

A short sketch of the life
of

Papa and Mamma Elsaesser

as written by herself for her children

DEDICATION

To my dear children in memory of your beloved father
HERMAN ELSAESSER

Preface

In the beginning, my intention was only to write a few notes about those early days when your father and I started out in business, as I knew this would give you all much pleasure later on, when I, too, am gone. I had a few pages written already when I decided to let someone read it. This person was so taken up with it that it encouraged me to write more details of our lives. May the example of your dear father incite you to still greater generosity in the service of God- it the wish of your loving mother. God bless each one of you. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

Chapter 1.....My Own Childhood

Now here goes the long-promised notes of my life and also the life of my husband, Herman Elsaesser, pioneer restaurant operator and proprietor in Cincinnati. I will start with my days as a child in Germany.

I was a miller's daughter- which meant a lot in the old country, but the year before I was born, 1868, there was a big cloudburst, something like happened recently in Kentucky. It made my father a poor man. We lost about everything. We were a family of six- Father, Mother, and four children. My sister Marie was the oldest, then two brothers and I, the baby. I had brown curly hair like some of the Italian children have, and was the pet of the family and of the whole village. It didn't bother me one bit that we were poor- I never went hungry once in my life.

My childhood should have been sad, but what child is sad? Children don't know the troubles and worries of the parents- at least I didn't realize it at all how bad things were. After the cloudburst, my parents not only lost nearly all their earthly possessions, but my poor father gave up all hope and started to drown his troubles in drink. Oh, how sad that was! My poor mother found consolation in hard work and prayer. She was a very pious little woman. In our village we had no pastor, and Mass only on Sundays or for funerals. My dear mother would walk for one hour to get to the Church of the Capuchins where she was enrolled in the Christian Mother's society and the Third Order of St. Francis. She was small, had a sweet round face and black hair. She was swift on her feet and didn't spare them for God. Also she loved to work in the fields and I know her work was mingled with prayer.

Our dear godmother took care of the house and the children because she had open limbs and it was thought the inside work was easier for her. She was supposed to be paid for her work but this hardly ever happened because there was no money. She used to say, in fun, "I work for meals but get nothing to eat, for wages, but get no money." Thanks be to God we always had plenty to eat, since she was an excellent cook.

I see myself yet, skipping home from school (about 20 min. walk) to find

my sister's babies stretching out their little arms to me to take them bye-bye. I loved them just as much as though they were my little sisters. and they grew up to be sweet young ladies.

Our schoolmaster had to teach us Religion as well as everything else, which he did very well. When time came for First Holy Communion, we had to go to the city parish church to get the last instructions. We behaved very well, going and coming. We prayed the Rosary. It was a big feast day for me! The year before my First Holy Communion, my father left for America. He had a fictitious letter, supposed to be written by a friend over here, in which it said he could do well in this country. He begged the money from friends for the trip, which did not cost much at that time. The night before he left was a sad night. He took farewell from me alone and told me I should be good, and next year I would make my First Holy Communion and he would send me a gold cross from America.

For a long time we heard nothing from him, but at last we got a big letter. He told us all about America- how he could not get any work. He was about 50 years old then and not very strong. Oh how we used to cry for him! We wrote to friends who would answer that they had seen him but did not know where he was located. One of my brothers went over to look for him, but to no avail. He advertised in papers, looked up all the friends we knew in America, but could not find him. At that time I was in boarding school and how I cried and prayed for my father, but nothing was heard from him. When I came over, seven years later, I started the search again. Often I thought I saw him, but it was never the man I looked for. We had to give up, that he was lost from us. Our poor mother never complained, but never stopped praying for him, I know. She was a quiet person and worked hard till she got older and could not work any more. My sister, Mary, took good care of her, and also of our good godmother. They both died in my sister's home. Two of my brothers died at the age of 14, but several years apart. My older brother, who had been a soldier, worked on a farm, and later took care of horses in the city. The next brother was Frank, the one who went to America to find father. He could have done very well here because he was very talented, but he could not save money. He remained poor, and became lost here, too. I do not know where he went, nor when, where nor how he died. I hope he died a good death.

Chapter 2 MY DAYS AT BOARDING SCHOOL

As I mentioned before, my big sister got married, and she and her husband started in business. They had a mill, a bakery, and also a summer garden with a dance pavillion where large dances were given like Thanksgiving (Kirchwein), Fastnacht (Mardi Gras). I enjoyed these times immensely. I used to love to dance, and to work, too.

My sister's husband was a sickly man for eight years, but on the other hand, he was an excellent businessman. After he died, the mill and all was sold, and my sister moved to the city to raise her children. She had three very talented daughters. I was sent to a convent boarding school with them.

In boarding school I was not a brilliant scholar, but I was very religious there. I never forgot all the prayers we said, even during our work. We had to sew, first of all, the uniform we wore on weekdays- a big blue tight-fitting apron to cover the dresses we brought from home. But on Sundays we wore a brownish-gray dress with a blue scarf, and on Feast days we wore black with a little ruffled collar and our prize medal on a blue ribbon. When we went out into the city, we wore our black dresses with

big white hats trimmed with velvet ribbons.

