

# Munter Musings

STORY  
50 YEARS  
WITH MOTHER AND DAD  
1922-1972

### PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

Robert H.  
Margorie  
Elmer  
Guane  
Axie

Iris  
Arlene  
Jim

Setting--Farm

Authors--Elmer and Harriet

Dedicated to Mother and Dad

What is an anniversary?

Your interpretation of a wedding anniversary may be different from ours- but foremost in my mind it is the culmination of a period of years, in this case 50, when two people have established a loving home for themselves and their family. They have lived the common way of life, relying on their fellow man and God and the church at all times. It is a reunion time with joyful feelings of togetherness.

I shall begin my story of our family with its original actors, my dad and mother as they were dating in the winter of 1922. It seems Dad saw Mother at a dance in Coleridge. She was there with someone else but Dad asked to escort her home and she refused but consented to accept a date for the next weekend to go to a dance at McLean, Nebraska. When he called for her he was driving a rather old 1916 Dodge touring car and he remarked that it was not in very good condition. H  
He was right as before they got home on that cold windy January night, the top had come loose and the side curtains were flapping in the wind. Mother just about froze but Dad had a horse hide lap robe which helped to keep Mother warm. On the next date Dad was sporting a new 1922 Dodge roadster! Along with the new car their romance was off to a great start. Four months later on May 3, Dad and Mother were married in the First Christian Church in Sioux City. Grandmother

Bayne and the Pastor;s wife were the witnesses. I can imagine what a handsome couple they were- our good looking Dad and pretty Mother as she wore a blue dress and gray hat and shoes.

On the way to Sioux City that morning, Mother stopped at aunt Ruby Roth;s house to borrow her blue coat.

On May 4, Dad and Mother motored to the farm which was their home for 42 years.

That first evening a bunch of friends and neighbors chivariated them and the treats cost Dad about \$35.00. Later in the summer, they took a trip to Minnesota.

Of course they were busy with the usual work and activities on the farm.

Since I (Elmer) am the oldest I remember (lovingly, I assure you) of several things about you other five brothers and sisters.

Duane, born in May of 1923, was a peppy



curly-headed child who was a lively guy as he motored his tricycle through the pantry in that old familiar path around and around and around.

On November 4, 1924, I well remember Dad waking me up in the night as he said, "Elmer, you have a baby sister and I heard on the radio that Calvin Coolidge was just elected president of the United States. Incidentally, that was a Hatfield battery radio which Dad really enjoyed. Our baby sister was named Avis and what a beautiful and good natured baby she was.

That 1924 Christmas day dinner at Grandma Munter's in Hartington was the one where little brother Duane was very sick with a mastoid condition and the decision was made that he should be taken to a Sioux City hospital for an operation. So Dad, Mother, baby Avis, and Duane went to Sioux City on the train. This was a very serious operation and of course we were all thankful when he finally came back home.

Duane as a little fellow, used to tease our cute little baby sister Avis as she sat on the floor or would be creeping around. One day the teasing was too much for her (You know women-- when they've had it!) and she reached down and gave Duane a good sharp bite on his big toe with her teeth. This surprised him and he immediately started howling to an unsympathetic mother who realized he deserved what he got.

My second sister Iris was born on October 30, 1926--I remember that Iris was not very strong as a baby and she cried a lot. Arlene joined our family August 31 in 1928. Now, I had three darling sisters whom I probably did not quite appreciate until I got older.

Of course Mother was a very busy lady in the house so it was one of my jobs to watch these three little girls as they sat on a blanket in the yard. By now I was ten or eleven years old



and I could think of other things more desirable to do but I'd coax them to watch our brother Duane as he did plenty of tricks for them in his clowning around.

As I mentioned before Mother was busy constantly with us as her family, cooking, sewing, washing and ironing, gardening, canning and we always had a hired man so that was one more. We each learned to work and share responsibility. I finally graduated from the baby sitting and began to help with chores and in the field. Duane of course was right behind me so I'm sure Dad appreciated our help. Avis was a fine outdoors girl as she could do well with the horses. Iris helped Mother inside and Arlene became a chicken specialist as she fed chickens and was the official egg gatherer.

My sisters often talk about how our brother Duane should have joined a big league baseball

team as he had such a well developed pitching arm! So often when they came out the door or around a corner, corn cobs or mud clods would come flying through the air with them as a target. Of course they's scream and run for cover.

I remember when we four older kids attended our country school. Dad provided a buggy and horse for us to travel back and forth in, and I was to be the "wagon master" but Duane wasn't content to ride home so he'd get out and run or hide someplace and it was my responsibility to see that he was in that buggy when we drove in the yard! What a time we had! I was proud of my little flock!

