

THE GEORGE FRICKE FAMILY

George Fricke is the son of Ernest Fricke who was the tenth child of Christian and Caroline Schaper Fricke

March 7, 1934

This was the big day for George and Ruth. The sun was bright and the sky clear, the temperature warm. At 6:00 P.M., we were united in marriage at the parsonage of St. John's Lutheran Church in Madrid, Iowa. Mother had a big roast chicken dinner ready for us when we got back from Rev. C.O. Nelson's home. My sister Jean and Georges' cousin Herbert Fricke were our attendants. There were about 20 guest present in my parents little farm home located about three miles northeast of Madrid. I had made our wedding cake which was an angel food and made a few decorations on it using a ten cent cake decorator mother had purchased at our local "Ten cent store."

The following day we loaded all our belongings which included a sow about to farrow that my father gave us, a sow Mrs. Nellie Stockman gave us. (George worked for her and she became a very good friend of ours), several bushels of corn, a holstein cow George had bought, our wedding gifts, and our clothes. That filled one small truck.

We had a job working on a farm north of Boone, Iowa for an old bachelor Albert Jones. Here we had an eight room house to live in,, a large yard with a space for garden, a hen house that kept our dozen old hens my dad gave us, together with \$25.00 a month salary. We thought we were rich. On our way up to our new home, we stopped in Boone and bought groceries. When this was done we had fifty cents left between us. That had to last until March 31st when we got our first pay check. About the same time we arrived at our new home, the furniture from Davidsons of Des Moines, Iowa arrived. There was a good green and ivory cook stove (coal, wood, cob and trash), our bedroom furniture which consisted of a beautiful bed with bed spring and innerspring mattress, a vanity and a chest of drawers. George had purchased a table and four chairs prior to this, so it went along in the truck with the rest of our belongings. We had no parlor heater, so it was quite cold a few times. We closed off all the house except the kitchen-dining room and tiny bedroom. Someone had left an old table in the house, so we cleaned it up and used it. We got hold of several wooden orange crates and put them together to make a cupboard in which to hold our dishes. As time went on we gradually added to our possessions - paper drapes for the windows and some one gave us a 9' x 12' congoleum rug for the dining room floor. We got along fine until winter set in early the fall of 1934. Mr. Jones had a room upstairs filled with furniture.

One day when he was there he went up and brought down an air tight stove and some rocking chairs for our use. The floor in that house was so cold I froze my feet. If you have never experienced frozen feet you will never know the agony I suffered for several months after that. We were then waiting for our first child. Gerald was born on October 5, 1935 at home south of Stanhope, Iowa. By this time, George had gotten another job with an older single lady named Esther Erickson for which we were paid \$35.00 per month. This time the house we lived in had eleven rooms. We had furniture enough for four rooms, It was a nicer house, with water in the summer kitchen and a sink. Also, there were cupboards. We stayed there three years. In 1938 we moved to Kelly Iowa and rented a farm owned by Charles Reynoldson. During those three years at Stanhope George would go to farm sales where he would buy machinery. He bought a two bottom plow for \$2.50; an 8 foot disc for \$5.00; a harrow for junk he had revived that; a two row cultivator for \$2.00 and a corn planter for less than \$5.00. Our new residence was close to Mrs. Stockman's, and my father John Davis. Between the two George had horses to use and other machinery necessary to get his crops in. That following year the world was nearing a turmoil. Soon we were in World War II.

David Lee was born March 19, 1940 at the Mary Greeley Hospital in Ames, Iowa. Three years later on January 16, 1943 John Ernest was born at the Mary Greeley hospital in Ames, Iowa. The war was really "ferocious" during this time. When John was six weeks (1943) old we moved to a farm north of the Ames, Iowa college. North of where we lived was located a Naval Air training field. One of our neighbors told us we had to keep our windows covered at night. To me this was scary. After two years had elapsed and we had been suffering through ration stamps for most everything we bought, Michael Ray our fourth son was born on July 2, 1945 at the Mary Greeley hospital in Ames, Iowa. At the close of the war George was getting farm ownership fever. We started looking. Upon answering an add in the Des Moines Register we located a farm 20 miles south east of Albert Lea, Minnesota. We moved there in February 1947. By this time I was really getting into cake decorating for fun. Birthday cakes mostly for friends and family. In December 1951 we moved again. This time we located two miles east of Litchfield, Minnesota. This farm we bought after selling the one in southern Minnesota. Here we lived until all four boys had completed school and each one in time had enlisted in the U. S. Air Force.

During the boys growing years we both got involved in 4-H club work. I had been a member four years before we were married. George got involved when Jerry was ten years old and joined the club at Ames, Iowa. George became a leader at this time. With each move he retained his 4-H leadership and soon I became involved.

George put in twenty years as a 4-H leader and I held that position for eighteen years. In 1963 I was the first 4-H leader, together with another leader, Mamie Hortwig of Meeker County, to attend the 4-H leader's forum in Washington D.C. for two weeks.

