

**Henry Snyder's
Family**

by

Leona D. Snyder

Introduction

The following manuscript is a transcription of actual conversations between Leona D. Snyder, age 88 and Kathryn R. Snyder. Harriette L. Hineline joins in later. Kay and Harriette asked their Aunt Leona questions to try and jog her memory. They were trying to recapture the history of their family background on the Snyder side. These tape recordings were taken in the Fall of 1977.

Rose M. Snyder has taken the recorded tapes and typed a printed copy of these conversations. Harriette and Rose have placed phrases and words in parenthesis near parts of the conversation that might have been unclear to a lot of it's readers. We have underlined important names and places, which the reader might at some later date wish to look into further.

This is part of our searching for our roots. Read and enjoy.

[Leona D. Snyder and George L. Snyder are two of the eight children of Henry Snyder. Kathryn Snyder, Harriette L. Hineline, and James K. Snyder are three of the five children of George L Snyder (who founded the Bakery). Rose M. Snyder (now Rose Tucker) and George LeRoy Snyder are two of the nine children of James K. Snyder and Frances Louise Butterworth. This document has been entered into computer format, included with other documents, to be put into book format by George LeRoy Snyder. Additions and explanations inserted by George will be in brackets.]

Leona: Josiah and Elizabeth Snyder were my grandparents. They came from Pennsylvania and moved to Ohio. I can't remember when. Later, they came to Michigan before the Civil War. I don't remember how many children they had in Michigan. They had five girls (really 7) and two boys (Adam and Henry). I'm trying to remember which one is the oldest. I don't believe Aunt Becky was the oldest.

Kay: I remember Aunt Becky. She was the one that lived up there on the farm. (Aunt Rachel was the oldest and the one Kay remembers.)

Leona: And Jane was the youngest. And there was Catherine. Catherine was buried up there in the cemetery. Angaline! There was an Angaline, too.

Kay: That must be the one you can't remember.

Leona: No, it was the one that was in the South, I can't remember.

Kay: Well, you've given me four.

Leona: There'd be six girls.

Kay: Six girls, instead of five.

Leona: Because of Angaline.

Kay: And, there's another one you can't remember.

Leona: No, I counted her. Aunt Becky, Aunt Hanna, Aunt Jane, Aunt Catherine, Aunt Angaline, and the one I can't remember (Aunt Rachel). But there were six girls and two boys.

Kay: The boys were quite split. Your Father was the youngest in the family, wasn't he?

Leona: I don't know if Jane was younger than Father or not. I guess she couldn't have been. I think Father was the youngest. I don't know how old he was when Adam went to the Civil War.

Kay: Tell us about Adam.

Leona: Adam ran away from home and joined the army. Grandpa tried to get him released, but he couldn't. I don't know just how long he served. But he was a calvary man and was shot from his horse. When he tried to catch another horse he was captured and put in a Libby Prison. He was there several years before he died. She had a premonition and she was there at the table and she said, "Adam is dead. I know Adam is dead." Then later we got word. They could never find out very much about his life in prison. They think at one time he almost escaped. They were caught before he crawled out.

They had a hole dug. Then somebody came back and told about this hole they had dug in this prison. It was a terrible prison. The condition was terrible.

Kay: How about the story Grandfather use to tell? About how his Father was a Democrat and your uncle was in Libby Prison. And there was a boy that came back to Branch County from being in the Union Army that was wounded and his family too were Democrats . . .

Leona: No, I don't remember that.

Kay: Now, when you settled here in Michigan, you went to Bethel Township, didn't you?

Leona: Yes.

Kay: Now that was up in the hills. Where there was rocky land.

Leona: Bethel is out there by Cranson (School). It was level land, but it was rocky.

Kay: How long did my great-Grandfather live? (Josiah)

Leona: He died about 1900. I remember he died at Aunt Jane's house. (Josiah's daughter) She had married John Arnold. Aunt Becky married Abner Brown.

Kay: They lived up there on the homestead in Bethel. (Josiah, Jane, John)

Leona: They lived up there, but not on the homestead. Father lived on the homestead.

Kay: His Father (Josiah) really homesteaded in Michigan, didn't he?

Leona: I don't know. But I know we lived (Henry's family) up the hill a little ways, and Grandfather (and Grandmother) lived at the bottom of the hill. It was a very short distance between the two houses.

Kay: Aunt Becky was the one that made the Black Walnut cakes.

Leona: No, it was Rachel. So there would be seven girls. Aunt Rachel married John Kanouse. She's the one you remember. Aunt Hannah married Luther Brown, the brother of Abner Brown. The two sisters married to two brothers. Aunt Catherine married a man whose last name was Gilbert. I believe Aunt Angaline married a Quimby.

Kay: Did they all live in the same area?

Leona: They all lived around Bethel until later years.

Kay: So there were seven girls and two boys. That was a good size family to raise back in those days.

Leona: Of course, people had big families in those days.

Kay: I mean that many to raise to adulthood, because they all grew up except the one that was in the war (Adam). I forgot to ask, do you know when he was taken as a prisoner?

Leona: I don't remember that part.

Kay: You said he was in for several years so he must have been in one of the earlier battles.

Leona: Father lived up in Bethel until 1899. Then we moved to Coldwater.

Kay: Had he gone to the Far West yet?

Leona: Yes, long before that.

Kay: Tell me about Grandfather going out for gold.

Leona: Well, Father (Henry) had a bit of wander-lust. A little bit like Jimmie (James K. Snyder) I think. They were finding gold out in the West, so he went West and Mother (Rose) had three children. The oldest children, Dolly, Josiah, (Josiah Jacob called Si, later called J.J.) and Charlie. Josiah was later called Jay. Charlie was a baby. I don't know how long he was gone. But, Mother was up on the old farm (the homestead) and I don't know how she made out.

Kay: Well, with plenty of family around, they probably helped her.

Leona: Yes. I know she made Charlie some pants and he would stand in front of Dad's picture and say, "See my poc-ticks! See my poc-ticks!" (Pockets) Dolly would only be about 6 or 7 years old. See those first 3 were just two years apart, each one of them. If Charlie was between one and two, the others were around six and four. So, there were three small children she had. Well, he didn't strike it rich. So after a while he came home.

Kay: How far did he go? Did he ever say?

Leona: He was in Montana.

Kay: He must've gone out there about 1882.

