

FAMILY HISTORY: Jerry and Mary Johnson Written 1989

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know (But Were Afraid to Ask!) About Our Family

Well kids, let's start with my maternal grandparents, because I know more about them than I do about my dad's folks.



This is Timothy S. Howell, my Grandfather and my Mother, Nellie

According to my notes (and certainly not documented) the Howell family came to the United States from England in 1640 (which is almost too early to be believed.)

Then, the family moved from Long Island to Blooming Grove in Orange County, New York in 1741.

According to Clyde's Family Bible, this is Grandad Howell's family tree:

Hezekiah Howell

Frances T. Howell

Children:

- 1) Jeremiah Howell 1798
- 2) Hezekiah Howell Jr. 1801
- 3) Nathaniel Howell 1803
- 4) Matthew Howell 1805
- 5) John Howell 1806
- 6) Mary B Howell 1808
- 7) Andrew T. Howell 1810
- 8) Gabriel Howell 1812
- 9) Simeon Howell 1813
- 10) Andrew T. Howell 1816

Did you notice that there were two Andrew T's? Probably the first one named after relatives died. So, when another little boy was born, the same name was used again. (They didn't waste anything – not even names!) I think that this last Andrew T. may have been the one the children called "Gar".

This last Andrew T. bought a farm in Kendall County, Illinois, in 1853. Many of their neighbors in Illinois also came from Orange County, so the names of their new little towns were the same as the towns they left in New York. They probably came in small groups, in covered wagons.

The land they were the most anxious to have was covered by hard wood trees to be used in building. This is the reason so many names of places ended in "Grove" – Au Sable Grove, Na-au-say Grove. It wasn't until the forests were depleted that farming began.

The land looks as flat as the palm of your hand, but the pioneers soon discovered that the "knolls" were the only parts of the land that could be farmed. Seeds planted in the "hollows" were washed out by spring and summer rains. (Later they buried large tile pipes under the surface of the soil and excess water was siphoned into rivers.)

An influx of pioneers arrived in the 1820's and 30's and began staking out their claims. The only problem was that people were already living there, and objected to being driven off their land. The Indians – Sac, Fox and Pattawattami Tribes considered the land theirs. Communication was difficult. The white settlers were scaring off the wild animals and putting dams on the rivers, making hunting and fishing impossible.

There were many incidents in which settlers were ambushed, their buildings burned, and in some cases women and children kidnapped or killed. After 15 years of so, however, the Indians gave up and moved west. The Howells probably missed most of this. By 1835 the land was in the hands of white settlers.

Now here is Grandad Andrew T. Howell's family:

Andrew T. Howell 1816

Mary (Heard) Howell 1813

Children:

- 1) Jab (?) T. Howell 1841
- 2) Hezekiah Howell 1843
- 3) Rebecca Howell 1846
- 4) Timothy S. Howell 1848 GRANDDAD!!



Here's Grandma Howell. Her family were the Kelloggs.

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Now, shift gears! Grandma's father was George W. (for "Washington" what else?) Kellogg. He was born on Christmas Day in 1811, in Rutland County, Vermont. He loaded his family and goods into a covered wagon and headed to Illinois in 1835. He taught in one of the first schools in Kendall County and then bought a farm.

I think that his farm is the one we visited when we went to see Uncle Alvin and Aunt Myra. (The farm is still owned by Kelloggs)

The Kelloggs:

George W. Kellogg

Sarah Gleason Kellogg

Children:

- 1) Sherman Gleason Kellogg
- 2) Robert Kellogg
- 3) Anna Sarah (4/26/1849) – GRANDMA HOWELL!!
- 4) Ellen M. Hawk
- 5) Frank P.
- 6) & 7) (Uncle) Alvin and (Aunt) Alice

Sherman (#1 above) married Belle Thompson who became Clark Mottin Jr's grandmother. Clark's parents died and he was raised by his granny.

Here's an example of what makes a family tree shake! Remember that the Kelloggs were Grandma's family. (My mother came in the next generation.)

How soon ever, (Aunt) Alice (Alvin's twin sister) married a man by the name of Litsey and they had a daughter, Edna. She became my dad's first wife! In 1902. They had two children, Dave (1905) and Thomas (1908). Edna and David often visited the Howell farm. Of course, Edna called the Howells "Uncle Tim and Aunt Anna".