The Sisters were called Notre Dame teachers of the poor. I will never forget them. They were holy Nuns. I liked the one best that had the laundry. I loved to help wash and iron. The plain clothes were mangled, but with rude big stones- not as we know mangling today.

One day I burned my hands while throwing hot ashes into the river: the hot ashes flew up onto my hands when they hit the cold water. We also had a big fire while I lived there. The barns burned, together with the fine cows, a team of horses, a few pigs. Even the bakery and laundry, the loft where we hung our clothes- all of that burned that morning. It was an awful fire! We prayed and cried till it was out. They put the buildings up again, and in 1925, when we visited there, Stephen was treated with lunch and beer in that building when he practiced piano with a Sister.

I was there for two years, as a young girl, and wanted to go back to be a Nun, but it happened otherwise. Instead I came to America, and in later years, I had three daughters of my own to become Sisters.

When I finished school there, I looked for a job, but a suitable position could not be found, so a relative of mine made arrangements for me to go to America.

Chapter 3

MY FIRST DAYS UN AMERICA

I landed first in Brooklyn, N. Y. and was met by some distant relatives. They received me well and were very kind to me. I had intended to stay in or near New York, but I only stayed there six weeks. One of my brothers had also departed for America several years before me, and at the time was working as a baker in Cincinnati. I wrote to him that I was in Brooklyn and he sent me a letter saying that he was very sick and about to die. Well that settled it for my staying east. I went upstairs and counted my pennies and found I had just enough left to bring me to Cincinnati. The friends I was with did not like to see me leave them, but, after all, they didn't blame me for wanting to see my sick brother. The man had a sister living in Newport, Ky. He put me on a Pennsylvania train, looked about, and put me in the care of a traveling salesman. It was very wise of him to do so. I was so train-sick nearly all the time that I needed a friend, which he was- a real gentleman. Arrived at the station, he put me on the donkey-car, and told the conductor where to let me off in Newport.

It was on Sunday evening and I can never forget the astonished faces of the family, to have a visitor from New York, sent by the lady's brother. The daughter, about my age, sat at the front steps with her smaller brothers around her. The mother was all crippled up with rheumatism, and the father was a hard-working tailor, one of those who made better suits for custom tailors. Well, there I was! They took me in and were kind to me. In those days, children of German parents, spoke German, too, so it was not hard for me to speak with them. It is not so easy to be in a strange country, knowing nothing of the language. Housework was the only kind of work open to us, and even that kind was hard to find. I was with these good friends several weeks until I found my brother, or rather, he found me. After he got out of the city hospital, which was located at 12th and Central at that time, he found a letter from me, to tell him where to find me. When he came, he said he admired my nerve, coming alone

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to this country at the age of 18.

He had taken a job again as a baker in a bakery on Sixth St. between Central Av., and John St. (This was the very place that we later started in business). It was called the New York Bakery because the proprietor, Mr. Schaumloeffel, used to work in New York. He was a good baker, but liked the cards too well, instead of tending to business. His wife was a crabby woman who frightened customers away.

Well, on that Fourth of July, shortly before I came to Cincinnati, the kitchen and bakery had caught fire and the help had to leap for their lives. Among them was my future husband, but of course I did not know that! He was all packed up to leave for Australia to find his fortune, and just got out, trunk and all, before the floor fell in. It must have been a bad fire because everything was still black and burned out when I took the place of the girl who had broken her ankle when she jumped out of the window. So you see, what's bad for one is good for another. My brother brought me there for my first job, which I gladly accepted for \$3 a week. I had to cook for the family and the bakers. I took a look at the terrible mess in that charred kitchen, all the debris around yet, with only a path shoveled to get to the stove- I hardly knew where to start.

It was a very hot summer and the heat nearly killed me. My brother helped me to clean up the mess, and showed me how to cook "American food." They all liked my cooking, and ere long, everything was in running order again. Mrs. Schaumloeffel always talked of the boy who had gone to Australia, wondering how he was getting along. She talked so much about him, it made me curious to know him. Well, he was in Australia, but could find no work there, and wrote to a friend of his, an old lady, to ask if she would help him to come back and get his job back. She helped him as much as she could and he came back. He worked his way back on the steamer as a dishwasher, and when he landed in San Francisco, took a job there as a baker in a restaurant. That particular business impressed him very much and he probably made up his mind then that he would like to get a chance to have that sort of business.

Finally he got back to Cincinnati, got his old job back and we met for the first time, in the kitchen that had burned and was newly fixed up and in running order. He was baker and I was cook and we liked each other at first sight. He never told me though, what he thought of me. He wasn't that kind. He was short and stocky, with a friendly face, red cheeks, and black hair- a clean, sober and healthy young man.

Well, the Mrs. got a hint that "her Herman" liked somebody better than herself, her dog SPITZ, and her cat "Schnutter butter". So one day she ran me out without an excuse. So there I was without a job again. I found friends on Wade St., and they took me in for a few days until I could find another job.

I then worked for Mrs. Wheelwright on Walnut Hills. She was a nice woman but her husband was very cranky. One thing I learned there was how to cook the real Boston beans. From there I went to work for a young Jewish family named Newburg. She was a daughter of the then-senator Mack. I was by then a fine cook, could bake and do more than they had expected.

