

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg State University Digital Commons

Your Family in History: HIST 550/700

History

2016

The Family History of Reed W. Phillips

Reed W. Phillips

Pittsburg State University, reedphillips@yahoo.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/hist550>



Part of the [Genealogy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Phillips, Reed W., "The Family History of Reed W. Phillips" (2016). *Your Family in History: HIST 550/700*. 30.

<https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/hist550/30>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the History at Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Your Family in History: HIST 550/700 by an authorized administrator of Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact lfthompson@pittstate.edu.

The Family History of

Reed W. Phillips

23 November 2016

Reed W. Phillips authored this family history as part of the course requirements for HIST 813 Seminar in American History: Family History offered online in Fall 2016 and was submitted to the Pittsburg State University [Digital Commons](#). Please contact the author directly with any questions or comments: reedphillips@yahoo.com

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).

List of Direct Line Family Members

Generation One

- A1. Reed W. Phillips (1990-)
- A2. Gretchen Dawn *Scott* Phillips (1989-)

Generation Two

- A1a. Harry Albert (Hap) Phillips (1955-)
- A1b. Debra Lynn (Debbie) *Bybee* Phillips (1963-)

Generation Three

- A1a1. Robert Ross (Bob) Phillips (1924-2014)
- A1a2. Doris Marie *Johnson* Phillips (1929-2003)
- A1b1. Kenneth Calvin Bybee (1931-2013)
- A1b2. Erma Jean *Schmidt* Bybee (1936-2015)

Generation Four

- A1a1a. Harry Ross Phillips (1900-1938)
- A1a1b. Merry Alta *Jeffries* Phillips Sanders (1906-1972)
- A1a2a. Albert Earnest Johnson (1901-1978)
- A1a2b. Ruby May *Ross* Johnson (1911-2005)
- A1b1a. Nelson Bluford Bybee (1886-1969)
- A1b1b. Amanda *Foster* Bybee (1890-1966)
- A1b2a. Charles William Schmidt (1909-1955)
- A1b2b. Erma Pauline *Hergemuller* Schmidt (1916-2010)

Generation Five

A1a1a1.	Frank Lowrie Phillips (1873-1966)
A1a1a2.	Nannie <i>Pirtle</i> Phillips (1873-1921)
A1a1b1.	George William Jeffries (1879-1948)
A1a1b2.	Bessie Ellen <i>Cundiff</i> Jeffries (1883-1974)
A1a2a1.	Herbert Guy Johnson (1871-1955)
A1a2a2.	Nancy Ann <i>Lamb</i> Johnson (1875-1947)
A1a2b1.	Charles Luther Ross (1879-1949)
A1a2b2.	Arzena <i>Hixenbaugh</i> Ross (1880-1952)
A1b1a1.	James William Bybee (1862-1937)
A1b1a2.	Mary Elizabeth <i>Rank</i> Bybee (1864-1918)
A1b1b1.	George Washington Foster (1827-1905)
A1b1b2.	Sarah Eliza <i>Davis</i> Foster (1848-1912)
A1b2a1.	Emil Otto Schmidt (1873-1919)
A1b2a2.	Margaret May (Maggie) <i>Armstrong</i> Schmidt (1880-1956)
A1b2b1.	Ernest Frederick Hergemueller (1880-1953)
A1b2b2.	Anna Eliza <i>Green</i> Hergemueller (1883-1966)

Generation One

- A1. **Reed W. Phillips (1990-)**
- A2. **Gretchen Dawn *Scott* Phillips (1989-)**

Reed Phillips (1990-) was born at the start of 1990 to **Harry Albert (Hap) Phillips (1955-)** and **Debra Lynn (Debbie) *Bybee* Phillips (1963-)**. He was due several days prior, but waited to ensure that he would not be a tax deduction for his parents, an electrician and a tax preparer. This is the story of his family, of my family. After leaving the hospital, my parents stopped at a boot store to show me off to some of their friends. They then took me home to a white bungalow style house. We would live there until my first leap day. I was almost potty trained, but the change in environment ruined my progress. My early memories are limited to vague blurs and stories. However, I have many memories from my school years.¹

I married **Gretchen Dawn *Scott* Phillips (1989-)** in Platte Woods, Missouri on June 23, 2012. We welcomed a son **Henry Owen Phillips (2013-)** in September of the next year. I am currently a high school Social Studies teacher at Oak Grove High School in Oak Grove, Missouri.

Gretchen Dawn *Scott* Phillips (1989-) was born in June 1989 to **David Carlton Scott (1956-)** and **Susan Marie *Winters* Scott (1959-)**. She has one younger sister **Emily Megan Scott (1993-)**. She grew up in Kansas City, Missouri. Her family lived in California for eighteen months due to the job relocation of her father. She graduated from Park Hill High School in 2008. She attended the University of Kansas for a Music Education degree for one semester before transferring to the University of Central Missouri. She obtained her degree and taught high school and middle school Orchestra for one year in Sikeston, Missouri.

She married **Reed Wayne Phillips (1990-)** on June 23, 2012. Upon the birth of their only child, **Henry Owen Phillips (2013-)**, she became a full time mother, while actively seeking out Orchestra teaching positions. She started playing violin at the age of five and currently plays in the Heritage Philharmonic Orchestra of Eastern Jackson County.

¹ See the section titled **School Years**.

School Years

Prior to starting school, I was confident that I did not need to go to school. I knew everything and I told anyone who would listen. I knew how to read, count, add, subtract. What could I possibly learn in school that I had not already learned from my parents and my paternal grandmother, a retired school teacher of over thirty years?

Kindergarten

Inevitably, I was enrolled in school and I was given the choice between morning kindergarten and afternoon kindergarten. I chose afternoon that way I could catch all of the morning cartoons on public television. One day, we learned about careers. I came home visibly upset. My teacher had told us that in the past, many kids grow up to follow in their parents' footsteps in career choice especially in the trades. My father had followed in his father's footsteps and I did not want to be an electrician like my father. My parents told me that I did not have to do that and that I could do anything that I liked to do.

One of our field trips was to a pumpkin patch just before Halloween. I was afraid of the pumpkins and refused to go in the field. After everyone had chosen their pumpkins, I went to the edge and picked out a very small pumpkin. I loved it. Tragedy struck on Halloween night as some teenagers took it from our front step. My mom and I walked to look for it, only to find it smashed in the gutter down the street.

One morning during the spring semester, I went with my mom to the office of her co-worker. In the office, there were some pictures of the relatives of my mom's friend. I was trying to see one better, so I knelt in a chair backwards to get a better look since the picture was on top of a glass cabinet. The chair fell backwards and delivered me nose first into the glass door. My mom took me to the emergency room where I received six stitches and a bandage across my nose like one of the local professional football players. After the traumatic event, I requested to go to school, even though I was an hour late. I had gone from not wanting to go to school, to wanting to go despite injury stitches. I will always remember how many stitches I received; six stitches when I was six years old.

First Grade

My first grade teacher was my favorite teacher. She was a sweet lady. By day, she was a first grade

teacher, but at night she was a clown. She went to nursing homes and hospitals to bring smiles. She kept some writings and later returned to them my mom. One such writing was a wish list for Santa. She was heartbroken that a little six year old asked Santa for a toothbrush and anything else would be nice.

Another writing assignment that I remember was a magazine clipping about a basketball team. The jersey had the word “Island” and I wrote about how the word should be changed to “iland” because the “s” made no sense. I earned the right to share my paper with the principal. I was very proud to be recognized like this.

In first grade, I was tested to join the gifted program at our district called E.C. or Enrichment Center. I missed the mark by a couple of points. After the results came back, the test administrator talked me through my mistakes and strengths.

On our field trip, we went to the Kansas City Zoo. It was a rainy day, so we had to eat in the ape sanctuary. One of the moms taunted the gorilla and it ran back and forth banging on the glass. We were scared little kids.

Second Grade

In second grade, I met the kid that would become my best friend through school. We were alphabetically next to each other and shared similar interests and academic ability. The two of us became inseparable. He introduced me to my favorite book series as a kid, *Animorphs* by K.A. Applegate. We partnered up for a project on dinosaurs. We made a model of our favorite dinosaur, the ankylosaur.

Towards the end of the year, I was tested again for admittance to the gifted program. I scored high enough on the second test to be admitted to the gifted program. I was sad that I entered in the week after the E.C. field trip. But, I was glad to join the gifted program and visit one morning a week with a teacher that my mom had when she was in school. When the teacher retired at the end of the next school year, the paper did a spot for the teacher. My mom and I were spotlighted as being students in her first full year and her final full year as a teacher.

Third Grade

In third grade, there were many opportunities to work together on group projects. The class

performed a Thanksgiving play based on the “Arthur” books by Marc Brown.² I was cast as the Brain. In addition to my role as the Brain, I served as understudy to the Turkey. My best friend had received the role of the Turkey, but on performance day, he was ill. I was able to play two parts in the Arthur Thanksgiving play.

Later in the year, we performed in a Christmas pageant. The theme was greeting cards. Each class sang two songs based on a type of Christmas card. My class was chosen for the Shoebox collection, which is a line of comedic cards from Hallmark. We sang our two songs and it was a grand time.

Fourth Grade

In fourth grade, I went to a different school building. It was the 1912 school building. This was the same building that my dad had junior high and my mom took kindergarten and junior high. This was a three story building with most 4th grade classes on the second floor and fifth grade on the third floor. The main floor was for the “specials” like Art, Music and P.E.. My class was placed on the main floor in a new classroom. So new in fact, the wax was not yet dry on the first day of school and our chairs and desks were stuck to the floor. We were just across the hall from the art room and the music room. That year was the year of the recorder and papier-mâché.

Fourth grade was the year of my first crush. Of course, I was too shy to do anything about it. She was also near my name alphabetically, so we would end up in line together sometimes. This crush faded quickly following fourth grade, but every so often I run into her and internally chuckle at my memories.

Since the school was once a junior high, there were lockers in the hallway. We were assigned a locker and a locker partner. My partner was a good friend from that year, but he moved partway through the year. After that, I had a locker to myself. Additionally, my locker partner had been the winner of a class writing contest. However, he moved between the assignment and the actual event at the university. I was lucky enough to be the runner-up and I was able to go in his place. While at Central Missouri State University, I was placed in a room with about eleven other students. We all read the stories we had written. At the end, we could purchase a book with all of that year’s winners in it with their writing.

² "Arthur's Thanksgiving (Arthur Adventures Series)," Barnes & Noble, Accessed November 21, 2016, <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/arthur-thanksgiving-marc-brown/1103736893?ean=9780316112321>.

Fifth Grade

Fifth grade was at another school. During my kindergarten year, the school district built a school that became the middle school. It originally served grades six through eight. However, they built a new wing on the school for the fifth grade class. I had already spent some time in the building as that was the location of the gifted class that I attended once a week. Fifth grade was my last year to have recess. It was the year of my first hyper-extended thumb. At recess, I put my hands up to stop a ball from hitting my face. The ball had such force that it bent my finger back and contused my thumb.

