

# THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOE CHADDERDON

## FORWARD

Joe started writing his autobiography some time in the 1990s when he was in his 70s. At some point around 2003, I think he decided to focus his attention on self-publishing a book about the history of The Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company (KVP) and the City of Parchment. The autobiography was saved but unfinished on his hard drive. The paper mill that began as KVP in 1910 had been abandoned and the buildings were being torn down. Joe spent a lot of time working with the Western Michigan University Archive staff, sorting through records of the company and helping to identify and save documentation of the company's history. He also worked on making a video record of the buildings and equipment that remained when the company closed. It was very important to him that the history of the company and the City of Parchment be accurately documented. He spent years on this endeavor.

As he mentions in his final chapter of this autobiography, his health took a bad turn in 2008 and early 2009. Complications of a severe vitamin B12 deficiency nearly took his life. His recovery was long and slow. He never did fully regain his physical and mental strength. He was able to complete and publish his book, "History of Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company and the City of Parchment" in 2010. He appears to have forgotten or lost the draft of this autobiography. He discovered it in his computer files in 2015. Soon after that we had to sell the family home in Parchment so Joe and Betty could move to assisted living at The Fountains. After his death, I kept his computer in storage while my siblings and I were occupied with caring for Betty, who had dementia and was in a Memory Care unit at The Fountains. I knew there was an unfinished autobiography somewhere and hoped I could find it some day and share it with his family. After Betty passed away, I did find it on his computer. It was a pretty rough draft and did not continue beyond 2003. It needed editing and formatting. Also, Joe had indicated he wanted to include photos but had only identified a couple he planned to use. I searched family photos from collections we saved when we cleared out the house in Parchment. The photos in this piece were chosen by me.

What follows is mostly in Joe's own words. I wrote the final chapter. Joe was too busy taking care of Betty and dealing with his own deteriorating health to write more than a couple pages after he rediscovered his earlier work in 2015. He died less than 2 years later. I'd like to think he would be pleased with the product. I take full responsibility for details describing his life after 2003.

Dave Chadderdon



**CK&S Station at Richland Junction circa 1920**

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Family Background and early childhood**

I was born at home in a small Kalamazoo County community called Richland Junction on July 19, 1920. A doctor came to our house for my birth, and a lady helped Mom for a while. In 1920, Richland Junction was a small town of about a dozen homes located near the present day town of Richland Michigan, at a junction of in Chicago, Kalamazoo and Saginaw railroad (CK&S). At the time CK&S ran from Kalamazoo to Woodberry near Lansing, MI. At Woodberry, it connected to the Pierre Marquette railroad that went to Saginaw. At Richland Junction, one spur of the CK&S went into Richland and another to Delton. There was a small general store with a gas station. When you bought gas, you pumped the amount wanted by hand up into a glass measuring tank. Then it flowed by gravity to your car or gas can. My father, Ray, was in charge of the small railroad station at Richland Junction. There were two trains from Kalamazoo each day. In 2003, the railroad tracks and the station were gone at Richland Junction but you could still see where the tracks went if you knew where to look. Only a few old houses remain in the area that was Richland Junction, and there are no businesses. In 2003 the little house where I was born was still occupied. By 2010 it was gone. Later

the CK&S became part of the Michigan Central Railroad which became part of the New York Central. By about 1980 the CK&S no longer went beyond Parchment. Roads with cars and trucks had taken over the railroad business. The CK&S supplied the KVP plant in Parchment, where my father and I worked, until it closed in about 2005. The tracks, behind our family house on Keys Drive at Rosedale in Parchment were used for switching railroad cars full of material used at the KVP plant. Beyond that, the rails and wooden ties were removed many years ago. By 2010 the rails and ties to the KVP plant had been removed and all the CK&S railroad was gone and the KVP buildings began coming down.

My father, Ray Emmet Chadderdon, was born 10-11-1895 in Emmet County in northern Lower Michigan to Emery and Hattie (Burchett) Chadderdon. Emery was the son of Sanford and Caroline Chadderdon. Dad's family moved to Kalamazoo County where Sanford operated a farm and worked on the railroad. Ray went to grade school in a one-room school about two miles north of Richland Junction. In the 1950's my father still went to reunions at the school. When I was a youth, Emery was a section foreman in charge of maintenance of the CK&S railroad. They owned and lived on a farm on Gull Road south of the City of Richland. Emory also owned and farmed about 50 acres of land on the road that is now M89 about 2 miles north of Richland Junction. This land included a barn and the house where we lived after Harold and I were born. Ray married my mother, Bernice Dhanenens on 11-15-1917. My father was the oldest of six children – Ray, Carl, Elsie, Wren, Viola, and Royal. My Mother, Bernice, was born 1-23-1897 in Prairieville, Michigan to Phil and Louisa Dhanenens. Her parents were immigrants from Holland and Belgium respectively. Her older sister, Emma was born in the Netherlands. Louisa died soon after my mother was born. Her father then married a woman named Millie who came from Holland to live with them. Mom learned English when she went to school. As was common at the time, Ray's and Bernice's schooling stopped at 8th grade. Her father was a farmer and owned a small farm about a mile west of Otsego and north of the Kalamazoo River. Before my mother was married, she worked in a paper mill in Otsego, MI. I do not think my mother ever worked outside her home after she was married – certainly not after I was born. During the depression in the early 1930's, grandfather Dhanenens was not able to make payments and lost the farm. Mom's parents went to live with relatives near Detroit. My brother, Harold and I used to hitch-hike to Detroit to visit them and see the big city.

I was the oldest of 8 children, Joe, Harold, Jim, Vera, Margaret, Lucille, Grace and Janet. My bother Harold was also born in the house in Richland Junction. When I was two or three years old we moved to the house north of Richland Junction owned by my grandfather. My earliest memory of winter is sliding down a hill behind this house on a sled made by my dad. This house is still there but has additions. I went through the house when it was for sale in 2001. The barn is gone and a new M89 now goes west of the house through the area where the barn was. The house now fronts onto the old

M89 which is now called Winding Road. When they put in the new M89 my grandfather sold the barn and the land west of the old road. He kept the house and about 40 acres east of Winding Road. When we lived there, this house did not have electricity or running water. The toilet was an outhouse out back. Heat and cooking was with wood stoves.

When I was a youth my grandparents lived on a farm of about 80 acres on Gull Road about 4 miles south of Richland. He also farmed the land on M89. One year when I was about 12 years old, Harold and I helped our Uncle Royal gather hay from the land on the M 89 onto a horse drawn wagon and take it to the barn on Gull Road. Harold and I could not lift the hay up to load the wagon, but we could catch and arrange the hay on the wagon. The cut and dried hay was gathered with a pitchfork and thrown onto the wagon. When the load got high, it was special to ride the 5 or 6 miles back to the Gull Road barn on the horse drawn wagon. I sometimes stayed a day or two with Grandpa Chadderdon at the farm on Gull Road. When I was about 12 years old, I watched Uncle Royal as he was plowing a field by the barn using a horse and a handheld plow. Royal let me plow for a short time. I was small and it was difficult to hold the plow on line as the horse pulled.

Aunt Viola bought the farm on Gull Road and the land on M89 when my grandfather retired and my grandparents moved to the home owned by Viola and her husband Lee Russell in Kalamazoo. Lee and Viola then ran the farm. When Viola died, she willed the land on M89 to my sister Lucille. She and her husband, Gene Burgwald built a nice home there. When Gene retired he contracted for a precut house and did much of the construction. I helped him on occasion.

When I was about 5 years old my father, decided his future was not with the railroad. He bought two lots at 5175 Mill Street in Cooper Township, one block north of the current Parchment City Limits. Mill street was named after the family that owned the land in that area. The street was later renamed Keyes Drive. Harold and I were the only children in the family then. This area was rural with few houses in the area. All roads were gravel or dirt. He started building a house there. He did most of the work himself, but had some help from relatives and friends. During the summer of 1926 we moved into the partially complete house and I started Kindergarten in Parchment School that fall. My father quit the railroad and started working at the Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company. He first worked on the Bagley paper machine in 1926 and then on the Beloit machine which was built in 1928. Later he ran both Yankee paper machines. When he retired in 1960, he held the top job of machine tender on Yankee #2.

When we moved to Keyes Drive in 1926, we had facilities common at the time. We had electricity for lighting. There was a well in the basement and we had a hand pump to get water into the kitchen. Not

long after we moved to Parchment, Dad installed an electric pump and a water tank in the basement. We then had running cold water in the basement and kitchen. The toilet was an outhouse behind our house. All houses in the area had outhouses and a Halloween trick was to tip them over.. We took a bath every Saturday in a wash tub brought from the basement to the kitchen. Bath water was heated on the kerosene kitchen stove and there was more than one person bathed in one tub of water. You were lucky if you were first when it was clean and warmer. If not, you would get rinsed with clean warm water. Clothes were washed by hand. We changed socks and underwear every week – needed or not.



**EMERY AND HATTIE**



**MILLIE AND PHIL**



**SANFORD AND CAROLYN**



**WREN, ROYAL, CARL AND RAY  
CHADDERDON**



**THE SLED DAD BUILT  
HAROLD, JOE AND DAD**

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Growing up in Parchment**

My brother Jim was born October 6, 1926. Jim was born at Borgess Hospital as were my five younger sisters. Harold and I have been very close all our lives. Being one grade apart in school, we did many things together. Jim being 6 or 7 years younger was always the little brother. Harold started in Parchment School in 1927. At that time Parchment School had 10 grades. Then I and my brothers and sisters went to St Augustine school to finish high school. Most of our classmates from Parchment went to Kalamazoo Central high school or State High School at Western State Teachers College, (now Western Michigan University). We were the only Parchment students to go to St A. My five sister's birth dates are as follows - Vera, 1929; Margaret, 1931; Lucille, 1933; Grace, 1935; and Janet, 1936. Mom's health was fairly good, but she had a rheumatic heart. Being the oldest, Harold and I were expected to help with the family chores. These included cleaning, cooking, dish washing, clothes washing, ironing, and care of the younger children.

Our two story house on Keys Drive was 24 feet by 24 feet and had a basement. The first floor had a kitchen, dinning room, living room, bedroom and a small room that eventually would be a bathroom. The second floor had four bedrooms but was mostly unfinished when we moved to Parchment. The house was heated by a wood and coal burning furnace in the basement that had one central register near the center of the house between the living room and dinning room. The only heat to the second floor was warm air going up the stairs. This heating system was common at the time and considered good. We had a coal bin in the basement and there were several companies in Kalamazoo that sold coal and delivered it to the coal bin in the basement by putting a chute through a window. We got wood from a forest on my grandfather's farm and used that in warmer weather and to start fires. Coal was used at night to "bank" the fire so it would hold all night. A damper controlled the draft to the fire, which regulated the furnace fire and thereby the temperature of the house. Eventually dad ran a chain from the damper in the basement to the dinning room so we could control the fire from there. Before that we had to go to the basement to adjust the furnace.

At first clothes were washed by hand in a tub with a scrub board and bar soap. For most things, the soap of choice was Ivory from P&G. Dirtier things got bars of Fels Naptha Soap. After a few years we got an electric washer with a wringer. We would start with hot water in the machine and wash for about 10 minutes. Then clothes were put through the wringer into a first rinse tub, through the wringer

to a second rinse tub and then through the wringer to a wooden bushel basket, carried outdoors and hung to dry. A second load of clothes was put into the washer using the same water. Sometimes it was followed by a third load in similar manner. The washer had an agitator to wash the clothes. At the rinse tubs we moved the clothes around by hand to get the soap rinsed out. During the winter we often hung clothes outside in the cold and the clothes would freeze on the line before they dried. We also had lines in the basement to dry clothes- especially in the winter when it was very cold. Soap was purchased in bars and we shaved it to aid in dissolving. About this time they started to sell soap in flakes so it dissolved easier. For a while we continued shredding bar soap by hand because it was cheaper than flaked soap. After the washing was done we had to get the water out of the basement. We would take it out a basement window. One person in the basement would take a pail of water and put it out the basement window and another would throw the water on the ground. When we were smaller, Dad would lift the pails out the window and Harold and I would dump them. When Harold and I got big enough, this was our job to put water out the window and dump it. Eventually Jim and the girls helped.

In the early 1930's, we dug by hand in order to install a septic tank and dry well in the yard behind the house.. Then Dad installed a bathroom in a room that had been designed for that. It was a small room about 6 by 7 feet with a stool, wash basin and a tub that stood on the old bear claw feet, common to the time. Later we got an electric hot water heater and had hot and cold water. After most of the children were gone, dad got an electric pump to pump wash water out of the basement.

We kept the outhouse for years after we got the bathroom – actually until after WW2, about 1950. Some other houses in the area still had outhouses then. We had grown to a large family of 3 boys and 5 younger girls by 1936. With that many in school, the bathroom was very busy in the morning. The girls got to use the one in the house and the boys went to the outhouse. The outhouse was nice on summer mornings as the sun came up and the birds were singing, but not in the winter when it was snowing and the temperature was below zero. The toilet paper in the outhouse was an old catalog from Sears and Roebuck or Montgomery Ward. The catalog also provided reading material and then you tore off a sheet, wrinkled it to soften it before using it to clean yourself.

When I started school in 1926, I went to kindergarten. This made me a year older than most in my grade. Parchment had a very good grade school with high academic standards. Parchment was a company town of the Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company. Mr. Jacob Kindleberger, founder and chairman of the board of KVP insisted Parchment was to have a very good school. The school board president was Mr. Hayward, president of KVP. Most school board members worked at KVP. They saw that the school had a good building and necessary supplies. Mr. Kindleberger often came and talked to the classes. He knew the best way to convince students of the importance of education was to give

some of his time. When students transferred from Kalamazoo schools to Parchment, they sometimes were dropped back a grade because they were behind and could not catch up. When Parchment students transferred to Kalamazoo schools, some were promoted a grade. I was an average or little better than average student in grade school. In later grades, I was a little better- perhaps a B+ average. At 8th grade we had a graduation similar to the current high school graduation with a valedictorian and salutatorian. I was chosen to do the class prophecy, which meant I was about 4th or 5th out of the class of about 21. My class completed 10 grades at Parchment and nearly all went on to graduate from high school, most from Kalamazoo Central High School. Harold and I started high school St Augustine's in 1937. I liked math and science best. I got B's in English and language and mostly A's in math and science. History also was a special interest of mine. If we studied Lincoln or Napoleon, I liked to go to the library and read more about them in the encyclopedia or other books. I recall breezing through geometry and biology in 10th grade at Parchment as others struggled. In geometry we often had a study period during class to start work on the next assignment. If we got done early, we could go to the Laboratory and use the microscope. This was a great reward and fun for me and I always got done early.

My parents considered school important and we were expected to do the best we could and to go every day. We often got awards for perfect attendance. I recall having little or no homework. I knew most others took books home to study, but I had no trouble completing the work during in-school study period. Mr. King was school superintendent and taught math and science in grades 9 and 10. Ken Ruse taught 7 and 8th grades and had some physical education classes. George Mac Donald was principal and taught English, history and social studies in grades 9 and 10. I learned enough English grammar from Mr. Mac Donald in 10th grade to do well through the 11 & 12th at St. A and the first semester of English in college at Western. Several students failed the first semester college English. I got a B thanks to Mr. MacDonald. Second semester I had to study to keep up.

