

How It All Began

Nennetje Nijboer + Johannes Jacobus van den Born

Married September 5, 1930

Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary 1980

A transcript from recorded and written presentations during
a family campout celebration at Gull Lake

I.	Jack VandenBorn	page 2
II.	Kees Van't Land.	page 4
III.	Bill Vanden Born	page 8
IV.	Bertha Groot	page 11
V.	Hans (JohnJ) Vandeborn	page 13
VI.	Wilco Vanden Born	page 16
VII.	John Vandeborn	page 18
VIII.	Nennetje Nijboer	page 19
IX.	Johannes Jacobus van den Born	page 22

I. Fifty Years. [Jack]

The rural Nijboers bought animal feed from the van den Born's.
 Four woman-girls were farm-hardened, calloused, milk-spattered,
 The men-boys, also four, bookkeeping, sleek, superior, delivered corn,
 But accounting eyes noted the supple woman through the milk barn haze.
 Johannes J. and Nen found a love that a couple formed -
 And began the decades one through five in a depression fall.

Decade 1

Friday, September five, nineteen hundred and thirty.
 To the *gemeentehuis*, forms filled out, clerks recording
 A church for God's word and blessing added, in thirty minutes.
 Nijboer's hosting farm served dinner, a cigar, perhaps some wine
 A song, no dance - that will come by Synod ordinance.
 To Rhenen removed the Johannes J. and Nen family that day,
 A family full-orbed and a business mature to organize and maintain.
 The cattle, pigs, chickens of the Veluwe knew no depression,
 They ate from the mill pictured in the homes of the Edmonton children.
 The *boer* op, Achterberg, Colijn, frenzy, and in the whirligig
 Five children to Mother came: Bertha, Willem, Gerrit, Han, Jan.
 Successes piled but none was another daughter.
 The decade closed with snarls of death and blackness from the east.

Decade 2

Rumour had turned to ugly reality; the behemoth stirred,
 Overran with jack-boots, Gestapo-dogs, the land of farming peace.
 Radios, weapons, people went underground; printing presses fed patriotism,
 Away from Rhenen, evacuated to the mother-womb of Barneveld surround.
 In the furnace of hate, fear, war another child was born - the sixth.
 To the dynamited mill came hungry, for crushed rye kernels, relief.
 The years were long, tortured with death nearby, but God had mercy.
 The springtime of '45, double, set new plans and purpose, awakened Canada,
 The farms needed grain mixed and prepared, Holland expanded: Rebuild, remold;
 another child, the last, in '47 came.
 Festered, though, the cold fears, cramped-in mood, the frenetic pace.
 Turned to resolve, the New Love - Canada - adventure attracted
 And Kannegieter land made in 1949 poor immigrants of ten.

Decade 3

Twenty years of marriage, seven children with only one girl,
 A year of Canada, a half section in the north, ten people,
 On Badman soil, grey and wooded, poor for barley and oats.

But hope, confidence, Edwards' help. Oh, it was possible!
 The hungry boys and men food received from garden and love
 To gather root and rock, hack the trees for lumber and house.
 The tough years pushed plans for turkeys and pigs - the hog barn.
 But a phlebitis-torn leg turned away the heavy beast.
 Chickens, all white, turned the grunting and gobbling into cackle.
 New barns, long, narrow, replaced the log house and grass grew on the land.
 The oldest of the family had begun their own homes and callings.
 Two sons remained to help the farm—Wilco and George—at decade's end.
 It was over, largely, the raising of family, setting free from home-nest.

Decade 4

The 1960s found our Bertha on Edmonton hinterland, beset by potato and child
 Bill, freed from the Ontario darkness, returned to U. of A. light.
 The wires of telephones ensnared the hand and mind of the junior Johannes J.
 In turn went John to Montreal, to Florida, Texas, Colorado, engineering wise.
 Mathematically bent Jack found a haven in teaching; and to chemistry
 Wilco turned, first here and then in Wisconsin and Delaware.
 At decade's beginning, Johannes J., driven as of thirty, but of fifty late,
 Increased the chicken throng despite the infirmity of body.
 St. Albert and Edmonton north absorbed the eggs like rain in soil.
 It was the *boer op* again, like of the Veluwe, only the *boer* was a housewife.
 The electric pace could not go on indefinitely as of old.
 Mother, drawn to travel, found the airplane and to Holland.
 But the farm remained, full of chickens and the toil of three.

Decade 5

Buildings stood empty of flock more frequently in the beginning.
 Buyers for the land visited from time to time as if to challenge the work.
 Days were longer it seemed and the heart was somehow weaker.
 Then like a thunderclap, there was engineer John, from Colorado.
 New sounds, of hammer and skidoo, filled the ears of Nijboer-van den Born.
 The work eased, the pressures fell away like apples from a tree.
 And in '76, George was delivered from earthly sorrow, to Father home.
 Softly now we see the summer approaching the anniversary sunset,
 Filling the horizon serenely with golden colours,
 Celebrating fifty years of togetherness, of family, of love.
 Two homes, ten thousand miles apart, have spawned a half dozen.
 Westlock's church has been blessed and a blessing gives still.
 For it all, now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices.

Jack VandenBorn

II. [Uncle Kees]

The occasion is the celebration of the 50th wedding anniversary of J.J. v.d. Born and Nennetje Nijboer, which wedding was solemnized in the Gereformeerde Kerk in Barneveld, the Rev. Korfker officiating, if I remember rightly. Now, since I came back to Holland in the spring of 1930 after four years in Canada, I don't know too much about how the two got acquainted. But since Nennetje was what we would call a help in the household of a Dr. Schut in Barneveld and this Dr. Schut was the family doctor of the family v.d. Born, it could have happened that by picking up some medicine at the office of the doctor. Was it love at first sight? Anyway, at the resulting marriage ceremony the following *rijmelarij* was presented.

