

PORTION of History of Tom BERNARD
Compiled by Dick Bernard 1981-82 presented to Tom on 18th birthday
Feb 26, 1982

We were very poor during our Colorado Springs time together. Not too long after we arrived we bought a bedspread and some kitchen utensils at Salvation Army; on July 1, 1963, we had to borrow \$60.00 at Seaboard Finance - a major loan.

We spent about a month together in Colorado Springs. During that month you were conceived, and Barb showed the very first signs of the illness that would ultimately prove fatal for her. We had gone to Mass at the church in Colorado Springs, and walking home Barb developed a heavy nosebleed. At first, we thought it was just due to the altitude - but I think it was more than that.

On July 14, 1963, Barbara went back to Valley City to prepare to take her first teaching job in Sarles, North Dakota. She went by bus (it was cheapest) and I wrote a letter that evening to her where I described her departure. In part I said: "These six weeks together were too wonderful to be replaced by anything You maintained your composure remarkably well (getting on the bus). I knew you were as unhappy to board it as I was to see you board it. Believe me, it sure was hard to watch you leave." Later in the later I made a sadly mistaken prophecy: "We're headed for a long and happy life together I am sure." Two years and 10 days later she died.

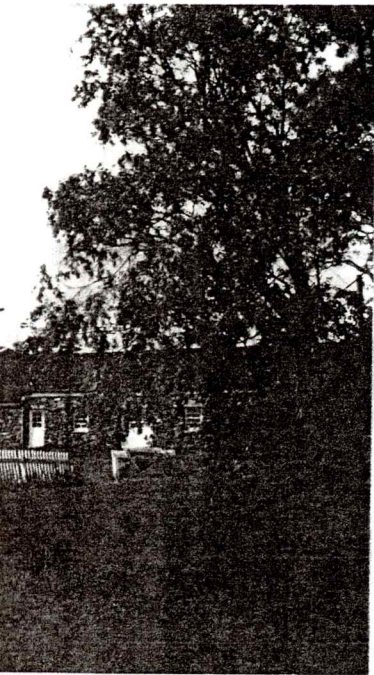
After Barb left, I actively began to seek an early out from the Army to take a teaching job I had been offered in Hallock, Minnesota. The Army played "hard to get" and I was unable to get out of the Army until October 9, 1963. I started teaching in Hallock on October 15, 1963.

Hallock was about 75 miles from Sarles. And our decision to take teaching jobs in these two places was foolish to say the very least. We had just been married, and hardly knew each other, yet took jobs a long distance apart. Our intention initially was that I would commute weekends to Sarles, or Barb to Hallock. It was foolish, I say again.

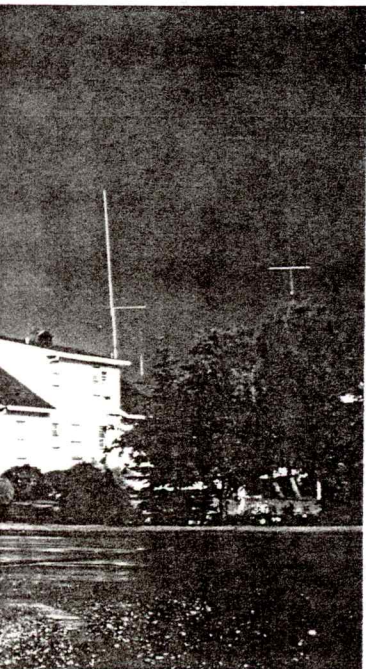
As it turned out, I only visited Barb in Sarles twice. The second weekend we went for a doctors appointment in a little city in Manitoba near Sarles, and the doctor told Barb she had to quit teaching due to kidney problems. So by October 30, we were living together in an apartment above Casper & Inga Mattsons home in Hallock.

It was about this time that I made another terribly foolish decision. We were still poor, and I declined to purchase hospital insurance when I had the change. \$15,000 and 1½ years later I regretted that decision. But I couldn't do it retroactively. The moral: always have insurance. Always.

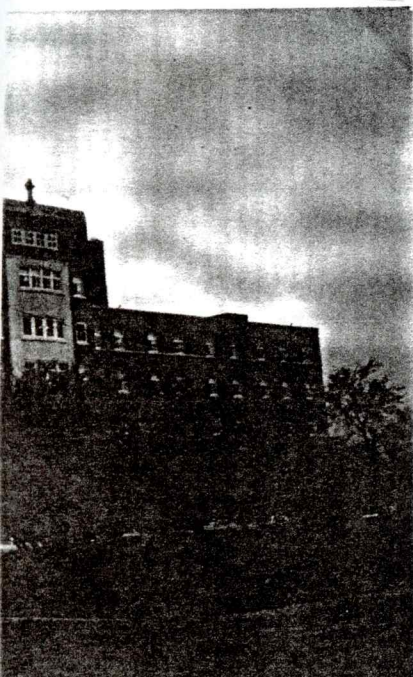
In the early months we did make a couple of purchases. I bought my first car - a 1963 Rambler for \$2070.65 - when I got out of the Army. I was 23 years old. And about Christmas of 1963 we bought an 11" TV for \$99.95 on time payments. It was a big deal.



Barb taught
this - Sep-Oct 1963



1963 pre-existing
conditions would
have disqualified her



Going back to the Sarles time for a minute: Sarles was just a few miles from the farm where Aunt Mary & Uncle Allen Brehmer lived. Since Barb lived in Sarles only about two months she didn't have much contact with Brehmers. But Aunt Mary described one occasion: "the only time we got to visit with (Barb) while she was (in Sarles) was the time we went home (to the Berlin farm) one weekend. We picked her up and took her as far as her folks in Valley City. We had such a nice visit on the way down - stopped at Lakota and had lunch. Our whole family was along. The car was crowded but she didn't seem to mind all the confusion".