Parchment had only the basic studies when I started. The building had no gymnasium or shop. There were no homemaking or business classes. We had recess for exercise and it was usually outdoors. Starting about 7th grade Mr. Mac Donald had softball and soccer after school as intramural sports, but no games with other schools. I recall my class was often competing with Harold's class. The spring when I was in 8th grade we had softball each night after school. We chose teams each night for games and Mr. Mac Donald kept a record of who was on the winning team most often. At the end of the season the one who was on the winning team most often would get all the the ice cream they could eat. Before the last game of the year, I and a boy named Bob Smith were tied for the lead and we got to choose teams. The one who had the winning team got the ice cream. Smith had a temper. I teased him about errors by his team and he got on the error makers who resented it. They soon didn't play as a team and we won. (Dave comments: This may be a preview of Joe's reputation for sandbagging and

talking smack in the KVP Golf League.) Mr. Mac Donald took me to Clark's drugstore in Parchment and bought a quart of ice cream. As others watched and cheered, I sat on a stool at the counter and ate. It was the first time I ever had all the ice cream I could eat. I recall how cold my mouth got and eventually I could not finish the quart.

Harold and I went to St Augustine High School on Michigan Avenue in Kalamazoo. Parchment gave us money to ride the city bus – 10 rides a week or 50 cents. In nice weather we sometimes walked home or hitchhiked to save the nickel for spending money. Later they started giving tokens good for bus rides only at school hours, but not until after I graduated.

We were up early to go to school at St Augustine . Harold and I had breakfast, packed our lunch and took the 7:30AM bus. The rest of the family was getting up as we left. We went to Mass at St. Augustine Church on the NW corner of Kalamazoo Ave and Park street, where the Kalamazoo County Health Department was later located. After Mass we walked to St. Augustine High School at what is now part of St, Augustine grade school. St. Augustine grade school was on Kalamazoo Avenue next to the church in the 1930's. The old church and school on Kalamazoo Avenue were taken down when the new St Augustine Church, now the Cathedral of Kalamazoo Diocese, was built. A new St. Augustine grade school was built on Michigan Avenue at the same time.

First Fridays of the month were special at St. Augustine High School. We all went to Communion fasting from midnight, as was the church rule then. On Thursdays before first Friday, they made time so we could all go to confession. After Mass on first Friday we got a little time so we could go to the Lockshore Dairy store (corner of Westnedge and Michigan Avenue ) for a chocolate Malt and a sweet roll – 25 cents.

At St. Augustine all classes were taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth, Michigan. There were no lay teachers. There were no shop, home economics, typing, or gym classes. Math classes were only algebra and geometry which I had already completed at Parchment. Everyone took 4 subjects plus religion. There were 6 class periods including a study hall. My 10 classes in two years included 2 religion, 2 Latin, history, government, 2 English or language, chemistry and physics. My favorite classes were chemistry and physics taught by Sister Christopher. She is the only teacher I ever visited after I left St A. I visited her when she was retired and living in Fontbonne Manor at Nazareth. She was about 80 years old, but sharp and remembered me as a student. She was pleased I was working in a laboratory and wanted to know about my work at KVP.

When I was in grade school and high school, there was an unwritten dress code. No one wore overalls or dungarees – they were for work. Boys wore dress pants and shirts that were ironed. At St A boys

wore ties. This was before no-iron fabrics and knit fabrics. Girls wore dresses – ironed of course. Harold and I would press and spot clean our pants each week. The pants required dry cleaning – no wash and wear yet. There was a tuition charge for St Augustine that Parchment did not pay. My parents could not afford to pay and Harold and I worked for the tuition. I recall sweeping the main hall every night after school. Others cleaned classrooms and toilets. At every school vacation time, Christmas and summer we came to do special cleaning.

St. Augustine had football, basketball and golf teams, all coached by Harve Freeman. Neither Harold or I were on any of the teams. Not starting until in 10th grade was perhaps one reason. Living in Parchment made getting to practice a big problem. We also were expected to get home to help with the younger children. We had a younger brother (Jim) about 12 years old and 5 sisters (Vera, Lucille, Margret, Grace and Janet) ages 10 to a baby. Mom needed help with housework including cooking, washing, ironing and caring for the small ones. Mom baked our bread and pastries and Harold and I often helped Mom. I did most of the ironing and baby care. Harold did more cooking and working with mom. This was the time before no-iron fabrics. Shirts and dresses were starched and ironed. I think I have ironed more little girls dresses than any of my daughters who had permanent press clothes.

The years 1930 to 1940 were part of the great depression that started in 1929. Many people were unemployed and survived on welfare. Some lost homes because they could not make payments. Uncle Jake as Mr. Kindleberger was known, tried to help everyone in Parchment and few lost homes. The KVP mill stayed open, but often ran only 3 or 4 days a week. There was no union and Mr. Kindleberger had all men work fewer hours so not many had to be fired or laid off. We survived on that. Sometimes when there was not enough work, men would be paid to wash the mill windows or do special cleaning or painting at the paper mill. Some were helped by welfare but most were expected to work – some even in the park or on city roads. Our family did well during the depression. My dad even with eight children never took welfare even though some who worked at KVP did. He was proud and never wanted us to be considered poor.

We had a big garden at home and Mom canned vegetables from it. During peach season, Dad would take the back seat out of the car and drive to the South Haven fruit market. He bought several bushels of “over ripe for shipping” peaches at a discount. We had lots of peaches to eat and some for family and neighbors. Mom would can a couple bushels of peaches by cold packing. We also had a garden at my grandfather Chadderdon’s farm. At grandfather’s we grew sweet corn to eat and to can. We had a large potato patch. We had early potatoes and late potatoes that kept better to eat during the winter. We dug a pit and put potatoes in it and covered it with straw. When we needed potatoes during the winter and early spring we could uncover some and bring home a couple gunny sacks. Grandpa grew wheat and corn. Dad would go to Ashtons Mill at the corner of Mount Olivet and Riverview where they used

water power to grind wheat and other grains. Dad took some of the wheat from Grandad's to have it ground. We also bought wheat flour, corn meal and oat meal there in large bags for less than the grocery stores charged.

Granddad Chadderdon had cows and pigs, and some were butchered each year. Each winter we got half of beef that was hung in the garage to be kept cold – often frozen. When we needed meat, we cut it off. Frozen meat was cut with a hack saw. If it got too warm to keep the beef in the garage, we canned it. The pork was eaten fresh or canned. We cured hams and bacon. We also made sausage and salt pork. The fat from the pig was rendered to make lard. Granddad and Dad's brothers and sisters got shares from the butchering, but we were lucky because no one else wanted the heart, liver, tongue, head and kidneys. Mom made headcheese from the pig's head and fried brains were a delicacy. As they said we found a use for most of the pig except the squeal. We ate well and relatively inexpensively, but we planned and worked to make it possible.

During the Depression, Grandfather Dhanenens, lost his farm and moved to live with a relative near Detroit who was a lawyer. Grandpa cared for the yard and Grandma Millie helped with the house work. One summer Harold and I hitchhiked to Detroit and spent a few days with our grandparents. Grandpa lived next to a golf course and he had lots of golf balls that had come over the fence into his yard. Grandpa had holes with tin cans in the yard and we golfed there. It was mostly putting and Grandpa usually won. One day we took a bus to the Michigan State Fair in Detroit. It was big and shows were expensive, but we enjoyed the free activities and a few of the special features and shows.

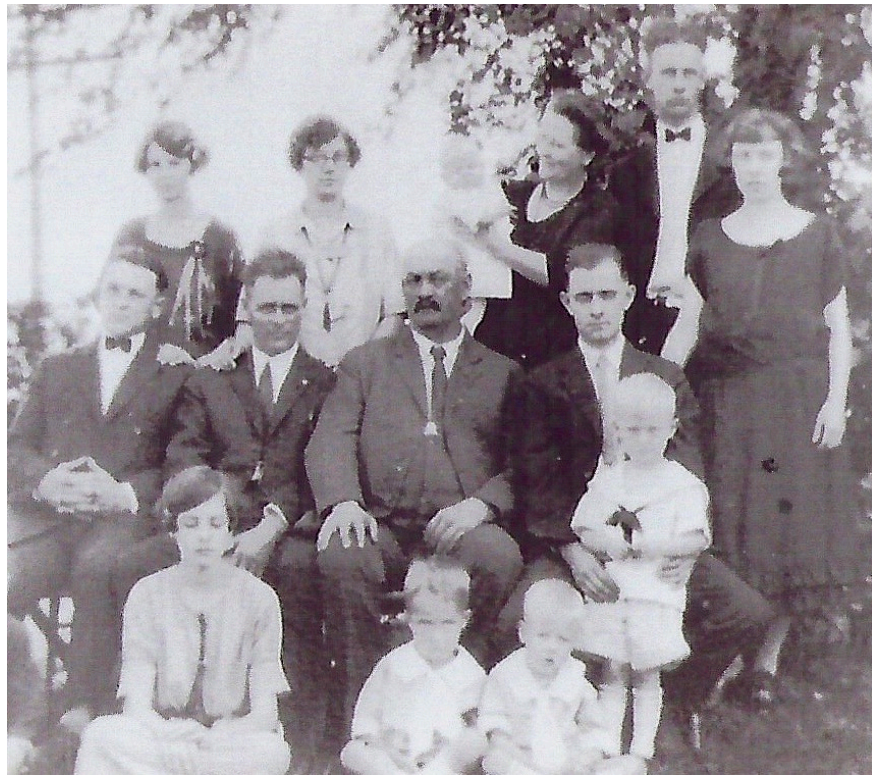
About 1935, during the depression, Mr. Kindleberger started a program to give high school boys and girls work during the summer when school was out. The boys had many jobs through an organization called the "Home Works Company". People, who could afford to, hired us to do jobs around their homes. Through this Harold and I got a regular job mowing the lawn for Joe Kindleberger, son of Jake, and kept it after school started and for a few years. About 1935 Jake Kindleberger and KVP had built an addition on the community house. It had a gymnasium and a woodworking shop. The boys of the home works group used the shop in the community house to make things to sell to people, including window screens, stools and shoeshine boxes. Another job for boys was to mow the school lawn. Parchment school was where the middle school is now and had a large lawn and athletic field to mow. I remember about six teenage boys mowing the grass with small reel push mowers. There were no power mowers and on a hot summer day this was very hard work. Some boys got to spend most of what they earned on fun and games. Harold and I spent most on clothes.

The summer after I completed 10th grade, I worked for my Uncle Wren. He was remodeling a house on Charles Ave on the East side of Kalamazoo for my grandfather. Every day I would ride my bike from home on Keyes Drive to the house and be there at 8AM. After working 8 hours, it was a long ride home. It was about six miles. After I got home, I had to help with family chores. Recently I was talking with Harold about how he remembered the summer of 1937. He thought it was fine for me to get the job, but he had to stay home and help with the younger children. Was it fair to my little brother? But I remembered Harold got to have jobs sometimes and I had to help at home. Harold helped on a paper route, worked at Goosen's grocery store and at the local gas station. I never had those jobs because I was helping at home, when I was younger. Perhaps things even out.

After the 11th grade, I did odd jobs most of the summer of 1938. After I was 18 years old on July 19, I applied for a summer job at KVP. It was depression time and they had too many applicants for summer jobs. Most of the summer they said "no" because I was still in high school, but I kept trying. Finally I got a couple weeks of work helping bale waste paper in the Wax Production Department. That was big money, (about 30 cents an hour – equal to about \$3 in 2000 money) used for clothes, school and spending. After graduating from high school, I worked the next summer at that same job. I saved enough for my clothes, and tuition at Western State Teachers College (now Western Michigan University). As I recall tuition, and fees (including a pass for football and basketball) was \$45 a semester my first year at Western. We could take up to 16 hours of credit hours.

Before we leave this chapter, I want to tell you more about my ancestry. We were told my ancestors came from a town in England called Chadderton near Oldham and east of Manchester and Liverpool. In about 1980 Betty and I traveled in England and visited Chadderton. In about 2007, our son Phil traveled in England and visited Chadderton. Other family members have also traveled in England and visited Chadderton. Apparently the spelling of Chadderton has varied with time.

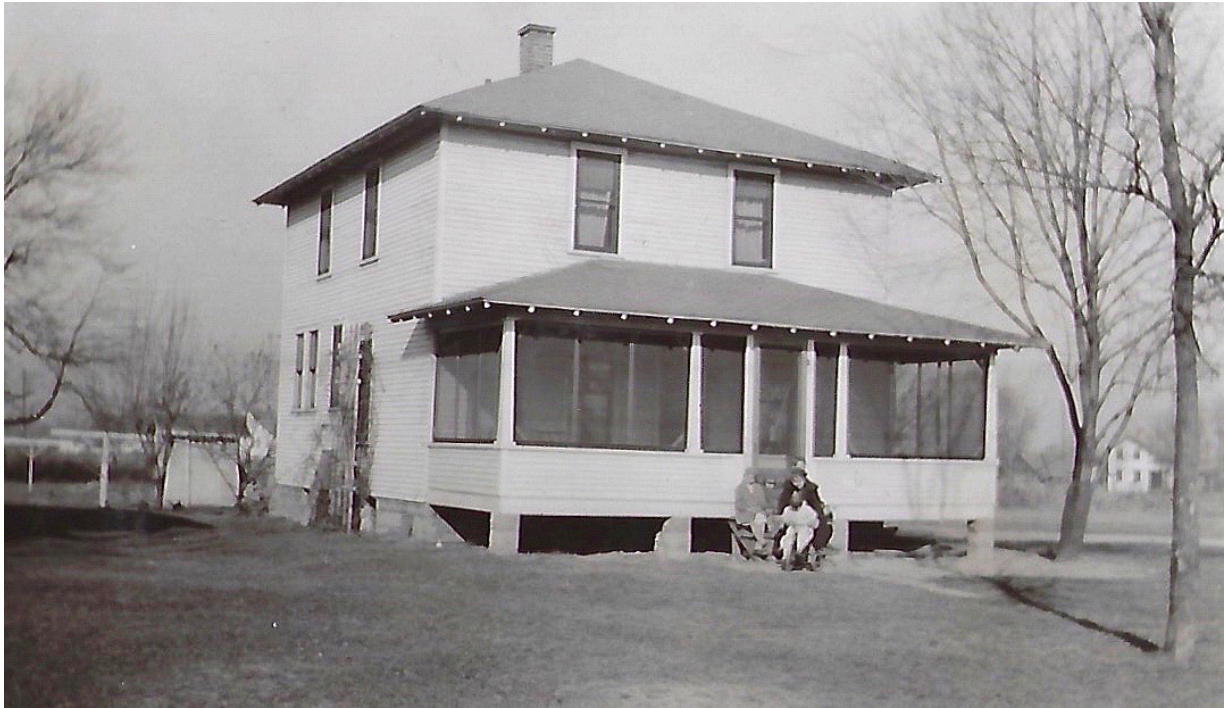
PERSON	BORN	MARRIED	DIED
<b>Joe Chadderdon</b>	7/19/1920 Richland Junction, MI	5/28/1945 Betty Ecker	7/20/2017 Kalamazoo, MI
<b>Ray Chadderdon</b>	10/11/1895 Harbor Springs, MI	11/15/1917 Bernice Dhanenens	10/4/1964 Kalamazoo, MI
<b>Emory Chadderdon</b>	7/7/1874 Barry County, MI	10/10/1894 Hattie Burchett	9/18/1953 Onancock, VA
<b>Sanford Chadderdon</b>	4/16/1833 New York	2/17/1859 Caroline Bratt	10/30/1896 Harbor Springs, MI
<b>Michael Chatterdon</b>	10/23/1807 New York	10/7/1830 Poly Ann Sanford	2/9/1852 Flushing, NY
<b>Lewis Chadderdon</b>	1763 New York, NY	1795	4/29/1852 ???
<b>Sharrach Chatterdon</b>	1732 Greensburg, NY	1751 Mary	
<b>Michael Chatterdon</b>	Flushing, NY		1785
<b>Cornelius Chatterdon</b>	Yonkers, NY		1745
<b>William Chatterdon</b>	1627 England		1648
<b>Michael Chatterdon</b>	1605 England	1626 Jane Woodward	



**JOE & HAROLD (FRONT) WITH GRANDPA, DAD, AUNTS AND UNCLAS**



**THE HAY WAGON**



**FAMILY HOME ON KEYES DRIVE**



**MARGRET, VERA  
GRACE, JANET LUCILLE**



**JOE'S FIRST COMMUNION**



**JOE & HAROLD, BATH TIME**



**JOE AND MOM**

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **College at Western**

In 1939, I enrolled at Western State Teacher's College (now Western Michigan University) taking courses I could transfer to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor for a degree in engineering. During my freshman college year, I worked part time at the Western's Wallwood Hall in the ballroom coat check room. I had saved money from various jobs to pay for the tuition. Freshman year I paid \$45 for tuition and attendance at college football, basketball, and baseball games. Times change and the cost of college is very different now.

