

Remembering Our Dobberstein Grandparents

In commemorating the passing of the 20th century and in an effort to better preserve the old memories of our forebears, for the family reunion of 2000 I asked families to write a short memorial about their Dobberstein grandparent, something pertaining to their lives, their values, their attitudes, such as their thoughts on work and marriage, youthful adventures, uncanny experiences, how they met their spouses, or some other such aspect of their lives which may help the rest of us get to know them better. The eight pages that follow, originally published in the pages of the 2000 Dobberstein Digest newsletter, are the result of this effort.

Encouraged by the positive response from those that participated and the interesting stories that resulted, I would like to continue this tribute in this year's newsletter. So if you have other stories to tell, or if you didn't have an opportunity to tell a story about your Dobberstein grandparent last year, here's your chance.

Remembering...

John & Emma Dobberstein

by Leroy Dobberstein

Armand Dobberstein

by Steve Melso

Henry Dobberstein

by Cindy Gorges

Ida Roesler

by Dorothy Opal

Leola Schweppe

by Sara Grove

Edwin & Lydia Dobberstein

by Ann Martin

Herman Dobberstein

by Hugo Dobberstein

John Dobberstein

by Faye Leatherman

Leo & Ruby Dobberstein

by Heidi Hughes

Elmer Dobberstein

by Becky Carter

Ida Roesler

by Paul Schweppe

Edwin & Lydia Dobberstein

by Bob Dobberstein

Edwin & Lydia Dobberstein

by Dave Dobberstein

Send a story of your Dobberstein grandparent
for this year's family reunion newsletter



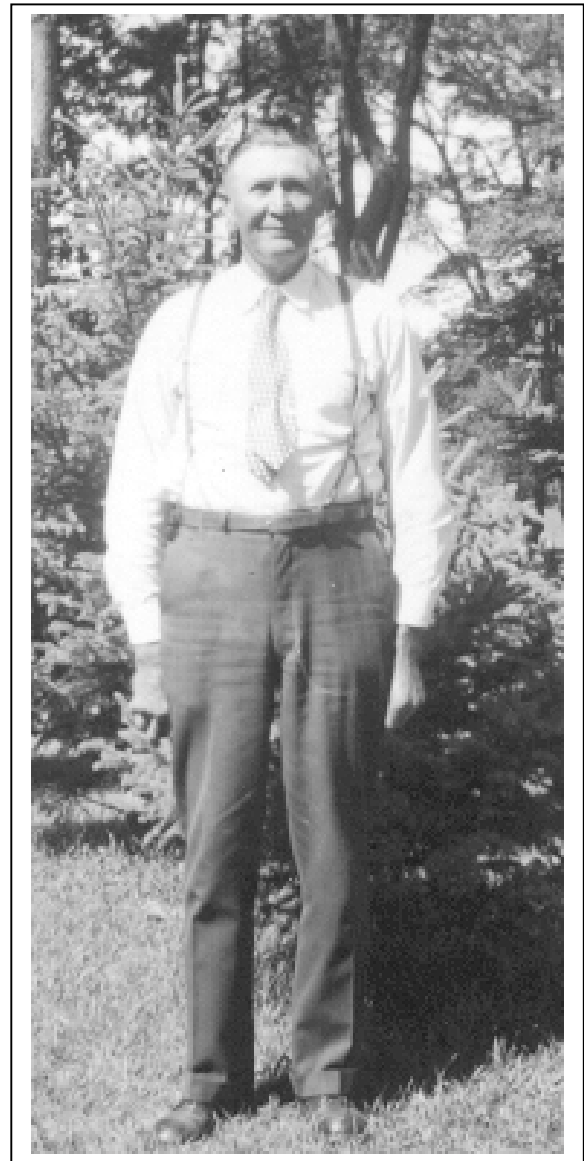
Remembering John and Emma Dobberstein

I have nothing but fond memories as I look back to the influence of Grandpa John and Grandma Emma in my life. I had the privilege of having my paternal grandparents in my life for thirty years, longer than many if not most grandchildren can say.

I learned to know them best when I worked for Uncle Leo two summers as a teenager. Grandpa came out almost every day to the farm he had owned and enjoyed for so many years. Though in his mid-seventies by then, he still wanted to be useful. Nothing I experienced with my grandparents during those summers conflicts with memories I have of them from my earliest childhood.