Dave was probably 3 or 4 at the time Thomas was born (1908?). Edna contracted some infection and died in 1909 and within weeks, Thomas died too. These were the hardest years in Dad's life.

Dave was sent to some sort of boarding church school and he was a mighty sad disoriented little boy.

Eventually, however, David began to live again, and who should he go to for advice and companionship? The Howells, and he found not only Uncle Timothy and Aunt Annna, but their daughter, Nellie!

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Everyone knew it was SERIOUS when he went out to the school where Nellie was teaching and offered to sharpen the kids' pencils. They were married on April 26th (Grandma's birthday) 1913. Little Dave was about the happiest little kid around, and he and Mom always got along well.

David had to begin calling Uncle Tim "Dad", and Aunt Anna "Mother". He had married his first wife's cousin. I guess there are no laws against that!



The Howell House on Mt. Pisgah Farm



1907? 1908? Aunt Mae, Mom and Uncle Charley

Grandad Howell was a man with very high ideals and as honest as the day was long. He and Grandma got the names of German farmers who wanted to emigrate to the United States. He would correspond with them until he was convinced that they were serious about continuing in farming and then would send them money for their transportation. He had a little tenant house for them to live in and he and Grandma did everything they could to help them adjust to life in a new country. Often after they had worked for two or three years, they would be ready to buy a farm and start out on their own.



Example of an early 1900 farm kitchen.

Grandma was strait-laced in every sense of the word. Guess who as the president of the W.C.T.U.? And the Ladies Aid? But also, guess who used to take children from the Chicago slums out to the farm for their summer's vacation? And last, but not least, she raised turkeys and with "her" money bought Haviland China. A gal like that can't be all bad!

From Grandma, unfortunately we probably inherited asthma. In her day there were only a couple of treatments for the disease. You could induce vomiting, or you could collect a certain kind of weed, dry it, crumble it up, burn it and inhale the fumes. Aunt Mae told me that when they left Vermont, they carefully tucked seeds from these medicinal weeds (labelia?) in their bag of “necessaries”. Maybe other members of the family were bothered by allergies, but I remember Grandma having to “set a spell” when she ran out of breath.

It was believed that asthma skipped generations. None of Grandma’s children had it, and every one of her grandchildren did!

I often think of how hard these people had to work and how few conveniences they had to work with. No inside plumbing, so no bathrooms, electricity, washing machines, sewing machines ----- . So many things had to be done by hand. The picture of the kitchen on the preceding page could have been Grandma’s. The stove was the “center” of the room. In the winter it was the warmest place in the house for the children to dress. Breakfast would be cooking, hot water would be waiting in the reservoir on the right side. And, if the season were spring, behind the stove in a shoe box lined with old rags, there would be a little “runt” pig soaking in a bit of “TLC”.

The Howells

Timothy S. (born in 1848)

Anna S. (born in 1849)

Children

1) Nellie Elizabeth (3/8/79) (My Mom!)

2) Mary Tuthill (10/3/83)

3) Charles G. (9/12/85)

Most all of the Howells and Kelloggs remained in the area – many are still there today.

Mother

My mother went to a one-room country school for the first eight or nine years. Then she had to move into Yorkville to attend high school. She had room and board with a family there and on Friday afternoon Granddad would come to get her (with horse and buggy) and take her home for the weekend.

When she graduated from high school (in 1899) she was considered well-prepared to go back to her one room school (Pletcher?) as the teacher. As long as Grandma Howell helped her with the 8th grade math, she got along fine.

She had to drive a couple of miles to school. Bird, her horse, was plump and lazy and although she would start off at a smart trot, would soon slow down to a leisurely walk.

This would irritate Mom. So, when they got to a spot where some willow trees grew, she would order Bird to stop and she would get out, cut a good little willow switch, get back into the buggy and when she said Giddy up! she would emphasize it with the switch. She'd show that lazy Bird who was boss!

