

Born in the month of December on the 16th. in the year 1936. In the town of Nunda New York Eleven miles south of the town of Mt Morris and we lived in Dalton four miles south of Nunda at the southern tip of Livingston Co.

My mother Marion Hazel Hankinson was issue of Helen Hankinson and Hazel Talmadge. ~~My mother~~. My grandfather was of Norwegian & English extraction and my grandmother was of Scottish and Irish extraction.

My father Robert Bruce VanPoststrand was issue of Fred VanPoststrand and Mary Elizabeth Lyon. My grandfather was of Dutch and English extraction and my grandmother was of English extraction.

We lived in Dalton until the 2nd World ^{war} started. We lived in four different houses in that short time of five years.

Things I remember of that time are dogs for pets, chickens and how frightening a rooster can be to a very small boy. Especially when it flew up onto my head and pecked away at me while I screamed in terror.

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This happened up the street from where we lived. I had wandered there to watch some men drive a pipe into the ground for a well. And old mister rooster was just protecting his territory. I wasn't much bigger than a large rooster anyway.

The man who lived there heard me screaming and quickly came and beat the rooster off with his hat.

I remember my father and his friends hunting on the hillside behind our house, for pheasants, and the blast of the shotguns when they shot.

My father bought and ran a Red & White grocery store on main street, with my mother as his helper and his friend Archie Maker who worked for Dad. There was sawdust on the floor behind the meat counter, the great old solid wood meat cutting block in the center of the floor.

The barrels of salt pork and corned beef in brine in the meat cooler.

When oysters were in season they came in a five gallon tin.

There was a soda fountain in the front of the store, ice cream and sodas, banana splits, oh what smells

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The smell of fresh ground roasted coffee beans, the growl of the grinder and the ground coffee falling into the paper bag. I remember the bag of salt that opened as it fell from the shelf I was trying to pull it from and filling my eyes. My mother scooped me up and rushed me to the fountain and washed my eyes out. The time I cut a deep gash into the back of my thumb with one of my fathers knives while trying to whittle a piece of wood. Oh the pains.

One day a man came into the store with a strange aroma about him. He was quickly waited on so he could leave. My father took me out to the front of the store where the mans coupe was parked and the air reeked of that smell of skunk. My dad said the man was a trapper and the rumble seat of the coupe was where the man carried his catch of the day. I got a nickel once a week for an allowance and it took quite a while to make up my mind what to buy with it. Ice cream on a stick

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covered with an orange coating or a candy bar. Decisions, Decisions.

My mother had a girl come and baby sit me and my brother Fred in the afternoons after school.

One day she was trying to light the gas oven on the kitchen stove.

Fred and I were standing in the doorway from the kitchen to the dining room watching her. After striking several wooden matches and had no luck in starting the oven she lit another match while leaning in front of the oven door. And there was sudden burst of flame from the oven and burned her hair, face and hands. She screamed and cried and ran to the phone and called my mother who hurried home.

Dad sold the store and we moved to the edge of town into a tiny one room house that belonged to his cousin. I don't think we lived there more than a month or two. One Sunday morning in the winter Fred and I went outside to play in the snow. We were told not to go near a pond below the house.

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Yep, you guessed it. The next thing I knew Dad had broken thru the ice and I was screaming for help. I can still see my father running down the hill to the pond, thru the snow, in great leaps and bounds in his bath robe and slippers, fresh from his Sunday bath, and charged into the icy water to snatch my brother up, and then he took my hand and we hurried back to the house. Safe and sound.

Dad got a job cutting meat in Rochester, that was 55 miles north of Dalton. So we moved toodus New York 25 miles east of Rochester a few miles south of Lake Ontario.

It was at this time the 2nd World War started in America. This was the winter of 1941-1942.

This was a very cold place in the winter. We moved into a small house trailer and I guess we had a hard time keeping warm. Dad had to work on a bus each day.

We moved into a boarding house a short time later, because it was much warmer there.

