

As you turn this,  
the last page of the  
Family Record for the  
years of 1906 - 1961 it is  
hoped that certain thoughts  
of enjoyment have been ful-  
filled. A 55 year term has  
passed and this staff with-  
draws silently, with the solemn  
wish that whoever opens these  
covers may read the pages  
within with pleasure.

N atural

I nspiration

E nergy

L ove

S incerity

E nterprising

N oble

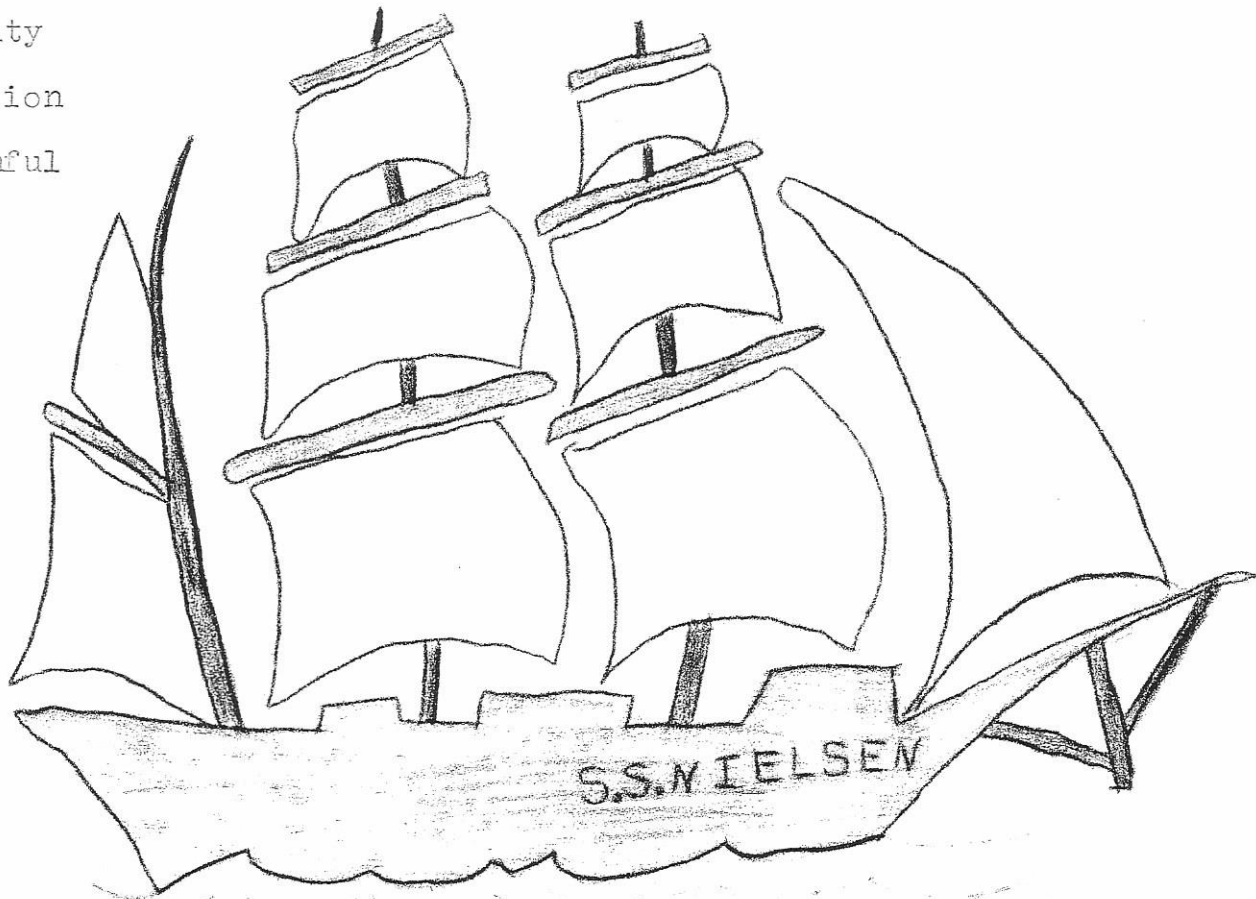
F riendly

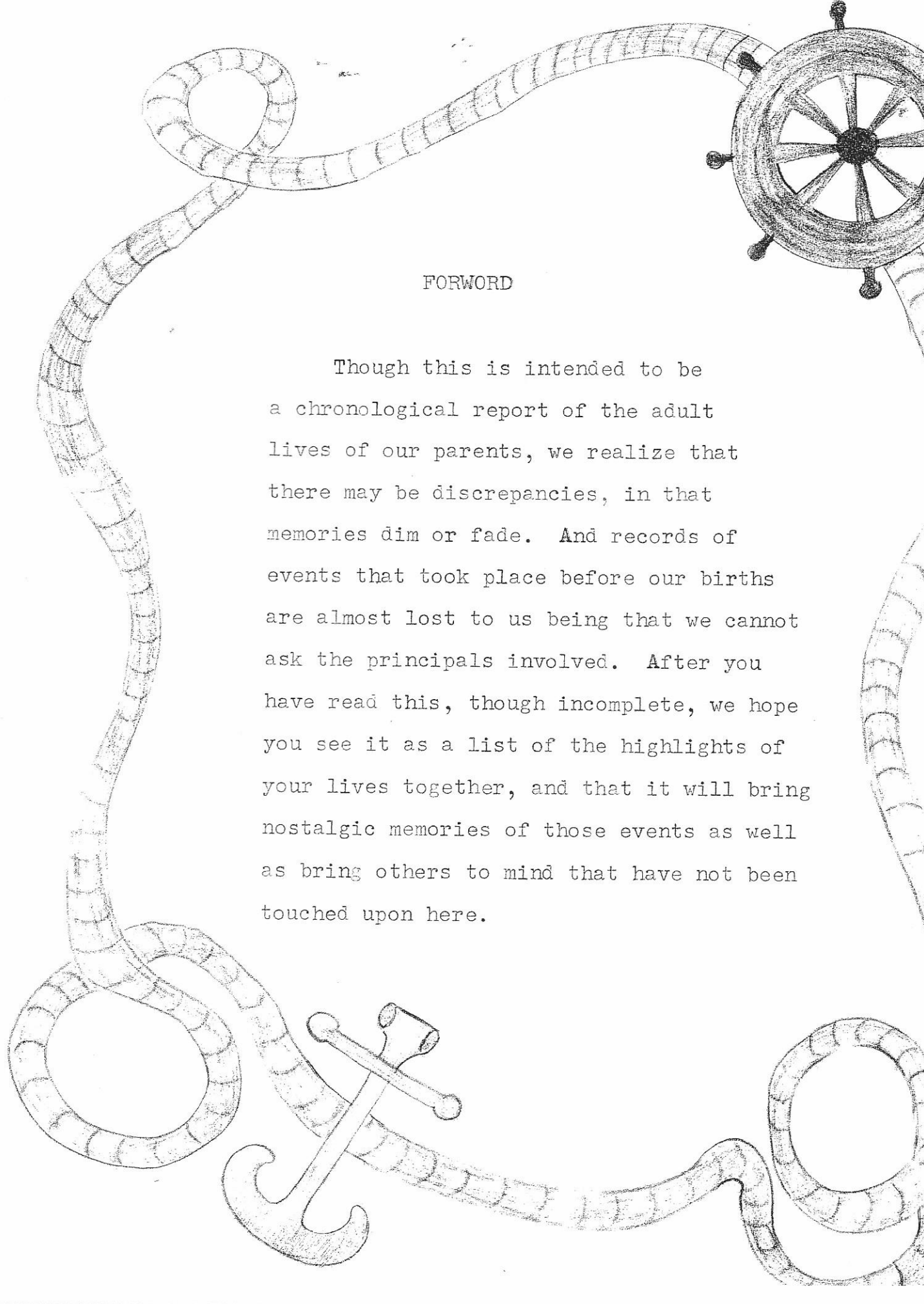
E ndearing

L oyalty

D evotion

T ruthful





## FORWORD

Though this is intended to be a chronological report of the adult lives of our parents, we realize that there may be discrepancies, in that memories dim or fade. And records of events that took place before our births are almost lost to us being that we cannot ask the principals involved. After you have read this, though incomplete, we hope you see it as a list of the highlights of your lives together, and that it will bring nostalgic memories of those events as well as bring others to mind that have not been touched upon here.