*Zeer waarde bruid en bruidegom, ge weigert zeker niet
Te luisteren op deez' schone stond wijl 'k U mijn wensen biedt*

*'k Wou U dan wensen bruiloftspaar, dat op U weg door 't leven
De zon van voorspoed en geluk, Uws harten wens moog' geven.*

*'k Had heus al eenigen tijd gedacht, Hoe 'k je zou duid'lijk maken
Dat deze wens van harte was. En tot uw hart mocht raken.*

*Want rouwen is geen gekkernij, maar voile ernst van't leven.
'k Wou daarom op deez' feestpartij, mijn beste wensen geven.*

*Eerst dacht ik 'k wens ze 't beste maar, zoals de meesten doen
Ik peinsde zal 'k wat uit het hoofd, of van papier wat doen.*

*Maar toen kwam er opeens 't idee om jullie wat te geven
Dat helpen kan de huwelijksboot te sturen door dit leven.*

*Opnieuw geprakkizeerd, gedacht, om toch wat leuks te vinden
Dat practiesch te gebruiken viel, en beiden kon bevrinden.*

*Want 't huwelijk is een bootjes reis waar soms ook stormen loeien
Wijl'er op gezichten, o zo blij, soms haar en rimpels groeien.*

*Zo wer' getrouw aan de oude wet, de vrouw de eer te geven
Het eerst eens aan de vrouw gedacht, en aan haar toekomst leven.*

*Wat, dacht ik, zou ze leuk en fijn? Wat lief en aardig vinden?
O, dacht ik manliefs glad gezicht, kan haar altijd bevrinden.*

*Nu is 't der mannen leel'ke kwaal, om met een dag zes, zeven
Een baard te groeien kolossaal, waar vrouwlief voor moet beven.*

Dat bracht mij toen op het idee voor bruid'gom wat te kopen

Waar bruidje vast ook schik van heeft, doch zelf wel kan ontlopen.

*Ik ging direct naar Barneveld, de winkel van Ter Hee
En toen 'k daarvan naar huis toe kwam, bracht ik een scheerstel mee.*

*Een staafje en een haakje, daar hang je 't kwastje aan
Twee bakjes voor water en zeep, mankeert er ook niet aan.*

*'t Is hoogst eenvoudig zo ge ziet, een spiegel aan een staaf
En als je 't mes maar vaak gebruikt, dan vind je vrouw je braaf.*

*En als je dan geschoren bent dan open je de la
Je bergt je boeltje netjes op en vraagt een kus van Ma.*

*Ze weigert die dan zeker niet, dus drukt de zorg je zwaar
Scheer zorg en haren van't gezicht en. . . vraag een kus van haar.*

*'t Is daarmee dat 't je helpen moet, de huwelijksboot te sturen
Want als je't niet heel vaak gebruikt, moet vrouwlief het bezuren*

*Juist daarom en uit zorg voor haar bracht 'k toen dat scheerstel hier
En wat ik nu nog zeggen wou 'k wens jullie veel plezier.*

Now, for those of you who don't know too much of your parents' language we call Dutch.
We'll give you a short story of the first ten years marriage
But for sure in love they fell, and. no joke we soon could tell.

John might have come to the office and fainted
That could be how they got acquainted.
The rest is guess work as you know.
In 1930 Nen became the wife of Jo.
You offspring have to know a secret. It is only fair.
Did you know that your Mom is an unpaid millionaire?
A housewife's work, though seldom appreciated,
would total \$20,000 per year, if fairly negotiated.
Multiply by 50 years of faithful service,
The staggering amount would make you nervous.
So ladies, when you show him the new dress you bought,
Remind him that you're worth a lot more than he thought.
In the family John v.d. Born,
One daughter, and then, a good number of sons were born.

It was a busy life, for both husband and wife.
Johan was busy in his feed mill enterprise, and not to anyone's surprise

He made the venture a great success, for he had a head for business.

A man so active can't be kept down; he also won a seat on the council of town.
And then an elder in the church to boot; yes, a man can do a lot, *als het maar moet*.

On birthdays company would be there, but no Johan, who was still selling his ware. To persuade farmers to quit feeding their pigs boiled potatoes and cornmeal and just ground grain, took a lot of talk and a well-developed brain.

He would charm and persuade until at last the farmer would order some to get rid of him fast. A few weeks later, again on his route, he would check and see how the farmer made out. And, lo and behold, the bags unopened on the same spot.

What is this? questioned Johan. How will you ever know what you've got If you don't feed the right pig feed, it's still on the same spot?

Let's run a test now, fair and square: twelve pigs, the same age and weight to begin with. Six in one pen and. six in the next.

One pen fed your way as you have done of old.

The pen next to it with the feed that I sold.

We'll continue to feed them until they are sold.

You'll see for yourself, it's the truth you were told.

The result will convince you to use prepared feed, because

The results will be better indeed.

When the farmer saw that v.d. Born had not lied,
the results of the tests were told far and wide.

That's what Johan wanted, not the feed on the shelf, but the motto:

*"Goeie waar verkoopt zichzelf.
Gemalen graan, vermengd tot voer
dat brengt de mulder naar de boer.
Nauwgezet weegt hij z'n waar
en staat steeds voor z'n klanten klaar
Maar, 't goed te doen naar ieders wens,
dat is en blijft een vrome wens."*

So now Bertha and boys and offspring you know
That your parents are certainly no ordinary Joe
I don't know if father slipped some extras in the stuff
But the kids, when little, never seemed to get enough.

They had appetites like you wouldn't believe.
Mother had to keep shovelling it in with no reprieve
The results can be seen, we told you no lies
All of them are strapping big guys.

The care and work, though steady and hard pressed
Was not as bad as the rumours of Europeans' unrest.

Soon Dad had to divide his time and attention
Between business and army preparation.

When in 1940 Holland was invaded, nothing made sense
Father as officer went to his country's defense.
What happened then is not up to my pen.
I have not much more to do, than to wish you God's blessings,
And congratulations to you.

Kees Van't Land

III. [Bill]

I don't really remember very much from before 1940, except that we didn't see very much of Dad at all. Mother was the one we had to deal with, except when there was trouble, like fighting. George and I used to fight once in a while. Dad was the big bad guy; he was there to hand out the lickings. I remember one time he had pneumonia, that was really during the war, he was so sick that he couldn't get out of bed. But we still had to get to the bedroom and get a licking right there.