Leona: Dolly was born in '76. She lived to be 92. And Father lived to be 92. They were almost the same age when they died.

Kay: Then Grandfather came back from the wild west, from gold hunting. Did he stay out there about a year?

Leona: I don't know.

Kay: Then you moved into town in '99?

Leona: Yes, we lived down on Polk Street. We lived there a year, then we moved to Waterman Ave. That was where Royal was born. That was about the time his Father died (Henry's Father, Josiah) because Grandpa (Josiah) was at our house at the time. Then he went out to Aunt Jane's (Arnold's Corners, East Gilead) and he didn't live too long after that.

Royal was the youngest child of Henry Snyder. Harry was born in '98. Royal was born in 1900. George was born in 1893. I was born in '89. Ella was born in '84. Charlie was born about '80. Then Josiah, or Jay as we called him later, was born in '78 and Dolly in '76. Ella was born in '84 after Father got back. (From Montana)

Harry was three months old when he died. He died of Thrush. Royal lived until he was 17 months old. He had anemia. He died of Cholera-infanta. He was a sickly baby. That was the last one my Mother (Rose) ever had.

Mother (Rose) was born in '58 and Father was born in '54. I don't know where Mother was born. She was an Olmstead. I don't know where Grandma Olmstead was born. She was raised by a family. Her people died and she was raised by a family and she lived until 1909. (Buried in Batavia Cemetery, Batavia Township, Branch County, Michigan.) When I graduated from high school she died that year. She lived to be 80 something.

[The people and dates from Leona's memory have helped in compiling the family tree that should be attached to this document. The dates and places in the family tree should be considered more likely to be accurate than Leona's memory. When anything was checked by another method, the more accurate information was used. Most of the people mentioned here are buried in the East Gilead Cemetery in Southern Branch County, Michigan. Tombstones have been checked for dates in the family tree. Further research needs to be done to verify the causes of death of Royal and Harry.]

Kay: Did your Mother have many brothers and sisters?

Leona: Yes, quite a family of them. I don't remember too many of them. I remember Uncle Alfonso. We always called him Uncle Flonny. I don't know what his name was. Then there was Uncle Daniel and then Uncle Albert.

Kay: Did any of them fight in the Civil War?

Leona: No. Uncle Daniel, Uncle Albert, and Uncle Alfonso. That's why we called him Uncle Flonny, his name was Alfonso. Then my Mother had a sister, Aunt Mamie. She married an engineer. (Harry Zimmerman). And whenever they had a vacation once a year, they would come to our house and stay for a week or so. We always thought lots of her. Of course, they had money and she always dressed real well, with nice material, and she use to give Mother her dresses. Mother made us girls dresses and we

always had nice dresses 'cause it was such nice material. Mother was a very good seamstress. Our dresses were always trimmed with ruffles and things like that. She always had Aunt Mamie's clothes to make over, so we always were real well-dressed. I thought lots of Mamie and Uncle Harry, that was her husband. He was a great big tall man. My ambition was, if I was going to marry a man, I wanted a man as tall as Uncle Harry. I could stand under his arm because Aunt Mamie could stand under his arm. They wanted to take me to raise when I was about 14. Of course, Mother wouldn't let me go. But they never had children. We always had a good time when they came. They finally moved after he retired out West. They bought a homestead out West. Then he and my Mother's youngest brother, Albert, they took a homestead out in Colorado. Well, it didn't turn out very good and in the end they lost pert near everything they had. They moved from Colorado to California. They bought a house and lot out there in California. It was near San Francisco.

Kay: Did your Mother's brothers and sisters live to a good age?

Leona: Yes, Aunt Eva, Mothers youngest sister, she lived in Coldwater and married George Hiesrodt. I can't remember just how old she was when she died.

As far as I know, all her brothers and sisters are dead. Uncle Flonnie and Albert lived in North Dakota and the last I knew Uncle Flonnie had gone farther West to Utah. It must have been before Mother had died because after she died I didn't keep track of them, only Aunt Eva, the youngest one, that lived around Coldwater.

Kay: Well, they lived up to a reasonable old age at that time.

Leona: Oh, yes. Well, Mother was only 56.

Henry Snyder's Family

Kay: Your Father was Henry. Did he have a middle name?

Leona: Henry William.

Kay: And, your Mother's name?

Leona: Rose . . . (Marilla).

Kay: How old were they when they were married?

Leona: Mother was about 18, I think, and Father was about 22. They were four years apart. They lived up there on the farm all the time up to 1899. Dolly, Jay, and Charlie were born there before he went on his gold-hunting venture out to Montana, and after he came back it was Ella, Me, George, and the two babies. (Who died in infancy)

Kay: Do you remember Charlie's middle name?

Leona: Charles Henry.

Kay: What about Aunt Dolly?

Leona: Aunt Dolly was never really exactly named. They couldn't find a name good enough for her, because she was the first child. So finally Father said they were going to name her Elizabeth. But she always hated it. That was for Grandma Snyder. But she hated that name Elizabeth, so she would never go by it. They started to call her Dolly when she was a baby, so she just went by the name of Dolly. Her name was Dolly Elizabeth, but she would never own that Elizabeth, so she was just Dolly.

Josiah's middle name was Jacob. They call him Jay. Before he got married he was working in Auburn where he got acquainted with his wife, Ida Smith. By that time he always hated that name Josiah and he was always called Si. When he got off on his own, he always signed with his initials J.J. Well, then after they were married everybody began calling him Jay.

Kay: What about Ella?

Leona: It's Ella Ethel. (Ella had only one child, a daughter, Lois) Then the second granddaughter (of Ella Ethel) then named her Ella. Then Luann was named after her Grandfather, her Mother's husband. His name was Louis Kraus. So they called her Lu for Louie and we always called him Louie. Then he died in 1925. Ella had three granddaughters.
[Ella Ethel married Louis Kraus]

Charlie had two girls and a boy. Leona Marie was the oldest one, then Rose Marilla, I think. That was the one that was named after Mother. And she would never own the name of Marilla. And Howard A. was the youngest. He married a Dorothy Leyman. They had six girls and three boys. Charles Henry (one of Howard's sons) died at birth. He was named after her Father (Dorothy's) and his Grandfather (Howard's). Henry was from my Father and Charles was on the Leyman side.

Marie married Brian Manigold. They had one girl, Marguerite and three boys, David Hale, Jimmie (James), and Rolland.

