

October 26, 1989

There is a time for everything and I guess now is the time for me to tell you my "once upon a time" story. Today is October 26, 1989 and Sandy and Scott, you are 32 years old and dad and I will celebrate 35 years of marriage March 19, 1990. Dad practiced 45 years of law, retired in 1997, due to a stroke. Received a 50 year certificate as a member of the state bar of Wisconsin for 50 years 2001.

I had always wished my parents had written down more about their lives and parents, although we do have the Wheeler and Kelly genealogies. But I grew up on the stories of my ancestry that my mother told to me. The Kelley's, the Wheeler's on my mothers side, and the life of Mary Upham, your great grandmother's sister, who was the first wife of William H. Upham, governor of the state of Wisconsin, about in 1890 or so Emily A. Lee and an Aunt Kate, who was the wife of Frank Kelly. Kate's house was where Constantine's law office is now. I was fortunate to have been in that house because I was a friend of Peggy Constantine in high school and they lived there. The James Kelley house was where the courthouse is now, in back of it. All these people are buried in mound cemetery, Lot 6, Block 36. Not Upham's, Emily Lee, my mother, her mother, my mother's two children. And my dad. My mother remembered going to the governor's mansion in Madison, she said she was three years old. Grandma wheeler's father, had the Kelley Lumber Company. In Racine. James H. Kelley. My mother was born at Marshfield, October 1, 1889. The Upham's are buried in Marshfield. At Oshkosh the Sawyer Museum was the home of Caroline Sawyer, one of two adopted daughters of Mary and Governor Upham. Caroline married Phil Sawyer, wood baron in Oshkosh. Caroline's other adopted sister was Dorothy and she married Rod Finney. I don't believe Caroline and Phil had any children but Dorothy and Rod had a boy, can't remember his name.

My grandfather Wheeler had a terrible temper, my mother later told Hope. I don't believe she ever told me, that her father had thrown her down the stairs when she was a little girl. I bet that's why she never liked the charcoal drawing of herself, she gave it to me. My grandmother divorced Merrill Wheeler after 37 years of marriage. She earned a living by writing.

Mary Upham wrote a book of poems, with a suede cover. Grandma wrote the book 'my allegiance'. Mary upham was not only the wife of the governor but she was like a medicine lady to the men who worked in the logging camps. She was also a temperance leader. She and William H. Upham traveled extensively, even to Egypt. I had a picture of them in front of the pyramids years ago and on camels, but it's been lost over the years.

Emily Lee married Charles Lee, a lawyer for the Case Company. When he died she inherited lots of money and when she died she left \$125,000.00 to the library in Racine and to this day and still have over 300,000.00 and are most grateful to her. Last years 2000, they had a birthday party for Emily A. Lee and invited me to attend, it was on her birthday August 10, I believe and they had cake and coffee, etc. I gave them a picture of her when she was younger and a picture of their house, rather I gave them a picture of Charles Lee and of their house. 1504 College

Avenue was where she died. They held her funeral in the living room. Their first house that they built was 1202 Main Street. I went thru it a few years back when Preservation Racine had an open house there. Very interesting.

Emily Lee was good to her whole family. She left them all some money.

I think Bertha Kelley was a member of first presbyterian church here also.

I was also told that one of the 'minute men' of the American Revolution was a relative on the Kelley side and Putman who said 'shoot when you see the whites of their eyes' was also a relative.

Merrill Wheeler and Cora Kelley Wheeler had Herbert, Rae, William, Harry, Laura Elizabeth my mother, and Warren.

Merrill was a gambler on the stock market when they lived in Minneapolis, I guess, also in Marshfield. My mother always said she stayed clear of her father. He is buried in California someplace. They met in Racine, he came from Rutledge, Massachusetts to Racine. I suppose they moved to Marshfield to be next door to the William Upham's. The two sisters.

Hope has the original 'Waldo' wedding picture miniatures of the Kelley's, James, and Betty Abbott had the one of the grandmother, James wife, large portrait in her living room. The companion of the portrait, of James Kelley was last known to be in the metropolitan museum of art. Betty Abbott tried to buy it, but they wouldn't sell it. It was on loan when she tried to see it. I don't know who owned it, the art museum or someone else.

Helen and Hope each had a small chest with marble tops from the Kelley family. The maid sold the furniture she had of the Kelley's back in the 50's and they bought those pieces. My mother never wanted any old furniture I guess cause she grew up with it and had it so long she wanted new.