Go forth, little Family volume  
We leave you to your fate.  
Collect memorials, past and new;  
Your leaves we dedicate  
And beg of all your members near  
Some tokens of remembrance dear.

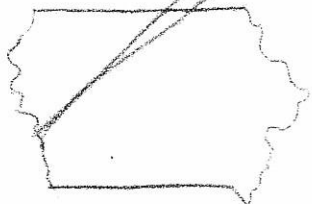
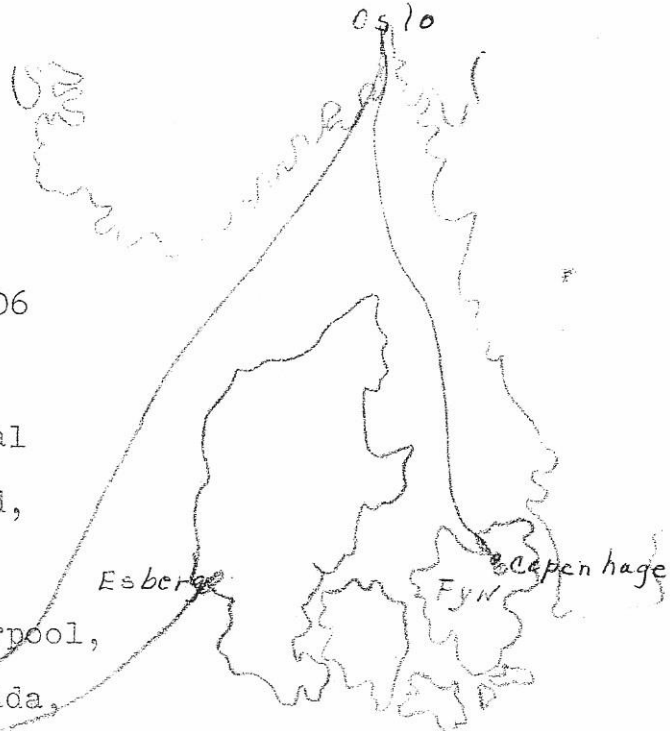


On the eleventh day of May, 1906  
Father set sail with his sister,  
Christine, from Esberg, the principal  
seaport on the West Coast of Jutland,  
bound for Grimbsy, England. From  
Grimbsy, they went by train to Liverpool,  
where they embarked for Quebec, Canada,  
sailing on the S.S. Lake Erie on her  
maiden voyage to Québec. Father's Viking

blood had thinned considerably, because we  
understand that he was not too good a  
sailor.

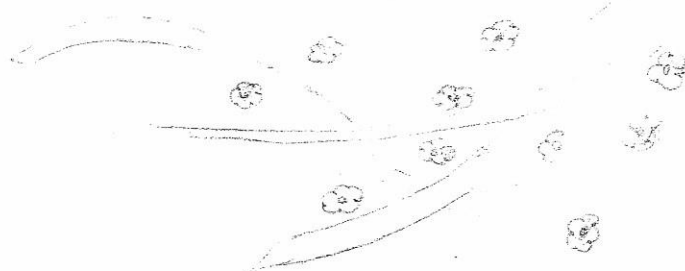
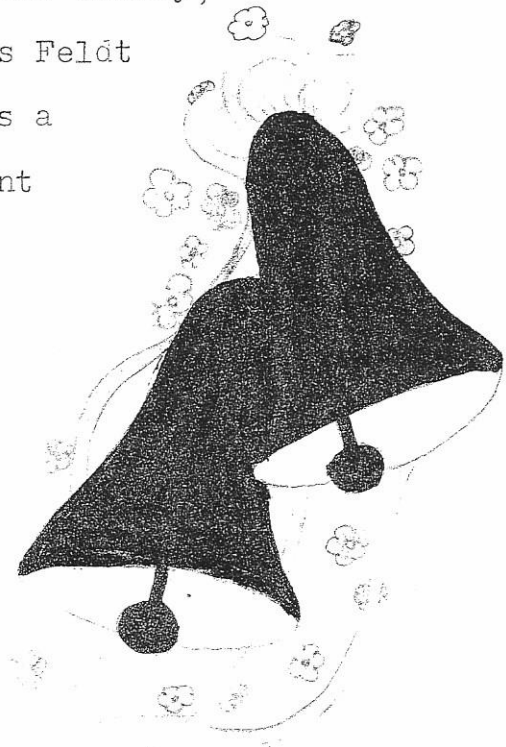
We do not know how they felt when they  
first set foot on North American soil, but  
most likely they were awed by the size of the  
country, plus being at a loss for words with  
not being able to understand this foreign language. But  
nevertheless the trip from Esberg to Council Bluffs, Iowa, was  
completed without any casualties.