I liked it so much there, but Herman I had lost. I wrote to him once, telling him as best I could, where I was, but he couldn't find me and I thought, "Well, so far, so good. If you don't care for me, that's all right". Finally one day I looked up another old acquaintance, and old Schwobemutterle, named Mrs. Meyer. I arrived to see her on a Sunday evening when they were all dressed to go to church. The old lady said, "Ja, weist,

there is a mission for me, but the last night of it, they won't run us out." So we went to the close of the mission at St. Francis church on Vine St. After church was out, there was Herman waiting beside me. He took me home so he would be sure to know where I lived. He came to see me a few times after that, but the family, Newburg, were never home at these times, so did not meet him.

One morning I got a letter with the edges of the envelope all singed from the open gas flame. The postman laughed and said, "Nellie, your beau is in a hurry." And so he was! In that letter he wrote, "If you want me, you must marry me in two weeks." He really was in a hurry, just as the postman said. Then, of course, I had to tell the family I was leaving to get married. They were astonished! I hardly ever went out and no one came to see me, so they thought my fellow must be a fake, and surely would rob me of my hard-earned money. When he came to get his answer, the family had to admit he was no fakir.

Somehow my leaving that family brought a big change to them. Grandma and Grandpa Newburg moved because they did not like the cooking of the next girl who was hired. After that girl left, the family boarded out, gave up housekeeping altogether. It seems it was as hard then, as now, to get good reliable help.

Chapter 4

GRANDPA'S CHILDHOOD

I did not know Papa as a child, but after marriage, one tells the other of the life before they were acquainted. He was born in a village in Baden, between the Schwarzwald and Switzerland. It is a rather rough climate there. A few years ago I visited his home in July. As I rode from my home, I was astonished at such a big difference in climate in such a small area. When the train passed through the Rhineland they were harvesting rye, but when we passed Freiburg and came to the mountains, the wheat was yet green- I really wondered if it would ever ripen.

The people seem to be like their country- stocky, rough, but good. Papa had a hard struggle even as a child- he had to go to Switzerland to work for a big farmer. He was a stableboy, cuffed about by rough hired men, but his mother needed the little money badly. She was sickly, had open limbs and a bad cough. (I can sympathize with her for I had the same for many years). He had an older brother who was drafted in the army, and there was a younger sister. Herman must have been bright in school, at least he always kept the first place in class, which is an enviable position in a village school where there is only one teacher for all the grades. He would have liked to have a chance to learn more.

Toosoon came the time for our Papa to be mustered, and he was afraid he would be drawn for the army like his brother was. He did not want to be a soldier, and his mother had no one to earn a penny for her- except him. One day when she was working in her garden, the good village nurse called to her, "Catherine, if your Herman wants to go to America, I will lend him the money." Gladly mother and son accepted the offer, and ere long, Herman secretly walked to Switzerland to get over the German border, and from there, continued to the next port- I believe France.

Arrived in this country, he went to Columbus, Ohio, where there were several Leipferdinger he hoped to get help from. Also, in those days, they

had to be glad to have work themselves. He worked a couple of weeks in tannery, which he did not like. Then he bethought himself of another idea, from home- Burgermaster' Mariely. She had visited back home once, and he remembered that she looked so rich. He did not have her address, but he thought he could surely find her if he watched the door of the German church. So, for many days, poor Papa waited after Mass in front of old St. Philomena's down on Pearl St. (it has since burned down), but Mariely didn't come out of that church nor any other. She no longer went to church. But Herman did not know that. He was in a strange city now, without knowing where to turn for work, food or shelter. He found how hard it is to go hungry. That is why, in later years, he never turned away a hungry person. One day, cold and hungry, he sat on the steps of the then-new Fountain Square, crying. A good-hearted German saw him and asked the trouble. After hearing his story, the man was kind enough to take him to the place where he was employed, fed him and shared his bed with him until Herman found work. This first job in Cincinnati was in a small bakery near the old Good Samaritan Hospital. It meant food and shelter, and a little pay- only 2 or 3 dollars a week in those days for a poor baker.

Sometime later he also found his friend, Mariely. For many reasons he couldn't stay with her, but her sister-in-law's husband had a good bakery on Sixth St., near Central Av., and he offered him the big sum of \$3 a week, also food and shelter. Herman was an apprentice there for a long while, learned cake baking and was finally raised to \$8 a week. Even then, the outlook seemed sad because he wanted to be able to help his parents. As it was, he sent nearly every penny of his hard-earned money home. He was determined to stick it out in this country, and finally his mother wrote that all her debts were paid and he should begin to save his money for himself.

Mr. Schaumloeffel left all the work to Papa while he went out to drink and play cards. He didn't mind his business at all, and his wife frightened the customers away with her cranky face and unfriendliness; so by and by they went bankrupt and owed poor Papa wages. In spite of this he had worked there 7 or 8 years and had saved enough to take him ~~XXXX~~ to the land of his dreams- Australia ! As I said before, I was still in Germany at that time, or maybe in Brooklyn- anyway I had not met him yet. But he later told me that his trunk was all packed when the fire broke out on the Fourth of July. It started to burn but he threw it out the window and jumped after it, then he was able to carry out his plan to travel to a far-off land.

