

## Memories of ELIZABETH CHERNEY ORPHAL

I remember that after Tom and Ellen were married, Mother and Dad moved to the George McKnight farm, and, naturally, lots of stuff went to the dump. Among other things going to the dump was a Thomas Edison roller player with the big horn. Down the road goes Bill, blaring away on the horn! What we wouldn't give now for that player, right? Maybe Bill was blaring away because he thought he'd get a buyer along the way!

Then there was the day that Tres and I had to go to Uncle Joe Stodola's for a "visit" for a couple of days. Well, when we returned home, there was Toot. The thing was, we didn't even know mother was expecting a baby.

One time when I was working in Milwaukee, I came home for a weekend visit during the winter. We got a snowstorm. Fortunately, the plows went through before I had to leave. Martin was working in Kewaunee, but his Model T Ford roadster was stored for the winter in the garage at home. Dad decided to take me to Denmark to catch my train back to Milwaukee using Martin's car. We started out, got as far as Hiningson's hill and somehow got into a snow bank. We reversed out, went back home and put the car back into the garage. We finished the trip to Denmark using the horses and sleigh! Guess I shouldn't have come home that weekend...I don't think I was too popular. Wish I could remember if we damaged Bill's car.

When Grandpa Stodola died in early February, all the Stodola family, along with our whole family, went to Kewaunee. While we were there, a blizzard came, and we were all stranded there. It was some time before the plows made a dent in the snowdrifts, so the cars could not make it through. Phone calls were made to ask neighbors to do the chores. Good, helpful neighbors, including Emily Ray, milked the cows. The bunch of us was divided between Grandpa's house and the rectory. We girls slept five to a bed—crosswise. Despite the terrible storm, the young crowd found it necessary to check out the Kewaunee "downtown area". Of course, nobody got a lot of sleep, and the men played cards all night. We were pretty happy to hear the plows coming through so we could start for home. Unfortunately, they only cleared the roads in Kewaunee County. By Bureshes place, I think it was Tom and Martin that walked from there to home to get a team of horses and a sleigh to finish our trip home. Those wonderful horses...reliable transportation, never to be forgotten.

We walked the two miles to the dance hall and back. We were never too tired for that. Mother's orders to me were always that I shouldn't forget to ask Julia Cherney to dance. I hated that. To me, Julia was always so smart and so popular, and then there was me..fat and bashful. So, I waited until almost the end of the evening to ask her, and thankfully, most times she had all the dances taken. At least I did my duty and did what mother told me to do. Everything was ok until the next time I went to a dance.

Frances and Mary Stodola decided to come visit me in Milwaukee. They hopped on a bus in Manitowoc, and then changed for one to Milwaukee on an early Sunday morning. When the bus driver picked them up, he asked them if they were left over from the night before. They thought that was pretty funny, and we all got a good laugh about it. We had a very nice time during the visit. We enjoyed sampling different flavored bottles on our liquor shelf. They had such a good time; they even came to visit me at our cottage at Three Lakes. There are quite a few pictures of that visit. Frances and Mary were always cute and a lot of fun, even without all the liquor sampling. And, they were the best cooks ever. I've always wondered why men didn't snatch them up...maybe they were too fussy!

My mother never had a measuring cup or measuring spoon. She just used the "farmer cup" used for coffee, and regular teaspoons and soup spoons for her measuring when baking and cooking.

One day, all the kids were in the house, playing in the attic, while Mother and Dad were outside in the fields. I think I was the youngest at the time. All of a sudden, we looked out the window and saw mother running like mad to the house. She came in and locked all the doors and told us the gypsy's were coming. The gypsy's came into the yard, helped themselves to so many chickens and left. They always took what they could get from farmers and even stores, and then went on their way.

We didn't get too many spankings. Dad had a wide strap for sharpening straight razors. If we were naughty, he sometimes whacked us on the back of the legs to get our attention. The bigger punishment was kneeling on a thin layer of dried peas....and we had to fetch them ourselves! We'd have to kneel on those peas for a half hour or so.