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It was at this boarding house that I experienced being knocked unconscious for the first time.

Another boy and I were boxing with gloves and he K O'd me with a blow to the eye. The next thing I knew my mother was holding me at the sink and splashing water in my face. We then moved that spring to a house at the edge of town right next to the muck fields where farmers grew, celery, carrots, lettuce and potatoes. There was a 50 yd buffer of cattails between the houses and the fields this ^{was} a great place to play and explore.

Dad would take us over to Sodus Point to swim at the white sandy beaches near the light house at the entrance to Sodus Bay.

And we fished from the concrete walkway that went from the beach to the light house. We also rented a boat and fished in the Bay.

We caught yellow perch and sunfish and small mouth bass. In the spring we caught bull heads and eels.

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That fall I started first grade at Sodus. That winter 42-43 we moved to Sodus Point into a cottage on the side of the bay where the entrance to Lake Ontario was almost straight out from the cottage. We could see the great coal boats come and go. That was a busy place in those days. The school house there was a two room school house. 1-12 grades each row was a different grade.

1943

The next spring we moved to Avon and I passed from first grade. That summer I got caught playing with matches. Was pushed from a hay stack and dislocated a thumb. And took a wild ride down a steep hill from the five & dime store on one of the typicals that were on display on the front porch of the store.

I went down the sidewalk standing on the back of the bike and very quickly I was going at a very fast rate of speed. So I got off and landed on my butt and slid quite a ways and burned all of the skin off of my bottom. One sore kid for day.

1943

We moved to Geneseo late that summer and I started in Second grade. We first lived in a very large house. Next door there were two boys named Moore and it was from these boys Fred and I learned to swear. Needless to say, my mother did not like these two guys. One of them stole my piggy bank and so we were not allowed to play with them any more. I got my first puppy while we lived here and it later died of distemper and I cried for two whole days.

We then moved over the movie house into an apartment. I cannot remember how long we lived in each of these places. I went to school at Geneseo for three years. 2nd grade 3rd grade 3rd grade. They made me stay in 3rd grade because I was started in school one year too early. This was terrible to me and I think I was embarrassed also. During the less than three years living in Geneseo I was constantly tormented by the April Boys. They chased me home, beat on me and even stood me against a wall and shot

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me many times with a bee bee gun.

Dad bought a home for the first and last time in his life.

We moved to Livonia to 13 Spring street in June 1946. This would be a place we would live in the longest.

My brother Fred was born just two weeks after my third birthday. And my sister (Penelope Penny for short) was born just six months before Dad bought this house in Livonia.

So when we moved here we had this tiny, plump little blonde that took baths in our dish pan, with us. I thought she was a beautiful little thing. I thought I now had seen the last of being chased, beaten and intimidated by bullies. Boy was I wrong. When I started school that fall, there were the two Murphy brothers, Larry & Dick and their cousin Mike. And if that wasn't bad enough, there was Larry Richardson from Lakeville. Who had to punch you in the stomach every time he met you in the hallway. I wasn't the only one though, he didn't care who you were he picked on almost everyone smaller than him self.

Getting back to the house at 13 Spring St. It was a large home with a flat roof. It was so large Dad rented the other side of the house to Walt Harvey, his wife Leona and they had a little tiny, very frail daughter Irene who was three years old and had very red hair. We all used the same bathroom. I think there were many things that happened to me here in the five years we lived here that influenced me for the rest of my life.

I will say at this point that my parents let us do our thing most of the time. Fred and I were allowed to go where we wanted to, and this was true with our lives as we lived it, as part of this family. They were great parents.

This old house came with a large yard and trees to climb and a barn with lots of nooks and crannies, a sleigh and a buggy. We spent many hours with this old barn.