Almost from the time Barbara came to Hallock to live with me (late October, 1963) her medical condition worsened quickly. We made lots of trips to Grand Forks to the clinic there. They worried a lot about the pregnancy - you.

Late at night on January 6, 1964, Barb began to hemorrhage, and I drove her to St. Michael's hospital in Grand Forks. I remember that it was an awful night to drive - very foggy. And we were scared, with good reason. But we made the 75 mile trip OK. Little did we know that Barb would not come back to Hallock again until March 6, 1964, and then would be only home for a week before going back into the hospital from March 14 to April 1. (Most of the time in Grand Forks she was in the hospital. For about two weeks, from February 11-24, she lived in a motel room to save money. That had to be an awful existence for her, since I had to work in Hallock, 75 miles away.

You were a very special part of Barb's thoughts when she was pregnant. Her friend, Shirley (Undem) Erickson recalls as follows about Barb's thoughts: "the first thing that comes to my mind is while she was pregnant and her excitement about having a baby. Even while she was sick and had to be in bed in the hospital what stands out in my memory was her smile and bright eyes. She said, "I want a baby boy that looks just like his daddy." And when you were born, it sure looked like God had given her just exactly what she asked for. You were beautiful! Even when she knew her chance of seeing you grow up was slim, her delight in you was immeasurable."

You were born on Wednesday, February 26, 1964, at 1:15 a.m. Your Mom's room was on fourth floor at St. Michaels - either 403 or 405. You weighed 7#4oz at birth and were 19½ inches long. You stayed in the hospital from birth through March 6, a little longer than usual, not because you were sick, but because your mother was still hospitalized and they wanted you to be with her. A good choice!

When you came home to Hallock, Flo came up to help out for a week or so during her Easter break at college. She recalls "it was then I learned how demanding being the mother to an infant was! You were really cooperative and a very good baby, but I still got tired. One night while I was sterilizing your formula I fell asleep. About an hour later I awoke, realizing my dreadful mistake. Without thinking I took the cover off of the



← your
first
picture
Feb 26, 1964

sterilizer and steam burned my right hand. The next day I was to leave for college again, so I waited to have (the burn) looked at by the NDSU Health Center. You were constantly on my mind as that hand healed over the next several weeks." (NDSU is North Dakota State University, Fargo, where Flo was in college)

Flo was also involved in your Baptism, which took place at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Halleck on March 8, 1964. So were Shirley and Michael Erickson. Your godparents were Flo and Jozsef Zoltan Kanter, a super good friend of mine from Army days (Zoltan could not be at the baptism so my brother John was proxy. Zellie was from Hungary, and had left that country during the revolution in 1956. I was his sponsor when he became a U.S. citizen in 1963. I have been unable to locate him since 1965. Where I last knew him he was living in Tucson, Arizona).

Some comments about the Baptism from Flo: "I also remember being one of the baptismal sponsors and holding you while the Priest annointed you. You wore a gown I made for you and I don't think you even woke up during the service!" (NOTE: I still have the baptismal gown you wore).

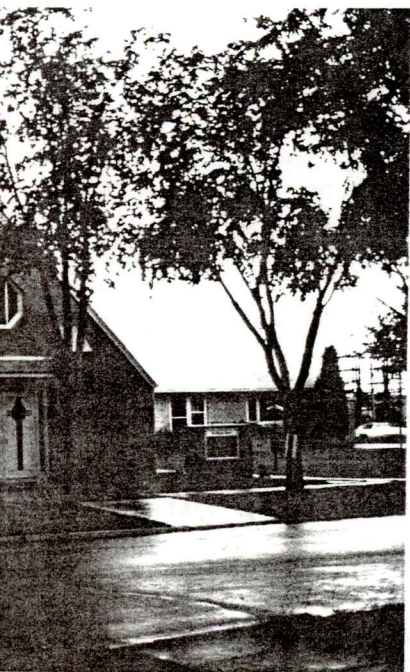
Shirley Erickson also remembers the time around your Baptism: "We (Mick and I) did come for your baptism. That was quite a day as I recall. It was so cold, and there was a lot of snow. You and your Mom and Dad had a small three room apartment. Your mother had to go to bed as soon as we came back from church and your aunt Florence and I worked on dinner. As I recall, neither of us was real adept at cooking! Again, my most vivid picture of your mother that day is her smile and the light in her eyes as she held you and nursed you - - - as though she held a precious blessed gift. Then she handed you to me to burp, and I was scared to death - - - really didn't know what to do with one so little. You were a cutie but I didn't know how to make you stop crying!"

Because Barbara was so weak, and because I had to work, our early months were quite chaotic. In addition to Flo helping out, you did spend some time with Grandma and Grandpa Bernard in Tolley, and had your first illness there - some childhood disease.