Chapter 5

STARTING BUSINESS TOGETHER

On July 15, 1890, we were married in Holy Trinity church on Fifth St. We had no big wedding because we had little money and few friends. After the ceremony, we treated the help in the bakery to a keg of beer, and after we all ate together, we went on our honeymoon to Coney Island- not in New York, but right here to our own Coney Island.. We ate there together, then came home with all the other merrymakers on the Island Queen. In the morning we went to work as though nothing had happened.

The business Herman had decided to buy was so run-down, and times were so hard that we had a struggle to get along. His boss owed him \$300. and his old friend, Mrs. Brown, loaned him \$500 to buy this business. If you think the business was prosperous, let me tell you what it consisted of:

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some old bakery pictures, 8 old tables and chairs, a small coffee urn, a few staples for baking, and no customers and no credit ! Our rent was \$125 a month (\$4 a day seemed very high), we had to have help: one girl, one baker, and an apprentice.

The store was large and long- very unhandy to work in. We only served one three-gallon urn of coffee all day. In a word, it was a dreary outlook. Our neighbors felt sorry for us and patronized us as much as they could.

One neighbor was also a very good friend of ours- Mr. Theodore Levin who worked in a fish market across the street. He came jumping over several times a day to get coffee and doughnuts, until one day he said, "I haven't time to go home for dinner today. Can you give me dinner?"

I replied, "Of course, go in the kitchen and sit down with the bakers." "No," he protested, "it is too hot in there. Please bring me something out here." I served him out in the store and that was the beginning of our first restaurant. Our girl's beau soon wanted dinner, and our few coffee and rolls customers gradually began to eat meals there. In about a month we had 30 or more customers for dinner each day.

Oh, how busy I was in those days- going to market, planning and preparing meals for so many. One funny thing was the variety of dishes that I bought a few at a time, at a neighboring crockery store. With all the expenses there was no profit then, but it was the beginning of a wonderful business.

Herman was good baker- doughnuts and pumpkin pie were his specialties. Saturday was our busiest day because of the market trade. We couldn't charge much though- coffee and two rolls 5 c, a meal 15 c, with lunches for 10 c. Lunches were all right, but dinners with steak or chops didn't pay at all. I used to get a steak for 45 c, which made only three dinners at 15 c each. Where was the profit in that? Even then customers were not satisfied with the amount. It was necessary for me to learn to buy in larger quantities and cut meat myself, which I had seen done. Then we began to make a little money, though it was still hard to pay our debts as well as our bills.

Often while I worked in the kitchen and at the bakery counter, Papa would stand in front of the bake oven, worrying how we could make our weekly payments of \$8. One morning I was scrubbing the old cash drawer which was supposed to ring when the drawer opened. It had become too encrusted with sugar and no longer rang. I found a piece of money which I dropped into some water, to soak away the sugar. When I looked at it later, and found that it was a \$5 gold piece, I ran to the basement to ask Herman if we could keep it. "Of course," he said, "we paid for the old fixtures, and God knows, we need it." Then he asked if the man had been here from the Building association. I replied that he would probably be there soon. He told me, "Take this and the change we have saved, and pay him the \$8 we owe. If we couldn't have paid him today, we would have run away this very day, leaving everything stand."

After that we did more business, and finally the \$500 was paid, then we could fix up a bit. We hired more help, bought new tables and chairs and a ten-gallon coffee urn. In winter we had to fill the urn quite often. The market people came for hot coffee in buckets and pitchers and soon we had the old stand as lively as could be.

Mr. ~~KLOPP~~ Levendorf used to sit outside his crockery store and say, "gottes wunder, grad wie ein Taubenschlag.. The people go in and out of that place."

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took a few lessons in a private school, and, being forced to speak the language, it came quickly to her. She was helpful, but too young to work very hard. Herman's sister helped in the kitchen and also learned English quickly.

Grandpa Elsassner had lots of fun with the little grandchild, Katie. She came to us just ten months after our marriage and was a healthy little girl. One Sunday her father took her out to Eickler's Garten where all his bachelor friends sat with glasses of beer. They laughed at him for taking his daughter out so young- she was only six weeks old. But he was very proud of her and brought her home safely. Almost every two years following, other arrivals came. Next, our Anthony- he practiced voice very vehemently during the first year, and this exercise of his lungs may have helped him to become a good singer later. So we had our hands full of business and family for many years to come. There were all the diseases that could be had: measles, whooping cough, diphtheria, and even smallpox.

Cincinnati in those days was not a very healthy city, but sooty and smoky. There was just enough gas for poor lighting, none for cooking. When we got our first electric lights, about 1895, they were big globes like street lights- two or three big ones for one store room.

Sixth St. Market was a great place where everything could be had. In front of our bakery was a sausage stand, nearby a ham stand and a cheese stand, also many vegetable, fruit and poultry stands. At Christmas and Thanksgiving, Market days were great events. I shall never forget our first Christmas business and the very unusual weather. In the afternoon of Christmas Eve we had doors and windows open- it was sultry and warm. Then all at once it got cold and started to snow. By morning we had at least two feet of snow. I was so homesick I cried like a baby. I missed my Christmas at home in the old country. Our next Christmas was not so bad. By that time we had our little girl, who was named Catherine, for Papa's mother. She was such joy to us and to the help.

