

"My Life History"

Grover Wayne Howard

Private 1st Class
96th Infantry Division in WWII
Deadeye

I was born in Atchison County Mo on October 23, 1924 on the Hanna Ranch. I was a large baby brought into the World by a Country Doctor, his name was Dr. Waugh. My mother was ruptured a my birth and went through likfe with this problem. I had three sisters and a younger brother, the oldest Dora, Pearl, Marie and Keith.

My folks stayed on the Hanna Ranch for several years and I can remember back to my younger yrs to about 6 years of age this was a bad time. Depression was coming and our wages was poor all work was done wih horses and corn was picked by hand. You were paid \$0.03 a bushel to pick corn, then you had to scoop it off by hand. When I got old enough to work I was paid \$0.50 a day. We worked from Sunup to Sundown.

Our food was simple: cornbread, naval beans gravey and homemade bread, salted pork, salted down with morton house salt and was it salty, homemade sausage, pan cakes, homeny and we always had a large garden in the summer time. My first experience at shool was locous grove, had to walk 1 1/2 miles each day. When it was nice sometimes I took my rat terrier along and stopped off in a small patch of woods and spent the day never made it to school. Viola Cox spanked me in the 1st grade, they were practicing for a X-mas Program and I was sitting there watching the Practice one said in his dialogue "I have a secret"! and I spoke up and said teacher I have a secret to and she turned me over a desk and spanked me with her hand.

We played fox and geese in the snow, dare base, Andy over, soft ball, croquet, marbles and made little tractors out of thread spools and rubber bands. I was held back the 1st year never knew what it was all about. My second year in school my father had a nervouse break down and was sent to St. Joseph. Leaving my mother withe Keith, Marie and myself to care for. We had to ask the County for help. Once we drew rations of canned Mutton, beans, sugar, flower, prunes raisens and canned fruit.

My mother washed our clothes by hand on a wash board. Kerosene lamps and wood stoves. I still have our old Kerosene lamps we used down stairs. We moved from the Loeous grove district into the South Dale district near farmer City Store. Here we had two miles a day to walk to school. We moved into a house where a lady had committed suicide and blew her brains on the wall. Marie always saw brains on the ceiling which always scared me at night. Could see all kinds of things at night.

We had a tough time here and I chopped wood in a nearby wooded area and drug it home used a buck saw to saw it up for fuel. I began trapping which helped out and I was about 10 years old then. We didn't have a car, a small store was two miles away called Farmers City Store. We lived on eggs, Chickens we got from the neighbors, water gravey and water biscuits. We didn't have enough to eat. Dad was still in the hospital, but was soon to be discharged. I took down with scarlet fever, was very sich, the doctor came out and told my mother I'd never make it through the night. She bathed me in hot packs all night long and I came through. Was confined for two weeks, no body could come in and none of us could go out, my mother would yell out the door to Mrs. Niemann and she would get groceries at Farmer City Store. Calvin her son would would bring the grocerys within 50 yds of the house yell to my mother to come to the door, then he would run.

After I recovered my mother couldn't care for all of us so I was sent to live with Pearl at Westboro, Mo. Had to go to town schoo. Was in the 4th grade here, I had lost so much time in school I was held back again, by summer I was fully recovered and went back to my folks. Dad was recovered to where he could do day work for farmers I carried water for threshing crews, helped pitch bundles of oats and wheat into the thresing machines. Sure enjoyed these days. Always was fed well dinner and supper. We begun to live better, the depression was over Dad got a job with the W.P.A and was paid \$0.30/hr or \$2.40/day.

We moved to the North Polk District, the old school is now located as you go into Tarkio, the records are there. the old book we used I remember this old Orange Civic books so well. The teacher kept a book . Check it out, it tells when Mom came to school to visit, etc. I finished my years in North Polk. I remember my teacher so well her name was Mis Nocton. I saved her life she got stranded in a snow drift the roads in from fence to fence I came along on the way and found her she had given up I kept breaking a path for her urging her on. We got to school and I went to the neighbor who came over and bathed the teachers frost bits with snow. I got the old coal furnace stoked up and warmed the old school house up in good order.