Sooo after several painful repetitions, Bird got wise. She would start out from the farm at a trot, then slow down to a more comfortable pace. But when they got near the dratted willows, she'd put on such a burst of speed that the buggy would be skidding along on two wheels ---- and when the willows were safely behind them, put on the brakes, and W A L K to school. (Mom, seething in the driver's seat.)

Grandad finally settled the issue by cutting a switch and putting it in the buggy before Mother left for school.

I think she got \$40 a month for teaching. She later attended DeKalb Normal School, but didn't ever get a degree. She taught in Aurora for a couple of years, but most of her stories about teaching were about her "one -room school".



"Mary, This is where your mother taught school." (Note from Aunt Hazel)

"Here is a picture of the old Union School in Na-Au-Say Township in Kendall County, Illinois. The building was moved by the Historical Society. Maybe someday you'll visit it. The Francis Lyon Farm is owned by the Kendall County Hist. Society – on route 71 south of the Emma Rd. The note on the picture is from Aunt Hazel. The Society got very interested in one-room schools, bought this one & had it moved to the Lyon Farm.

In about 1910 Mom went by railroad out to Marble to see a high school friend. Here is a picture she took out there. She also took a snapshot of the Crystal Mill.



The caption on the picture "Between Redstone and Marble" is thought to be written by Mom.

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My mom and dad lived in Elgin, Illinois and then moved to Columbus, Ohio. He started out in the Methodist Church and then transferred to the Congregational Church, mainly because he could be more independent in his choice of location.

He and mother had 3 children. A baby boy, Harold, was born stillborn. Then I came along---dazzling my dad who was one of 5 sons, himself and who had had 3 boys (Dave and Thomas by his first wife and Harold). Then four years after me-----Fritz (Frederick Timothy).

Mother's sister, Mae, never married and Uncle Charley married Hazer Gable, and they had three children, Dorothy (died when she was three or four) Clyde and Libbie Ann. I was born in Columbus and Fritz made his debut in Kokomo, Indiana.



Fritz and I (about 1923, ages approximately 6 and 2)

Father



Frederick T. Bent

I wish I knew more about Dad's family than I do. He was proud of the fact that he was Scotch and I remember that he talked about Edinburgh. (Maybe one or both of his parents came from there.) I used to think that Edinburgh was probably somewhere near Boston!

He also talked about Nova Scotia, which wouldn't be surprising as many Scots lived there. The name means New Scotland. Then at least part of the family moved to Boston – specifically Newton. (How is this for scientific genealogy – based on supposition?)

I think Dad's father was a shoe repairman, but he evidently died long before Dad made contact with our family. Grandma Bent died shortly after I was born.

Dad was one of five brothers. Fred and Irving (how do you get Jack as a nickname of Irving?) were the older brothers and Ernest (E.D.) and Bill were the younger ones.

Dad worked his way through college, chewing on tea leaves to keep awake so he could study.

It must have been about this time that he was threatened with tuberculosis, so he dropped everything and made his way out to Denver. There he met a young fellow who had the same health problems and they pooled their money, bought camping equipment and spent the summer in the mountains. (This is why I'd love to look up the signature we saw in the register of the old hotel in Leadville.)

He worked for YMCA for a while, flirted with the idea of "reading law: but gradually was drawn to the ministry. He started out in the Methodist Church, but transferred to the Congregational because there was very little "snoopervision". Everything was decided by vote of the local church – no hierarchy! My dad was a great minister to have for a father. Our home life was no different than that of any of my friends (except we probably had more fun)

Dad was smart. He was elected to the Phi Beta Kappa, but didn't have the money to get the key. So, when Fritz became a Phi Beta, he said he'd share his key with Dad. Dad was a popular speaker and often was called to act as a mediator when factories had strikes.

I thought he was good looking. His eyebrows were the first thing you noticed. They were long and curly. The first thing Dad did in the morning when he stumbled out of bed was take one eyebrow in each hand and pull them out straight. One time a barber cut them back and when they began to grow again, they were just like a horizontal butch and kept pushing his glasses off.

And we all know that Mary and Fritz put little curlers in them. Mom also added to this story: On Sunday afternoons Grandpa would like to take a nap on the couch. One Sunday Mom and Fritz took the opportunity to put the curlers in his eyebrows. Unfortunately, one of his lady parishioners unexpectedly came by and Grandpa woke up without thinking and answered the door! You can imagine the lady's surprise seeing the curlers! Grandpa Bent also wrote a beautiful letter to Steve as a newborn welcoming him to the world.