Fifth grade was also the first time I recall getting into trouble. In art class, there were several students giving another student a hard time about his allergies. I was laughing along with the process. I earned a pair of lunch detentions for my part in the debacle. Those were the nicest lunches, as I was able to eat uninterrupted. I still regret my decisions from that day as just a few years later I would be subject to bullying myself.

Sixth Grade

Sixth grade was my first year that I switched classes from teacher to teacher and room to room. Gifted class soon took the place of English class. This was frustrating to me as the regular reading classes were taught by the history teachers. Some of the history curriculum was taught in reading. To this day, I am still behind in the ancient cultures of Greece, Rome and Egypt.

This year is burned into my memory as it is with most Americans. I was sitting in math class, two rows from the door and three seats back when the news of the September 11th terrorist attacks were announced to the school. This event set policy for the next decade and beyond. There was a mix of emotions. We still had two blocks to our day. After school that day, I went home and sat in the living room, watching the replays of the event and tried to make sense of it.

This was also the year that I started band. I was angry that my father had sold his saxophone when he was in his twenties, otherwise I could have started on sax instead of clarinet since the band director wanted people to start on the core instruments. I was not very good at the clarinet and was consistently at the back of the section. It was a combination of not practicing often enough as well as a weak embouchure. It was still a

wonderful class to start in sixth grade and it would have a lasting impact on the next ten years of my life.

Seventh Grade

Seventh grade was a rough year. I was bullied by several students. I did not react well to their bullying. I was caught by the health teacher. I was sent to the assistant principal's office to explain what I had done. The bullies each received one day of in school suspension. However, I earned two days of in school suspension. I am eternally grateful that I knew the assistant principal outside of school and that he knew I did not mean what I had done. The punishment could have been much more severe. This event significantly changed my life and from that point I have kept my anger in check.

The summer following seventh grade, I had been nominated to attend a People to People Student Ambassador Program and take a trip to Europe. It was a twenty-one day adventure through England, France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. This was my first time away from home. This trip was a great experience.³

Eighth Grade

My eighth grade year started out on a somber note. My grandmother, **Doris Marie Johnson Phillips (1929-2003)**, died in August. She had been a school teacher for over 30 years, but was retired by my birth. She had been fighting cancer for many years. I remember sitting in the room at the nursing home with my mom and my grandpa. My dad had stopped by earlier in the day to say goodbye, but he had to return to work to continue running the generators. Her death was pronounced and my grandpa started to take stuff to the car. Roughly ten minutes later, my uncle arrived and was devastated. She was the first direct ancestor to die during my lifetime. Her influence and memory has been instrumental in my growth as a person and my later decision to become a teacher.

During eighth grade, we learned about natural sciences. My first serious plan for the future was to be a meteorologist. I had enjoyed learning about the weather cycle and climates. I was very intrigued by the natural disasters that could happen. I remember being scared about the volcano at Yellowstone and the fault like in New Madrid, MO. (By the way, we are still overdue on both fronts. Good luck sleeping tonight.)

³ For more information about this trip, please see the section titled **Tripping Through Europe**.

In eighth grade band, I was selected to move to bass clarinet. My terrible embouchure on clarinet was perfectly suited to the bass clarinet. Once my tone improved, my confidence improved and my willingness to practice increased.

Freshman Year

My freshman year was a typical year. Other than band, most classes were standard freshman classes. For physical science, I had a first year teacher who was in reality a physical education teacher and a coach. Most that we learned, we learned on our own from the textbook. We did the same word search several times and we watched several movies. His next year, he was reclassified as the In School Suspension supervisor. All of my other teachers were very good teachers. I had taken Algebra I as an eighth grader. That allowed me to take Geometry my freshman year. I remember very little from that year of Geometry as the skills were not reinforced in the other math classes.

In the first weeks of school, my English teacher had us work on a future plan project. It was in this project that I decided to become a high school history teacher. I had positive experiences with several history teachers. I really enjoyed history and could recall a lot of information. Additionally, I felt that this choice would honor the memory of my grandmother.

In band during my freshman year, we had a “West Side Story” themed show. It was during this year that my switch to Bass clarinet was finalized. My mom took me one day after school to upgrade my clarinet to a bass clarinet at the music store. That was an exciting time to know that I would not have to play the regular clarinet again. I had an issue at a marching competition of overheating in the wool uniform. We were marching to the downtown parade route in Carrollton, MO. I made it three-quarters of the way there before I nearly collapsed from the heat. I recovered well and drank plenty of water and I was able to march the field show in the mud bowl that is the Carrollton football field. The mud was so thick that my shoe became stuck in the mud. Luckily, it was the one spot in the show that I returned to again. I was able to march back into my shoe and finish with it.

My freshman year, I joined the Quiz Bowl Team and joined the Math Relay Team. Both nerdy groups were a fun way to exercise my brain. Since the gifted classes ended in middle school, these academic

based activities filled the gaps. I greatly enjoyed the math relays. There is nothing that gets your brain working like taking math tests on a Saturday morning. The more involved activity was Quiz Bowl. It was great to have an outlet for my random knowledge.

The summer after freshman year, the Odessa Band of Distinction was invited to play in the Washington D.C. July Fourth Parade. That was a great experience. It was hot, but my parents had invested in an ice vest for me. It was a vest that had pouches that could be frozen. This, in combination of a polo and khaki uniform, made the parade bearable. The trip was a wonderful learning experience getting to see some of the sites in the capital. I hope to return to revisit some sites and to see more.

Sophomore Year

My sophomore year very much a continuation of my freshman year. I doubled up on science classes to complete the graduation requirements with Biology and Chemistry. My Chemistry teacher was again a first year teacher, but he was a very good teacher. With that choice, there was not much variation from the standard classes offered to sophomores. This was a year filled with strong teachers. This was essential to my development to becoming a teacher myself.

During my sophomore year, I met someone that became my longest crush. She was in band and Quiz Bowl. We spent a considerable amount of time in similar activities. This crush would start during my sophomore year, but I would not act on it until my junior year to no avail. I was friend-zoned rather strongly being called “like a brother.” I will admit, I was a lot like her older brother who I looked upon as a role model.⁴

During my sophomore year of band, we continued our successful runs through marching season. This was my first year that I played the Contra-Alto Clarinet during concert season. It was also the first year for a split concert season between a Concert Band and a Symphonic Band. I made the Symphonic Band, which was the upper band. In addition to making the top band, I was also promoted to JV Captain of the Quiz Bowl team.

Junior Year

⁴ For more information, see the section titled **Lovelorn Lyrics and Resolution**.

My junior year another year with more of the same. I was consistently strong in my classes with great teachers. The only deviation from that would be my government teacher. It was his first year. He was a coach, but he did have a passion for the Social Studies which was a positive influence on me nonetheless. His downfall was he wanted to be our friend in addition to being our teacher. This led to added stress for him. He would not make it through his third of teaching before he quit to become an insurance broker. I learned from his experiences and have striven to maintain a high level of professionalism.

I was promoted to the Varsity team of Quiz Bowl during my junior year. I did not get as much play time as I would have on the JV team, but I was glad to move up. We were successful against most teams we played, except for Oak Grove. They had a player that could solve complex math problems while drawing trees.

In band, I had auditioned to become a drum major. I failed to make the cut my junior year. I used the skills from the drum major audition to become the low reeds section leader, which included Bass clarinets and tenor saxophones. During the concert season, we travelled to Chicago for a Dixie Classic Competition. The Chicago trip was a fun trip. In addition to performing, we visited the Shedd Aquarium, the Navy Pier and the Magnificent Mile.

Senior Year

Finally, by my senior year, I blossomed and became comfortable with myself. I came out of my shell and was more outgoing. I attended the Homecoming dance, Court-Mat Warming and Prom. This was my only year to attend dances in high school. I went stag to homecoming. I had a date to Court-Mat Warming, but we had agreed to go as friends. I was hoping that by going to the dance, we could become more than friends. Her actions made it clear that the relationship would progress no further than being friends. At this point, I was content with that as she was a very good friend. We had nearly every class together and sat together in many classes. My date to the Prom was as a friend as well. We both agreed to go together with our group of friends.

For my senior year, I auditioned again to be a drum major. I was successful this time around. Drum majoring was a wonderful time. The head drum major was the friend that I took to Court-Mat Warming and

the rear drum major was a friend of many years. Leading the stands tunes, operating the spirit can, and leading the wave are fond memories of my time as a drum major. It was an honor to have a leadership position and from that I earned a Leadership Award and scholarship.

My senior year, I doubled up on math classes, taking both College Algebra and Calculus. During my senior year, I changed my life course slightly. I had figured out that it would be easier for someone that could not coach a sport to find a math job than a Social Studies job. There were more scholarships available and a loan forgiveness program. I graduated with the intent to become a math teacher. I graduated with a 4.0626 GPA and I was fifth in my class of 151. The switch from sixth to fifth took place on the last possible day for grades to be submitted.

Undergraduate Freshman

For my undergraduate degree, I chose to attend the University of Central Missouri. I had a rough time for the first few weeks. It was a difficult transition. However, after switching dorms and switching majors, my experience in college improved.⁵ In college, I continued to march with my bass clarinet in the Marching Mules. Additionally, I met and started dating **Gretchen Dawn Scott Phillips (1989-)**⁶.

Undergraduate Sophomore

My second year of college was much better than my first. I continued dating Gretchen. I continued my studies toward a Bachelor of Science in Education in Social Studies. I was in the Marching Mules for a second season. I found that I enjoyed the Political Science classes and the political process.⁷ This year was also my first observation course. I was assigned to Oak Grove and observed the great teachers for thirty hours. The summer after, Gretchen took a job in Yellowstone for a couple of months to repay a debt. It was a tough summer, but we survived.

Undergraduate Junior

My third year of college saw my last year of marching band. I was selected to be a Supplemental Instruction teacher for World Geography. The University of Central Missouri has a Conditional Acceptance

⁵ For more information about this, please see the section titled **Dorm Room Relocation**.

⁶ For more information about this, please see the section titled **Lovelorn Lyrics and Resolution**.

⁷ For more information about this, please see the section titled **Legislating Connections**.

Program to admit students that might not be fully ready for college to give them an opportunity to prove themselves. They are required to take certain and additional classes. The Supplemental Instruction class is essentially a group tutoring session. This was great experience on my path to become a Social Studies teacher. The summer after that year, I asked Gretchen to become my wife.⁸

Undergraduate Senior

My final year of college was spent focusing on the impending graduation and impending marriage. I was assigned to practicum hours at my alma mater. My student teaching, I returned to Oak Grove High School. While there, I worked with three excellent cooperating teachers. After we graduated, we married in June, moved in August, and began teaching.

Continuing School

As a teacher, I spend every year in school. For my first year of teaching, I taught Mathematics and history in a small school in Southeast Missouri.⁹ Following that year, I became a high school Social Studies teacher in Oak Grove, Missouri. In my second year at Oak Grove, I started a Master of Arts in History degree from Pittsburg State University.