During the summer between my freshman and sophomore years I worked at KVP in various mill jobs to earn money for college. KVP was known for helping college students earn money for college. This was very important for me because it paid for all my college expenses except room and board which was supplied by living at home with my parents and siblings. My earnings covered tuition, books and supplies, bus transportation to Western, and spending money. There were no expensive parties or dates for me or my brother Harold who was in college also. (In the 1960s, my son David paid for much of his college tuition by working at KVP during the summer.) At the end of the summer, I was offered a job at the KVP Lab testing pulp for moisture every night from 3 to 5 PM. KVP bought pulp by the dry weight of the pulp in the railroad car. They weighed the cars and checked moisture to be sure the shipper was correct. This was a better job than working at Western. Also I was able to work at the KVP laboratory on Saturday mornings during college.

In 1940, KVP decided to build a new laboratory on Riverview Drive in front of the old one. In addition to the laboratory section, the new lab had office space for lab supervisors and workers. Also there was a large library with lots of books on chemistry, physics and paper making. The library had a large conference table for meetings. The old lab seemed dark. The new lab was bright with big windows and new florescent lighting. The pulp testing lab portion of the old lab was maintained and used. The new KVP Lab was ready to be used during the summer of 1941. My job at KVP that summer was to help do the final cleaning of the new lab and then move chemicals and lab equipment to the new lab. My jobs at KVP during the rest of my college time would be in the lab. So began a life-long career in technical services at KVP, though I didn't know it at the time.

The KVP lab had equipment just as good as the chemistry department at Western. The lab tested pulp and paper for strength, moisture and other properties. Coal was bought by the ton and checked for BTU content to be sure they got a good value. Also the lab tested the paper produced in the mill to be sure it met customer specifications. Humidity and temperature influence paper strength tests. The new lab had a large room maintained at 73 degrees F and 50 % relative humidity. These are the standard conditions for testing paper specified by the Technical Society of the Pulp and Paper Industry. The basement of the new lab retained the pulp testing and hand sheet making equipment of the old lab. Also the basement of the new lab had an area to house the KVP company fire trucks and a meeting room for the volunteer firemen. The company provided fire protection for the KVP plant and the city of Parchment. Some men of the lab were expected to be on the fire department because they were close to the fire station, and could be first to respond. I was a volunteer fireman for several years

World War 2 had started in 1939, but the people of the USA did not want another war in Europe. President Roosevelt had been working against Hitler by sending war supplies to England under a lend lease program. On December 7, 1941 the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and we entered the war. In a fireside chat that night, Roosevelt called this “a day of infamy that would live forever”. I always remember Pearl Harbor, partly because the older brother of my future wife was at Pearl Harbor and also because it changed my life. During the war all new building projects at KVP stopped. KVP turned to war efforts by making special papers to wrap food for soldiers. KVP was a world leader in making papers for packaging food and other greasy materials. Two of the lab research chemists, Reg Hurst and Rudy Germanson, moved to Washington DC to help in food packing projects for soldiers and wrapping of military equipment that could be greasy. Parchment paper made at KVP was an important wrapping material for the war effort.

I had planned to take pre-engineering courses for 3 years at Western and then transfer to the University of Michigan to get an engineering degree. Things changed on December 7, 1941. Now that we were at war, I knew I would probably be drafted soon. I knew I did not want to be in the army – particularly not in the infantry. My Uncle, Earl Chadderdon, had told me about trench warfare in World War One and I wanted no part of the infantry. I learned of a Navy program called V7 that would allow me to complete college, graduate and then go to officer training. It required good grades in technical courses and passing a tough physical test. I went to Detroit to apply. I was fortunate to pass – some did not. The Navy required I would have to graduate in the spring of 1943, so the engineering degree was out for now.

I got my bachelors degree from Western with majors in chemistry and math and a minor in physics, graduating in 1943. I was a member of the honor society in chemistry. At Western, I took the most

advanced courses in Chemistry and Physics. These included physical chemistry and atomic physics in my senior year. This was the first year atomic physics was taught at Western. The courses were very basic by modern standards. In 1943, my chemistry book said the electron was the smallest particle of matter and showed only 96 elements, and four of them had not been identified and named.

While at Western, I always scheduled classes starting at 8AM. This meant I had open hours during the day that I spent studying at the library. That way I had little studying to do at home where I was expected to help with family chores and care of my younger siblings. When I was working at the KVP Lab during college, I was usually scheduled to work 2 hours (3:00-5:00pm) to run the moisture tests on samples of pulp from the 6 to 10 railroad cars of pulp received each day. KVP received pulp with some water content. Each car was reported by the supplier to contain a specified number of dry pounds of pulp. KVP wanted to be sure they did not pay for extra water. On Saturday mornings, I worked 4 hours cleaning lab benches and washing lab glassware. This glassware had to be cleaned in chromic acid, rinsed with distilled water and allowed to dry. I held the job through college and worked full time there during summer vacations. It was a great job giving me the money I needed while getting valuable experience working in a lab.

My time at Western has been very important to me. It qualified me to be a naval officer in WW2 and for my lifetime job at KVP. But most of all I gained a very good lifelong friend and companion – Betty Ecker. We had met in the fall of 1938 when I was a senior at St. A. Betty was a freshman at Western. Her home was in Flint MI. She came from a working class family like ours. She had a scholarship for tuition and books. There were no dorms at Western and students lived in homes of the area. Betty had to work for room and board because her family could not pay for it during the depression. She got a job working for George Mac Donald who lived in Parchment. He was principal of Parchment Schools and his wife worked in the office at Western State Teachers College (later Western Michigan University). They had no children. They wanted a college girl to do housework and cook for room and board. Betty rode to and from Western with Mrs. Mac Donald or took a bus.

Betty wanted to go to Mass on Sundays. There were very few Catholics in Parchment. George Mac Donald knew the Chadderons were Catholic and suggested she call us. We went to 8:00 am Mass every Sunday at St Augustine church on Kalamazoo Avenue. She met us at Riverview and Glendale (nearly half a mile from where Mac Donalds lived). It was a crowded car, with me driving and Harold and Mom in the front seat of our old Reo. Betty got in the back seat with my five younger sisters – usually on the bottom layer. She rode to Mass with us a couple times before she found a Catholic family who lived near the Mac Donalds who went to 11:00 am mass. That way she got to sleep in on Sunday.

I remember little about Betty at that time. She was a nice looking young lady but too old for me (actually only 7 weeks older but a year ahead of me in school). Besides I had girl friends in my class at St. A. Later we got to know each other at Western. I do not recall much of her in my freshman year. Later we spent lots of time together. We got to know each other at the Newman Club for Catholic college students that met at St Augustine's church hall. We were both officers of the club. We had one class together. It was Dr. Moore for economics. We were seated alphabetically and she was directly behind me. I usually spent 2 or 3 hours each day studying in the college library. Betty was often there and we were part of a group studying quietly together. Some quiet talk was permitted, but mostly we studied.

While at Western I was able to enjoy much of college life including basketball games and dances . I had a group of friends (men and women) who went as a group. We also studied together in the library. Betty Ecker was part of that group. She was not my special girlfriend until my junior college year. She graduated in 1942.

Harold and I had always had friends we would invite to our home – often for a Sunday meal. Betty came to our home often when she was a senior. She got along well with the family. After she graduated Betty got a teaching job at Three Oaks, MI. On weekends, she often came to Kalamazoo from Three Oaks on the railroad. We brought her to our house for Sunday dinner and sometimes for the weekend.

The summer between my junior and senior college year Betty moved home to Flint, MI for the summer. I hitchhiked to Flint a couple times to spend the weekend at her home. I wanted to see her and make sure we were special friends before I went to the war.

What did I see in Betty? It was a possible future wife, after I did my service in the Navy. As a wife I wanted someone who was attractive and fun to be with. She also had to be intelligent and a nice person. I preferred a Catholic. Although she did not look like a beauty queen or model, Betty was an attractive lady that men would be proud to date. Her real beauty was more than skin deep in her character, intelligence and personality. She got all "A" grades as a freshman and sophomore at Western and was elected to women's honor society called the Daisy Chain. This group later was accepted as part of the national honor society called Mortarboard, and Betty has that membership.

I am proud of my college record. I was chosen to be a member of the honorary chemical society. I took the top courses that Western offered in chemistry and physics. As a senior I took physical chemistry, the top class in chemistry offered at the time. The physical chemistry class started with 6 or

7 men and two women. After a few weeks the class was down to two men, Bob Clement and I. Bob, who was classified 4F by the draft board had been in my class at St A. was a good friend until he died about 1980. The other men in the class were drafted into military service and the women found the course too difficult. So Bob Clement and I had a special class for two in physical Chemistry. Dr. Knowlton lectured and explained principles, and we could ask questions any time. There was lots of lab work and most experiments required two people to setup and run the tests. It usually took several days to set up and run an experiment. We did more than the required experiments because we considered it fun – like boys with a fine chemistry set for Christmas. It was fun and we got “A” grades.

The second semester in my senior year (1943), I quit the job at KVP so I could have more time to enjoy college before I went to the war. I had saved enough money for college, but was broke when I went in the Navy. Before I quit KVP, my time was full with classes, work and helping at home. I still helped at home but could stay later at Western because I did not have to work at KVP every afternoon. I wanted time to spend with friends at Western and at home before I entered the uncertainties of war.

I knew I would report to the navy soon after graduation but I did not realize how soon. About three weeks before graduation I received orders to report to midshipman’s school on the Sunday after graduation. I graduated from Western at 11:00 am on a Saturday morning in June, 1943. Betty and her parents came to the graduation and all my family was there. At 3:00 pm I boarded a train for New York City and Midshipman School at Columbia University. A quick and important turn in my life.

I was happy I got to graduate from college because many my age were drafted before they could graduate. I looked forward to service in the navy. Most of my friends had already been in service for over a year. It was my first time out of Michigan and my first long train ride. The Navy supplied a roomette for officers, but enlisted men went coach. I slept well. When I woke up Sunday I opened the window and enjoyed the scenery as we went along the Hudson River and into Grand Central Station Then I had breakfast in the dining car.



**COLLEGE  
SWEETHEARTS**



**JOE & HAROLD 1942**

## CHAPTER 4

### Life in the Navy – World War 2

My train arrived at Grand Central Station in New York. It was very big and impressive. Being a country boy in a big city, I decided the only way to find Columbia University was to take a taxi. The taxi was a Checker Cab made in Kalamazoo as were most New York taxis. Of course, I was impressed with the tall buildings and lots of traffic – even on a Sunday morning. This was my first ride in a Checker Cab. At home I walked or took a bus. After this ride I learned to ride the subway or a bus in New York. It was much cheaper.

At Columbia University, my orders were to report to John Jay Hall. It was one of several large buildings at Columbia. I quickly learned how to stand waiting in line and then follow orders quickly. John Jay Hall was a building with class rooms and a men's dormitory and it was about 12 stories high. There were not many elevators. The rule for navy men was persons living on floor 9 and higher could ride the elevators, others had to walk up and down the stairs. With my luck, my room number was 804. I found we had ten minutes between class formations. In that time I had to run up 8 floors, change books, go to the toilet, make sure my uniform was neat and shoes were polished, and be back in formation to go to the next class.

The dormitory rooms were for two and were quite small. There were bunk beds and I got the top one. We each had a desk where we studied. To survive midshipman's school one needed a good roommate. Mine was a good one. We had to keep the room neat at all times. Often we had surprise white glove inspections by the officers. Beds had to be made properly, and even the bottom sheet next to the spring had to be neat. With white gloves the officer looked for any place he could rub and find dirt. Classes filled the day and homework and study the evening. Often we studied on weekends, but most times we went out on Saturday nights and Sunday. I always went to Mass on Sunday.

My roommate came from a family with money and knew people in New York. I was broke when I went to midshipman's school. I thought I would have navy pay to spend in New York. Most of our pay was taken to buy officers uniforms, and we only got about \$10 dollars a month to spend. Now I wished I had worked longer to have money in New York. I do not think I ever went on weekends with my roommate. He had friends in the area and money for the theater and partying. I did things that did not cost much like sightseeing and cheap movies. We could get tickets to Radio City Music Hall and I enjoyed the show with the Rockettes dancing. Subways were only ten cents a ride.

The only person I knew in the New York area was Vince Petrocelli who went to Western with me. His family lived in Brooklyn. They invited me for a Sunday dinner. It was a typical Sunday dinner for a large Italian family. It started with spaghetti and meat balls and all took a large plate full and some took a second. I thought this was the dinner. Soon they cleared the plates and brought clean plates. Next serving was chicken with potatoes and gravy. Then there was desert. By the time I finished dinner, I had all I could eat for the rest of the day.