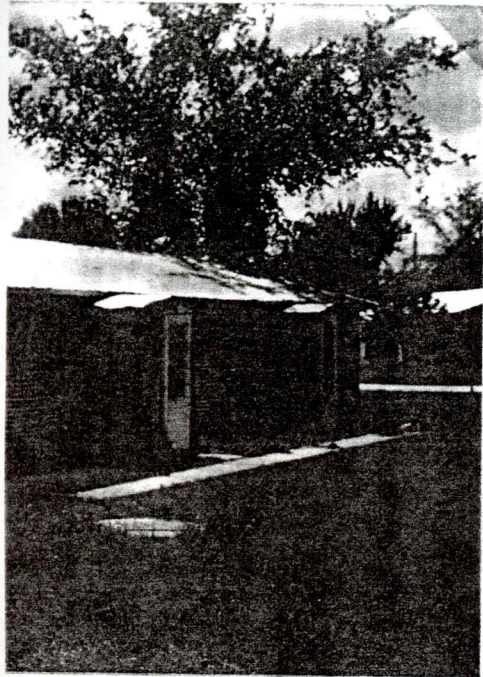
At Halleck, Barbara was usually too weak to take care of you which must have been a horrible strain for her as she wanted so much to be able to care for you. There were helps in Halleck. One of the biggest was our landlady, Mrs. Mattsen, who lived downstairs. Mrs. Mattsen recalls: "Barb was a very kind gentle girl and so soft spoken. During your stay upstairs we talked many times especially after Tommy was born. She liked to read and would have loved to do some more oil painting. She had one picture that she had done of some flowers. I hope you still have it. After Tommy was born and Barb came home she was so weak she couldn't pick him up. I would go up and bathe him every morning and after lunch when I went to the store you would bring him over to Princess Smiths house. Princess would have him until you were



Jozsef Zoltan Kanter,
picture taken at
3. The man in the
background.



view baptised in March 8,



free after school. Then you would be home to help take care of him in the evening. Barb loved her little son so much and would hold him but wasn't strong enough to pick him up, so when I left upstairs I would put him in his bed. She would change him and talk to him and he was a good baby. Barb had so many plans for good health and the two men in her life that she loved so much, but that wasn't to be. What I can tell you about Barb besides this I don't know. She was a fine young lady."

What else can I say? Almost nothing. The times were difficult, and were to get even more difficult, but through it all Barbara loved and cared for you a great deal, and so did I!

THE SUMMER OF 1964.

I resigned at Halleck at the end of the school term. My intention was to look for a job in a town that had medical facilities better than Halleck. As it turned out, our next town, Elgin, North Dakota, was about the same as Halleck in terms of medical. But that's a little ahead of this story.

The summer of 1964 saw us pretty much flat broke, me without a summer job, and Barb still very sick. Since the folks (your Grandma and Grandpa Bernard) had a "hutment" at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, I prevailed on them to let us live there for the summer.

Here's Flo's recollections of that summer: "you and your family lived with us in student housing in Grand Forks. I worked at St. Michael's Hospital and you spent your days at a babysitter. Your Dad was taking classes at the U and working at a golf course. Your Mom was too weak to care for you. She felt a lot of despair at not being able to do anything. We wondered if she was really that sick. None of us had ever been seriously ill and really had little understanding of your Mom's problems."

It was a difficult summer. In the tiny hutment lived Grandma & Grandpa, Flo, Frank, John, Barb, you and I. In addition to taking two classes at the University, I worked almost every night at the River Bend Country Club in East Grand Forks. I was a waiter. My wages were \$1.00 an hour plus tips. Since Barb was so weak, and Grandma was also going to school, you were babysat almost every day by a very nice high school girl, Becky Gjerswold.

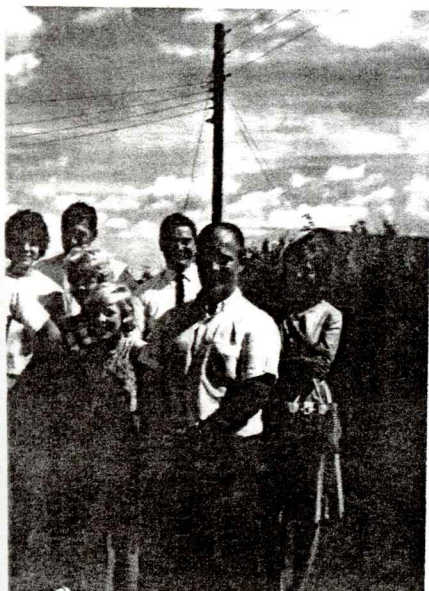
I don't recall for sure where Barb and you went right after that summer school. I do know that I then had to spend two weeks in Army reserve training at Camp McCoy (near Tomah) Wisconsin. My guess is you either stayed at the hutment, or (more likely) you and Barb went to Grandma Kent's in Valley City while I did my training.

ELGIN - 1964-65

The year at Elgin, North Dakota, was the last year Barb was alive. It was an extremely difficult year, and there are a lot of memories. This section may be the longest of any in this album.



Cousins





I don't recall exactly how we moved to Elgin. We didn't have many things, but I suppose we must have had a small U-Haul at least. We would have moved there in August, 1964.

We rented a small upstairs apartment from Art & Elinor Alt (You were in this apartment in August, 1978, when we were coming back from out west. And you met Mrs. Alt).

Like before, Barb was very sick most of the year. We were continually making trips to Bismarck for Doctor appointments, and she was hospitalized on each of the following time periods at St. Alexius in Bismarck: October 11 - November 5, 1964; February 14-18, 1965; March 28-April 2, 1965; May 13-15 and 21-25, 1965. When she left Elgin to go in the hospital on May 21 little did we know that she would never come back home.

I taught junior high school in Elgin, as I had in Halleck. We relied a lot on babysitters again. Barb became good friends with, in particular, Sheila Grosgebauer and Carole DeForest, two women about her age. She wanted to substitute teach, but only felt good enough on one or two days to actually do the work. (Those two or three days, while paltry, were enough to qualify you for survivors social security benefits which I have been getting all these years. These benefits run out this month, I believe, but they are a lasting legacy of your Mom's work).

While in Elgin numerous significant events occurred: You learned to crawl and walk; you turned one year old (your Mom's letter to you is on the next page - she wrote it about your first birthday); and you ended up in the hospital for the first (and last time) since your birth - you had a bad case of measles and were in the Elgin Hospital from April 16-18, 1965.