⁸ For more information about this, please see the section titled **Lovelorn Lyrics and Resolution**.

⁹ For more information about this, please see the section titled **Trial by Fire: First Year Experience**.

Tripping Through Europe

I have been told that the best type of souvenir is a free souvenir. However, the free mementos that I obtained while on my European Heritage Trip through the People-to-People Student Ambassador Program were not gifts anyone would want to wake up to on Christmas morning. The complimentary mementos that I received were bumps, bruises, stings, and other various injuries. While in Europe, I suffered a couple of memorable accidents, but I learned life lessons from these injuries.

My adventure began in the United Kingdom where I toured on the upper level of a red, double-decker bus. In the early afternoon of the day of the incident, I needed to ask a question of the Delegation Leader who was seated on the lower level. I rose from my seat and walked casually toward the head of the stairs. I had just begun to descend the stairs when the bus suddenly stopped and I began to fall. My hands instinctively reached for the ledge above me in order to stop my descent down the stairs. The ledge was a two inches of the carpeted floor between the opening of the stairwell and the back of the seat directly in front of the opening. However, the carpeted ledge was much too small to have any chance of stopping the topple. My left leg bounced off of each and every step on my way gracefully down the stairs. I walked out of the bus that day with four bruises on my left leg and the knowledge to not be in motion while on a bus in motion because it is impossible to tell when the bus will stop.

Later in my voyage, another instance occurred on my final morning in Germany. That morning was spent at a park, across the road from the hostel in which the group of ambassadors had spent the night, even though I had the option to shop in the village. The park was beautiful with open landscaping and several large rock formations turned water fountains. After a couple hours, the tour guide told me to run and tell my bus mates that they needed to be back to the bus as soon as the possibly could. They had decided to shop in the village for souvenirs. I took off in the direction of the village to locate them, when all of a sudden I fell backward as if I had run into a brick wall. In reality, a bee happened to be flying in an opposite path on the same linear plane as myself and stung me in the forehead. The force of the sting knocked me into a near unconscious state. I was moved to the bus where the chaperones and the tour guide were looking at my forehead and bumbling to find some medication. Luckily, I had my own first aid kit with sting medication.

After that day, I have attempted to keep a first aid kit near whenever I would be outside for an extended amount of time, because I never know what could happen.

Each of my accidents along my European voyage taught me a valuable life lesson. If I have learned nothing else but this one fact, the best type of souvenir is indeed a free souvenir. The free souvenirs that I am speaking of are the life lessons that I learned from the mishaps. If anyone were to ask me for advice if that person is planning on traveling to Europe, I would tell them to be careful and to always carry a first aid kit. My overall adventure through Western Europe was an enjoyable learning experience that I would indeed embark on again, in spite of the accidents.

The Dorm Room Relocation

Ten o'clock at night, roommate finds a room with only his belongings. He logs in to Facebook, the common form of communication, and asks, "Hey, where'd you go? Are you alright?"

This story begins back in the spring of 2008 and as such, some of the details may be false due to a biased memory. After relenting to my parents, I finally agreed to live on campus for my freshman year of college at the University of Central Missouri. I believed that I could commute the thirty minutes twice daily. How would I cope with living away from home? What if I ended up in room with someone I could not get along with? Where should live on campus? Would I want to be in the general population or sign up for a special interest housing program (SHIP)?

As with many people of my generation, I turned to social media to find a solution. I joined a group on Facebook for incoming freshmen who comprised the class of 2012. Within that group, there was a message stream for students looking for a roommate. My search started by scrolling through the list to see if I could find anyone of potential. A gentleman from Mehlville, Missouri stuck out. I messaged him to introduce myself and get to know him. On the surface level, it looked like he and I would hit it off and foster a friendship. We both applied to the Social Studies Education program. Both of us had signed up for the Honors College. We liked similar movies, music, and television shows. Our high school list of activities included similar groups. Both auditioned for and made the Marching Mules on woodwind instruments. In our first few exchanges, I learned that he went to the same camp that my best friend since second grade attended a couple summers earlier. Upon conferencing with my friend, he claimed, "Other campers called us twins. That should have been my first major clue. I had not yet realized how far my friend and I had grown apart over the last few years of high school.

He and I agreed to put each other's name on our respective housing request forms. Then came the debate which hall we wanted to request. While attending Missouri Boys State the summer before, I experienced Ellis. With that experience I knew that I did not want to spend a semester in that building; one week was more than enough. We agreed to sign up for the Honor's College SHIP in Hosey Residence Hall. Not only would other smart people live there, but the residence hall had its own library and study center in

the basement. Additionally, it was within a minute's walk to a dining hall.

By July, we received our housing assignments, and we received a room second floor of Hosey. In the time between, I changed my major to Mathematics Education. There are more job opportunities for a math teacher that was not a coach than a history teacher. In fact, in applying for my first job, the school opted for a football coach to fill the history position. It worked out though; they later hired me to teach math. Job opportunities aside, the government offered loan forgiveness for three areas; math, science and special education. That became a moot point; I completed college without taking a single loan. Moreover, the Math Department Chair was a nicer fellow than the History Department Chair. Despite changing majors, I still enjoyed history and planned to minor in history. Members of the Marching Mules moved in a week before the general population in order to give time for band camp. On a hot, August day, my mother and I drove two vehicles to Warrensburg and proceeded to unload and carry stuff in to the dorms. The whole process took around five hours to get all that I packed to bring to college carried in and unpacked. An hour in our process, my roommate and his parents arrived and commenced with the same activities. They announced that my roommate did not have a vehicle, but were excited to hear that I had one so I could drive him places. Immediately, I felt put off. Why would these people volunteer me to drive their son around? They should have asked or even better allowed their son to ask me for rides as needed. We completed moving in and made the furniture set up function. Two beds, two desks, a dresser to split, two walk-in closets, and a door to the suite style bathroom. Other than the severe humidity not letting posters stay on the wall, life went on. We survived band camp. We survived the general population moving in to the dorms and the first days of classes.

Well, not quite survived. Despite the Math Department Chair being an awesome guy, the math professors that I had classes with were entirely too difficult to understand. Additionally, the calculus that I took in high school did not exempt me from taking Calculus in college. The class met every day and the assignments were roughly one hundred problems a night with no class time to work. Additionally, an Orientation Seminar class interfered with marching band and neither party was willing to work with my schedule. On day two, I reluctantly went to my CS 1100 Computer Programming I class in the Morris Science

building.¹⁰ The professor introduced himself and discussed his passion for technology and programming. While sitting there, I knew that my heart was not in this program. This professor had students introduce themselves and their majors. On my turn, I said, “My name is Reed Phillips. I am from Odessa, Missouri. I am a Mathematics Education Major, for now.” In response, the professor asked, “For now, what do you mean?” “I think I’m going to change majors at semester,” I replied. Then the best advice to hear, “Change it now. It’s not too late to change your schedule. Follow your passions.” After that class concluded, I immediately went to my academic advisor to change my major and course schedule. I then went to the bookstore to exchange books. As such, I did not take math in college, but yet taught a year of math thanks to the magic of passing the Praxis exam in Mathematics.

I digress, my roommate and I coexisted within the same room for three weeks. Within those three weeks, he figured out that he was no longer under the thumb of his parents and he spread his wings and partake of the “full college experience.” He would be gone for hours on end and return to the room at very late times. There were several occasions in which he returned to the room and flipped on the overhead lights not realizing that I was already in bed. To make matters worse, on a couple of occasions, he ordered pizza after returning to the room that I was already asleep. It is difficult to sleep in a lit room, with a pizza delivery guy at the door and the smell of pizza. The most exciting occasion was chatting online with my roommate for roughly an hour and a half about classes, homework, and life in general. He initiated the chat after he returned to the room that I was already sitting at my desk with the lights on. I have little clue how he managed to walk past me, sit in the room for an hour and a half and chat with me, without realizing that I was in the room. At the end he turns around and exclaimed, “Oh! You’re in the room!”

As he was making friends in the residence hall, I decided to hang out with a friend from high school. He applied after I had submitted my Housing Agreement Form, otherwise I would have requested to room with him. His room was across campus in the University Conference Center (UCC) on the Art SHIP. To hang out with each other, we walked back and forth visiting each other daily. Luckily, UCC was adjacent to the marching band practice field. It was convenient to hang out with him and others from the floor that I had

¹⁰ I still do not understand how computer programming would help someone teach high school math.

met in band. I made several new friends on the fifth floor and became an honorary floor member. The people on that floor became lifelong friends.

After a few weeks of walking back and forth campus to hang out with the crowd at UCC, Nick, received a notice: “All freshmen in single rooms need to either pay the single room rate or be subject to consolidation to a room with another first year student.” One of my new friends’ original roommate did not show to campus at all, but he paid for a room sized carpet for the dorm room, which we were able to keep for free. The friendships made on the fifth floor of the UCC were very strong and my new friend did not want to leave, nor did he want to get stuck with a random person. My high school friend, my soon-to-be roommate, and myself discussed the possibility of me moving in to Nick’s room. Within about thirty minutes, I was in line at the Housing Office making the request to switch rooms and I was given clearance to do so around 3:30 in the afternoon.

I considered waiting until the weekend to complete the moving process. The weekend had more time to pack up, talk to my current roommate, and possibly get help from my parents. Instead, the three of us exclaimed, “*Carpe diem!*” We decided to move my stuff that night. The three of us piled in to a car and rode across campus to my soon to be former dorm room. Upon arrival, my old roommate was nowhere to be found. The packing, un-decorating, and carrying out commenced. I found the Community Advisor for second Hosey and showed her the form from the Housing Office. After we finished carrying my stuff out to the car and my truck, the CA cleared my room, signed the form and we headed back across campus with all of my belongings in a single trip around 5:30. Upon arrival at UCC, I filled out the forms and we began moving my belongings to my new room. By 7:00 that evening, I was settled in my room with all the boxes unpacked. Around 10:00, my old roommate sent a message on Facebook asking, “Hey, where’d you go? Are you alright?” My reply included an apology for not leaving a note. By the time I thought of it, all of my stuff was packed away. The reply also included an explanation that a friend did not want to get consolidated and that I had several friends on the same floor.

I am not sure which one of us removed the friendship on Facebook. He was the first to place a block from searching. Any time we ran into each other on campus, we both ignored the other and never spoke

again. Despite having the same major, we only had one class together in Wood Hall, the history building. The class was the prerequisite for student teaching. I will admit that I felt moderately awkward in class. However, I decided to not make it awkward until he made it awkward. We both handled what limited interaction that we needed to professionally and without conflict. The next semester, he was not in the student teaching class. By May, in the Commencement Program, I learned that he had changed his major away from Social Studies Education and earned a regular Bachelor's of Science degree.