Though it may not have registered as much at the time, I remember most fondly the importance of God and church in their hearts and in their lives. No one who knew them could question their faith in their Lord. They knew and confessed that they were sinners and deserved God's wrath, but that in Christ they had a loving and perfect Savior. It played out in everything they said and did. In keeping with strong Christian morals and principles they were disciplined and hard-working people who commanded the respect of their children and grandchildren. Both could be stern in rendering discipline, but always in a way that easily betrayed their kind and gentle spirit. I don't remember them ever saying a harsh word to each other or about other people. They had close ties with their neighbors with whom they worked hard and socialized often. Both loved to play cards, and yes, could occasionally express some displeasure when a novice to the game of Sheep head made a dumb play.

Though I knew my grandparents for three decades, it remains true that I did not get to know them until they had lived out more than half their years. There is some disadvantage when you don't get to know someone until they are just that - old enough to be your grandparents. I have often thought that I get the best picture of my grandparents by reflecting upon their children whom I have known much longer. The



children of John and Emma also loved their Lord and showed nothing but respect for their parents and for the called workers in the church. Church was always the most important thing in their lives. Each chose a spouse who loved the Savior as much as they did and have found joy in serving the Lord and raising their children to share the same values and principles. No, I don't have a picture of grandparents John and Emma displayed anywhere in my home, though there are many in albums that I do take out from time to time to enjoy. More important than any picture on display, or even in my memory, is that I remember, and never forget, what they have done to mold and shape my life, directly, or through my parents and aunts and uncles. Thank God for Christian parents and Christian grandparents.

Prof. Leroy Dobberstein

Remembering John Dobberstein

I'd like to contribute a few memories I have of my grandpa – John Dobberstein. As a child I have fond memories of him, and I have a clear vision of this man as I sit firmly in middle age.

He worked hard, spoke little, and was the cornerstone of his family. He loved baseball, smoking his pipe, playing cards, family and friends. His faith in God sustained him all his life.

Grandma Emma was a contrast to Grandpa – he tall and thin, grandma short and fluffy. Grandma endures in my mind though. I was 14 years old when she died. Grandma loved pink wintergreen mint candies (I thought they tasted like Pepto-Bismol), and always carried a pack of spearmint gum when she visited us. She loved handiwork and I'm proud of the linens I have of hers. They'll be passed on to my sons – tangible items from the past – from someone who contributed to who I am, and who my sons are, and so on. This is genealogy!

Faye Leatherman

Remembering Armand Dobberstein

When I was 18 years old and deliberating whether to be a pastor in the Wisconsin Synod, my Grandfather (Armand Dobberstein) sat down with me and said these words, "Just remember - there is no greater way that you could serve your Lord than in the full-time preaching ministry." The next fall I was enrolled at Northwestern College. Donn Dobberstein and myself became his first grandsons to become full time pastors. It happened in the spring of 1995. Grandpa did have the chance to hear us preach

our first sermons, but fell asleep in the Lord the year before we graduated. If it wasn't for those words of wisdom from grandpa nearly 15 years ago, I may not be serving the Lord as a full time pastor today. I thank God often for our Christian forefathers who showed us the way that we are to go and were great examples for us. Thanks *in part* to them we can look forward to seeing them again in heaven. To Him be the glory.

Pastor Steve Melso

Remembering Leo & Ruby Dobberstein

My grandmother, Ruby, took an incredible amount of time and wrote her family history, memories, etc., down in a book for me a few years ago, and it is one of my treasured possessions. I wish I also could have found the short poem I wrote for Grandpa Leo.

Ruby was quite the "deb" it seems – many young men wanted to go out with her, and she dated a few, including Art and Gary Dobberstein. But she really had her eye on Leo, ever since she was 12 or 13. She remembers hearing a girl say, "Leo is a really nice fellow. The girl who gets him will be lucky." And to think it was me!" she said. It took a while, years, before they started dating. Leo had taken her home many times from dances, house parties, etc. over the years. Then, Leo's family barn burned down and he didn't have much money to take a girl out. His dad might give him a quarter to go out, but the family car had burned along with the barn and he had to get permission to use the old farm truck. He lived on Winchester Road; she lived on County D. One night Leo unexpectedly stopped by Ruby's house on a Sunday evening and wanted her to go out with him, she doesn't remember where. From then on, they went steady. Ruby said that he never really said why he liked her, but he must have or he wouldn't have kept coming. On dates they liked to go to the Silver Dome in Greenville for dances, and they went to shows when he had the money. They dated for over 3 years, and he asked her to marry him Christmas of 1936. They were married June 30, 1938. Personally, I am glad they did!

Heidi Hughes



Remembering Henry Dobberstein

The most special memory I have of my Dobberstein grandparent (Henry) would be that he always had these pink wintergreen mints in his pockets, and if we wanted one, we had to dance for him, so me and Lynn and cousin Doreen would do the twist. He'd get that twinkle in his eye when he was teasing, and then he'd make us find which pocket he had the wintergreen mints in.