Rose married a Sherbourne. They had one girl, Dortha. They lived in California. I don't know if they got a divorce or not. I can't remember what his first name was. (Harlow Sherbourne)

Kay: I remember visiting her up above San Francisco with you. Who did Charlie Marry? Your brother, Charlie.

Leona: Charlie married Lulu. They lived in Chillicothe, Illinois. When Howard was about five years old, they separated. Charlie came back to Michigan, brought the girls to my house and he kept Howard with him. Then he lived in Chillicothe where he had a bakery and an ice-cream parlor. Then he married Cleone Brandon and they moved back to Michigan and the girls went back to live with them. She (Cleone) died in 1935 three weeks after George died. They lived on a farm out by Blackhawk Mills up until Cleone died. Then he went and sold the farm and came to town and stayed most of the time with Howard.

Kay: What did he do out there on the farm, just farm?

Leona: Yes, he farmed.

Kay: He was quite a bit in politics, wasn't he?

Leona: Not involved too much. He was a staunch Democrat. (Democratic County Chairman) He, Jay, and his dad were all very strong Democrats.

Kay: The town, the county, and the state were all Republican. Grandfather (Henry) Snyder retired when he was about 55, didn't he? Sometime he had a double mastoidectomy?

Leona: After Mother died, he stayed with Jay (went back out to Illinois) who had a restaurant and ice-cream parlor and made ice-cream. Father worked for him for about a year and then he came to Michigan and bought a restaurant on South Monroe Street. He had that restaurant for a couple of years and then he sold it. He didn't work much after that, just a little while in a factory, but not much. Then he didn't work after that. He was in his 60's when he retired. He was born in '54 (1854) and he died in '46 (1946). It got to be a standing joke because every year we'd have a birthday party. And that was going to be his last birthday party. Every year was going to be his last birthday

party. He had a birthday for thirty years. He was 92 years and I forgot how many months. (3)

I lived with him off and on from the time Mother died. From 1920 we lived together on Clay Street. And in '44 we moved over to Washington Street and that's where he died. He died in '46. He was in the institution (Kalamazoo State Mental Hospital) from June to the next October. He got violent and I couldn't care for him any longer.

Kay: I remember Mother went down and stayed with you and was convinced after one night.

Leona: He began to go off real bad on Christmas Day. From that time on he thought someone was trying to poison him. In January he got up in the early morning and went down poking the fire and then he came up and I went downstairs and then he was going down. I tried to keep him from going down again. I told him the fire was all right. And he pushed me out of the way, but he fell down cellar. He was really bad then. Bessie came and stayed with me until the last part of April; Mary Ellen was going to be married in May. You folks all decided it wasn't so bad. Well, he turned against me and he turned against Jean, my adopted daughter. You thought it wasn't safe for us so we had to put him in Kalamazoo.

Kay: Well, Mother said definitely at night because he started hammering on your door.

Leona: We were very much afraid of him. Over the Christmas vacation he was awfully bad. From that time on, I put a lock on the stairway door so he couldn't get upstairs. Because he often threatened to kill me. One minute he'd be blaming me for something, then the next, I was poor and had so much to do and worked so hard. Then the next minute he'd be giving me the dickens, because I wasn't home taking care of him.

Kay: I understood that after he got into the institution they made quite a bit over him because he was such a handsome old man. He had white hair and grew a white beard. That's what they told me.

Leona: I don't remember him growing a beard.

Kay: I understand that you couldn't see him very often because you set him off.

Leona: I went to summer school that summer and Jean and I went out and saw him every week. After we came back to Coldwater, I couldn't afford to go to Kalamazoo every Saturday. So I didn't see him only once before he died in October after school commenced.

Dolly married a preacher, Sherm Lemon. He wasn't very good to her. She had two miscarriages from him and a little boy; they brought him back here to Michigan (to bury him); they lived in Iowa. Then Dolly never went back to him because he was mean to her and he was mean to the baby. And sex was all he wanted. Then later she

married a John Williams. Charles and Wayne were born to this union. When Wayne was about 6 years old, John died. He died of T.B. Then she went to work in the shoe factory and got acquainted with a fellow. After about a year to a year and a half after John died, she married a Herb Wilkinson; they lived together until 1951, then they separated. She was in her 70's. Then in 1955, she and Wayne moved to California. There they lived together until she died in '68. That was the next year after we'd been out there. (Bessie and Leona, age 78)

Jay died in '43 and Ida died in '69. They adopted a little girl in 1920. She was 19 months old. She was born to a young couple and the wife left them. A great Aunt took care of her until she was 19 months old. They had a child and they were very poor and they felt as though they couldn't take away from their own child to raise her. At that time her Father had stopped paying anything for her support and so they turned her over (in Illinois) to the police court or whatever you call it, that took over these children at that time. They advertised them in the paper. Well, Jay and Ida never had children so every time they came to Coldwater, Jay always went up to the State School (orphanage) but he never saw a child that he was attracted to. One night he saw this baby girl advertised and he had already been in touch with this police matron in Peoria, Illinois. She knew what he could provide for a child. He ran home and showed Ida the ad and they decided that they would like this child. So he telephoned the police matron. She said she would hold the child until the next day. So the next day (it was when he could get away from his business) they went down to Peoria and they went to the Police Matron. She took them to this great Aunt's. Wait, I got ahead in my story a little. Jay had always said if he took a child it was going to have dark hair and dark eyes like the Snyder's. It was going to look that much like the Snyder's. But as they walked up the walk, here was this baby girl looking out the window with the palest of blue eyes and a regular little tow head. Jay looked at her and he said, "I'm satisfied, if you are." He went inside and she called Ida "mama" right away. They decided they'd take her. So they took her right then, took her down to a baby department and fitted her out with clothes and had her hair cut and took her back to Chillicothe that night with them. On the way home, Jay said, "If we're going to change her name, we're going to have to change it before we get back home." Ida said, "Yes." He said, "I'd like to call her Leona." Ida said, "That's all right with me." So she was called Leona. When she was about six years old, they moved back to Coldwater. All this time she didn't have a middle name. She decided in the first grade, all the other children had a middle name so she decided she'd like Leona Louise. So she went by Leona Louise from that time on.

Kay: Did the family know what her original name was?

Leona: I can't remember whether it was Iola or not. But I don't know the last name. They don't know either. Because they could never get adoption papers. They got some kind of papers, but they never really got adoption papers.