We played "smear" with Dad a lot. I remember four cards and then you get High, Low, Jack and Game. To this day, I cannot remember how the game was played, but I remember all of us playing it. Dad made us a "checker" type game on cardboard and we used coffee beans for the checkers.

Dad made all of us wooden shoes, but not the kind you're probably thinking of. They consisted of a wood platform, perhaps 1-1/2" – 2" high, with a strap over the foot. It was muddy and messy outside, so these worked good. He also made us ski's and we went skiing over to Anna's. He just got a board, soaked the tip, bent it up, let it dry that way, gave us a strap, and we were on our way.

We slept on corn husk mattresses, and had feather thick blankets. One sheet, just to cover the mattress. The only heat to the upstairs was through the register on the floor sending up heat from the kitchen...until the stove died out. The only register to the upstairs was in Tres and my bedroom. Talk about cold.

There was only one tub of bath water to take care of all of us. We had to heat the water, so one tub was all we got. I think the youngest went first. Then, we'd add a little more hot water as we went.

We had one or two Sunday dresses, one pair of Sunday shoes, one pair of school shoes, and the wooden ones Dad made for us to use when doing chores.

We had to wash two loads of clothes before going to school in the morning.

My father loved having us all come home from our jobs in different cities. Mother told me many times how happy he was to have us all home. That's why he probably tolerated the "food" fights that sometimes came up. One weekend I was home, I was probably 16-17 years old; I decided to bake a lemon chiffon pie...something new I'd learned in Milwaukee and wanted to try at home. I cut the pie and served everyone a piece. I was sitting next to Tom, and he carefully watched as Bill sampled his. Then, he started snitching bites off of my piece. I got so tired of Tom eating my pie, that I shoved the whole thing right into his face. Mother and Dad were sitting across from us, laughing their sides off. They really enjoyed us. Of course, that's not the only time I threw food around. One time Tom was talking smart, and probably making fun of me or something, and as he got up from the table, I took a spoonful of mashed potatoes and whipped it at him. Not only did I miss him, the potatoes zinged dangerously close to Dad's head. Amazingly, he laughed about it.

A little Bohemian: " Yuck se mas nezka" How are you?

I remember tending bar at Beverly Gardens when there were dances. I don't remember if we sold beer or just soda and ice cream. Of course, that was before bartenders needed to have a license. We'd go out and dance between servings. My sister Anna would sell the tickets for admission...a whole ten cents.

During the school days, during lunch hour, we'd all run about a quarter of a mile away to play in an old, empty farmhouse. Usually we'd play hide and seek. The teacher knew where we went. I think we were allowed to do that. We'd come running back when she rang the bell. And then, sometimes, when certain boys liked certain girls, the boys would go across the road from the school to the little grocery store. They would buy a sucker or licorice and sometimes, one for their "girlfriend". They would then try to smuggle it to their special friend without anyone else seeing them so they wouldn't get teased about having favorite girlfriends on the side.

It was during those days that Gilbert Valentine had a crush on me. So, when Valentine's Day came around, he gave me two valentines. I didn't know what I should do. One was homemade and one was purchased. Should I take both home, or throw one away and should I even let the folks know that somebody had a crush on me. All the girls at school, and even my sister and brothers knew, but I didn't know if I should be flattered or ashamed that I got two Valentines from one boy.

There were different age groups when growing up. Our Anna was called Anna R because her middle name was "Regina". Wencil's sister, Ann, was known as "Anna E" but I can't remember her middle name. Helen (we called her Heide) Halada went with Alec Gracheck (sp) for years. The other three people in that age group were Veronica Novitski, Anna M (Uncle Martin's daughter) and my brother, Martin Cherney. Helen Halada was the last of that age group to marry. I think that after she broke up with Alec, she married Jimmy Cherney, my cousin...my Uncle Martin's son. Jimmy was a neat person. Kind, cute and very funny. I remember the chicken dinners Helen used to make for us after they were married. She'd have all of us over for dinner when we'd come home for the summer months. She was a darn good cook.

