



1983

To my dear husband, George - With love and total devotion for a wonderful life together.

PREFACE

As my children and grandchildren were planning a celebration for my 100th birthday some thought was given to interviewing me and making a videotape of those memories. Although I have never been camera-shy the prospect of an on-camera interview held no appeal to me. After some discussion the less scary approach of a written story started to take shape.

In September, 2007, I was “kidnapped” by my daughter and son-in-law and spent the next several days at their home in Lake Geneva. And we talked! Together on the sofa, Marcia jotting notes into her laptop computer, we spent hours talking and remembering a life that spans ten decades.

I am most fortunate to have reached that century mark and am truly blessed to still enjoy a good quality of life with a healthy body and mind. On occasion, Marcia would chuckle and accuse me of “information overload” because of all the many details I could furnish.

As I said before, my overall health is very good. I must admit, however, my only complaint is that my hundred year old knees are getting pretty sore and it was a struggle for me to navigate those stairs at John and Marcia’s home. I was very happy to return to my cozy one level apartment after being away for a few days.

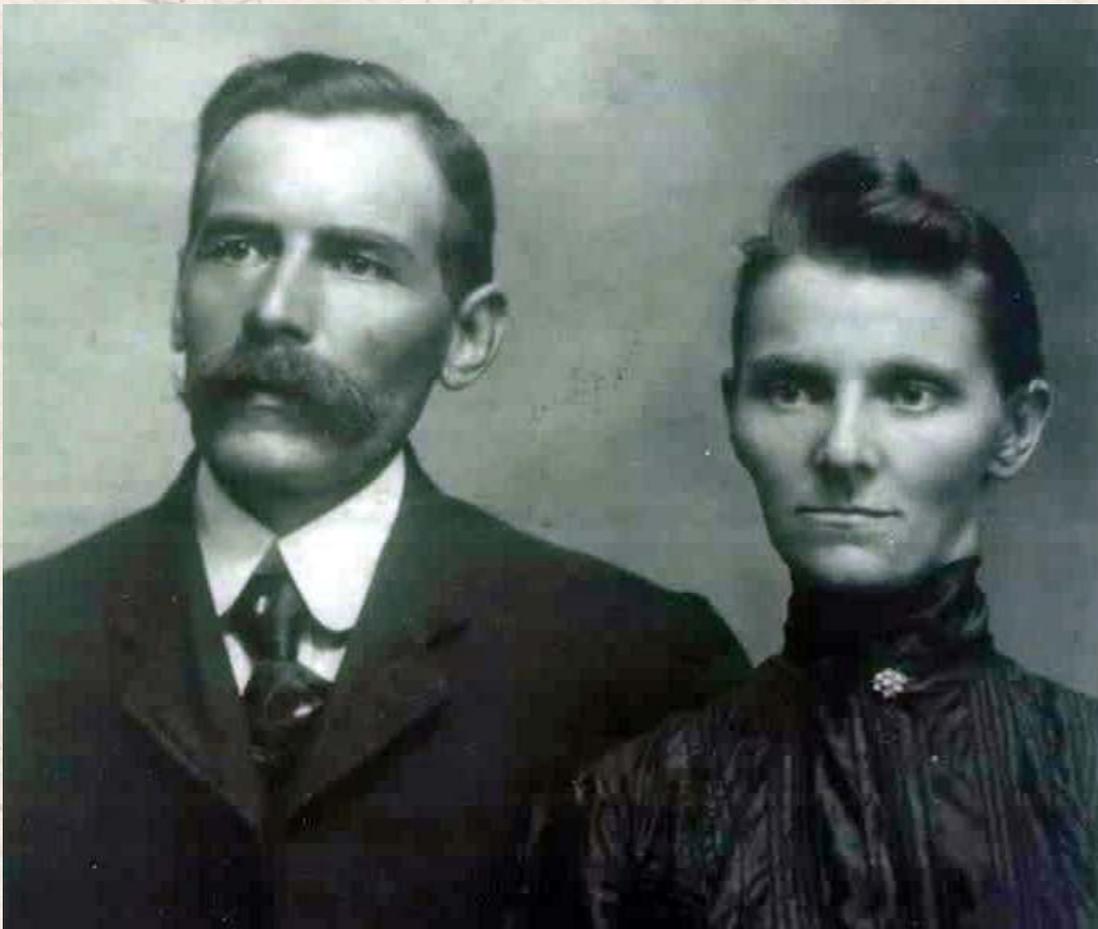
What follows has been a work in progress since that time. I would like to thank Carol, Judy and Marcia for all of their many contributions and also thank my grandson, Johnny, for his many, many long hours in getting this book of memories published. I hope that you will enjoy reflecting on this journey with me.



High School Graduation, 1924

My name is Ida. Here is my story.

I was born March 3, 1908 in Chicago, IL the sixth child of Richard (Tacka) and Nellie (Peternell Fennema) Kingma whose parents emigrated from Friesland, the Netherlands. Richard, born in 1875, was four years old when his parents came to America. Nellie was 12 years old when in 1890 the Fennema family arrived here.



My maternal grandparents: Eeltje and Renske Fennema. They immigrated from Friesland, Netherlands in 1890. Renske died of pneumonia in February 1891.

When I was born we lived in a small frame home in a south suburb of Chicago known as Roseland, IL. That home was previously owned by my grandparents. Later they sold it to my parents when they decided to move a few doors away to a two story that became the Ulba and Dietge Kingma & Sons General Store. My grandparents lived in an apartment above the store.

In this small store you could buy linens, blankets and comforters, coats, dresses, work shoes and dress shoes, underwear, socks and stockings,

ribbons, brushes, combs and fancy hairpins, plus sewing supplies and many other items. There were shelves of yard goods in different patterns and also candies and big, soft/chewy, white peppermints that you always had tucked inside your pocket for church. Grandma was in charge of managing the store while Grandpa worked at Pullman Co., a manufacturing plant that built train cars. Pullman hired many of the Dutch immigrants when they first arrived in this country because they had a reputation for being honest and hard working.



My family, before I was born. Rich, Della, Bert and Ed.

Mondays through Fridays very early every morning you would see these men making their long trek “down the hill” to the factory. Some came from several miles away, regardless of the weather, with their metal lunch buckets in hand.