I worked four years in the Litchfield Produce, but quit there when it went bankrupt and went to the Meeker County Hospital where I worked as a nurses aide for fourteen and one half years. My cake baking and decorating was expanding - now into wedding cakes. Bread baking was getting to be a new trend also. While I was doing all this George got a job in St. Cloud at the Franklin transformer company and later in Litchfield at the Arid Aire grain dryer manufacturing company. By this time the boys were growing up and one by one graduating from high school and enlisting in the U.S. Air Force. The crops weren't the best, our farm was quite sandy so unless we had plenty of rain our crops did suffer. For supplemental income George drove school bus for seven years. Following that he got a job at the "Jennie O" produce where he worked as a government inspector. Then in 1970 I started work with the Litchfield Garment Company sewing leather sleeves for all wool sports jackets. I stayed there seven years and quit. Cake decorating had completely taken over. George then sold the farm and we bought a two and a half acre plot of ground on the west side of Lake Minne Belle, six miles west of Litchfield. We built a new house with a walk out basement where I do all my baking.

I now have a sizeable investment in decorating supplies. I made at least one cake every week-sometimes three. The most perplexing request was for a cake large enough to serve 400 people. When finished it was seven tiers high with an eighteen inch cake on the bottom and graduated in size with two inches less in every tier. The tallest cake I have ever made was five and one half feet high. I use my own recipes for frosting. It takes about six hours to frost and decorate a large wedding cake. I now have a store of "time saver's" and tips which I've learned through my years of experience.

I make a lot of doll cakes and also use dolls for decorating. To coordinate colors I use actual scraps of materials from the bridesmaid dresses for dressing the dolls. I never make two cakes alike always giving an individual touch.

Our family is growing. In 1934 it was just two. Today we have four sons, three daughter-in-laws, six grand-daughters, three grandsons, one step grand-daughter, one step grandson, two great grand-daughters, one great grandson, one grand-daughter-in-law and one grandson-in-law. One grand-daughter died in a fire. Twenty five in all.

EARL FRICKE

Earl Fricke is the son of Ernest Fricke who was the tenth child of Christian and Caroline Schaper Fricke.

Earl Fricke enlisted in the U.S. Army and left for active training in February 1941. He spent his recruit training at Fort Lewis, Washington with the 3rd Infantry Division.

In late October 1941 he was released from the army because of the 28 year old bill. Pearl Harbor was bombed December 7, 1941 and two days later he received his call back to active duty. He spent most of 1942 helping train new divisions and in late October 1942 moved to Camp Pickett, Virginia. Soon they set sail for parts known only as operation "Torch". They landed on the shores of Africa near Fedela, French Morocco then on to Casablanca. From there to North Africa in the chase of Rommel's Afrika Korps which ended in Tunis. From there they invaded Sicily where they first met General Patton. Had some very hard battles on the island. After the island fell they made another landing at Salerno, Italy. From Salerno they pushed on up the boot to Cassino. Then they made yet another amphibous landing at Anzio. Here they really got bogged down in the mud. Finally on May 25, 1944 they broke out of the beach head for Rome. This breakout was their most costly battle of the war as they lost 998 men in their division in just one day.

Once again the division was on the move for southern France. Here they stormed the beaches at St. Trapez, France and advanced up the Rhone Valley to Besancon, France. They fought in the Vosages Mountains and on to Colmar, France in snow and real cold weather. Then on to Germany when on March 15th they broke into Germany, smashed the Siegfried Line and went to Worms where once again they had to cross the mighty Rhine River. From there to Stuttgart, Ulm, Augsburg, Nurnberg and Munich then on to Berchtesgaden and finally to Salzburg where the war ended. They had been in ten campaigns throughout the war.

It seemed strange to no longer hear the crash of shells and roar of bombs. The Third Infantry Division received more Congressional Medals (31) than any other in World War II. But they really didn't have much to celebrate. Nearly 35,000 men, more than twice the original strength of the division were dead, wounded or missing in action. You really don't celebrate things like that. May we never have another conflict like this.

HISTORY OF
GERALD EDWARD FRICKE FAMILY

Gerald Fricke was the first child of George and Ruth Fricke

Gerald Edward Fricke born: October 5, 1935

Mary Linda Johnston born: August 19, 1941

Gerald and Mary married: January 29, 1959

James Robert Fricke born: May 5, 1959 (son)

Bonnie Kay Koenen born: April 28, 1958

James and Bonnie married: July 27, 1978

Tonya Jo Fricke born: January 10, 1979 (daughter)

Justin Bryce Fricke born: April 16, 1980 (son)

James and Bonnie divorced: June 5, 1980

Kristine Kay Neumann born: October 19, 1957

James and Kristine married: November 2, 1980

Tara Kristine Fricke born: June 10, 1981 (daughter)

Diane Sue Fricke born: September 27, 1960 (daughter)

Geri Lynn Fricke Dahmes born: July 25, 1962 (daughter)

Steven Jeffrey Dahms born: October 18, 1960

Gerie and Steven married: June 5, 1980

To introduce you to the accompanying history of the Gerald Fricke family, it would add interest to your reading to know their back grounds.