We also always knew when Grandma and Grandpa had been visiting during the day, cause we could smell the smoke from his pipe as soon as we entered the house. I was only about 8 years old when we lost our grandpa, but what I remember of him was that he was the kindest old gentleman that ever lived. He had a great sense of humor. I missed him terribly when he died and I cried for days.

Cindy Gorges

Remembering Elmer Dobberstein



As Elmer Dobberstein's granddaughter, I've always known my grandpa was special. As a kid, I remember him taking my brother and sister and me bowling and patiently explaining how to "shake hands" with the head pin. He used to spend hours with my brother in the backyard playing catch and talking about baseball statistics. Grandpa was always more than willing to explain geometry proofs to my sister, and every time we saw him, he was ready to challenge one of us with a new word puzzle or math game. Grandpa showed a genuine interest in all our activities, and, whenever possible, he came to Little League baseball games, gymnastics meets, music recitals, and circus performances. He made a point of being at our baptisms, confirmations, graduations, and more recently, family weddings. If Grandpa couldn't come to something, he always let us know he was behind us. He never forgot a birthday and always sent a special reminder of our confirmation date. For each of our 21st birthdays, Grandma and Grandpa made us a special scrapbook recapping the first two decades of our lives. Perhaps one of my most cherished memories is of Grandpa D's traditional tape-recorded interview of every family member on Thanksgiving Day.

These memories are just a few examples of how Grandpa has touched the lives of three of his grandchildren. I haven't even mentioned his five other grandkids in Washington. Or the over 300 people he sent birthday greetings to each year. Or the countless number of people he helped through his volunteer work, or the many athletes he coached over the years, or the complete strangers he touched daily with his off-the-cuff humor or his infectious smile.

Remembering Ida Roesler

I've always known Grandpa was an outstanding man, but until just recently, I thought his specialty was being a great grandfather. Yesterday, listening to the stories of those who came to pay their respects to him, I found out he was much more than just a great Grandpa. He brought a lot of joy to so many people, but amazingly, he never wanted credit for what he did or claimed to be any thing out of the ordinary. Grandpa was truly a humble man - a servant of others. But above all else, Grandpa lived to serve His Lord, and to give all the glory to His creator and maker. Today, as we mourn the loss of one special man, we need only to look to our Father in Heaven. Grandpa would have it no other way.

Becky Carter

Note- Becky wrote this on December 2, 1991, the night before Elmer's funeral. God, in His wisdom, had plans for Becky, too ~ to join him in heaven on January 9, 1993 after her losing battle with aplastic anemia.

My grandmother, Ida Dobberstein Roesler, had a great influence on me as I grew up. Except for the 6 years I spent in Nigeria with my parents, I lived with my grandparents until my marriage. Grandma was very strict, but always fair. She was a wonderful cook and always had room at the table for a guest. On Saturdays she would bake the bread, donuts, sweet rolls and *kuchen* for the week. My husband admits that before we were married he'd plan to visit me on Saturdays because he knew it was Grandma's baking day! Grandma was a Godly woman who used to read her Bible and pray for her family members daily. I feel that God is still honoring her prayers for us, and I look upon her as an example as I am now a grandmother myself.

Dorothy Opal



Remembering Ida Roesler

Here is a memory of Grandma Ida. In the late seventies I was serving a mission on Long Island. One day Chris picked up the phone to call Grandma, and before she could dial, a voice on the other end said, "Come quick! There's a fire in my house!" It was Grandma. She must have dialed our number thinking it was the fire department, and Chris picked it up before it rang. A curtain had caught fire from a candle in the bathroom. We told her to hang up and we called the New London fire department. At first they didn't take it seriously. How could someone in New York call in a fire in New London? But we insisted and they sent a truck. They put out the fire with only minor damage, thank goodness. Though it didn't appear in the *Guinness Book of World Records*, I think this might be the fire alarm turned in from the greatest distance away.

Paul Schweppe

Remembering Leola Schweppe

I didn't really know my great grandmother Ida Roesler, but I can tell you a little about Grandma Leola Schweppe. The things I remember most about her when I was younger is taking long walks with my sisters and her, talking about everything under the sun. She was forever sharing with us all her experiences living in Africa. She also made the tastiest oatmeal cookies and could play a mean game of UNO.

My fondest memory is wanting to use her old-fashioned hand washer. You would have to wash the clothes in these giant tubs then feed them through a wringer to squeeze out all water. We thought that was the neatest contraption!

I think what I respect her most for is her selflessness to her family and her many contribu-

tions to the church. She worked very hard and never complained. I'm extremely proud to have her as my grandmother.