A terrible accident happened at Pullman and Grandpa’s right arm was severed almost to the shoulder. It was an awful tragedy. Unable to work at the factory any longer, Grandpa would spend his days helping out in the General Store sweeping and cleaning.

When I was four years old my parents built a new home next door at 10420 S. Michigan Ave. where I spent my childhood. It was a very nice frame home on a deep, narrow lot with a detached garage that opened to an alley behind the home. Also on the property was a chicken coop that housed a few dozen chickens and a pig. One of my daily jobs was to gather eggs from the nests. What a scary job that was! The mother hen would squawk and flutter her wings in protest, scaring the daylight out of me!

Four more siblings were born in the next few years for a total of ten children, five boys and five girls in the Richard Kingma family. By age, starting with the oldest were: Albert (Bert), Edward (Ed), Della, Richard (Rich), Renzena (Ren), Ida, John, Nell, Marguerite and Fred.

Caring for ten children was a tremendous job. Mother spent hours in the kitchen making meals for her big family from scratch. Every day the house was filled with the wonderful aroma of fresh baked bread. Cooking alone was a lot of work but in addition Mother made most of our clothes and knit socks for the boys and sweaters for all of us. Her hands were never still for even in her spare time she would always be busy knitting. But we did have some help. Mother's younger sister, Ida, would come to our home twice a week. On Mondays, Aunt Ida would do the laundry and on Tuesdays she would iron all day. Also, every Wednesday Frau VanderWeit would come and spend the day mending clothes and darning socks.

Many Dutch families had settled in the Roseland area and as youngsters we had many friends and cousins in the neighborhood for companionship. We enjoyed playing marbles in the sand lot, hop scotch on the sidewalk and together we would roller skate all over town.

I didn't like my name and wanted to change it to "Iva" which I thought sounded so much prettier. I nagged and begged to get it changed but no one would listen to me. One day my mother pointed out to me that President McKinley had a wife and a daughter named Ida and I should be very proud of that name. That was the end of the subject.



The Richard and Nellie Kingma Family

Standing: Rich, Ed, Albert, Ida. *Second Row:* John, Ren, Della.
Seated: Ma, Nell, Pa, Marguerite. *Seated in front:* Fred.

My father worked for Kennedy's Pullman Laundry driving a horse drawn wagon, picking up customer laundry. Our family doctor became very good friends with "Pa" and noticed that he demonstrated an unusual talent for caring for horses. Dr. Bonthuis felt that veterinary medicine would be a good career choice for my dad and encouraged him to continue his education, helping us financially to allow him to go to school. All the while my dad was driving the laundry wagon he would be studying, a textbook propped above his head. He would put every spare moment to good use - reading and learning, studying and preparing.



The wagon that my dad worked on while in school. On the wagon are my brother Bert, sister Della, and brother Ed.

Classes were held in the loop so a few nights a week my dad would take the streetcar to McKillip Veterinary College in downtown Chicago. After graduation he set up practice in a barn behind our home. Oftentimes that barn also boarded small animals for added income.

“Doc”, as he was called, was very well respected in the community as a veterinarian. Many of my dad’s clientele were poor farmers that had very little money and would pay for services in fruits and vegetables instead of cash. We were not wealthy but we had a good life and lived comfortably.



My two brothers shoveling snow at 10420 S. Michigan Ave., the original location of the Veterinary Clinic



The veterinary clinic in the new location at
16 W. 111th Street

In 1929 Pa had a heart attack. We were shocked when this hard working breadwinner, pillar of the community, became very sick. After his heart attack Pa told Ma that he had secretly signed papers to purchase from his brother-in-law a small “cottage” a few blocks away. You can imagine how surprised Ma was when she found out and can almost hear her scolding him in Dutch, “Dick, how could you be so foolish as to buy a house we don’t need and not even tell me about it?” Pa pleaded to be released from that contract but his request fell on deaf ears. His brother-in-law held him to the agreement. Consequently, the 10420 property was sold to Monarch laundry who wanted that property for future expansion and we moved to 16 W. 111th Street.

The proceeds of the sale of 10420 paid off the debt to Uncle Garret and gave us enough money to put a second story on our new home and also build a clinic in the lower level. Because of his failing health, my father was no longer able to care for large farm animals but did continue his practice caring for small animals.

The need for large animal care was on the decline for the world was changing and farmers began replacing horses with “Iron Horses”. Pa recognized the need for change and seized the opportunity by taking a job with Ford Motor Co., selling trucks to some of his farmer friends.

Pa died in 1933 after a series of heart attacks at the very young age of 57.

Schooling

My grammar school, Roseland Christian School, was located about four blocks from our home; a trip we walked every day. Shoes were bought one size too large, thinking that our growing feet would get some extra wear out of them. I often had blisters on my feet because of those ill-fitting shoes.

Our route took us past Kohn Public School. We were always so frightened to walk past the school because the bully boys at Kohn would line up in the playground and shout insults at us. They called us “Hollikies” and “Wooden Shoes”. They thought they were far superior to us. Their taunts continued until a statewide achievement test was administered to both public and private school students. The results of that test showed that the Christian School students rated at the top of the list and Kohn School at the bottom. That ended the teasing. From that day on we were treated with respect.

Our grammar school had no gymnasium but a brand new natatorium was built a few blocks away where our entire class could go for swimming lessons. Twice a week we walked there to enjoy the pool. We were required to wear an ugly gray swimsuit that they supplied. The procedure was to give a nickel deposit in order to rent the suit but that nickel was refunded after we turned in our wet suit. We really enjoyed those trips to the pool. I was a pretty good swimmer in those days and could even dive off the springboard without fear. Now, so many years later, I’m afraid I would sink like a rock.

Our grammar school class was very small with only six students but I had the honor of being the class valedictorian. I attended Chicago Christian High School, which was organized in 1918 with my sister, Renzena, in the first graduating class. (James DeBoer was the founding President of the school board. His son, John, was my sister Nell's favorite teacher and his grandson, John George DeBoer, later married my daughter, Marcia.) In order to get to the high school I had to take a streetcar to 69th and Racine and then walk a block and a half. We met in four rooms above a bakery shop. A small closet served as an office. Every Monday morning before school started we had to stop in the office to pay a weekly tuition and then were permitted to go to class. All day long we would smell the aroma of baked goods wafting throughout the building from the bakery below, making it difficult to concentrate on our studies.