Gerald was born in Stanhope, Iowa to parents Ruth and George Fricke on October 5, 1935. His young life was spent on the farm lands of Iowa and Minnesota with farm animal raising and farm chores. He had the company of three brothers to keep his parents very busy. George and Ruth involved him in 4-H Clubs which gave him lessons in responsibilities and earning his own money. This also gave him contact with people who formed his early ideals that were to surface themselves in his adult life. Sports became a burning desire within him as he entered high school. Gerald graduated from high school in Litchfield, Minnesota in 1953. He began college in St. Paul, Minnesota. He entered the Air Force in early January 1955 to allow him to take advantage of the G.I. Bill with hopes of continuing his education. The military experiences introduced him to another side of life and ultimately directed him to his present career in the Federal Aviation Administration as an Operations Branch Specialist in the Regional office located in Des Plaines, Illinois.

Mary was born in the small town of Belle Fourche, South Dakota on August 19, 1941 to Shirley and Arthur Johnston. Her parents were ranchers, raising sheep and farming. Mary was introduced to moving early in her life. Her parents bought properties in Montana, Idaho and finally the state of Washington. Mary spent most of her young life in Washington, graduating from high school in Colville, Washington. She had opportunities to grow and mature with more responsibilities than average children her age. Due to divorce breaking her mother and father's marriage, Mary became aware of the need to help her mother any way she could. A new marriage for her mother, made life easier and happier. Mary could be active in high school activities and also work in a cleaners as an added source of money for her high school needs. She had dreams of marriage and perhaps secondly, go to a business college. Marriage came first as she met Gerald in 1957 while he was stationed near her hometown at an United States Air Force Radar Site.

Gerald and Mary were married January 29, 1959 in Colville, Washington. As all young girls, Mary dreamed of having a home of her own, mothering children and being a dutiful wife. As all young girls, she knew little of her future ahead, but being young and in love, life was to be taken as it arrived each day.

They were married in Washington but in just a few days they arrived in Minnesota which was Gerald's claimed home state. Gerald had been honorably discharged from the military and had enrolled in college at the University of Minnesota - Farm Campus.

Gerald's dream was to earn a college degree. However, with family expectations, he applied for a job with the Federal Aviation Administration. Other jobs came in between such as working in the college cafeteria washing pots and pans. Then as an electricians helper in a paper company.

Gerald and Mary's first child James Robert was born by ceaserean on May 5, 1959. Both he and his mother were quite ill but being young and strong, they returned to fine health.

That fall, the first word of employment for the long awaited application for the FAA arrived. Gerald was to report to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma November 19, 1959 for several weeks training. This left Mary and their young son to fend for themselves in the big city of St. Paul. Mary had begun a job and James was all set at a child care home. A long distance call from Gerald came on a Sunday asking Mary to come to Oklahoma. Mary had been raised on a ranch, gone to country schools, graduated from a senior class of 93 students but she had never driven any long distances nor did she know one direction from another. Mary and son, James, left on Monday morning for the journey southward. Oklahoma was their destination and seventeen hours later with the Lord helping them all the way, they drove into the motel parking lot where Gerald was staying. Three weeks later, they were homeward bound for St. Paul again on January 1, 1960.

Gerald and Mary's first Christmas had been spent in a little motel in Oklahoma but they were together and it was a grand Christmas with their son. The turkey sandwiches lasted them all the way home.

As the new year began soon was the news of another baby to be born in September. Many pressures of family expenses made Gerald decide to take a promotional bid to Indianapolis, Indiana. The timing for departure and the baby's due date worried Gerald as Mary would have had to remain until after the baby's birth if transfer time came after August. Time on their side, the transfer completed, the family left for Indiana with the car packed to the brim and a moving van to move their few items left. Their next home was rented in Hazelwood, Indiana where they hurried to check into doctors and hospital for the preparation of a new baby by ceaserean in six short weeks.

A daughter was born September 27, 1960 in Indianapolis. She was named Diane Sue and so special to her family. Ruth Fricke made her son Gerald aware that Diane was the first girl born to their side in 30 years.

As all young families must find for themselves, the sacrifices are many those first years in just keeping the needs of a family provided. Again, Mary found a job to help supplement the income.

A fine, warm home was found for the children to stay. Gerald had met his career status with the FAA but had his doubts as to his profession. He resigned the FAA and began work at Blue Cross-Blue Shield Insurance Company in their data processing department. Again, blessings were showered and they were aware that another baby would be coming. "If you can't lick the insurance company, you join it" became their motto. Geri Lynn was born by cesarean July 29, 1962. After her lungs got their exercise, she soon began to show her importance to the family. Her joy turned many fallen faces to many smiles on many occasions to come.