While I was working in Milwaukee for Dr. Feldman, Helen worked in Milwaukee also for the Reisen family in Fox Point. Fox Point is somewhat north of Milwaukee, and at that time, there were no buses or streetcars going out that far. So, the family gave her a car to use on her days off. She would pick me up, as well as Helen Pecheck (who later married Joe Cherney, Wencil's brother) who worked for Dr. Holbrook, and Anna M, who was working in Milwaukee for a Jewish family. I cannot remember what we actually did on our days off...I just remembered getting rides in her car. We all worked as maids. Helen was the luckiest because she had the use of the car. We were lucky too because we could ride along. Helen Pecheck once told us how she had to think of a dessert to serve for either Ash Wednesday or Good Friday, or something, and she figured that it couldn't be anything real fancy for that sober day, so she served the family hot cross buns. We thought it was pretty funny, but I guess she got away with it.

The next age group consisted of my brother, Tom, Tres and I, Beatrice, Agnes, Louis and George Cherney (Wencil's sisters and brothers), Frances Cherney (Uncle Martin's daughter), and Ben, Helen, Lorraine, and Pauline Novitski (really, really good friends of ours). I don't remember what Beatrice and Agnes did after they got out of school, but from our age group, Helen Novitski and I wound up in Milwaukee working as maids and came home summers to work in the fields, etc....shocking grain, picking stones, picking cucumbers for the cannery. Those were the days, milking was done by hand, and the milk cans were placed in water troughs to stay cold. We'd assemble by the cans after a dance and have a nice cold drink of milk. A ladle was always handy and nobody worried about germs. We all drank from the same ladle and the same milk can. Whatever milk was left, we loaded onto wagons and hauled it to the milk factory for making cheese. Those were the days...not much money but lots of fun.

Tres and I loved Tom's new Pontiac almost as much as he did. We have a picture of Tres and me sitting in the car (I think I was driving) outside the garage. The deal was that one of us would back it out of the garage, and then after WE washed it, we'd switch places and the other would drive it back in. Tom wanted his car to be clean, so when it was time for a date, Tres and I had to wash it. We did it because we all loved each other.

I remember after one of the dances, Tres and I were working in the pantry off the kitchen. We were also busily talking about the dance, the boys, our love lives, etc. Unknown to us, Dad was standing outside, under the window, listening to it all. He then came in and asked us questions about stuff we didn't know he knew. It was only much later we learned how he got all the information. And after those dances, he'd make it a point of walking around all the cars to check for damage.

Elizabeth remembers Wencel Cherney romancing Anna and when she went to Chicago or Milwaukee to work, Wencel would come over and take Theresa (my sister) and me to the dance. When Wencel and Anna got married June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1926, there was rain, and rain and some more rain, and oh yes there was lots of mud, too. The meals were served at our house (home place behind Beverly Gardens). They left on their honeymoon, and I had the honor of the clean up job. Their wedding was the first dance and wedding at Beverly Gardens which was owned by Emily and George Ray (Emily was Wencel's sister).

Elizabeth also remembers when cousins, Frank and Jim Cherney played with a band and they would take Frances, Theresa and me along to the dance. We were the first to arrive and the last to go home – were we ever honored, especially in winter when they added a caboose to the sleigh – with blankets and seats – were we ever so lucky!!!!

Elizabeth remembers their first car. Her dad got a Model T Ford. She remembers walking tow miles to school – following in martin's and Tom's footsteps in the snow. Theresa and I got sore throats at the same time – a good time Ya!!!!