Eighth Grade Graduation, 1920

Back: Ida Kingma, Sophia Dykstra, Nellie Underwater, Anne Dekker
Front: Richard Elzinga, Mr. Blystra, Gerrit Lindemulder

When I entered high school a very general education was the only option but in my second year they started to offer a two-year commercial degree. In the middle of my sophomore year I decided to switch to commercial. My classes then included shorthand and typing in place of math and science. The cost of a general education was only \$6.00/week but the commercial education cost \$8.00/week, a slightly higher fee to cover the cost of material.

I graduated in 1924 when I was 16 years old with a commercial degree after 3½ years of high school. There were fourteen students in my high school graduating class. In addition to my high school classes I also went to private elocution classes (Dramatic Art) one day a week at the Calumet Conservatory of Music and Art.

Uniforms were not required at Chicago Christian but we always dressed nicely in a skirt and blouse or a simple dress. My mother made an outfit for me that I loved to wear, a khaki colored two piece pantaloon and tunic outfit. I thought I looked pretty smart wearing it. Also, it was the perfect attire for riding my bicycle instead of the dresses and skirts we typically wore. The principal apparently had a different view of this flashy new look and I was crushed to learn at our school program a few nights later that my part in the program had been cancelled. Without any warning Mr. Fakkema decided that because of the pantaloon/tunic he had seen me wear I was not a good representative of the Christian School and took me out of the program. I had worked hard on my reading and it was a big disappointment that he would make this decision simply because he did not approve of an outfit I wore.

That summer after graduation my sister Nell, my best friend Ange Nydam and my sister-in-law Alice arranged a “girl’s getaway week” at Devil’s Lake, WI. From our rented cottage in Baraboo we decided to splurge and took a cab ride to Wisconsin Dells where we planned to spend the day and see the sights. The highlight of our trip was a ride on a thirty-passenger paddle wheel tour boat, “The Apollo”. Our tour guide was a tall, good looking man. George looked so handsome in his navy blue uniform. Immediately we all fell in love with him. After our boat ride around the Dells, George invited us to stay for the “Pow Wow” that evening. We could not afford the tickets but he was kind enough to supply them for us. He even provided pillows and blankets for us so we would be comfortable during the show. Later that evening he drove us back to Devil’s Lake and with a twinkle in his eye said, “Ida, why don’t you sit up here with me in the front seat?” That ride back to Baraboo snuggled next to George was the best part of that vacation.



George and (left to right) Alice, Ange, Ida and Nell

My first job after graduation was as a file clerk with the City of Chicago Transit Authority. Two months later I had an opportunity to replace my cousin, Ann Kingma Smith, who was retiring from her job at H. Hamstra Co. (importers of Droste cocoa and chocolates) to have a baby. I worked there for four years from 1924 to 1928. My boss's daughter was unemployed and needed a job so before long I was squeezed out of my position. This was the beginning of the depression and jobs were very hard to find. Eventually I went to work as a secretary for Universal Credit Co. in the Engineering Building on Wacker Drive in Chicago. From my office window I could watch as they began construction of the Merchandise Mart.

I was always very careful with my money and every payday made a practice of putting some money in a savings account at a local bank. It gave me a real sense of pride to watch that account grow. Suddenly and without any warning the Crash of '29 happened and the Wiersma Bank, like so many others, collapsed taking my hard earned savings with it. I lost over \$400. Others lost even more than I did but this was an awful loss for me. Later a portion of that money was refunded but at the time it was a very bitter pill to swallow.

These were tough economic times and companies were forced to downsize. As with most companies Universal had a "Last In - First Out" policy. My position was eliminated after working there for a year and a half and I was again out of a job.

I continued taking dramatic art lessons at the Calumet Conservatory. As time went by the Conservatory planned a very special program which included a pianist, a vocalist and myself to give a reading. I mailed a program to George. Somehow that letter found its way to him even though I did not have his correct address.

It so happened that he was planning a trip to Chicago for a convention and we made arrangements for our very first date. That was the beginning of a fifty-two year love affair with George. We continued a long distance romance for the next several years writing letters, making occasional phone calls and visiting each other as often as possible.

Eventually I qualified to teach at the Conservatory and gave half hour drama lessons at various odd hours during the week. I quickly discovered that the Dramatic Arts field was not a very lucrative profession. My students paid fifty cents for a half hour lesson but it was necessary for me to supply all their lesson material, the cost of which was more than I would receive. However, my students did learn to be poised, to be self-confident and most importantly, to enunciate. Recently I met a former student who told me how much those lessons helped her later in life and particularly in her career as a teacher. It was a very nice thing to hear.

At that time I was always very much in demand to perform or give a reading. I also coached two plays at Chicago Christian High but at no time was I paid for my services. I would get a very sincere thank you, but thank-you(s), pleasant as they are, don't pay the bills!

I had no job. Jobs were impossible to find. To earn a few dollars I decided to hire myself out as a babysitter. I found employment working half-days, five days a week for the Greenwood family in Beverly, babysitting and helping with a variety of household chores. The streetcar from Roseland to Beverly cost seven cents. I then would walk several blocks to Greenwood's home wearing high-heeled pumps that were so in style at the time. (Do you suppose my current foot problems are the result of being fashionable so many years ago?) I earned \$5.00/week. The Greenwoods generously paid the fourteen cents a day carfare to and from work but I gave my parents \$3.00/week for room

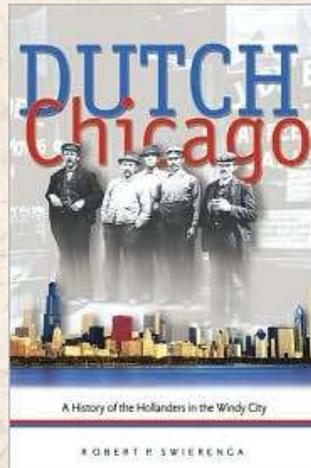
and board. There was little spending money left after expenses. I enjoyed working for the Greenwoods and grew to love and admire this wonderful family. Years later their daughter, June, married my brother, Fred.