In 1940 when the war broke out, Dad was gone. I remember that we had to trudge up the hill, the whole family, Mother and all the kids, it must have been two kilometers and then we had to get on a boat and travel downstream on the Rhine to Rotterdam. We spent the time there. When we came back from there, about a week later, we had no idea where Dad was. I don't know if Mother knew, but we sure didn't.

The house was a big mess because the army had been fighting right around there. In fact, a soldier had died in the back of the house. I guess in due course Dad did come back but I don't remember when. In June? A month later? As far as I was concerned, as a kid, we had no worries about the war at all.

The war was there but it didn't seem to faze us at all. Same thing later on during the war when there was trouble with food. I don't think I ever worried about food on the table. We just took for granted that it was going to be there.

Then Jack was born, in 1943. About the same time there was some chance of Dad having to go to a prisoner-of-war camp in Germany. Jack had to be baptized the day after he was born.

Dad was somewhat involved in the underground. Again we knew nothing about that. We barely knew that the underground existed I suppose, which was maybe just as well. I started high school in September of '43, in Arnhem, about 20 kilometers away from Achterberg. That went fine the first year - I got a boarding place there. The second year, that was September '44, the paratroop landings by Arnhem began about two weeks after school started. There must have been some warning about that because Dad came to get me, *op de fiets*, a big bicycle called a *transportfiets*, with a big metal basket on the front. I had to sit on the front of this thing. Dad pedalled it all the way back to Achterberg. There was a big hill by Wageningen; we had to walk up there because it was too hard to pedal. I think that must have been a pretty tough trip for Dad. It didn't bother me very much.

Soon thereafter we had to all leave, we had to go to Terschuur on an old wagon. Grandma van den Born died some time during that winter. I remember a cold trip to the cemetery. During the time that we stayed there, seven or eight months, there wasn't much food around. Again, it didn't bother us very much. Some of us had to go and get milk from the local dairy on a bicycle. People from other parts of Holland came by and Dad was busy collecting their passports and feeding them ground peas, which nobody liked. We didn't like them either.

During the war we had a goat in the backyard to get some milk. I don't think any of us really liked the milk from that goat. It was very good for us I'm sure, but I couldn't stand the stuff.

We had a whole pile of rabbits there. George and I had to collect dandelions to feed them, a dreadful job. But the rabbit meat tasted good. Before we went to Terschuur, Mother canned a whole bunch of those rabbits, but they were awful afterwards.

We used to play around the old mill quite a bit. Of course, that mill was a big mess after the war when we came back. The mess was finally cleaned up. George and I had to chop up a pile of firewood because all the old beams were cut in blocks and piled about yeah high in the backyard. We had to chop all this stuff and pile it up very neatly in the backyard near the old chickenhouse.

A while later Dad bought three pigeons. He had a real love for pigeons when he was young, so he thought we should have some pigeons too. They were pretty wild at first but after a while they got to be trained quite nicely; we would whistle at them or call them and they would come into our hands. Until one morning they were gone. We found a few feathers behind a shack in back of the garden; the cat had had our pigeons.

Dad used to ride a motorcycle but he got a jeep right after the war in 1946. I had my first driving lessons in that jeep. One time we were going through the *poort*, probably the first time I was driving, and I got a little too close to the edge and scraped it along the side a little bit. Dad wasn't too happy about that. I also remember riding on that motorcycle once when I wasn't really supposed to. It was parked outside his office and I started it and rode down the hill and came back up again. I wasn't quite sure what Dad was going to say about this. But he said nothing actually. I think he was perhaps just happy that I came back all in one piece.

Then there was the time we had to go cut hay with the jeep pulling an old converted horse mower on a Saturday afternoon. (On Saturday mornings Dad was never home. He always went to a trading place where he bought and sold grain, the *Beurs*, and he would come home about 2 o'clock, eat and sleep for awhile, and then go back to work again.) I was supposed to drive the jeep but I wasn't very good at driving and I stalled the thing two or three or four times. Dad said, "That's no good. Let me drive this thing." He got on the jeep, I got on the mower and vrooomm, there we went. First thing, the mower hit a big pile of dirt, a gopher mound or something. The mower split in three pieces. . . the end of the mowing. I was glad I wasn't driving then.

That jeep was a famous thing. There was the time we went on a trip. I think it was Bertha, George, me, and Dad that went on a trip around Holland, one of the only holidays we ever had. We went through Giethoorn, Friesland, across the *Afsluitdijk*, and spent some time running around in the water at a beach. As a matter of fact, Dad did some speeding in the jeep. He wanted to show us how fast this thing could go. It could go at least 60 miles an hour. Pretty fast in this open vehicle with no cover on it.

Then pretty soon we started talking about emigration, to Canada. To us kids it sounded like an interesting prospect. We didn't quite know what to expect. It was kind of a new adventure, and I don't think I ever worried about it in any way. I had no problem

deciding to leave Achterberg. Maybe I wasn't old enough to have any real ties there. I went with Dad to Den Haag to the office of the CPR and looked up the population of Busby in a big book. There were 150 people in Busby. That may be more than there are now. It sounded like an awfully small number.

The next thing we had to do was get all checked out by the medical doctors. There we all stood in our underwear—and the doctor said we had to take that underwear off. Dad kind of looked at us, he didn't really want to do that. A short-arm inspection!

I think it's fair to say that during those years in Holland I, we, never got to know Dad very well at all because we had to deal with Mother most of the time. Dad was always gone somewhere. The fact that I was away at school didn't help matters any. I think it wasn't until we came to the farm in Busby that I got to know Dad quite a bit better. I think that's a lesson I remember, that if you're gone a lot from home, your kids really don't find out who you are. Probably that was one reason Mother and Dad wanted to leave Holland.