Kay: They never got the Father to sign away his rights? He might have disappeared.

Leona: He just disappeared, I think. I think Ida knew the great aunt's name. But, I can't remember what it was. When Leona wanted to get a social security or passport or something, Ida had already died. I was the only one that could tell them this story that I remembered. She was born the 23rd day of August 1918. You weren't quite a year old when she was born.

Kay: You are Leona D. D was for Dot, wasn't it?

Leona: Leona Dot, but I always go by Leona D. Snyder. I was born in 1889, August 6th. I'm 88 years old now. I never married. I was an old maid school teacher. I always loved children and I have always said that I was going to give a child a home as I got older. But after I lived with my Father and had to take care of him, I just felt as though I couldn't. But it was always in my mind and I was always hoping that a time would come when I could and I was getting older and older all the time and I was afraid they wouldn't let me have a child. In February 1937, a little girl (age 6 ½) was brought in the school (Jeanne) that was going to be for adoption. She and her two brothers had been taken away from their Mother. I was very much attracted to her. When I saw her, I just felt as though she was the child I wanted. I talked it over with my Father that night and he said, "I'm not going to live very much longer." Because he had had a mastoid operation the year before and he wasn't at all well. He said, "You go ahead. If you want this child, you take her." I said, "I don't know whether it would be fair to the child and to you too." He said, "I won't be here very much longer, you go ahead." So the next day I went to the judge and he said, "If I had known it a couple days ago, I would have let you had her. But we decided to turn her over to the state." But I couldn't give up. When Saturday came, I went down to Bronson where she was born, to find out what I could about her (her background). It didn't make any difference with me, I still wanted her. Her background wasn't very good, of course. I came back to Coldwater and went to the Judge again. He said, "I talked with the Prosecuting Attorney and the Circuit Judge and we decided, if you want this child, you can have her." I said, "Well, I want her." He said "When do you want to get her?" I said I couldn't take her today because I would have to have a chance to get acquainted with her and get her some clothes that would be fit to wear to school. I think I ought to have a weekend with her to get acquainted. So he said all right. When the next Saturday came, the officer in charge of these children said they had whooping cough and I wouldn't be allowed to take her. I kept thinking about it. She had been in school by that time about three weeks. I went to the health officer and told him the circumstances. He said she was probably the one that brought it home to the boys. He said I could have her and gave me a permit. The next Saturday they brought her to me to my house on Clay Street. I thought she would be very upset, but she wasn't. She acted as though she belonged there. I told her I was going to change her name and her name would be Jean Loree. I told her I was going to be her new Mother and that would be her new grandpa. She accepted all these as though she just belonged there. I took her downtown and got new clothes for her. She always acted as though she belonged. I thought she would cry and worry about her Mother, but she didn't, because I guess there wasn't much love loss there.

I took her February 20th, 1937. In 1947 she married Jack Kipfer and she had three girls. Joy, Gay Lynn, and Kimberly Leona. Joy got married in 1966. She (Joy) thought they couldn't have children and they waited about three years. They adopted a little boy named Aaron. Then in four years she got pregnant. She had a little boy Justin Paul. The next year she had a little girl, Angela Joy. She (Joy) looks after me a great deal. I enjoy my great grandchildren just as much as I enjoy my grandchildren. I always enjoyed my nieces and nephews so much. I use to have them go home with me from school and stay overnight.

Kay: Mother always said, "I don't know why but Aunt Leona never seems to think you do anything wrong, when you're with her." I'm all by myself when I'm with her, and we get along fine. I guess I had too much competition at home.

Leona: Well, you always get along easier with one child than you do with five. Let's see. I didn't say Joy got married to Gordon Porter. Gay Lynn got married to Kenneth Fisher and they moved to California. They have one little girl, Lesli Ann. She's almost the same age as Joy's youngest girl. Kimberly is still in High School, the ninth grade.

Kay: George, my Father, went to school . . .

Leona: In 1905, we moved to Illinois, where my brother, Charlie, lived in Henry, Illinois. George and I went to school. George quit school in the ninth grade, I think it was. He went to work for Charlie in Chillicothe, Illinois. Then he met Bessie Gilfillan and they were married. I don't know what year they were married.

Kay: Dick was born (July 9, 1911). They went to Galva (Illinois). I think that was where Dick was born. Then they went to Keithsburg, where Jimmie was born (October 30, 1915). In between they were back to Chillicothe. Aunt Molly was telling me this. They were back in Chillicothe and Mother kept house for Charlie and Howard. Daddy went around to different bakers, learning his trade and he came back to Chillicothe. They moved after you people moved back to Coldwater from Illinois. They (George and Bessie) lived down there on Hull Street. First they lived on Hull Street, then they lived on Hudson Street and I was born on Hudson Street just about a block from Chicago Street. The house isn't there anymore. He had the bakery there on the corner of Hudson and Chicago Street. That's where Roy (Fellers) came to work for him and he taught him the trade. We had Grandma Harris; she was the clerk. Mother worked a little bit. Mostly she was not too well after I was born (December 16, 1917).

Leona: No. I took all my Christmas vacation (1917). I spent it there. Then Jimmie wasn't at all well. I took care of him.

Kay: He was real sick before I was five years old. Just before my fifth birthday he had diphtheria. He had something else besides diphtheria, either measles or something else. He was only seven years old. He had to learn to walk and talk again. I think we had moved to the 70 Hull Street house before he got so sick. It seems to me, that I can remember the doctor coming. I had the anti-toxin, I was already exposed to

diphtheria. I had to have the shot, but I never got sick. Poor Jimmie was up there in the bedroom, sick. I remember I had to stay just in my yard and in the house. I couldn't go anywhere because we were quarantined. I remember it now that I think of it, because I always placed Jimmie being sick at the 70 Hull Street. We moved there when I was about four years old. Four and one-half, I wasn't five yet. Harriette was born after we got down to the Hull Street house.

Leona: She was born on Hull Street, I think in 1923 (May 4, 1922). Mary Ellen was born in 1925 (July 23, 1924). Father was real sick and we thought for sure he was going to die. Bessie had a nurse, when Harriette was a day or two old. She decided Father needed the nurse worse than she did. So, the nurse went over to our house. Father had the hic-cups and all, the doctor said those were the death hic-cups and he wouldn't live. All of us tried everything we heard of. We never really knew what stopped them. It seems that one of the neighbors had read, that you put your hands on your breast bone in some way in your thumb somewhere else and you press. That seemed to work, and we didn't know whether that stopped it or if it was the popcorn he'd been eating. Anyway we were all just waiting for him to go. I was just about worn out, so Dolly and Herb took me out to their house while Herb did the chores and we thought for sure that by the time we got back Father would be gone. I got back and here he was lying on the couch in the living room. He got better and that was 1925 (1924). He lived over 20 years more. He died in 46.