Whenever I would find a small item as I was tidying up the Greenwood house and did not know what to do with it I would put it in a pretty porcelain bowl that was standing on their buffet. It became known as the "Ida Bowl" and was filled with odds and ends such as hairpins, safety pins, buttons, even a jack knife and a watch and various other bric-a-brac that had been found around the house. The family learned that if they were ever looking for something they should first check to see if it was in the Ida Bowl and more often than not I would have put it in there. When George and I announced our wedding Mrs. Greenwood gifted the Ida Bowl to me. I enjoyed this lovely souvenir for many years but recently returned it to my sister-in-law (their daughter, June) as the rightful heir to this beautiful Greenwood keepsake.

On May 27, 1933 the Chicago World's Fair, a two-year celebration known as "A Century of Progress" opened in Chicago and attracted visitors and dignitaries from around the world. The Dutch in Chicago were looking for someone to represent the Netherlands at a special event they were planning to be held in conjunction with the World's Fair. My name was submitted for the role of "Miss Netherlands" and shortly thereafter we were thrilled to learn that I had been selected, only to find out later that we had been misinformed and Juel Yonker had been given the title. I would be the runner-up. The honor of being "Miss Netherlands Runner-Up" meant that I would be willing to take over in the UNLIKELY event that Miss Yonker was unwilling or unable to serve in her title role. After the excitement of hearing that I



Official Chicago
World's Fair Poster



More of the Miss
Netherlands story is told on
Page 546 of the book
*"Dutch Chicago: A History
of the Hollanders in the
Windy City"*

had been selected it was very disappointing to learn that it was not true.
Chalk up an A-plus in the School of Hard Knocks!

As the "Little Dutch Girl Without A Job", a commitment such as this would have presented a significant financial hardship for me for it would have required a special wardrobe and other expenses that I could not afford. It was an honor to have been considered for this exciting adventure but I had better things to do with my life.

George and I were married in August.



College Graduation, 1928

George Sidney Schilstra

I was born in Chicago, IL on August 15, 1905, the fourth and last child of John (Ipe) and Alice (Alarda Vander Zee) Schilstra who immigrated to this country from Friesland, the Netherlands. When my father was 23 years old he traveled alone to the United States in search of a better life.

He lived for a year with the Waalkes family who sponsored him and spent that year studying. The following year (1893) he became an American citizen. My mother, Alice, was the oldest of six girls and came to the United States with her entire family. Both families settled in Englewood on the south side of Chicago when they first arrived in this country. My parents were married on April 18, 1896.

They lived in Englewood for awhile but later moved to Norwood Park on the northwest side of Chicago where my Dad was a carpenter, building beautiful two-story homes in that area. My family consisted of three boys and one girl; James, Elizabeth (Bess), Harry and myself.

Tragedy struck our family when Harry was killed in a freak accident. Harry was behind a tractor that was pulling a wagon when it accidentally broke loose, crushing him to death. He was only seven years old. Dad was grief stricken. The sight of his lifeless, beautiful son whom he loved so dearly was devastating. He carried that heartache with him his entire life.



George's parents, John and Alice Schilstra

When I was in the seventh grade the Schilstra family moved to a small farm in Kilbourn, WI (later called Wisconsin Dells) where Dad continued his carpentry work doing odd jobs. On the farm there was a creek running through the property where we spent many wonderful hours fishing for trout.



John and Alice Schilstra Family

Back: James, Alice (Alarda), Elizabeth (Bess), John (Ipe)

Front: Harry, George (on lap)

After high school I went to the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Summers were spent as a guide on the tour boat "The Apollo" at Wisconsin Dells.



George on the Apollo

Our tour around the Dells included a stop at a particularly beautiful spot where we would climb to an overlook at the top of a hill. There Mother Nature had constructed a pillar of stone that stood offshore about ten feet

away. It was called Stand Rock. I would thrill my passengers by jumping across to it. (We were later replaced with a dog for that dangerous leap and before long it was determined that it was even too risky for the dog.) Wearing leather shoes with leather soles, you did not make the jump if it was wet and slippery or you would risk falling about 70 feet to the rocks below. Not a good thing!



Jumping to Stand Rock

It was at the Dells that I met the love of my life. Ida and I were married several years later. I graduated from the University of WI with an engineering degree in 1928 and began working for the Wisconsin Power & Light Co. (Alliant) in Madison, WI. A year later I transferred to Sheboygan, WI and got in on the ground floor construction of the Edgewater Power Plant.

In 1948 I became manager of Edgewater Power Plant. Many years later I had the pleasure of overseeing the construction of another power plant in Cassville, WI which, at the time, was the largest generating plant in the Wisconsin Power and Light Company system. I stayed in Cassville as Nelson Dewey Generating Station Manager until November, 1967 at which time we returned to Sheboygan. I became Construction Superintendent for the Edgewater 4 addition and stayed with Edgewater until my retirement in 1970 at age 65.

As a result of my position as manager I was invited to join Rotary Club International of Sheboygan and at one time served as the President of that organization. During my years as manager of Edgewater we also enjoyed several fabulous trips living in the luxury guest suites onboard the Reiss Co. coal boats with family and friends and other company people.



Reiss Bros. coal boat



Relaxing and playing
aboard the Reiss boat,
1954



I enjoyed working in the power plant very much but unfortunately the many years of exposure to the high-pitched noise from the turbines took a serious toll on my health. We did not know it at the time but the constant exposure to that noise caused a major hearing loss later in life. In 1960 I suffered an episode of severe dizziness and vertigo and became violently ill. This was the beginning of Meniere's disease, a chronic disease of the inner ear that leads to hearing loss and deafness. The company did everything it could to remedy this and sent me to the best doctors available (University of Iowa and Mayo Clinic) but the damage had already been done and there was no cure.

In retirement I found the time to enjoy woodworking and spent many, many hours with my power tools. I built beautiful bird feeders and doll houses and also made doll house furniture. Ida constantly worried about me when I worked on these projects. She was afraid that I would seriously injure myself. I'm happy to report that I managed to avoid all major injury and fortunately kept all my ten fingers intact. Some of my doll houses were sold through Marshall Field & Co. stores.

Golfing was also a passion of mine and I enjoyed it even more so in retirement. I always played a pretty good game and later in life was pleased when I would "shoot my age".