Upon reflection, I do regret not handling this situation with more candor. However, based on the trajectory of my life, leaving a note or talking to him before leaving is the only action that I regret not doing. My new roommate and I became lifelong friends, we both stood up for each other at our respective weddings.

Lovelorn Lyrics and Resolution

Growing up, my parents listened to country music and by default, so did I. A favored artist of the entire family at the time was Garth Brooks. One song I remembered listening to, but never fully understood was his 1990 hit “Unanswered Prayers.”ⁱ Not fully understanding lyrics continued to be an issue throughout my futile attempts at relationships during high school.

The tale begins with a young sophomore with a crush on a freshman girl. It started with an insignificant statement during lunch, but I and my tablemates took it to mean much more. A friendship blossomed between the two. The two of us shared membership in quiz bowl and marching band. We shared interest in similar movies, television shows and music. I finally worked up the courage to ask her to prom my junior year of high school. Following her final performance at district small ensemble contest, we walked across the street to Griff’s, a greasy, hole-in-the-wall burger joint in Sedalia, Missouri. As we ate, we discussed various topics, including the music playing over the speakers, including “Hotel California” by the Eaglesⁱⁱ. Shortly thereafter, I asked her to prom, she accepted, but had to ask her parents. I was ecstatic. A couple of days later, she reneged her acceptance using her dad’s birthday as an excuse. I was undeterred from the crush. Despite being told her parents did not allow her to date, I continued to pine for her. This came to a conclusion at the following year’s homecoming dance. She went with friends, so I went stag with the plan to request “Hotel California” from the disc jockey and ask to have the dance. I did not fully understand the song at the time, but now I understand this was a metaphor for being stuck where you could not get out. The crush itself was my “Hotel California.” The D.J. never played the song and by the end of the night, she had a boyfriend. Needless to say, this devastated me.

A few weeks later, on a marching band trip to the Bands of America Grand National Championship in Indianapolis, Indiana, I hung out with a friend, his girlfriend at the time, and her friend. She was a sophomore and had just broken up with her boyfriend. The four of us hung out during the downtime we had in Indianapolis. There were times the four of us ate together and cruised the malls together. I had recently discovered The Who and had been listening to their songs. One song that stuck out in regard to this girl was “Substitute.”ⁱⁱⁱ This was the first time that I was able to attach the meaning to the song and understand that I

was only a placeholder for her ex-boyfriend. After a week of texting each other and talking in the hallways at school, we determined that we could not be a good couple and called off the endeavor without actually dating. She went back to her previous boyfriend a couple days later.

To fill space in my life after two failed attempts at a relationship, I turned to a group of friends that included a senior girl. I had all but two classes with her and we were both drum majors in the marching band our senior year. Needless to say, we spent most of the school day together. So much time in fact, that another student asked my first crush if this senior girl and I were dating; figuring that she would know since we maintained a very good friendship despite the rejection. At that point, this girl and I were not dating, but not for a lack of wanting to on my end. I made the decision to listen to “Love Me Do” by The Beatles^{iv} purely based on the fact that my last two attempts included a song to focus my emotions. Initially, I chose this based on the connection to her last name, which started with the letters D-O. In reality, this choice shows the absolute desperation that I felt at the time. A song that is begging for an unrequited love to be returned. In fact, I asked her to go to the court-mat warming dance as a friend with the hopes to become more than that by the end. We met at the school, and drove to eat together. However, she invited others to join us at the restaurant. On top of that, as we entered the dance the first thing out of her mouth was, “He told me he wasn’t going to the dance! How could he bring her?!” That is exactly what a guy wants to hear at a dance from his date. I hung around for a bit, but after she ran off to talk to some of her friends, I quietly left in a depressed mood. I explained what happened at school later and she apologized and we remained good friends after this event. She started dating someone else a couple of weeks later. During my especially rough first semester of college, I briefly considered transferring to Truman State University to be closer to her. However, I decided to move across campus instead.

Due to that move, I was in position to meet the love of my life, Gretchen Dawn Scott. She initially went to the University of Kansas (KU) for Instrumental Music Education. Her experience at KU was mostly marred by an overbearing violin professor that made her choose between marching band and violin. Gretchen was friends with someone on my floor of the dorms at UCM from their joint membership in the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra (MYO). Gretchen had contacted her to find out about the String Education

program at the University of Central Missouri (UCM) and decided to transfer to UCM at the spring semester of the 2008-2009 school year. On January 11th, 2009, Gretchen moved in to the same floor that I had moved to the semester prior. On Wednesday of that week, she asked myself, my friend from high school, and my roommate to help her move her lofted bed. A month passed with quiet admiration from a distance, Gretchen announced to our mutual friend that she thought I was cute. I had thought the same of her, but weary from my past rejections to say anything about it. Additionally, I had checked back in to my personal “Hotel California.” I sought advice from another friend at college on relationships and if there was any point in pursuing my first crush. This friend checked me out of the “Hotel California” and told me that Gretchen liked me. I shared to her that I liked Gretchen in return. Thus, the prodding commenced. I was encouraged by nearly everyone to talk to Gretchen and ask her out. The slow process commenced; steps included sitting closer to her at meals, talking with her more and getting to know her better. Over the next few weeks, Gretchen and I hung out together any moment that we were both free. Finally, with encouragement, I asked Gretchen out to dinner via text message. “Hey, looking at tonight’s menu for Ellis, it doesn’t look very good. Would you want to go off campus and get something to eat with me?” This was a poor way to ask someone on a date. However, she accepted my invitation. We dined at Nathan’s Bar and Grill in Warrensburg, Missouri on the fifth day of March in 2009. Despite my nerves, we made our relationship official a week later. Over the next few weeks, we went on more dates and continued to get closer to each other. We attended weddings together and spent more and more time together. Looking for a birthday card for her, I found one that played Chicago’s “You’re the Inspiration.”^v This song was exactly how I felt and I knew the meaning matching my feeling. I knew that I wanted to propose to her, but the question remained how.

We found that we enjoyed miniature golfing. I planned to propose to Gretchen while mini-golfing. Since her favorite color is yellow, she always chose a yellow ball. I found yellow, foam practice golf balls and etched out a ring holder and make a switch while grabbing the ball out of the hole for her. Over that summer, we went miniature golfing three times. I did not have it on our first trip to the Parkville Mini Golf on Labor Day. I had the ring with me on a double date with some of Gretchen’s high school friends. They started dating before we had, so I did not want to propose in front of them. Not until the twenty-sixth of July in

2011 did I manage to ask the question. However, Cool Crest in Independence, Missouri was very busy that evening. Gretchen ended up with an orange golf ball. Throughout the eighteen holes, I racked my brain how I make this work. I did not want to wait; our senior year of college was looming. We sent our golf balls away on the nineteenth hole without winning a free game and placed our putters on the racks. At that point, I pulled out the foam ball and asked, "What do we do with this?" I dropped to one knee and in the shadows next to the putter racks asked, "Gretchen, will you marry me?" She said yes. We called parents and then purchased anti-itch cream; the mosquitos were thick that evening. We started eleven months of planning for a wedding to take place on the twenty-third of June in 2012. On the eleventh of September in 2013, we became parents to our amazing son Henry.

A few months into dating Gretchen, Garth Brooks' "Unanswered Prayers" came on the radio. Finally, after finding the love of my life in Gretchen, I understood the lyrics; I had lived the lyrics. Personality and value differences had grown between myself and my high school crushes. With the luxury of hindsight and greater cognitive abilities, I appreciated the failures of past attempts at relationships. There is no question that Gretchen saved me from living with my parents and from potential depression. I am jubilant that she is my wife and the mother of our wonderful son.

AZLyrics.com. <http://azlyrics.com> (accessed October 2, 2016).

"Unanswered Prayers"

Performed by: Garth Brooks

Written by: Patrick Alger

Just the other night at a hometown football game
My wife and I ran into my old high school flame
And as I introduced them the past came back to me
And I couldn't help but think of the way things used to be

She was the one that I'd wanted for all times
And each night I'd spend prayin' that God would make her mine
And if he'd only grant me this wish I wished back then
I'd never ask for anything again

Sometimes I thank God for unanswered prayers
Remember when you're talkin' to the man upstairs
That just because he doesn't answer doesn't mean he don't care
Some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers

She wasn't quite the angel that I remembered in my dreams
And I could tell that time had changed me
In her eyes too it seemed
We tried to talk about the old days
There wasn't much we could recall
I guess the Lord knows what he's doin' after all

And as she walked away and I looked at my wife
And then and there I thanked the good Lord
For the gifts in my life

Sometimes I thank God for unanswered prayers
Remember when you're talkin' to the man upstairs
That just because he may not answer doesn't mean he don't care
Some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered

Some of God's greatest gifts are all too often unanswered...
Some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers

ii"Hotel California"

Performed by: The Eagles

Written by: Don Henley, Glenn Lewis Frey, and Don Felder

On a dark desert highway, cool wind in my hair
Warm smell of colitas, rising up through the air
Up ahead in the distance, I saw a shimmering light
My head grew heavy and my sight grew dim
I had to stop for the night
There she stood in the doorway;
I heard the mission bell
And I was thinking to myself,
"This could be Heaven or this could be Hell"
Then she lit up a candle and she showed me the way
There were voices down the corridor,
I thought I heard them say...

Welcome to the Hotel California
Such a lovely place (Such a lovely place)
Such a lovely face
Plenty of room at the Hotel California
Any time of year (Any time of year)
You can find it here

Her mind is Tiffany-twisted, she got the Mercedes bends
She got a lot of pretty, pretty boys she calls friends
How they dance in the courtyard, sweet summer sweat.
Some dance to remember, some dance to forget

So I called up the Captain,
"Please bring me my wine"
He said, "We haven't had that spirit here since nineteen sixty nine"
And still those voices are calling from far away,
Wake you up in the middle of the night
Just to hear them say...