Gerald and Mary had been on a waiting list to rent a place in the country with its own lake stocked with fish. Also a large fenced yard and garden spot. This place became available and a few bucks saved on rent, they moved to Danville, Illinois. Later this became one of the most referred to as the favorite place. The children could grow, be close to nature and the family ties were strengthened. During their time at the little house on the lake, Gerald was reinstated with the FAA and Mary once again became a homemaker. Winter proved to be a test to Gerald and Mary as they continued living in Danville. At times, the snow drifts prevented Gerald driving the car home. So he would park down near the highway and carry grocery bags across the field. Mary would watch for his lights and go to help him carry needs home at midnight when he would be getting home from work.

Times improved and soon the possibility of buying that first house presented itself. It meant lots of painting and fixing but Gerald and Mary earned the down-payment for the house and moved to Mooresville, Indiana in October 1964 to occupy their first home. Mary remembers the high point of having a washer and dryer of their own. James was in kindergarten and life was full.

A test must come to all married people. Mary's test was the day Gerald came home from work at 10:30 A.M. and informed her that he had an opportunity to go to Alaska. The final decision was to be made by 2:00 P.M. that very day! Shocked and angry, Mary did realize that she must let her husband grow and continue to believe in him even though she felt at that moment he was crazy. The agreement was made. They would go to Illiamna, Alaska.

The preparations were many because it was remote Alaska. They had to stock up on medical supplies, get medical records updated with children shots, sell all that had taken six years to obtain and sort out the most important items to take with them. The government allowed only 3000 pounds for moving to Alaska. There was three weeks only to be ready for the journey to the West Coast. There the car would be shipped to Anchorage and in time to Illiamna,. The strong faith of Gerald had to hold on for all the family during that period of their lives.

James had been playing in the hall-way of the home practicing slides for baseball and he pitched forward to chip his new permanent front tooth diagonally. Add one more worry to their long trip. He had to sip his meals through a straw across the country. There was a dental appointment waiting for him when they arrived in Washington. A steel cap was placed securely over the tooth to protect it, hopefully, for the two years duration they would spend in Alaska.

Gerald reported for his duty in Alaska, on December 2, 1965. The family was to arrive at a later date after the dental work. Mary had never flown in an airplane before and she was to fly along with the three children from Seattle, Washington to Anchorage, Alaska and onward to Iliamna, Alaska. The children were six, five and three and one half years old at that time. Mary was so nervous by the time the flight had changed once, she just prayed that the airplane they finally boarded would land safely and indeed in Anchorage. When they did land and approached the terminal, fear struck. All the faces were Oriental faces! Thank goodness a flight from Japan had also landed in Anchorage. Mary was still on the right track. One more small flight and the family would be re-united in a new location. That day was December 23, 1965. Iliamna, Alaska really was a place, even if it hadn't appeared on the map. Population: 86 and only 23 of those people were white. The Frickes made up five of those. The remaining people were Aleute Indians of the village.

The family ties strengthened even more during the stay in Iliamna. Each member of the family depended on each other. Church, which had been a very intimate part of Gerald's family, had to be improvised because there wasn't a church in this small village of the Lutheran faith. Sunday School lessons were done by correspondence courses. An airplane brought the life line items of food and mail twice a week. So Sunday lessons were sent on Tuesday and answers were received on Friday from Saskatchewan, Canada. Faith grew, children learned valuable lessons, mother was very busy keeping everyone clean, fed and happy, and father was working nearly every day.

The elements of winter in that north country faced Gerald and Mary soon after their arrival. The children had a short three mile bus ride to the village where the school was located. Three miles isn't far until you just can not penetrate the way. Then it is a distance undescrivable. The snow had begun to skip into drifts as the wind came up quickly. Soon blizzard conditions existed. James had been kept at school as the wind began to come up and soon it was very evident that he must remain at the school with 25 other students over night.

No one could have made the trip after them due to the severe storm which went in their record book recording 60 m.p.h. wind creating a chill factor of -93 degrees. The Fricke house was opened to those stranded in the housing addition. Calmness returned late the following day and allowed snow machines to return the youngsters home. Quite a fulfilling reunion that was!

Happier moments were the airplane bringing groceries, items ordered from catalogs, magazines, books, and even junk mail. They enjoyed reading everything. Groceries were ordered for periods of two months and received every six weeks, weather permitting.

Diane enjoyed her sixth birthday in Illiamna. She had asked permission of her mother if a birthday party could be held at their house for all her friends. Mary was quite surprised to learn later in the day when the children of the village of Newhalen arrived at Diane's house to enjoy birthday cake, many came including their parents. This was a good way to acquaint themselves with the native people, however. The villagers fully accepted all the family after that pleasant encounter.

The lessons learned and experienced in this small, remote place were to set a pattern for existence and living for each other. The priority items were properly placed in each one's lives. There was no television to view and time was spent playing games, cooking, baking, rock picking and polishing, and visiting the other families. Family communications began here and remained as an important part of keeping feelings open for all the children and their parents.