I meant to say more about Papa's life than mine. He has always been well known for his religion and his charity. He never undertook anything without prayers and a promise of charity if it turned out well. We never let a beggar pass unaided, and we never let Sisters go out of the place without their baskets filled. There always seemed to be plenty for that.

When the landlady died and the house we lived in was put up for sale, a neighbor came to Herman and said, "If the price is not too high, I will loan you the money if you want to buy the place." The place did sell cheap and we bought it. It was not exactly a good buy, because the house was not valuable, but it kept us from being put out of the business we had worked so hard to establish. We did not make money like people say "head over heels" but there seemed to be a blessing on the business.

Soon we bought another house and started another restaurant and rooming house on Fifth St. near Baymiller. That was a mistake for it was too much work for me and I became very sick. At that time, when we had five children and two places of business, I almost died. Katie, Tony and Alphonse were born when we lived on George St., Frankie and Annie on the new place on Fifth St. The railroaders cheated us out of their board and room until we sold out to Mr. Franzreb. He knew how to get the money from their pay card, so they could no longer cheat. We moved back to the Sixth St. place where we had three big rooms over the restaurant. There our Teresa was born. Our children had diphtheria there and our poor Alphonse was at death's door. He was the sickest I ever saw anyone. We had a good Irish girl in the bakery at that time- we just called her Irish Katie. A young Italian came in for coffee one day, to find her crying. When he asked why, she said, "The boss' little boy is dying of

diphtheria." He told her about a young Dr. Greive, who could cure the boy. The doctor made me hold the child while he shot a tube in his throat, about the size of a little finger. It was fastened on a strong silk thread hanging out of his mouth on one side. That tube burst the shut membrane and suddenly life came back into the little fellow's face. Then he was given a shot that was new at that time, and I had to sit quietly holding him in my lap for three hours. Our little Teresa was two weeks old that day.

Poor Alphonse's life was saved but he stayed very delicate for years. He had a heart attack later, then got smallpox. Dr. Greive was surely sorry for me when little Frankie and baby Teresa also got the disease. They were going to take the children away from me to the Pesthouse, but I told them, "Take me, too." It was only a wooden building with two wards, located where that fine hospital is today, for tubercular patients. Men stayed downstairs and women and children upstairs. There was one cook, one nurse, one porter, and about 50 patients. Medicine was a bitter tea, of which we had to drink a little glass full twice a day. Each morning there was a bucket of good fresh milk and a bowl of mush, with a good stew at noon every day. I don't remember all the food but it was healthy food for sick people.

We rode there in an old rickety wagon over bumpy roads. When we first climbed the stairs, the patients grabbed the baby from me, kissing and hugging it. I was terrified. I had never seen smallpox before, and some of them were what is known as "in full bloom". I grabbed my baby and ran down into the yard, bellowing. A woman I had met came out of the kitchen and asked, "Why, Mrs. Elsaesser, what brings you here?" I showed her the baby and she said, "Why that isn't so bad. In a short time it will all be over." Her consoling words were as welcome as an angel to me, and, quiet and comforted again, I went upstairs to fix the cots on which we had to sleep. I gave my children some of the fresh milk and gradually became reconciled to my lot. When time came for dishwashing, there was much fussing among the patients about their duties. "No, I won't wash them tonight." "It's your turn." "No, I washed them yesterday." "You girls think you're too good to wash dishes." Finally I asked, "Where is the dishpan? Where can I get hot water?" And I started to wash them. Then everyone wanted to help, and in no time, the dishes were done and we settled down to rest. Of course I couldn't sleep- that was too much for one day!

None of the children had it very bad, and the country was a real treat for them. At first all the help in the restaurant had wanted to leave, but Irish Katie made them ashamed to do that, so all stayed and were there to greet us when we came home in a few weeks in a carriage. Irish Katie had all the roses in market there to welcome us home. Little Frankie was her pet- he used to get pennies for candy often from the cash register. Alphonse was awfully marked with red splotches, but they finally disappeared.

I have written so many discouraging things about our life in town, I must at least tell one funny thing that happened there before we moved to Price Hill. Annie was a little tot about three, when she had one penny to invest in candy. She went around the corner to the Tuchfarber ~~home~~ grocery, but on her way home, got too interested in the candy and lost her way, missed George St. and went all the way to Central. Finally a policeman saw her and asked her name. She told him, "Annie, and in German Anna." Meanwhile we had been very worried about her and reported her lost, so the policeman carried her home.

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Chapter 6
MOVE TO PRICE HILL

That summer we rented a little house on Price Hill so the children had more fresh air and room to play. There little Alphonse got sick again, with pneumonia. It seemed that every sharp wind made him sick. I never thought I would raise him, but now he is a well built man with a family of eight children and a very happy wife. Katie, Anthony and little Annie were taken care of by good Lena Meyer, who was their nurse girl. When I left the hospital with Alphonse we had made many friends- some even cried when we left because we got along so well together.

Next we bought a house on Warsaw Av., near St. Lawrence church. There we had an old, cold house, but a fine spacious yard. Now I wanted to have a cow for fresh milk for the children. The first cow turned out so well that Papa got the cow spell on him. All at once we not only had one cow, but cows galore. It was more work again than I could stand.