I didn't have any lights in any of the schools on dark days, it was hard to see our work. During trapping season I was sent home several times because when it warmed up, the skunk smell become real rank. She would say is that Jurniors, I'd say yes and was sent home. Skunks were

worth \$3.00 each, a days work for a man. I had a dog named Pinto and he was a great skunk Dog. We had a old Kerosene lantern and a long pole the dog circled the skunk at nite and I'd run in with the pole and crock the skunk in the head, put him in a sack and throw him over my shoulder. Sometimes we got 4 or 5 every night. We caught lots of rabbits and would clean them and hang them on the clothes line. Boy they were good. We didn't have anything else to eat in the way of meat.

After I made it through North Polk, I went to Tarkio High School. Was real good in football, made the All Conference team my freshman year. Played the guard position. Was active in 4H and FFA. Had reserved champion in Chester White breed at Omaha. Had Grand Champion at Rockport, had some berkshires, had Grand Champion boar at Tarkio Fair.

We didn't have a car at this time. We used to have a 1923 Model 'T' Ford Dad bought new for \$300.00, he traded it off to a fellow for 10 bushels of potatoes. Dad had a horse that he rode to work on. When he was working for the W.P.A., they grubbed out trees along the roads, spaded the banks down with shovels, painted park buildings and built schools. Anything to give them work and put the people back to work, this was Roosevelt.

Right after Hoover Administration, during my sophomore year in school, I bought a Model 'T' Ford for \$7.00. It had a busted head I got a junker and fixed it up. We used this old Ford for a couple years then traded it off with the horse for a 1934 Chevy which I wrecked when making a left turn, a fellow behind me went to pass at the same time, hit me in the left side threw me off the road, I ran into a telephone pole, the pole was rotten, it broke at the base and we went right on through. That was the end of that car. I took the tires off it and bought a 1934 Ford used the tires on it.

The war broke out on Dec. 7th, 1941. I was a Freshman in High School. We were living on the Prather Ranch near Tarkio. I've had 25 head of mules and half a dozen horse I had to cultivate corn through the summer stack and break stalks with four head of mules and a 16 to 20 foot railroad track iron which was pulled against the corn standing in March.

When I finished my Jr Year in High School I wanted off the farm so bad I joined the Army. I didn't go back to finish my Senior year in High School. I went to Fort Leavenworth, KS for my physical and passed and was asked with branch I liked best, Army, Navy or Marines, so I chose the Army. I got to go back home to get my business in order for two weeks after I

joined. I can still see my mother crying as I walked down the road the day I went to the highway to hitchhike into town to catch the bus back to Fort Leavenworth, KS. I was 18 years old, thought I was doing something, I could have gotten out of going, the guy who owned the Ranch tried to get me to stay and work on the farm they were short handed but I'd seen too many war series on the news and I'd seen the film Sergeant York in World War I and I thought I wanted to fight the Japs!

Well right away when we got to Fort Leavenworth in June, the river got high, went out of its banks and we had to fill sandbags I try to to keep the river within its banks. We worked at this for about a week, also got my first taste of K.P. We were given a test and I passed one on the Morse Code so was sent to Camp Roberts, CA to take 18 weeks in radio and telephone communications. We were taught hand to hand combat with bayonets. Trench knives machine guns, crawled under live fire, had lots of 25 mile hikes, rifle practice. I made expert in all of my course. Also got the expert infantryman badge which gave me \$10.00/month more. Was promoted from a Private to a Private First Class. I got \$15.00 a month and had allotment made out to the folks. I got pretty good at shooting dice. I won around \$500 which I sent home, it's a good thing I did some of the guys wanted to borrow and I wouldn't have ever got it back.

Well after my 18 weeks I was given a furlough back home and I felt so proud coming home all decked out in my Army Toggs. My Mother broke her arm that trip I'd driven down to the end of the lane she got out and it was muddy She was going to open the gate and fell down and broke her left arm. We had to go to Tarkio and have it set.