Kay: He always lived longer than everybody expected. He was always supposed to be dying (Henry thought he would die soon after his wife, Rose died in 1909). Do you remember any stories about when you were young? Did you do anything different when you were young?

Leona: Nothing particular. I don't know why, I can't remember very much of anything when I was young. Only that I was always hunting up babies and taking them for stroller rides on Saturdays. Royal died in 1902 (17 months old). I was 13 and some lady had heard about me. Of course, I took care of Royal, all vacation. When school was out, I always went home and Mother had Royal ready and I took him outdoors because he was anemic. I always took him out after school and when school was out, I kept him outdoors all the time; except only just when Mother was feeding him and bathing him. As soon as he got up in the morning, we took him outdoors and I took care of him. This lady evidently heard about how I had been taking care of my little brother. After he died in the spring, that summer she came and wanted to know if I would help her with the baby. So I went every morning and seven o'clock and I worked until after supper dishes were done at night. I got \$1.50 a week.

Then somewhere George went to work for a blacksmith, brushing the flies off the horses while he was shoeing. And he got \$1.50 a week. We both earned 9 dollars that summer. He bought him a suit and I bought myself a coat. About the only coat I ever remember, a hairy coat. It was blue with white flecks in it. I was very proud of my coat and he was very proud of his suit. Because we earned it. I was about 13 and he was about nine. That was here in Coldwater. At that time they had the blacksmith

shops and they had the horses tail fixed on a stick and he swished the flies off the horses while the man was shoeing them. Saturdays I always had some baby to take riding.

Kay: Did Daddy (George) have jobs all the time?

Leona: No. Mother took in washings and we used to deliver washings and go and get washings, George and I did. We had our wagon and we always went and got washings Sunday night. Mother did several washings.

Kay: What about smallpox?

Leona: In 1901, we lived on Waterman Avenue (in Coldwater). Charlie was working in Auburn, Indiana, a factory job, I imagine. The doctor said he had shingles. He was just in a boarding house and so he came home on the railroad. At that time we had what they called a herdick. It always met trains and anybody who wanted to ride, rode in the herdick, drawn by horses. So, he came home on a Saturday and then on Sunday he was real bad. We had the doctor and he didn't know what it was. We had a lot of cousins and relatives in on Sunday to come to see him because he was sick. On Wednesday the doctor decided it was smallpox. At that time they quarantined everybody who had come in contact. So we had a lot of the relatives quarantined. When the children came home from school, that was the end of school. Charlie was real bad. At the same time, Mother had inflammation of the bladder. Royal was about six months old. He was born in October and this was the next spring, around about March. Dolly was doing housework and Charlie's girlfriend was there in Coldwater. Well, they had to be quarantined so Dolly figured she was needed at home. So she went home and Charlie's girlfriend came too. They were quarantined in the home with us. There were nine of us altogether. The neighbors were scared to death. They made a big fuss about us and wouldn't even walk on our side of the street. As the warm days began to come, we wanted the windows open. The neighbors objected, because they were afraid they were going to get it. We also had a night watchman. He watched from one of the neighbors houses across the road. If we put a light in the window, he was supposed to come over and see what we needed. The doctor had smallpox when he was five years old, he said. Mother had had smallpox when she was a girl. We were all vaccinated. We all had what they called veriloid which is the light form. Except Ella and Father. They got the real smallpox. Mother was down flat in bed with the inflammation of the bladder. Royal was sick. He had cholera infantia. Many a night Father (Henry) walked the floor with Royal, when all he could do was to stand up. He'd just stagger back and forth. There was one week when everyone had to wait on themselves. They brought in a kettle of stew from the restaurant and put it on the back porch. Then we put it on the back of the cookstove. When anybody got hungry, they could go out and help themselves. Mother was beginning to crawl around a little bit and by hanging on the wall and like that she could get out to the kitchen. She was so weak. She couldn't even hold her lower jaw up. We were all in the there. Of course, the girls, Dolly and Nellie, they kept a diary. At night the doctor said, we

could walk up and down the sidewalk after dark. But the neighbors made so much fuss about it, we didn't do it very much.

Then after we got better, we had to be fumigated and, in the meantime, Father had bought a house on Orchard Street. He signed the papers just before we got quarantined. So, the Royal neighbors and the Woodmans (these were insurance societies) went in and cleaned up the house and did some papering and fixing that needed to be done. When we got out of quarantine, we had a place to go. We put all the clothes we were going to wear in the front room and plugged up all the doors and windows and shot formaldehyde gas in there. That burns your eyes terrible. So all but the baby's things. Mother wouldn't let them put the baby's things in. On the day we were all supposed to get out of quarantine the herdick came in and we all had our bath of formaldehyde and water and put on our clean clothes. Then we all got on the herdick and waited until everybody got cleaned up. We went over on Orchard Street. Our clothes were so saturated that we couldn't stand it hardly to stay in the house, because it burned our eyes so. We stayed out on the lawn. George had his birthday while we were quarantined, April the 4th. Judge (Yaple) felt sorry for him so he sent George marbles, a ball and a bat for his birthday. George thought that was pretty great. We lived on Orchard Street until 1905. Then we move to Henry, Illinois.

Kay: Formaldehyde! How did you ever get your clothes to smell good?

Leona: We had to air them out. It was terrible.

Kay: Couldn't you go through and wash them out again or something?

Leona: I guess we did. I don't know what we did. We couldn't hardly stand to stay in the house because it burned our eyes so terrible. We had to stay outdoors where there was a breeze. It was in April, because We were quarantined over George's birthday. But it was kinda warm weather when we moved. People were so scared, they were afraid of us for a long time. The doctor, he did get smallpox (veriloid). He would come and see us on a bicycle and would just wave from the sidewalk (the doctor was so sick). When he went into the grocery store to order some stuff for us to be delivered, everybody made lots of room for him. They were scared to death of him too.

Kay: He did catch the smallpox then.

Leona: Well, he thought he had it. But he evidently vaccinated himself again.