Joe was born on Warsaw Av., (3751). Then came Mariele, then Stephen was a Christmas present, born on St. Stephen's Day, 1905. In this house we had lots of sickness. Our Mariele had pneumonia there and my dear sister, Mary saved her little life with Kneipping. She gave olive oil and put wickels on the little chest. Little Mariele had many narrow escapes there. Franzely, the hired girl said something urged her to look after the baby. There she was almost choking on a pacifier. Another time she crawled through the bars of her bed and was hanging there by her head. Still another time, the children were pushing her baby buggy to and fro, when the handle caught a coal oil lamp standing on a small table. I heard their screams in the stable where I was looking after the cows, ran in just in time to throw the burning lamp in the stove just before it exploded. In a few minutes a neighbor came in to tell me that my chimney was burning out. I said, "I know it." All in all we had lots of trouble in that house. Only one feast day we had there- our dear Katie's First Holy Communion. Father Weibe, S.J. was there for the occasion, also Mr and Mrs Eckhard and a few other friends. When Joe was born, Papa took Frankie in the morning to show him the new little doll. Just then Joe moved, and Frankie was delighted, "Papa, it moved." Nine days after Joe was born, our Tony was run over by a street car in front of the house. They had to lift up the car to get him out.- he looked terrible, his head was hit and his hip broken. That was a terrible thing, but after all, he did get well again, though he got up too soon, just tipped his foot on the floor and it was broken again. He was such a good patient, never complaining, but sitting on his hard bed, drawing and whittling. A year after that we almost lost him again. He had a bad spell of rheumatism, got water in the heart sac and was again near death's door. (Thank God for sparing him to us ! What should we do without him?) Our dear Stephen became blind and our William (who was born after we moved to Rosemont) had infantile paralysis. So more serious heartache and work and worry for us. I tried everything for these unfortunate children, but to no avail for my poor Stephen. He got worse and worse till he lost all sight. Thank God he is not helpless. He is admirable, hard-working, a good man, has a good wife and lovely children. William also turned out to be a good business man. After all the sorrows and anxieties, things turned out remarkably well for these two. Life for them is really so good, we almost forget it looked so bad. God is good. With all the crosses he sends, a blessing follows. What God sends is good, no matter how bad it looks.

Chapter 7
MY HAPPIEST HOME

One of the happiest surprises of my life was the day Papa told me he had bought 819 Rosemont. I had often seen the beautiful place and sighed, "Oh, if I could only have a place like that to raise my children!" never dreaming that he would buy it for me. The day we moved in was really a "dream come true". He bought our new home from Mr. Reed, who very likely only sold it through necessity as he often came back to revisit it. I can see him yet- he was a tall man with a cane, and usually had his dog with him. Mr. Reed had bought the place from Sextros, who were very fashionable people, giving dances and parties often. They manufactured their own gas supply, and so there were gas jets everywhere you looked. When we first moved in, even a bell or two to summon servants. The people of Price Hill knew the place as Linden Mansion, as there were so many Linden trees on the premises. When we came, Papa planted still more, so it is a real park in summer when everything is green. How I used to enjoy seeing the children playing in their nice big yard. They were so thoughtful and kind toward each other, especially toward Stephen, playing mostly games in which he could take part, as RUNNING-WATER-STILL-POND.. Up to this time, Stephen could still distinguish light and day and bright colors. When Papa used to come home in the evenings, he would often say, "What color of tie have I on, Stevie?" He was always so gentle like a little lamb.

I thought we would be entirely happy in this big, fine house, but church and school were too far away. Papa would always say, "We will stay if we get a Church out here." We had eight acres of land, so Papa, of course, brought the cows out here. We had many chickens, too, and plenty of trouble with the neighbors, but Papa didn't mind that at all. He bought more land, so the cows would have enough pasture. Within a couple of years, we had too much land and had to lay out streets. The Most Reverend Archbishop Moeller accepted Papa's offer of ground for a church. His Grace viewed the grounds and told us how big it would have to be. We were overjoyed about getting a church and school out here, and gladly gave the ground. It is easy to say "Start a church and school", but not so easy to GET started. Much work and sacrifice it takes! There were very good and pious people near us. Many were Dr. Schoenhof's best parishoners from St. Lawrence church. It was hard for these people to come from a well-established church to an entirely new one. But they put a willing shoulder to the wheel and worked hard. Some people were not a bit shy to tell us over the phone that they were not willing to make all the sacrifices just because WE wanted it. They had the idea that we were doing all this out of selfish motives, the truth was, we had never thought of what it would mean to us, other than in a religious way. Once I overheard a man tell another at one of the picnics, "This whole thing was all speculation and foresight." That was the first time it struck me that people would think we gave the ground for speculation. It was God's will, not ours, that beautiful St. William should be on the hill. Of course it helped to sell lots after awhile, but only because people wanted to live near a Catholic church and school. We were close neighbors to our Lord for quite awhile. After his Grace, the Archbishop Moeller accepted the gift and named a pastor, breaking of the ground was on March 8. Our Willie was born that day (1910). Thus he was the first baby of the new parish. But it took longer than expected to have it ready for use. So Willie was baptised at St. Lawrence church by Father Roth, Lou Gehring and Mrs. Thurn being godparents. However, his name is the first in the baptismal record of St. William's.