In those years our recreation consisted of Sunday family gatherings, family card playing, Dad listening to the radio and reading. Dad and Mother seldom went any place at night--so

we were all at home. For the fourth of July Mother would pack a picnic dinner and Dad would put some flags on the fenders and radiator of the car as we loaded up to take a ride to Center, about 50 miles away, or some other place to check on Dad's cattle which he had pastured there. I realize that doesn't sound too jivvy to you young whipper-snappers but to us 40 or 45 years ago we thought we were havin' a ball. And then we'd get home and hurry with chores so we could shoot fire crackers whild Mother and Dad made home-made ice cream.

Some times we'd go to Coleridge on Saturday nights and this was a big deal as Mother dolled up herself and each little girl. When she got each one ready, they had to sit on a chair until we were all ready.

Duane and I would go to the show and get a candy treat and feel like plutocrats as Dad

probably gave us each 25 cents from the cream check money!

We kids kept growing up and older and by and by some of us were in high school and college.

'Twas in the fall of 1938 that our baby brother Jim was born. I was attending college at Wayne and working in Dr. Benthach's old hospital. Dad brought Mother there and while she was in her room waiting for the action, Dad suggested to me that we should take a little ride into the country to help pass the time--When we returned a half hour later, we learned Jim had been born and he was a cute curly-haired red-faced squalling baby! Of course all of us were so happy and proud and Jim became the center of attention for us all--and eventually the idol of the grand children. You see Jim was lively, full of ideas, loved fun and he was in the new-doing generation.

School, parties, dates and boy friends filled the minds of Avis, Iris and Arlene as they were popular with their friends. On weekends when they'd come home, Mother would usually do some sewing for them as she made most of their clothes.

Duane was developing into quite a hog and cattle raiser as he was interested in livestock. He made our parents very proud in his endeavors in 4-H work and when he became Star Farmer of America.

Eventually all of us graduated from high school, some of us went to college and each of us secured jobs. I'm sure our folks were proud of each of us for something although this is not a portrayal of the attainments of the offspring. Our parents deserve the credit for letting us go into our chosen field as we made our decisions.

Duane and I served in the armed forces of our country as did most other boys our age.



By now all of us are married, have children and yes there are four great-grandchildren as of this writing with another due in June.

I look back through the years and can say our Dad was a mighty good farmer--He took care of the land, was a fine cattle and hog man, never neglected the care of the animals liked mules and used them for work in the fields. Dad was a very modern farmer for his time as he read farm magazines for new ideas and trends. He was hard working and a good manager. He didn't like milking however so that job was delegated to the hired man or one of us boys! But I well remember how he'd like to drink the cream from the separator!

Just as Dad worked hard outside so dad Mother work hard inside as she prepared thousands of meals and did an abundance of cooking for hired men in the corn picking and threshing seasons. Farm women are to be commended for their contribution as they did their bread baking and all of their other cooking without the conveniences so well



taken for granted today.

Dad and Mother while you were making history on your farm, many things were happening in the United States as well as in foreign countries so I will review a few of the highlights.

At the time of your marriage, Harding was president and some historians called those years the "roaring twenties". The country as a whole prospered. There was stock speculation, riotous spending, and the real estate booms sent prices skyrocketing. During these years the United States set off on a joy ride in an era of wonderful nonsense. Americans naturally felt light-hearted after the war. Henry Ford led the way by "putting America on wheels in his Model T".

People spent more and more money for good roads, furniture, clothes and vacations. There were crazes for jazz bands, sports and dances. Daring young flappers shocked their elders, with shorter skirts bobbed hair, free use of cosmetics and cigarettes.

I remember how you, Mother, came home from town one day after having your beautiful long hair cut short! Dad didn't like it but finally became used to the new look!

I remember reading the papers and hearing on the radio about the Charles Lindbergh's solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean in 1927 and how it roused the nation to a fever pitch of excitement. Coolidge was elected president in 1921 as I mentioned before. In 1928 or 29, you decided to purchase the farm you were renting from Grandpa Hunter and this became an important step to you.

The future looked bright when Herbert Hoover became president in 1929 but his administration had hardly begun when the country suffered the worst business crash in its history. After the 1929 collapse the country sank steadily into the most acute depression in its history. Banks failed, factories shut down, stores closed, farm

prices fell lower than ever before. Desperate men sold apples on street corners in cities, ate in "soup kitchens" and lived in clumps of shacks called "Hoovervilles". Angry farmers prevented mortgage foreclosures with pitchforks and workmen demanded government action. Of course Dad and Mother this depression affected you folks and all of the other people in our area. But we always had enough to eat, sufficient clothing and parental care so we survived famously even though we kids were not aware of the worry our parents had.

