

1947 - 1954

In The beginning



On February 15, 1947 Guy and Barbara Anez were married in Minneapolis, Minnesota following a little over a year of courtship conducted primarily by mail.

They made their home in Sidney, Montana though the first part of 1947 where, I believe, Guy ran the Farmer's Union tire shop.

Guy was hired as manager of the Farmers Union Service Station in Kalispell, Montana and by July 1947 they had moved to western Montana.

They lived in a small house on the Farmer's Union lot.



Home 1947-1949: 57 the5th Ave East North, Kalispell, MT

I was born In Kalispell at 3:14 AM on January 11, 1948 at the Kalispell General Hospital.
(No wonder I ended up doing "shift" work and working nights so much)

Kalispell General Hospital
Kalispell, Montana



HOSPITAL BIRTH CERTIFICATE

This Certifies that James Francis Arney
was born in Kalispell General Hospital, Kalispell, Montana, at 3:14 A.M. on the 11
day of January A. D. 1948 County Flathead Color W Sex Male Weight 7 Lbs. 13 Ozs.
Father's Name in full Harry F. Arney Birthplace Cylon, Wisconsin
Residence Address Kalispell, Mont. 57-5th Ave. E. N.
Mother's Maiden Name Barbara M. Kitch Birthplace Minneapolis, Minn.

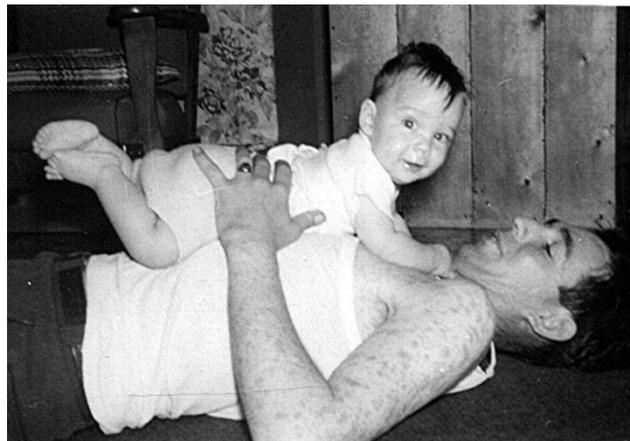
In Witness Whereof the said Hospital has caused this Certificate to be signed by its
duly authorized officer and its Corporate Seal to be hereto affixed.

Hospital No. 45148

J. G. Giffis - M.D. Attending Physician
Walter Henry Lawrence Superintendent



As I heard the story, I was overdue and dad joked about making mom drink castor oil and taking her for long drives over bumpy roads to get things moving.





Fish fry in Kalispell

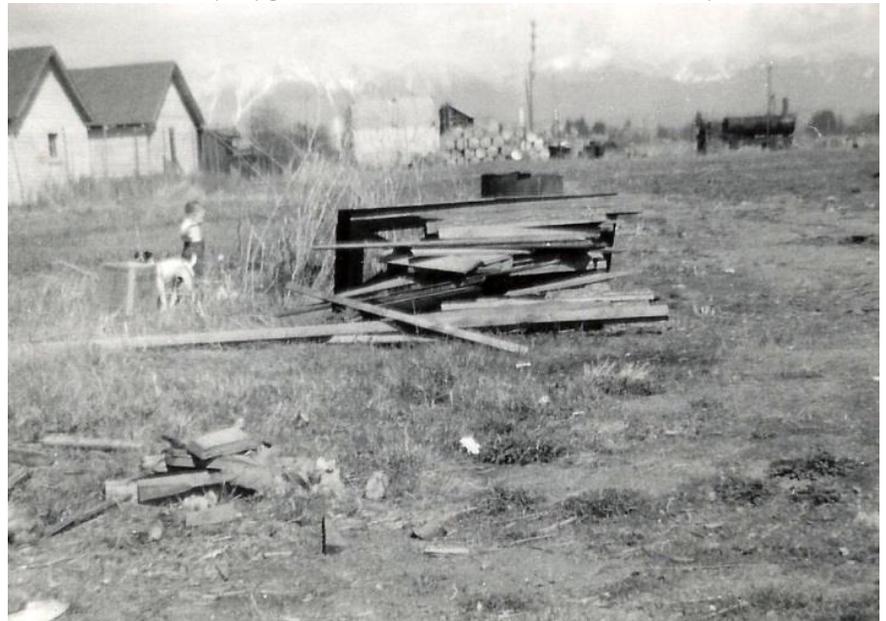
According to my mother they didn't have much, but they enjoyed their time in Kalispell.

I apparently did too - notice I already had my eye on the beer can.

I don't have any memories of Kalispell but I apparently survived those years even though my "playground" was the Farmer's Union yard.

I guess I was a tough kid.

During the spring of 1949 an issue developed between dad and the Farmer's Union board and he resigned. I think dad wanted to fire an employee but the guy was the son of a board member and he was forced to keep the guy.



He went to Havre and he'd found employment in July or August with Wes Cassel at the Coca Cola Bottling Company.

