a lot. I made fried chicken and gravy and didn't know the gravy had to simmer and bubble.

I did know how to make tuna salad sandwiches, a favorite on Sunday nights when Uncle Ted was over.

Record here some travel tips or suggestion for fun-filled vacation:

Plan ahead, make lists, be organized, then relax and take lots of pictures.

July

Share a family tradition or memory from the Fourth of July.

One year my dad had bought fireworks in Kentucky on our way back from Florida (1949). He set them off at Harbert Beach. It was fun, a little scary because it was illegal.

Have you ever participated in a rally or demonstration? What was the cause? What were your feelings about it?

I wanted to participate in a Civil Rights march in St. Joseph at the courthouse in 1964 but didn't because there weren't any white people.

Who in your family served in the military and when? Do you have a special memory of that person?

My Uncle Chuck was a captain in the Army during World War II. He sent us books once from Africa. He looked handsome in his uniform.

My father was in the National Guard. I was too young to recall.

Did you learn to swim? How?

Yes, my father taught me how to swim in Lake Michigan. We loved going to the beach. My sister and I went often as we lived a quarter of a mile from the Lake.

It is one of my fondest childhood memories.

Tell me about your most memorable trip by plane, train, or ship.

My mother and sister and I came back from Dallas in Nov. 1953 by train. We came into Chicago and took the South Shore train to Michigan City and the bus to Sawyer. My dad stayed in Dallas to work that winter. We missed him a lot. That is when I met your dad and started dating him just before Christmas.

Did you ever travel abroad? How old were you and where did you go? Did you travel alone or with a group?

No. I've only been into Canada a few times. First, when we would go camping up north and a couple of times or more to see Niagara Falls when Aunt Patty was living in Buffalo.

Did your relatives come to visit in the summer or did you go to visit them? What are your memories of those visits?

We went to Dallas one summer to my Aunt Sal and Uncle Chuck's. We went to the Texas State Fair.

We went to Whitehall one summer with my dad's cousin Ronald and his family. He had a boat and we road in it.

We went up north two summers to my Aunt Mary and Uncle Bill's cabin (my dad's older sister). We had fun, saw a lot of deer.

How did you learn to drive? What was your first car like?

My dad taught me to drive when I was only eleven years old. We had a new Oldsmobile.

Did a tragedy ever strike your family? How were you affected?

When I was ten years old my Uncle Chuck's sister and brother-in-law were murdered in their home by a neighbor who was upset that they had sold their house to a racially mixed couple. It was very scary and sad. My cousins stayed with us that afternoon and my dad explained what had happened and why. He was so calm and reassuring and that helped us kids understand why everyone was so upset. It happened in St. Joseph in 1948.

August

Name a book or author that helped you develop a philosophy of life. Share some of those insights.

I don't recall the author, but there was a book about "Hull House" in Chicago run by a social worker to help people. I read it when I was about nine years old and decided then I wanted to help others.

Of course, the Bible was a tremendous inspiration. I especially was influenced by Matthew 25:40 where Jesus compares what we do to help others we are doing for him.

Did you have a collection when you were growing up? What initially sparked your interest in it?

I guess I collected trading cards for awhile but I didn't start my bear and doll collection until I was in my forties. Patty and I started collecting bears in 1980 and then we gradually started collecting dolls.

Describe a perfect summer day.

At the beach on Lake Michigan with my children. Or a picnic at Riverview Park on the river in St. Joseph. On vacation up North sleeping in a tent, cooking out, hiking and swimming and going to the Falls.

What kind of outdoor work do you like? Hate? Why?

Gardening because I love flowers.

For six summers I worked on the school buses washing, cleaning, painting and taking them back and forth to the garage. My boss, George Anderson, was wonderful to work for, but it was really hard work. One thing, I did get a great tan every year from being out in the sun so much. I ran buses up the side of a hill to wash them down with a hose and soapy water then rinsed them and when the floors dried I waxed them. We had 30+ buses.

If you could be a patron of a charity or organization, which one would you choose? Why?

Feed the Children or the Salvation Army because they help poor families meet basic needs such as food and shelter and they are faith-based.

When did you learn how to ride a bike, or to water ski, snow ski, roller skate, or sail? Share your memories of the experience.

My sister and my father taught me how to ride a bike. I was probably about eight. I was so excited. Patty and I loved riding our bikes.

We roller skated in the back yard on the sidewalk a few times until Patty broke her arm. We received skates for one of our birthdays that year – 1947 or 1948.

My friend Anita and I used to go roller skating at the roller rink in New Buffalo when were 11, 12 and 13.