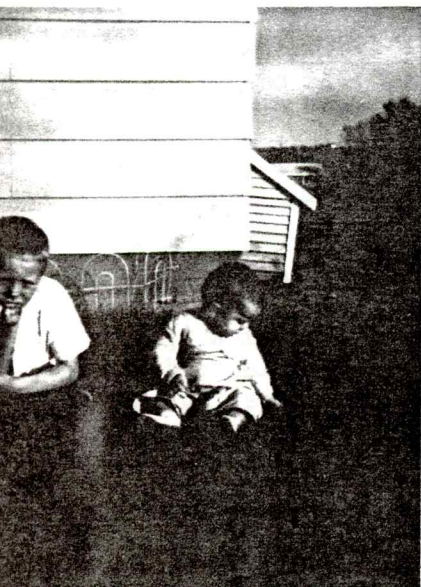
When Barb was in the hospital you and I stayed weekends in Bismarck with Carole DeForests mother-in-law, Viola DeForest. It was at Mrs. DeForests home at 834 North Anderson, Bismarck, that you first stood up in your crib! I think that would have been early November, 1965. It was a big event.

In Elgin you had primarily two babysitters: an older lady, Mrs. Ernest (Elsie) Jahraus took loving care of you during the day; evenings and weekends one of my eighth graders, Kathy McKeague, loved you and Barb. Sheila Grosgebauer also helped out, and some others such as Mrs. Christ Wutzke and Mrs. Alex Weishaar. Their services were indispensable because Barb was so very sick almost all the time. She had no strength.

Before writing the recollections of Mrs. Alt, Mrs. Grosgebauer and Kathy McKeague, let me recall a couple of other items from Elgin:

When you and I went to Bismarck to visit Barb, you would ride in a sort of basinet in the back seat. Most of the time you would sleep. (Thankfully! The trip was, like the Hallock-Grand Ferks trip, about 75 miles). I remember going to Bismarck one

OCT • 64





with Grandma Grosgebauer
Arbuto, Dec. 1964



the last picture ever
It was probably very
1965 at St. John's Church,
We were sponsors, and
first child of her

Sunday, starting the trip almost empty on gas. Southwestern North Dakota, then and now, had almost no towns, and in these towns nothing was open. So I held my breath and decided to try to make it to Bismarck. The way into Bismarck includes a long slope, maybe four or five miles, down into the city of Mandan. I reached the very edge of that slope, and the car ran out of gas! We coasted several miles into town to where I could get gas. The Lord was watching out for us then!

Another time, in about March, 1965, we lived through an extremely intense blizzard that took two or three days to blow itself out. During that "hibernation" I finished writing the first magazine article I ever wrote, an article on small schools in North Dakota. It was published in the journal of the North Dakota Education Association in May, 1965.

Back to the memories. Three persons from the Elgin days write about what they remember:

(from Sheila Grosgebauer) "Tommy was so small, a big baby and a handful for his mother who was sickly at the time. Yes, I did take care of him and enjoyed him a lot. I have also liked the name Tom and of course always know him as Tommy.

"Seeing (Tom's) drawing on the (1981 Christmas card) reminds me of (Barbara). She enjoyed drawing and pictures. Also Barb liked a song about a tree, whether it pertained to Christmas or not I am not sure. I believe it was about a man singing and telling his wife that he would build her a home and it would have a tree on or near the house.

"I remember Barbara as a slender, tall - because of her slenderness - and loving person. Even though she didn't feel well, she was always kind and loving. She adored her son and now can I only feel her pain since I have children of my own when she knew the day for her departure was closer than others."

(from Eliner Alt, our landlady in Elgin) "The things I remember best about Barbara was her determination to live and get well, her will to best the illness she had, and I remember how terribly ill she was. She wanted so desperately to be able to take care of her husband and baby and she tried so hard but would be exhausted after working 10 minutes. She could just not do it. She was a good loving and caring person."

(from Kathy (McKeague) Barnholt - an eighth grader in 1964-65)

"Dear Tom, Even though you don't remember me, I've never forgotten you. When you were a small child about a year old, I used to spend 3 to 4 afternoons a week, and sometimes Saturdays, helping your mother and taking care of you.

I'd go over after school and do the dishes, help pick up for your Mom and I generally did what ever she was unable to do. My biggest joy was taking care of you. You were the best baby. I'd feed you and change you and just generally "lug" you around for your Mom. I remember that during nap time, your Mom and I would play cards. She taught me how to play Canasta, and we'd play

for hour's. You must remember I was just a girl of 13 then. Think back to when you were 13 - you think you were really grown up. And in an adults eye's you're still a kid. Well, your Mom never made me feel like a kid. She always listened to what I had to say, and only gave advice when I asked for it. I used to ask her questions about her illness, and now that I know how hard it was for her to answer my questions, she always took the time to try and make me understand.

Your Mom was very strong in her religion, and I know that her religion got her through from day to day.

I'll never forget that summer day, I was in Iowa visiting relatives, when my Mom called and told me your Mom had died. I cried for hours and I couldn't face anyone. That was the first time I had ever been faced with death. I knew that I had lost a friend, but you guys had lost a wife and mother.

I remember calling my mom back and asking her if we could adopt Tommy. She informed me that he still had a father who loved him and needed him very much. I was so worried that you wouldn't get raised right.

Well, here it is 17 years later, and you're not a baby anymore. I guess your Dad did alright after all.

I know you don't remember your mother, but she is one person I'll never forget. She was very special in many ways, but most of all she was a "special friend" to a kid who thought she was wonderful.

Good luck in your future."