Welcome to the Hotel California
Such a lovely place (Such a lovely place)
Such a lovely face
They livin' it up at the Hotel California
What a nice surprise (what a nice surprise)
Bring your alibis

Mirrors on the ceiling,
The pink champagne on ice
And she said "We are all just prisoners here, of our own device"
And in the master's chambers,
They gathered for the feast
They stab it with their steely knives,
But they just can't kill the beast

Last thing I remember, I was
Running for the door
I had to find the passage back
To the place I was before
"Relax, " said the night man,
"We are programmed to receive.
You can check-out any time you like,
But you can never leave! "

iii **"Substitute"**

Performed by: The Who

Written by: Peter Dennis Townshend and Peter Townshend

You think we look pretty good together
You think my shoes are made of leather

But I'm a substitute for another guy
I look pretty tall but my heels are high
The simple things you see are all complicated
I look pretty young, but I'm just back-dated, yeah

Substitute your lies for fact
I can see right through your plastic mac
I look all white, but my dad was black
My fine-looking suit is really made out of sack

I was born with a plastic spoon in my mouth
The north side of my town faced east, and the east was facing south
And now you dare to look me in the eye
Those crocodile tears are what you cry
It's a genuine problem, you won't try
To work it out at all you just pass it by, pass it by

Substitute me for him
Substitute my coke for gin
Substitute you for my mum
At least I'll get my washing done

But I'm a substitute for another guy
I look pretty tall but my heels are high
The simple things you see are all complicated

I look pretty young, but I'm just backdated, yeah

I was born with a plastic spoon in my mouth
The north side of my town faced east, and the east was facing south
And now you dare to look me in the eye
Those crocodile tears are what you cry
It's a genuine problem, you won't try
To work it out at all you just pass it by, pass it by

Substitute me for him
Substitute my coke for gin
Substitute you for my mum
At least I'll get my washing done

Substitute your lies for fact
I can see right through your plastic mac
I look all white, but my dad was black
My fine-looking suit is really made out of sack

iv **"Love Me Do"**

Performed by: The Beatles

Written by: Joey Molland, Paul McCartney, and John Lennon

Love, love me do
You know I love you
I'll always be true
So please, love me do
Whoa, love me do

Love, love me do
You know I love you
I'll always be true
So please, love me do
Whoa, love me do

Someone to love
Somebody new
Someone to love
Someone like you

Love, love me do
You know I love you
I'll always be true
So please, love me do
Whoa, love me do

Love, love me do
You know I love you
I'll always be true
So please, love me do
Whoa, love me do
Yeah, love me do
Whoa, oh, love me do

v **"You're The Inspiration"**

Performed by: Chicago

Written by: Peter Cetera and David Foster

You know our love was meant to be
The kind of love that lasts forever
And I want you here with me
From tonight until the end of time
You should know, everywhere I go
You're always on my mind, in my heart
In my soul

Baby

[Chorus:]

You're the meaning in my life
You're the inspiration
You bring feeling to my life
You're the inspiration
Wanna have you near me
I wanna have you hear me sayin'
No one needs you more than I need you

And I know, yes I know that it's plain to see
We're so in love when we're together
And I know that I need you here with me
From tonight until the end of time
You should know, everywhere I go
Always on my mind, in my heart in my soul

[Chorus x3]

Legislating Connections

In college, I enjoyed taking Political Science courses at the University of Central Missouri. I took a variety of elective courses as part of my Bachelor of Science in Education in the Social Studies degree program. In one of my classes, POLS 2511 State Government, we had a two week long simulation of a state legislature. I found that I enjoyed the debate, the drafting of bills, and the legislative process. As a result, I signed up for POLS 4552 Legislative Politics the following semester which had a month long simulation. At the end of this second course, the Vice President of the House of the Student Government Association (SGA) approached me and asked me to consider joining the House of Representatives of the SGA. I accepted the nomination, and the House voted to welcome me to the body. This was the start of an exciting period of my college career, but I had to wait until the next school year to get going.

The summer passed and school was set to resume. There was one major problem. The House met at exactly the same time as the Marching Mules' rehearsal; Wednesday at 4:00 pm. From past experience, I knew that I would not be allowed out of marching band practice, so it looked like I would have to quit before I even started. There was a limit of six absences one could accrue before being kicked out. My first attempt at change was to draft an amendment to the Constitution of the Student Government Association to exempt class conflicts from being kicked out. By not being able to defend my legislation, it failed in the House and never made it to the Senate. Luckily, the Vice President of the House worked out a solution with the Vice President of the Senate. My solution to maintain the attendance requirement was to attend the Senate meetings as a member of the gallery on Tuesdays. I was not able to participate in debate from the gallery, but I learned much from my time in the Senate gallery. I learned the process of the Student Government Association. Additionally, I attended my committee meetings.

Within the committee meetings, I took the initiative and wrote many pieces of legislation despite not attending my chamber's regular meetings. I drafted another piece of legislation for the committee. I drafted a Campus Clean Air resolution to curb the tobacco problem on campus with the assistance of a Senator. The measure passed the House after much debate. However, the Senate was a much harder egg to crack. It failed in the Senate. In Wal-Mart one evening, a random person approached to compliment my efforts and told me

not to give up. I moved on to other prospects, but at least I helped restart the student debate against smoking and tobacco on campus. Two years later, UCM would become a Tobacco Free Campus and would enact cessation assistance programs.

Not only did I try to affect change, but I also spearheaded some fluff pieces. The football team was fairly successful my junior year of college and as a member of the Marching Mules, I witnessed the season. As such, I drafted a resolution to recognize the football team for their efforts and to recognize the quarterback for earning the Harlan Hill trophy that year. Additionally, this was the same year for a massive snow storm and classes were cancelled. However, the cafeteria staff and the grounds crew came in to work for the students. I drafted a resolution recognizing their efforts. Both measures passed with little issue. There were several other measures that I guided to passage. I worked with the President and Senate Floor Leader to bring the New York Times to campus as part of the Readership Program for students. In 2011, there was an attempt to allow conceal and carry weapons on Missouri campuses. I drafted and guided to passage a resolution to the Missouri General Assembly and the Governor asserting the opposition of the student body of UCM to conceal and carry on campuses.

Once football season had finally ended, I was able to consistently attend the House meetings. Once there, I flourished. I enjoyed the debate and was glad to participate rather than sitting idly in the gallery. The former Floor Leader had accepted a position in the staff of United States Representative Vicky Hartzler and left a vacancy. I volunteered to fill that vacancy. Once voted into that position by acclamation, I led the meetings by introducing legislation and assisted people writing legislation. This responsibility led me to continue my growth and excitement. Countless hours were spent drafting legislation. The main charge for the Internal Issues committee was to examine the Constitution and Bylaws of the student body and to remove redundancies, make changes and improve the cohesiveness of the two documents. I jumped at the opportunity to spearhead this project. From January through March, I was working on revising the Constitution and Bylaws. Weekly, I would update the committee as to my progress and seek input on word choice as well as policy choice.

There were several major changes that the committee deemed necessary. In the new governing

documents, we eliminated the dual offices of the Vice President of the House and the Vice President of the Senate by combining into a single Vice President position. On top of that, we combined the offices of Senate Secretary and House Clerk. Additionally, we added incentive for the position of Speaker of the House and Speaker of the Senate. We clarified the differences between a bill and resolution. The process of nominations to the House was made more democratic. Finally, the James C. Kirkpatrick Excellence in Governance Award needed to be improved. Each year, the SGA honors one person for their public service to both the state of Missouri, education and the University. The body had failed to meet the self-imposed, Constitutional deadline. I caught this and drafted an emergency, temporary amendment to the original Constitution to save the Award. Within the legislation to approve the changes within the Constitution and Bylaws, I added a clause to enact sections early as seen fit by the body. The new Constitution and Bylaws had to be approved by a vote of the entire student body. The student body passed the new Constitution and Bylaws. I spent the following summer cleaning up the punctuation and capitalization. Additionally, I spent time that summer working on a new website for the SGA. I am pleased to say that after six years out, SGA is still using the website and is still using the Constitution and Bylaws.

For a couple of days, I considered running for the final Vice President of the House position before the new Constitution took effect. However, I realized that I would be student teaching during the spring semester and I would not be able to attend the meetings in a timely manner. To much dismay from several people, I pulled my name from the candidates and resolved to stay out of the Executive for my last semester on campus. However, that did not last. At the first meeting, I was appointed House Clerk. That position was stifling, but came with a stipend. In my position as House Clerk, I was tasked to maintain the minutes of the meetings, maintain the office, and be restricted from participating in debate. I was not able to participate, but I was able to mentor younger members to increase their participation and confidence. I worked with someone as he stepped up to fill my vacant Floor Leader position. As a sophomore, he asked for guidance on several occasions. He would eventually rise to the office of Vice President.

I am eternally grateful for my time in the Student Government Association of the University of Central Missouri. By participating in that organization, I was able to prove to myself that I could participate in

change. In addition, it became an outlet for social interaction. Before this, I was a reserved person and did not seek conversation. From my participation, I found that my opinions and my attention to detail could be useful. For the seventeen months that I was involved, I found myself to be motivated, involved and connected. This became the definition of myself for that time period. I have since found other ways to participate including drafting an ordinance for consideration of a local city council and volunteering to assist with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Community Teacher's Association. There are days that I miss the politics and have decided to pursue elected office in retirement from teaching.

Trial by Fire: First Year Experience

Gretchen received an interview in February of our senior year of college, long before the standard opening time for teachers. She was offered the job and she accepted the Orchestra position in Sikeston, Missouri. This was exciting news. We were set to get married in June and it was comforting to know that at least one of us would be gainfully employed. The only issue being the job was eight hours from our hometowns, but yet still in Missouri. Our parents tried to warn us that it would be different “down there.” We brushed off their concern, “It’s still Missouri, and how different could it be?” Our naivety was not our friend. Now, it became my turn to look for a job. A social studies position would be harder to find and there would not be openings for a couple months. After four interviews at two school districts, I was offered a position as a teacher of Mathematics at a nearby school district in July. My assigned courses included Pre-Algebra, Algebra I and Algebra II. I was given one section of World History as a peace offering to keep me happy.

On the first day of teacher meetings at my new school, I received the key to my classroom. This was my first classroom ever and I was excited and expectant. I found my room, unlocked the door, struggled to find the light-switch, and looked around. I was appalled and in shock as to the condition of the room. There were random stacks of books throughout the room. There was a large trash bag that was nearly full of trash. A large rolling shelf was not organized in the slightest. The drawers inside the desk held loose items of no relation. The lone white board in the room, made from shower board, was left since May with calculus terms in red dry erase marker. Given three months, the writing was no longer dry erase, nor was it wet erase with the white board cleaner. The board never fully came clean, but I made the best of the situation. There was a pile of empty and mostly empty Mountain Dew bottles behind the desk. In a desk organizer, I found a dirty spoon and a used plate nearby. I lost count of the number of keyboards strewn around the room. After seeing the condition of my room and taking pictures, included below, for posterity, I talked to the principal to ask about the condition of the room. He played off my concerns and said, “Oh, yeah. That’s how the previous teacher was like.” No apology for the condition of the room or the lack of summer cleaning.

As the days progressed and I acquainted myself with my colleagues, I found that we had little in

common. Many of my colleagues had grown up in town and never left except for college at the nearby Southeast Missouri State University. Others were life-long residents of the nearby towns. The teachers I met resisted change (particularly the Common Core State Standards), had negative attitudes towards students and contemptuous about the home situations of many families. I tried to eat lunch with the teachers on my shift. On the third day of school, I began to eat in my room. I could not listen to the complaints nor the ranting. One rant, from history teacher, in particular was about the government housing down the street. Recently, the government poured new, longer driveways to, as she claimed, allow the “Cadillacs” and other expensive vehicles to fit. She was complaining that those in government housing should not be able to afford cars nicer than hers. While there were some expensive vehicles, not all were as nice as she played. Nor did she know the circumstances involved in the presence of all of the vehicles. The other teachers agreed and continued to complain about other topics. I could not handle the negativity as a first year teacher with my career ahead of me, and decided to eat in my room for the remainder of the year.