What summer games and activities did your family enjoy?

My sister Patty and I loved to go to the beach and go swimming. When we were young our parents took us. As we got older we went by ourselves. We lived only a quarter of a mile, so we could walk to the beach.

Sometimes we played croquet. We rode our bikes a lot and went hiking in Harbert Woods.

We sometimes watched the Cubs play on T.V.

Our family sometimes took a picnic with us to the beach or on a drive. Nana often went with us.

Did you ever mild a cow or spend time on a farm or in the country? Tell me about it.

No, but my in laws had cows. I was afraid of them.

What places would you still like to visit? Why?

The New England States in the fall.

Describe a frightening or difficult experience from childhood. How did you respond to it?

My Uncle's sister and her husband were shot and killed in a terrible murder by a man who harbored racial hatred. I was about nine years old. My father wisely explained to us girls and my cousin Joy what had happened. Although it was a terrible event, my father was very calm and consoling. He was a very special man.

Share some of your ideas about successful entertaining:

Plan ahead. Make lists. Pay attention to detail. Think of your guests and what they will enjoy doing, then relax and enjoy yourself.

Always prepare something you know you do well as far as cooking or baking are concerned.

Half the fun is planning. Take pictures, have fresh flowers.

September

Did you learn to sew or make other crafts? How and when? What was the first thing you made?

My grandmother “Nana” taught me how to thread a needle when I was about seven or eight years old.

My girlfriend Anita and I sewed doll clothes for our dolls. We also made small rabbits we called “Crusader Rabbit” after the cartoon on T.V. They fit in a large match box and we kept them in in our desks at school for awhile.

One year, for Mother’s Day, we made yarn corsages and sold them in front of the Swedish Bakery. We did quite well. We were ten or eleven at the time.

As a young woman I sewed several dresses for myself and Dayle. I made a robe for Warren.

What was your favorite subject in grade school, junior high, and high school? What was your major in college? Why?

In grade school, I loved reading and spelling best. In high school, I liked history and government best. I was interested in politics at a very young age (eleven).

In college, I majored in criminal justice. I was very interested in psychology and the law. I wanted to work with young offenders and I did for thirteen years.

As a young person did you volunteer for work in church, community, or social services? Tell me about it.

My girlfriend Anita and I had Bible for school for a week one summer when we were about eleven. We bought all the supplies and little prizes ourselves. About twelve or fourteen children attended, including Rev. Olson’s. It was at the Harbert Community Church.

When I was first married I taught Sunday school for a while and helped with Bible school at the Sawyer Highlands Baptist Church.

I was a volunteer in probation for District Court while attending college and also a volunteer at the Youth Services Bureau.

When did you move away from home? Describe where you lived and how you felt about it.

When I got married very young. I was very much in love and happy but missed my family. They went to Florida for several months that first year, so that was hard.

We lived at the Christopher’s cottage in Bethany Beach. A big old cottage, my husband worked nights so I was home alone at night sometimes I was scared being alone.

Who was your best friend after you were married? Describe some of the fun things you did together.

Lucille Christopher. We visited back and forth and both had babies the same ages so we had a lot in common. Our husbands were cousins. Lucille and I write back and forth the past three or four years and I treasure her friendship. She is three years older than I am, a very down to earth fun person to know. She is very talented in arts and crafts, gardening and sewing. She also collects dolls so we still have a lot in common.

Of course, my sister is and was always my best friend.

What are your spiritual strengths?

My faith in God has always been strong. I cannot imagine living without it. Jesus is my Savior and my friend, always present. I am a forgiving person through the grace of God. My compassion comes from loving Jesus and wanting to be like him. God gives me strength to endure and peace and joy. I also think God helps me to keep things in perspective and see the humor in situations.

How would you like to grow spiritually?

I would like to be less self-centered, dwell less on my infirmities and think of others and help them.

What special talents did your parents nurture in you? How have you developed those talents?

My parents encouraged me to read from a very young age and it has been a lifelong love of mine.

They also taught me to think things through and use good judgment in making decisions.

Describe your personal style in clothing, make up or skin care, and hair care:

Casual but feminine.

October

What are some of the best speakers you have ever heard? Why?

Mario Cuomo. Jesse Jackson. Rev. Billy Graham, Ted Kennedy, Barbara Jordan, Dr. King, Bill Clinton.

They all inspired me to do better, to get involved, to care more about others and to serve God.

Also, President John Kennedy. I was so young and he was a remarkable man.

What spiritual legacy would you like to leave for others? Why is it important to you?

