

## MEMORIES OF GRANDMA & GRANDPA

by

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It's fun to look back and realize what types of things stick in your memory about grandparents.

The house on Coit Avenue (N.E.) held special charm for me as a kid. Many things there were different and going there meant being with grandma and grandpa, which was a rare and special event each year.

It seems to me that we usually arrived there from Iowa about 6-7 p.m. and the standard menu for the evening was fried eggs and toast. We'd all sit around the table together and Dad would tell some new jokes... whereupon Grandma would laugh almost uncontrollably and then say, "I didn't get it!"

The couch in the living room often became my bed for the week, but the first couple of nights I didn't sleep too well because of the grandfather clock (which fascinated me) and the traffic noise (which kept this farm-town boy awake or woke me up prematurely). I also recall the habitual bowl of All-Bran which Grandpa would eat before going to bed in the evening; I often went to sleep with the sounds of clanging dishes and subdued talking coming from the kitchen.

Grandma would often take me shopping over on Plainfield at some fancy sounding grocery store. . . usually we bought pumpernickel bread, Vernor's ginger ale, grape juice and fruit.

Seeing Grandma with <sup>her</sup> long white hair down for washing was a shock to me the first time I saw it; she washed it with Ivory soap! It was also hard for me to understand why she and Grandpa slept in separate bedrooms,

Grandpa would often go with us on a ride around Grand Rapids, taking us to Comstock Park or some high hill (I forget the name) overlooking the city. At his office he'd check our teeth and we'd play with a dentist chair in another room, giving each other rides. Sometimes he would play catch with me on the driveway between the house and the building next door

I remember the last time I rode with him when he drove the car; I was a little worried about his driving because we were going so slow! We stopped at some cemetery for about a half hour and walked around looking at gravestones and talking about the markers, many being those of soldiers.

Even after Grandpa contracted Parkinson's I remember that some of the things we as kids did would often cause him to break into laughter. He would sit in "his chair" by the French doors and shake all over from laughing so hard. He also seemed to get a big kick out of being the "tooth-fairy" when any of us lost a tooth at their house.

I don't remember much about them visiting us at our house, except for two things. The first was when we lived in Parkersburg and they brought me a brand new heavy-duty tricycle. The other thing was when Grandma visited us in Wheaton... somehow she got the message across to me that she didn't like the girl I was dating (It wasn't Ruth!). Incidentally, I'm so glad Ruth was able to meet her when we sang with the Moody Chorale in Grand Rapids four months before she died. She received our wedding invitation the week before she died.

In the years since I've been out of college, any number of people has told me of the Godly example of my Grandpa. . . "He told me about the Lord in the dentist chair," or "He gave the financial means for us to carry on this mission work." Just as those folk often had tears in their eyes when they spoke to me, so do I whenever I read Psalm 61 and realize that the love my grandparents had for the Lord is truly a heritage to me from the Lord.

"Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name."

(Psalm 61:5b)