Dave, my older brother, graduated from Ohio State with a degree in Agriculture. He was married that same day to his girlfriend, a nurse by the name of Gertrude. They had two little kids, Tom and Ruth Ann. Dave and Gertrude split after a few years.

Dave moved to Oshkosh and began teaching science in our H.S. I distinctly remember that one fine winter day he came home with a snake coiled around his wrist. Mother took one look and lost it! And Dave took the snake to the basement. Before he could really uncoil him, Mr. S slid off and disappeared behind the dill pickles! Mom took a year's leave of absence from the scene and the next Spring, when Dave was in the basement for a cigarette, who should come sashaying out from under the coal pile but the snake! Big celebration that night!

After three or four years, Dave met and married Emma Huffman, who was going to school at Oshkosh State Teachers College. Dave and his new wife went to live on our farm, outside of Mt. Sterling, Ohio.

The farm and all the buildings were run-down and the Depression was in full swing. The "barn" everyone said was a section of the house. The outstanding features of the old house were the really beautiful circular staircase and the six fireplaces, 3 on opposite sides of the house. There was one in the kitchen, one in the bedroom above it and one in the basement. The story was that slaves were sheltered there and that the house had been a stop on the Underground Railroad...whatever!

Dave and Emma eventually had five children, Dave III, Edna, Sandy, Billie and Jim. They never had enough money and they didn't discipline their children, and those kids turned out to be the most wonderful, thoughtful young people you ever saw! Every time Fritz and I saw them, we'd go home, rolling up our sleeves, determined to make our over, so they'd be as good as Dave's.

Emma developed rheumatoid arthritis and died after several years. Dave, a farmer at heart, ended up as a teacher. He loved writing – he was a smart fellow who never really found his niche – except as a wonderful parent.

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He re-married a nice little woman, Betty, and they had a good 6 or 7 years together in Maryland.



The three of us (Fritz, Dave and me) out at the farm “The Last Gasp on Mud Run”

Fritz was born restless. He was hitch-hiking from Oshkosh to Columbus, on to Yorkville when he was in high school, and all of his life he enjoyed being in far-away places – Lebanon, Belgium, Turkey.

He really didn’t wake up academically until he began going to Ohio State. It was a big change after Teachers College!

Dad had had a stroke forcing a move to the farm. Then he began recovering to such an extent that he became the minister of a small church in Columbus.

After OSU and a stint in the Army, Fritz went to Chicago U for a Masters & eventually a PHD.

He married Nancy Pettengill and they went to Lebanon, and, subsequently, to Turkey and Belgium. Fritz thought his best work was done in American University in Beirut. He helped establish its School of Management and was its first director.



Mesa Lakes – Fritz, Jeff, Me and Mom and Steve

Fritz is one of the few people I know who dared to go swimming in Mesa Lake. He jumped in, and in the same motion jumped back into the boat.

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They had three children, Rodney who works at the Budget Management Office in Washington, Tim who is at Wake Forest College, and Laurie Angiolillo-Bent who is an attorney and lives with her family in Freehold, New Jersey.

Laurie and Joel's children are Carl, Julie (about the same age as Julian) and Gina.

“Dad’s 2 cents worth...”

My grandfather, Elmer Johnson served in the Union Army (Civil War) for four years. After he returned home, he and his wife had a little boy whom they called Thomas Elmer in 1870 and a little girl named Ada, who died at an early age.

When his parent’s death left him as an orphan, Thomas went to live with an Aunt Emma and her husband. They were less than kind to him and his childhood was not a happy one.

However, he met and married my mother, Margaret Maud Hartsuck in Albia, Iowa in November 1900. Dad had asthma and was particularly bothered in the Fall when all the pollens of the Iowa country side were at their worst. However, he became a partner in the Star Coal Mine and as long as he was underground, in the mine where he could escape the pollen, he was relieved of the asthma. He and Mother lived in a little place called Avery, where the mine was located.