Strong faith in God because then you are never alone.

Tell me about a canning or harvesting experience.

In 1963, I canned dozens of jars of tomatoes and froze corn we had grown in our garden. We didn't get a freezer until late in October and dad kept bringing home more and more tomatoes to can.

You kids and I had the mumps that year and I had major surgery in August with five young children ages 2-8. I was exhausted!!!

I remember helping my mom peel peaches to can when I was little.

Grandma Wally and I canned cherries one year late at night as she was a night person.

I hated canning.

Have you ever been in an accident, had surgery or long illness? Tell me about it.

I've never been in a serious accident. I had several surgeries: gall bladder, appendix, child birth repair, cataracts, 7 D + Cs, 6 endo biopsies and a biopsy on my leg.

I spent seventeen days in the hospital in 1992 with cellulitis in my left leg. It was quite serious and I had to take early retirement because of it. I missed my job a lot but I adjusted and enjoyed hobbies, reading, politics, my

doll collection and listening to opera. My family has been very good to me and I enjoy seeing them and talking to them on the phone.

What responsibilities did your parents require of you as a child? Explain how this affected your growth and development.

We learned to make our beds and pick up after ourselves at an early age. I helped set the table and often helped my mother dry the dishes. We used to spend that time talking and I enjoyed that.

Name your favorite hobby. When and where did you start doing it? Why do you enjoy it?

Reading. I have been a lifelong reader. I enjoy seeing things through others eyes, learning new things, having adventures.

Opera since 1994. I love the opera. I listen to opera every Saturday afternoon on NPR. Beautiful music fills your soul.

Doll and bear collecting since 1980. I love my dolls and bears. They are so cheerful.

Politics since I was 10 years old I have been interested in politics. I find it fascinating. I love hearing what is going on and keep up with it on a daily basis. I know all 100 senators. I am a Democrat.

When and where did you buy your first house? Describe the house and explain any significance it held for you.

We bought our first house at 1010 Broad St in St. Joseph in Feb. of 1964. We lived there for almost fourteen years. My kids grew up in that house. It was a two-story house with three bedrooms, two large living rooms, a dining room, kitchen and one bath. It was on a little hill so our lawn went down in front. We have very close neighbors. It was only three blocks from downtown St. Joseph.

I have some very happy memories of our home there.

Tell about a memorable hotel or resort you have visited. Describe the location and tell about experiences that were significant.

We stayed in a really nice new motel called "The Golden Sands" the night we were married. It was near Michigan City.

Did you ever go on a hayride or bob for apples? Tell about fun harvest activities you enjoyed with other young people.

I never went on a hayride. My sister did and I envied her that experience.

We did bob for apples at various Halloween parties at school and at a church young peoples party one year. I didn't particularly enjoy it as you got all wet and I wanted my hair to look nice.

As a teenager, did you belong to a club or church group? Tell me about the individuals in the group who were most significant to you.

Howie and Betty Carlson were the leaders of our young peoples group. They were a nice young couple.

Share some home remedies or tips for good health:

Drink lots of orange juice every day. Instead of vitamins eat fruits and vegetables regularly. Get lots of fresh air and enough rest. Have a cheerful heart and be quick to forgive.

November

What individuals have had the greatest impact on your spiritual life? How did they impact your life?

Mrs. Shermack, my Sunday school teacher, her faithfulness inspired me.

Mrs. Moss, our GMC leader, by her dedication.

George Anderson by his example. He lived his faith and was a beautiful human being.

Rev. Fenner, Rev. Ed Nelson. Both wonderful ministers, very humble men of great faith and warm personalities.

Rev. Billy Graham, his sermons and prayers.

Pope John Paul II, by his devotion despite his frail health, his unwavering faith is inspiring.

Rev. Shuler, his optimism and joy.

What is your most treasured possession and why?

Several things come to mind:

My bus pin George Anderson gave me. He was my mentor and was very special to me and I knew I was special to him.

Winslo my bear, Paddington bear. My dolls and bears bring me a lot of joy.

The tea set and "hardanger" of my great grandmothers.

My China cabinet that was Nana's and Mom's, also the what not shelf.

The mirrors that have reflected five generations of our family.

My little glass top table that Mom gave me.

Mother's christening gown.

What Bible character would you most like to meet? Why?

Jesus. Because of his sweetness and love for all of us. His sacrifice. I think of Him in the garden the night before he was crucified.

I wish I could have been there, His disciples fell asleep. I am afraid I would have too but I like to think I would have waited for him patiently.