I had two good Coon Hounds and did some Coon hunting while I was home, had to haul some coal to the folks while I was home the two week vacation didn't last long so was back to Camp Roberts, CA and was assigned to the 96th Division at Camp White, Oregon. When I got there they put me in the Anti-Tank Company. We had 37 Millimeter Cannons which were designed to knock out tanks. We trained for jungle combat, marched a lot, had hand to hand combat training, had battles and took hills using live bullets, took villages where dummies popped out of nowhere and you had to shoot them with live ammo.

After about six months of this I had to go into the hospital to get a cyst removed from my tailbone, spent a month in the hospital when I got out they sent me home again on a furlough for 1 month. I sure enjoyed that

one. Well the month soon ended and back I went by riding the old rough train. All were coal burners. I have busted open the operation where they stiched me up so they put me on light duty in the barracks for one month.

Our training was over and wer were at full strength. We knew we were about to be shipped out for some place we didn't know iif was to be Germany or Japan. We water proofed our jeeps, trucks, etc. We knew we were going to make a landing some where. We took training in making landings on beach heads for two weeks at San Diego, CA. We loaded up one day in August to amke a landing somewhere. We joined a big convoy after taking two more weeks jngle training in Hawaii. We moved so slow ziz zagging across to Anawetai Island. We thought we were going to invade Yap but our orders were changed. We were going to land on Letye in the Philippines.

by this time it was October and spent my birthday in the Invasion the night before we were fed like kings had turkey and all the trimmings. We laughed and said the big feed before the kill. Eat good this night be your last good meal and how true that was., the next morning we were all up dressed for the kill. We could hear the big guns from the Iowa and Missouri battleships shelling the gun position of the Japs on Shore. our air planes were strafing our Chaplain was pacing back and forth on deck saying Prayers for our safety I guess. I saw several dead Japs floating inn the water.

Our landing boats were waiting to lad us up. They were going around in circles waiting for the Command to make a dash with us to shore under fire. All of us made it ashore, some were hit on the way in. We went in several hundred yard and dug in. The smell of sulfur from the big guns was everywhere, dead water buffalo were here and there. Dead Japs were scattered here and there. The first evening a Jap reconnance plane flew at tree top level. We thought it was one of ours and no one fired, that night a Betty Bomber came over and dropped Bombs on our big Ammo dumps on shore, they exploded all night. Several hundred Colored soldiers were killed in this attack.

Our artillery set up and begin laying shells in on the enemy. You could hear the shells whistle over yor head as long as you could hear them you were alright. Sometimes they hit short killing our own men. Our artillery did a great job, they killed thousands of Japs. The 96th Division accounted for more dead Japs thna any other outfit in the Pacific. We took no

prisoners. The Japs feared us with a passion. We had a tough time on Capton Hill the japs had a track and rolled the gun back and forth and it was difficult to knock out. The first night on the hill 150 japs were moving in on us. We were all tense. We were dug in and had trip wires out front attached to flares which went up and lit up the whole area. Everybody was shooting low about a foot above the ground, it was raining hard mud filled our fox holes. We were miserable, the Japs didn't make it to our positions. What it was was several pigs were out there sitting off the flares. The Japs probably heard us doing so much shooting, they chickened out, the pigs escaped unhurt.

One night on the hill three of us in a big fox hole and I felt something crawling up my leg, it was a 10 inch centipede. A guy from Louisiana wanted some mosquito dope. I had several bottles I gave him one, he lost it somewhere one night in the fox hole, he wanted some more and I wouldn't give him any and he threatened to shoot me. I had boxed him several times and had always beaten him and he didn't like me after that I had to keep an eye on him and I thought he might shoot me. So I wasn't caught off guard, I figured I'd get him first, his name was Butcher.

We moved off the hill after several days and took dynamite charges and blew the caves up with the Japs in them. They were buried alive. We ran into Jap resistance on another hill my Sargent Wanted 10 volunteers to bring out the wounded, he picked me for one he hated me this was a suicide mission to charge into the japs with stretchers to bring out our wounded. My captain said he'd go with us we the ground and crawled pulling the stretchers with us. We didn't have any grenades, only pistols. I heard the Captain yell and saw him grab his neck and the blood was all over him and he went down. Pringle and I was shook up by a loud explosion close by both losing our helmets. We heard screams from our buddies as they were killed by either our artillery rounds or the mortars from the Japs in front of us. They had deep holes they were in with ladders that they could pop up and go down so when we bombarded them with artillery they would go down and when we began the advance they climbed up to the top of the hole and lit their flares. Simms my best buddy tried to belt a machine gun up as we crawled forward, this was one of our guns. The gunner had been killed the Japs nailed him through the head, they dropped smoke in on us for a screen and we were able to crawl back out.