One day I played in a Rotary Club golf outing at Pine Hills C.C. and was lucky enough to get a Hole-in-One. However, I scurried away as fast as I could after golf or I would have had to buy complimentary drinks for all my fellow Rotarians. We laughed about it later but the truth of the matter is that bar bill would have put us in the poor house! A few days afterwards, a package arrived with several rolls of Life Savers, a gift for my Hole-in-One from the manufacturer. The slogan for Life Saver candy was "The Hole-in-One That Refreshes". Ida was also a good golfer and we enjoyed playing together as a couple and also with our good friends.

George died in 1985 at the age of 79 from a fatal heart attack.



Our wedding picture, August 30, 1933

Children

George and I were married on August 30, 1933 in the home of my parents in Roseland, IL with family and close friends in attendance. It was the hottest day of the year. Home air conditioning did not exist and some of our guests nearly roasted all dressed up in their Sunday best black wool outfits.

Baptized without a middle name I now became Ida Kingma Schilstra. We spent our wedding night at the Schrader Hotel in Milwaukee. Our honeymoon was very short as George was expected at work the very next day.

While George was at work I spent my time getting settled. We moved into an apartment at Enz Manor which, at the time, was the only apartment building in Sheboygan. We stayed there for six months and then moved to a beautiful apartment, the entire first floor of Hogenson's lovely colonial home. A year later Carol Lynne was born and a year and a half after that her sister, Judith Merle, arrived.



Knitting, by the warmth of the stove



Carol Lynne



Judith Merle

I was very pregnant with my third child the next year when on a very cold day in February, Mother, my sister Marguerite, her husband and their young daughter came to our apartment for a visit. The next morning as they were heading back to Chicago they had not gone very far when their car hit an icy patch and slid out of control. In those days cars were not equipped with seat belts and Mother was thrown out of the car. The car rolled over her and she was badly injured.

Mother was taken to Port Washington Hospital. She begged that she not be admitted but rather taken to our house to recover. By coincidence our landlord, who lived upstairs, had a hospital bed that we could borrow so we set it up for her in our living room. (Amazingly, the three other passengers had no serious injuries nor was the car badly damaged so they continued on their way to Chicago.)

After a very painful ambulance ride Mother arrived at our apartment. Upon examination, our family doctor determined that Mother had suffered a broken back and constructed a cast for her. However, she died unexpectedly of internal injuries in the early evening the next day. Nellie Kingma was only 59 years old. I was shocked and horrified and deeply saddened by her death but because of the impending birth I was unable to attend my own mother's funeral. Marcia Nell was born a week later.



Marcia Nell

One of our neighbors invited us to take part in a community scavenger hunt where teams of four drove around town picking up clues to eventually end up at the Kiwanis Club park shelter for dinner and prizes. There was a lot of excitement and camaraderie within the teams for this fun competition which took place on a Sunday afternoon. It turned out that George's team won first place. The news of that honor appeared the following Saturday in the social column of the Sheboygan Press with the headline, "Schilstra's Team Wins First Place".

The following Monday, first thing in the morning, there was a knock on my door. Reverend Pekelder, the minister from the First Christian Reformed Church, of which I was a member, came calling to remind me that our church had a firm policy against desecrating the Sabbath Day. Participating in a "Treasure Hunt" on a Sunday afternoon was in his eyes an evil thing to do.

With his strict view of church law he came to deliver a very stern lecture. As he became louder and more agitated I started to cry. My young daughter, Carol, also became more and more frightened, "Mama, why are you crying?" and she began to cry. Then her little sisters started crying and by the time Reverend Pekelder finished his tirade we were all weeping and clinging together in abject terror. In my defense, I tried to explain that we did not stay for the dinner but left the party early in order to go to church that night but none of that mattered to our pastor. What we did was terribly wrong in his eyes and he shouted in his deep, booming voice, "Don't make any excuses, Missus!"

Through my tears I begged, "Please leave...please, just leave me alone!" Later, after he left and I dried my tears I decided that the pastor was wrong...something so innocent could not possibly have been all that bad. I would, however, keep secrets from that man and make every effort to never incur his wrath again.

Eventually the incident was forgotten and we became very good friends with Rev. Pekelder and his wife.

Our life became very busy with three children born within three and a half years and I would use their naptime to get little chores done. Every day I would polish their shoes and put them on the kitchen windowsill to dry. Our next door neighbor was amused to look over and see six little bright, shiny white shoes lined up and would say to herself, "It must be naptime for the Schilstra girls."



Carol, Marcia and Judy

We lived in the Hogenson apartment for six years and then moved to 1003 Ashland Avenue on the south side of Sheboygan. We lived there for the next nine years, across the street from the grammar school the girls attended. George's parents decided to sell the farm in Kilbourn and came to live with us in our small home. We were bursting at the seams with three generations living in our little house until we moved to a large farmhouse on the plant property provided for the manager of Edgewater Power Plant.



The farmhouse at the Edgewater Power Plant

The farmhouse was on several acres, surrounded by thirty-five apple trees that were decorated with pretty blossoms in the spring and filled with a variety of delicious apples in the fall. Sometimes the girls would fill bags with apples and set up a stand at the end of our driveway selling apples for ten cents a bag. I don't know if they ever made much money that way but they had a lot of fun trying.

The front door to the farmhouse was rarely used since the driveway ended at the kitchen/mudroom door. All winter long that front entry was filled with bushels of apples that were made into delicious pies and applesauce. Every time the door opened the living room was filled with the wonderful fragrance of fresh apples.

At the far end of the property "Grampa" had a small garden that he tended all summer long. His garden supplied us with wonderful homegrown vegetables.

The farmhouse had rooms for everyone. It had five bedrooms plus an extra "sitting room" for George's parents, a library/sunroom and everyone's favorite, the "rommel room", a Dutch word describing a room that caught all our household clutter. The spacious living/dining room with its high ceiling was the family gathering spot where we would crowd around the radio to listen to our favorite programs, which included, "Our Miss Brooks", "Fibber Magee and Molly" and "Phil Spitalny and his Hour of Charm Orchestra".

On cold winter nights my favorite thing was to pull up a little wooden footstool and put it on the oversized floor register in the corner of the living room and sit there letting the furnace air warm me down to the marrow of my bones. That warm air felt so good!

Having grown up in a large family I always enjoyed cooking and would often welcome relatives and friends around our roomy dining room table.