(Of all the letters I've received this one is the most moving. I cried when I read it the first and second times; I've cried again very intensely while I've typed it now.)

THE LAST MONTHS FOR BARB.

I never finished teaching the entire year at Elgin.

The day was Thursday, May 21, 1965. Barbara had had a bad night, and in the morning decided she couldn't take care of you. So I took you over to Mrs. Jahraus' for the day.

I want to let Mrs. Jahraus describe what happened next (from a letter she wrote to Barb on June 7, 1965): "The morning you called and said Richard brings Tommy, and you come some time of the day. Here in half hour I received a call you will be taken to Bismarck. I felt so sorry for you, and it was the hand of God that Richard went back and found you otherwise you maybe lay there a long time."

What Mrs. Jahraus described was this: after I dropped you off with her I had to go back home to get my school books. I had never had that happen before. I always took the books.

I got back to the apartment, went upstairs, and found Barbara

via a n e n p a c
C. F. L. Fredholm Agent.
"THE ROUTE OF THE NORTH COAST LIMITED"
MAY 25 1965
PACIFIC NORTHWEST VACATIONS
Date
YELLOWSTONE PARK
Barb's Last trip with Grandma Kent, her Mom.
(See the next page)



Aunt Jean Busch
- Summer, 1965



Barb - Grandma +
boyhood 1965

in a coma on the floor by the telephone. (The telephone was on that little desk which you still have as your desk).

If ever God was helping us, it was at this awful time. Barb was, as I've said, in a coma. But she had apparently just dialed her doctor, Dr. Pfeifle, in Bismarck before she collapsed. I picked the phone off the floor, and he was still on the line!! He knew immediately she needed to be in the hospital.

I could have had an ambulance come - there was one in town - but without thinking I picked Barbara up and carried her down the stairs, put her in the car and took her to the hospital a few blocks away. How I accomplished that still amazes me as she was totally limp.

She regained consciousness in the Elgin Hospital, and I believe that same day we went by ambulance to St. Alexius in Bismarck. (I had pangs of nostalgia when, in August, 1978, you, Buck and I travelled that same route the ambulance took, and followed an ambulance for about 15 miles. Believe me, that brought back memories for me).

Before I leave Elgin, I want to quote another bit of that letter to Barb from Mrs. Jahraus dated June 7, 1965. "My prayers go for you and if it is God's Will you be getting better so you can be with your darling Tommy and your wonderful husband again. That is my prayer's and I no yours to." (Mrs. Jahraus was a wonderfully kind, though uneducated, older woman. She was a real gift for you. She has been dead for some years. I enjoyed her a great deal when we lived in Elgin, and she loved you and you, her).

It took the doctors almost no time to decide that Barbara's only chance for survival was a kidney transplant. And, since St. Alexius was not equipped for that kind of operation, nor specialists available, the decision was made that she should be transported as early as possible to the University Hospital in Minneapolis.

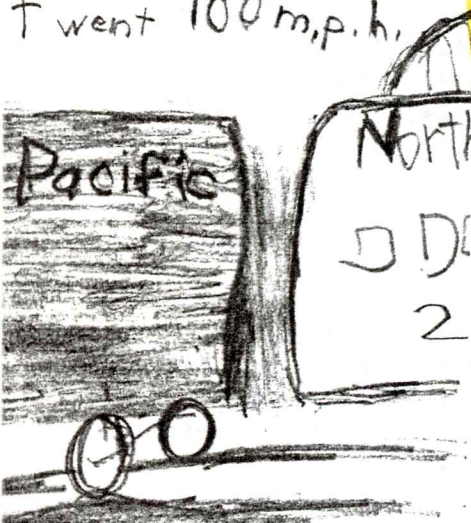
On May 25, after stabilizing her medical condition about as much as they could, St. Alexius doctors released Barbara, and she and I headed for Minneapolis. (I can't recall if you went with us or someone else. It was a very traumatic time, I know Barbara couldn't care for you so I assume either someone went with us and took care of you, or you rode with someone else.)

It is about 450 miles from Bismarck to Minneapolis
We started the drive from Bismarck to Minneapolis via Valley City. The car was still the old Rambler that had seen us through thick and thin the previous two years. Somewhere between Jamestown and Valley City a water hose blew in the radiator - but again the Lord was with us - it blew right at an exit ramp and a service station and we had hardly no wait or problem.

The car, however, needed work, and because it was urgent that Barb get to the Hospital, she and Ruth went by train and I followed. (The ticket is on the preceding page.)

The summer of 1965 was the summer that Barbara died. And it was a terribly difficult time for us all. I'll try to remember some of the things that happened that summer.

a train engine we
went 100 m.p.h.



2 cards to Barb
was old at the time



University SE, Mpls,
x July, 1965.

We did get Barb into the University Hospital, but not easily. They were concerned about how we could pay the bill as we had no hospitalization insurance. But finally they relented, and Barb was admitted.

We (you, I, Ruth and David) started out staying at one of two places. Barbara's cousin Marlene and her family (Eddie Berg's) lived in a four-plex in the 2600 block of Clinton Avenue South in Minneapolis. We stayed there for awhile. (That four-plex has long since been destroyed and is located where the present I-35 passes the downtown Honeywell plant in Minneapolis). We also stayed - particularly you, Dave and Ruth, at Gail & Berghild Umphrey's at 3855 Portland Avenue South. (Berghild still lives there; Gail died five years ago). I initially stayed with all of you, but at some point decided I needed to get a place for myself nearer the hospital so I moved to 3315 University Avenue Southeast and got a room.

So, Barb was in University Hospital, I was at 3315 University Avenue SE (right by the KSTP-TV tower), you and Ruth and Dave were with a whole family at 3855 Portland Avenue South.