This Aunt Kate I referred to earlier had an electric car that she let my dad use. She also had very fancy dinners with maid service, and before they were married, because my mother and dad were engaged for three years before they got married because my dad was starting his business. My dad said they would go to Aunt Kate's for dinners and she'd serve some of the fanciest foods, such as Cornish hens and he never liked anything like that. He said he'd almost croak eating it, but he did eat it. You remember he was a meat and potato man, no chicken man. I guess that is why I never liked chicken but I did learn to eat it.

He'd imagine the chickens running around on the farm, and we'd go to Marshfield and Aunt Myrta and Uncle Will would take us to a farm for a Sunday chicken dinner. My dad hated it. My mother and dad went to Chicago on their honeymoon, it was cute in my mother's wedding book, where she said what a wonderful first Christmas they had, a friend, their mother and "us".

They were 30 years old when they got engaged and married at age 33.

My mother was born in Marshfield as I said before. She and her family moved to Minneapolis and her father was set up in the grocery business in Minneapolis by William Upham (former governor of the State of Wisconsin) He was married to My Mother's Aunt Mary, the lady who wrote the suede cover poetry book. My mother was the baby of her family. They then all moved to Chicago, lived in Irving Park, on Kendall Ave not far from Lincoln Park. Her brother Herbert worked for a transportation company and my mother went to Lewis Institute. Her mother and father had been separated for years, and eventually her mother got a divorce, (after 35 yrs of marriage). My mother and her mother moved to Woodstock, Ill and lived with a Miss Hendrick's boarding house. Mother was a court reporter in Woodstock, and I think she also worked in Chicago. She had gone to Lewis Institute. Her brother had paid for that so she could become a secretary.

My father met my mother through a Theresa Lund. Dad had seen Mother in the window when he would be walking up Sixth Street on his way home from work on 8th street. He wanted to meet her. They were married May 5, 1923.

They lived at 310 15th street and Grandma Wheeler lived with them. From there they moved to 2323 Bate Street. A little red brick bungalow, then to Greenbay Road, Lathrop Avenue. Elmwood Drive, Stanish Lane, 9 Sheridan Road (where dad and I were married), Elmwood again, Storybook Drive, and then Grandpa on Osborne. He bought Grandpa Stewart's house after Grandpa Stewart died.

If you ever get to Marshfield go to the Upham Mansion and the house on the right is where your Grandma Nelson was born. Right next door. In Oshkosh the Sawyer Museum is of interest because it was the house of the adopted daughter of Mary and William Upham. William Upham's name is in Memorial Hall, Racine, in the great hall on the wall. He was in the civil war and captured and in Libby prison, Lincoln shook his hand. They held his funeral here at the First Presbyterian Church in Racine because he thought he was dead and then appeared after the war alive.

April 23, 2001

Dear Marilyn, Peggy and John:

The passing of your Mom is the closing of the Wheeler era - she probably being the last of the Wheeler clan. I loved your Mom very much and am really sorry that she has had to go through the last few years of her life in such an unproductive form. I know it's been hard on all of you and I am sorry for that too. I think we're all relieved that she has gone to be with her ancestors and the love of her life, Rolly and that she is no longer suffering.

We all have great memories to think about, and many come to mind. She was always there for me if I needed her thru the years, I talked with her about many things years ago, and of course the first place I went was to see her when your Dad told me I was going to have twins. She always said I was welcome to come and stay at your house if I ever needed to, and I took her up on that quite a few times, once in high school for two weeks when my Mom and Dad were in Florida, once when breaking up with Chuck years ago, and once when I was going with Roy. I remember those two weeks I was at your house she packed my lunch every day, and took me to the bus stop up on Melvin everyday. She might have even picked me up I don't remember that.

And of course all the times she went to see my Mother all those years. Mother was very fond of Helen, her very closest niece. Your Mom and Dad were married on the Green Bay Road in our house there. I don't think I was born yet, but Hope remembers that, I'm sure. She also stayed with us one summer I remember. She lived upstairs that summer and I believe your Dad came courting there.

And all the holidays we two families celebrated together. And remember Uncle Warren, your Mother had him and Miss Hendricks and his wife for dinner. He made my Mother very nervous and she really never wanted to see him, but somewhere along the line when I was young she tolerated his visits, of course years later she wouldn't see him. That's another story in itself.

At any rate I guess what I'm trying to say is your Mom had a special place in many many hearts including mine and I have missed her sweetness and sensibility for many years. As we all grow older we come to realize that everything isn't always lovely in the garden, (so Martha Smiley used to say), if things were good, she' say, "everything's lovely in the garden" but we're thankful for all the good time and memories and that we do have special people like your Mom in our lives. I'm sure your Mom has now found her peace.

All my love,

Dot

Roy also extends his sympathy to all of you. He was very fond of Helen and she him.