The japs cleared out during the night and I helped carry the dead out. The

were tossed on trucks like cord wood and I can see them yet the truck loaded with dead American Soldiers, their arms and legs dangling over the sides they were taken back to the beach and buried.

One day we came upon a scene that was terrible, our probing squad had been ambushed by Japs, the lay scattered all about their bodies all bloated up one guy was only wounded and he crawled back in some brush to smoke and evidently the Japs saw him and he was riddled. After the third day this hardened you and you got used to the death you saw it every day and wondered when you would be next.

One day I saw our P38 fighters get into it with some Jap fighters, it looked like the Japs were getting away but our P-38 caught up with them and gave them bursts from 50 cal machine guns and down they went. What a sight.

The Japs were coming in landing craft behind us. The people were praying for us in the states our Navy got Wind of all this. Somehow there was a big battle in the Leyte Gulf. We could see the flashes from the battleships big guns. They sank many of the Japanese ships and killed their landing troops by the thousands. If they would have succeeded in getting a foothold behind us we wouldn't be here today.

We were on the front lines for over two months. We ate our food which were 'C' rations had to cup our hands over the food to keep the flies off sometime we ate near the swollen bodies of Japs, all bloated up and the flies all over them. We filled our canteens from running streams of water and found after we had drunk our fill we found dead Japanese soldier dead in the water upstream half decomposed having been killed by our Artillery.

We pulled back for a few days rest. I layed down on some bag of clothing near a old Catholic Church. I slept all day all night and woke up the next day. I was so tired we slept in fox holes two men to the hole, one slept one hour then changed watch with the other, the japs liked to slip in and jump your fox hole and put a knife or throw a grenade in on you. The Japs like to get drunk on Sake which is Whiskey made from rice they would charge our line in waves at different intervals. We would set up in a big circle the rifleman in fox holes which made up the round circle machine guns 30 cal, and Garand rifles. Also our 37millimeter cannons loaded with cannister ammo large shells like that of a shot gun the shot shell the inside had 75 ball bearings packed in resin so when it was fired it covered a

wideswath maybe 10 yds wide. Like shooting Ducks when the Japs charged many could be wiped out at one time. We had infrared guns just came out. We could see them and they couldn't see us.

One night we had barbed wire strung out in front about 50 yards. We tied cans half full of rocks so if any japs came in contact with the wire the rocks would rattle in the cans and we would open up with machine gun fire. That night the cans rattled but on one fired . Thank God a small philippino boy had got into it and couldn't get out. He begin to yell so we got him loose and his life was spared. The small kids didn't wear clothes at all, theirs hoes were made from coconut plam leaves and framework was bamboo poles, they sat on the floor to eat their beds were mats with mosquitot nets drooped down over them. A lot of Malaria was around. The mosquitoes were everywhere it was so hot in the jungle the sweat would just pur off of you, snakes, lizzards and strange insects of all kinds, there was lepericy, water flukes in the water which made you swell up like a pregant women which would finally kill you. elephant disease caused from mosquitoes where your legs would swell up theres times their normal size.

One day a phillipino came in and wanted to borrow a rifle he said he knew where a Jap sniper was locate. We gave him one and in about an hour he brought the rifle back and to prove he had shot the Jap, he cut the Japs penis off. Had it all rolled up in a bloody rag and showed us all.