Father went to live with an older sister, Louise Christof-  
fersen, her husband and sons. He worked for a while in the  
railroad yards shoveling cinders, but left there to go to school  
at Elkhorn, Iowa. The school burned before he completed his  
studies, (it has never been proven whether it was accidental),  
and so he returned to Council Bluffs, where he became an  
apprentice painter and paper hanger.



About a year after he had set sail from Denmark, a lovely, and petite young lady disembarked in New York, having crossed the Atlantic from Copenhagen, via Oslo, Norway on the S.S. United States, with her mother, father, three brothers and one sister. Her features may have been a little wan and pale due to the rough crossing, but as soon as her feet were planted on solid ground, she was again her own sweet natural self in the person of Gerda Feldt, bound for Council Bluffs, Iowa, where she found employment in a candy factory. Sometime later, she was to meet Jens Nielsen, through the Danish Brotherhood and Sisterhood which they had both joined on their arrival in Council Bluffs.

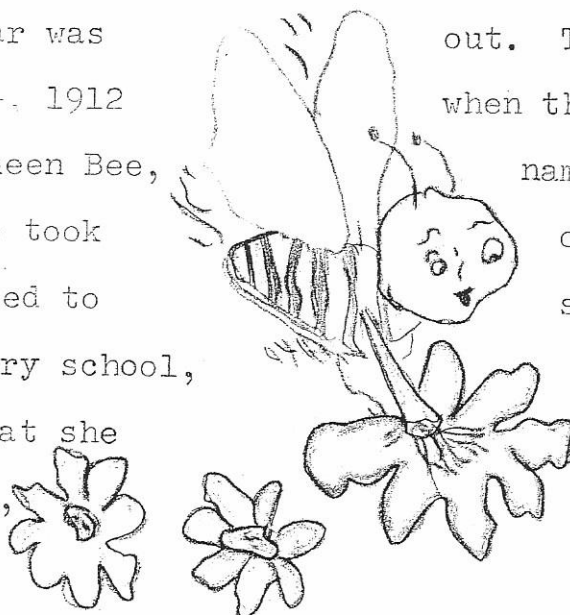
The Lodges were going to present a musical comedy, "Kloge Ellen", in which both had parts. Miss Feldt played the role of Kluge Ellen. The play was a terrific hit and the cast was asked to present it in Omaha, where it met with the same success. Perhaps the association of working together in this play ripened what had started out as a mere acquaintance into a courtship, that was later to be tied by marriage bonds on May 20, 1911. The following announcement appeared in the Council Bluffs paper a few days prior to their marriage.



\* \* \* \* \*  
 \* MARRIED--Jim Nielsen, aged 22 years, \*  
 \* and Miss Gerda Feldt, aged 23, were \*  
 \* married Saturday morning by Justice \*  
 \* of the Peace W. C. Joseph at his \*  
 \* office in the court house. Judge \*  
 \* Joseph in this marriage grabbed off \*  
 \* all the profits there were in the \*  
 \* nuptial business around the court \*  
 \* house, this being the only license \*  
 \* issued Saturday by the clerk of the \*  
 \* court. \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*

After their marriage the bride was moved into a new home on 6th Avenue, that had been built for her by her husband. This then started a voyage that was to go over smooth seas,--through stormy weather and fair, and to cover a span of fifty years between the covers of this Memory Book. there were times of stress as all ships that sail the sea have been through, but with Jim Nielsen as the Captain and Gerda Feldt Nielsen the first mate, the ship did not falter in its course.