Bill Vanden Born

IV. [Bertha]

I remember that jeep trip too. It must have made quite an impression on us. I remember travelling and visiting some relative in Friesland. We ate in a restaurant, which we otherwise never did.

I recall talking about going to Canada, I share a lot of the memories, the kind of adventure, that we all went on the boat, and so on.

I remember the first day we went to Busby. We went with Joe Van Does- burg and Jake Vanden Brink. They had a little pick-up and Mother, Wilco and Jack were in the front, and Dad with the rest of us were in the back. It was quite nice weather but it had rained. We went through St. Albert, a little village, a little church - pretty country, a nice country to live in, I thought. But the further we got ... things changed somewhat.

The roads did not improve. They got pretty greasy by the time we got to Busby. Right in town, by the corner of the Co-op store, we didn't stay on the road. We slipped into the ditch. How we got out, I don't know. We went into the ditch in another place, I don't know where. At Sylvester's corner? Anyway, we did get to the farm.

It didn't quite look like what we expected. We all gave it a good Looking-over and we investigated all the buildings, the junk piles and Mrs. Badman's garbage. We found some nice muffin tins, I remember. Maybe Mother still has them.

The first thing, we didn't have any water. Dad and I, maybe somebody else went along, we walked over to Edwards. We went down the road, not across country, and ended up at Granny Edwards' house rather than Annie's. I remember coming in that kitchen and here she came out of the cellar. She looked just like a witch to me.... I'd never seen the likes of it. Somehow we must have gotten home with some drinking water. Well, you know the story of how they came afterwards and brought all sorts of stuff.

Dad could speak a little English; I couldn't understand a word of what was said. I was really overwhelmed. [Bill: I remember about Dad's English when we were fencing on the north quarter with old man Ericson. His favourite expression was "son-of-a-gun" or "son-of-a-bitch." Dad had never heard those words before. He asked for an explanation.] Dad went to the store and got a big boxful of bread, 24 loaves. We had all those guys, six, seven, eight boys with Bill Van Doesburg. Joe and Jake stayed a couple of days to work on the farm. So it was quite a job to get all those people fed. Dad quickly got some flour and I remember baking pancakes. As soon as we finished one meal, I started frying pancakes for the next one.

I remember the most about the roads around Busby. The first time we found out about a church, it was with Mirus, a Mennonite church. We had Dutch bikes and we all went to Mirus on them, a whole string of bikes, for six or seven miles. Mother stayed home. We loved that church, singing "When the Roll is Called up Yonder." I thought it was such a beautiful song. They had a girl playing a guitar and we sang that song, but we didn't know what it meant.

Another time I was at Mrs. Mirus, I don't know for what reason, but I went on a bike. Of course, it rained and I couldn't come back. I had to stay overnight. There was no way you could go over those roads with a bike in that mud.

Another time, I was in Edmonton already and Bill was too, and we liked to visit home once in a while, we hitchhiked a few times. One time Bill could get a whole basketful of raspberries. We thought we'd go to Westlock because then we could meet the folks in Westlock and ride home with them. But somehow the piece of road between Clyde and Westlock was being refinished. It was closed and we had to go back through Picardville. I think we walked most of the way. Those raspberries, I don't know what they looked like.

Also, when I was first in Edmonton, I went home on the bus. They picked me up in Busby I guess. But I had to go to Picardville to catch the bus again. They had to take the stone boat and bring me to Picardville. It was so bitterly cold that I walked most of the way behind the stone boat.

I did housework for a lady. She had phoned when the bus from Westlock was supposed to come in, but I didn't come on that bus... But I did get to work again.

Another time, this was later when I had acquired a boyfriend with a car, we were going to visit home. The roads always had such potholes. I remember going to Busby; we looked at a hole, we'd stop, Bill would get out of the car and see if it was safe to go through this way or that way, half a mile further, another hole. We'd look at that for a while, measure it with a stick. One looked too deep and we turned around and went home again.

We went to church by taxi, but first by bus. Rev. Hoekstra and Mr. Wierenga, Dixie's father, were at our house once. That was the beginning of the church at Westlock. Of course, we saw an organ in church and I got a job right away since I could play. We went to church in a school bus. We picked up a Zwart family that lived by Manola or Picardville somewhere. We went a few times by bus and the church paid for that. Later they hired a taxi. He always had station CKUA on and they always had such lovely piano music. I loved that on the drive to Westlock.

Bertha Groot

V. [JohnJ aka Hans]

I scribbled some things down but I didn't bring it out in poetry because I'm not a poet. To carry on from Bertha - she said we went to church by bus and by cab. I remember in the early times of the '50s we even went by Ferguson tractor when the roads were so muddy that they were impassable for the taxi or school bus. Dad said, "We must go to church," and we did. He would drive and I would stand on the back, or vice versa. The Ferguson, in high gear, would splatter you with mud. By the time we got to church (I don't remember if we had suits on or not), we were normally mud up one side and down the other. We went to church, rested for an hour, and went back home.

Those were tough times in the early part of the '50s. Financially, it was a tough time. To make up some financial assistance, Dad went around the country scouting for some jobs. One of them was digging a basement. It was south of Busby and some farmer there decided to build a house. He made Dad a deal that we dig the basement for \$100. The house was something like 1000 square feet and probably eight feet down. We took this on based on the idea that this was Dutch soil - mostly sand and soft black dirt - and so a matter of a couple of days. The first foot or so were pretty good, but the next seven feet were solid grey-wooded clay. John, myself, and others, I'm not sure, were digging this basement. We had spades and picks and we ended up renting a Fresno, a two-handled bucket we pulled behind the little old Case tractor. You pulled it up one side and tumbled the dirt out. I think it took us three weeks or a month to dig that hole. Hard-earned money!

Another job we took on was picking roots on Sylvester's farm. We first picked all the roots up and down the alleys made by the bulldozer in piling up the trees. We were doing the cleaning up. The second step was burning the stuff. Well, when you burn a bunch of wood, you just put gasoline on it and light it. We soon found out that half of those piles were dirt and wet trees. Nothing of that would burn. We burned the first time and then we cleaned, up once more and did it all over again.