I love the hymn that says "I'll go with Him to the garden, I'll go with him all the way."

What is your most vivid memory of being pregnant?

Feeling excited and happy that I was having a baby. Feeling life the first time with each of you. Feeling blessed to be able to have so many babies. Knowing that it was a very special time in my life.

I was also nauseated and tired and a little scared each time, but very much in awe of what was happening to me physically as you were growing inside of me and the overwhelming sense of love and joy.

How did you choose my name and why?

I chose Dayle because it was my middle name and I always liked it. I was named after a dear friend of my parents Dayle Hall, who drowned the summer before I was born. Marie was a pretty name and also I had an Aunt Marie and Grandma Wally's middle name is Marie.

Bernard was your father's middle name. I liked it a lot. We knew we were going to you Bernie .

Laurence was a name of a teenage boy paper doll I had. I always wanted a son named Laurie. Gilbert, of course, was in honor of my dad.

James Montgomery was my choice. I like it a lot and still do.

Robin Wade was Dad's choice. I also liked it but had chosen Michael Dimitri. Dad didn't like that choice.

What is your most poignant memory of my childhood?

I have so many memories of all of you. The days you were born were among the happiest days of my life! Holding each of you for the first time, a great rush of love coming over me and thanksgiving that all went well.

What was a favorite Thanksgiving tradition in your family?

Getting together with family for turkey dinner, mashed potatoes, rolls, cranberry sauce, gravy, stuffing, pumpkin pie with real whipped cream.

Patty and I would usually go for a walk afterwards.

Several times we were with the Scoverns (my mother's sister's family) usually at our house in Harbert.

It was very traditional.

A couple of years we were traveling to Florida and we ate out. Once we were in Dallas at the Scovern's probably 1953.

What are some things from your childhood that you are thankful for?

My parents, my sister and "Nana," my mother's mother.

Living near the lake

Having a wonderful dog Rusty

Going to Sunday school and church.

My friend Anita and her mom Ester.

My mother's good cooking and baking.

My dad taking us places, to the movies, to the lake, on drives on Sunday afternoon, to the zoo when I was really little.

Listening to the radio late Sunday afternoon and all evening as a family. Playing games like Chinese checkers.

What childhood memory first comes to mind when you think about winter? How do you respond to that memory?

I think about playing in the snow, building a snowman, sledding. I always thought snow was beautiful. I think about bundling up to go out in the snow. How cold it was walking home from school on a windy winter day.

Hot cocoa after being out in the cold.

Of course, Christmas comes to mind and all the fun we had.

A fire in the fireplace, having popcorn, watching TV (after age ten).

Patty and I making up lays for our dolls.

Christmas programs.

What are your childhood memories of going to church or of interacting with other Christians?

I have very positive memories of going to church and Sunday school. I was in the girls Missionary Guild at ages 10 and 11. I was president one year. Mrs. Moss was our leader, a very devoted Christian lady.

My Sunday school teacher for many years was Mrs. Shermack, she was very kind.

I accepted Jesus as my savior when I was eleven years old and my faith has been lifelong and a great joy and comfort to me, always.

What family custom would like to pass on to your children and grandchildren?

Getting together on Christmas Eve for dinner and presents.

Remembering the true meaning of Christmas.

Going on family vacations.

Having family cookouts with the whole family coming together.

Telling each other that we love you and hugging each other.

Taking pictures and sharing them with the rest of the family.

Sending little notes of thanks or words of encouragement or a birthday card. Cards mean a lot to me. I love sending them and I love getting them.

Share your favorite Thanksgiving or Christmas recipe:

Potato Salad: Wash, peel and quarter 8 to 10 lbs of potatoes. Cook in salted water until firm but tender. Wash, cut and chop celery hearts, about 2 or 2½ cups. Peel and chop a very large sweet onion. Hard boil 10 eggs, cool, peel and chop fine. Cook 1 lb of good bacon until crispy, drain, cool and crumble. Chop up cooled potatoes, add seasoned pepper and a little salt. Add celery, onion, coat with Miricle Whip, add eggs and crispy bacon & mix. Cover and refrigerate several hours.

December

Tell about Christmas rituals in your family and how you felt about them.

After I married I've started celebrating on Christmas Eve with a Swedish smorgasbord. Having baked ham, Swedish meatballs, rice pudding, limpa bread, potato salad, potato sausage, homemade cookies.

We exchanged our gifts and Santa came on Christmas Eve. On Christmas Day, we went to my family in the early days. Later, they came on Christmas Eve to our place.

Were you ever in a Christmas program? How did you respond to the experience?

