

**Jean Fesmire Doan**  
**b. 1925**

**Family History**

I just turned 80 years old on December 19. I was born in 1925. My mom was Mary Markley. My sister-in-law Sylvia was a Markley too, but not related. Sylvia's mother Blanche was my sixth grade teacher in Red Lion School. Mom lived on Pine Road and was a charter member of the Huntingdon Valley Baptist Church.

My father, Russell, grew up in Hartsville. My father had a brother Albert, a missionary in China, who died on the way to the hospital in Tibet of a ruptured appendix. His wife stayed over there until she was driven out by the communists. Then she came back and lived in New York until she died, quite a few years ago. A great person.

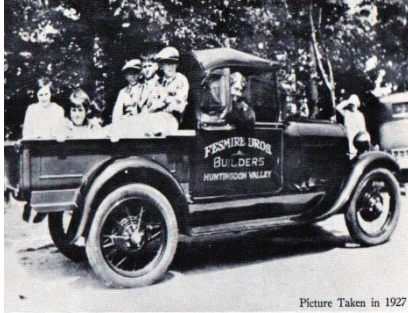
Another brother was Wesley in Jersey. He lived in a little shack down in Jersey. He had been married years and years ago and was in World War I. Then there was a brother Frank who lived in Ivyland. He and his wife had two children. My dad's sister Martha also was a missionary in China. She ended up living in the Garner House, an apartment house, in Hatboro and later in Christ's Home. He had another brother Wilmer who lived right next to us on the Pike next to where Claire's Casuals used to be. Wilmer had a big family too.

Pop's first job was at Pitcairn's dairy farm, and that's where he met Mom. After that Uncle Wilmer and my father went in the building business together. Then Pop went in business with my brothers, Russell and Ernest and Chester, and Uncle Wilmer went in business with his son Arol. Pop and Uncle Wilmer built the bank (Wachovia Bank Huntingdon Pike and Fetersmill Road) in 1920. They did a lot of the work themselves in those days.



[Photo: Huntingdon Valley Trust Company; OYRHS]

Margaret William's father worked for Uncle Wilmer. It was when Pop got older that my two older brothers and Chester worked with Pop. He built quite a few homes in the valley. Welsh Road, Hallowell Drive. He and the Stahls. I think the Stahls built houses across the street from me on Anne Street. Pop owned lots from the Pike down to my house (565 Anne Street) and the house next door except for the one on my right. That house was built by Fred Herwig. It had been an empty lot. Flacks had that house built for their son and daughter, Beverly and Brian and their families. I still keep in touch with them. Pop also built the Freeman's house right behind my house on Barrett Avenue



Uncle Wilmer's children were Roger, Arol, Lloyd, Albert, Warren, and Marian. They were all musical. I don't think either Wilmer or his wife, Ida, were particularly musical, but the children all took lessons and played an instrument.

[Photo: The family truck in the 1920's with family members]

I was one of seven living children. Actually, there were eleven children altogether. Three sisters died between the ages of one and two, and a brother died at the age of nine. Two of these children died within nine months of each other. That left seven of us. Ernest was the oldest, then Russell (both of these brothers lived at the top of Anne Street in the brick houses on Huntingdon Pike), Norman, who lived on Proport Drive, then Chester who lived on Mansion Drive. He moved to Newtown to a farm on Middle Holland Road although he also lived on Terwood Road and now lives in Maine.



[Photo: The Russell Fesmire family]

A sister Ada lives in the Hampton Crossing Apartments, and a sister Betty who married Harry Cornell. They had Cornell's Produce business in Southampten. They lived in a house on the Pike up near Sorrell Horse Road. She died of Lou Gehrig's disease. Harry died in his 40s. My father built my house here on Ann Street for two sisters who lived here. I've been here 55 years in June.

We would food shop at Clayton's Store. We bought our meat at the American Store across the Pike. Brown's Drug Store was there too. The Post Office was in the back of Clayton's store. For clothes we would go into Philadelphia or Jenkintown. On West Avenue there was a dress shop where I would buy clothes. We would take the train to Philadelphia and shop in the department stores there too.