In 1994, after dad's funeral, I talked with Wes. He told me that the reason he hired dad was that, unlike most of the guys who showed up for interviews in suit and tie, dad came in looking like he was ready to work and he hired him on the spot. As Wes talked about dad he had tears in his eyes. It was the only time I ever saw Wes display any emotion other than irritation or anger (perhaps apparent anger).

Initially the folks lived in Highland Park and supposedly dad walked about a mile to work every day, summer and winter. By early 1950 they'd moved to a rental house on the corner of 10th Street and 7th Avenue at 701 10th Street. This is the first place I can really remember. The Coke Plant was directly across the street so it was always part of my upbringing and I very much took it for granted.



Jim and Marge about 1953

While we lived in that house Margaret, Bob, Daryl and Cathe were born. The house had only two rooms and a bathroom on the main floor. There was no shower or tub in the

bathroom and we kids took our baths in a galvanized tub in the kitchen. Dad took a shower now and then across the street at the Coke plant. Mom once said she got by with sponge baths, but I understand that once a week the folks would take a shower at the Burkett's.

Harold Burkett was a carpenter by trade and dad's sister, Shirley, was a telephone operator for Northwest Bell. During the early 50's they lived in a duplex on the southwest corner of 6th Street and 7th Avenue and, for a while, Harold worked at Pepsi Cola Bottling which was just around the corner to the south, on 7th Avenue. Harold built a house in Highland Park and they moved there about 1954.

The folks slept on a hide-a-way sofa bed in the living room and all of us kids slept on the second floor (the attic). There were two beds and a crib up there and as kids joined the family we had various sleeping arrangements which basically amounted to 2 or 3 of us sharing beds.

- See Appendix III for 3D drawings of the house as I remember it -

There was a big upright console radio-phonograph in the living room. I can remember listening to radio dramas - especially westerns like the Lone Ranger. I especially remember a program that was some kind of medical drama, possibly Ben Casey, and they were always talking about polio and iron lungs. I had no idea what an iron lung was but was scared to death of them and of catching polio. I can remember pulling the covers over my head when I went to bed at night so "polio" couldn't get me. I'll always remember the day the radio quit. I think my mom's brother, Uncle Bill, was visiting and when he turned on the radio one morning there was a sizzle-pop and a cloud of blue smoke rose from the set. My recollection was that we got a new radio but it didn't have a phonograph and I think it might have been around 1959 or 1960 before we got new a record player.

The telephone was on a little table between the kitchen and living room. This was before touch tone or even dial phones so when you picked up the receiver an operator would say, "Number Please" and we'd give her the number. Phone numbers could be anywhere from one to four digits

and were sometimes followed by a letter. Our phone number was "922-J". I don't know when we switched to dial phones but I think it may have been around 1957. It wasn't until about 1959 that everyone got a seven digit number. At first we only had to dial a one digit prefix followed by the four digit phone number for local calls. When we had to start dialing the full seven digit phone number it seemed like a terrible burden. Long distance calling was a big deal and pretty much reserved for emergencies. Most communication was accomplished by mail and mail was delivered to the house twice a day. Postage for letters was only 3 cents and it was surprisingly fast.

The yard wasn't much. There was no "lawn" just tufts of prairie grass that dad would mow a couple of times a year. The "front" door was on the south side of the house, facing 10th Street, but it was never used. There was a paved walk from that door, through a hedge, to the street but since the door was never used the hedge was overgrown and the walkway through the hedge was impassable.



The neighborhood was rather eclectic. Next door, to the east of us, was George Johnson and we were all a little bit in scared of him. I now know that he was the county probation officer, but at one time I think I was told that he was the truant officer who would "get us" if we skipped school.

Directly across 10th Street to the south was the home of Bob and Marion Donaldson. They had 4 children; Deanna, Bob (who was my age), Bruce and Brian. Mr. Donaldson was an engineer for the Great Northern and he had irregular hours so we had to be careful about playing around the house because he often was sleeping during the day. Bob had an American Flyer model railroad that I always wanted to play with but he took it for granted and was more or less bored with it. They also had a TV and I can remember watching afternoon TV at their house. My favorite show was Lash Larue.

Next door to the Donaldson home, to the east, was a scary place where an old man named Joe Gussenhoven lived. The yard was a tangle of bushes and he had a large corrugated metal garage/workshop behind the house that was rusting away. He was carpenter and worked from that workshop. He must have had some of his electrical equipment grounded to the structure itself because if you touched the side of the building you got a little shock. To us he was just an old scary guy, but apparently he was one of the men who played a prominent role in the growth of Havre.

East of Mr. Gussenhoven was a big house with a hip roof that had been converted to basement, main floor and upstairs apartments. I would later live there briefly.

East of that house were the Eggerts. Mr. Eggert (Fred) was a milk man who went to work early every day and got home early in the afternoon.