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Fred and I had many friends here in Livonia. And we traveled all over the township to play with our friends. My mother let us go all day long even though she did worry some. But we managed to be home in time for supper. I used to get home from school in the springtime grab my fishing pole, bait and a peck basket and hitchhike two miles to Lakerille walk to Pebble beach and fish in the creek where thousands of fish came to spawn catch a peck and hurry back out to the road, hitchhike home and clean all of the fish mostly perch and mom would cook ^{them} for supper. We must have eaten fish for a solid month.

We went to church every Sunday after we moved to Livonia and we attended all of the church functions. These I really enjoyed very much. I had the morning paper route and later got the afternoon paper route. I could earn money and buy things and started a savings account at the Bowens State Bank. I mowed lawns in the summer and shoveled snow in the winter and sold candy in the winter also.

Fred and I collected papers and sold them at the junkyard for a penny a pound. We were busy boys.

Then my dad sold the house in 1951 and moved us back to Dalton. We moved into an apartment over Ralf Eismans warehouse.

Mom was pregnant for my brother Mike. Dad gave mom enough money to take care of things and he took a bus to Las Vegas to play the horses all summer. Came back with just \$800⁰⁰ left. He got a job in Rochester, Bought a Henry J car and drove the 55 miles every day six days a week for a year. Fred and I enjoyed living in Dalton. this was home ground for our family. My Uncle Quinten lived there and my grandfather Fred owned and ran the Dalton Garage with my uncle Quinten. My aunt Mary worked at the Post office. And there were lots of Dads old friends that were glad to see us return to Dalton. I worked with Archie Maker in his bee yards. Fred and I spent all of our spare time making new friends and exploring the surrounding town ship. that summer. My Uncle Quinten was the school supervisor and the Van Nostrand name ment something here. We were glad and proud to be home. I started trapping that winter and Dad let me have a 22 rifle that I wanted. One morning I was checking my traps before school and

I had caught a skunk under a pile of old lumber, behind Mr. Baker's barn. I went to Mr. Baker's house before he went to work and asked if he had a .22 that I might borrow to shoot it with. He gave me his little Stevens Jr and nine cartridges. I shot the skunk. He told me I could use it until I used the rest of the shells. I took it home and showed my Dad the rifle when he got home. I told him Mr. Baker said I could use it for awhile. I told Dad that I wished I could have a .22. He said to ask Mr. Baker if he would sell it. And I did. Mr. Baker said he wanted \$4.00 for it. Dad said OK and gave me the \$4.00 and I had my first of many guns. I took my NRA test over at Hunt's and Dad bought my first hunting licence. I hunted every day for the rest of the winter for rabbits. And I shot my first cock pheasant on the wing that winter. But was afraid to take it home because it was out of season. So I built a fire and cooked it and ate most of it. I left rest in the woods for the birds and the foxes.

School was great, I was in 9th grade. I was learning the basics of competition wrestling. I was doing great

in gymnastics and all sports.

There was a girl who was the younger sister of a good friend in my class. Her name was Donna Colburn. Dale, her brother and I spent a lot of time together on their farm. I was in love.

When I was at the farm she would go to fetch eggs in the hay barn and I would go along, we would steal a kiss or two. Oh how my heart would pound.

There was a square dance at the High School every Friday night. The whole Colburn family would come and Donna and I were partners all night long.

Albert Nash from Hunts was my best friend. I spent a lot of time at his home thru that winter of 51-52. We hunted and I would help him with his chores. They lived on a dairy farm on the Road to Short tract. I would stay at his home some week nights and ride the bus to school with him and his sister Elaine.

I had my first trap-line that winter. My Uncle Quinten gave me about 30 traps and I was in business.

The next August Dad moved us to Trumbull St in Mt Morris.

That year in Dalton was the beginning of a long love affair with hunting and fishing and trapping.

I would go on until I was 26 before I stopped trapping and until I was 53 before I stopped hunting, god only knows, till I stop fishing.

There was one day in that year that stands out. It was a very hot day when Dad and I went fishing for trout at Barkertown Creek and I caught my first large brown trout. It was a 16" dandy.