Yes, the country demanded changes and it was in 1933 when President Roosevelt was inaugurated that he bolstered the people as he said those famous words, "The only thing we have to fear, is fear itself." Roosevelt's aims were relief recovery and reformation when he took office.

The drouth years were 1934 and 1936 in our area. I well remember how destitute everyone was- Dad tried to borrow \$5000 from the Coleridge bank

with whom he did business but was refused the loan. This provoked Dad and he went to the Belden Bank for the same request of a \$50.00 loan to buy corn! Having never done business at the Belden Bank prior to this time, once again he was refused but the bank president Dick Draper loaned Dad the money from his personal account. Fifty dollars doesn't sound like much today but back ther 35 or 36 years ago, it looked like several thousand dollars.

Roosevelt's domestic program was interrupted by the gathering war clouds which led to the entrance of United States into WW II on December 7, 1941.

What effect did this have on our family? Well wa boys were in the armed services. Because it was impossible to secure hired men to do farm work Avis and Iris became Dad's helpers as they assisted in corn picking.

In the spring of 1945, Roosevelt died suddenly and vice president Harry truman became president.



It was soon after the German surrender on May 7 that Truman ordered the newly developed atomic bomb to be dropped on Hiroshima, Japan on August 6. A second one was dropped on Nagasaki three days later and the War in the Pacific ended with the Japanese surrender on August 14, 1945.

Inflation became an acute problem under Truman. United States industry had quickly converted to a peacetime production after the war. The country entered a period of prosperity greater than any before in its history. New industries sprang up to supply Americans with plastics, television, frozen foods, and automatic home appliances. The electronics, chemical, natural gas, and jet-aircraft industries expanded rapidly. But runaway inflation threatened the nation after the government dropped price controls and other wartime restrictions during the first years after the war.

Truman was reelected in 1948 after a "whistle stop" campaign throughout the country which seemed to appeal to the people. The Korean War

broke out June 25, 1950.

By 1952, the nation seemed to be ready for a change as President Eisenhower became the new leader of our country. He kept many New Deal and Fair Deal measures but followed a moderate path.

In these middle 1900's, the United States found itself stronger and richer than ever before. It grew by two states when Alaska and Hawaii joined the union in 1959.

By now science had become more important in many fields due to its tremendous showing during WW II. The United States launched its first satellite, Explorer I, into orbit in January, 1958. (Russia launched the first man-made satellite, Sputnik I in October, 1957). Thus the Space-age and interest became apparent in our education.

I presume some of the younger members of our family will be weekendng on the Moon in years to come! Think so David?



John F. Kennedy, at the age of 43, was the youngest man ever elected President when he defeated Richard Nixon in 1960. Kennedy served only 34 months when he was assassinated in 1963.

Vice President Johnson plunged immediately into his new duties. He was reelected in 1964 and soon after was the passage of a health program called Medicare among other important legislation. Social Security had been well established some years before.

We are now living during the Nixon administration. His big thing seems to be to "hold the country together and to Vietnamize the war in Asia which has been going on for 10 years!

There would have been many newspaper headlines which you would remember-- To name a few--

Lindbergh Solo Transatlantic Flight, The 1929 Stock Market Crash, The John Dillinger Murder, Kidnapping of Lindbergh Child,

Pearl Harbor, Atomic Bombings, End of WW II, Penicillin Great New Drug, The Korean War, The War in Vietnam, Drug Addiction Rising, Men Walk on the Moon, and Nebraska's Big Red Has the Best Football Team in the Nation 2 Years in a Row! Now That's really big news.

Someplace along here I should mention Dad's automobiles-- There was a 1916 Dodge touring car, a 1922 Dodge roadster, and a 1924 or 1925 Studebaker sedan. A 1935 Ford sedan which wasn't too satisfactory was next on the list followed by a 1942 Chavy. Then on July 7, 1950, the day the first granddaughter, Kathy, was born, Dad purchased a Pontiac. This was followed by a yellow Ford in 1958 and then a 1963 Pontiac which is still holding the road at this writing.

Dad and Mother, I know that while you were actively engaged in farming and family

raising, you took very little time for traveling (maybe a weekend to Iowa or Minnesota occasionally) but you liiked forward to the trips you might have. Well, the "crops and kid raising" seemed to cease and you found yourselves in 1960, living it up in your trailer as you motored around the country from coast to coast and stem to stern of the U.S. This "map and miles" hobby seemed to occupy your lives for about 5 or 6 years.