One day 25 of us went out on a patrol that was at the end of our fighting to see if we could come in contact with any Japs. We blackened our faces owre no stell helments and took nothing along that would rattle. We walked in single file on one could talk only hand signals were used. Wer about 10 yards apart so if we were ambushed we wouldn't all be killed. I was the last man. All at once hell broke loose up front. I dived into the underbrush expecting the worst. Our lead man had come upon two sleeping Japs along the path. We were on. Both were very thin and sickly looking. The next day we went on another patrol dep in the Jungle. We could hear a hammering noise coming from within a small clearing up ahead our first scout crawled up so he could see what it was. He came back and said there was 6 Japs eating sweet potatoes sitting on a log their rifles were lening against the log so didn't know we were anywhere near so we decided to ship into two groups and form a 'L'. the group to the north would suddenly raise up after crawling into position and fire straight south into the Japs. The rest of us had crawled straight south, if any them ran east they would be killed by our group. The guys on the north side had

done a good job after the firing we went in to see the results. The Japs had all been killed, here were just small groups left here and there and this was the end of the Japanese on Ie. So we begin to get new equipment and rested up for our next big battle to come on April 1st, Okinawa.

I remember so well that day April 1st our battle ships were busy shelling the island, our planes were bombing the island. We were lowered into the landing craft and headed for the middle of the island, the Marines were to take the north half the 96th Division was to go across the island then go straight south this was where all the Japs were. The Marines had but nothing to speak of. We went ashore and met no resistance and thought what a picnic this is. Where are the Japs? Well we didn't have to wait long before we found out they had all pulled back to the south side expecting us to land on the south side not in the center as we did. They hadn't expected this at all.

We soon came to where three or four tanks were their tracks were blown off the fellows in the tanks were out of their tanks and were crouched behind them peering around and were firing into a couple of houses which were burning. They yelled at us to watch out there were Japs inside. Which had fired on them and blown their tracks off their tanks. Evidently the Japs had committed suicide inside. We were crawling low around the houses and advanced forward, we came across several Japs that had been blown into several pieces by our artillery several Japs ahead were trying to make it over the crest of a hill. They were running and falling down everybody stood and watched them and let them get away it looked so funny them to use over the next ridge.

We came to a village we had to go through the houses to see that nothing was there. I almost shot one of our own guys who had gone upstairs and I could see straw coming down through a crack one of our Captains was killed in this search by our own men. This happened a lot. We soon came to a hill that was infested with Japs. The guys to our own left were pinned down and several were killed by our own heavy guns begin pounding the Japs positions. I crawled with the rest of the guys. It's a wonder none of us were hit. We pulled back and dug in for the night our big guns and mortars whelled Japanese positions all night. About 3 AM in the morning about 15 Japs and Okinawa's tried to slip through our position. We killed all but two or three older men whose legs almost shot off. They grounded until day light when they were taken care of by the Medics. One of my buddies buried an old man who was with the Japs.

He was a native of the Island, poor old guy, a lot of innocent people were killed trying to get back to safety. They didn't think we would spare any of their lives.

The next morning we slowly moved up blasting away with heavy mortar and artillery fire. I followed a tank stayed close behind it like a fool, I wasn't thinking they drew heavy fire from machine guns. We withdrew to the rear and dug in while the tanks stayed out in front shelling Jap pill-boxes, my buddies had captured ponies and had young pigs with their legs tied, chickens, etc. that they were going to eat later on. We hadn't dug our holes too deep every body thought we had pulled back far enough and were safe, when all at once the Japs had found the range on us with their artillery and mortars. The guys were digging like hell and so was I. Chickens, pigs, and ponies were running every which way. We just got dug in good and word was passed down it's too hot for us here. We're going to attack Jap positions in the next two hours.

My feet began to bother me so I took my shoes off and the skin came off my feet clear up to my ankles and both feet. I yelled for some ointment from the Medics so I could go on and the Medics said Captain come and look at PFC Howard's feet and he did and said we're going to have to send you to the rear. You can't fight in the shape you're in and I had Jungle rot. I hadn't had a change of socks for so long wading through mud it had made them the way they were.

They put me in a truck with several other wounded and one shell shocked guy who kept yelling let out and I'm going to kill them all. Two guys had to hold him down.

We were taken back to the beach and were put on a hospital ship and begun to wish I was back on land the Japs had taken their entire airforce and were trying to do all the ships in. Our boat was hit with machine gun fire several ships were hit by suicide planes and were burning. You could see the tracer bullets from our shells as they were being fired at the Jap planes some were being hit and were exploding around us.