As a first year teacher, I was required to participate in a Mentor program. However, due to circumstances, there was not another Mathematics teacher with enough years to serve as a mentor. The school decided to place me with a science teacher. This was not an ideal situation. I was a Social Studies Education major teaching Mathematics being mentored by a Biology teacher. She was a nice mentor. She made a great effort to answer any questions I had. Halfway through the year, she was diagnosed with cancer. She missed all of third quarter and part of fourth. It became a challenge to complete all requirements for the mentoring program, but it was eventually completed. Beyond my mentor, I had another unofficial mentor, the Assistant Principal. Many hours were spent in her office talking about students, teaching, and life. She was the first person that I told outside of my family that I was going to be a father. She was a very understanding person. Without her to talk to, I know that I would not have been able to complete my first year of teaching. She became my “school mom.” She had a daughter that was my age and her youngest had graduated a year before I started teaching.

The greatest aspect to a teaching job is the students. This school had in the neighborhood of a 98% free or reduced rate. The town had fallen on hard times after the closure of a couple of factories. Many

families left town and those that remained were either emotionally tied to the town or could not afford to leave. As part of the widespread poverty, there was a local detainment facility. A majority of my students had either a parent, grandparent, sibling or in the detainment facility or had spent time there themselves. I was out of my element. There were days that I came home from work and looked up the price of a bulletproof clipboard. Over the course of a single year, I wrote at least twenty-five office referrals. In the four years since, at a different school, I have sent three students to the office. Not all students were troublesome. There were many students, through no fault of their own, stuck in a terrible situation who tried to make the best of it in hopes of escaping to college. My heart wrenched for those students that were trapped. As the year progressed, many of the troubled students slowly came to understand me and I came to understand them. I would be remiss without mentioning that this school was around 65% African American. However, the issues existed across ethnic boundaries. The Caucasian and Hispanic students were just as likely to act out in class. From my perspective, the greatest issue I had existed with the academically struggling students, those in Pre-Algebra and Algebra I.

Due to the low achievement levels, this school was under close scrutiny from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The school had recently regained full accreditation after spending time provisionally accredited. The district had earned their accreditation by meeting certain targets and working with a consulting firm to improve the middle school. Standardized test scores from the middle school were in the bottom five percent of the state. The administration forced the recommendations for the middle school to the high school, despite not being to blame for the scrutiny. One massive recommendation was tracking test scores, reading levels, attendance, and office referrals in a data binder. My school year would have been much less stressful without the terror that was the data binder. I spent countless hours working on that beast and it was the bane of my existence.

On top of the added responsibility of the data binder, there were at least three schedule changes to try to encourage better achievement from the students. The students had a homeroom class at the end of the day. In the beginning of the year, students were randomly placed and it was a low stress period to work on any homework and ask teachers for advisement. After a new recommendation, the assignments changed.

Students were then assigned by need and ability. By being a math teacher, I was able to see all of my low level students a second time every day to try to improve their grades. This method did not work and it added another prep to my schedule. Just what a first year teacher needed; a fifth prep.

Moreover, on Thursdays and Fridays, we were forced to attend Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings. In those meetings, we were to work with our PLC members to brainstorm solutions to the various problems, academic and disciplinary. More often than not, we would get lectured about how we were not doing enough and how it is not the kids' fault that there was no support at home. In a way, it felt like the consulting firm blamed the teachers for everything. Nearly all of the additional work fell to the teachers and little was asked from the students.

By September, Gretchen and I joked that we would be moving back at the end of the year. Her experiences were not much better than my own. We were greatly considering the move in November. By January, we were serious about moving back. Despite my negative experience at this school, I am glad for it. I occasionally find myself thinking of a random person, staff or student, and wondering how they are doing. I was tested in that position. Not only tested academically, but socially and professionally. Beyond all else, my experience has made me appreciate my current employment.

The Summer of Stress

By the start of the summer of 2013, I was homeless, unemployed and expecting a child with my wife. During our time in Sikeston, Missouri, we decided that living eight hours away from family was too far of a distance. We drove the distance at least once a month. We drove home frequently to see our family and to return to a culture that was familiar to us. Even though we were still in Missouri, Sikeston was certainly in the South. Despite having stable teaching jobs, we made the decision to look for employment closer to our family. The desire to leave increased on the tenth of January, 2013. We found out that my wife was pregnant and due in September.

The urgency to find a new job increased immeasurably. At best, I would be the only person employed and Gretchen would stay home with the baby. Despite non-discrimination, we could not imagine a school wanting to hire a teacher only to turn around and find a long term substitute less than a month into a school year. I redoubled my job search and started to find some leads. After applying to several schools, I received a call from Park Hill School District, my wife's *alma mater*, requesting that I appear for a screening interview. I was apprehensive about using a personal day from school for nothing more than a screening interview. However, Gretchen was very positive about Park Hill and encouraged me to go ahead with the interview. The screening day was scheduled for the afternoon of January 17th, 2013. I drove to my parents' house the day before and slept in my childhood bedroom with the knowledge that nine months later, I would have a child of my own. I drove the additional hour, stopped by to visit my mother-in-law, and I completed the quick interview between innumerable other potential candidates.

After I arrived back at my parents' house to change out of my suit for the eight hour drive, I found only my father at home. My mom was at the nursing home where her father was staying. He had passed away after a long and painful stay in the nursing home. I left immediately to join my mother and grandmother, Erma Jean Bybee, at the nursing home, still clad in my suit. My grandma had no idea I had been up for an interview, so she was very confused and grateful at my appearance since I am their lone grandchild. Next came the epic decision that to this day I am surprised I made. I decided to drive back to Sikeston that night, leaving at seven in the evening on an eight hour drive. I had used a personal day that week and I did not want

to use a bereavement day in the same week. I also knew that the next day was a scheduled Professional Development day at my school. Additionally, I knew that Gretchen would want to come for the Funeral, which was to be scheduled on Monday the twenty-first on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. During my drive back to Sikeston, I stopped in Arnold, Missouri, a suburb south of St. Louis, at Steak & Shake to finally have dinner around midnight. That was the best St. Louis traffic I had ever experienced and actually saved around an hour and a half. I finally returned home to my wife, very tired, but safe. We both attended school that day and left after school to return to my hometown. From Wednesday to the following Monday, I drove two full round trips for over 1400 miles. I never received a call back from Park Hill, but I am grateful for being nearby on that particular day for family reasons.

My next interview was another screening interview with the Blue Springs School District sometime in March. The prospect of not having to drive and potentially being able to video chat to avoid losing a paid day off was very promising. However, the only available time was late morning. Instead of going to work for part of the morning and leaving midday to return after, I called in sick the morning of the screening interview. At the time of the call, I was not sick. By the end of the day, I had actually developed symptoms of a cold and was legitimately sick. Perhaps that was my body's way of dealing with the guilt of calling in a fake sick day. Blue Springs never called for a follow-up interview either. A week or so after this interview, I received a letter from the Superintendent of my current school as a Notice of Intent to Re-Employ. By the date of that letter, Gretchen and I were starting to consider the possibility of staying in Sikeston despite being culturally out of place and eight hours from our friends and families. In Sikeston, we would at least have stable employment for the next year.

I continued to look for employment closer to our hometowns and applied for more and more jobs. In an effort to reach more schools, I decided to attend the Teacher Placement Day held at my collegiate *alma mater*, the University of Central Missouri on March 27, 2013. As the case had been, I drove up after school the day before to sleep at my parents' house again. As I distributed my résumé to the nearly one hundred schools in attendance, I ran into my Social Studies Education advisor and professor. He had been on medical leave during my first year of teaching and had recently returned to campus. We chatted for a couple minutes about

life and prospects. I informed him that I would be a father and that I was looking to move back in the area. He congratulated me and I thanked him for that and all that he taught me. That was the last time I saw him before his death in September 2013. Additionally, there were several schools that screened me on site including Sedalia, Raymore-Peculiar and North Kansas City. None of the screenings from Teacher Placement Day became a full interview.

After several months of debating, Gretchen and I decided that we were not going to stay in Sikeston. An eight hour drive is tolerable for a pair of twentysomethings, but an eight hour drive for a newborn would be torturous. On April 9, 2013, I submitted my letter of resignation to my school district. We determined that family support trumped economic stability. We knew that our parents would support us as necessary and I was beginning to resign myself to applying to non-teaching positions. Once I had submitted my resignation, the interviews started to flow my direction. I was able to schedule two interviews on one day. Luckier still, that day was a day off of school in for the annual town festival. I interviewed at Lafayette County C-I in Higginsville, Missouri for a Mathematics position in the morning of April 22nd. Later that afternoon, I drove on to Lexington, Missouri to interview at the high school for a Mathematics position. I was beginning to believe that I was destined to teach Mathematics since I am not a coach. However, I was told that I was the second choice for the Lafayette County position and I never heard a word from Lexington.

The following Friday, the 26th of April, I scheduled an interview for a Mathematics opening at the school where I had completed my student teaching requirement, Oak Grove High School. This interview was much less stressful since I already knew the Principal and the Math Department Chair. I felt very confident after the interview and it was a very positive experience. After visiting with my cooperating teachers, I drove back to Sikeston to finish out our last month of life in the South. I finished my last month of teaching and we started packing the non-essential parts of our life in boxes. With no job in line for the next year, we were accepting the fact that we may be bouncing from parents to parents for a while and potentially welcome our son while living with our parents. I received a call, stating that I was in the top two candidates for the math position and since I student taught at Oak Grove, I did not need to come in to teach a sample lesson for part two. It finally came time to move over the Memorial Day weekend. My parents and Gretchen's dad came to

help load and drive our belongings to Odessa.

After not hearing a word for a couple weeks, despite the positive interview, I decided to call the Oak Grove Principal on May 28th about the progress of the Math position. He had decided to hire the other candidate, but there was potential of another Math teacher leaving and that morning, one of my cooperating teachers had submitted his resignation to become a stay-at-home dad and I would be in consideration for both positions. The Math teacher was the head baseball coach and if he had left, then they would need to fill that, which they would find a Social Studies teacher to fill that and I would be handed the Math Position. If he did not leave, then I would be placed in the stack of applicants for the Social Studies Position. Needless to say, my hopes were very high. This was my best and seemingly last chance to have teaching employment for the upcoming school year. As I anxiously waited, the Math teacher did not leave and I was thrust into the pool of candidates for the Social Studies Position, but I was placed in the second stage. The Principal interviewed other candidates and called me and two others in for second round interviews with the department chair. She determined that any candidate would be a fine choice. It was not until the principal ran into my other cooperating teacher at a restaurant on June 19th and asked her opinion about who he should hire. She recommended that he hire “Reed, obviously, as a known commodity.” I finally received the call on June 24th.