Finally Dad and Mother you decided to sell your farm. This was a great jolt to you to to leave the home you had built up into a beautiful place with its attractive white fencees which you and Mother had built and painted, its tall beautiful evergreens you had planted and watched grow, and its land which you had lovingly cared for, for over forty years. But you realized you should make a move while you were still able and alert. So in Jan. 1964, you sell the farm to George Soendt and think about

the home you'll be building and moving into in the fall of 1965 in Laurel.

You are situated in a good little town and are now noted for being a good gardener (My Harriet and I enjoy those results!) a good lawn grower and a wise sage. Mother enjoys the social entities of the village as she does her "thing". Both of you are avid readers and interested in world happenings.

I'm sure you're not finished with your traveling yet--Mother enjoyed her South American venture in 1970 so much that I presume there'll be more trips in the future some place--you certainly have the time to go now folks No eggs to gather, no cows to milk, no hogs to feed and notheing to obligate you

All of your family are very glad for you that you had the opportunity to enjoy these trips together.

There must be something noted about the



good times the grandchildren enjoyed on your farm, Mother and Dad.

Of course the main character in this grandchildren chapter would be Jim! He was the leader, the entertainer, the main actor of the clan--the fellow who these kids all adored. First there was Mike in 1943, then Rick 1946, Tom in 1947, Gary, Larry and Ronnie in 1948, then finally came the long awaited first granddaughter in, 1948, followed by the 1953 batch made up of Jack, Cindy, and Danielle. Kenneth made his appearance in 1954 followed by Steve A. in 1957 as well as Susie in 1957, and Steve F. in 1958, and the 1959 babies were Mark Herse and Nance. David joined the group in 1963 and Ellen made her appearance in 1966.

It is the older grandchildren who made up the excitement of getting in on the "era of Jim". There was the digging of caves in the trees, the burying and digging treasures, the camping out, the Christmas bow and arrow sets used on the hogs!

Avis's boys led the rest in ice and overshoe chapping in the tanks. Iris's Gary lost his glasses in a corn cob fight. There was swinging on the rope in the hay mow, there was climbing, wrestling and just loads of good fun with the whold gang.

Mike fondly remembers the good omlets Grandmari made plus all the other goodies found in her kitchen.

Jim's doodly bug was fun to go someplace on but disheartening to have to walk it back home-- engine trouble maybe?

Some more grand kids antics was to put corn by the electric fence so the cattle would come to eat it and get a shock!

I never was aware that these kids ever had disagreements or fights--I guess they had too much fun to waste time arguing! By now of course about half of these dids are grown up and married or about to be so I'm sure they have good thoughts about their gatherings on Grandpa's farm.

My family were so great to Harriet while I was



overseas as they helped her get Mike "into the world", and showed their concern in an abundance of ways. Of course Harriet, having no brother or sisters of her own, immediately adopted all of mine and has always loved them dearly. She's even tried to get her nieces and nephews when she can get by with it!

Through those years different things happened to each of us-- we didn't all get our toes bitten, nor split our baby-doll pajamas which exposed our modesty, nor even get to be the first to have a grandfather's chair but we sure enjoyed sharing the experiences with the ones to whom these things happen.

I remember how my sisters sat down to do their Christmas shopping from the Sears catalog--by the time they emerged from the little out house if they still wanted it they sent for it!

I know there are many subjects I didn't mention, such as the hired men, our relatives, the neighbors, the illnesses, the marriages of the children, the sorrows and tears, the reunion, etc.

Everyone of these is important and would make great reading but I think it's impossible for me to try to delve into every facet.

I'm sure that we, Elmer, Duane, Avis, Iris, Arlene, and Jim, have neglected to say thanks to you our folks for many things you did for us, for words of encouragement, and thoughts and prayers rendered for us. I know such actions are inexcusable but probably very typical. It isn't too late yet to show how we feel but of course some of don't express our thoughts adequately, I don't remember the who, when, where, and what not the exact dates all the important events in the life of our family but in these notations, Harriet and I have selected, there is a richness of family closeness which lies in the memories of shared experiences that only we its members can fully appreciate.

Dad and Mom I shall close this reading using a quote from an unknown author:

"You've passed your silver quarter and now reached your Golden half. You've reaped joy from Life's Harvest and I s'pose of course some chaff. May pathways which now lie ahead prove peaceful as can be to make a lovely setting for your Diamond Jubilee."

END