I was in many Christmas programs both at church and at school. When I was little mother bought us beautiful velvet dresses and curled our hair so we felt very special.

When I was in 6th grade I was a Scottish girl in a red plaid kilt and cap. Nana made my costume and it was really pretty. There were four of us and we dance a Scottish dance in our tap dance shoes. My friend Anita was Raggedy Ann. All the costumes were homemade and very intricate and beautiful. It was so much fun we spent several weeks practicing.

What favorite Christmas treasures have you kept from year to year? Share their origins.

I love decorating for Christmas and since I have been alone I have collected many pretty decorations that I look forward to setting out every year. I usually start decorating the day after Thanksgiving.

I have a little tree I decorate every year. I save pretty ribbons I have received and put them on my tree with all the other things I've gathered over the years. There is a little story with each of them and I share them with whoever helps me put up my tree.

I especially love my little cherished teddies Christmas train that I put under the tree with little bears I have been given.

Tell me about a memorable Christmas visit with relatives.

Going to the Scoverns for Christmas dinner in Long Beach.

Going to Walter Ackerman's in Bridgman the year he died.

Many Christmas Eves with Wally and Warren and Bud's brothers and sisters when we lived next door.

Many dinners at my Mom and Dad's with Patty and our families.

What is your favorite Christmas carol? Why?

"O Holy Night" is very beautiful, especially sung by Luciano Pavarotti.

I love the old Christmas carols all during December. Also, I watch the Christmas specials on PBS.

Did you have a Christmas stocking as a child or a special ornament? What did it look like?

We always hung up our stockings (a knee sock) on Christmas Eve. We could run and get our stockings when we woke up on Christmas morning and take it back to bed with us. In our stockings would be an orange, some walnuts, some hard candy, and a few small items like little knick knack dog, a card game, some dime store jewelry, or a fancy pen or colored pencils.

After the addition to our house when I was about nine years old we had a nice fireplace to hang our stockings on.

Describe the Christmas that has been most meaningful to you.

All the Christmases when you kids were little, getting you dressed up cute for the Christmas program at church.

All the excitement of Santa, all the toys we got for you and how happy you were when Santa came.

The way your eyes sparkled with the wonder of it all, seeing it through the eyes of your children.

Watching the "Captain and Mr. Green Jeans" count down til Christmas every day.

Painting wooden ornaments at the table in St. Joe.

Plugging in the tree the first time every year.

The Christmas scene your dad painted the window.

What would be the most wonderful gift you could receive? Why?

All my children having faith in God and accepting our Lord

All of them having wonderful peace that passes understanding when you have that faith.

Knowing that all my children will stay in touch with each other after I am gone.

Tell me about a time when God answered a specific prayer for you.

When I was eleven I asked God for a special outcome concerning our school gift exchange. It was unlikely to happen but it did and in my mind I knew that God did hear my prayer even though it was a childish wish from a young girl He cared and increased my faith that day.

He has answered many prayers since then. I have matured in my requests and trust Him with all my needs. He never lets me down. I know he is always near and I can feel His presence.

What would you like to see happen in the next ten years?

National health insurance available to all. More compassion in our wonderful country, a feeling of inclusiveness, less mean spiritedness. Tolerance for all faiths and life styles, races, and cultures.

What has been the happiest time of your life?

Raising my children, days at the beach with them in St. Joe.

Vacations we took up north, as a family

6th Grade I was so happy I fell in love.

My favorite years of work were as a school bus driver. I met so many dear friends – 1966-1975

What advice about life do you want others to remember?

First, faith in God, then love of family.

A sense of humor, dedication and loyalty are important to me.

Do your best but don't take yourself too seriously.

Keep track of old friends, send a card or a note or call them. Share a memory, send a picture, or a poem, or a joke, let them know you still care.

Notes –

July 2005

We had a great time at Dayle's July 10th, 2005. It was a pretty sunny day. I rode up with Larry + Barb and rode back with Bernie + Pattie. All of Dayle's children were there. I got to meet Kyle, Leiya, Makenna and Chris fiancé Katie for the first time.

We took lots of pictures and had delicious food and a great visit!

August 2006

We had a wonderful reunion at Bernie and Pattie's this year. All of my children and children-in-law were there. Seven of my nine grandchildren, three of five great grandchildren. My sister and brother-in-law and nephew Patrick and his wife were also there.

I was overcome with emotion it was one of the happiest days of my life!

It was a gorgeous day, sunny but not too warm. We took lots of pictures, visited and had delicious food. It couldn't have been nicer!