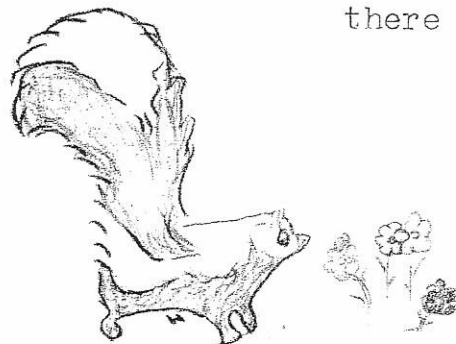
The first year of marriage went by in blissful happiness,--two separate lives learning to live as one--and then the realization that they were going to add a crew member to their ship before the year was out. They had to put into port on May 14, 1912 when they were blessed with this little Queen Bee, named Ilse Marie. As she grew, the ship took on a new look. Later when she started to school, in the small one room country school, (Boyer, District #4) she recalls that she could speak very little English, because our parents'



native tongue still came much easier for them, and so they naturally spoke it most of the time.

During this early part of the marriage, Grandmother and Grandfather Feldt, with Uncle Niels moved next door to our parents on 6th Avenue. Sometime during the year of 1915, plans for moving on a farm had been seeded and nurtured by the dreams of owning their own land and having a place in the country to raise their children away from the city streets. A brother-in-law who was in real estate found a farm  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles southwest of Woodbine, Iowa, that was supposed to be all that they could desire. But Uncle Charlie was known to be a "fast" dealer, and from what can be gathered, he dealt them a parcel of land that was not quite what he had led them to believe that it was. Uncle Niels put his money into this farm with Mother and Dad, and so in the spring of 1916 they were ready to leave Council Bluffs with Mother's father and mother who were going to make their home with them. However, before this move took place, they were to make port again on December 15, 1915, when their little queen bee was dethroned by this little stinker who came

Of course,  
two, but  
out to be  
helping  
cleaning,  
they enjoyed



*Dora Louise*

to make her home among the crew.  
there was still only a crew of  
later on they turned  
pretty good hands,  
in the house with  
and cooking which  
thoroughly when



Mother and Dad had gone to town and they were left to experiment. Oh, the dishes they prepared then!--or attempted to with Uncle Niels as the guinea pig. Whether or not it turned out good, it had to be eaten before the folks came home, and thank God that he had a strong stomach as well as a silent tongue. He never told on them,--it was almost as if they were all fellow conspirators. They all held up better than good old Alley, the beloved dog, who had to finish some candy one day for them and would up with his gums bleeding. (Probably he lost a couple of teeth too.)

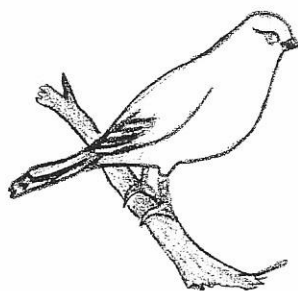
March of 1916, then was the time that our parents became farmers, starting out from Council Bluffs in two railroad cars laden with furniture, five horses, one cow, one plow, two wagons, some chickens,--the five adults and the crew of two; the sea was pretty rough during this period, with their being novices at farming and short on cash. As soon as they got to the farm they realized that they needed hogs, a disk, harrow, etc., which they had to borrow money for. They purchased five fine purebred sows and fed them well, so that their litters would be strong and healthy when they were born. They realized too late that this was the wrong thing to do; that the sows should have been kept lean, as all but one sow died when their litters came. Work was hard and never ending, with no modern implements, tools or conveniences as we know them today. Mother raised chickens, of course hatching them by way of the old setting hens. She raised a garden, that many times had to be irrigated if the rains were scarce, via the hand carried bucket route from the

well to the garden. For some years she washed on the scrub board and then boiled all the white clothes on the kitchen wood range. Spring was butchering time, when meats were canned, bacons and hams prepared for smoking, and sausages made and stuffed in casings to be preserved in lard. But this work brought the help of Dad in for cutting the meats. Later, when the girls became old enough and could be trusted with sharp knives, they contributed their bit to this task.

In the summer, vegetables such as corn, tomatoes, string beans were picked and prepared for canning, as well as fruits including apples, peaches, and plums and gooseberries that grew wild. Wild grapes, elderberried, plums, etc., were also picked for jams, jellies, and delectable bottled juices used for puddings, etc. Grapes were also picked for wine which was brought out on special occasions and for medicinal purposes.