Elizabeth remembers her Dad busy spinning wool, while mother was busy reading to him (of course we were supposed to **be quiet**). When Mother and Dad had to go somewhere – Martin got busy trying to make candy – if they came back unexpectedly – it sure got dumped in a hurry. Our meals were **fun**. When we got older – Bill & Tom were seated next to each other. Tom would be watching when Bill would try something if he kept eating then Tom would try it. I remember the mashed potato fights. My Dad was sure a sweetheart - letting us do all these crazy things.

And 1<sup>st</sup> rate Christmas tree trimmer. Yes our prune soup, a Christmas **special** and raised dough donuts.

Margaret Hruska was another thorn in our life – trying to run it – and her mother always squealing on us – not matter what we did.

The threshing times were great – lot of good food and 5 meals a day. Then the young boys that worked along. We really got a few dances – that was one way getting to know them better – beside the hard work. It was fun and nice memories.

The first baseball games were great – Bill was catcher – Tom shortstop and the rest of the family supporting and enjoying the ice cream cones that could be bought at the game. Those were also the days, when you were out of school – you had to go some.

Wencel went to Two Rivers to work, Anna went to Chicago or Milwaukee doing housework. Martin went to Kewanee at Manufacturing Company and he stayed with the aunts – lucky him. Tom went to Chicago with the Novitski boys. I went to Milwaukee to work for Dr. Feldman (Anna's old job). Theresa and Toot went to Green Bay and Bill worked for Jimmy Cherney. He worked in the woods all winter in Northern Wisconsin. My parents were real sweethearts and really kind and helpful.

Our Tom was something else, too. We got along great. When we started to school – Theresa started the same time I did. Our Mother making our dresses, dressed, us alike. So the teacher asked Tom if we were twins. His answer – Yes, only one is a year older than the other. He was smart even in his young day. When Tom had a date – I had to make sure his pants were pressed (You know those were the days with one pair of Sunday pants and to set his hair, too. Sometimes I got tired of his orders – so one day – I just starched his underwear real heavy and stood it up in his closet. I got a way with it too.

Talk about smart parents – Dad made sure to check the cars after a dance – if one had to take a trip to town quick – like you can guess there was a good reason. Good that Bill told him who his date was because sometime Mother had to wake Tom to tell him, Bill isn't home yet in the morning. Tom made a quick trip to Bill's date's house to find Bill sleeping in the car and his date gone to bed. **Wow!!!** ((Hey Aunt Elizabeth that didn't only happen to Uncle Bill – I had a date who fell asleep in the car at my house too, and I had gone into the house to bed when I couldn't wake him up. He sure high tailed it out our place when Dad (Wencel) started the pump in the morning. I never had another date with that fellow - Bern's comments)).

Father Kubale was a nice person, a quiet sort. Aunt Theresa from Kewanee was his housekeeper. They would come over for a visit and dinner and Father Kubale would give us each a nickel (maybe part of the Sunday collection). Well after they left, we would pool our money and would send Toot (Lillian) to the store (Voek's grocery on the corner) and didn't she come home every time with lemon drops. She liked them the rest of us didn't. We went on a family picnic with Father Kubale to Sturgeon Bay – Father Kubale, Aunt Tress (the housekeeper), Martin and Johanna drove with them. Tom, Ellen, me, Toot and Bill drove together. It was a really hot, hot day. Being way ahead, I guess the boys decided to stop at a bar. So along comes Father Kubale's car passed us, then we passed him again (I guess we were the only ones who knew where to go). Soon we were way ahead of them again (I guess Tom drove faster). Well another bar came up and we were dry. Wonder what Father Kubale thought of Aunt Tress's nieces and nephews – he never told us, now I wonder if Mother and Dad ever heard about it.

Those were the days when everybody, everybody made wine from anything – cherries, potatoes, rhubarb, current, goose berries – you name it, it was tried. And mother did too. Tom got the bright idea, we needed some, course we were going to visit, Anna and Wencel & Helen Halada, too. So we borrowed some wine and added water to the original bottle so it wouldn't be noticed. Poor Mother wondered why her wine wasn't good or spoiled. I wonder, too!!!!