The outhouse situation on the farm wasn't all that great. We normally did our sanitary things with newspaper, which doesn't work all that well. When we were picking roots, of course, we were young fellows eating a lot. During the day we had to do our daily duty behind a tree or a bush someplace. Of course, the wipe job didn't work that well there either. As a result the general rubbing caused a great amount of pain. Bill Van Doesburg, being a big scrappy fellow, seemed to be the worst involved. He used to take his shirt off and hitch it onto his belt, strap it around through his crotch and back up as tight as he could to keep his cheeks apart. This way he could keep on picking roots! More seriously, I noted a few other things I encountered through the '50s. Bertha left home right away. I'm not sure if it was the fall of 1949, but you ended up cooking in a frat house, then in a bank and then married in 1955. Bill stuck around a few years and taught me a few tricks in servicing the Case tractor - how to change the oil and battery. He took off to school and got married in 1958.

I didn't write about George really. He left in the early '50s. He stayed home for three or four years and came back later on. During the time he was gone, we didn't know mu-ch

of his involvements except that he worked at various dairy farms and the Oliver Tree Nursery.

I stayed on the farm until 1957. I went to Trail's End school first, which brings back some memories. We used to go there on a horse named Kitty. I think Kitty came from the Mirus farm. Three of us rode that horse with a bag of hay tied to her tail on a twenty foot length of rope. In winter time we manufactured a stone boat with a little front on it to break the wind and a little top on it. We had some kind of a stove on it in which we burned a little bit of wood. We pretended to keep warm. But that horse took us to school for a good length of time. I think it finally died on our farm.

From Trail's End school I went to Busby and then to Westlock. I stayed on the farm until I started with A.G.T. John left in 1956, I believe, to start university. He got married in 1960. Carrying on with the personnel, Jack left home in 1960. Before that he stayed at the Adkins place while taking grade 10 and 11. For a year he drove an old model A - I don't know where it came from - from our place to Matt Haisan's corner where he met the school bus. I don't know how well or how poorly it ran, but it was kind of an old wreck, [Jack: We never had any "brakes on it. We learned, to drive it without them.] Wilco went through these years attending school, of course.

Another highlight of the mid-fifties was Mother and Dad's 25th wedding anniversary, which we celebrated at Banff with the whole family. Bill and Bertha were just married. You people stayed in a cottage and the rest of us stayed in a tent Bill borrowed from the University. We spent the weekend and had a real good time, visiting with the bears and all through the park, also on the chairlift.

All of this relates pretty well to what we call "staff movement", I guess. A couple of other issues, some horse stories maybe: We heard about Kitty already. Somewhere we obtained a horse we called "Bot," a kind of scruffy animal, very wild. Van Doesburgs, I think, rode him and were bucked off a number of times. I don't know what happened to him after. Then we were fortunate to obtain a horse from Sherman. Its name was Fly, a young gray colt, wilder than blazes. Fly was not a good name for him, so we called him "Shit." We still couldn't cope with it, so we decided we might as well eat him! Thus we ate "Shit!"

On vehicle stories, the first vehicle we obtained was brought from Holland - a three-ton flat-deck truck which we kept for a few years. Our first smaller truck was an old Dodge. John claims it was a 1946 half-ton pickup. My first crack at driving it was with Bill hauling coal from a coal mine somewhere near Picardville. We came west of Picardville and Bill made up his mind that I should turn. I did - without bothering to slow down or anything. Of course, we went in the ditch and on the side! It was something like 45 below that morning too. We never did get the coal home that day. The next truck was a '54 Mercury, which Jack wrapped around a pole going around the Westlock race track. Another story involved logging in the north quarter on the west side of that big field. A number of people were involved with cutting trees. Dad located all the small piles of trees with his army compass. He went out and noted that there was a pile 7° west, north latitude, 8° southwest, north longitude. This went on for a couple of winters. We

dragged all these logs from the small piles onto a big pile in an open area with horses. The logs were eventually sawed into lumber which was used to make some of those beautiful buildings that John just decided to burn in the last few years.

There was the old Case combine that normally took about four people to run: one guy driving, one guy on the combine, one guy walking alongside pitching in the straw. We plowed up a couple of meadows and the plow we were using left a lot of sods not flipped over like they would be with a proper plow. So there was one guy plowing and one guy walking behind. (Jack: "*Zotse trappen*, we called it.")

No one mentioned the turkeys we had. They were kept on top of the old barn. It was our job to put those riding saddles on them. We could never figure out why those particular turkeys needed riding saddles. Of course, they were sold for hatching egg purposes and we had to protect the turkeys' backs.

This is most of what I've written down. For a number of years we stayed at Nicholson's farm, which was just north of Westlock, because it was too troublesome to travel back and forth to Westlock. John cut a hole in his foot with an axe there. Another highlight there was that I had an appendectomy in which I was in pretty rough shape.

There was also that hexagonal, beautiful pig barn that we built when Bill was still home. It took on funny shapes because it settled and sank. A lot of money was made from that barn.

The original chicken barn was built in 1954 by Mr. Lucas. Right after that, the famous farmer named Harry Hersey was very involved with building the second and third barns. I think these were the barns built in the '50s. They gradually replaced the log house and the other older buildings.

Hans Vandeborn

VI. [Wilco]

I was asked to talk about the '60s a little bit. I wrote some things down and since I have a good poetic wife, she put it into poetry.

What more can be said that the others haven't said
 In this day of celebration; for by God you were led.
 I cannot quite imagine 50 years of married life,
 It's such a long, long time to be wedded, man and wife.
 A time of memories, reflection and celebration this is.
 So a few thoughts from the "baby" of the family this is.
 Yes, the youngest of the family, and also spoiled, some say
 But Audrey says I turned out best for you practiced on the others every day.
 I seldom got a spanking, so I've been told
 And got my driver's license without any scold.
 The car could, be had. on a Saturday night,
 For the others, that was a dream out of sight.
 Some say I was spoiled; just don't you believe it.
 I was just well behaved, all my life, always on the bit.