Our ship was painted white and had a Red Cross on it, the Japs weren't supposed to attack such a vessel, this was international agreements between countries. But wasn't always honored. Which didn't make any difference to the Japs. This ship I was on stayed in the midst of the group for five days picking up wounded until we were filled up. At the end of 5 days we

headed out and I didn't know for where. Every morning for the next 7 or 8 days their were soldiers who had died during the night from their wounds they were in mattress covers weighted down with lead, the bugle was blown, prayers said by the Chaplain, the boards tilted up and you could hear the splash as their bodies hit the sea water.

We ran into a typhoon, the ship bounced around so I thought we were going to sink and prayed. We wouldn't these things make you a religious person in a hurry. The port holes were all closed, you were seasick throwing up all over the place, this lasted all day and one night. When it calmed down the next day we saw a big mine floating straight ahead if this had hit us during the typhoon, we would have been sunk, a sailor tried to hit it by firing a rifle at it but couldn't hit it. We veered way around it. On a Red Cross ship no big guns are carried on them, a rifle was all they had.

Well in a day or two can't remember we came to Saipan I was put in a hospital in a Jungle clearing and my feet were to be soaked 3 times a day. The hospital had all kinds of wounded guys.

That night firing broke loose, I jumped out of bed and so did everybody else. The 69th division were colored soldiers claiming they were firing on Jap infiltrators the fight had been over on Saipan for sometime but there were still Japs out there in the Jungle and they infiltrated in for food and sometimes killed our soldiers. I felt uneasy here in a hospital with no gun. With colored troops protecting the hospital area. I was in the hospital for three weeks and they said my feet were okay and I was sent out with 25 other guys to set up a trap for Japs still on the loose. We were gone for two or three days, had marched 35 to 50 miles in the excursion. When I got back to the barracks I pulled my socks off and off came all the skin again and back to the hospital back to the foot soaking. This went on until the war was over and they said we'll have to send you back to the states to a cool climate. We can't cure you here that was the best news. I was so glad so I didn't get to rejoin my Division after I left my outfit on Okinawa.

I went one day to a high wire stockade here on Saipan close to where I was soaking my feet and within the wire enclosure was the sergeant who had volunteered me for the suicide mission to carry off the wounded. He had had a nervous breakdown and was with all the other crazy acting characters in the stockade. Which was guarded by Military Police. I talked to him he didn't act insane until one of the nurses came near him then he would begin to act unnatural. This was an act I think to help get him

out. This was the last time that I saw him.

Well the war was over, they sent my Division to Japan for one of the occupantional forces. I was scheduled to go back to the states. So was loaded on a boat. We arrived near Ellis Island in California. We checked our surplus goods in and I had to turn in my pistol wish I had kept it like I did the big Tank Shell I still have. I poured the powder out of it and slid it uup my sleeve and carried it into the barracks. Could have blown up the place. Slipped it into my suitcase and brought it home on furrflow one time. That was when I was in training in the states. If I'd been caught with that I'd still be in Jail.

After we checked in our surpluses we were sent to Fort Logan, CO in Denver and was discharged. I bought a ticket on the train for Kansas City Missouri and hitched a ride to Tarkio Missouri. I caught a ride with a trucker he was drunk and he scared me so I asked him to let me out after the first mile & caught a ride with another fellow in a 1939 Buick. He took me to Burlington Junction Missouri. Where i walked 20 miles to Tarkio with a big barracks bag filled with clothews.

My dad was up town that day waiting on the bus which he thought I was on and Mom was someplace else, can't remember where. When I walked in the house no one was around to greet me. We lived in a small house not the best. Dad had been sick. They had used my allotment to live on. Now I was back they wouldn't have this so I found a job right away so I could support the family, not many fellows were back home just yet. There was lots of partys and celebrations drinking etc.

Dad began to feel better he got a job at the popcorn construction * at the College doing construction work of all kinds and I decided to go to College at Tarkio. During the summers I wuld to Nebraska, Dakota, Montana. I worked in Wheat field shocking oats, wheat, ghreshing pitching bundles, etc.