Pop had a car with running boards. It had the trunk in the back. But we had a bracket along the running board. We would put the suitcases in there. Away we would go to the shore. We'd go for a week at a time. One time he rented a house. We would always have company. When my brothers were married and came down, I remember sleeping on the floor. Mom made succotash and "meatcakes". Hamburger with bread. I still make meatcakes. Mom was famous for her fried tomatoes and fried potatoes. Mr. Hoke, the school principal, used to come to our house a lot because he loved Mom's cooking. Mostly Sunday dinners.

Pop took us all to Ocean City to a house on Park Place right near the boardwalk. It was a big rooming house called the Brookburn. A Mr. and Mrs. Wilson owned it. Our family would get all the rooms upstairs on one side of the hall for us and our company. My mom had a little three burner stove in each room and she would go from room to room to cook for us. One bathroom down at the end of the hall! There were other people in rooms on the other side of the hall. Just one bathroom for the upstairs! This house was still there a few years ago. My sister Betty had a place on Asbury Avenue. After she died, she left it to my other sister Ada and me. We sold it in 1992.



My brother Ernest was in a bad automobile accident at the railroad tracks at Terwood and Welsh Roads in January 22, 1924, a Tuesday night. Ernest was driving. The car was hit by a train. Russ Pletcher was in that accident, and they said if that creek hadn't been frozen, he probably would have drowned. I think it was Pop's car. A Festa boy was killed. It was written up in the newspaper.

My brother Russell was in the Navy in WWII. He was an aerial photographer. He came home with dysentery disease. His daughter Barbie was a little baby when he had to go into the Navy. My brother Ernest tried to take his place so Russell wouldn't have to go, but the Navy wouldn't take Ernest because he had punctured eardrums.

### Growing Up

I was born and grew up in the house on the Pike right across from the Saint family. We all were raised together. When the Middle School was our high school, I would walk through the Saint property, through the Van Horn property and cross the street to the school.

What did we do when we were growing up? Well, when we were kids we always went over to the Ridgway pool. They let us swim there every summer, all summer. Beautiful pool, spring fed. It was ice cold. It was a concrete pool. Pretty good size. They had picnics there. The two brothers, Rich and Bill, did the farming.

My brother Chester remembers Pop telling him that when he took down True Reformer' Hall on Murray Avenue, he used those joists which were four inches wide and fourteen inches high in the original Huntingdon Valley Federal building up on the Pike when it was built.

Chester also remembers a boy, Bobby Low, who lived down on Philmont Avenue, who would ride his bicycle all around with a monkey sitting in the basket on the front of the bike.

Mrs. Ridgway made “smear case”. My mother used to buy that from Mrs. Ridgway. Smear case is cottage cheese. They delivered it to my mom. Alice was always helping her mother. They were hard workers.

The luncheonette at the Pike and Welsh Road was “Ike’s” for a while, but later it was “Mom’s”. Ike was a character. We had a real bad flood down on the Pike back in the 1930s when I was in seventh grade, maybe 1936. Danenberger’s had a lake over in Feasterville. The flooding was so bad that the rowboats from Danenberger’s lake were brought down to rescue the people from the train station. The water was that high. I’ll never forget it. My father put us kids in the back of his truck and we went down to Doerings store because we could park there and watch it. It was worse than the one we had just a few years ago.



[Photo: Flooding at Huntingdon Pike and Welsh Road in the 1930’s]

Where did Shep, the iceman, get his ice? I don’t know, but I do know that the Smiths who lived on Red Lion Road had ice in one of their garages in back of their house. The creek used to freeze over on Terwood Road. We would ice skate there and we use to sled and ski down Hallowell Road to Walton Road to Welsh Road. We even would fish there in the summer.

A couple of times Mrs. Israel Hallowell had hot chocolate for us. The Hallowell’s were the big house at the top of the hill. There wasn’t a road then, just a driveway up to their house. That was the kind of snow we had. We weren’t allowed to go on Fetersmill, only Hallowell. There was not much traffic back then. Then we got skis. We would ski down the back to where Gloria Dei Manor is now. Right down the hill on the fields. They were the good days. Betsy Ann Peck, my cousin Warren Fesmire and George Wright, we all went there.