There are a lot of wonderful memories but an especially humorous story happened one Thanksgiving. We had a house full of company and so much food that our refrigerator was overflowing. We decided to store all of our leftover turkey in a Nesco roaster that we put outside in the cold. Before long the neighborhood dogs discovered our cache of food and devoured everything, leaving only bare bones and a perfectly clean turkey carcass with which to feed our hungry guests!

In Conclusion...

At age 97 I decided to give up independent living and moved to Saratoga Grove, a retirement home in the western suburbs of Chicago, close to some of my family. I enjoy the fellowship of new friends and the relaxing lifestyle of my new home.

Like my mother, I like to keep my hands busy and over the years have enjoyed all types of needlework. I have made beautiful embroidered aprons and tablecloths, have done cross stitch wall hangings and bedspreads and have crocheted a countless number of afghans, many of which were donated for sale at church and school bazaars. George also caught the needlework bug and taught himself how to knit (making mittens for his grandchildren), how to macramé (making charming snow flakes to hang on a Christmas tree and wonderful padded sweater hangers) and how to crochet (also making afghans). He was the target of some good natured kidding from his son-in-law about his gender female hobbies. Most of these handmade treasures are in the hands of our children and grandchildren and are still enjoyed to this day.

I'm probably best remembered by my grandchildren for my home baked Ice Box Cookies. My new apartment does not have its own kitchen so, on that score, I was forced into retirement. I have probably baked over a thousand batches of cookies in my lifetime (an average of once a month for 85 years!) and feel that I have earned this retirement but I must admit that I miss those delicious home baked goodies. I have shared this recipe and expect the next generation to carry on the tradition.

George and I both learned how to play bridge. It was a great source of sociability for us as newcomers in Sheboygan and a pleasant way to spend the evening with friends. We became quite skilled at the game. In addition to bridge I have always enjoyed various other card games including hearts, gin rummy and canasta and a variety of other games such as Rook, Monopoly, Rummikub, Yahtzee and Scrabble. I still enjoy all of these games and will play anytime I can find a partner. Be forewarned, I am a very good player and you won't stand much of a chance at winning.

I was associated with the American Red Cross my entire married life, originally doing volunteer secretarial work for them and later as a volunteer at the Blood Bank. Over the years I have donated over three gallons of blood! I also enjoyed membership in the Wisconsin Garden Club and have become a lifetime member of that organization, at one time serving as President of the local Sheboygan chapter.

In addition, I was recently honored for over fifty years of membership in the Sheboygan Federated Woman's Club.

I have maintained my membership in the Christian Reformed Church and over the years have developed many, many wonderful friendships with other church members. I have been very involved in church activities serving as a greeter, helping with coffee hour, a member of the Mission Society and the Golden Agers. My association with the church has always been a source of great comfort and joy for me.

My prayer is that my children and grandchildren and all future generations will find a feeling of purpose in their lives as I have and find the peace and happiness from living a full and active life with God as their cornerstone and guide.

As I reach my 100th year our family has continued to grow. Altogether counting children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, in-laws and “out-laws” we now total FORTY-SEVEN Schilstra/Sorenson/Rispens/DeBoer’s.

Lots of people to love and, of course, I love them all.

The End

Ida



My three girls: Judy, Marcia and Carol



George on the John Peter Reiss
boat, 1952



I always love
to be with
family... at
home with
George in
Cassville



...with my little sister, Nell



...holding my happy baby, Judy



High School Graduation 1924

Back: Claude Smitter, Harry Oosterhouse, Henry Eldrencamp,
Richard DeVries, Mark Fakkema

Middle: Florence Cook, Ida Kingma, Gertrude Jousma, Anne Karsten

Front: Chris Kramer, Cora Builthuis, Margaret Buikema,
Christine Dryphout, Hilda Hoving



Ida, Marcia, Carol and Judy
100th Birthday Celebration, March 3, 2008



Back: Ida, George, Curtis James, Iora, June
Front: Judy, Marcia, Carol, Grandma (Alice) Schilstra



Out for a bike ride



1998



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Happy 100th birthday! We are pleased to add our congratulations to your celebration.

You have led a remarkable life, and your experiences have contributed to the strength of our Nation. We join your family and friends in wishing you all the best on your special day.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush *Laura Bush*

100th Birthday card from President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush



All dressed and ready to go... Ange Nydam is to my left and Bernice Iwema is on my right.



All five Kingma girls at Lee and Dale's wedding, 1960:
Nell, Marguerite, Della, Ida, Renzena



95th Birthday Celebration

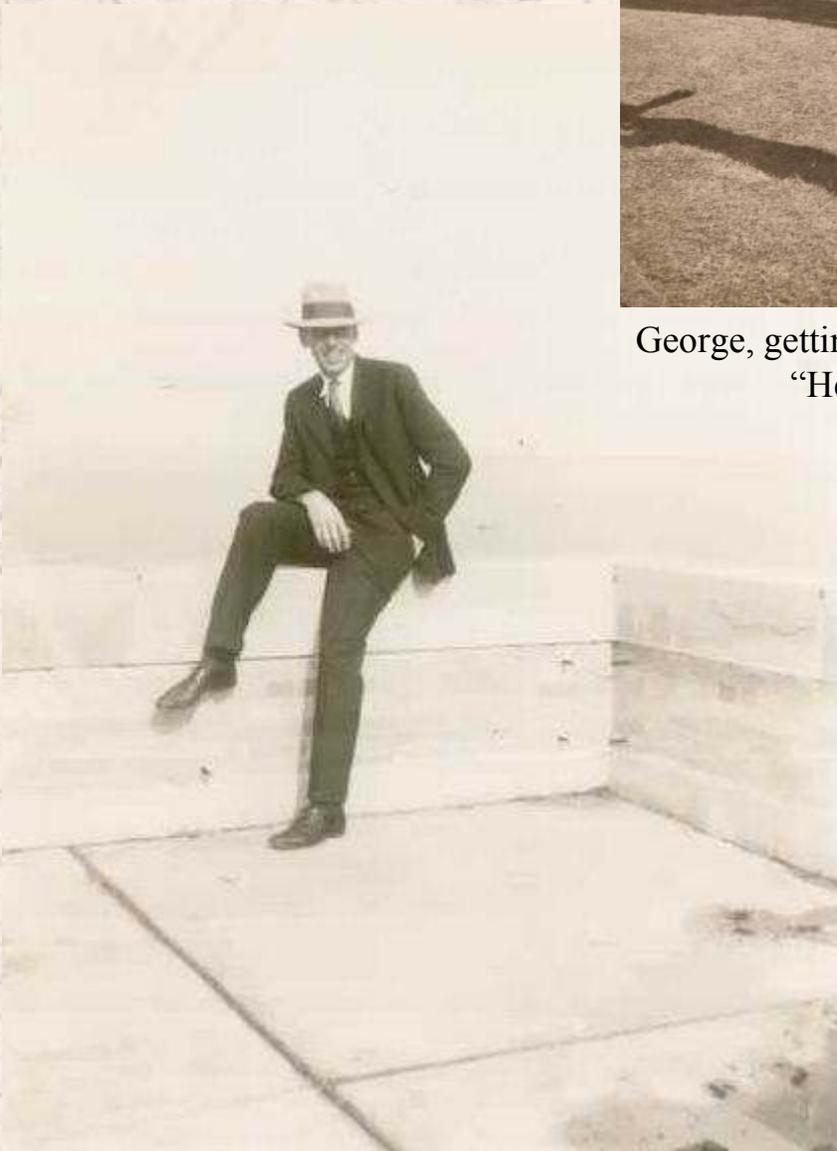
Back: Brittany, Mike, Kristy, Larry, Johnny, Amy, Dan, Betty Jo, Al, Judy,
Dirk A., Michelle, Dirk, Jennifer Rocco, Daniel, John