My father, Thomas E. Johnson

Ruth and Harold were born in the house, in Avery, Ruth on January 23, 1902 and Harold, January 19, 1904. The family moved into Albia in 1905, and Ed was born there in 1906.

Because of a mine accident and a subsequent lawsuit (and probably no liability insurance), Dad went to Colorado and bought some property near Fort Morgan, moving his family there in 1907. In this area all of the crops were grown by “dry-and farming”. In other words, dependent upon rain.

The first year there was an abundance of rain and they raised good crops and LOTS of watermelons. Dad would load the melons and Harold and Ed in the wagon and drive thru the streets of the town. They attracted a lot of attention and fruit sold quickly. But lack of rain and crop failures forced him to sell the land and move back to Albia. It was there on August 20 of 1912 that I appeared on the scene.

The family moved to Strong, Colorado, in 1914, where my dad worked as foreman of the Sunnyside Mine. This mine shut down a year later and the family moved to Walsenburg, where Dad worked in a mine office as bookkeeper. Then he became ill with erysipelas and almost died.

While he as recovering, he picked up a newspaper and saw an ad paid for by a fruit grower in Palisade – Lee Toothaker. He encouraged people to come to “the beautiful Grand Valley” and invest in the new peach industry! (The Colorado River was called the Grand River at the time – hence “Grand Valley”. The change in name came in 1921).

Probably as a result of Mr. Toothaker’s ad, Dad moved to Grand Junction in 1917. He seemed to be comparatively free of asthma at the time, and was able to get a job pitching hay – which he couldn’t possibly have done in Iowa.

After securing a job in the Palisade Coal Mine, and renting a house on West Sixth Street in Palisade, he sent for us. We arrived one evening in August, lock, stock and barrel. The minute the train stopped, I spotted Dad and ran up the aisle of the train saying “I see my daddy!” And the first thing I did was eat too many peaches and have my first bout of “peach flu”.

From reading about all of the moves our family made, you must realize that my mother was adapting to new situations all of her life. When she was quite young, she was “apprenticed” to the town dressmaker. She loved sewing, baking, crocheting – any kind of hand work. Wherever she moved, she got her family settled in school and then became a member of the church and women’s organizations. She was the president of W.S.C.T. umpteen times.

When the family moved to Cameo, she was talked into running a boarding house. When I think of all the loaves of her wonderful home-made bread and pies and roasts (done in a cook stove, yet) I just have to take off my hat to this wonderful homemaker. (She also rated stars as a grandmother.)



Mary and my Mother, Margaret. (Not a good picture of Mom, we never saw her so stern)

Dad's health became a problem again and he spent many a night sitting up in a chair. Finally, they bought a ranch in Vineland and then eventually a 20 acre peach orchard on Orchard Mesa.

Ruth married Marion Echternach in 1920. They had two children, Thomas William in 1922 and Virginia Maurine.

Harold married Doris Campbell, and they moved to Rochester, New York, to be near Doris' parents. Harold worked as motorman and bus driver until 1942 when they moved back to Palisade. They had a daughter, Marilyn. Harold worked on the ranch, then bought one of his own. But Harold had all of the attributes of a salesman who could sell refrigerators to Eskimos. So, he went into the business of selling hearing aids.

Marilyn graduated from Palisade High School. She married Oliver Christenson and after several years of fruit farming, he entered the hearing aid business with Harold. They have two children, Mike and Michelle, and they now have three grandchildren, Abby Joy, Sam and Aaron.

Now, Ed! He graduated from C.U. in 1929, and had to turn down a job with Western Electric in Chicago, because his father had died and he was needed on the farm. He married Yvonne Hayes on June 5, 1930 in Palisade. Their daughter, Suzanne, was born on November 26, 1931, and Yvonne died of complications.

My mother and Ruth took over the care of the baby, and Ed taught school (in Palisade High) until 1942, when he and Ek bought a 36 acre fruit orchard.

Ed married Jane Hickock of Denver, a music teacher in the high school. They have since retired, and divide their time between Casa Grande, Arizona, and Palisade. (We began spending Sunday evening together about 40 years ago – and Sunday evening just isn't Sunday evening without them!)