In 1950 I finished college and Married Frances R. Vanmeter. I met her in the Candy Kitchen. I was painting and sanding floors & didn't try to find a teaching job at this time. I was making more money doing this than I could make at teaching. I was doing this work for seven years it began bothering me I I could see it wasn't the best for my family. We had two children, first Michael Wayne Howard than Katherine Gail Howard. We lived in some ratty homes during this period of time, I trapped during the

Winter to help meet our bills. I like to fly the piper cubs & U the old double Wing Serman at the Air Port. Did so many wild stunts in them I began to have bad dreams about them so quit this as my recreation it got so I couldn't afford it. Anyway painting was getting old and my wife said you have a B.A. Degree in teaching. Why don't you look for a school. We saw a add in the Des Moine paper. Wanted Basketball coach for Boys and Girls. Social Studies and track they had 16 students. I applied for it and got the job. There was 3 of us. The Supt., science teacher and myself. We lived at Tabor, IA drive 7 miles to and from there everyday. My salary was \$4,300.00 for 9 months.

This job was about to come to an end. They joined us with Glenwood and I wasn't needed so I applied for a Job at Henderson, IA. This was the same set up. We had once more teacher here. This school soon folded up and I was there for 2 years. The wnet to Nishna Valley. So I was looking for another job so I went to Silver City, Iowa. This school folded up after one year. They went to Glenwood. So I was looking again & applied to Mr. Rutenbeck at Avoha and got the job here. I've been here for 26 years. I was to start here at \$4,600.00 and when I retired here in 1987 I was getting \$22,500.00

The Supt I worked under after Mr. Rutenbeck left for 24 years was Gordon Ohms. He was a wild short tempered guy who was hell to work for. Made life miserable for us all. He would have been a good oven man in the concentration camps. He retired the year after I did. All the years that I worked here in Avoca, I've had to work doing painting jobs to make ends meet. We built a new home in 1974. I did most of the building myself.

Letter written by Grover Wayne Howard to the Tarkio Bicentennial regarding North Polk School

I remember when the County Nurse used to visit our school, her name was Mr. Strobel. She checked our heads for lice and gave us our shots, I always hated this. I still have all my nine point pens. We received each year for all our required shots., etc. I remember the bob sled the purtles used to use to get us to school in when the roads were snowed shut. The fences were cut and we would bo through the fields. We alwasys took our sled too & at noon we would see who could slide the fartherest. We liked to walk home by Farmer City Store. We could stope in buy candy bars, ice cream and cookies. Mrs. Anna Rolf ran the store at that time. We had

several good plays at school at xmas time. We liked that time we always took a couple of weeks off to practice for this so we got out of some our studies. I'm happy to hear North Polk is being restored as I came to Tarkio Which I often do yet old memories will flash back into my mind of my childhood.

Grover Howard
Jr. High Social Studies Teacher, Avoca, IA

"What I remeber about, North Polk School"

I moved to the North Polk School District from the South Dale District and begun my fifth grade year, Mrs Nocton was our teacher that was in 1936. I can still see the students now & I can even remember where most of them set. The 1st graders were seated near the windows. Jr. Miller, path Chaney, Darrell Diggs, Keith Howard, Hr. Herron, Dean Herron, Marjorie Kemper, Grover Howard, Dean Purtle, Moris Purtle, Majorie Boestmer, Keith Boetoner, Don Henisand, his brother? Henson, Dean Kemper, Wilman Broermann, Willis Kemper, Pearl Wessler, Clarence Wessler, Dale Simpson, Ffreda Asberry, Betty Herron, Warren Vete, Ivan Rolf. Were all students while I was there, We didn't have any lights in the school I often wonder how we managed to read our books on dark days, but we managed. Mrs. Nocton was well liked by all her students & I never heard nay student ever say he or she didn't like her. I used to help her clean up at night and help fire the furnance. I remember she walked to school one day the roads were drifted from the Lutheran Church clear to North Polk School. She stopped by our house which was two miles from the school. I wasn't ready but I told her I would be along later. She had only a pair of boots, a skirt and silk hose. She made it the 1st mile and half way throught the next. She couldn't go the last half mile when I caught up with her the drifts were waist deep. She had given up and I broke the snow ahead of her going back telling her to come. Sometimes leading her by the hand. Finally we made it. I fired the old coal furnance and ran down to Mrs. Carl Rolfs, she came up and put snow packs on her legs which were almost frozen.