As I look back on midshipman's school it was a challenge to survive and become an officer. They challenged us to see if we could stand stress to weed out men who were not officer material. Midshipman's school lasted 4 months. The first month we were seamen and over 10% of us were not chosen to continue as midshipmen. The first three weeks of the second month I recall officers being helpful. They wanted us to get a good start as midshipmen. Then, they turned up the stress and another 10% washed out. This pattern was repeated in the third month and more washed out. Most who made it to the fourth month became officers. I felt I did well to graduate with scores in the middle of a class of fine and talented young men.

We studied about navy ships, boats, naval history, naval battles, navigation, naval regulations and naval etiquette. When I went to midshipmen's school, I had never been on a boat bigger than a rowboat or water bigger than Gull Lake. A couple times at midshipmen's school we went on the Hudson River in a tugboat that was 30 feet long and got to help navigate the river. This was my actual experience in seamanship and navigation when I became an Ensign in the U. S. Navy. After graduation we got about two weeks leave and then reported for duty as naval officers. I was happy and proud to be going home as an officer in the navy to see family and Betty before I went to fight in the war.

My roommate got married the day after we graduated. I was invited, but chose to leave immediately to go home on leave. After graduation we all got different orders and did not know what orders other graduates got. Most were to report to a navy base. My assignment was to report to the navy base in Norfolk, Virginia. I never again saw or heard from any in the class.

I enjoyed being home with family and a chance to spend time with Betty. Most of my friends from college and Parchment were away in one of the armed services. Betty was teaching school at Three Oaks High School. Harold was in the Air National Guard and got home on leave. Jim and Vera were in high school. My other sisters were in grade school. I do not remember much of what we did while I was home on leave. I only remember one Saturday. On this day Harold and I went to a jeweler and I picked out a diamond ring for Betty. I think most expected this and Mom had cooked a special dinner for the family. Dad and Harold poured drinks for all adults. Betty says Harold gave her a stiff drink.

She was asked to cut the pies for desert. She says pieces were unequal and my sisters fought to get the bigger pieces.

The diamond in the ring was not very big, but the best I could afford. Betty has always worn it with pride, even though most of her friends had larger stones. I was happy to have the promise of marriage from such a wonderful young lady. Some now ask why we did not marry when I got this leave. Many midshipmen did get married and their wives got an allowance each month. I thought it was better to wait till I got home safely from the war.

At Norfolk, I was assigned as a passenger on a Liberty ship going to Oran in North Africa. There I was to report for duty aboard LST 308. We were not allowed to tell our family where we were going when we left Norfolk. It was over two months before my family heard from me to learn I was serving in England. The Liberty ship was mainly a cargo ship. On this trip the ship carried 300 navy enlisted men and 60 naval officers. The enlisted men were in a large room on the ship. They slept on canvas bunks about ten high and had a room where they ate. The officers slept in a room about 8 feet by 30 feet with canvas bunks six high. Next to the sleeping room was a room about 20 by 30 feet where officers talked and ate. These rooms were below the main deck. The bunks were so close together you could not sit up to read. You could only sleep and rest.

Passengers could walk on the main deck of the ship but could not go to the structure above the main deck. The Liberty ship's crew had good quarters above the main deck and were served very good meals. Passengers were not allowed in any operating parts of the ship or in crew's quarters. Passengers who were officers and the enlisted men ate the same food, served twice a day. The food was cooked in two big steam kettles. Meals were a stew or soup and crackers or bread. The food often was not as good as you would feed your dog. This is the only time in my life that I was truly hungry most of the time for a few weeks. If we wanted, we could buy a good meal from the ship's crew. I considered it paying a bribe and refused to do it.

Only once on this trip on the Liberty ship did I get seasick. That day the weather was cold, rainy and windy with rough seas. I wanted to stay inside and take a nap. The officers sleeping room in the hold of the Liberty ship was opposite the ship's freezer. On this day, the ship's crew was going to have frozen fish for supper in the evening. About noon they brought the frozen fish out of the freezer and set it to thaw next to officers sleeping room. I wanted to take a nap on this miserable afternoon. Rules said no smoking in the sleeping area, but some did smoke. I've always been a nonsmoker. These weather conditions caused some officers to get seasick in the sleeping area. The odor of fish, smoke and puking was too much for me. I got sea sick and had to go to the ship's railing on the main deck and heave over the side. The sick feeling lasted for a couple days. After the weather got better, I was very hungry. I

broke down and paid the bribe to a crew member for good tasting food. I have always felt guilty for doing this and wished I had not done it. I do not recall ever getting seasick on LST 308.

It was a beautiful day when we walked off the Liberty ship in Oran, Northern Africa. The officers carried their gear to a truck. We threw our gear in the back, climbed in the back and road standing to officers' quarters on the navy base. It was after supper time when we got to the base. We were assigned a room with a bed and told to shower, change cloths report to the dinning room for a snack. They had good bread, roast beef, cheese and ham for sandwiches. I will always remember how these officers charged and elbowed to eat. It was the best food we had had for a long time and all were very hungry. Officers and gentlemen? It was nice to have good food, a bed, and a shower after nearly a month. After the war I read that the Germans had submarines in the area and sank many transport ships. I have had a lucky life.

My orders were to report to LST 308. I had never seen an LST and knew nothing about them. We did not study the amphibious navy at midshipman's school. I had no idea what an LST (landing ship tank) was or how they were used in this war. The LST was a new type of ship. It was 308 feet long and 50 feet wide. It was ocean going but had a flat bottom so it could land on a beach and discharge, men, tanks and trucks directly through bow doors and down a ramp to the beach. It had a crew of about 10 officers and 110 enlisted men. Over 1100 LSTs were made for World War II. The invasion of Normandy was delayed from 1943 to 1944 to get more LSTs. Stalin was unhappy about the delay, but Eisenhower and Churchill insisted.

In Africa, I found LST 308 had left for England. I was assigned as a passenger on another LST going to England. This was very fortunate for me. This LST had been in landings in Sicily and Salerno as the LST 308 had been. I learned about the battles the LST 308 had been in from the ships officers. I got to learn my way around an LST and stand watches with ships officers in the month that I was on this LST. This way I was not such a "green" officer when I reported on LST 308. When I got to the 308, I had mail waiting for me. The first contact with home in about two months. There were letters from my family and Betty Ecker. Betty and I corresponded quite often. She wrote most days and I tried to write each time we got a chance to send mail. I tried to keep my parents informed and heard from them regularly.

I reported aboard LST 308 on December 21, 1943, in Southampton, England. My first Christmas away from home. I spent two Christmases in the European theater and later one in Tokyo, Japan. I remember little about these Christmases, except I missed home and family. We always had a special dinner at home.

On LST 308, I was assigned as communication officer and assistant navigator. About six signalmen and three radio men reported to me and I worked with the quartermasters. I had to set up training classes for them so they could advance in rank. I reviewed my Morse Code and learned to read and send signals by radio and light quickly. I soon could send and receive signals by light at 10 words a minute (normal speed). Most radio signals were much faster and the radio men handled that. Our ship along with all the navy in England was preparing for the invasion of France and knew it would probably be in May or June – less than six months. Most of our radio messages were sent in a code so the enemy could not read them easily. We had a simple code machine so the enemy could not easily read our messages.

When I reported to LST 308, Lt. Allen Acomb was captain. Soon Acomb was promoted to Lt Commander and put in charge of a group of LSTs. He was transferred to another LST and Lt Hawley became captain.

I thought Hawley was a good captain. I liked working for him. He let ships officers handle the ship more than some captains. We could guide the ship up a channel, and anchor the ship in the harbor. Hawley always took over the con when we tied up to a dock. When we were under way at sea or along the coast he expected the officer of the deck to handle the ship and call him if necessary. At night you could be the only officer awake. I supervised my men as I wanted, but he expected us to do our jobs well and have our men well trained.

Hawley let ships officers take vacations in England. He wrote vacation orders, but if you got back to the ship without problems, he tore up the orders. This allowed us to take vacation time in England and still have all our vacation time left when we returned to USA. Our-out-of pocket expense was for travel, food and lodging while off the ship. I took two trips to London to visit my cousin Dick Chadderdon who worked in the army as a photographer's assistant. Dick also came to visit LST 308 in Southampton. I have studio pictures taken in London of us in uniform.

Now I was drawing officers pay with no deductions. This was the first time in my life I had time and money for "vacation". I enjoyed it very much. Once when I was away from the ship visiting Dick Chadderdon, the ship got rush orders to go to Londonderry, Northern Ireland. When I returned to Southampton, I learned the ship was gone and I had to find a way to Northern Ireland. I had to take a train to Liverpool and a ferry to Dublin, Ireland and a train to Londonderry. Here our ship was being equipped to be a hospital ship. The ship was being modified so that after discharging troops and military equipment on enemy soil in France, the tank deck could be quickly converted into a hospital to treat wounded soldiers as we returned to England. We could bring back 300 injured. We had three

doctors and 40 corpsmen to man the hospital. Since we were assigned to carry British troops to France, we had British doctors and corpsmen.

The base in Londonderry was a secret USA base and was set up before we entered the war on December 7, 1941. It was not recognized as having been there for some time. On May 26, 1941 Master Chief Joseph Earhart Sardo, was assigned to set up this base hospital in Londonderry. In 2001, Sardo published a book about the base and his service on LST 290 during the invasion of Normandy in 1944. The book is: "Foxy 29 – from the Sea Came Heros". During 2002, I met Sardo in Muskegon, Michigan on LST 393. He was selling books and I bought one for \$5 and he autographed it for me. Later I talked by telephone to Sardo at his home in Virginia. He writes an interesting story of the Normandy invasion.

While in Londonderry, I got to play golf. It was cool and there was a little snow on the ground in shaded areas, but not enough to hide golf balls. This was the second time I ever played golf. The first time was on the Isle of Wight in Southampton Harbor. I never had time or money for golf before the war. I liked the game and have enjoyed playing it since the war.

As preparation for the invasion, some LSTs were required to make a practice invasion on the English coast. The German submarines and E-boats learned of the plan and were able to attack. Some LSTs and other ships were sunk and many lives were lost. Our LST was not part of the practice, probably because we had been in previous invasions or because we were in Londonderry. This was another of many a lucky circumstances that saw me safely through the war.

As communication officer I got all the plans for operation Overlord (as the invasion was called). The plans came in 8 ½ by 11 inch loose-leaf books. I had a pile of books about ten inches high all labeled "Top Secret". They covered general orders for all five beaches, but our orders for Gold Beach were in detail. I still had these plans when I left the ship in Japan and I destroyed them because they were labeled Top Secret. I have often wished I had saved them. The sea chest the crew made for me was not full and there was room for them. I thought it might be inspected when I got to the states and I could be in trouble. It never was inspected.

The attack force on D-Day was the largest number of ships and men ever assembled. There were 7,000 ships and 133,000 men. The Germans expected the invasion near Calais where the crossing from England to France was shortest – about 50 miles compared to about 200 at Normandy. The US generals wanted the Germans to think the invasion was planned for the Calais area. They established a fake army that appeared ready to invade near Calais. They put General Patton in charge of the fake

army and had him send messages from that area as if he was preparing to invade. The Germans respected Patton for his work in Africa and expected him to lead in Normandy.

The Germans knew the invasion might come in Normandy or anywhere on the French coast. They assigned General Rommel to construct obstructions that were mined to catch and destroy landing craft coming to the beach. He also built fortifications on the beaches with large guns that could shoot at landing ships on the beach or approaching from the sea. These fortifications were designed so as to be hard to attack by bombs from planes or even the large guns of battleships and destroyers at sea. They were fortified with steel reinforced concrete that was about two feet thick.

D-Day for landing in France was planned for June 5, 1944. It had to be at the full moon because this caused highest tides so boats could float over most of the obstructions the Germans had on the beaches. The high tides at full moon in this area were about 50 feet deep. On that day the weather was so bad the invasion was postponed, but the moon caused tides would still be OK on June 6. After that it would be wait a month for high tides. The weather was still quite bad on June 6. Eisenhower had thousands of ships ready to attack Normandy and if the Germans could find them and figure where the attack was coming, the attack would not be a surprise. The attack had to be a surprise to have a chance to succeed. A weather forecast said there could be a break in the weather. Eisenhower decided the weather was a lesser risk than trying to keep men on the ships for a month and losing the surprise effect of the invasion in Normandy rather than near Calais as the Germans expected.

The allies had an advantage because of the bad weather. The Germans decided the weather was so bad no invasion could take place. General Rommel was in charge of the German troops in France. It was his wife's birthday, and he decided to go visit her about 100 miles from his troops in Normandy. Hitler also knew of the bad weather and deciding he would like to sleep late left orders not to be called.

I could say more about invasion plans in general, but you can read what others have written. I can tell you the weather was bad. I had the midnight to 4 AM watch and many especially the passenger, troops got seasick. Troops were happy to get to dry land despite the attacking Germans.

Our ship, the LST 308, was carrying British troops to Gold Beach. The LST 308 was scheduled to unload onto rhino ferries that would go to the beach with the first group at 8AM. The LST was considered too valuable a ship to risk by landing on D-Day. We could not make the Rhino work and all troops and equipment were still on board on June 7. Landings at Gold beach went well compared to the problems at Omaha Beach. On June 7, it was decided enough obstructions had been cleared on Gold Beach and LSTs should land on the beach to unload the much-needed men and equipment. LST 308 went in at high tide and had to stay on the beach for about twelve hours until the next high tide.

Germany's big guns located a few miles inland could shell the beach area and their planes could bomb us and they tried. Fortunately they missed LST308. Other ships were not so fortunate. German planes were not able to reach our beach during the day because of our fighter planes. A few German planes did drop bombs on Gold beach at night.

I recall one night when we were anchored near Gold Beach, a German plane flew over dropping bombs. The plane was flying towards us and dropping bombs as it came. I was standing watch on the conning tower. The plane dropped 4 bombs as it came towards us and I thought a fifth could be on us. Fortunately there was no fifth bomb. After that scare, I relaxed and enjoyed the nice weather that had cleared and I finished standing my watch. Then I went to my room for a little rest before the attack. At high tide we went on the beach and unloaded troops and equipment

I walked on the beach on June 7 and saw the results of war. There were holes where bombs and shells had exploded. There were German shells from their long range guns coming into the beach area, but none hit our ship or injured our crew. There were men laying on the beach like logs. Some were Germans and some were British. Some were dead and others were being treated by medics and waiting to be taken back to hospitals in England. War is not pretty – it is more like hell than something nice.

LST 308 was equipped as a hospital ship to take wounded men back to hospitals in England and treat them on the way. The doctors were among the first off the ship as they waded in waist deep water to reach the wounded on the beach. They talked to the British beachmaster asking which men were assigned to the LST 308 and were told the LST 308 would get no injured on this tide. The injured men for LST 308 would be on the next tide. Since we would be on the way back to England before the next high tide, the doctors asked to take some of the injured on the beach and were told they could not. One doctor said he would take some now. The beach master said he would shoot the him if he tried. We went back empty and I recall eating supper with the head surgeon. He was the most downhearted man I have ever seen. He had left a practice in England and volunteered as a medic. He had trained for months and got to Normandy and could not do the work. We made other trips to France. The doctors and corpsmen got to treat about 300 injured men a couple times. Most of the injured survived the trip to England and to hospitals.