As with the previous summer, I was almost flat broke. I can remember getting a threatening letter from Standard Oil since I couldn't pay for my credit card purchases of gas. We worked out an arrangement to pay the bill.

My first job was delivering phone books in south Minneapolis. I was paid \$24.50 for that. It wasn't much, but better than nothing. In mid-June, I went to work at the Lincoln Del in St. Louis Park, working as a clerk in the Deli. I was paid \$1.50 per hour there. I worked, as I recall, long hours - mostly late afternoon and night time.

Ruth and David went back to Valley City about once a month so that Ruth could pay her bills. On one of these trips David did the card that is shown on this page.

The doctors at University Hospital did all they could for Barb. But it wasn't enough. She had three major surgeries during the summer, and was in the very best of descriptions, in very depressing surroundings. Because she was being prepared for a kidney transplant, she had to live in sterile surroundings. That meant she could have hardly any visitors. And you were able to see her only once, that I can recall. Nellie Rosenwald, a patient with Barb who I befriended, recalled the following: "(Barb) was a very brave person and suffered so much. I remember someone holding the little boy (you) up to the window (of her room) so she could see him. It was so sad."

It would be fair to say, I think, that Barbara was in serious to critical condition all summer at the University. On the following pages are some medical reports on what happened to her.

She received lots of card and letters, but she didn't get too many visitors. For one thing, she wasn't allowed hardly any visitors; for another, most of her friends lived hundreds of miles away. She tried, I think, to keep a positive outlook. I believe the water-color on a following page is one she tried to do while at University Hospital.

By mid summer she had lost both kidneys, and was being maintained on kidney dialysis while awaiting a suitable donor.

By late July she was feeling pretty down in the dumps, for good reason. A friend of hers and mine, Father Allmaras, wrote me on July 23 after he had visited her in the hospital. "she seemed to be kind of lonesome for anybody to talk to when I was there. Hope that the surgery came out ok, she seemed to be a bit skeptical when I was there, . . ."

On July 23rd she was in intensive care after another surgery, and I recall distinctly going in to visit her, and finding her in quite good spirits. She gave me a list of things she wanted me to bring to the hospital the next day. I promised I would, and went to work.

The next day, July 24, I went up to the hospital late in the morning, went to Barb's room, and found her in a coma, and on a respirator. Her condition had apparently worsened very quickly very early on July 24, and through some mix-up no one had called me. It was to say the very least a shock.

It was an especial shock for Ruth because she had left for Valley City that very morning, and we could not notify her of the developments until she got back to Valley.

There seemed to be no hope, and indeed there wasn't.

Barbara, as saintly a person as I think I will ever meet, went to heaven at 10:50 p.m. on July 24, 1965. I was at the hospital when she died.

After learning of her death I had to deal with the mind-numbing details. The first item was to notify relatives. I can recall myself, at midnight, down at the Minneapolis Western Union office, sending telegrams telling of her passing. The body was sent to North Dakota for burial by train, I believe.

I recall going to Mass alone at Holy Cross Church in NE Minneapolis the next day - a Sunday - and crying in the pew. But I quickly regained my composure - it was not OK to cry for me those days - and headed off for the funeral in North Dakota.

have mercy on the Soul of

RICHARD BERNARD
(Barbara Sunde)

b. 15, 1943, Valley City, N. D.
ly 24, 1965, Minneapolis, Minn.
Mass—Thursday, July 29, 10 A.M.
Catherine's Catholic Church
ating—Rev. George Werten
ent—St. Catherine's Cemetery
Valley City, North Dakota

gentlest heart of Jesus, ever
in the Blessed Sacrament,
assumed with burning love for
captive souls, have mercy
soul of Thy departed servant.
severe in Thy judgment but
drops of Thy Precious Blood
in the devouring flames, and
O Merciful Saviour, send
angels to conduct Thy departed
to a place of refreshment,
and peace. Amen.

the souls of all the faithful
through the mercy of God,
peace. Amen.

al Jesus grant eternal rest.

ON - OLSON FUNERAL HOME
Valley City, North Dakota

PRINTED IN ITALY 10



THE FUNERAL, AND AUGUST, 1965

First, to back up a moment: two pages earlier in this book I mentioned where I thought you lived in the summer of 1965. After writing that page, I asked both Grandma Kent and Grandpa Bernard. Because we're talking about almost 17 years ago they couldn't remember for sure. But it is reasonably certain that for much of June you stayed in Minneapolis with Grandma Kent, David and I; then you went back to Grand Forks with Grandpa and Grandma Bernard till after the funeral. Dad recalls your Uncle John (who was then 17) complaining about having to babysit that summer.

The Medicare Act signed July 30, 1965

Barbara's funeral was on July 29, 1965, at St. Catherine's Church in Valley City. Because she had so many friends, and because her death was at so young an age, there were many people at the funeral. As I recall it, there were three priests and a minister officiating at the funeral service - very unusual.

As I recall, the day of the funeral was, for a time, rather breezy and threatening. At the burial itself, I was standing by the grave with relatives, and my Aunt Jean Busch was holding you. As she recalled to me: "you are correct about the metal from the protective tarp (over the gravesite) striking us as I held Tommy. Bumped his forehead - didn't hurt me and he quit crying when his Daddy took him. . . ."

After the funeral - well, let Jean Busch continue: "then, since we were together for such a sad occasion - we became mighty busy and held the 62nd anniversary park gathering for Ferd and Rosa (Busch)." This was my Grandma and Grandpa Busch.