Dad took me down to Barkertown Rd just a short way off of 408. He told me to bait up my line and throw it under the bridge and just let it lie there and let the trout find it. I was the middle of the afternoon and it was very hot.

Dad drank a beer and we waited. Finally Dad said, the hell with it, let's get out of here, it's just too hot to sit here any longer.

So I picked up my pole and started to reel in the line when the fish just exploded out from under the bridge. It was actually flying

half in and half out of the water, just like a salmon moving up stream in very shallow water.

There were a couple of anxious moments and lots of instructions from my father and that fat sandy was in the grass on the bank. It had been quite awhile since my Dad had seen such a nice Brown trout and it was the biggest one that I had ever seen. To me they were a very much sought after and seldom caught fish. And here was this dandy laying in the grass all wet and shiny and I caught it. What a trophy. Dad hurried to the car to get a tape and we measured the fish. It was 16 inches long and fat as a football.

We drove back to Dalton and we stopped at Gramps garage to show Gramps and Uncle Quintin, and Uncle Lanny Lyons. After every one had a look at the fish and made some comments about the good ole days that used to be and fish caught years ago. I was in a big hurry to show it

to our neighbor Walt Kelly who had taken me fishing with ^{him} a few times in the past year.

Summer was coming to an end and Dad moved us to Mt Morris. Trumble street, an apartment up stairs in the house of Fred Patinella.

We had one half of a two car garage, half of a garden and the washing machine in the cellar.

Fred and I now began to explore the Seneca River at this point and all of the lands and farms surrounding the township.

We spent most of our time at the river. I more than Fred. From August 1 1952 to Oct 22 1955 this would be my part of the world. We spent our first month finding new friends and getting the lay of the land.

Here in Mt Morris I went to 10th thru 12th grade. I took six subjects each year to make up for the two I lost in 9th at Dalton. I graduated with 20 credits, I only needed 16.

Those years 8/52 thru 10/55 were good years. I hunted each fall and winter, mostly on the farm of Russel Ace's where he raised sheep, from the State TB Hospital line to the Mt Morris Dam. But there was not hardly any part of the out skirts of town in any direction that I didn't set foot on pretty regular within three miles of the center of town. And I had a trap line that ran all the way from behind the knitting mill all the way down to the Canawaga Creek on the Bush farm and I ran that once in the morning and again after school everyday from Jan 1st to the 15th of March. And the fishing on the Genesee River from Mt Morris Dam to Bums Island on Brady's farm.

I had a good time in school there and I even liked my teachers.

I don't think my Dad or Mom ever objected to my devotion to the outdoors.

We had fish and game to eat real regular. I used to shoot so many rabbits I had regular customers on the way back into town I would stop at these homes and give them a

rabbit and they gave me a dollar. Between the fur I sold and game I sold I always had spending money in my pocket.

When I graduated from high school, my Dad gave me his 1948 Kaiser sedan and he bought himself a 1948 Packard. I went to work at Lomax Frozen Foods for one month and then went to work as a civil servant for Soil Conservation.

Then I volunteered for the army draft and then got tired of waiting and enlisted in the Army Corps of Engineers.

Sold my car for \$35.00. Dad took me into Rochester on the day of my induction, and I was on another adventure. Three years in the Army.

We went from Rochester to Buffalo by bus. Spent two days in Buffalo taking tests and getting checked out, physical and stuff. Then it was off to Fort Dix, New Jersey for ten days of getting my new wardrobe and shots and a steady dose of K P duty. Then we flew by DC3 from Fort Dix to Fort Leonard Wood Mo. I was down there 11/55 to 5/56. I had my basic training, then my

advanced Basic, with the 12nd A.B.
Then Engineer Forman School.

Then we took a train ride back up to Fort Dix N.J. for ten days of KP and more shots. Then we got our orders for permanent duty.

Got on a troop transport at Brookland Navy Yard and we were on our way to Germany. Seven days and a half day of sea sickness later we were at Bremerhaven Germany.