We were lucky on LST 308. We traveled in large convoys where ships were sunk by German submarines and E-boats. Many were killed. Many ships were damaged on the beaches. One of my sisters has said I must have had a guardian angel on each shoulder. My sisters tell me my mother had all the family gathered each night to say a rosary for the safe return of her sons and all USA troops.

I was fortunate that LST 308 got to stay in England until April 1945 – ten months after D-Day. Other LSTs were sent to the Pacific Theater shortly after D-Day and made very hazardous landings on Pacific islands. My ship made about 50 trips from England to Normandy carrying men and supplies for the war. After the first 5 or 6, trips we no longer had the British doctors aboard and were not a hospital ship. We started carrying US troops and eventually made it to all the beaches except Utah Beach. On one trip we brought back 300 German prisoners. On that trip I went down to the see the prisoners from a small platform overlooking the tank deck. It was about a twelve hour trip. The prisoners had to stand, sit or lay on the steel deck and had a few pails to relieve themselves as the ship bounced and rolled in the sea.. There were only two marines with machine guns guarding the prisoners. I asked the two marines where the other guards were. They said it was just them. I asked what they would do if prisoners charged them. One said he wished they would even look at him cross eyed. He would shoot them. I said, “You do not mean that. It is against regulations”. He said, “one of these bastards shot my buddy yesterday and I would like to get one of them.” Actually I think the German prisoners were happy to be out of the war and not have to continue fighting.

On one trip to France, we went up the Seine River to Rouen. On the way down river it got dark and we tied up to a dock. It was Christmas Eve. There was a small town called Queillbeuf with a church. We were able to go to Midnight Mass. They were not sure all Germans had left the area. To be safe, enlisted men carried rifles. I wore my pistol. There was a hole in the roof of the church. It was a clear night and we could see stars through a hole in the roof. In 1980, on a trip to visit our daughter Jean who lives in France, I went back to Normandy and visited the town and church.

Later, after the fighting had moved inland, we carried troops and equipment to Omaha Beach. The dead and injured had been removed and most obstacles to landing had been removed. I saw the high cliff and German fortifications, I marveled at how our troops were able to land there and get up the cliff. In 1980, when I saw the about 10,000 graves at Omaha Beach, I knew how. Not all these men were killed here – some died in later fighting. War is Hell.

After we had made about 25 trips to the beaches, the army wanted railroad engines and cars brought to France. The Germans had taken trains with them as they retreated. Our tank deck was converted to carry railroad cars. We loaded the cars in Southampton, England and took them to Cherbourg, France. We had one track down the center and one on each side. The slope from the tank deck to the bow doors was too steep for rail cars so concrete was poured to change it. It was easier duty because we had no passengers to watch and feed. We made about 20 trips to Cherbourg. Most of the German subs and Eboats were gone by then and it felt much safer. It was good duty.



**MIDSHIPMAN**



**NAVIGATING**



**THE HOME FRONT**



**BETTY, JIM AND VERA AT KEYS DRIVE**

## CHAPTER 5

### Return to USA, getting married

In April 1945, LST 308 received orders to return to the USA at Norfolk VA. The concrete on the tank deck for the rail cars caused a serious problem on the return to the USA. We hit very rough weather in the North Atlantic. In the ocean an LST would bend as it went over waves. Standing on the conning deck, we could see the long deck bend. The LST was flexible and it caused no harm in normal weather. However, the weight of the concrete in the forward area of the tank deck caused more bending. We started breaking some welds at sections of the ship. We got oil in some ballast tanks. The captain was worried we might break apart. Fortunately the weather got better and we made it to Norfolk.

We stayed in Norfolk a few days. I got two days leave and was able to visit my Uncle Wren Chadderdon who was superintendent of schools in Onancock, Virginia. While I was at Wren's the Germans surrendered and the USA celebrated victory in Europe (VE Day) – one part of the war done. At Norfolk, we learned the repairs to LST 308 would be made in New Orleans. While I was in Norfolk, I called Betty to let her know I was in the USA. It was the first time I had talked to her in nearly two years. We agreed we wanted to be married as soon as I could get home on leave. Betty was to make arrangements.

On the way from Norfolk to New Orleans, I recall sailing along the eastern coast of the US and seeing the beautiful sandy coast of Florida and people on the beach. It hardly seemed like war time. People in the USA do not realize what war is like. At New Orleans, the LST 308 was put in drydock for repairs. Soon I got leave to go home as repairs were being made on the ship and it was being prepared for the invasion of Japan.

When I got home to Parchment, Betty had gone to Flint to get ready for the wedding at St. Michael's Church. It was still a time of gas rationing and few good cars (no new cars since we got in the war). Few of my family would go to the wedding – only my parents, brother Jim and my sisters went – Harold was away at war. My grandparents, Dhaenens, lived near Detroit and could not go. My grandparents, Chadderdon, did not want to make a long drive to Flint. However, they helped me by loaning me their car to go to Flint. They also said I could keep the car a few days for a honeymoon. Betty was teaching school at Hickory Corners and school was still in session. She found a man home from the war to finish the semester for her. I could not find someone to be my best man. My brother Harold was away at war, brother Jim was too young and my friends were also off to war. So I asked

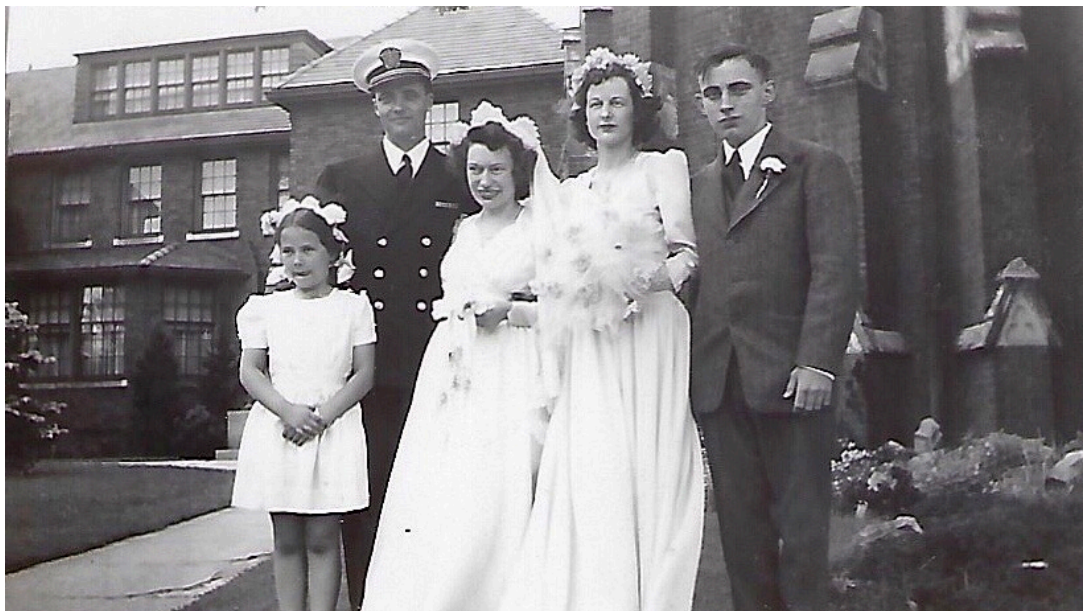
Betty's brother Tom to be best man. He was 16 and just old enough. The following year Tom, at 17, joined the navy. Later before the war was over Jim joined the air force. Betty's maid of honor was Margaret Hodges who taught with Betty at Kellogg high school. Margaret later married Carlton Brown and taught in Skagway Alaska and Burlington VT. She died in 2014 and a memorial service was held in Burlington. Our son Phil attended the service.

Few things for our wedding went as smoothly as we hoped and planned. We wanted to be married on Saturday May 26, 1945 but two weddings were scheduled that day and we had to wait until Monday, May 28. The wedding was planned for 10:00 am, but the priest forgot to write it in the church schedule and a funeral got scheduled at 9:00 am. We had to wait until 11:00 am. There were the weddings in the church on Saturday and the church was not cleaned before or after Sunday masses. Betty's wedding dress had a long train. There was supposed to be a white carpet for the main aisle from the door to the altar, but that was out to the cleaners. Luckily my youngest sister Janet had just made her First Communion and came with her white dress. Betty showed Janet how to carry the train of her wedding dress and she looked like part of a planned wedding party. Finally things settled down and all went well. We were married and had a fine reception. Our wedding picture shows me in my dress blue officers uniform and Betty in her white dress. After the wedding reception, telling no one where we were going, Betty and I left for Lansing to spend the night in a hotel. Mom and dad had car trouble with the old Reo near Lansing and had to call someone to come for them. Mom always thought we should have let them know where we were going so we could help. It never occurred to us to tell them where we were going or to check on them. In a way we were happy we did not tell them.

When I casually signed the Lansing hotel register as Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Chadderton, rice fell out of Betty's coat as she opened it. The bell hop laughed as he took us up to our room. The next morning it was off to Chicago for a honeymoon. We stayed at a very nice hotel, The Stevens. Betty and I had wonderful time for five days in Chicago and enjoyed dancing, shopping, and a movie. The Wayne King Orchestra was playing at The Stevens. We asked Wayne to play, "People Will Say We Are In Love" the first night. The next night we saw Wayne in the hotel bar and he came over to say, "People will say you are in love, and congratulations." During the war a naval officer in uniform and a young lady stood out.

Back in Parchment, I had a few days to spend with family and friends. Most men my age were away at war. We had parties at home with my parents, Jim and my sisters and friends. Being war time gasoline was rationed. The man at the local station told me there was plenty of gas for returning service men – without ration coupons. This helped us get around the area and out to lakes. For about a week, we rented a cottage on a lake – my parents took us out there. We had a fine time by ourselves as few were out to the lake this early in the summer season. Then it was time to go back to the ship in New

Orleans. Betty made the trip to New Orleans with me. We had a roomette on the train to New Orleans. There was little for me to do on the ship, but I had to report each morning and check on progress of repairing the ship and see what my men were doing. When the ship was ready, we sailed on the river as a shake down. Next the ship was outfitted for the invasion of Japan. We did not like our assignment for the invasion. We were equipped with many 35mm and 40mm antiaircraft guns on the main deck. We were to go to the Japanese beach in the first wave of attackers on high tide and ram the ship up as high as possible and be an antiaircraft platform. With the Kamikaze planes and shore based guns, it appeared our chances of survival would be slim.



**JANET CHADDERDON, JOE, BETTY, MARGRET HODGES, TOM ECKER**

## CHAPTER 6

### To the Pacific War Zone on LST 308

When we left for Japan, I was the navigator and communication officer. Some men of the original crew left the ship and were replaced by other crewmen. As we entered the Panama canal on August 6, 1945, we learned the first atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima. We continued through the canal. On August 9, 1945, as the 308 was in the Pacific Ocean headed toward the invasion of Japan, the second Atom Bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. On August 15, 1945 Japan surrendered unconditionally as required. All of us on LST 308 celebrated. We were happy to come through the war with no serious damage to the ship and no one killed from enemy action.

On the way to Pearl Harbor, we had trouble with one engine. We went on to Hawaii and were sent back to San Francisco to have the ship repaired and war equipment removed. Betty took a train to San Francisco and we enjoyed about three weeks together while the ship was repaired. It was like a second honeymoon.

We were equipped to take men, and supplies for the occupation of Japan. Men in service got points toward early discharge based on service time and number of battle ribbons. All of the original crew had more than enough points to be discharged at this time and left the ship. I had barely enough points for discharge but was required to go to Japan as Executive Officer and navigator because I was the senior officer left on our LST. I would have been captain, but a new officer reported on LST 308 who was one day senior to me. He graduated from a Chicago midshipman's school on a Friday and I graduated on the following Saturday in New York. I was happy because I enjoyed my work navigating by the sun and stars and did not have all the responsibility of a captain. Also it would be easier to get a relief officer and go home when I got to Japan.

We sailed without escort to Yokohama, Japan. There was a area marked on the charts as having been swept for mines. I was able to keep the ship in that area. On the way to Yokohama we stopped at the small Japanese island of Okinawa. Another officer and I got a to soldier drive us around this small island. The island had been declared captured for about six weeks when we got there. We landed on the west side and drove around to the east where the capital city, Naha, had been. Okinawa had been one of the costliest battles of the war. Thousands of our soldiers died and many of our ships were sunk including some LSTs. When we got to the area where Naha had been, there was little evidence of a large city of about 500,000 people. I was amazed. The ground was nearly level. No tall buildings

were left standing, only some small sections of wall about ten feet high stood. In Europe, when armies or soldiers saw they were defeated, they often surrendered and became prisoners of war. The Japanese army fought to the last man. A Japanese soldier who was doomed tried to take two or three with him before he died. In Europe, many cities were seriously damaged, but not leveled like this. Nothing higher than one story was standing. There were some mountains on the island where there were still Japanese soldiers who had not surrendered. Our driver said it was not safe to go near the mountains.

Before we went to Japan our ship was equipped with radar for the first time. As we approached Yokohama, there were many very small islands that were not on the charts. Radar helped us steer the ship even when it was dark or visibility was low. When we got to Yokohama, I took shore leave as soon as possible. I had two things planned. First I wanted to see what a Japanese city was like and second to go to the navy base and see if I could get an officer to relieve me so I could go home to my wife. I went with another officer, Ken Dorr. We had a good time and saw interesting buildings and shrines. This part of the island was only slightly damaged. Unfortunately, I did not find an officer to replace me and I spent a couple more weeks in Japan.

We went on to Tokyo. On a dock where we landed, were piles of Japanese rifles and swords. Every US military man could take a rifle and officers could take rifle and a sword. I kept the rifle and sword in a closet until 2015, when I gave them to my son Pete. I seldom took them out and perhaps some of my children never saw them. Like other returning servicemen, I was tired of war and did not want to talk about war or see things that reminded me of war. Another time on shore leave, I got to see, from a distance, the home of the Japanese Emperor. Across the street from the emperor's home was a large city square for public gatherings. Beyond this square was an important government building. General Mac Arthur used this as his headquarters in Tokyo. There was little damage to that part of the city.