With the stress of employment settled, it was now time to settle the homeless problem. We started to drive around Oak Grove looking for possible houses. We found a house that we were interested in and we looked at a house with a random realtor on June 26th. On July 10th, we set up a massive day of house hunting by looking at seven homes with the realtor and Gretchen’s mom. On July 14th, we brought both sets of parents to look at two additional houses and to look at our top two choices. The next day we had chosen to pursue a house on Clinton Street in Oak Grove, Missouri. By July 23rd, the sellers accepted our Counter-Counter Offer of \$114,000 for the house originally listed at \$125,000. We closed on the house on my second day of school on August 16th, 2013.

The summer of stress was finally over. We moved in to our house and I settled into my new job. A few short weeks later, we welcomed our son **Henry Owen Phillips (2013-)**. Without the help of

important people, the trajectory of my life would be vastly different from where it is today.

Generation Two

- A1a.** Harry Albert (Hap) Phillips (1955-)
A1b. Debra Lynn (Debbie) Bybee Phillips (1963-)

Generation Two represents my parents, both of which I consider to be part of the Baby Boom generation. Their births contributed to the significant population spike as discussed by Margo J. Anderson in her book, *The American Census: A Social History*.¹¹ It was this population growth that energized the economic growth after the Second World War.

Harry Albert (Hap) Phillips (1955-) was born in Independence, Missouri in 1955. He was the first child of **Robert Ross (Bob) Phillips (1924-2014)** and **Doris Marie Johnson Phillips (1929-2003)**. He became the older brother to **Keith Irwin (Kip) Phillips (1962-)**. My father was named for his two grandfathers, **Harry Ross Phillips (1900-1938)** and **Albert Earnest Johnson (1901-1978)**, specifically to have the acronymic nickname of “Hap.” That was what his parents called him and what he goes by in a casual setting. His brother was named to have an acronymic nickname as well.

He spent many years working with his father in residential electric business. He tells stories of him sitting in the back of his shop class, shaking his head with his hand raised waiting to correct the teacher on a basic electrical concept. From his life experience, and given the amount of money he was already making with his father, he made the decision to not attend college. He did have a variety of careers including postal sorting at the hub in Kansas City, working for General Motors, the Odessa Special Road District, and as Generation Superintendent for the City of Odessa. He has a unique method of commuting to work; he drives an electric golf cart. He would qualify for the 3.8% of Odessa residents that commute to work by “Other means” according to the American Community Survey.¹² Most of his working years included a side business of residential electrical installation.

He married shortly after graduating high school to Carol <Last Name Omitted> but that marriage was quickly dissolved. He then dated and became engaged to another woman that shared his birthday.

¹¹ Margo J. Anderson, *The American Census: A Social History*, (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 2015), 212.

¹² "SELECTED ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates," American Fact Finder, accessed September 19, 2016, <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>.

However, she died of cancer before they wed. He then met **Debra Lynn Bybee (1963-)** in the H&R Block Tax office in downtown Odessa, MO. They dated for about a year, before they wed in a small ceremony in the heat of August. They returned to their apartment for watermelon and beverages.

Debra Lynn Bybee Phillips (1963-) was the only child of **Kenneth Calvin Bybee (1931-2013)** and **Erma Jean Schmidt Bybee (1936-2015)** born in Lexington, Missouri in early 1963. On a familiar basis, she goes by the name “Debbie.” Even though she was less than a year old, she has been told that she was glue to the television during the funeral of John F. Kennedy in November of 1963. She remembers being in trouble a lot with her cousins or on her own. She warns to not run when your parent is after you with the yard stick and especially to not laugh when your mom breaks the yard stick on the bed as you are jumping across.

Much like her future husband, she chose not to attend college. This is evidenced by the information contained within the American Community Survey. According to the results of 2010 through 2014, only 19.3% of the population of Odessa, Missouri had any college degree.¹³ Rather, she went to the H&R Block Tax School. She worked for at a garment factory with her mom for a while; several seasons at the H&R Block in Odessa, MO; a couple of seasons in the Lafayette County Clerk’s office; and once her only child started school, she worked in the elementary cafeteria to be on the same schedule. On the side, she worked on tax preparation for friends and family.

¹³ "SELECTED SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS IN THE UNITED STATES 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates," American Fact Finder, accessed September 19, 2016, <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>.

Generation Three

- A1a1. Robert Ross (Bob) Phillips (1924-2014)**
A1a2. Doris Marie *Johnson* Phillips (1929-2003)
- A1b1. Kenneth Calvin Bybee (1931-2013)**
A1b2. Erma Jean *Schmidt* Bybee (1936-2015)

Generation Three consists of my grandparents. I am quite familiar with the stories they shared before they died. They came of age during the Second World War. That places them somewhere between the Greatest Generation and the Silent Generation. Each of my grandparents spent a majority of their youth living in rural communities and their families did not contribute to the suburban shift as discussed by Margo J. Anderson in her book, *The American Census: A Social History*.¹⁴ Their families were consistently living in rural communities. They continued to live in a rural community as the suburban area is slowly sprawling closer and closer.

Robert Ross (Bob) Phillips (1924-2014) was born on October 20th, 1924 in Kansas City, Missouri to **Harry Ross Phillips (1900-1938)** and **Merry Alta *Jeffries* Phillips (1906-1972)**. Seven years later, he became the older brother to **Nancee June *Phillips* Barker (1931-)**. He contracted polio as a baby which affected his limbs on his right side. He was told that he would not live to see age eighteen. He never let that slow him down or stop him. Due to the effects of polio, he was unable to serve in the Second World War. However, he was able to inspect cockpits of planes constructed in Kansas City.

After the war, he attended a single year of college. In hindsight, if he could only attend one year, he made a historic choice. He enrolled at Westminster College in Fulton, MO after the end of the Second World War. He shared several stories from his college days with his family. In one story, he recounted that he had to wake up early to start the fire in the boiler for the dorm. Without that, the dorm would not have had hot water for the morning showers. This task provided him with assistance for his room and board costs. In another story, he remembered the intramural baseball team that he had played on, and remembered playing a game against the other colleges in Fulton, including the African American school. Finally, and most historically important, he was on campus when Winston Churchill came to campus on March 5, 1945 deliver

¹⁴ Margo J. Anderson, *The American Census: A Social History*, (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 2015), 212.

the “Sinews of Peace” Speech. He did not get to watch the speech. However, he did have his camera with him for the motorcade. He snapped some photos of the parade route and he found a close location near the entrance to the hall before the speech, which he kindly shared with me.

He did not graduate from college, but he held a variety of careers during his life. He worked in the local shoe factory; a repairman for a local appliance shop; and he owned a residential electric service. Once he retired, he started a hobby in woodworking. Many of his wooden toys have been sent around the world on missions; to local hospitals; and was exhibited in the National Museum of Toys and Miniatures.

At a party in 1954, his sister introduced him to **Doris Marie Johnson (1929-2003)**. As I have been told, they fell in love and married without telling her parents. He saved money for several weeks for a house, before they told her parents that she would be moving in with her husband. Over the years, they added to that house various times before moving to town due to her cancer diagnosis. He was also diagnosed with prostate cancer, but he took a dramatic treatment to continue caring for his wife. Later, complications from that treatment led to his death on December 9th, 2014.¹⁵

Doris Marie Johnson Phillips (1929-2003) was born on July 30th, 1929 to **Albert Earnest Johnson (1901-1978)** and **Ruby May Ross Johnson (1911-2005)** near Phillipsburg, Kansas. Interestingly enough, Phillipsburg, Kansas was named for her future husband’s great-great uncle and Civil War Colonel, reporter and politician, **William Addison Phillips (1824-1893)**.¹⁶ She was joined by two younger siblings: **Norma Ann Johnson Logan (1932-)** and **Delbert Charles Johnson (1934-2002)**.

After moving several times in her youth, her family settled in Odessa, Missouri where she graduated from high school in 1947. She started attending classes at Central Missouri State College in the summer of 1947. She began teaching that fall in a one room school in the county surrounding Odessa, Missouri. She taught in several other county schools before starting to work at the Oak Grove R-VI School District for over thirty years. She earned her degree in education and even earned a Master of Education degree.

Before the birth of any of her grandchildren, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She survived and

¹⁵ Debra Phillips, “Robert Ross Phillips – Family Group Record,” supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

¹⁶ "Phillipsburg, Kansas." Wikipedia. Accessed October 29, 2016. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phillipsburg,_Kansas.

became a grandmother. She was known for her cookies, which were made in bulk. She was an active member in the Sni-A-Bar Women's Extension Club. A group of mostly retired women and some stay at home moms would meet at a house for a pot luck lunch and themed bingo. Her membership fostered the sense of community and friendship discussed by Claude S. Fischer in his book *Made in America*.¹⁷ In the late nineties, cancer returned in two different forms. She died on August 27th. 2003 at the New Haven nursing home in Odessa, Missouri.¹⁸

Kenneth Calvin Bybee (1931-2013) was born on November 3rd, 1931 as the youngest of fourteen children. His parents were already grandparents by the time of his birth. He grew up watching several of his brothers fight in the Second World War. He looked up to his brothers and their deaths deeply affected him.

He did not graduate high school. The highest education he earned was an eighth grade education. It is around that age, that he claimed to have started smoking. According to research compiled by Fischer and Hout in their book *Century of Difference: How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years*, in Figure 2.2 "High School Graduation Rates for All and by Gender, Religion, and Racial Ancestry, by year Person Turned Twenty-One," he is part of the new minority of persons that do not earn a high school degree.¹⁹ Growing up, I always found it interesting that he was my only grandparent that had not graduated. This is supported by the research in the chart.

Despite only having an eighth grade education, he worked for the Missouri Department of Transportation in a road crew for over thirty years. In retirement, he worked at the Odessa Special Road District on county roads for a few years. He was also highly present in the early months of the birth of his only grandchild. He came over every day for the first few months of my life.

He met **Erma Jean Schmidt Bybee (1936-2015)** sometime after he left school. They dated throughout her high school years. They married on June 16, 1956. They lived in various houses around

¹⁷ Claude S. Fischer, *Made in America: A Social History of American Culture and Character*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 132.

¹⁸ Debra Phillips, "Robert Ross Phillips – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

¹⁹ Claude S. Fischer and Michael Hout, *Century of Difference: How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006), 13.

Odessa, including building a house of their own. He enjoyed playing cards with friends on nights and weekends.

In his twilight years, he suffered from emphysema, COPD, and asthma due to years of cigarette smoking. He suffered from a stroke on a First of January. He spent some time in rehabilitation, but was later sent home. Several years later, he had a second stroke on October 6, 2007 and left for continued nursing home care until his death on January 17, 2013.²⁰

Erma Jean Schmidt Bybee (1936-2015) was born on June 20, 1936 as the second child of six to **Charles William Schmidt (1909-1955)** and **Erma Pauline Hergemuller Schmidt (1916-2010)**. She went by both her first and middle name, Erma Jean. She was named after her mother and her older brother was named after their father. She only mothered one child in 1963. She represents the overall decline of fertility rates as evidenced in Figure 4.3 “Observed and Projected Fertility of Women Who Reached Childbearing Age in the Twentieth Century, by Year of Birth Plus Thirty” as collected by Fischer and Hout for their book *Century of Difference: How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years*.²¹ Her birth as one of six and only having one child fits within the trend of the graph.