What was it like to cross the ocean with a one year old,
 Did he get lost, fall overboard or is he hiding in the hold? This summer we kept
 good track of Carita on the boat ride that we took,
 She wasn't gone a moment or we'd get up and look.

Then in the house there was no running water
 To wash the diapers of the new grand-daughters.
 To the decade of the sixties I've been assigned.
 With the addition of many chickens and grandchildren, the family was realigned.
 In May 1960 John and Sophie got married
 And around North America their life became varied.
 From sojourning in Ontario, Bill and Dixie also came.
 And Jack left for U. of A. to begin his life of fame.
 And there we were left on the farm, Mother, Dad and me; I in grade seven.
 But George came back to help us out you see.
 That help was welcome for one needed to lift all those heavy feed bags
 And with feeding chickens, gathering eggs, one's energy, it lags.
 Then came the profitable years: the wallet became padded
 Work was aplenty and soon new chicken houses were added.
 The egg routes in St. Albert Dad certainly enjoyed.
 This was the age of the miniskirt, but he was not annoyed.
 The egg baskets were full
 And Dad graded eggs till eleven, five days.

Large eggs for St. Albert routes certainly pays.

Tuesdays and Fridays took care of the egg routes,
 Home at eleven after 500 customers must be hard on one's boots.
 Dad still visits long-time regular customers each year
 To his heart all the ladies had become very dear.
 Young helpers from St. Albert were hired to help out
 And in summer during haying, it was more, hectic all about.
 Vacation or a Sunday off, these were times unknown
 And in the middle of the sixties, Dad and Mother's teeth old had grown
 So off to the dentist for an extraction process,
 After that, the new teeth looked like quite a success.
 In '65 Wilco left and construction began in stages
 Chicken house Six was almost a mansion, complete with cages.
 A couple years later a new house began to appear,
 Yes, Mother's dream home was truly found here.
 In 1968 for two weeks Dad was hospitalized with a sore leg
 So with help from various sources, customers still got their eggs.
 This incident began some reflection and thought:
 Should an end to the egg routes in the future be sought?
 Mother did her share too, picking and washing eggs
 Besides gardening and cooking for six,
 she must have finished the day with tired legs.

That's where the poetry ends.

All of this was without running water till about 1963. And I can't remember that Mother was ever sick or unable to do her work during the time, An item that added spice to life, however, was the party-line telephone that came in 1962.

In church it was the years that Rev. Walter Dubois was in Barrhead- Westlock. He was dear to all. At his farewell, Dad had to give a speech. The highlight was when Dad compared Mrs. Dubois to a dog - being a helper to Rev. Dubois as a dog helps his shepherd-master lead the sheep. I don't think Mrs. Dubois liked that too much! Dad wasn't in consistory during this time, but he regularly taught catechism and read sermons. For a time I was his only catechism pupil after church on Sunday afternoons. He even was the church organist on occasion and once or twice did both the sermon and playing the organ. He would announce the song and then run down to the organ and play the song.

This occasion is a time of thankfulness and celebration. And we give thanks to Mother and Dad for what they have done for us and to our God who gives us life and all things and watches over us each day.

Wilco VandenBorn

VII. [John]

We have this section set to poetry as well, thanks to my better half.

The sensational seventies were just that
 From good health and love to the abundance of baloney for feeding the cat,
 Grandpa happily continued his retirement
 While Grandma many hours in the egghouse spent.
 In 1971 to visit Boulder and Wisconsin was a nice plan
 Driving and sleeping in a little green van.
 In 1972 the farm was put on the block
 But no takers till 1973 rolled onto the clock:
 John, Sophie and family decided to return
 And in the spring of '74 farming began to learn.
 Rather than moving into a busy town
 Grandpa and Grandma preferred to remain on the family farm.
 Getting a trailer was not too tough
 Agreeing on a site, however, proved somewhat rough.
 Grandpa provided many pearls of wisdom-lines
 Particularly, "Make hay while the sun shines."
 Other notable quotes with him at rest,
 "When the sun sets in the west, the lazies work the best."
 Together they garden, sowing and weeding
 Those great *capucijners* for Grandpa's winter feeding.
 They're rich in protein, as you well know
 That eliminates the need for meat to buy and grow,
 Five days a week to Busby for the mail he drove
 For Grandma to cook peas, he bought a new stove.
 This was the decade that all the children returned close to home
 Though Jack and Avlyn have again decided to roam.
 Eight grand-children were added to the family
 Five boys and three girls, making a total of twenty-three.
 A family outing at a B.C. lake in '74
 Swimming, eating and fun, who could ask for more?
 On August 5, 1976 we all experienced sorrow
 For Uncle George would not be here tomorrow.
 Several trips to Lethbridge they made
 Visiting Van't Land's as well as Audrey and Hans.
 Family reunions on birthdays and. Boxing Day
 Were enjoyed by all, what more can you say.
 Grandma made two trips to Holland to visit her kin
 Grandpa impatiently waited for her to return.
 In 1975 the 45th anniversary celebration was held
 With a splurging dinner at the Sands Hotel.
 Although a few months early,
 We wish Grandpa and Grandma a happy anniversary.

John Vandeborn

VIII. [Mother]

When a boy finds a girl to his liking, and then after some years starts a family and it can expand to a clan of 37—that is how it all began.

This boy and this girl lived in the same neighbourhood more or less, three miles apart, but we belonged to a different village and went to different schools and churches. I grew up on a farm and Grandpa's Dad had a feedmill and grain dealer business. Grandpa's Dad visited us every week to take up orders and try to sell his stuff. Sometimes he mentioned his oldest son ("my son Johan") who was awfully smart. I was employed for some time as a cook for a doctor's family in Barneveld and Han came there for some medicine I think. Those doctors were also selling all the pills they prescribed. That is where we first met.

It was love at first sight, from his side, that is. It took him a while to convince me, but he was a good salesman and he sold himself. We were engaged 14 April 1927. It took him three and a half years to find a place to settle down and start a business of his own. Well, they, Vader van den Born and son, found a place in Rhenen that was somewhat to their liking and not high in price. It was somewhat neglected. So that was good, because we did not have much money and my fiancé figured he could bring "*dat zaakje*" back to life in no time.