Kay: He got what they call cowpox.

Leona: They called it veriloide.

Kay: That's how they first did the smallpox vaccination. They noticed the dairy maids, when the cows would have these things and they would get little sores on their hands and they never got smallpox. That was some story you told!

Why did Daddy (George) go away and go work for Charlie and quit school? I always understood he was the youngest of the family and had too many bosses.

Leona: I was older so I was always held responsible, more or less. Because I was older and I knew better. I shouldn't let George do this and I shouldn't let go George do that. So, of course, I got pretty bossy. As George got older, he resented it. Then they hopped all over me, because I was always bossing George. I don't know why he left. I guess he just got tired of school and he wanted to go. The folks wanted him to finish, too. But he wouldn't do it. I was the only one that went on. One reason why Ella didn't, after she finished the sixth grade, she went to work at the shoe factory. She was advanced in lots of things (subjects) but she was so far behind in arithmetic and it made her feel very inferior. So, she got through the sixth grade; she couldn't take it any longer. She went to work at the shoe factory at that time. We had gone to the country school until I was about ten years old. I went to the third grade and Ella was in the fifth or sixth in there. She was lower down in arithmetic so she had to go back to a lower grade to get her arithmetic. When we got through the sixth grade in the area schools, Ward schools, we went over to the Lincoln school for the seventh grade. She never went over there. I finished the eighth grade when we moved to Illinois. Then I had all my high school in Henry, Illinois. I had 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th there. The first year after I graduated, I was too sick. At that time we had to pass a teachers exam in order to become a teacher. That was the only thing that I was fitted for. I couldn't take the teachers exam that year because I was sick all that summer. This was in Henry, Illinois. I helped Father in the store. He owned a candy store and an ice cream parlor. I helped their all through the school year. Next spring I took the teachers exam and passed it. Then I taught school across the Illinois River in the other county. That summer Lois was born and Ella very nearly died and the baby very nearly died. I was up nights with the baby so when school started, I wasn't in very good shape. When I went over to the school, the directors wife's saw me. She told the others, "I'll give her just about two weeks." I fooled them. (I weighed 89 pounds and I was 5' 1" tall). I got along alright. I had 12 children. Three were from one family. One was hers, one was his, and one was theirs. I taught for \$35 a month. If I proved successful in two months, I was to get \$37 for the rest of the year. It really boiled down to if I could really satisfy this family, then I was satisfactory. Because I had her children, his children, and their children. I proved out and I enjoyed that year very much. Then my folks came back to Coldwater. They bought a farm out by the cement factory. I came back to that school and I went to see above the teachers exam, so I could teach school for the next fall. I met one of my teachers that I had had. She was the head of the County Normal (in Coldwater, MI). So she talked me into going to school to County Normal and getting my diploma from there instead of trying to teach. I stayed with Dolly (in Coldwater) through the week and went home to my folks over the weekend. My folks brought food to Dolly from the farm and helped out that way. One year of Normal and I graduated from there in 1912. Then I went over to Bronson. I taught there then I came back and got the school by the folks, Maple Grove, and I taught there two years. By then my Mother had died, so Father and I came to Coldwater to live. He had bought this restaurant on Monroe Street. I taught in Coldwater. Until then I went to summer school some. Then in 1919, I went to Ypsilanti. It's called Eastern

University now. It was called Ypsilanti Normal School. I graduated from there in 1920. Then I went, off and on, to summer schools until I retired in 49. Along about 1953, they were so hard up for teachers, they decided to let the retired teachers, back in. I went back to substituting and I substituted for 15 years. I was 78 then. I had from two to five days a week substituting. I substituted through the sixth grade. I used to change from grade to grade because I never wanted to get into a rut. So every few years I would change grades. By the time I got ready to retire I had taught all the grades, but the kindergarten and the first grade. After I began substituting, I got called to substituting those grades (kindergarten and first grade). I went to observe the teacher. I could substitute from kindergarten up through sixth grade, up until I was 78 years old.

Kay: I understand Social Security came in.

Leona: Social Security came in when I was 60. After 55 I had to earn six quarters. I retired when I was 60. When I earned my six quarters, I can't remember how old I was. I think I was around 68.

Kay: Wasn't it here in this school system when they brought in the older teachers and put them to some kind of work so they could qualify for their Social Security?

Leona: No, the way I qualified it was substituting.

Kay: Some of the other teachers, didn't they bring them back so they can get their Social Security?

Leona: No, I don't know. I don't think so.

Kay: I thought there were some that didn't have Social Security. Teachers weren't covered.

Leona: No, they never did. I was just lucky I was substituting. I started in with a little better than the minimum. My first Social Security check was for \$40.20, I think. I can't remember just what year that was. Now I get \$106.60. I get my teachers pension. My first retirement I got \$1068 and some cents a year. I retired when wages hadn't got up any. You retired at one-half of what your average salary for the last five years. My average must have been around \$2300. My average couldn't have been that because I had to go clear back to where I was getting \$1900. Anyway I got \$1068. So that would make my average around \$2100. If I would have waited another year, I wouldn't have got into that \$1900's. As it worked out, I babysat, I took care of children, and things like that, along with my pension, I got along real good. Of course, my pension every once in a while gets raised. I think in October I get another raise.

Return to Smallpox Story

This is a conversation between Leona D. Snyder, Kathryn Rose Snyder, and Harriette Louisa (Snyder) Hine. Kathryn and Harriette are nieces of Leona [daughters of her brother George].

Leona: George was about eight years old, because he was born in 93 and this was 1901. Royal was born in November of 1900 and this was the next spring. He had Cholera Infantum (bowel trouble).

Kay: It was Judge George L. Yapel, that dad was named after, who gave Dad the ball, bat, and marbles for his birthday on April 4th. After you moved in town, your Mother took in washings.

Leona: After we had the smallpox, we lived on Orchard Street. Then she did the washings.

Harriette: Did your Dad sell the farm or did he just lose it?

Leona: When we moved to town, he sold the farm.

Kay: He bought a restaurant, wasn't it?

Leona: That was way after Mother died.

Harriette: What did he do with his money when he came to town?

Leona: I don't know. He worked for a newspaper. He worked off and on doing whatever jobs he could get.

Harriette: Why did he leave the farm?

Kay: He wasn't much of a farmer, was he?

Leona: The farm probably didn't yield enough. It was only about a forty acre farm. It was stony ground. I don't know why we left. I was ten that summer and we left in the Spring.