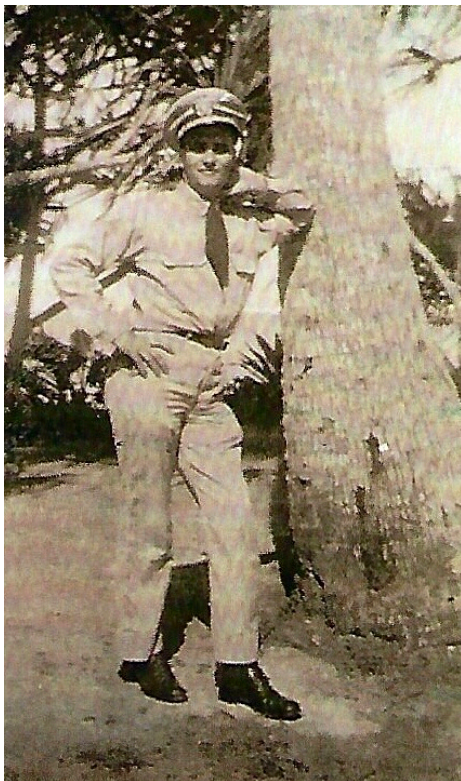
One of the days while we were in Tokyo was Christmas. On the ship, we had a fine meal and the crew celebrated. However, I remember this as one of the saddest days of my life. It was my third Christmas away from home and I missed Betty and family very much. Just before January 1946, I got good news. The base found an officer to replace me on LST 308. After he came aboard and relieved me, I received orders to sail to the USA on a transport ship that was leaving for San Francisco. I collected all my gear on LST 308 and prepared to go home. In my room I still had all the books describing the plans for the invasion of Normandy. The crew had made me a large sea chest for my gear and I had room for the books. They were marked "Top Secret" so I disposed of them. I thought my sea chest might be checked and top secret documents could mean trouble. My sea chest was never checked. I often wish I had taken them with me.

It was a good trip home. I had no responsibility, a good room and good food. The weather was good and it was a much smoother and faster ride than on a LST. At San Francisco, me and my gear were

transferred to a train to Great Lakes Naval Base. There I received all pay I had coming. This including pay for over two months of unused leave time. Betty and I saved most of the money for future family expenses.

At Great Lakes officers could not get a discharge from the navy, but had to remain in the naval reserve. They asked all officers to join the active reserve where they could get paid for training and earn points for promotion by working nights, weekends plus a two week summer training program. I requested release to inactive duty with no training programs. Most chose active reserve and considered it easy money. I thought I had done my military duty to the country and had had enough of the Navy. I only wanted to be a civilian and get on with my life.

When we got into the Korean War, those who had chosen training were called to active duty. In a few years I was informed I was overage in rank and had to chose training or a discharge. I chose discharge and got an honorable discharge.



**IN HAWAII**



**JOE SECOND FROM LEFT**

## CHAPTER 7

### **Return to Civilian Life, Buying a house and starting a family**

When I got home to Parchment, I had a good time with Betty, family and friends. When I was a child, my dad gave all of his children hair cuts and we learned to cut his and each others hair. I never went to a barbershop until I was in high school. After Harold and I got home from service, we often went home to see mom and dad. If needed we would get a haircut and cut dad's hair. Harold lived in the Kalamazoo area near the airport where he worked. Often we would visit each other to get hair cuts.

It was a big story in the Parchment News when a serviceman got home. Frank Libby, the KVP plant manager, saw the story of my return in the paper and talked to my dad. He asked to have me come to see him in his office. When I talked to Frank, he asked me what I planned to do. I replied that I planned to use my GI Bill to go to a university and get a masters degree in engineering. He said that was a good plan, but I was married and the next semester did not start for several months. He did not have an opening for a college man, but offered to start me as a technician. If I stayed, I would be promoted to a position appropriate to my education and experience. I started at the KVP Lab as a technician in 1946 and stayed until I retired as Technical Director of the Parchment Division in 1985 at age 65.

When I got home from the Navy, it was February and Betty was teaching at Kellogg High School near Hickory Corners. She was living in a large old family home with other women teachers. I could not and did not want to live there. This was farm country and no rental property was available. We found a cottage to rent on Gull Lake only a few miles from the school. There was only a pot belly stove for heat and it was mid winter. We were happy to be together, but now we needed a car for transportation. Automobile companies were still in the process of converting from building war materials back to building cars. Few cars were available. I went to new car dealers hoping returning service men would get a break – no luck, but they said they would put us on a long list. Used cars were tight also. We found a 1937 Olds for sale and bought it. Soon it started to break down and I had to fix it, often with the help of my brother Harold. Harold had gotten home before me and was working as a mechanic at the Kalamazoo Airport. He had taken a course in aviation mechanics at Western before the war and served as a mechanic in the Air Force during the war.

When Betty's school year was finished in June of 1946, we looked for a home in Parchment or the Kalamazoo area. We looked for a place to rent and found nothing we would want to live in. We got a Realtor to help. She showed us some more places to rent and none pleased us. Finally she asked if we had considered buying a house and if we had furniture. She had a house for sale that was fully furnished. Since we had no furniture, we looked at it. The house and furniture were neat and clean. My dad helped me inspect the house and he said it was sound and looked like a good buy. We bought the house. It was at the top of the hill on Hotop Avenue in Kalamazoo. My boss at KVP, Morris Kane, lived around the corner and often I rode to work with him. Betty kept house and taught school as a substitute teacher. We lived in this house for about 4 years.

This house on Hotop was two blocks from St Marys's Catholic Church and School and we became members of that church. We became friends of the pastor, Father Bartkoviak. Father Bart sometimes came to our house to talk and I would cut his hair. Parishioners helped build the church and school and I worked with them in the evening and Saturdays. Father Bart worked with us. Often about 10:00pm he would say enough for tonight and offer us a drink of whiskey. Sometimes some of us would play cards with him for a while.

Harold married Mary Konechny on November 30, 1946. Soon Betty and Mary became best friends. For a few years, Harold and I exchanged haircuts at each others house, usually before or after a supper with our families. About 1955, Harold moved to Nebraska to work for the Federal Aviation Administration. That started our travels as a family to visited Harold's family.

At the house on Hotop, I enjoyed two hobbies. One was wood working. I built some furniture, remodeled the kitchen cabinets and changed a few little things around the house. The other was photography. I bought a folding camera with a good lens. I started taking pictures, mostly of family. I also bought supplies needed to develop film, print pictures, and to enlarge pictures. I set up my equipment in the basement. We have many pictures I took, developed and printed. When we built our house in Parchment, I built a room in the basement to use as a darkroom for developing film and printing and enlarging pictures. However, color photography, and new technology meant an end to this hobby many years ago.

Soon the joys of owning a house were tempered with the reality of maintaining it. The house had a good stoker-fed coal furnace but after about a year the fire often went out like it was not getting coal. I talked to a furnace man and he said if it was an old furnace the worm feed was probably worn out. I figured out how to get the worm feeder shaft out. It was worn nearly smooth. I purchased and installed a new shaft and the stoker worked fine as long as we owned the house.

In about a year, I had another problem with the furnace. We began to smell a little smoke in the house and determined there was a small hole in the bonnet of the furnace. It was spring and we could get by until summer. I got a new bonnet and Betty's father came from Flint to help me install it. The bonnets were very heavy and I had trouble moving them. Her father had built very strong muscles working as a drop forge hammerman at the Buick factory in Flint, MI. He did most of the lifting and we made the repair.

With a house and jobs, Betty and I decided we would like to have children. Betty had a miscarriage soon after we moved in, but then did not get pregnant again after over a year trying. We went to see a doctor. He found no problem and said perhaps it was not meant to be. Then a few months later Betty was pregnant and on November 20, 1948 a son we named David Andrew was born. It was a difficult birth, Betty lost a lot of blood. I was sent to the hospital lab to donate my blood. We had the same blood type, O negative, so my blood was given to Betty to help save her life. The doctor said to be thankful as David might be an only child. However, soon Betty was expecting and on December 31, 1949 Elizabeth Ann was born. She was born only a few hours before New Years day and we were thankful to get an income tax deduction for the year. The doctor said we were very fortunate but would likely have no more children. On July 2, 1952, another son we named Patrick Leo was born while we still lived in the Hotop house. At this point the doctor refrained from any more dire predictions.



**LIZ AND DAVE, CHRISTMAS 1951 ON HOTOP (PHOTO BY JOE CHADDERDON)**



**THE HOUSE ON HOTOP AVENUE (PHOTO BY JOE CHADDERDON)**

## CHAPTER 8

### **Life in Parchment and Building a House**

In 1952, Betty and I decided we would like to live in Parchment near my work. We found a lot for sale at 2029 Parchmount Avenue. At that time the lot was in Kalamazoo township, just a block east of the Parchment border. Later it was annexed into The City of Parchment and the address became 1029 Parchmount. The owner was eager to sell and we bought it with a hole for a basement for \$300. After a few months looking at house plans and adjusting them to fit the lot, we decided on a plan. The lot fell away from the road and we wanted a walkout basement. Otherwise it would be a single floor house with three bedrooms. We wanted two complete bathrooms on the first floor. The plan called for an attached one car garage with a large room over it to use as a family room. The basement plan had a half bath with a long Formica counter. I planned to use this as a dark room for developing and printing black and white pictures. When color photography became less expensive and more common I did less developing and printing. Use of digital cameras finished the hobby. I still had the enlarger and supplies in the basement in Feb. 2014.

We started to build our house in the spring of 1953. I wanted to do most of the work myself on weekends and after work at KVP. I had helped my dad and had read books on how to build, but some advice from professionals is very helpful. I had two uncles who were union builders, and they helped me get started on certain steps. Uncle Royal Chadderdon was a carpenter and Uncle Lee Russell was a brick mason. Uncle Lee helped me get started on the blocks for the basement and then I laid the rest of them. My brother-in-law Ken Russell was a brick mason and helped some on the blocks and bricks. I did most of the building with some help from friends and family. Betty helped when she was able. I built forms for the footings in the basement and mixed the concrete by hand to pour them. Next I laid the blocks for the basement walls. Blocks up to ground level had to be 12 inches wide to support the brick walls for the house. Twelve inch blocks were very heavy for an office worker. Most houses had basements 10 blocks high. I built it 11 blocks high for more head room in the basement.

I was working at KVP as a process engineer as we built the house. I would work at KVP until quitting time (5:00 pm) and then work on the house until about 10:00 or 11:00 pm). At noon I would go home for a good lunch and pack a supper to eat before I started work on the house. Then I went home for a snack before bed. We had city water, but no sewer in Parchment at the time. I dug the holes for the septic tank and dry well with a shovel and built them in the back yard. We used them for several years with no problems before we got city sewer. Next I put a post in the ground in the front yard and fastened a fuse box to it. Now I could get electricity and I used a skill saw to cut wood for the house.

It was the only power tool I used on the house and it had a cord – not battery operated as they are now. I had no power drill. I used a brace and bit to make holes for electrical wiring.

When the block walls were done, I put the wood plate on top of them and got the 2x12 boards to support the main floor. On a Saturday Uncle Royal and man he worked with came over and we laid the joists for the floor and started the flooring. The subfloor was 1x6 boards. I finished the sub floor and ordered 2x4s for the wall studs. This was before the day of precut studs. I cut the studs to length. Again Uncle Royal and a helper came on a Saturday and we started the outside walls. I put up the rest of the studs with openings for the front door and windows. Then I put the plywood sheathing on the outside walls. Also I installed inside studs for the rooms with openings for doors into the rooms. My uncles and the helper were union workers. I paid them union rates. They were very helpful and I would have had problems without their help. Next, I cut the roof rafters and again Uncle Royal and a helper put them up on a Saturday. Then I applied the 1x6 boards as sheathing for the roof. This was before the days of plywood for roof decking. I applied the shingles for the roof. The lumberyard delivered the shingles on the ground and I had to carry them to the roof. I mention a lot of these things because now it is so much simpler. Now they no longer lay up block walls in the basement. Basement walls and footings are poured in one step.

I hired a man to do the plumbing and served as his helper to save money. I wanted help with the wiring. I knew a man who did wiring and would help me evenings after work. However, his wife worked nights and he had two children. Betty agreed to babysit them and get them ready for bed for several days. Betty always helped when ever she could but she had her hands full with 3 young children. I framed the inside walls and door frames and hung the doors. It was before the days of pre-hung doors. I bought trim lumber to frame the doors and hung the doors making openings for door handles and hinges. It was before the days of drywall for inside walls and ceiling. I applied 2x4 foot sheets of plasterboard for walls and ceilings and hired men to plaster the inside walls and ceilings.

Next I laid a plywood floor and applied vinyl plastic floor tiles. The vinyl tiles were a mistake. The recommended tile glue did not hold the tiles permanently and after a couple years the tiles started to become loose and curled. The curled tiles could not be glued flat again. In about 1960 I put quarter inch plywood over these floor tiles and hired professionals to lay sheets of vinyl flooring over the plywood in the entry area, kitchen and dining room and carpeted other areas. One of the last things was building kitchen cabinets. We moved in during the fall of 1954 before the kitchen cabinets were finished. It was the next spring before we laid the bricks for the outside walls.

During the winter of 1954 we lived in the house without a finished kitchen. We had a kitchen sink and counter top. During the winter I bought birch plywood and made drawer fronts and the doors of the

cupboards. I did not want the plywood to darken with age so I did not use regular varnish which darkens. Instead I used a nitrocellulose varnish that does not darken. Also I varnished the birch plywood doors for all the rooms in the house. In about 1986, with my son Phil doing much of the work, I refinished all the cabinet doors and drawer fronts with urethane varnish.

Uncle Lee Russell helped lay bricks and I paid him union rates. We worked on weekends and evenings after I worked at KVP. I had a cement mixer to prepare the mortar for laying bricks. I prepared the scaffolding and mortar so he could start laying bricks as soon as he got there. After he left I would arrange the scaffolding for the next time. A funny thing happened when we were laying bricks on the large east wall on the garage. On a Saturday morning I had the mortar and scaffolding ready for Lee when he got there at 8:00 am. I had piled a lot of bricks on the scaffolding. Betty had arranged a babysitter and was ready to help us. Lee soon needed more bricks and mortar which were in the front yard. I mixed mortar, and carried bricks to him. At 10:00 am, he took a coffee break, and I adjusted the scaffold up with Betty's help. As we got higher on the wall, I had to throw bricks up and Betty would catch them and place them for Lee. Then back I went for mortar and more bricks. I was getting tired, but happy to see so many bricks laid. At noon Lee ate the lunch he brought. Betty got me a sandwich that I ate and we moved the scaffolding up again. In the afternoon Lee said let's make Joe really run. He showed Betty how to put mortar on the bricks ahead of him to save him a step in laying bricks. Betty did this while I was getting mortar. I also had to bring bricks and toss them up to Betty. I ran all afternoon and was so tired at 5 PM I could hardly walk. Before my day was done, I had to clean the mixer and tools. When Lee got home, he was so tired he wanted to rest before supper. He sat and laughed about how he got Joe. His wife called Betty to see what was so funny. Betty told her how beat I was and they laughed about men playing boys games. For me, I was just happy to see so many bricks laid and to have Sunday to rest. Lee had laid over twice as many as union bricklayers usually do in a day.

I have been very fortunate to have a loving and patient wife. She took care of the children and helped when she could.

When we moved in much of the house was not finished. We were happy to be in our new home and not have two houses to maintain. We were able to sell the house on Hotop at a good price. We have enjoyed the house and raised our six children there. Our last three children were born while we lived here – Jean Marie Le Joncour, October 8, 1955; Peter Joseph, September 26, 1959; Philip John, January 14, 1967. We had 6 children over a span of 19 years when our age rose from 28 to 47. In those days most women had their last child before they were 30. Betty is a remarkable lady. She took care of the house and children while I built the house and worked at KVP. I helped at home as much as I could.

