

# INTERMISSION

## Chapter 2

It's all Bunny's fault. Actually it's the fault of Arlene Ruth, which is Bunny's real name, and which she is trying to get people to call her, especially now that she's got four kids. (But we can still call her Bunny.)

Bunny is the wife of our oldest son, Richard Paul. Richard Paul was born in 1948, which is 24 years after I was born, and 24 years before their first son, Richard John Thomas, was born. None of which is germane to this "Intermission", except that it serves to introduce the second son of Rick and Bunny: Robert Fredrick Cohrs.

As Bunny so nicely put it, Richie (Richard John Thomas), being the oldest of their four kids, always got the "first" of things material. First clothes, first toys, first presents (you get the idea). Not counting love, mind you. Love always wells deep, especially love maternal. But we all know that second-born is almost always synonymous with hand-me-downs. So Bunny wanted to get Bob something special, something original, something all his own.

So Bunny sent us a book to fill out, a book to give to Bobby (Bob, Robert). And when we didn't return it, she sent another, and another . . .

She sent us: (1) The Grandparent's Book;  
(2) A Gift of Memories from Grandpa (Grandma);  
(3) Our Family Tree - a History of our Family.  
These books are all copy-righted, so consider these titles to be under-lined, or foot-noted, or italicized, or whatever should be done to avoid being prosecuted for copy-right infringement. (We also got some books at garage sales, -- but we never bought the ones that were already filled in . . .)

Anyway, Bunny started sending these books years ago, and it's difficult for me to get started. My wife, Marjorie Mary Colburn Cohrs, started filling in the blanks in her books, but she's not done yet either. (From now on I'll call my wife G'ma Margie in this narrative, but you'll know she's really my wife, and not my Grandma, 'cause how could I marry my Grandma?)

When you fill out books like Bunny sent, it's kind of like taking a test. But when you take a test, you have to study for it. And there's lots of answers I don't know. I'd have to ask my Ma what the right answers are, but Ma's been dead for 20 years, so I can't ask her. And I can't ask Dad, either, 'cause he's been dead for 37 years. So if I

filled out Bunny's books, I'd have to leave a lot of questions blank. And then what good would the book be. I'd flunk the test. So that's why I'm doing this writing, 'cause this is stuff I remember, and I know it's true (except where I changed some of the names, to protect the innocent).

As our kids will tell you, when I talked to them when they were small, I talked to them like I was a kid myself. Of course, they'll tell you I always talked that way, even when I talked to our cats and dogs, or to my fish. And sometimes I like to write the way I talk, 'cause that way I don't have to use the dictionary so much. And this way, even though our grandchildren are all growing up so fast, I feel like I'm really writing to our great grandchildren, as yet unborn. And that way I get to start feeling close to them, too.

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I also wanted to take this opportunity to dedicate this narrative to my parents: Albert Lewis Fredrick William Cohrs and Anna Marie Weidler Cohrs. This year is the 100th anniversary of their birth, 1894. (Not that I'm slow or anything--but I did start this book in 1994.)

Dad was born on a farm which used to be just east of Elmhurst, where the intersection of Lake Street and North Avenue is now bridged.

Mom was born on a farm near the intersection of Wolf Road and St. Charles Avenue (near Villa Park) near where the Lilac Lounge was, and still is, only more so. (Both locations in Illinois.)

Because they were needed to help on the farm, they each had only four years of schooling. Mom's parents died early in her life, and so she went to Oak Park, to work as a maid, when she was about sixteen. Mom used to tell us how she used to pitch hay with a hay fork . . . big bundles of hay, from the fields onto the hay wagon. Dad used to tell us how he used to milk 30 cows before he walked the five miles to school in snow five feet deep . . .

. . . I used to believe Mom.

I remember when we used to visit my Dad's folks, when I was about 6 years old. They lived in Forest Park, upstairs in Aunt Clara's house, sometimes . . . and sometimes upstairs in Aunt Minnie's house, and we'd go see them on Sunday afternoons, mostly. They spoke only German, and my folks spoke to them in German. (My folks used to talk German at home sometimes, when they didn't want us to know what they were saying. Lots of times I think we wouldn't know what they were talking about, even if they talked in English).

Before we went upstairs to see our Grandparents, my folks would say for us to be good, and for us each to shake their hands and say, "Guten Tag" when we went into the room; and to say "Guten Abend" when we left, and in-between we just sat there, on a long bench, all four of us kids. (If anybody sneezed, we could say "Gesundheit"). We sat on a bench in a long, narrow room; and our folks sat on the same side of the room as us kids; and Grandpa and Grandma would sit on the other side. And my Grandpa had a black suit on, and my Grandma wore a black dress, and we never sat on their laps. And when they died, we saw them in their coffins, in the same black clothes that we always saw them in.

Now we're the Grandparents, and we can wear our old work clothes, or our shiny suits, and our kids and our grandkids could always climb all over us, and we could talk to each other cause we speak the same language.

And we can laugh, and be silly, and make lots of noise.

I always liked that a lot better.

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This is probably as good a time as any to  
end the intermission. So let me get back to my  
story.