I got my first doll that summer when I was ten. It had a cloth body and china hands, feet, and head. Kathryn, when she was little, she looked just like a china doll head. She had blue eyes and black hair. Aunt Eva, Mother's sister, came to our house and sewed all day and made doll clothes. That was my first doll and my last doll too. Of course, foolishly, when Marie, my first niece came along, I gave her my doll. I suppose it got broken because it was a china doll head. I wish I had that doll. I think it had a skirt and pants with lace on the bottom. And there was an under-skirt and that had wide crocheted lace on it. She made a shirt-waist dress. In those times we wore shirt-waist dresses. It had a yoke and a collar and looked very much like a shirt and a full skirt. I can remember the clothes we had. They were all white.

Aunt Eva sewed all day when she came to our house. She probably lived on Clay Street because that was the only place I ever knew her to live. That was when I was younger. Later on, when she got older, she lived with Helen (her daughter) and then she went out and stayed with Aunt Mamie until Aunt Mamie died. My Mother's other sister (Aunt Mamie).

Kay: Your Mother just had two sisters then?

Leona: Alive, yes. There was another one, Marilla, I think it was. They buried her up there in the Batavia cemetery.

Kay: Your Mother's name was Olmstead.

Leona: Rose (Olmstead).

Kay: This was around 1900's then.

Leona: Yes. It would be the summer before. The next year was 1900. It would be in 1899 because Roy was born in 1900. Then we moved to Waterman Avenue. We stayed there on Polk Street just one year. Then we moved over on Waterman Avenue and Roy was born the next fall. Then we moved to Orchard Street after we had the smallpox. We stayed on Waterman for about a year. We stayed on Orchard Street until 1905, when we moved to Henry, Illinois. Charles ran an ice-cream factory in Henry. Then Jay moved out there to Lakin, Illinois and started a bakery and ice-cream parlor. Then Charlie and my Father shipped ice-cream to Jay. My Father worked there in the factory. Then Charlie discontinued the factory there in Henry. Evidently he must have bought that store in Chillicothe and he had an ice-cream factory in connection with that. Then Jay always bought his ice-cream from Charlie. Later, I think Jay must have bought Charlie out because it was the same store Charlie had. Then Jay ran the ice-cream factory. He had a restaurant and an ice-cream parlor, in Chillicothe.

Harriette: Did you tell about when he had the fire? Uncle Jay had a fire, didn't he?

Leona: It might have been in Chillicothe. That fire was the reason he came to Michigan. Then he went to Auburn and started a bakery. But that didn't pan out. He left Illinois in 1925. Father was sick when Jay moved down here from Illinois.

Harriette: Did you tell about when Daddy (George) went to work for his brothers?

Kay: Yes. He quit school in ninth grade. She (Leona) and him (George) went to school in Henry. She was the only one to finish school.

Harriette: The way Mother tells it, was that you were getting all the attention in the family and he decided no one cared about him, so he decided to leave home.

Leona: Well, he got tired and he didn't want to go to school. He was smart enough, but I don't know if he wasn't getting along or not. Then he went to start to work for Charlie. That's where he started to learn the bakery trade.

Harriette: Your Father wrote to Charlie and told him to work George to death so he'd come home, but he didn't.

Leona: They felt real bad when he left home and quit school. They didn't want him to quit school. All the older ones didn't have the opportunity to go to school. We two had the opportunity. Father owned an ice-cream parlor then. George helped out in that and I helped out, too. Mother went up there almost every evening. Henry doesn't look like it use to at all. Coldwater doesn't look like it use to at all.

Kay: In 67, when I took you and Mother out West, we went through Henry. We stopped and saw an old couple there that you knew.

Leona: Yes. That was Lula Law. She was a teacher when I went to school and she was my Sunday school teacher too. She was a first grade teacher. This was a standing joke in the Snyder Family:

There were river rat kids. Kids that lived along the river and came to school dirty. This little fellow came to school one day and said, "Oh! Miss Hildebrand! (That was Mrs. Law's maiden name). Something awful happened at our house this morning." Of course she listened. "You know," he said, "Bobby shit in the pickle jar and mama had to throw away the whole first layer."

. . . (After a moment of laughter) . . .

Kay: You graduated from High School when you were 20 years old in Henry. Then you were sick a year. So the following summer you took your teacher's test and then you taught a year in Henry (across the river from Henry). You had twelve students. Then from there (Henry IL) your family had gone to Michigan the year you started teaching. You finished your year in 1911 in Henry and came to Michigan to be with your family. Your friend talked you into going to the Normal School here in Coldwater. You started in September and finished in June. Then you took some summer school classes in Ypsilanti, off and on, because you wanted to get a life certificate. You went to Ypsilanti in 1919 (after the war). You took a year in Ypsi and graduated with a life certificate (two year course). Of course, later on in life, you had to go some more. From there you went to Grand Rapids. What did you do in Grand Rapids?

Leona: I went to Grand Rapids and taught a year there. I would have stayed but Father wasn't very well and he was here in Coldwater. He said he would come up there to Grand Rapids and we would get an apartment and live together up there. I thought there wasn't anything for him to do but just sit in an apartment all day. He didn't know anybody up there in Grand Rapids. He didn't have any friends. While back here in Coldwater, one of his friends ran a cigar store and all these older men would go to this

cigar store and gossip and smoke and talk politics and things like that. I didn't feel as though it was quite fair to him to ask him to come up there and sit in an apartment all day without anybody. I applied and came back to Coldwater and went to teaching in Coldwater. See, I taught in Coldwater before I went to Ypsilanti. Father and I lived together after Mother died in 1914. Then I applied and got out of school and came to school here (Coldwater).

After Mother died, when Father sold the farm, then he bought the restaurant on Monroe Street (now Wilber's Furniture Store). He only had that a couple of years. So, I came back here. He sold the restaurant and he bought a house on Clay Street. He worked in a factory some. In the meantime in 1917 or 18 there was a big flu epidemic when so many people died. Our whole family had it.

Kay: Mother told us the story how you and Grandfather were the only ones to stay on your feet.