Betty and I have been very fortunate to have such wonderful children. All were born healthy and have done so much for us as we have grown older. In 2014, four live in the Kalamazoo area. They stop regularly and do things so we can live in the house we built sixty years ago. We see one or two on most days and they ask what they can do to help. Also they are all best friends of each other and we have a great time when we get together. The two who moved away have given us great chances to travel. Early on, Jean lived in Mountain City, Tennessee and we visited her there a few times. We saw the mountain area and traveled on the Appalachian Trail. Later she moved to France and we have been to France over a dozen times – usually for a month or longer. We rented cars and traveled much of northern France. We went to all the WW2 landing beaches in Normandy, sometimes with Jean and her husband Patrice. I got to show them where my ship, LST308, landed on D-Day. Also we got to travel in Ireland, England, Holland, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Europe has change so much since the war and seems almost like one nation. Going from France to Germany to Holland to Belgium was like going from Michigan to Indiana or Ohio.



**AT HOME IN PARCHMENT**



**DAVE, JEAN, LIZ, PETE, PAT  
THE HOUSE IN BACKGROUND**

## CHAPTER 9

### Life in Parchment

Betty and I thought it was important that the family work and play together each day. During the day I was busy working at KVP and Betty was taking care of the house and children. We wanted to make evenings a family time. We had a family rule that supper was at 6:00 pm and all were expected to be home then. I worked until 5:00 pm, but sometimes wanted to finish a report or was busy in the paper mill. I agreed to call in advance if I was not going to be home by 6:00 pm. All the children helped to set the table and get ready for supper. Everybody helped with the cleanup and each was assigned various jobs like clearing the dining table, scraping dirty plates, washing dishes, or drying dishes.

About 1955 most of the house building was done. The children were getting older and Betty and I liked to play games with them. Betty was in the house most of the day and I was in the lab or paper mill at KVP. We wanted to get outdoors. We got a croquet set and equipment to play badminton in nice weather. The boys played softball and then little league baseball. With snow we went to Kindleberger park for sliding. Also we did some sliding on the little hill next door.

As our family grew I looked for more family sports. I had always enjoyed golf so I got a family membership at Eastern Hills Golf Course so the boys could learn to play. The girls never cared much for the game. The boys all learned to play and enjoy the game. They never became near par players. Perhaps that is because they had a poor teacher and learned my bad habits. Even at 90 years old, I played with the boys, but only on par 3 courses. For many years, I played in the KVP golf league. My team did well and I have three championship trophies.

In the 1960s we had some cold winters. I started making an ice rink in the backyard. We started the ice rink when there was lots of snow in late December. We used a hose to spray the snow so it would pack. Then all the family would pack the snow down with our feet. If we got another snow soon, we wetted and packed this over the first layer. Then on a cold night we would pour chilled water over the rink area. I brought empty plastic 50 gallon drums from the paper mill to hold the water until it started to freeze and the heat of fusion was gone (79 calories per gram of water). Then we could pour the water on the rink without any melting. It would take a few nights to build a smooth hard layer for skating. After starting the rink with the first cold stretch of December we often had skating in January and February. The children helped until their bed time about 8:00 or 9:00 pm. I would often stay up until 11:00 pm working on the rink. After the rink was ready for skating, it still needed more water and care to repair the skate marks and build thickness. Some years the rink was as big as 20 by 40 feet.

I got my exercise working on the rink and did little skating. Betty was a good skater and helped the children learn to skate. We had bought skates for our children and collected skates that others could use. It was a job to help children get skates on and tied tight enough. Our children and their friends skated and some played hockey. Our son Pat became a good skater and played hockey on the ice. For him it became a lifetime sport. He joined a hockey club and played as a teenager. He also played hockey in senior leagues when he was 30 to 50 years old.

About this time we hosted a foreign exchange student from Mexico, Patricia Delgado. She came to spend a few months with us. She learned to ice skate on our ice rink. When she left for home, she bought expensive ice skates to take home. A couple years later our daughter Liz went to visit her during her summer vacation. We learned Patricia came from a well to do family who lived in a walled community.

About 1967 soccer was becoming popular for youths in the USA. A youth league was started in Parchment. I had played a little soccer in school at Parchment and liked it. We considered it a better game than baseball or football. In baseball, most coaches wanted to win and played the best players, Also in baseball much time was spent waiting for the ball to come to you or for your turn to bat. In youth soccer players were running much of the time and youth league rules said all players must play at least half of the game. We had 15 on the youth teams and 11 players were in the game at any given time. We saw that all our team played at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the game. I was not a coach, but helped with the team.

In my work I had been to the KVP Pulp and Paper Mill in Espanola, Canada a few times to help them make parchment and other grades of paper on their paper machines. I got to know several men who worked there. A few times I got to go fishing. If I went fishing alone, I seldom caught many fish. There were men who worked in the factory for a living, but worked at fishing for fun and for food. Once they took me on a lake on the company land. We got lots of fish and I enjoyed it. Around 1960, I thought a vacation in Canada would be good for the family. I had been a friend of John Mahoney who worked in the Espanola lab. He and his family had been to Parchment and Betty and his wife were friends. John agreed to take us up the company logging road to the wilderness lake where I had caught fish. We experienced the problems of camping in the "wild north". We had small children. We used the lake water to drink and cook. Betty had to wash diapers and clothes in the lake away from where we camped and swam. Unlike my other trips, we caught only a few fish.

Betty and I were very active in St Mary's parish when we lived on Hotop. I was an usher and an officer in the mens club. Betty was a leader for the women's society and an officer on the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women. The men of the parish helped to build the church and school. I worked with them and father "Bart" Bartkowski worked with us. Some times after we had worked for about 4 hours he would say we should stop and have a game of cards. Often we played poker and Father played a tough game. When we moved to Parchment, we continued to go to St. Marys Church. However, I had cut back on parish projects when I started to build our house. One night in 1955, Father Bart was at our house and told us Parchment would have a new parish called St Ambrose and it would be only about 400 yards from our house. We said that was nice, but we would like to continue to go to St Mary's. He said, "No, you should be in the parish where you live". We became charter members of St Ambrose. Most of the members of St Ambrose had been members of St Augustine Parish and they wanted to plan and organize the parish. Betty and I decided it was time to let up on church activities and were glad to let them lead for a while.

The first pastor of St Ambrose was Father Robert Palmer. It was over a year before we had a church. We held services in the gymnasium of Parchment Community House which was built by KVP but owned and used by the Parchment Methodist Church at that time. The first building the parish built and dedicated in 1957, was the school building with four classrooms for grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 and a large indoor hall for school activities. On Sundays we celebrated Mass in the activities room until we built a church in 1983. Father Palmer planned to add rooms for grades 1, 2, 3, and 4 later, but the diocese consolidated Catholic schools in Kalamazoo and closed St. Ambrose School before the parish saved enough money to expand the school.

Father Palmer was interested in Boy Scouts. He had men from the local Boy Scout council come to explain scouting to the parish men. They talked about the advantages of scouting. After the third meeting I saw the meetings weren't going anywhere. I said we should take a vote to see if the men wanted a troop. The vote was yes and I asked what was the first step to start one. It was to form a committee and then to elect a committee chairman. Most said they would be on the committee, but no one wanted to be chairman of the committee. When I was asked to be chairman, I said I never was a scout and knew nothing about scouting. All said they would help and that was the start of about 20 years of scouting for me.

We started with a troop for boys age 9 to 14 in 1959 and later added a Cub Scout pack for younger boys. About a dozen boys signed to become scouts. Stan Smiertka was scoutmaster. We were known as Troop 82. We had a few meetings and a couple hikes and then planned a campout. When we got ready to go to the camp site, Stan said he had been called to work that weekend. I had to be the leader. I had camped only a few times and never camped as a scout. Another man went to the campout with

us, but he was never a scout. We had to show the boys how to set up tents and build a fire to cook. We all survived and had a good time. We camped in a county park with no facilities. Our oldest son, David joined the troop and later became an eagle scout.

At Father Palmer's request, I organized several Catholic retreats for scouts that were attended by other troops from the area and from Battle Creek. Although I was not scoutmaster, I helped out as an adult leader a couple times when we went to the annual summer camp at Rotakiwan scout camp. Eventually I was inducted into the Order of the Arrow. I also got the Catholic scout leader award, the St. George Award. I was the first scout leader from Kalamazoo area to get the St. George Award.

In 1968, St Ambrose School closed. A main reason was the cost to pay the sisters and lay teachers. I was chairman of the school committee and called a meeting about the school. We voted to close the school. There were too few boys to keep the troop operating and Troop 82 was closed. Most St. Ambrose boys joined Troop 18 at the Methodist Church in Parchment. I was asked to stay on the boy scout area council and I did. After a few years I had no boys in scouting so I dropped scouting.

In 1960 Parchment built a high school on what had been farm land behind our house. They put the tennis courts about a hundred yards from our house. I had always enjoyed tennis, it was my favorite sport. As an adult I had not played often because there were no courts near our house. Now I started to play often with our children, men who worked at KVP and other men of the area. After a while, I had a large number of men who wanted to play. In good weather, we planned to play on Monday and Thursday immediately after work for about an hour. Often there were 20 or more men and we would play doubles. An effort was made to keep the teams competitive. As I played more, I found I could hold my own with most of the men and win often. I was an unofficial leader and set times to play so as not to interfere the school teams. I was 40 when we started in 1960 and I continued to play tennis until I was 88. In the winter we would play inside at local tennis clubs and WMU.

It took lots of time on the phone to organize the tennis and few wanted to help. I continued to organize tennis for the group for about 10 years. Then I learned about a program at a tennis club in Portage. It was at the Racket Club and they had indoor and outdoor courts and played the year around. A young lady named, Susanne Bray, organized the tennis for around to 30 men. She assigned four men to a court and we usually played 3 sets of doubles. After each set we rotated so you played with all three other men. With this group I was one of the better players.

About 1980 the Racket Club was sold to the YMCA and the YMCA had programs that filled most of the time. Susanne resigned at the YMCA and went to work for West Hills Tennis Club owned by

Western Michigan University. Here she was allowed to organize a tennis program for men at noon to 1:30 pm on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday . They played all year. However, I usually played only in the winter. I preferred to play outside in the summer. During summers, I organized a group of men to play every Monday, Wednesday, Friday after work at Parchment High School. We usually used six courts and played doubles. We matched up as we gathered and then played winners play winners and losers play losers .

I played with the winter group at the West Hills until about 2005. When I started with this group, Susanne put me with the better players. By the year 1995, I was playing with the older and slower players. I won more than I lost because I played aggressively and was good at volleying at the net. Most older men played a conservative game. I and the men I played with never entered amateur tournaments or had any rating. I thought I could learn more of the game and went to a group lesson given by the club pro. I was amazed at how much better the local pro was than I and others taking lessons. I realized how many levels of tennis there were and was happy where I was. The local Pro, good as he was, could not play on the pro tennis tour.

By this time I had been promoted to supervisor of technical services at KVP. I still spent most of my time working out in the mill on production problems, but I had about 6 technicians and 3 engineers I supervised. In 1975, KVP learned they would have to meet new and stricter requirements for their effluent to the Kalamazoo River. I had always been involved in effluent treatment. I am proud of the KVP record of meeting all Michigan waste water requirements on time. Most local mills and cities did not. To meet the new standard KVP would need to build a new treatment plant involving secondary treatment and it would be one of the largest expenditures in company history. KVP was to be allowed 10 pounds of BOD (biological oxygen demand) per ton of paper produced. However, this limit was based on the tons of paper produced in 1950 and not the much larger amount produced in 1975. No one in the company knew how to do this.

I was given the title of environmental engineer and headed the project to meet the new standards, but I still supervised technical service. It was necessary to hire a consulting company to help us. I researched consulting companies and chose Aware Company of Ann Arbor, MI. Aware required a study showing how much water was used and where it was used. I hired extra men to help in the study. After the study Aware recommended a plant with a primary settling tank to remove solids followed by biological oxidation in two large aerated basins that should reduce the BOD in the effluent to about 10 parts per million (ppm). However, the volume of our effluent was too high for a 10ppm BOD effluent to meet the state standard and we would have to reduce the effluent by about two thirds. This required modifications in production including new equipment to reduce water usage.

The project was given high priority and the project was completed a month ahead of the June 1977 deadline. Everything worked well and we met the new state requirements. This was the largest project in dollars spent in the history of KVP. More about this is in my book about KVP.

About 1979, Betty and I got the idea that cross country skiing would be a good winter family sport. Only Pete and Phil were living at home by then. We all went to a sporting goods store and were fitted for skis, poles and boots for skiing. We kept our ski equipment in the basement. We would dress for skiing in the basement to go out the back door to the school yard. Sometimes we would go around the school, but more often we went to a wooded area next to the high school near G Avenue. It often seemed cold in the open if there was a wind, but it was nice in the woods. Sometimes we went to a wooded area near Kalamazoo Valley Community College or other ski trails like Allegan State Forest. It was family fun and good exercise.

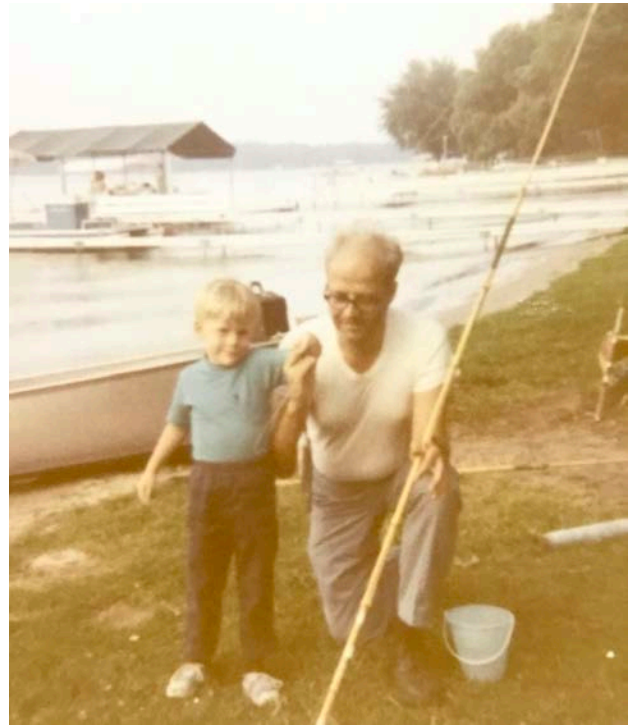
Our youngest son, Phil, was born in 1967 when Betty and I were 46 years old. Phil was 8 years younger than his next older brother, Pete. His oldest brother, David was a freshman at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids when Phil was born. I retired from KVP at age 65 in 1985, the year Phil graduated from high school. Betty retired in 1978 and started to draw social security at that time. Since she had a minor child, she received an extra \$300 a month until Phil graduated from high school. She was required to spend this money on Phil. Phil got some special opportunities compared to older siblings because of this extra money for seven years.