Elizabeth always enjoyed the Stodola Aunts and Uncles. Uncle Joe and Tom were fun and funny. There was a party at our house – all of them – I think there were glasses of wine. Uncle Tom Stodola had everybody doing exercises – up & down and repeats. "I know my heart, I know my mind, I know I am sticking up behind"!!!! I guess I wasn't supposed to hear that one – too young. The two Aunts – Mary & Frances & Mother stopped at Uncle Tom's tavern in Algoma – seems like I took them there. Uncle Tom was giving them lemonade. Well after a while – all three are fanning away like crazy & flushed – and wondering why. He (Uncle Tom) didn't give out the recipe either for his lemonade. They were always ready for fun and were loved by everyone. Uncle Joe and Frank played the violin. When they got together there was always music.

Games were different years ago. Tress & I got a dolly and buggy together, had to take turns wheeling it. One year we got a small stove. We tried to build a fire in it but no luck. After we used up a big box of matches, we decided manes and tails of Martin & Tom's toy horses might burn. And they did, too. When Anna came from school she told Mother. We were not popular. I don't remember what punishment we got. It should have been more because we could have burnt the house down. We tried being nice – but!!!!

Elizabeth remembers her school years and her teen years, too. I didn't like myself at all. I was short, fat, very shy and tongue tied, too. Why anybody asked me to dance surprised me. I could dance the whole dance and not open my mouth – sad – but that was me. When I worked in Milwaukee and came home for the summer with a couple of nice dresses, I thought, until Tress told me I looked fat in them. That was one way she got them sooner than I was ready to give them up.

When it was stormy, snow, etc. and we could stay home, you would never guess what we did (before we learned to play cards). We got to strip and strip feathers for pillows and feather quilts. At least we were warm as we used them on our beds. (No central heat – Aunt Elizabeth?)

One of Mother's sayings was – if someone asks you to dance, don't refuse. It takes a lot of courage to ask. Dad was a beautiful smooth dancer. I loved dancing with him.

The church festivals were fun and we would wait on tables. One year, Mother made our dresses, (Johanna, Tress and me) – red and white stripes and we all worked at the same time. We thought we were smart.

We used to visit Dad's Mother and Dad – Thomas & Veronica Cherney. They lived in a little house near Uncle Jim's. She always gave us a cracker cookie – the only kind she ever had – not too good really. I remember going to her funeral – 9<sup>th</sup> of March. I was about 7 or 9 years old. Years ago the names of children were either carried on to the 1<sup>st</sup> born or they would use the godfather or godmother's name. Too many relatives with the same name.

Ice cream and grapes were a very special treat. We could only get them when a baseball game was being played at Beverly Gardens or when I would come home from working in Milwaukee and would treat. We could ice cream at Osterloh's on Sunday coming home from church. Whoever got to pick, mostly picked strawberry. I hated it and don't like it today. Maybe that was the only flavor besides chocolate and vanilla.

Grapes we could buy a small basket of Concord grapes for 25 or 29 cents or a big basket for 50cents. But who had that kind of money.

Elizabeth remembers going to the Luxemburg fair. Don't remember who all went, perhaps Tom but Tress and I did, maybe Toot, too. Tress was showing over her gored skirt, how she could squat and the skirt reach the ground. So who would know what she was doing or why. Anyway I bought a basket of grapes for a treat. Some how we got home late for chores (Dad already had the cows home). Maybe he wasn't thrilled but Tress took my basket of grapes and walked over to Dad and said "Look Charlie what I brought you" (the grapes I paid for). When smart she called Dad "Charlie". Dad was already laughing and I can't imagine why we were late for chores but we did them.

Those county fairs were neat – you know ice cream & grapes and maybe some boys we knew – a young crowd went to the county fairs.

Uncle Tom's Stodola's one sentence was "Ya ta Visi!!! Somehow Aunt Elizabeth, I don't think that is meant for my young ears, is that why that is in Bohemian?"