I graduated from high school in 1931, and planned to enter C.U. in the fall – but the "Great Depression" hit Palisade. The price of peaches went down to about 25 cents a bushel, and many hundreds of bushels of peaches were allowed to fall on the ground.

I stayed at home and did the pruning. Ed began substituting for Wayne Aspinall in Palisade High School. It was a long winter.

Peaches brought a better price the next year, and I began attending classes at Grand Junction State Jr. College. The next year I was able to go to C.U. I met Mary Bent at a dorm dance in 1935, and we were married in 1939.



“Waitin’ for the Weddin’ “
(Back row – Harold, Dorris, Ed) (Front row – Me, Mom J, Marilyn)

We lived in Nucla for two years and enjoyed it. The town was so isolated, the residents had to make their own fun. There were many young people living there. We had dances and learned all kinds of card games, went hunting, took picnics and enjoyed activities at the high school.

In 1942 we moved to Boulder, where I was the Head Proctor in the Men's Dorm. Then came the infamous Dec. 7, (Pearl Harbor) and the Japanese Language School moved into the dorm and we moved out.

March 14, 1943, Steve arrived. We had gone to a bridge party the night before. One of the players sent us a card saying "I'm so glad that although you didn't make a grand slam last night, you made one this morning."

When the draft board made it clear that they were going to make a soldier out of me, we pulled up stakes and moved to Palisade – to a little house on W. 4th Street. Because we were working on the peach ranch, I was deferred for a year or so, but in March of 1945, we got the letter.



My enlistment at Camp Lee, VA

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After basic training at Ft. Lee in Petersburg, Virginia, we were sent to the Philippines, where I had an interesting job on an audit team for the reorganization of the Philippine Army.

In March 1946 I was discharged. It was great to be at home – even though 3 year old Steve, looked at me the first morning at home and asked “Who is that in bed with Mom? Mary’s Mom and Aunt stayed with Mary & Steve while I was away.

Jeffrey Allan was born, February 14, 1947, and Judith Eileen on August 29, 1949 to complete our family.

Mary taught while I was gone and when peaches failed us again, I went down to Appleton to teach. After a couple of years, I transferred to Palisade High School and in 1962 became principal. After 12 years in this job, I resigned. Ben was born the year before and so was Claire. Mary had resigned and was having entirely too good a time without me.



Dad when he was “the chief” of P.H.S.

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We bought the ranch on Orchard Mesa in 1954. We were both overwhelmed by the debt we had taken on (\$22,500 for the works!) But we thought it was a beautiful place to live and raise our three kids, and Ike, our little yellow dog. And it was!

Now, Steve and Ruth (plus Ben and Malia and assorted dogs) live in Rosamond, California. Judy and Ron (and Gretchen and Claire and Friskey) are in Glenwood Springs. Jeff and Jane (and Conor and Julian) live in Palisade near us.

What a good life this has been! Fifty years and still counting.

Mom's P.S.

Something else about the family that you might be interested in. Ever hear about the D.A.R. (Daughters of the American Revolution). Women back in my mother's day, were proud as anything if they were in DAR – because the organization researched your family to see if someone of your relatives “way back when” had fought in the Revolutionary War. The information was carefully documented: “On page _____ line _____ your relative _____ was in such and such a unit of the American Army. (British were definitely included out!) and participated in such and such a battle. In Mother's things, I found the document that they used as confirmation of the fact that a certain Phineas Heard, captain of Light Cavalry took some action against the enemy in the Revolution. Sooo, if you want to join the Daughters, you're a shoo-in.

The DAR shot itself in the foot by denying rights to Negroes. When Roosevelt was President, a very talented Negro woman was to give a concert in Washington and the DAR refused her the right to rent a hall. Sooo Eleanor stepped in and invited her to sing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Not much has been heard from the DAR since.

Also, we have the letter Ek wrote to Janet Dole about how his family took part in the Oklahoma Strip (a narrow piece of land overlooked by mistake) until after the original rush to get land. You'd love it.

Mom

ADDITIONAL FAMILY PICTURES



Emergency Pants (Jeff)



Grandma Johnson and Jeff



Seasons Greetings



from our house to your house

Judy, Steve and Jeff

1951?