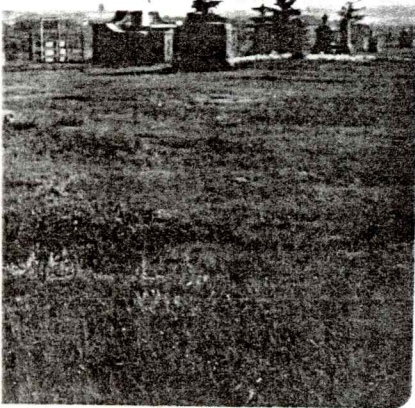
Actually, I believe the anniversary celebrated was their 60th and it was a very late celebration - as they were married in February, 1905. But Jean was correct. . . since most of the Busch clan were together for the funeral, we all went down to the Grand Rapids Park and did have a reunion on July 29th. I don't remember much about that day anymore. I do remember being worried about you getting into some mouse poison that was inside the building we were in.


What happened in the month after the funeral remains very cloudy in my mind. I do know that I came back to Minneapolis to live again at 3315 University Avenue SE, and that I was back by August 4, 1965. I know that because I have a letter I sent to Grandma Kent on that date.

My letter to Grandma (below) answered some questions for her, and answers some questions for me today about Barb's last days and our feelings. Following is almost the entire letter:

July 13
 "(Father Allmaras) was at the hospital to see (Barb) before the (1965) All-Star game in Minneapolis. He saw her fairly early in the morning when neither of us were there, nor when we could have been there."

← I can't be sure. But I think she may be at the Busch farm after the funeral reunion.
 in July, 1965





"... (Barb's) last kidney run (dialysis) was on Tuesday or Wednesday afternoon after the operation. At any rate she was due for it the next day. I was off work that day so you left early. A short time later the doctor decided to put her on the kidney a little early as her calcium was too high. I saw her for a short while in the kidney room but this was still while she was under sedation so she didn't respond anyway.

"... about Saturday (July 24). It would have done no good for you to come Saturday. Barb was not conscious all day and if you could have gone to the room, as you wouldn't have been able to, you would have not stayed long. It was extremely depressing. Best you remember her as she was Friday. I was in and around the hospital most of the day. Went over to Schacht's (where I stay ... and was kept informed by telephone. The doctors and nurses were very good about this after the first lapse in the morning.

"Ruth, it might help if you see a doctor in Valley ... and talk to him about this. You have to start living again. Barb's loss is a tragic one to both of us, but you must remember that "the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away." Be consoled in the fact that Barb was a good person and that she certainly will merit eternal reward. Our duty now is not to the past, but to the present and future because sooner or later we will face death too. Barbs trials have ended, ours just continue.

"Please don't blame yourself, or the doctors, for anything in this hour. I am convinced we did everything possible for Barbara. Doctors can do so much. Had she faced this same situation a year ago her chances would have been less, at least. Let us hope that by her death the doctors have learned something new so that the chances for others are better. You must remember that she would have had no chance at all if others had not been concerned about the kidney problem. The doctors in Bismarck and Grand Forks did all they could and I am sure no one at the University of Minnesota would have done differently.

"So devote yourself now to living. Pray for Barb and for everyone else whose destiny it is to suffer through long illness. May she rest in peace.

"On my part, I plan to continue here in Minneapolis and am now trying to find a home where Tommy and I can be together. Tommy will have a good home and will be brought up with respect for God and for his mother. I will raise him well.

"Will close for now. Please, again, pray for Barb and for the sick."

Sincerely, Dick

You might ask the question: "why did I choose to return to Minneapolis when my background and relatives were mostly in North Dakota?" The answer is really quite simple. When it became obvious that Barb would require a kidney transplant to live,

↑ 1615 S. Ferry
Anoka Mn.
Our home from
Sep-65-
Aug 66

←
A+ 1615 S.
Ferry
about
Halloween
1965



ta with search
Dec 1965
(booked)



ento, Dec. 1965

it also became obvious that we would have to continue to live in the Twin Cities area for at least several months even if the transplant were successful because of the potential for Barb's body rejecting the new kidney. Going back to rural North Dakota was out of the question.

So, beginning in about July, 1965, I began looking for teaching jobs in the Twin Cities. I can remember sitting in Barb's room at the Hospital calling school districts for work.

Anoka-Hennepin, as I recall, was the first district listed in the phone book and, surprise of surprises, they had a job opening in my field!! So I applied in Anoka and a couple of other places and finally was offered a job teaching geography at Roosevelt Junior High School in Blaine in the Anoka-Hennepin School District

I signed my first contract with Anoka-Hennepin on July 21, 1965. On July 24, 1965, Barb passed away.

But . . . now I had a job. After the funeral I believe you went back to Grand Forks with Grandma and Grandpa for a while and I came back to Minneapolis to look for housing for you and I. I also went back to work at Lincol Del, I believe.

My search for a home was, as I recall, not terribly long. Though I cannot recall to this day how much time I spent, where I got my information on contacts, or how many people I interviewed. I do recall interviewing one person in Blaine (where Roosevelt was located).

At any rate, my search ended when I found the Smart's in Anoka. They offered to take you for child care, and to give me a room upstairs. They lived at 1615 S. Ferry, Anoka, about a half block from the Mississippi River. They had two small children, somewhat older than you, and since I would have to work two jobs to survive during the 1965-66 year the arrangement seemed ideal. It did turn out to be ideal (under the circumstances): you lived downstairs with them, I saw you as often as I could.