Our family was doing all it could for the new church. One rang the angelus and the bells for Mass. We kept the altar wine, made the fires in church, and our Frankie and Tony were singer. Frankie sang soprano like a girl until his voice broke, like it does with most boys. Our Anthony and his friend, Edward Otting, used to sing very nice, their voices blended so well. They also sang at the Old St. Ludwig's for evening Benediction, and the church would be crowded. Dear Father Henry Buse liked congregational singing, and as he sang loudest himself, everyone else was bold enough to try to sing as loud as he did. It was all so inspiring, one people came, they came again often. Papa was collector there, and he had to be careful not to step on people's feet and legs-- there was such a crowd. Later, when Sunset Av. was finished, the little church was moved back and connected with the new school. It served a long time until there was a good bit of money on hand to build our present beautiful St William's. There should be lots said about all this but it would fill a big book, which I really cannot write.

I said there was a good bit of money saved for the new church, but the war, and afterwards, the depression, came along, and the invested money went to nothing. The school had been built and the parish was big, and the church HAD to be built. It was, but the debts were terrific and the interest high, so the worry brought our pastor, Father Anthony Francis Roth, to his grave. Our dear present pastor, Father Francis A. Reardon, now monsignor, filled his place with a heavy heart, to shoulder such a burden! He went about with prayer and serene fulfilment of his duties. He was not (and is not yet) easy on the purses, but with the good will of the parish, and lots more sacrifices, he can cut down those debts to one-half. If the good Lord spares him to us for awhile, he will accomplish the almost impossible.

When a person lives a long time and looks back, he surely has a picture of the ups and downs of life. It is a struggle at all times, only some persons keep on making more trouble for themselves than necessary. It is a nice feeling to be prosperous, but it means so little. Sometimes it seems as though a tornado comes to blow away most of what has been so laboriously gathered. Then death comes and takes us away. If we did good here, that we can take away with us. Your good deeds, your fulfilled duties, these are the only things that count then. A life lived for God, and with God you will be!

Chapter 8

OUR TRIPS

When we got older and ambition let up a bit, we finally got to think of traveling. I was the first one to go across the ocean to see my folks in Germany. We had sent a family picture to them, and when my sister saw that picture, she thought I had consumption. Well, she was not far wrong, so Papa wanted to prove to her that I was quite alive, so sent me over for a vacation. Our Katie was six years old then and I took her with me, leaving the others at home, in the care of good Aunt Teresa, my brother-in-laws wife. They lived in the same house with us at the time, also I had other pretty good help. So, in a very short time, I was on my way to New York for a steamer. I forget the name of it now. I was very seasick, but little Katie was well all the time. We had fine weather and in ten days we were home. I can't forget the scene when they heard our voices. I just thought they would go out of their minds. Our dear old godmother was alive at that time. They couldn't do enough for us. They had a store in connection with a boarding house, something like a delicatessen for the nearby soldiers. In a big barracks across the street we could see the soldiers exercise and form parades to the big field for

practise. We did not visit long, however, because of the children at home. I went to Papa's home, too, to see Grandpa and Aunt Bertha, but couldn't take Katie along because she was broke out with hives very bad, probably caused by the change of food and water. I took my niece, Christine, along to Baden. When we got near the village, seeing a boy, we asked him in what house Gottfried Elsaesser lived. But instead of an answer, he bombarded us with rocks, which surprised us very much. Later on, that same boy and his sister came over to us. We were living in the house of the Burgermeister where we were treated fine. His wife was an excellent cook, and he was a great entertainer- a smart man.

As Papa's home was near Switzerland, we visited the famous shrine of Einsiedeln. There is a wonderful church and shrine of Our Lady there in connection with a Benedictine convent. Grandpa Elsaesser was there with us, and we also took him to my home town, Aschaffenburg, to meet my folks, also his little Grandchild, Katie. My brother, Konrad, was so taken up with little Katie, he carried her around like a baby. He was also quite attached to me. He was happy when Papa sent over money for me to bring him and Christine and her sister, Francis, home to America with me. We arrived home safely on October and started work all over again.

My sister got very lonely after we had all gone and the next year she visited us here. We had a big G.A.R. Convention in Cincinnati that year, with so much work forme, that, after it was over, I was quite sick, to the point of death. My dear sister nursed me, and, but for that, I think I might not have been well again. Anna was the baby at the time- about 6 months old.

My sister went home again after I was up and about, but she came over a second time a few years later and again saved the life of one of the family, little Marie, her godchild. Christine, her daughter, was married and she really came over to get acquainted with her son-in-law, George Gerdes. As it happened, she was in time for the christening of the two babies- Oct. 29 and 30th, one to Christine and one of my own. My sister stayed quite awhile this time, and when she returned to Germany, Francis went with her and stayed until her sudden death from a stroke. After the affairs were settled, Francis came again to this country to live. She never married, preferring to be a governess for other people's children. A few years ago, she, too died.