**THE ICE RINK, PATRICIA DELGADO IS SECOND FROM THE RIGHT**



**JOE, PETE, LIZ, BETTY, PAT, DAVE**



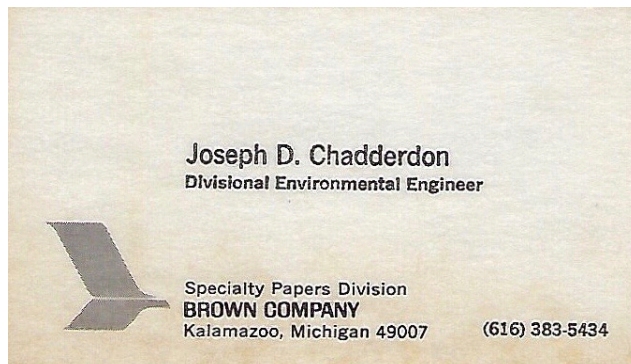
**HOW PETER LEARNED TO FISH**



**HAROLD AND JOE ABOUT 2005**



**MARY, HAROLD, BETTY, JOE, IN 1980**



## CHAPTER 10

### **The paper Industry in Kalamazoo in the Twentieth Century**

During the 20th century, the paper industry was a major source of jobs and wealth in Kalamazoo. In the mid nineteenth hundreds, Kalamazoo was known as the Paper City, and there were 11 paper companies in the Kalamazoo area. The first area paper company was the Kalamazoo Paper Company founded in 1867. It was a wooden structure and it burned in 1872. It was rebuilt as a brick structure. The company expanded, and continued to operate through the 20th century. There were two professional organizations in the paper industry – one for the technical staff and one for the mill supervisors. They were called, Technical Association of the Pulp and Paper Industry (TAPPI) and Paper Mill Superintendents Association (PIMA).

When I started working in the KVP Lab, I was a technician and was paid hourly (\$1.00 per hour). Betty and I were able to live on this and make house payments. When I got raises we put them in a savings account. In 1947, I was put on an annular salary and I joined TAPPI – both the national organization and the local Kalamazoo Valley Section. I always went to the meetings of the local section while I was working and to some of them after I retired in 1985. The local section lost nearly all members when the fourdrineer paper mills closed in the Kalamazoo area in about 2000 and was then combined with the Ohio section. Then there were no more local meetings of TAPPI. The national meetings of TAPPI were in New York City until about 1983 when they moved TAPPI headquarters to Atlanta, Georgia. Since then they have been in Atlanta.

The local section held 8 meetings a year. Attendance at the meetings was about 75 to 200 depending on the subject of the presentations. Subjects of the meetings usually covered paper making and testing subjects. A few meetings included visits to local mills. I was an active member and made presentations at several meetings. I was chairman of the section in 1960. My son Patrick studied paper making at WMU and worked in paper mills. Pat was chairman of the local section in about 1980.

In 1948, I went to my first National TAPPI meeting in New York City. PIMA was meeting there at the same time. Several of KVP management people went also. We went on the train and I got to know more technical and management people of KVP and the area. Paper mill suppliers also sent representatives to the New York meetings and they took people who worked for their customers to fine suppers and Broadway plays in the evening after the convention meetings. When the convention was

over, the KVP people went to visit Patterson Parchment Paper Company near Philadelphia. This was the first of my several visits to Patterson. It was very interesting to me because I was working in the KVP parchment division at the time. I went to couple National TAPPI meetings in the early 1950s and starting in 1956 I went to the national TAPPI meeting every year until I retired and two after I retired. Starting in 1975 Betty, went to most the national meetings with me and enjoyed New York. I enjoyed the trips, but also I learned much about paper machines, paper making, paper testing, and lab supervision at the meetings. I met people from other mills and learned about how they ran their labs. Also I made friends from other mills who I could ask for advice as problems arose.

National TAPPI had committees that met to work on paper mill problems. I was on some national TAPPI committees. About 1955 when several paper mills were making silicone treated paper, I was on a committee to write standard testing methods for silicone treated paper. These committees met during the year to work on problems and I traveled to interesting places for the meetings. Preparation for the meetings took time, often outside regular working hours.

I feel fortunate that I worked at KVP. The work was interesting and I enjoyed it. I had challenging work and was able to afford raising a family and then have a good retirement. I was sorry to see the KVP plant closed and then torn down. Times change, the mill became old. The way pulp and paper were made changed. Until around 1990 pulp was made where the trees were (KVP got much of its pulp from Canada where trees were plentiful) and shipped to places like Parchment where paper was made and shipped to customers. Then companies started making paper at their pulp plants. Paper mills like KVP were getting old. The new paper machines were twice as wide and ran more than twice as fast as KVP. Plants like KVP had been rebuilt and modernized many times, including computer control of the paper machines. Mills like KVP could no longer be modified to compete. All Fourdrinier paper machines in Kalamazoo making fine paper, like KVP, closed by about 1998. Only cylinder board machines making paper-board from old newspapers remained open. Their raw material was cheap and their product too heavy to ship long distances. Hundreds of paper mills around the USA similar to KVP were also forced to close.

In 1953 a issue of the Paper Industry Magazine listed the following mills as operating in southwestern Michigan area.

<b>NAME OF COMPANY</b>	<b>NUMBER OF MILLS</b>	<b>TONS PER DAY</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
<b>Allied Paper Mills</b>	2	250	Kalamazoo
<b>American Box Board</b>	1	200	Grand Rapids
<b>Eddy Paper Company</b>	1	130	Three Rivers
<b>Eddy Paper Company</b>	1	200	White Pigeon
<b>French Paper Company</b>	1	45	Niles
<b>Hawthorn Paper Company</b>	1	42	Kalamazoo
<b>Kalamazoo Paper Company</b>	3	200	Kalamazoo
<b>Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company</b>	2	225	Parchment
<b>Lee Paper Company</b>	1	75	Vicksburg
<b>MacSimBar Paper Company</b>	1	300	Otsego
<b>Michigan Carton Company</b>	1	400	Battle Creek

I visited all these mills and got to know their technical staff. For more information about my working life, see my book entitled “History of the Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company and the City of Parchment”.

## CHAPTER 11

### The final years

#### **(Joe started writing this chapter in 2015)**

I wrote to this point in about 2003 before I had a serious health problem. I had become vitamin B12 deficient. Without the B12 you can not get the value out of the food you eat and you slowly waste away and could die. I saw several specialists and had many tests and scans. At that point, I was very weak. I lost a lot of my memory including any memory of writing this autobiography. Finally I was referred to a neurologist to determine if my problem was dementia. He did some more tests to rule out other causes of my problems and diagnosed the B12 deficiency. With B12 shots, I slowly recovered. After several years, I had recovered enough and decided to write an autobiography, not this one. In November 2015, I found this story in my documents folder on my computer. It was dated 2003. I read it and was amazed. I had absolutely no memory of writing this even though with B12 shots I had regained strength and much of my memory. I had memory of items in the autobiography, but no memory of writing it. Minds are complicated! What do I do now? I may write an addendum to bring some things up to date and perhaps publish it. It better not take too long as at 95 years old, I may not have a lot of good years left. Much has happened in the last 30 years. Betty and I have had good health. I work around our house, yard and garden. I still drive around town to stores and church. Our children (4 live nearby) drive us on trips over 10 miles. Betty had some mini strokes (TIA) in 2013. They caused left side weakness and her short term memory is poor. She sees little out of her left eye. She.....

#### **(At this point, Joe's work on his autobiography ended. The remainder of this chapter was written by his son Dave after he discovered Joe's draft.)**

The toll that aging took on Joe was more and more evident during the first decade of this century. Joe's health had deteriorated badly during 2008. In January 2009 he was hospitalized for pneumonia and c-diff. He seemed to be failing physically and cognitively. In Spring 2009 he was referred to a neurologist to rule out dementia. That doctor identified an alarmingly low level of vitamin B12. His physician ordered B12 injections. He improved slowly over the next year but did not fully regain his previous strength. His tennis and golf hobbies were now mostly a thing of the past but he remained active for his age both physically and mentally. In the summer of 2010, he completed his book, "History of Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company and the City of Parchment". He had it printed

and published it himself. He and Betty set up a table at the annual Parchment Summer Festival where sales of the book were brisk and he proudly signed copies for purchasers. (There are copies available to check out at the Parchment Community Library.)

Through the rest of 2010 and 2011 things were relatively stable. Joe and Betty accepted more help from their children. By 2012 Joe and the family noticed that Betty was showing cognitive decline. In the Spring, she was evaluated by a neurologist and tested by a neuropsychologist. The diagnosis was moderate vascular dementia. In August, Betty had a TIA (a mild stroke). It caused weakness and some loss of function on her left side. In January 2013, she had another TIA. It was getting difficult for them to live independently at home in Parchment. With lots of help from their children and the aid of an in-home caregiver/housekeeper, they managed to stay at home. They also began wearing emergency call buttons which they had to use a few times, such as when Betty fell while Dave had taken Joe to get a hearing aid fixed. That was the last time Joe left Betty alone. From that point on, taking care of her was the primary focus of his life. Through 2013 and 2014 they both got weaker. At one point, Betty had to be in rehabilitation at Borgess Gardens to regain enough strength to function at home. She probably had been having more TIAs. Since Borgess Gardens was 2 miles from home, Joe drove there and spent his days with her. They graciously fed him 2 meals a day, on the house.

Joe had agreed, with some pressure from the kids, that he would only drive to the store and a few other places close to home. There was one exception that is worth telling. One Saturday afternoon Dave got a call from Joe's brother Harold. He just wanted to let Dave know that Joe had driven to St. Joseph, Michigan with Betty. They had spent a wonderful day with Harold and his wife Mary and were headed back to Kalamazoo. The clear message was that the kids couldn't tell their elders what to do and not do. Throughout this time, Joe and Betty tried to stay active. They walked in the neighborhood. Joe hit tennis balls against a backboard or a wall in the basement. He was no longer able to run the court and play the game. He went golfing occasionally with one of his sons but generally rode in the cart and only hit the ball when near the green.

On 12/29/14, Betty fell and shattered the bones in her right shoulder, an injury that makes a broken hip look like a walk in the park. She was in severe pain and could not move without assistance. Surgery was not an option, so she was immobilized so the bones would heal as best they could. She spent a couple weeks in Borgess Hospital and a month in rehab at Borgess Gardens. In February, Medicare denied further rehab because she was not making progress. She required assistance from at least one strong person to do anything more than lay in bed and Joe was too weak to help her move. Dave went to talk to Joe expecting to have to convince him that their time was up at the house in Parchment. Joe started the conversation by saying he'd decided he would sell the house and move to an assisted living

facility. They had already determined that the cost of 24 hour in-home care was not affordable. Joe and Dave visited several facilities around town and found most had lengthy waiting lists. Fortunately, The Fountains at Bronson Place had a nice room open in their assisted living facility. A few days later, on February 16, Joe and Betty moved to the Fountains. He was totally occupied with Betty's care so he instructed his kids to clear out the house and let them decide what to do with the things that couldn't fit at the Fountains. The task of letting go of his possessions and the house he built was more than he was willing to face.

That Spring the house was sold to a young man who worked as an engineer at the one remaining local paper mill. Joe decided to let his son Pete use his car and eventually transferred the title to Pete. Joe never drove again after moving to The Fountains. Dave helped Joe apply to the Veterans Administration for financial assistance but they learned he had too much money to qualify. Meanwhile, Betty was getting a little stronger and was able to start occupational and physical therapy at The Fountains. By June, she was able to walk using a walker and do some basic things around their apartment. They were able to leave the assisted living unit and move to an independent living apartment at The Fountains. After looking at several available apartments, Joe chose the one closest to the dining room. (Much later we learned that the previous occupant of that apartment had been The Very Reverend Paul Donovan, retired bishop of Kalamazoo and a close friend of Betty's mother.) Joe was thrilled to escape the cramped assisted living apartment and be in an area where there were other residents he could relate to. One of them was a man who had run the National Boys Tennis Tournament for many years. He gave Joe tickets to the 2016 tournament and a valet parking pass. Joe and Dave enjoyed watching tennis that year, something Joe had done most years since he retired. For the next two years Joe and Betty lived comfortably in apartment 166 while their health slowly declined. All things considered it was a pretty good time. Four of their kids were close by and provided a lot of support. In early 2017, Joe qualified for Veterans benefits to help with some things insurance didn't cover like podiatry and medical supplies. When he went to appointments at the VA Hospital in Battle Creek, he was treated like a hero and repeatedly thanked for his service in World War 2 by everyone he encountered. As summer approached both Joe and Betty were failing to the point that the administration at The Fountains wanted them to move back to assisted living.

On July 11, 2017 as Joe was sitting down, the chair tipped over backwards and he hit the floor hard on the back of his head. In ER it was determined that he had significant bleeding on his brain. A neurosurgeon explained that surgery was an option but would be major at that point and he might not survive. Another option was to wait a week and see if surgery was still needed. At that point surgery would be safer. Joe said he didn't want brain surgery unless it was a last resort. A day later he was stable and transferred to The Springs, a nursing home on the campus of The Fountains. The next day he

had what appeared to be a seizure and was sent back to the hospital. He also developed pneumonia but the doctors thought it could be treated. Over the next couple days his condition declined. He developed ventricular fibrillation and other metabolic problems. He became increasingly confused and slept a lot. On the 17th his doctor said his prognosis was very poor and recommended shifting to “comfort care”. Joe’s pastor, Fr. Jim O’Leary, gave him the sacrament of the sick that afternoon. Joe’s advanced directive indicated that he did not want to be kept alive if there was no chance of recovery. Since Joe was unresponsive at that point, the decision was made to initiate hospice care. On July 19, 2017, Joe’s 97th birthday, he was moved to Rose Arbor Hospice where the family celebrated a birthday party. Early the next morning, with Betty and their son Phil at his side, Joe passed away peacefully.

Joe’s funeral was at St. Ambrose Church where he had worshiped since the mid 1950s. Father O’Leary spoke about the founding members of the parish and about Joe’s and Betty’s 72 year marriage. Family and friends processed to Fort Custer National Cemetery, where his ashes were received with full military honors. A small portions for his ashes were scattered on the Kalamazoo River, which he had helped to restore, and on Gold Beach in Normandy, France.

Betty moved to the The Gardens, the memory care unit at The Fountains. She survived almost 3 more years with visits from one or more family members almost every day. She graduated from hospice services once during that time. Her strength and will to live amazed us all. Early in 2020, her heart began to fail and she resumed receiving hospice services. When the Covid 19 pandemic hit, in-person visits were prohibited. She was isolated and alone in her room. We tried to visit on FaceTime but she probably didn’t understand it. We moved her to Rose Arbor Hospice where we were allowed to be with her. She passed away in her sleep, early in the morning on April 10, 2020 with her daughter Liz at her side. She was just 49 days short of her 100th birthday.



**JOE AND BETTY WITH THEIR 6 CHILDREN AT THE 2016 CHADDERDON FAMILY REUNION**



**70TH ANNIVERSARY BLESSING, ST. AMBROSE CHURCH BY FR. JAMES O'LEARY 2015**



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