On August 24, 1920 the ship again made port, when this little songbird, Helen Anna, climbed aboard and demanded to become a crew member. There was a bit of unrest and dissatisfaction over this addition, because rather have had a

aboard ship.  
soon forgotten,  
the car became  
having sold



one of the crew would  
car than another member  
This feeling though was  
and the following year  
a reality, when Father  
a lot in Council Bluffs,

bought this most wonderful of all cars, a Chevrolet touring car.

What a revolution from the old spring=buggy, box wagon or horse drawn sleigh, which was used in the winters. But as

winters waned and the spring warmed the good earth, so that snows began to melt, the ground to thaw, so that trees began to wake from their winter rest and started to bud, and tiny wild flowers appeared in secluded, sheltered spots, there were many times when this wonderful car was bettered by the reliable horses and wagon, who could go over the deep rutted, and almost bottomless roads, better than the motor driven vehicle could. Oh, the times when driving to town, community club meetings, or picnics, the car was overloaded and under-powered, so that the car would sink down to its axels in the mud. Then at an urgent signal from Dad we would all leap from the car as if being shot from one gun, and without any lost motion we would all start pushing. I often wonder how we all looked when we arrived at those places. There must have been many mud spattered dresses, stockings and shoes which went unnoticed by us because of the joy of going somewhere. These occasions didn't come often in the country.

Helen is dubbed a song bird here because she had a lovely singing voice. She could sing well before she walked, which was late because of illness. And if she were mad, you could depend on her singing.

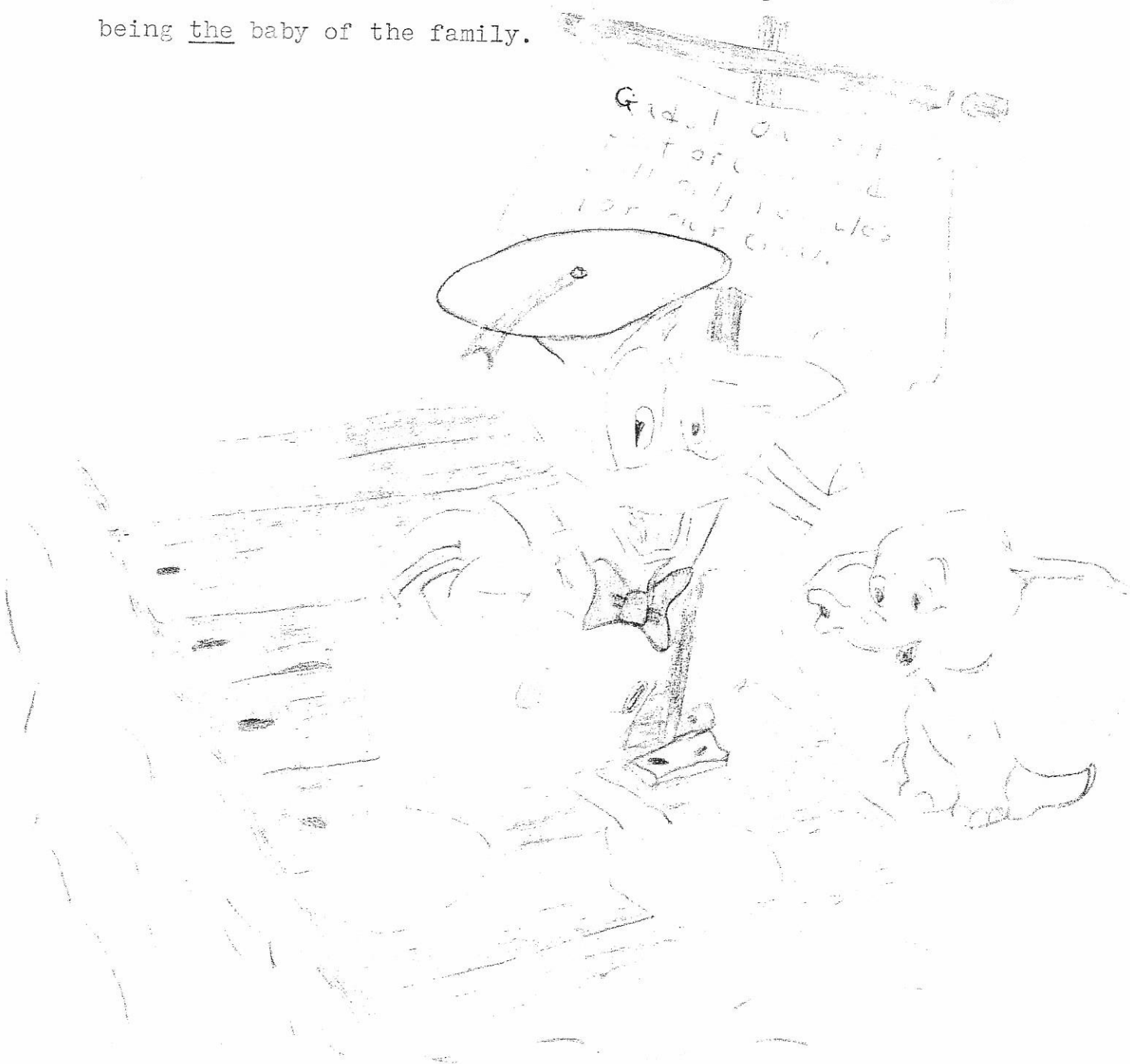
The farming was progressing and going along pretty smoothly. There were of course anxious times, when a cow or calf would become bloated and emergency measures had to be taken immediately to save them. Horses or cattle would sometimes fall into a ravine or the creek and have to be pulled out. One thing can be said here, --there were few idle hours. Besides preparing for the planting