Family Reunion 7/1984 at folk's house.

Back row – Steve, Jeff, Judy, Ron, Ruth

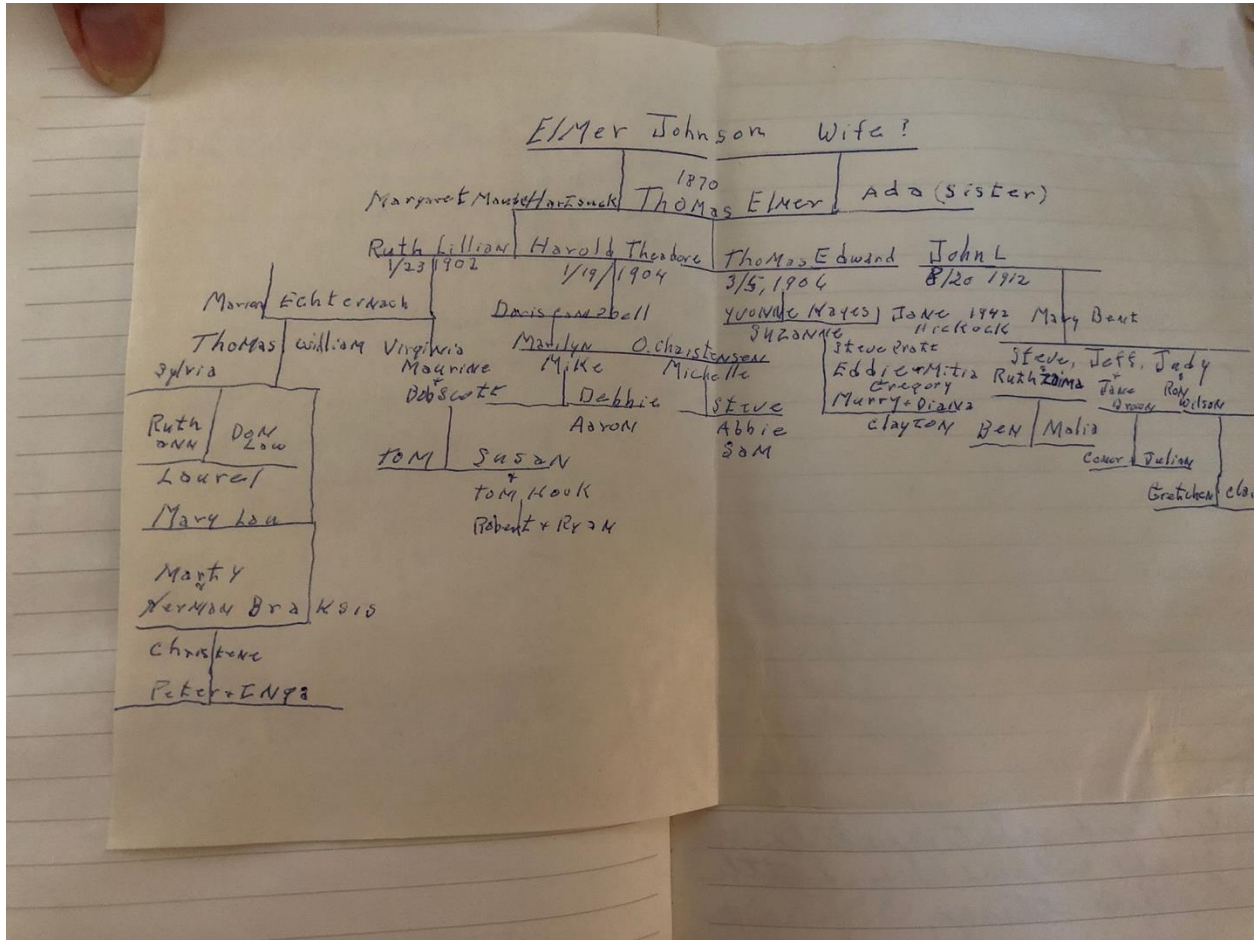
Front row – Malia, Jane, Ben, Gretchen, Claire, Conor



Steve and Ikey at Mom and Dad's about 1955



Steve, Judy and Jeff



Elmer Johnson Family Tree