An even happier day was when the "Fricke Switch" was flipped to remote Illiamna's Flight Services to the station of King Solomon, Alaska and Gerald transferred to Nome, Alaska on February 2, 1967. The knowledge gained in the remote site helped Gerald and Mary immensely when the order for food had to be made for the year. The cost of living was much higher in Nome but the housing was also much better. Nome's population was near 2800. Nearly three-quarters of that population were the native Eskimos.

Geri-Lynn began kindergarten in Nome and Diane and James were seasoned students by this time as they were in second and third grades. New friends and the childhood disease, mumps, were the first events soon after arriving in Nome. There was a beautiful Lutheran Mission Church that the family most happily attended. Gerald became active in the church and soon found himself the treasurer. Mary followed by becoming the choir director and teacher. The Frickes were once again in the minority of the population being only one fourth of the population being white.

The town was friendly and the FAA people had bowling leagues and good report with one another. The remembrances of Nome were always cherished with good memories for Gerald and Mary. James was tested many times as he began to grow and became taller than anyone of his own age. He was a gently-minded child but the day had to come in which he bloodied the neighbor kid's nose.

The experience of panning for gold occurred in Nome, Alaska. The family could drive the car 75 miles north and 75 miles east. Gasoline was \$1.00 per gallon and that was thought to be outlandish in 1968. The terrain was facinating and many rides, no matter the weather, were the fun form of entertainment. It would be cold and white in the winter, but warmer green in the summer. Patches of flowers and berries added to fun outings for the family. Berries were picked, frozen and enjoyed just like home, in the lower 48 states.

A promotion for Gerald came to remove them from their comfort and after extending the time from two to four years in Alaska, they transferred to Fairbanks, Alaska in February, 1969. It was expensive to live in Fairbanks because housing was not provided as it had been previously in Nome and Illiamna. A mobile home was purchased and shipped up the Alaskan highway for them to occupy in May. They enjoyed their brand new home. The children's school was appropriately named North Pole Elementary located in North Pole, Alaska. Life continued on schedule. Mary was called to help by working in a downtown store. She continued working until their return rights came in July of 1970.

Gerald was assigned the Chicago area in returning to his home region. Mary and the children enjoyed a train ride from Fairbanks to Anchorage and continued to Washington by air to visit Mary's mother and attend her sister's graduation.

To make another long move easier, a vacation was planned for relaxation and family enjoyment. A camper was purchased to make the trip and transition which took the family from Washington, down the coast of Oregon into California to visit old friends. They continued eastward and northward to a final destination of Plano, Illinois.

As always, the children adapted to new friends, community and schools. James began his real interest in sports here. Plano was to be a temporary home until shopping for a home could be completed.

A home was purchased in Botavia, Illinois in 1971 that still remains in the memory of each of the children as the best loved house. It was a 75 year old house that had been partially remodeled. Gerald and Mary continued the improvements as they lived there the next two and one half years. Each child had his own room. There were large closets and two bathrooms!

It rested on 3/4 of an acre of land accommodating fruit trees, garden and pine trees. There were chores for everyone. Diane and Geri began to train for their musical interests in Batavia. James made some long, fine friends as he participated in sports. Mary had ample room to qualify for a state license for day care, of eight youngsters.

The business of Federal Service always meant the possibility of transfer. Gerald had continued to add college credits to his advantage and had become the representative for the Flight Service Union. This in turn prepared him to accept the promotional bid to Saginaw, Michigan as an assistant chief in the Flight Service station. This was great for Gerald but he knew it would be hard for his family. Surely a time to pull together and put priority on the top again. James had just begun high school and Geri and Diane had many friends. They all realized that the move could be very rewarding also. It took four months to sell the home in Batavia. The Lord softened the blows so when time came to pack in a moving van, the family one and all were ready.

The new community of Saginaw was a reward for making another move. The people in our new neighborhood were warm and special. Many attended the same church and as the children continued confirmation classes, everyone helped one another in car-pooling for the many trips to church. This carried over into school activities also. The children were approaching their teenager years and the acceptance with peer groups was essential. Sports provided the avenue for James as well as Diane and Geri.

James grew taller and taller as he prepared to play basketball. He was a contributor to a winning team. Baseball and football were also sports that James excelled in to his fullest capacity. His father began to realize just how tall he was getting when he mistook James' shadow in a glass door for that of a crowding stranger. His frame stretched to 6'4" before graduation from high school. James graduated from Swan Valley High School in Saginaw in June 1977. He received two honors that he'll prize for a long time. He was chosen the outstanding senior boy by the teaching faculty and was given the esteemed Civitan award.

The three and one half years spent in Saginaw were challenging for parents and the young people were survivors. As an added challenge was the acceptance to house and provide care to a Swedish exchange student. Per Lindquist came to live at their home for one year. Gerald and Mary's household of four teenagers and their individual growing pains were times to be reflected later in their lives.

Gerald continued his education at Saginaw Valley College. Gerald would challenge the children for good marks in school. They all responded well. Geri Lynn began her attempts in competing to become a cheerleader. Geri was talented in vocal music and received the outstanding choir award as a freshman.