of crops, tending to them, and the harvesting, there were fences to be mended, harnesses to be fixed, and machinery to be repaired. Horses needed shoeing or unshoeing. Barns, hog and chicken houses needed constant cleaning. Even the trusty old "outhouse" needed an occasional moving.

Spring of 1923 saw the good ship again heading for port, and on May 27th, it weighed anchor to bring another crew member aboard. Hopes were riding high for the Captain and First Mate, that this time they might pick up a male for the crew, but as it turned out, the genes had again been mixed up, and who should climb aboard but this little female duckling, promptly named Vera Christine. And if there had been any disappointment over the sex, it was forgotten and never mentioned. Vera was little bother, as she loved to play and entertain herself in a make-believe land of her own. This Characteristic showed up even on her scavenging trips for the salted herring heads, and to the little fenced pen where Mamma kept the baby ducklings and goslings. Imagine her surprise and horror when she discovered her latest darling sitting in the pen in the midst of the small creatures, many of which she had squeezed to death--probably as fast as she could catch them. With all fairness it must be said that she was not considered a murderess.



She simply loved them to death. Her love for pets shows itself even today in her home. However, she no longer loves them to death. Grandmother and Grandfather Feldt had both passed away several years prior to this, so the ship was lighter than before, but soon it was to pick up another member for her crew. On June 8, 1929, this little pet leaped aboard. She was named Dolores Esther Kamilla, and as she was to be the last of this female crew it was natural for her to be especially loved and spoiled because of being the baby of the family.



Dolores, though, was not here long before heavy storm clouds hovered overhead, spelling draught and depression in big black letters. These rough, heavy clouds kept our ship in dangerous peril for several years. These were the depression years of the 1930's, that were felt from Maine to California, and from Canada to Mexico. Perhaps you could have weathered the depression if that had been all, but the draught along with it made the burden too heavy and so in the late fall of 1936, after the farm had gone, the farm equipment, furniture, livestock, chickens and feed were all sold. However, during these dark years, the sun showed through brightly twice. First when the ship made port to pick up a male, Harold Greer, the first one to join your family. Elsie and he had chosen each other for their life mates, and were united in marriage May 14, 1934. The following year they were blessed by the birth of their first child and your first grandchild, Aileen Marie. Almost two years later when they had made the big decision to get ready to move to California and with the farm sale behind them, Mother, Dolores and Uncle Niels left for San Francisco by train a few days before Christmas, laden with box lunches for the trip, plus strong seats and backs for sitting up all the long way. They were followed a day or two later by Dad, Dora, Helen and Vera in the car with a small trailer. This move must indeed have been a tremendous decision to make after working and living on the farm for about 21 years. They knew they left nothing behind in worldly goods, but a storehouse full of memories--some poignant and some heartbreaking. Whichever they were, they were for the most part very vivid in their minds and hearts. Perhaps so because of not knowing what was ahead of them. This small group left the farm early on a winter morning in late December, with "high hopes" in the hearts of the