Middle: Jessica Rocco, Tyler Rocco, Adam, Cindy, Marcia, Carol, Ida, Tina, Doug

Front: Ben, Lindsey, Jillian, Heather, Paige, Lauren, Linzy, Ashly, Katie, Justin



George, getting ready to hit a home run.
“Hey batter-batter”



Is this George or Fred Astaire?



In the back yard of the Edgewater home with my three girls:
Carol (back right), Judy (front left) and Marcia



Looking adorable in my sailor suit.



Still dating, George and Ida on a trip to Oconomowoc, WI



Our family out to dinner at the exclusive *Rutherford's* restaurant:
George, Ida, Marcia, Carol, Judy

...another nice perk from the power plant. The picture was taken by our
host, a salesman from the coal company.



Carol and Richard Sorenson Family

Back: Julie, Kiersten, Megan, Carol, Jill, Teresa

Middle: Hans, Stig, Eric, Kyle, Charlie

Front: Michael, Colleen



Judy and Al Rispens Family

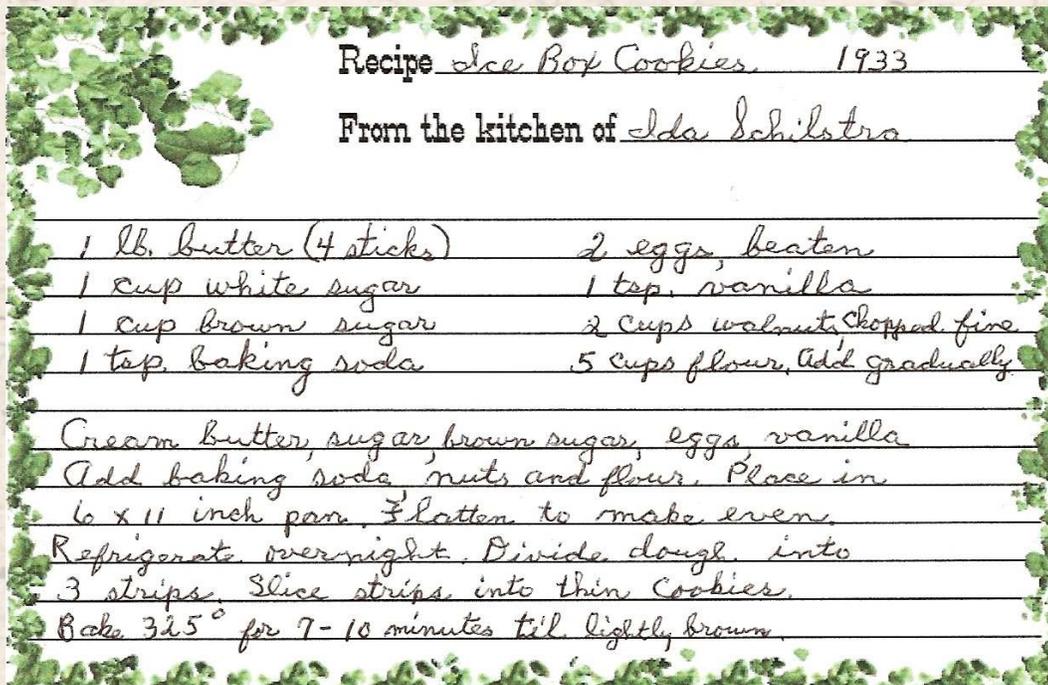
Back: Joseph, Laurajean, Dirk, Betty Jo, Larry, Cindy, Lindsey
Front: Ben, Jennifer, Daniel, Al, Judy, Dirk A., Adam



Marcia and John DeBoer Family

Back: Matt, Doug, Tina, Justin, Kristy, Mike, Marcia, John,
Dan, Balbina, John C., Amy