Mixed emotions of happiness and sadness came when Gerald was selected to be the Facility Chief at the Redwood Falls, Minnesota Flight Service Station in 1977. Diane was entering her senior year of high school. James was anticipating his first year of college and the family had many friends to leave behind. In looking ahead, there was a re-uniting with grandparents in Minnesota who had missed all of the family's growing. They would have only sixty miles separating them- the shortest distance ever in all of Gerald and Mary's married years. Holidays could be spent together and major family events.

James began college at his Uncle John Fricke's alma-mater. His good grades and sports ability qualified him for financial help. He had been employed all summer making good money at a job so he was all set for his first year at the University of Minnesota at Morris.

Diane challenged the senior class at Redwood Falls High School for the high spot. She came in #3 in class standing. Choir was outstanding in Redwood's school giving her many musical opportunities. She continued her basketball playing on the varsity teams. Diane was prepared upon her graduation in 1978 to enter her first year of college. She also attended the University of Minnesota at Morris.

Geri enjoyed singing competition and earned recognition as a cheerleader all her high school career.

James met Bonnie Kay Koenen while attending college. They were married July 27, 1978. They had good intentions in continuing college as their goal. James and Bonnie became parents of a daughter, Tonya Jo, born January 10, 1979. A son, Justin Bryce, was born on April 16, 1980.

James and Bonnie were divorced June 5, 1980. A heartbreak to all the families.

James remarried soon that year to Kristine Kay Newmann on November 2, 1980. He continued classes in college as well as a full time job with the Carlson Craft firm as a supervisor in management. He will have a degree in Business Administration. James and Kristine became parents to a daughter, Tara Kristine, born June 10, 1981.

Diane continued her studies in Literature and Spanish and obtained a coaching certificate. After spending two months in Mexico, she began her senior year in college. Graduation begins to look close at hand after these four years entirely on her own. She will be a skilled and capable teacher holding two degrees.

Geri Lynn attended Golden Valley Lutheran College in Minneapolis, Minnesota after her graduation from high school in Redwood Falls. She also received a diamond ring and marriage proposal from a high school sweet-heart. The following spring, she married Steven Jeffrey Dahmes on June 5, 1981.

Gerald had been persistent in obtaining his college degree. While in Redwood Falls, he travelled seventy miles to Mankato to complete his needed hours for his business degree. It was a grand day in June of 1979 when his family all attended graduation with Gerald in full dress of cap and gown. In adding a degree to his credentials, Gerald was given the opportunity to advance in his chosen profession. One more move for Gerald and Mary to record. Gerald was transferred to the Midwest's Regional Office located in Chicago in June of 1980. His responsibilities increased and traveling to outlying areas adds to the job's interests. In leaving Minnesota, their hearts were heavy to leave family and friends. They had raised their children to be independent people and they were prepared for living now, so the way cleared for them to embark on their own lives together. The family visits often and distance is a small thing. The world seems smaller with all their travels now.

This family continues to remain a close-knit group. Life continues to add its dimensions as becoming grand parents was a high point in a mid-stream point of living.

Gerald and Mary look to challenges ahead with continuing faith in God.

THREE YEARS LIVING AND WORKING IN HONG KONG

Imagine if you will, being set down in an airport alone and in a foreign country - a country where the people, the language, the culture and the customs are quite unlike those found in America and - finding no one to meet you! Already several thousand miles from home having just crossed the Pacific Ocean by an over night flight from the United States and with no sleep for at least 48 hours didn't help much either. Not knowing one person in Hong Kong nor even the address of the place where I was to live only added to the problem. How could such a thing happen and what to do?

How could it all have happened this way? Easily and it did. I had recently retired as Director of School Nursing from the Evanston, Illinois schools. While living in Evanston I was amember of Grace Lutheran Church. Dr. Edward May, then President of the Wheat Ridge Foundation was also a member of Grace Church. Both were members of the Chicago Chapter of the Lutheran Medical Missions. As President of the Wheat Ridge Foundation Dr. May visited our Lutheran Church health facilities around the world. Whenever and wherever he found unmet health needs an attempt was made to alleviate these conditions as much as was possible. Since I had only recently retired Dr. May recommended that I go to Hong Kong, there to establish a school health program in an area with a rapidly expanding population but with limited health facilities. A program of health services and health education could do much to alleviate some of the more serious conditions. Dr. May presented his proposal before a regular meeting of the Chicago Chapter of the Lutheran Medical Missions and recommended that I go to Hong Kong as a volunteer, under the sponsorship of that organization. So with their approval and with the agreement that they provide my plane fare, arrangements were made for me to leave early in July 1972. It was understood that I would remain for at least one year or more if necessary.

Not being familiar with Chinese people nor their culture gave me some misgivings. Dr. May, however, convinced me that it was a work of faith and that we can only do our best and leave the rest to God. And so in early July 1972 I found myself in the unusual circumstances previously described.