He started in '29 on his own all by himself, found a boarding house and started to work. He got a partner who joined him later on. That partner was a farmer who wanted to change his profession, sold his farm and joined the fellow in Achterberg. He brought some money with him and a family of four children. They moved into the house that was connected to the mill.

Things picked up soon and we decided to get married. There was no house for us, so Han bought a piece of land from a friendly farmer (in the middle of all grain fields) and ordered an architect to build a house there. That was in the spring of 1930 and we moved in in September that same year. We bought furniture in Utrecht, had a girl from Achterberg clean the house. After the wedding day in Barneveld, Han's youngest brother brought us by car to our new home. No honeymoon; they didn't know such things that time.

When we came there around 10:00 o'clock, we had a key somehow, but there was no light. We found out the next day the power was not connected yet. But we managed just the same.

But money making was not so good. The Depression came in the U.S., a crash in the money market and the grain prices started dropping and dropping. Grandpa bought his grain on the market in Utrecht. He went there every Saturday and on Monday the prices had fallen again. One time he went around in his warehouse and looking around, every article was lower than what he had paid for it. But when the prices were at the lowest, he started making some profit.

So I started housekeeping. I was somewhat lonesome. I knew only the Wilgenburg family, Han's partner. But pretty soon we found out we were going to have some company. And nobody was more happy than my husband, Grandpa, because I was

mostly alone in our house. I could not help him in his kind of work, and there was not much to do. But when Bertha arrived everything went better. My sister came for the occasion. She was a kind of nurse and everything went all right. Both grandparents came for the baptizing. Grandpa would rather have had a son, but in time he got lots of them.

Grandpa was not at home much; he was always in a hurry. The "*zaak*" took nearly all his time. We had an agreement when we married. He promised to stay home one night a week, on Wednesday and, of course, on Sunday. Another agreement was I should never serve him "*zuurkool*," sauerkraut. But that Wednesday evening disappeared when his partner left the business and took up farming again. He also emigrated later to California and had a big dairy outfit.

Grandpa was waiting for a son, so we had two more children pretty quick. We were married three years and eight months when George came around. The children were hardly ever sick. But in those days we hadn't the tools we have now in the house. So I got help. One or two days a week a girl came to do housework and babysitting so I could go out shopping or visiting. We were getting friends, mostly from the church in Rhenen. They made Grandpa first a deacon. He had to go around collecting money for the church. Later he became an elder. He made a deal with the other elders: If they did all the visiting, he would read the sermons on Sunday. We were too small to have a minister of our own. He could do that pretty fast. My neighbour lady in the church said to me after the first time he did it, "Not too bad for the first time."

The Depression was bad; farmers had no money, but Grandpa managed somehow. I enjoyed George the most because for some years he was the baby. In '37 and '38 Han and Jan came - Hanneke and Janneke, they were called. We were a happy family. Grandpa tried to teach Bertha to read and write, but she did not like it. Instead, Bill always hung around with these lessons and he picked it up real fast. I think he could read when he was three or four, but I am not sure. Grandpa had it all written down, you know, about the first tooth, the first walk and so on. But his papers were all burned up in the war. We had a big garden and always had chickens for trying out feed mixtures so they could advise the farmers about raising chicks and what to feed them, and fighting diseases. Sometimes Grandpa van den Born from Terschuur came to stay with us for a week or so for repairs to the mill. He was an expert in that. Our Bill was bout two years old and Grandpa tried all the time to have him on his lap, but he would not do it. Too stubborn, I suppose.

And then the war started to come up. Han and I were on a little trip to Belgium and were drinking coffee somewhere in a grotto - the *Grot van Han* - and there a phone call reached us. Han had to report for duty right away. So we rushed home, slept by the border in a funny place, and all of a sudden we were on our doorstep. We were gone two days. Jans was just having a meal with those five children. Her older sister Nell came sometimes to help. Han left the same evening or next morning for "*onbekende bestemming*."

And then a whole army moved into Achterberg. There were a lot more soldiers than plain people. We did not get them in our house because there was not a man in it. We lived right in the defence line. The boys were too small to enjoy all the racket.. Han came home sometimes, but I had to carry the whole burden. We had a nice girl to help us. She came every day and helped a lot.

The five war years were sad years. We had to move out of the house two times: first when the war started for twelve days and after four years, when the Allies came to free us, for ten months. Those years were sad. You never knew what was coming the next day.

Grandpa's business went downhill so he started raising rabbits. But a disease hit them and a lot died.

In the middle of the war Jack came around. He arrived before the appointed time. He was small but made it all right. He even had a tooth before he was three months old. After the war it was hard to start all over again. The mill was gone: it had fallen on the warehouse and our house was damaged - a big hole in the front wall and bunches of Germans had lived in it. Chimneys stuck out the bedroom windows. Germans with girlfriends had lived in each bedroom, a separate couple in each. Even a piano was in there. There were trenches in front of the house and Grandpa buried all the trash in there. They had taken all our stuff out of the closets, put it on a pile outside and tried to burn it. Of course, books don't burn very well.

The children went back to school. Bertha went to a school in Zetten, across the river Rhine. But there was not much to work with - all was stolen and burned. We couldn't get a painter for our house for two years. Then Wilco came and we were all happy about that. Bertha raised him partly. We still could not buy much meat and also clothes were on coupons. If you were expecting, you could get fabric for a coat, so I bought myself a new coat, a black one.

Grandpa got tired of it all. The government was getting socialist and, all in all, it didn't look good. So we looked around for a better country, and that was Canada. Canada wanted immigrants badly and Holland was too full.

It was all a deep secret, because if it didn't work out, the customers were not supposed to know that their "*mulder*" wanted to desert them. But then Bertha took English lessons and they got suspicious.