Leona: I was down and so was Father. It got so bad in school that I got down to where there was only five children in my room that came to school. The rest all had the flu. One morning I got up and I was so sick I didn't know how I was going to make it. So, I got on my wheel (bicycle) and went down to the doctor's house and got some medicine, went to school and told the principal I was sick. They thought I ought to go home. She telephoned the health officer and she told him I was sick and had been to the doctor and got medicine that morning but I was so sick, it was all I could do to keep going. There were only five pupils in school. He said, "You tell her to go home and send those kids home!" The superintendent was out of town at that time and when he came back, he was real mad. The principal told him that the health officer said to send her home and send the kids home. Then that weekend they did close the schools. It was in the spring, I think. Father was working in a factory somewhere. When he came home I was sick in bed and I was up in a few days. Charlie's folks were all down and George's folks were all down. Father and I, as soon as I could, went out to Charlie's because there was all those chores to do. Cows to milk and so on and so forth. Father could do the chores while they were sick. George's folks moved the bed down in the front room so everybody was down there in the front room (the little house on Hudson Street).

Kay: I was a new born baby. I had just been born in December.

Leona: When Christmas vacation came your Mother was still in bed. I went and took care of her. They had a practical nurse. My land! She hadn't washed her and her hair was all tangled. When my Christmas vacation started, we just let her (the nurse) go and I took over. Bess's elbows were just all grimey and her hair was so tangled. I worked a little while at a time on her hair, as much as she could stand. I got the snarls out of it.

Kay: That's the time she had the child-bed fever and actually they figured she got the infection after the birth.

Leona: Yes, from that woman that didn't take care of her. Well, that flu was bad.

Harriette: How long were the schools closed?

Leona: I don't know. It had to get better.

Harriette: What were the symptoms of that flu?

Leona: You were just sick all over. You ached so awful. There wasn't any chance for a pregnant woman.

Kay: Mother always said that if I'd been born a few months later, she would have died. Doc Gamble came to George and he said, "I don't know whether I can save your wife or not." Daddy said he was so sick that all he said was, "well, do the best, Doc." You just didn't care about anything you were so ill.

Leona: Generally you were real sick for about a week. Then you would crawl around for another week or so. It took the life right out of you. It was bad. We never had as bad an epidemic since then.

Kay: We're going to talk about the depression (1929-1937) now. I remember Grandfather (Henry) told Daddy (George) not to expand and to keep his business in one place. Daddy was set on doing what they (the government) told him. To increase your spending to help the economy. So Daddy remodeled the house. Grandfather had told Daddy that we were set to go bust and he better draw in his horns and not spend out his money. Mother had often had said that she wished Daddy had listened to what Grandfather had said.

Harriette: Can you remember about how much money you were earning at the beginning of the depression?

Leona: I couldn't have been earning more than \$1150. They cut our wages during the depression. I only got \$900 and something (per year). They urged everybody to buy bonds. Dad still had a little money and he bought bonds. I bought one or two.

It got so bad, the children (a lot of them) were not having enough to eat. They set up a place over the Elks Temple and every noon the teachers brought these children from their room; the ones they figured were under nourished. Anderson's Dairy always contributed a lot of Dutch cheese. Different ones gave food. They fed those children one meal a day. That was the only decent meal some of those children had. I was teaching in the Old Lincoln School. Each day we took our turn of going over. I probably had the second grade. I don't know how many I took over. They set up long tables and fed these children. They had milk and Dutch cheese and always had bread. That was the only decent meal some of these children had, because things were so bad.

Harriette: They did that without any public funds. How long did they keep that up?

- Leona: I don't know how long. It was the biggest part of the school year. When Roosevelt was elected, he started that school lunch program. Jay worked on that W.P.A.
- Kay: So did Jimmie. (James K. Snyder)
- Harriette: Jimmie got paid \$25.00 a week. That was high pay in those days. He was the one with the most money at that time. You (Leona) use to bring your money down and put it in the safe at the bakery. You had to save it because you didn't get paid in the summer time and the banks were closed. Did you have money in the bank that you lost?
- Leona: I didn't lose anything, because it took all I earned to live from one time to the next. I didn't have any savings.
- Harriette: When I was seven years old, you were teaching at Washington School, which was a half a block from where I lived. You had a little room, cloak room, off the room and you use to take Rex Clark in there and give him breakfast early in the morning before school. (Leona was Harriette's 2nd grade teacher)
- Leona: When the kids found out that the other kids didn't have any breakfast, they would come to me and tell me that so-and-so didn't have any breakfast this morning. I sent over to the little store and bought milk and graham crackers. I'd take them in that little room and give them milk and graham crackers.
- Kay: The depression got worse. Mother said that during the depression you had cash coming in. Daddy died in 1935, and the depression was just about over. Still hard times. He got the bakery into one bakery (building) in the center of town before he died. Before this all happened and afterwards people were still short of cash. The shoemaker, the Mannerows, repaired shoes. We always had our shoes half-soled. He did the shoe repair. The Branches Department store and Woodwards Department store and the hardware store, the dentist (the one that did all my teeth, Alexander) and everybody traded their bills. They didn't have cash. We would get our shoes fixed, we'd get our teeth fixed, we'd buy only what we needed in the stores and the grocery stores. They bartered all over town.
- Leona: They had to work together. So many people lost everything. I got my pay in cash. If George got in a pinch, and had a bill that had to be paid and I had the money, I'd let him have it. They'd paid me back when they could. I forgot how much they owed me. It seems like it was \$150 or \$200 or something like that. I remember by that time your dad had gotten pretty bad on clothes. Your Mother had all she could do to make ends meet. She asked me if I could just possibly let her have enough to get him some clothes. As time went on, she paid it back. As time went on, we got more, too. Our wages went up and we had more.
- Kay: Mother told us, if Aunt Leona hadn't been paid in cash, and given Mother and dad the use of the cash for the business so they could buy supplies they would have had to go out of business. Of course, they let them go on credit, but they still had some they had

to pay cash on. Mother said, if Aunt Leona hadn't gone along with this, they would have had no business, period! No home, no nothing. She says we can never repay Aunt Leona.

Harriette: I can remember the weekends when I'd go to your house and you would make me doll clothes. I still have those doll clothes. The girls (Jo Bess and Kathy) just marvel at them. What was the most money you ever earned teaching?

Leona: I think \$2300.00 was the highest. That was in 1949, the year I retired. If I had stayed, I would have gotten \$2400.00 the next year.

Harriette: When I started teaching in 1954, I signed a contract (in May) for \$3100.00, because teachers were so hard to find. When I started teaching (in September) they raised it to \$3300.00.