In the summer, we would roller skate right down the sidewalk on the Pike on the east side. We skated to Murray Avenue. I still have the roller skate key. Remember the clamp on roller skates? We would also go down to the high school and play softball, baseball. Girls and boys all together.

When we lived on the Pike there was a field next to the Lady Washington House. We used to go up there and play all the time. Synnestvedts lived in the Washington house. They had a son Paul who used to play with us. Paul was killed in a car accident when he was 18 years old. Hubert Synnestvedt and his wife were music teachers. Mrs. Synnestvedt gave my niece Barbie piano

lessons up on the second floor of their house. We were always told that Martha Washington slept in that house. There were also carnivals in the field.

At nights we would go up behind the bank, there was a lot of empty ground there, and play Kick the Can. It's like Hide & Seek. During WWII Pop and Uncle Wilmer had Victory gardens in the field. I remember when my sister and I were there one evening with Pop. This was when we got word that George Wright was killed in WWII. He was a year or two older than me. He was in the same class as Bill Gantt, and he was killed too.

We didn't see much of the Bryn Athyn kids. Occasionally we would see them in Brown's Drug Store. They always had their own activities.

We used to have a big time here on the Fourth of July. Mom and Pop had steps, three steps down to the Pike. We used to sit on the steps and watch the parade. Fire engines, bands. We used to be able to park cars all along the Pike. When someone came to see us, their car didn't have to go in the driveway, just parked out front. We would also burn leaves in the gutter on the street.

My sister Betty and I would often work in the post office, behind Clayton's Store, at Christmas time, and we would go on the rural route with Mr. Wick in his truck. Betty and I would pack our lunch and go with him to deliver mail. I loved working in that post office.

### **Lower Moreland Residents**

The Saints had a big family. Rachel and Nate, missionaries. There is a movie about them now, "End of the Spear". There also was Phil who was an evangelist and artist, Sam who was a pilot, David who was a sculptor and inventor of the Graco Baby Swing, Dan, Steve and Nate, we called him "Thanny", and Benny, the youngest. We played with them all the time. We played in the back of their property by a big tree. Betty, Chester and I used to play basketball with them. For a basket we used a rim off a peach basket.

Right next to the Saints was Elias Markley who was the barber in the back of Clayton's Store. They had a daughter Ruth. The next house was the Austins. David Suitor and his wife lived there later. That house was the library for a while. Mrs. Austin had a little shop there called the Valley Shop where she sold thread, scissors, and needles. Things like that. The next house was Arthur Mason. He was a realtor. That's where the flower shop is now. Arthur's sister Emma lived there with their mother. Emma married Arthur Close.

The Sluggs lived where Stefano's is now. Dr. Crowe lived in the next house which was Bertha Crowe's house. Teachers rented rooms there. I remember Mr. Slaybaugh who later rented a room in Margaret William's house on Murray Avenue. Mr. and Mrs. Woodward lived where Beige & Beige is. Then the Holts lived next door, Eleanor Holt and her son Billy and her father. Old Mr. Holt. Then there was Dr. Salverian and Dr. Sandler in Holt's house. Then the Grant Heaton's where the beauty shop is now. The phone exchange came next. The Connors lived there. You had to connect to an operator to make a call. Libby Wright was the operator.

Did anyone talk about the where the railroad went across the Pike and the man who used to come out with the flag? I think there was a man over at Red Lion Road who did this too, but I don't remember that as much as the man down the Pike. He had a little shanty down there. This was before the bridge was built. He had a daughter named Rosy. Sometimes she would hold the flag. We would get the biggest kick out of seeing her come out. She would come out and hold up the sign for us to stop when the train was coming.

In my early years, we would get milk from the Pitcairns dairy. Mr. Connor used to deliver milk with horses. Horses used to pull the wagon. In later years we got milk from Schmidt's Dairy delivered right to our back steps.