But finally we all went on the boat and Oom Kees was especially pleased because he had an eye on Canada for a long time. He had promised his mother-in-law not to take his wife to Canada. But she did not live anymore, so he figured he had a chance now. And now we are all here.

Nennetje Nijboer - van den Born

IX. [Dad]

I have a paper too. I will look once in a while, don't worry. When you start to recall things, then you feel young again at certain moments. I am an old man now, but one time I was a boy too and went to school and had to learn certain things.

The Paper

When I was a schoolboy the teacher told us that when you say much, you have to know much or to lie much. So I am in a kind of difficult position, but I shall do my very best. Another saying I remember is "in the limitation the master shows up."

What I remember too is something of the beginning of arithmetic: "2 apples + 3 apples is 5 apples" on the blackboard.

After leaving elementary school, I was sent to a secondary school: in Dutch, a "*Handelsschool*," in English, a business school. They did not teach us the handiest way to cheat people, but, rather, some general science, intensively, about money systems of surrounding countries, weight systems there, languages, etc.

For English we had Mr. Baarslag who had lived in England for a while. For the study of this language we had in use a recitation book with small stories in it. Once a week we had to study a couple of these stories and tell them in the classroom. I can recollect a couple of them. For example, about some lady who wanted some help and hired a country girl for this. Some day she had bought some plums and wanted the girl to stone them. She showed the girl how she wanted this done, and walked away, eating the plum. How surprised she was when after a while the girl came to her, saying, that she could eat no more! Yes, those girls from the country!

Another story was about somebody who had bought an old castle. A lot of junk was lying all over the place. He hired an Irishman to help him clean up and discussed with him how to do this the best. "Just dig a hole for it," said the Irishman. And what to do with the dirt then? "The hole has to be made big enough so that both can go in." How simple when you have a good set of brains!

Another story was about a Dutch young man who went to Canada. In the Dutch language we do not have the words for beef, mutton, etc. The young man said that he liked the work on the farm pretty good, but he did not like the food.. First, one day one of the old cows died and we got beef. A little later one of the old ewes died and we got mutton. Then some day one of the old sows died and we got pork. Finally some day the old grandmother died, but then I left.

After my school years I worked for a few years in my father's business in the feedmlll. But gradually I came, in those years, to look across the road sometimes and, being an attractive young man, that causes problems too sometimes. Some day your eyes are directed in a certain direction, you feel it that that is it. I proposed - she had to think it over a bit, but she could not resist and said, "yes." She did not hug and kiss at our first meeting, but gradually the explosions came! And that is now more than 53 years ago. To think it all over, I feel young again.

But my father had heard of some business that was for sale and could possibly be something for us. We went there someday and the deal was made. So in arrangement with our parents, the decision for marriage was made and within a few weeks, that is going to be 50 years ago.

And just when we were married, the 30'er years started too. At the end of the 30'er years, the war started. The vicinity we lived in became a battle area, I myself being in the Dutch army and Mother alone with five children and having to leave home.

After Holland had been overrun by the Germans, things changed rapidly. During the 30'er years, there seemed to be too much of everything. But that was soon over. The Germans had need of a lot. They had a little bit of paper money printed and they took the goods.

I had some forebodings of Mr. Hitler's plans. Somebody had a heavy milk fattened calf for which he had not been able to get a decent price. I bought that from him, had it butchered and Mother canned it. We had to hide it. Behind our house was a small porch. Opposite to the entrance was a dead corner and close against the wall we buried the canned meat.

Sometimes we had to move from our house on the orders of the Germans and later we could see that with a sharp pointed stick they had examined that corner. But they had not come close enough to the wall and so just barely missed our calf.

Everything on the farms was soon registered by the Germans - cattle, feed, etc. When the farmers had their grain threshed, an inspector was there to keep track of everything. The grain had to be delivered someday. For home use the farmer got coupons, for their own grain. In former times threshing had to be done by hand and most farmers still remembered how to do that. But then still they had to be careful with that and had to hide this grain. Now and then inspectors came on the farm to check for this and for the cattle that had been registered, etc. For non-farmers, food was all on coupons and the people who had to live on that did not grow fat. Even milk was on coupons.

I had been thinking of that possibility too and right after the war began I bought a goat-lamb. A goat was more or less a despised animal, easy to maintain and giving milk of excellent food value. (One of these past days there was a discussion on television here about that between a couple of mothers. One had a baby who could not stand cow milk, but as soon as the baby got goat milk, everything went well. The baby was now eleven pounds already.) So now you can see that notwithstanding war and starvation times we still could raise such wonderful offspring. So what can I do better but to recommend to all of you young mothers but to get a goat, each one of you. According to the encyclopedia, there are dairies in the States that milk 400 goats.

The war years have come to an end, but even the war did not bring people to repentance. They seem to say, "Now we can eat and drink and have fun again." The socialists had a slogan that it was now time for "*vernieuwing en verjonging*" [renewal and rejuvenation]. Looking at the world of today with my old eyes, the longings are still the same. The problem is, however, that it does not work. The first symptoms of that we can see already.

In Holland I had an over-busy life day after day. In the light of the ideas of the generation after the war, I had not too much confidence in Holland's future. This and a couple of other things made us look to the possibility of Canada. Not that I thought Canada was Paradise, but on the farm we would have a more quiet life. I talked it over with Mr. Van Doesburg, who was Chief of Police in our area. At that time we were not allowed to take money with us from Holland. Van Doesburg had a brother-in-law here who had just sold his farm and retired. He would be willing to buy a farm for us. And this is what happened. That is the way we have come to Canada.

And, now, we have almost had 50 years of marriage. We have met all kinds of problems, had to make difficult decisions sometimes. But when we look back, and try to summarize, then we actually can come only to one word - GRATITUDE, to our God in heaven, who has made everything so wonderfully well, and has been with us.

And, now, I have not mentioned every detail that sometimes came up in my mind, but by limiting here and there, I hope I have deserved my Master's degree.

We have had the biggest part of our marriage I suppose. The next fifty years will take a while. I hope to see all the anniversaries of the younger generation, maybe.

Johannes Jacobus van den Born