Across the street from the Eggerts, about 3 doors east of our house, was a family by the name of Bruffy, I think. I believe Mr. Bruffy had something to do with the college but if they had kids they were enough younger than we didn't play together. My recollection is that they had a

reputation of fighting a lot and that we could all hear them yelling at each other. Mr. Bruffy was supposedly camping along the Madison River in southwestern Montana in August 1959 when the largest earthquake ever recorded in Montana occurred. He was one of 28 campers who were killed in a massive rock slide caused by the quake. I remember hearing the comment that, "Maybe he just took the opportunity to disappear."

Diagonally across the intersection to the southwest was Mrs. Hoffman, a widow who rented her basement, and directly across 7th Avenue to the west was the home of Wes Cassel, owner of the Coke Plant, and to his north the Coke Plant itself. Wes's garage was attached to the Plant and between the garage and the bottling plant there was a small apartment where Wes's mother sometimes lived.

North of us our neighbor was Ralph Sleeter, who owned Havre Laundry and Dry Cleaning. They were the first in the neighborhood to have a TV and would sometimes have us kids over on Sunday evening to watch Walt Disney. Across an alley north of Sleeters were the Glickman's. Mr. Glickman was a Great Northern Railroad conductor - for some reason I think he worked on passenger trains.

- See Appendix III for an aerial view of the neighborhood with homes identified -

There was a neighborhood store about a block from the house on the southeast corner of 6th Avenue and 10th Street. They closed about 1954 but I think I remember being sent there to buy cigarettes from mom - times were certainly different back then.

Milk was delivered to the door about every other day. I suppose it may have been in bottles but I only remember the waxed milk cartons. Sometimes chunks of wax would break off into the milk and one day Margaret got a chunk of wax and choked. After that she started chewing her milk and we teased her unmercifully about that. Most of the time our groceries were delivered from Buttery's. I can recall mom going over the newspaper ads and placing her order by phone. The groceries were delivered in boxes that were about 18 inches square and collapsed to save space after they were empty.

About 1953 the Sleeters built an addition onto their house and put up a cinderblock wall along the property line between our properties. In order for the cement trucks to get to their lot they had to back across our yard. A section of the hedge along the street on the south side of our lot was taken out and the trucks also left some really good tracks across our yard. Bear in mind there was no lawn; what grass grew was just prairie grass or crested wheat so it was no big deal. After the construction project we were "given" the northeast corner of the lot for our play area where a pile of dirt was left from digging the footings and we could dig, play trucks, whatever. I think the rest of the east side of the lot was garden.

One fall mom was cleaning up the yard and burning leaves on the boulevard next to the Sleeter's driveway. I got the bright idea of playing fireman so Margaret, who was two years younger than me, and I got on our tricycles with our little buckets and started hauling dirt to the fire. Now our play area was almost directly east of where the fire was burning but the yard was a couple of feet above street level so we couldn't ride our trikes directly from the dirt pile to the fire and



the "rules" were that we couldn't get off our trikes. So we'd load up a pail of dirt, hang it from the handle bars, and follow the truck tracks through the break in the hedge then go down the sidewalk to the corner hang a right and peddle as fast as we could to the fire where we'd dump our pail of dirt. Then it was back to the corner, up the hill, through the hedge and across to the dirt pile where we'd load up. I don't think mom was paying much attention to what we were doing - at least not enough - because we eventually put the fire out and when she came with her next box or bag of leaves she discovered what we'd done. We were pretty proud of ourselves but she was a little upset.



A really early memory (and I don't know if I actually remember it or just think I do because I was told of the event) was that I liked to take all the magazines from where ever they were kept and lay them out on the floor. I really do remember doing that. I would place them end to end and make "roads" with turnoffs and branches. The story goes that one evening when it was my bedtime mom or dad told me to put the magazines away and get ready for bed. I refused.

Eventually I was threatened with a spanking if I didn't pick up the magazines. I still wouldn't do it so dad had to spank me. After three or four spanks he asked if I would pick up the magazines. I refused. He spanked me again and again I refused. This apparently went on for some time and reached the point where dad was afraid he would actually hurt me if it continued. At this point mom had a brainstorm and asked me if I needed to go to the bathroom. I said I did so they took a break while I went in to pee. When I came out of the bathroom they asked me to pick up the magazines as if nothing had happened and without an argument I did as I was asked.

And to think some people think I have a stubborn streak!



During the 1950's one of dad's good friends was a co-worker named Jim Bows. A few memories of him include standing with dad in front of the Coke plant as they talked. I remember Jim saying "... some of the cars now days are so low slung that even Jimmy could look right over the top of them." Another memory was of riding in a car with Jim Bows and dad. Jim lived southwest or west of town in what seemed like the country. I remember riding in a car, perhaps going to Jim's house or possibly test driving a car, and dad and Jim were drinking beer and throwing the empty cans out the window. It was "OK" to do that back then.

Clarence and Ellen Finke were also friends of my folks. They lived about 4 blocks south of us and Clarence was the production manager at the Coke plant. He was blind in one eye as a result of flying glass when a bottle exploded while being filled. They had three daughters who sometimes babysat us kids. I don't remember Clarence as being particularly old but he had passed away well before I starting working at the plant.