The problem actually began with a difficulty stemming from the plane. I had received a plane ticket on a Pan Am 747. Very early one morning during the second week in July 1972, I left Des Moines via United Airlines bound for San Francisco, to await the departure of the plane which was to carry me to Hong Kong. We were scheduled for an early afternoon leave. By noon everything seemed to be in readiness, all had boarded the plane, baggage was loaded and the numerous other details essential to take off had been completed. Then the trouble began.

As we started down the run way one of the big engines refused to fire. Nothing to do except to return to our starting point, disembark and begin the waiting. It was well past midnight when we finally took off. Several hours after leaving San Francisco we were able to see the lights from the Aleution Islands. Shortly thereafter we encountered some very severe thunderstorms. At 3:00 A.M. Japan time we landed in Tokyo, and changed planes to complete the remaing four hours of the trip to Hong Kong.

Before leaving San Francisco Pan Am had requested that we prepare a telegram, to be sent to Hong Kong, at their expense, informing anyone who might be meeting us that we would be late in arriving. For some reason these telegrams were never sent. Miss Martha Boss who was to meet me did not know why I did not arrive and I did not know why I was not met as had been promised.

As you can guess at this time many thoughts were passing through my mind and inquires seemed to be of no help. If no one came to meet me I could go back home but quickly dismissed that idea. After collecting my thoughts I decided to take a cab to the only address I had - that of the return address found on previous correspondence from Hong Kong. Then the task of getting a cab. The Chinese couldn't understand how I could arrive under such circumstances nor that I could not even give them the address of the place where I was to live. Possibly being afraid of having a transient on their hands, they hustled me into a cab with directions to the cab driver to take me to the mailing address, which he did. When we arrived at 21 Hankow Road I could see no entrance to the building and hanging on to the last shred of security left I refused to get out of the cab, finally convincing the cab driver to take me back to the air port. Communicating with him had been difficult and when I spoke he only shrugged his shoulders but after repeating the word "airport" several times we did return where I presented myself to the Pan Am office. The gentleman in charge could not only understand but spoke English very well. After explaining my plight to him and showing him my letters he called Lutheran Handcrafts at 21 Hankow Road. A little more than three hours later, some one did come to meet me, and take me to my new home at 21 Chatham Road.

Twenty One Chatham Road proved to be an interesting place. A Buddhist Temple was located on the 12th floor. Jingling bells ringing all thru the night, a strong oder of incense pouring through the open windows and loud chanting sometimes made for little sleep. I lived on the 14th floor and many times when the "lift" was not working I climbed those fourteen flights at three flight intervals. Our neighbors across the hall were Indians from Bombay. Two events will always remain in my mind; on my second Sunday morning when walking to church my purse was suddenly snatched out of my hand. I was left without a key but felt I should return to the apartment to wait until Miss Boss who I lived with came home. My keys to the flat were in my purse and since my address was also in there who ever

had my purse could get in that flat should they so desire. The Indians seeing me sitting on the step outside our door and learning what had happened invited me to have dinner with them which I did. At another time we were invited to attend a Hindu wedding when one of their sons was married to a beautiful Indian girl. The wedding ceremony took several hours after which time we partook of a feast such as I had never seen before nor since. Tables loaded with food, each prepared for people from different nationalities were placed about in a large room. Later I learned that foreigners are seldom invited to such occasions and we were quite fortunate to have been a part of it.

As I stated at the beginning I was sent to develop and implement a school health program in our Lutheran Schools although the Chinese did insist that during my first four and one half months that I teach Bible Classes, conversational English and evening English classes to Jr. High students. Every evening was filled as were the week ends. Later this proved to be a blessing in disguise for school personnel, students and parents first learned to know me as a co-worker rather than a foreigner come to thrust a new program on them. I was no longer the foreigner but as one of the Chinese principals expressed it. "You understand the Chinese - do what ever you feel is necessary". During those years I learned to know many of them well and developed friendships which I shall treasure always.

I can never forget my first day of teaching standing before a crowded classroom of 48 Jr. High Chinese students. Later when I got to know them better I learned that they, too, were looking at me wondering what was going to happen. The pressures on these students are great. Rote teaching is the common method used by instructor and students must memorize every thing. If they fail they often are not able to go on with their education and that closes the door to future advancement. One unforgettable picture will always stand out in my memory - that of students holding a book reading, reading, and reading (frequently outloud) trying to memorize every word.

While I was doing this teaching I was also developing a realistic program of health services and health education to be implemented after I quit teaching. That meant employing Chinese Nurses not only to assist me but to carry on with the program after I would leave. In addition training them for the work also had to be done as well as seeking financial aid for the program. The Wheat Ridge Foundation did finance the program as well as the Chinese nurses salaries during the first year. Grace Lutheran Church in Evanston gave much, much help.. Individuals and other organizations assisted also.

