



My life was shattered. It was hard to believe Penny and I, and Aldrich Marshall now lived in the dream home Nancy and I had built in 1960, the same year I bought the quarter of land from Mom and Dad. Penny spent all the time she could with me and Grandma Myrtle Johnson kept her when I couldn't and she went to school in Miller. She was 10 years old and growing fast.

On September 21, 1963, Donna Campbell and I were married. Aldrich Marshall still lived with us. On September 21, 1965, Barbara was born to us. What a joy again! She and Aldrich were great buddies. She liked to climb on his lap. He had a wooden leg and she would take his watch from his bib overalls and listen to it. She grew like a weed and Tuffy was her constant companion. Penny also thought the world of Barbara. They were great friends.

Farming progressed rapidly and we rented more land and bought more machinery. With the help of Donna, Penny, Barbara, Aldrich Marshall, Alfred Howard, the Auch boys, Ed Byroad, and Mac Mortensen, farming grew by leaps and bounds. We bought land from time to time as money permitted and now have 12 quarters of land besides renting 12 quarters. We also do lots of custom work and do enjoy farming.



In 1972, I was combining for Glen Smith and was foolishly working on the combine header and it fell on me. It was 20 degree weather and I could hear the bones breaking. I knew my time was up. I laid for three hours before help came and they got me to the Miller hospital. For five or six days, death was close. I had broken my pelvis in 13 places, but 69 days later I walked out of the hospital. God had seen fit to leave me here for a time and I was thankful to be able to walk. How grateful I am to have a chance to see Barbara grow up.

In 1982, Donna started having unusual chest pains and was tired; she finally convinced Dr. DeGeest to send her to a heart specialist in Sioux Falls. In a short time she was to have heart surgery. Could I stand losing Donna? God gave me the strength to be a good partner and Donna came through surgery only to find her veins plugging up again. In the spring of 1985, the doctors gave her some medicine which helped a lot and she showed encouraging improvement the fall of 1985.

Again, I needed repair work, I think because of my accident. On December 2, 1985, I had a new hip put in and am now recuperating at home. Modern medicine is great!

I know I've missed many things, but thanks to Mom and Dad, and sisters and brothers, my wife Nancy, my wife Donna, daughters Penny and Barbara, and all my friends life has been good to me. Thanks to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



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GEORGE MELBER, JR.



## GEORGE'S LIFE STORY

Written December 24, 1986

My father, George Melber, was born near Stuttgart, Germany in the year 1881. The story I received was that all of his family died in Germany, and at the age of 23, he came to the U.S.A. to some relatives in Wisconsin. He worked on a farm there and learned to speak and write English, which I think he mastered very well. The money he had when he came he pinned to his underwear so he would wake up if

someone tried to rob him on the boat. Nothing much was ever told to me about his life in Germany, although he once told of riding horses in the military. Why he really left Germany was never actually revealed to me.

My mother, Ursula Lieske, was born around Bridgewater and Salem, South Dakota, of parents of German descent. She had three brothers, Menris, Dorman, and Ulmer, and one sister Alemne. They moved to Polo, South Dakota, when she was quite young. Dad came to Polo to work for the Schaeffers and Wieselers as a farm hand. I have no facts about their courtship and marriage, but they were married in 1910 and set out for Ekalaka, Montana, to homestead some land. They loaded all their belongings into a boxcar and headed west. As soon as they proved the homestead up, they moved back to the Howell Township area, and mother said she had rattlesnakes under her kitchen stove many times.



I was born on the Mitchell Place which is about 18 miles north of Miller on Highway 45. Soon after I was born we moved to a farm 4 miles north of Ree Heights, South Dakota. Then, in 1929, when I was four years old, we moved to the farm I live on now. They paid \$35.00 per acre for it and as we went into the 1930s or depression years, lost the land again. Some time in the late thirties, they bought the land again for \$12.00 per acre and before Dad passed away in 1960, they got it paid for.

The first I remember about life was seeing the gravel trucks haul gravel on the road by our place when I was about five years old. We milked cows, raised some hogs, and lots of chickens and ducks. I remember dust storms when the sky became so dark we had to follow the fence line to get home from school 1/4 mile south of us. We had to cover our faces with dish towels so we could breathe. Our house wasn't very weather tight and dirt would come in, as would snow. When it was cold and windy the only warm place was in bed or backed up to the cookstove or heating stove.

How we hated to go to the outdoor toilet which every one had. Some cold times we would use a "slop pail." Crops were poor and prices also. We got some help from the government in the way of feed and seed loans and commodities like prunes, raisins, canned meat, beans and oranges. Mom and Dad didn't like taking help, but it was a way of survival.



On February 28, 1928, Eva Lillian was born. On March 2, 1931, Arlene Ruth was born. In about 1935, my only living grandparent Mary Lieske died. She had lived at our place for a while before she died. The body was kept at Grandma's house before the funeral. A short service was held at the house before the funeral and I remember sitting on Dad's lap and it was the first time I saw tears in his eyes. That day, I found out there was a soft spot that I hadn't known about before.

I remember going to Aberdeen with my folks in a Model T Ford car. On the way home we were coming by Cottonwood Lake and one of our rear wheels passed us! We ran and got the wheel and put it on and came home.

Saturday night was a big occasion at our place. We would wait around until Dad started shaving and then if he got a cigar out, we were pretty sure he would go to town. Sometimes we would get a nickel to spend. We could get an ice cream cone or quite a lot of candy. When the 10:00 whistle blew, we better be at the car to head home. Louise, Eva, Arlene and I spent a lot of time together as we were the youngest left.

In the fall of 1939, I was eligible to go to high school. I didn't know if I wanted to go and Dad didn't care if I went, but Mom thought I should go and said if I could get there she would buy pencils and paper. I walked and rode my bicycle the freshman year, but Dad wanted me home for chores morning and night. The second year, I walked to Lanz's and rode to school with Beatrice Lanz. The third year I wanted a car and I borrowed \$20.00 from First National Bank and bought a 1924 Chevrolet, a beautiful black car an old couple from Wessington had. It ran real good, but I soon ran it to death. I can remember coming into St. Lawrence and retarding the spark lever to make a lot of banging and popping. Crazy kids!

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. I was a junior in high school and some kids were of age to be drafted and some enlisted in the army. It was a sad day to see brother Lloyd drafted to go to the army. He was one of the first.

I graduated in 1943 and continued to farm with Dad and worked out hauling manure and bundles when I had time. I rented some land from Doc McWhorter in 1946 and started to farm some land for myself and buy some machinery. My first tractor was a used regular

Farmall on steel wheels for \$800.00 which was a lot of money then. Once a week I had to tighten the rods as it had a flat crankshaft.

It wasn't long till I realized that I liked girls and my sleep was getting less at night. I enjoyed dancing, and Eva and Arlene and I didn't miss many in Miller, St. Lawrence, Ree Heights and Wessington.

In 1951, Nancy Johnson and I were married and Dad and Mom moved to Miller to live. In 1952, on November 15, Penny Rae was born to us. I couldn't believe I was now a father and what a joy. I thought life was great! When Penny was born, we learned that Nancy had a heart problem. In 1962, things got worse and we went to Minneapolis for heart valve surgery. I came back without Nancy.