Front: Linzy, Brittany, Katie, Ashly, Jillian, Paige, Lauren, Heather



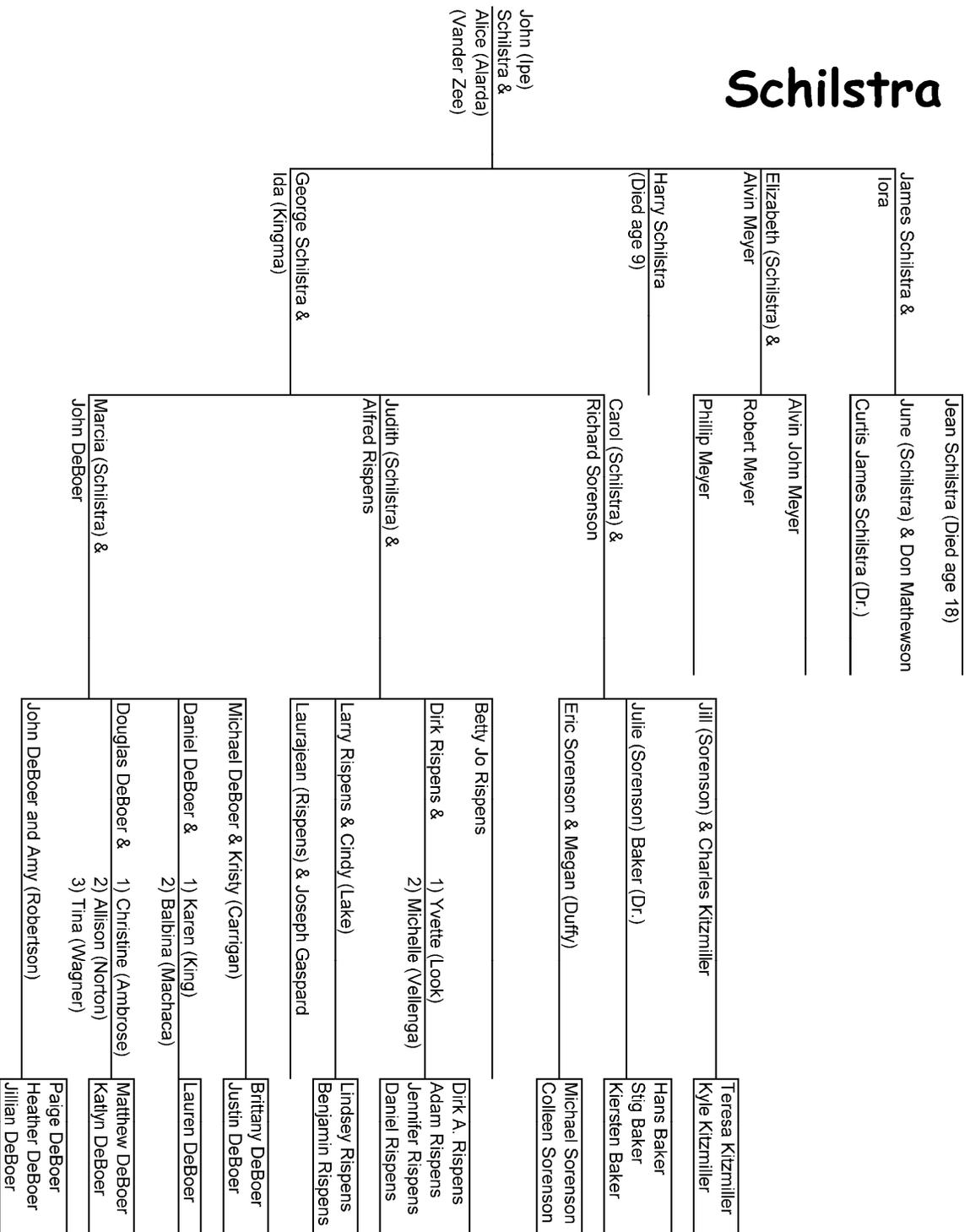
My "world famous" Ice Box Cookie recipe

Now you have it, next generation. Make me proud!

Timeline

1875	Richard Kingma was born
1878	Nellie (Peternell Fennema) Kingma was born
1879	Richard Kingma immigrated to America
1890	Nellie Kingma immigrated to America
1891	Nellie Kingma's mother, Renske Fennema, died of pneumonia shortly after arriving in America
1892	John (Ipe) Schilstra, George's father, immigrated to America alone
Apr. 18, 1896	John (Ipe) Schilstra and Alice (Alarda Vander Zee) were married
Aug. 15, 1905	George Sidney Schilstra was born
Mar. 3, 1908	Ida (Kingma) Schilstra was born
1912	Ida moved to 10420 S. Michigan Ave.
1920	Ida graduated from 8th grade
1924	Ida graduated from High School at 16 years old with a commercial degree
Summer of 1924	Ida went to Wisconsin Dells with some friends and met George, the tour guide, for the first time.
Fall of 1924	Ida began working for the City of Chicago Transit Authority as a file clerk
1924 - 1928	Ida worked for H. Hamstra Co.
1928	Ida was squeezed out of her job by her boss's daughter
1928	George graduated from University of Wisconsin
1929	Richard Kingma ("Pa", "Doc") had his first heart attack
1929	Beginning of Great Depression
1929	Ida went to work for Universal Credit Company
1930	Position eliminated at Universal Credit Company
1933	Richard Kingma died after a series of heart attacks
May 1933	World's Fair begins
Aug. 30, 1933	George and Ida were married
Feb 1937	Nellie Kingma ("Ma") died in auto accident
1959	George and Ida moved to Cassville
1967	George and Ida moved back to Sheboygan
1970	George retired
1985	George died at 79 from a fatal heart attack
2005	Ida moved to Saratoga Grove

Schilstra



Kingma

Richard Kingma (Dr.) & Nellie (Fennema)	Albert Kingma & Agnes (Monsma)	Ronald Kingma & Faith (Fennema) Nelda (Kingma) & John Hollendar
	Edward Kingma & Teen Vander Pol	Richard Kingma & Florence Edward Kingma, Jr. & Jane Albert Kingma & Renee Norma (Kingma) & Martin Wondaal
	Della (Kingma) & Henry Vandenburg	Robert Vandenburg & 1) Helene (Stoub) 2) Helen Ramona (Vandenburg) & Preston Hanenburg Earl Vandenburg & Rochelle Lee Vandenburg & Dale (Myroup)
	Richard Kingma & Alice (Nelson)	Joan (Kingma) & Daniel DeVries
	Renzena (Kingma) & Peter Vander Vaart	
	Ida (Kingma) & George Schilstra	Carol (Schilstra) & Richard Sorenson Judith (Schilstra) & Alfred Rispens Marcia (Schilstra) and John DeBoer
	John Kingma & Anne (Joczylowski)	
	Nell (Kingma) & Kasmir Simon	Phillip Simon & Joanne Robert Simon & Lane
	Marguerite (Kingma) & 1) John Vogel 2) Matt Sinke	Lenore (Vogel) & Gordon DePree
	Fred Kingma (Dr.) & June (Greenwood)	Patricia (Kingma) & Skip Klinck Dirk Kingma & 1) Betty 2) Kitty Douglas Kingma & Debbie Debbie & David Watkins Molly Kingma