I had selected vision testing as a first priority since the importance of good vision is easily understood and such an activity would be more readily accepted by the parents. Audiometric screening came next and then dental check ups. Many times eye charts were hung on the wall outside the school building to escape the intense heat found inside. Audiometric testing was more difficult for there is little or no way of escaping the noises and windows had to be kept open. A young Chinese dentist gave invaluable help and for the first time helped many of the Chinese to understand the importance of such care. There is no dental school in Hong Kong to train dentists to care for their four and one half million people. All health problems discovered were referred to appropriate and available medical resources after the home visits and conferences with parents had been made. Several large clinics were in operation. However one doctor told me that they were expected to see sixty people in two hours (two minutes for every person). We also helped in schools for the handicapped located near ours. Health education, too, was stressed and one of our crowning achievements was holding a health exhibit showing what had been accomplished in both health services and health education.

Just this past spring (1982) I was invited back to Hong Kong to attend a program celebrating ten years of school health services and health education to be held in conjunction with a religious Thanksgiving service.

Each day in Hong Kong was filled with something special: Making home visits in little shacks on the mountain sides or on the 20th floor of a mansion (not the same meaning as we understand mansion); riding over crowded double deck buses and being the only one who was not Chinese; getting on the wrong bus; riding in a san pan over the rough Chinese sea to a drug rehabilitation center; working with the British Military Hospital who accepted referrals for many kinds of illnesses or adverse health conditions including children with hearing and vision difficulties; riding the hydrofoil to Macau (a Portugese colony under communist domination) to work in our Lutheran School there; going on a three day outing to Lantau Island with the Chinese students and sleeping on a bag of saw dust; getting stuck in the lift or caught in a torrential down pour; living through several typhoons; working with Hong Kong education departments, the Hong Kong Christian Service, the Hong Kong Public Health Department and the Hong Kong Dental Society; attending an all East Asian Health Conference held in Bangkok; visiting a Chinese home each Friday night for Bible study; each Sunday working with the Chinese young people attending church services, and spending the afternoon with them playing games, singing or other types of activity; observing the ever changing sights in the harbor or going to the lobby of the Peninsula Hotel to eat a snack but in reality only there to get warm

(it sometimes took an hour and half to eat that sandwich.)
There is no heat in Hong Kong homes except in large hotels.
I could go on and on for each has story of its own. How
can anyone describe the more than three very busy years
in Hong Kong - my only regret that I never took time out
to visit Australia, China proper or Katmandu.. It had to
be the Lord who kept me from returning home on my
unforgettable arrival.

After such a beginning one might think that working in
Hong Kong could only be a frustrating experience. Not so -
as I look back on it now my three years in Hong Kong have
become a precious memory - one of the most rewarding
experiences I was ever privileged to enjoy.

Irma Fricke

Wilhelmina (Minnie) Fricke

Wilhelmina (Minnie) Fricke was born to Christian and Caroline Fricke on March 25, 1866 and was their fifth child. The following year her parents moved to Iowa. She was baptized and confirmed in St. John's Lutheran Church. Very little of her early life, the same as with so many others during those days, is not known.

On October 20, 1887 she was married to Louis Eckhardt. Twenty one years later he passed away following surgery for a ruptured appendix. Just before his death he had bought his brother Ed's farm. Ed Eckhardt had had a heart attack and had quit farming. Minnie and Louis had twelve children and August the oldest of the twelve was not quite nineteen years old. Louise the youngest was just nine weeks old when their dad died. A baby boy born in 1902 died at the age of three weeks. Louis had made a will on his death bed and at that time asked the oldest children to stand together. That will was executed on July 11, 1933. By that time August, Clara, Arnold, Roy, Lydia and Louise had all passed away. Six of the twelve children were now gone. Despite her many sorrows and suffering she never ceased to lead and to guide those intrusted to her care. As her daughter said, "If it was weeds, thistles, burdocks, button weeds or what ever she would give each child a narrow bladed spade with which to work always with herself, however, out in front leading the way. The weeds were cut, loaded on a horse drawn cart and taken home to be burned before the seeds could ripen."

When Minnie's youngest sister died leaving a nine month old son, she drove a horse and buggy several miles to bring him to her own home where she could care for him. On many occasions she sent one of her three oldest daughters to help out in one or the other of her brothers homes. When one of her brother's wives passed away she baked bread twice a week for them and three times a week for her own family. There was always a large garden and fruit from fruit trees planted by her brother-in-law. Mending for such a large family was a never ending task. In addition she kept many of her grandchildren so that they could attend St. John's Lutheran school and be confirmed.

When Roy was electrocuted on September 29, 1926 and some of the children became angry she said, "Remember there are some things worse than death".

But the strains of life had taken their toll and when Louise, her youngest, died leaving two little boys motherless her health began to fail and her energy to wane. This was the first time in her life she was slow to recuperate. She became ill requiring the care of a doctor and hospital treatments, at first every couple of weeks but as time passed the treatments were more often. During the last six months of her life she became almost entirely bedfast except for occasional periods when she was able to sit up in a chair.