Christna and George had three nice children, then George had to die young, too, about 35 years old. After that, Christine was very nervous and delicate, so her mother said for her to come to visit her. Another sister, Louise, had come to this country to console her, and they planned to go back together. The very evening before their steamer left, they accidentally (almost miraculously) met Louise's husband, Michael Schlosser, who had just arrived. So, of course, Louise stayed here. She later had two sons, then her husband died, and she had to bravely raise the boys alone. When they were old enough to care for themselves, she, too, died. Now Christine and I are the only ones left of our family. Papa has one sister living now in Germany. She has been over here twice, but was always anxious to get home to Germany. She is 74 now.

Now I must continue more about my trips. I went to the Holy Land with a Franciscan tour. I saw all the holy places but it is so long ago, that they were holy. Wars and troubles over there don't leave the Franciscan fathers time or money enough to keep the lands in good condition. The everlasting jealousy of all the tribes there is showing through everything.

I also went to Lisieux ~~and~~ Lourdes with my beloved son, Stephen, to seek a cure for his eyes. But the miracle did not happen the way we wanted it. It happened in another way, but we don't understand sometimes what God sees

fit for us. While we were across the ocean I took him to Papa's home and to mine. In both places he had a wonderful time.

Chapter 9 DIVINE PROVIDENCE

There are many instances I can recollect. Our first fire in business: our little cook was rendering fat in the oven of the kitchen range when it caught fire. I was already running to call the fire department, when someone said, "It's out!" Here is the way it was put out: Papa's brother, who worked in the basement, heard the cry and ran up with a bucket of ashes, threw it on, and out went the fire- a trick worth remembering!

One morning when Papa went to town on the street car, they were just passed the middle of the Eighth St. viaduct, when the part they had just been over, collapsed. It was due to a big flood which had undermined the pillars of the bridge.

Another time on the same viaduct, the horse was frightened by smoke from a passing train, and Papa and little Katie were thrown out. It can only be by Divine Providence that they were only bumped a bit and scared- not hurt at all.

One time Papa was on the third floor of a building at a K of C meeting. His heel caught and he fell down the three flights, unconscious, but with only a broken wrist.

He had many bad falls, because he was so hasty. His last fall was the beginning of his last illness. He fell coming home from the farm, injured his knee, was laid up for a long time on account of it. This was bad for him- it weakened him so much, he was never the same after that. Although he went to town again every day after that for about another year, business worries, heart trouble and other things finally laid him up. Everything possible was done, but the good Lord took him home on Dec. 6, 1935, at the age of 72½ years. I never thought I could live after he was gone, but God's will must be done. I am not well; but holding on.

Papa's funeral was a great proof of his honorable life. Hundreds of people came to see him laid out, and many priests and religious said prayers for him. Services in church were like those for a beloved pastor. I can't tell much about it- it hurts too much.....

Chapter 10 REFLECTIONS FIFTY YEARS AFTER MY WEDDING

It is fifty years past, but it is just as yesterday to me. We were still strangers to this country, especially me. I had been here only two years and had worked most of that time in Walnut Hills. I liked working for the Newburgs best, I had the feeling of their confidence, they trusted me with everything, and that was what I liked. I really was homesick for them and Walnut Hills after I was married.

While there, I had an expensive dress made- the making alone cost \$10. It fitted well and looked all right, but I didn't dream it was to be my wedding dress. We were married in Holy Trinity church, with only the boss, our hired girl and Uncle Severin, Papa's brother, our witnesses. After the ceremony, the singers asked us for some money for their singing. We didn't know about that custom and hadn't enough money for that, so they teased us about that for years to come.

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While a big family is together, it is nice. Boys and girls growing up together until school days are over, then begin another life. The question is the same for all: What am I going to do. what am I going to be ? That was easier for our boys to answer than for many others. Papa never wished them to work for strangers, so he put them all to work in the restaurant. The girls, too, started there, but they didn't stay. The oldest daughter, stayed until she married, but the others had a different calling- to the convent. When the first one went, I just thought it was impossible. I could not believe it, but she went and two more followed. Now they keep me busy visiting them, with which I like very much. I see now how God was good to them and to us all.

I have now passed my 70th birthday. I never thought I would be that old, because I had three very bad sick spells. I was annointed three times, which means I was at the point of death. But here I am yet, and Papa gone since 1935. Since his death, the boys are all still in the business, and so keeping together. My poor blind son alone, can't be there and as he loved the cows like Papa did, he had a dairy on Papa's last ground investment, of which he thought so much. So far it doesn't look like much of a success, but Steve makes a living on it for himself and his family. It is like a miracle how he gets along. His wife and children are a great consolation to him. Maybe someday everything will turn out as Papa wished. Papa always wanted his boys to be saving like he was, so he influenced each one to build a house, of money they had saved of the wages he paid them. Tony, Alphonse, and Frank built houses alike on St. Williams Av. That all had been cow pasture sometime gone by. Katie and Lee bought a house on Sunset Av. nearby.

Kate- April, 1891

Tony- Jan., 1893

Al- Sept. 5, 1894

Frank- Sept. 3, 1896

Anne (Sister Evelyn) Jan., 1898

Teresa- Nov. 7, 1899

Joe- Feb., 1902

Marie Oct., 1903

Steve- Dec. 26, 1905

Bill- March, 1910