Pop was on the HV Federal Board from the time that it was in existence until his death. It used to be the Bethayres Saving & Loan on the corner of Huntingdon Pike and Philmont Avenue. L.R. Stevenson had a little office down there, right on the corner. We would run down there with our Savings & Loan books. We also used to go to H.B. Leedom's, too. He lived right on the corner of Wynkoop Avenue and Huntingdon Pike, the big house across from Stiles Funeral Home. He owned Leedom's Lumber Yard down in Bethayres. I think his name was Benton. We called him "H.B.". I remember going down to him with savings books.

Mr. and Mrs. Davis lived next door to H.B. The house next door to us had a lot of families in there. Dot Wall, who was Eddie Schmidt's sister, once lived there with her husband and two kids, Bobby and Ginny.

I remember Cleve Ramson who lived on Murray Avenue before the Moyers. Cleve rented a room to a Mrs. Thompson and her daughter Elva. My mother would make up baskets for people on holidays. I can remember going to Mrs. Thompson with a basket.

I remember the iceman Shep Barrett. All of us kids would go to the back of the truck and get the pieces of ice that were being chopped. We also had a huckster, not Tom Redmile, who had a burlap bag on the side of his truck with oysters in the shell. He would stand there and crack those oysters. Then we had a truck come to the house with clothes. Max Millan was his name. I remember Mom buying clothes out of that truck.

The Claytons lived in the big gray house on up above the Fettersmill intersection on the Pike. The Charles family lived in the house where Nick the shoemaker used to be. There was Charles, Seymour Clayton, and then Sylvia Markley's house. The one on the corner was Clayton's Frankford Unity Store. Harold Utzy was a nephew of the Claytons.

Harold and Texas Stoneman worked in Clayton's Store. Don Hogeland's wife was Harold Utzy's sister, and Harold ended up living with them after Mr. and Mrs. Clayton had died. Harold would be working in the produce section. If you had a cold, he would say, "How's your coal bin"? And on the day my brother Russell got married, my sister Ada had to go to the store and she had her fancy dress on. When she went in the store, Harold said, "What are you doing with lace curtains on?"



Do you remember Clayton's store? They had a counter, and behind the counter there were shelves. When Raymond and I got married, there was a write-up in the paper with our picture. Mr. Clayton tacked our picture right up behind the counter. So everybody who went up to the counter had to see our wedding picture.

[Photo: Clayton's Unity Frankford store is shown here in 1944 at Huntingdon Pike and Feters Mill Road; OYRHS]

Ted Barrett, Frank's father's brother, used to work in Brown's Drug Store. He worked there for years and years. He made the best ice cream sodas. Everybody loved Ted. It was just the way he made those sodas. An ice cream cone was a nickel. Doc Brown was always smoking a curved stem pipe and he had a few strands of hair that were always combed across his bald head. Mrs. Brown would come out to the door of the drug store with her bedroom slippers on.

Do you remember Mr. Van Horn on Murray Avenue? He had a curved stem pipe too. And Mr. Gray across the street. He chased us home a couple times. They were very religious. Leo McOwen lived next door to Grays. They had two girls and a boy.

How about old Mr. Snell who lived on the corner of Cypress Street below the Pastores? He always came out of his house with a gun. And the house on the Red Lion Road bend was lived in by Mrs. Fauntleroy who always wore a black satin high hat. Her daughter Bertha lived with her. My dad used to help her out with repairs.

The little house with the red roof right by the railroad tracks on Terwood Road used to be lived in by Frank Tinari. He first worked for the Jarretts who lived in the big house up on top of the hill (around the bend on Terwood Road where Valley Road comes in).

Odd Fellow's Hall was up on the Pike where the doctors' offices are now and where the Huntingdon Valley Federal Bank used to be. Next to it was a little shoemaker's shop. The Stalford family lived in a house next door, Stanley and his mom and dad. Then there was the American Store and Brown's Drug Store. Mr. and Mrs. Briggs lived in part of the Odd Fellow's Hall. Mrs. Briggs used to do sewing for my mother. Mr. Briggs is the one who put bones between his fingers. He would play the bones to music. He was a redhead with a moustache with waxed ends. His children were all redheads too. There was another building behind the American Store and Brown's Drug Store. A surveyor lived in that building.