Train ride to Karlsruhe and I was at the 499th Combat Engr.

It was still the month of May. I was in C.C. After about a month we were sent up to Murnau to the USERUR School to learn all about Demolitions, mines and booby traps. It was a fun summer. When I say we, there were 26 of us that stayed together the entire three years of service.

One day we were crossing the Rhine river to go to breakfast from our bivouac area, there was a navy picket ship tying up at our swinging bridge. As we neared the opposite bank I saw a sailor on deck helping to secure the ship.

I asked my sargent if I could get off, because I recognized that person as Gene Mann from Mt Morris someone I had gone to school with.

He said I could, but be sure to be there when they came back from breakfast so I could rejoin them on the return trip. I ran up to the ship and asked the person on deck if Gene was aboard. He said yes, and went below and Gene came on deck. Boy was he surprised to see me. He had joined the navy one year before I joined the army and our chances of meeting there on the banks of the Rhine river, mighty slim. Yet there we were. And he was stationed on the other side of Karlsruhe from me. We later got together for a night out on the town.

Later on the next year we were getting ready to fly back to the states and the new Battalion that was going to take our place had sent over their advanced party over. I was the Co Armor at that time. My section sargent sent me down the hall to get some typing paper from supply. I got there and the guy standing on the other side of the counter was Bill Marten from Mt Morris.

We were both pleasantly surprised. It really is a small world. Meeting two guys from home halfway around the world. We finally packed up and started for home. I was going on 34 days leave as soon as we got back to the states. We rode the train back down the valley as it were to me, to Bremerhaven. We got on the USS Harry S. Taylor a 450 foot, flat bottomed troop ship and by supper time we were in the English Channel and on our way to the states. By the way, that supper was my last meal for the next ten days.

It was the last part of the month of February and we were headed into the north Atlantic. The seas were very heavy. Shortly after supper a guy was walking by our bunk area and stopped right there in front of me and lost his supper. That did it for me. I spent an hour or two trying not to get seasick but lost the battle. I was very sick and six days later, without food or water, I finally passed out from dehydration. I was strapped down in sick bay and fed intravenously to keep me alive.

I stayed unconscious untill the night before we arrived at Brooklyn Navy yard. I became conscious as we got near the coast and the seas calmed down. I got back to my Co. Got my gear and the next morning at 9 am we got off the ship and on a bus, that took us to grand central station and I finally ate breakfast.

I had lost 15 pounds in ten days. Not really my idea of a diet but it will sure take the pounds off. I

I ate turkey sandwiches and drank beer all the way to Rochester train station which took 8 hours. Mom & Dad & Penny and little Mike were there to greet me.

On the way home I told Mom about the sea sickness and being unconscious and dreaming about thick pork chops and ginger ale. Dad was a meat cutter and had brought home the meat for the week which included thick pork chops. And Mom always had ginger ale. So when we got home she cooked up three and I had trouble eating two of them.

It took me almost a month before I could put away a full meal. My stomach just could not handle it.

For a month I ran a trap line from Snygar at the Pioneer Rd all the way up thru Waland to Websters Crossing and back down thru Conesus and the south end of Conesus Lake and back to Genesee, where my folks had moved to after I went into the army. About 40 miles. I would drive Dad to work in Waland in the morning and pick him up at night.

I spend the rest of each day skinning & stretching pelts and then do a little beer drinking. Then go pick Dad up and go home and have supper. Then he and I would go have a few beers.

After leave time was almost up I called one of the guys that lived in Rema and made plans to drive down to Fort Benning Ga. to our new assignment. We left a few days early and took our time. We drove the entire length of the Blue Ridge Parkway in the first day of the month of March. It was beautiful all the way.

So now there I was in Georgia

I was back in my outfit for about a month, and did not have a job.

They put someone else in charge of the armory. So they asked me if I wanted to go to Headquarters Co and drive truck. I said yes. So my truck driving career started on April 27 1957.