Sara Grove

Remembering Edwin & Lydia Dobberstein

Our memories of Grandma Lydia and Grandpa Edwin Dobberstein are very fresh in our minds. They were wonderful grandparents to us. When Bob was a little boy, his dad, Vernon, would take him to their farm on Huntley Road. There, to Grandma Lydia's delight, her poultry would chase Bob when he tried to help out by feeding or gathering the eggs. Bob would sometimes ride in Grandpa's milk truck on his route. Bob also remembers shoveling snow from under the clothes lines as fun. Georgia recalls the grandparents warmly welcoming her into the family. They were always pleasant to visit, and we played many hands of



cards at the cottage on the Wolf River and around their kitchen table. When Aaron was born, he would scoot all the blocks from Quincy Street to their home on Beacon Avenue on his little plastic horse. Aaron wore out two of those horses! Grandpa made him feel so special when he let Aaron puff on his pipe - even though it was unlit. During their last years with us, we would often visit them at St. Joe's and bring our dog along. They always loved both cats and dogs. Edwin and Lydia are role models to us as a fun-loving married couple. They were hardworking, good stewards of God's blessings, and they enjoyed their family and many life-long friends. We particularly remember that they were gracious elders, even in pain. They took the ups and downs of life in stride, and were prepared to meet the Lord without fear.

Bob Dobberstein

Remembering Edwin & Lydia Dobberstein

As for memories of my grandparents, Edwin and Lydia Dobberstein, I have plenty! I guess what I remember most fondly is Grandpa Edwin wrestling at the holiday dinners with his grandsons...or whoever was closest at hand for him to pick on. After a while we joked about where we should seat Grandpa at the dinner table.

I remember many photos of Grandpa and Grandma in their travels all over the country back in the 30's and 40's. Dad (Vernon) always wanted to take a photograph of him standing in the same national park location as he traveled in his later years, just as he'd seen in the black and white photos of Ed and Lydia. One more thing I thought of about Grandpa and Grandma. They always had a Chihuahua named Sparky. When one would die of old age, they would get another and name him Sparky also. I know there was a Sparky 1, and then a Sparky 2, and probably a Sparky 3. We gave them a rough time about all the Sparkies in their lives.

Ann Martin

Remembering Edwin & Lydia Dobberstein

My grandparents were already in their mid-60s when I was born, so there is a whole lot of their lives that I myself cannot recall. They valued friends and family very highly. I can always recall my grandmother (with only a 6th grade education) being able to keep track of the lives of so many different people, including friends and relatives in both New London and Florida. Her memory and ability to use common logic were outstanding. Her memory was very detailed.

My grandfather had a smile that would make anyone feel at ease, and was well liked by everyone that knew him. He enjoyed playing cards a great deal, and was quite good at many different card games including Sheephead and Yuker.

My grandfather was also quite a trickster, especially in his younger days. One story that was told to me was when they lived on their farm. He would have the uncanny ability to be able to hold onto a charged electric fence at will and be able to continue holding onto it while talking to a friend or relative; and at will, touch the other person, giving the other person quite a shock from the fence.

Grandpa and Grandma both loved their garden and flowers very much, and also enjoyed their winters in Florida and summers in New London. They would go to Florida every winter and would stay until spring. They owned a trailer in Nixon Trailer Park. My grandfather would take great pride in driving into the trailer park every fall and waving to all their friends announcing their arrival. They also had their trusty dog Sparkie along on every trip.

Dave Dobberstein

Remembering Herman Dobberstein



There aren't too many things that I remember about Grandpa Herman. Armand told me that he used to stay at Grandpa's house when he went to school in Hortonville. (One of the other grandsons ~ I don't remember who ~ stayed there too.) Armand said they would be sent upstairs to bed and might be kind of noisy. Since Grandpa had hot water heat, all he would have to do is rap on the pipes and tell them to be quiet and go to sleep, then they would settle down.

When Grandma Bertha died Uncle Bill and Aunt Dena moved in with Grandpa Herman and they lived there until he passed away.

I remember Grandpa always sat in a rocking chair at the south-facing window and watched the cars go by. They lived right on the highway. He walked with a cane as long as I can remember.

When Grandpa Herman was 100 years old we went to see him, wished him a "Happy Birthday," and told him we hoped he'd have many more. But he said, "That is enough." He could speak some English, but he replied in German. He passed away when he was 101 years old.

Hugo Dobberstein



Young Family of Herman & Bertha Dobberstein

Many thanks to the relatives who contributed these stories and personal memories of their Dobberstein grandparents. For other relatives not included herein who would like to send their stories to be included in the 2001 Dobberstein Digest annual family reunion newsletter, please send it to...

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