daughters, but with somewhat less enthusiasm on the part of Dad. The worry over the past years had taken a heavy toll on Dad's robust body and spirit. When they had gone only about 35 miles on their journey of 3000 or more miles, the little trailer broke down and before it was repaired, Dad was ready to turn back. Probably he had a premonition of what worry and trouble the trailer would be on the whole trip, as it was to break down twice more before San Francisco was reached. While waiting near Honeycreek for repairs, who should whiz by but Elsie, Harold and Aileen, hurrying for their 2nd appointment with the stork. Gerda Ann was in a hurry, so they were unaware of our predicament. Helen and Vera had the grueling job of being trailer watchers and many were the times they got bawled out for not keeping vigil over it. Both were annoyed--after all they were first of all suffering from sore and stiff necks and cramped space, and at the same time missing out on the ever changing scenery which was new to us all. But after a slight breakdown somewhere in Kansas, trailer and car behaved exceptionally well. Dad and Dora took turns driving. Dora proved herself to be a worthy driver, except for the long long stretch of snow covered icy highway made worse by strong cross winds between Gallup, New Mexico and Flagstaff, Arizona. The next morning she was unanimously elected to go treasure hunting with a gallon can in hand. The treasure being gasoline, without which the car wouldn't budge, and the hunt was in the middle of the Mojave Desert. Perhaps this area is more populated now, but at that time gas stations were far between and it was darned cold early in the morning in mid-winter. (I won't say it was Dad's fault that we ran out of gas, but I bet he's not been on any trip since and failed to fill the gas tank before crossing a desert.) Two days after this they arrived in San Francisco to stay at

Aunt Christine and Uncle Ernie's, until the house at 232 Morse Street was bought and has been home ever since. Helen, Vera, and Dolores each finished their schooling in San Francisco.

From the time you landed at this haven the storm started to break, and the sun peeked through, dimly at first, and then finally bright. One or two years later Harold, Elsie and children came to San Francisco.

Dora was married March 25, 1941 to Dick Scurzi. Helen, on September 20 of the same year to Bob Geertz. Now the ship was really making port often and the crew was growing fast. On July 25, 1943, Bob and Helen were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Barbara Ann. On September 19, 1942, Vera flew to New York to marry Bill Bisson. July 13, 1945, God gave Dick and Dora a precious son, and he was named James Nielsen. The next stop was made on December 10, 1946, when a dear little stranger was born to Bill and Vera when they welcomed aboard Ronald Boince. June 20, 1947 brought another daughter to Elsie and Harold, named Patricia, and the following year, 1948, William Geertz was born to Helen and Bob. Two years then passed before other stops were made. In April of 1950, Dolores was married to Eugene Dupignac. On June 7, of the same year, Victoria Ann was born to Dora and Dick, and in August of that year Harold Greer, Jr. made his appearance. The following year on September 10, the stork dropped a precious bundle of boy for Gene and Dolores.

Now your daughters had all been married, and literally were "off your hands". You had acquired 5 son-in-laws to bolster the crew, and 10 grandchildren as helpers on this ship.

At first after you came to California, your daughters as well as yourselves, had pondered over whether or not you, Dad, at your age would find it too difficult to get enough employment to finish



raising your family at home and to put a little aside for emergencies and old age. But your early training and aptitude for your trade stood you in good stead, and as years passed, all realized that the anxious moments need never have been spent.

When you joined the Danish lodges, you gained new friends, which gave you both a wonderful social outlet.

In summing your years of marriage, if they may be paraphrased-- it can be said that from the ashes left in Iowa, you had built a whole new, and let us hope, a better world for yourselves here in San Francisco.

In the past 8 years you have acquired 3 great-grandchildren.

Now as the date of your 50th Wedding Anniversary draws near, and your ship is getting ready to come into it's home port, it is interesting to note that it is no longer manned by Danes. You added a sprinkling of Irish, Scotch, Italian, German, English, French, and Norwegian.

As you look back over your long journey and bring it up-to-date, may you be able to say that though at times the going was rough, you weathered it and brought your ship home safely. We, your children, say, "A JOB WELL DONE".