My brother Ernest and his wife Edna lived in Russ Pletcher's house on Murray Avenue before the Pletchers. Ernest and Edna were newlyweds. I used to go clean for them. I noticed all the bushes in the yard of the house next door, the Cataldo's. Mr. Cataldo worked for Asplundh Tree Company.

Did you ever hear of Buttonball Creek? It ran along Butterworth's building along Philmont Avenue.

How about the restaurant that the Danenbergers had? The Danenbergers lived where the Fettersmill Square building is on the Pike. They lived up on the upper floors and had the lower part of their building as a restaurant. Now there are shops and apartments built on the back. That building was later used as a pharmacy. Joe Spadaro was the pharmacist. After that, Dr. Bruce Morrison had his office there. Next door was where Peggy Charles and her family lived. Then came Horace and Blanch Markley's home. Then on the corner came Clayton's store, always a store, and behind that in the very back was Elias Markley's Barber Shop.

Up at Buck Road and the Pike was Otto Kofod's garage. He lived on Walton Road. His garage was there for year's right at the "V". We always called Philmont Avenue "State Road", and we called Huntingdon Pike "Second Street Pike".

I went to Lower Moreland School from 1<sup>st</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. I played basketball for four years of high school, was Captain for two years and also played field hockey and was Captain for one year.



[Photo: 5<sup>th</sup> grade class, 1936. Miss Lillian Neilson, teacher]

Front row, l to r: Bob Hinds, Lindy Spurlin, Richard Horn, Bill Glenn, Ted Beechwood, Horace Lodge, Warren Fesmire.

Second row, l to r: Concetta Tinari, Marcy Campoli, Jo Montrella, Doris Worthington, Jean Fesmire, Barbara Fellenz, Phyllis, Margaret Johnson.

Third row l to r: Gibbs, Yvonne Steward, Charlotte Weber, Bea Wynkoop, Betsy Peck, Hazel Barrett.

Fourth row l to r: Forrest Henry, Elmer Dannenberger, Gaines, Bootsie Boyce, Harry Lewis, Joe Gersch, Nick Pastore, Carl Ebert.

### **My Marriage & Family Life With Raymond**

I met my husband Raymond in school when I was in eighth grade. He came from Feasterville. He was born and raised in a house where Kmart is on Street Road. The house has been torn down. It was built in 1726. I had a picture of the house painted on a lampshade in the living room by Betty Hallowell. The kids were bussed down to Lower Moreland from Feasterville. The first time I saw Raymond and he saw me we liked each other. He was in ninth grade. We went together all those years. He went in the service after high school. We were married in 1948 in the "old" Baptist Church on Red Lion Road (now a medical building).



We were married on January 24<sup>th</sup> in a blizzard. We went to Florida. We drove there in a brand new car loaned to us by my brother Ernest. We didn't have any money and had an old car. The first night we went to the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C.

When we came back we lived in the second floor apartment behind Stiles Funeral Home. Pop had converted that little barn into apartments in the early 40s. There are two apartments. The one upstairs has a bedroom, a kitchen, a bathroom and a living and dining room. Raymond and I paid \$60 a month rent for that apartment. I still have the rent book.

Ray and I have two children. My daughter Susan just moved in December to Chicago. They have two children, a son and a daughter. I have a son in Georgia who has three children, two sons and a daughter. My husband died in April 2001.

I've lived on Anne Street for 55 years. We moved here when Susan was three months old. When we came to buy this house, there were two cars behind us lined up on the street, people wanting to buy the house. We came in and decided we wanted to buy the house because if we didn't buy it, we knew the people in the next car would. There were just no houses for sale around here in 1951.



[Photo: Jean's parents, Mr. and Mrs. P. Russell Fesmire Sr. at their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary dinner in 1956]