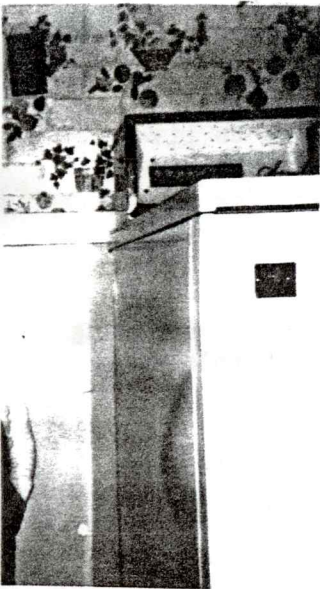
So by late August, 1965, we were back together in Anoka.

1965-66 - 1615 South Ferry, Anoka, Minnesota

There was lots to be thankful for as I started the 1965-66 school year. I had a good home for you and I. I had a good job in a brand new school. I had a second job to help pay the many bills I had.

But there were "negatives" too. Barb was gone. Working two jobs almost full-time was not good. My debts as the year started - \$15,982 in all - were so high that I had to seriously consider filing bankruptcy. I didn't see you as often as I would have liked to. But we survived.

Here is Mrs. Smart recalling the year: ". . . if I remember



right (Tom) was 15 months old when he came to live with us. Tom was always a real good little guy. We had a lot of fun with him. Larry was 3 and Ren 7 at that time. Tom always tried to do everything they did. Tom was a real good eater - loved string beans and loved oatmeal with brown sugar on it. We would take him along to my folks at Grove City on weekends a lot of times. Tom always liked to sleep in Larry's lower bunk bed instead of his crib so we always let him take his afternoon nap there. He was always happy, smiled all the time. Was a little stubborn when it came to potty training but we made it OK. Dad (me) drove a VW and would stop in often. Also would have supper with us a lot. Times were rough, none of us had much money. But seems we were always happy. And we had our health so really had everything we needed."

Marion Smart, Dec 16, 1981

Some things I remember about 1965-66:



↑
In Mrs Smart's
Kitchen
Prob. Fall 1965

I lived in a room upstairs in the house. You lived with Smarts downstairs, as Marion said. As I worked full-time as a teacher I didn't see you during the weekdays much. I also had to work almost full-time at the Lincoln Del, so three nights a week at least, and most weekends, I worked a full-shift there - until January, 1966.

←
In January, 1966, the combination of overwork and, I suppose, poor diet and not enough rest, earned me a healthy dose of pneumonia. I ended up sick for more than a week, and shortly thereafter quit my job at the Lincoln. I have never since worked two jobs. Just too much.



your
second
birthday
2/24/66
At
Chris
Strunk's
Apartment
(Fair Oaks
Minneapolis)

I did start the year on the verge of bankruptcy. In fact, I discussed bankruptcy with an attorney in Anoka in about October. North Dakota Public Welfare finally came through and paid off the biggest bill, to University of Minnesota Hospitals. That left me still with debts of over \$4000 - still alot since my salary at the start for Anoka-Hennepin was only about \$5600. But at least the debt was manageable. I will never ever question public welfare programs. When I needed help, they helped a great deal. When I needed, society gave, and I've never forgotten that.

←
You and I saw each other often during the year, but it was not a normal kind of father-son relationship as you can gather. The important point for me to you is that I never ever considered "farming" you out to relatives, or leaving you for good. I was just trying to cope the best I could.

As if there weren't enough troubles that first year, about December, 1965, the old Rambler which had seen us through the two previous very difficult years "died" itself. So I was faced with another debt. On December 29, 1965, I bought a new Volkswagen for \$1563.52. That car lasted for the next five years. We'll next discuss it in March, 1971.



*John + Grandpa
Grand Forster,
1966*



*toy box in the
car in 1966.*

During the fall of 1965 I met Dave & Sue Irber for the first time. Dave taught with me at Roosevelt. Over the next pages we will talk more about them. They were my very best friends, and we still are close.

Later in the Fall, probably late October or so, I met a lady by the name of Chris Strand - an art teacher in Anoka. We began to date off and on, and some pictures you see were taken by her at her place. That relationship, which never got terribly serious I'd say, lasted off and on into 1966-67 after I moved. I have completely lost track of Chris, and have not known for years where she even lives. I thought she was a nice person.

I remember well the porch swing at our home on Ferry Street. You and I sat on it often. It still is there. I look for it each time I drive down Ferry street. I lived in the room directly above the porch in that house. I had, I recall, a small stove but nothing else. It was a room. I had little leisure that first year. I do remember, however, getting "hooked" on the Batman show that was the craze in those days on TV. (My TV was the tiny one we had bought in Hallock the first year. It finally quit too).

Sometime that first fall I remember spending some time in the bathroom at the house getting rid of what seems to have been hundreds of pills that Barb had used. There were pills of all varieties - all to help her cope with failed kidneys. It is a wonder that she had any of her own personality given all of the stuff she had to take. As I recall, they were all in a cake pan. I flushed them down the toilet or the sink. It was a tough experience because, in a sense, they were the last reminders of Barb's life - negative reminders, to be sure, but reminders nonetheless that a few months earlier there had been a person named Barbara.

A last memory of 1965-66: The new Volkswagen I purchased was quite a car - for you, especially. In the back of the car was an indoor "trunk" where I kept a cardboard box full of toys. When we travelled you spent a lot of time with those toys, and in that trunk.

I believe it was sometime in the spring of 1966 when we drove to Chicago to visit Art Busch's. I vividly remember you and I having a real learned discussion on the way back about the moon we observed near LaCrosse, Wisconsin,

As I recall, 1965-66 ended on a pretty upbeat note.

THE SUMMER OF 1966

This summer we spent apart, as I had gotten a fellowship at Illinois State University (Normal) for graduate work. We left Smart's, and you spent an interesting summer with Grandma and Grandpa Bernard.