I remember in the hall we had old karo syrup pails for our lunch. We brought our canned food which was put in a pan of hot water on the furnance. We had a old water fountain, it was made of stone. We had little tin cups which you could push shut. We had to line up before lunch, wash our hands with green soap and dried with paper towels. In the winter we played fox and geese in the snow, had forts and had snow ball fights. In the summer we played andy over, croquet, volley ball and marbles.

The following is written by Mother, Francis Raylene Howard

May 23, 2000

This is going to be hard for me to do, but feel I must finish what my dear husband was working.

My dear wonderful husband "Grover Wayne Howard Jr." died Jan 31st 1998. He was the best husband for 48 years and he was also a terrific father for Michael & Katherine and he dearly loved all 5 of his grand-kids.

There can never be any one to take his place.

We had fun getting apple trees pin oak trees and cherry trees & bushes for our new home (year 1974).

We moved in Oct 1974, still had woodwork and etc. to finish. Early Dec 1974 we had carpet put in the front room. Kitchen & dining area hallway and bath room.

Sept 1975 (Kathy) Katherine got engaged to Jeff Hansen from Walnut, Iowa, son of Vincent and Phylsis Hansen

they were married Nov 15-1975 at Trinity Lutheran Church - Avoca, IA.

We bought extra lots south of us had big gardens down there. Grover built a big garage from the lumber from his Dads home in Tarkio, Mo. He also built a brown storage shed. He later sold this to Mark Sieh. He built a red barn storage shed.

We also bought an extra lot north of our property here. Huge gardens were planted each year.

One year Grover had 600 tomato & pepper plants out plus squash, beans, and etc. We sold a lot and I did lots of canning and freezing garden produce.

Mike met Patty Sayre, daughter of David and Betty Sayre of Cherokee, IA. They were married Dec. 31, 1977 at Cherokee, IA. Patty a 3rd grade school teacher. Mike was a EMC Engineer at John Deere.

Grover was a Jr. High teacher, drove the school bus also always had paint jobs every summer plus all his gardens.

Grover helped with Boy Scouts, Camp Outs, and canoe trips.

Grover built many items for our home. The dining hutch, 3 dry sink flower planter ?, refinished his parents antique bed, several bed side tables, coffee tables and (2 sofa end tables coffee table & foot stools).

He saw this set at Mike & Patty's. Came home and made them. I have them in the basement and family room.

He built a red barn for storage on our home place here.

When we found out Kathy was expecting, Grover made a beautiful cradle and cute rocking horses. This cradle was used by all 5 gradkids. He sold several small cute rocking horses.

He helped with the house Kathy & Jeff bought, painting, roof and etc.

We helped Mike & Patty & Kids move several times.

Grover went on lots of fishing trips to South Dakato, Minn, and Canada.

He trapped every year. Walked many miles every day. This helped to keep his Type II diabetes under control.

Grover went with Mike on several business trips.

He helped Mike get started on the 40 acres farm where Mike started the Liberty Labs business.

Grover built sheds, pulled antenna ropes. Kathy helped with Grover on the 1st big building.

Grover & Kathy helped build a 4 room 2 story addition on Mike & Patty's house.

Grover taught school here for 26 years, 30 years teaching all total.

He retired in May 1987. He had eleven years of retirement.

He trapped and went hunting right up to the last few days.

He also started carving canes and small head figures. He was always drawing especially hunting, pictures, nature and funny cartoons about his hunting friends.

Our grandchildren have been a great joy.

Amy Gail Hansen born April 4, 1978

Laura Sue Howard born Nov 9th, 1979

Kurt Jeffrey Hansen born Aug 13, 1981

Nathan Wayne Howard born Oct 21, 1982

Steven Wayne Howard born July 24, 1987

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