She dated **Kenneth Calvin Bybee (1931-2013)** during her high school years. She graduated from Odessa High School in 1954. She married on June 16, 1956. As she was in a relationship during her formative years, she never officially learned to drive. Kenneth or friends would drive her anywhere she needed to go. Saturday mornings was grocery store time. Kenneth would drive her to the store and wait in the car or truck. Every Wednesday they would drive up to the newspaper office to be in line at 6:30 to purchase that week’s newspaper. Wheel of Fortune was a common show that she would watch with her sisters and her mother in the basement apartment below her house.

She worked at the local shoe factory and at a couple of garment factories. I remember riding with my mom to pick her up from her last garment factory job in Blue Springs, Missouri occasionally. Most days she

²⁰ Debra Phillips, “Kenneth Calvin Bybee – Family Group Record,” supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

²¹ Claude S. Fischer and Michael Hout, *Century of Difference: How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006), 66.

would carpool with a co-worker or Kenneth would take her.

Much like her husband, she smoked for a majority of her life. That led to several health issues later in life. She had to have carotid artery surgery three times to clear the plaque buildup. She also had macular degeneration in her eyes. She died on April 28, 2015 after spending time in the nursing home.²²

²² Debra Phillips, "Kenneth Calvin Bybee – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

Generation Four

A1a1a.	Harry Ross Phillips (1900-1938)
A1a1b.	Merry Alta <i>Jeffries</i> Phillips Sanders (1906-1972)
A1a2a.	Albert Earnest Johnson (1901-1978)
A1a2b.	Ruby May <i>Ross</i> Johnson (1911-2005)
A1b1a.	Nelson Bluford Bybee (1886-1969)
A1b1b.	Amanda <i>Foster</i> Bybee (1890-1966)
A1b2a.	Charles William Schmidt (1909-1955)
A1b2b.	Erma Pauline <i>Hergemueller</i> Schmidt (1916-2010)

Generation Four represents my limit of personal knowledge about my ancestry. I heard many stories from my parents about their grandparents and from my grandparents about their parents. I was even able to meet two of my great-grandmothers. This generation was born around the turn of the century and weathered the Great Depression as young adults. Interestingly, the Phillips line from this generation also contributed to the urban shift in the 1920 census as discussed by Margo J. Anderson in her book *The American Census: A Social History*.²³

Harry Ross Phillips (1900-1938) was born on June 21, 1900 to **Frank Lowrie Phillips (1873-1966)** and **Nannie *Pirtle* Phillips (1873-1921)** in Council Grove, Kansas. He was a Spanish teacher in Westport, Missouri. He married **Merry Alta *Jeffries* Phillips Sanders (1906-1972)** and had two children. They lived in the city, but were planning to move to Holden, Missouri. He died on August 21, 1938 of a heart condition.²⁴

Merry Alta *Jeffries* Phillips Sanders (1906-1972) was born to **George William Jeffries (1879-1948)** and **Bessie Ellen Cundiff Jeffries (1883-1974)** on February 13, 1906. She was the second of six children. She married **Harry Ross Phillips (1900-1938)** in Kansas City, Kansas. Together, they had two children. She was a beautician, much like her daughter. She had a shop in Holden, Missouri for many years. After the death of her first husband, she remarried on October 14, 1944 to **James Harrison Sanders (1894-1981)**. He was a mule farmer and trader. He traded mules at the Missouri State Fair in Sedalia, Missouri. He took his grandchildren many times and paid them to check in at designated times and locations.

²³ Margo J. Anderson, *The American Census: A Social History*, (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 2015), 134.

²⁴ "Harry Ross Phillips: Heart Ailment Is Fatal to Son of Frank L. Phillips," *Kansas City Star*, August 22, 1938.

Albert Earnest Johnson (1901-1978) was born on November 30, 1901 to **Herbert Guy Johnson (1871-1955)** and **Nancy Ann Lamb Johnson (1875-1947)**. He was a carpenter. He married **Ruby May Ross Johnson (1911-2005)** on June 9, 1928 and fathered three children. He died on August 20, 1978 of coronary thrombosis.²⁵

Ruby May Ross Johnson (1911-2005) was born on December 30, 1911 to **Charles Luther Ross (1879-1949)** and **Arzena Hixenbaugh Ross (1880-1952)**. She married **Albert Earnest Johnson (1901-1978)** on June 9, 1928 at the young age of sixteen. She was a mother by seventeen and was a homemaker.

She was known as a very good cook. My father, **Harry Albert (Hap) Phillips (1955-)**, remembers eating dinner early with her before walking up the hill and eating second dinner at his house. She was a wonderful baker and would teach anyone how to make cinnamon rolls. She always had a supply of flavored mini marshmallows for her grandkids and great-grandkids.

As she aged, she began losing her memory. She had to move to the Oak Grove Bristol Manor for a few years, before moving to the Hillview Nursing & Rehab in Platte City, Missouri. She was an escape risk and was in the secured wing. She still managed to escape on several occasions. She was also known to steal the desserts from other residents at dinner time. She did not always remember who we were when we visited. She always commented about my dad's beard and her face would always light up when my father would kneel to give her a hug. She died on August 23, 2005.

Nelson Bluford Bybee (1886-1969) was born on October 8, 1886 to **James William Bybee (1862-1937)** and **Mary Elizabeth Rank Bybee (1864-1918)**. He was a farmer, but had also worked for the State Highway Department. He married **Amanda Foster Bybee (1890-1966)** on December 30, 1906 and fathered fourteen children.²⁶

When he died, on January 6, 1969, his youngest son was the executor of his estate. He was very poor at the time of his death and his executor was responsible to cover the costs of burial. His will also stated that

²⁵ Death Certificate for Albert E. Johnson, 20 August 1978, Registration District No. 174, Primary Registration No. 5638, Missouri Division of Health. Certified copy in possession of author.

²⁶ Debra Phillips, "Nelson Bluford Bybee – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

each surviving child was to receive at least one dollar which had to be paid by the youngest son. The siblings were angered that they did not get more, assumed that their brother had squandered the money and cut off contact with the family.

Amanda Foster Bybee (1890-1966) was born on March 8, 1890 to **George Washington Foster (1827-1905)** and **Sarah Eliza Davis Foster (1848-1912)**. She was the youngest of her father's seventeen children. She married **Nelson Bluford Bybee (1886-1969)** on December 30, 1906. Together, they had fourteen children.²⁷

My mother, **Debra Lynn (Debbie) Bybee Phillips (1963-)**, remembers her grandmother sitting in a dress in a rocking chair, legs spread, watching wrestling on the television punching along with the wrestlers. She also remembers her being a demanding woman that asked to be served frequently. She died on March 29, 1966.

Charles William Schmidt (1909-1955) was born on September 23, 1909 to **Emil Otto Schmidt (1873-1919)** and **Margaret May (Maggie) Armstrong Schmidt (1880-1956)** in Higginsville, Missouri. He worked as a driver for both buses and trucks at various points. He married **Erma Pauline Hergemuller Schmidt (1916-2010)** on November 14, 1933.

His children tell stories of his alcoholism and his anger. According to Claude S. Fischer in his book *Made in America*, alcoholism was on the decline in the middle nineteenth century, but it affected working class men, much like Charles.²⁸ They were afraid of him. Of his six children, most are born every year to year and a half, except for a five year gap before the youngest was born. The story has been told that he was in jail for several of those years.

In the waning years of his life, he was diagnosed with cancer. He did not want to be a burden on his family. On February 7, 1955, he committed suicide by shooting himself in the chest.²⁹

²⁷ Debra Phillips, "Nelson Bluford Bybee – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

²⁸ Claude S. Fischer, *Made in America: A Social History of American Culture and Character*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 234.

²⁹ Debra Phillips, "Charles William Schmidt – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

Erma Pauline HergemueLLer Schmidt (1916-2010) was born on December 10, 1916 to **Ernest Frederick HergemueLLer (1880-1953)** and **Anna Eliza Green HergemueLLer (1883-1966)**. She was the fourth of five children. She married **Charles William Schmidt (1909-1955)** on November 14, 1933. She consistently told her six children that they married in 1932 to avoid the embarrassment of them calculating that she was pregnant when they married.

She never remarried after the death of her husband, but she did receive an engagement ring from a suitor, Melvin <Last Name Omitted>. She never accepted the engagement but kept the ring. After her oldest daughter and husband moved into a house with an apartment in the basement, she lived in the basement up until her final year. Each night, several of her daughters would join her in the apartment to watch Wheel of Fortune. She died on January 6, 2010 at the New Haven nursing home in Odessa, Missouri.³⁰

³⁰ Debra Phillips, "Charles William Schmidt – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

Generation Five

A1a1a1.	Frank Lowrie Phillips (1873-1966)
A1a1a2.	Nannie <i>Pirtle</i> Phillips (1873-1921)
A1a1b1.	George William Jeffries (1879-1948)
A1a1b2.	Bessie Ellen <i>Cundiff</i> Jeffries (1883-1974)
A1a2a1.	Herbert Guy Johnson (1871-1955)
A1a2a2.	Nancy Ann <i>Lamb</i> Johnson (1875-1947)
A1a2b1.	Charles Luther Ross (1879-1949)
A1a2b2.	Arzena <i>Hixenbaugh</i> Ross (1880-1952)
A1b1a1.	James William Bybee (1862-1937)
A1b1a2.	Mary Elizabeth <i>Rank</i> Bybee (1864-1918)
A1b1b1.	George Washington Foster (1827-1905)
A1b1b2.	Sarah Eliza <i>Davis</i> Foster (1848-1912)
A1b2a1.	Emil Otto Schmidt (1873-1919)
A1b2a2.	Margaret May (Maggie) Armstrong Schmidt (1880-1956)
A1b2b1.	Ernest Frederick Hergemueller (1880-1953)
A1b2b2.	Anna Eliza <i>Green</i> Hergemueller (1883-1966)

Due to the increased amount of time and the lack of people to ask from Generation Three and higher, I do not know much about the people of Generation Five. I was able to locate the careers of the males in Generation Five, either from current family records or through the census records. According to research compiled by Fischer and Hout for their book, *Century of Difference: How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years*, 33% of people were farmers and a portion of the population was coal miners at the turn of the century.³¹ This reflects the job distribution of my great-great grandfathers; half were farmers and one was a coal miner.

Frank Lowrie Phillips (1873-1966) was born on July 16, 1873 in Mexico City, Mexico. He married **Nannie *Pirtle* Phillips (1873-1921)** on August 3, 1899. They had four children before her death. He remarried in Mexico in 1929 to Hortensia. They had two additional sons. He was a Spanish teacher at Westport High School and served as Consul General for Honduras and Vice Consul for Paraguay. He died

³¹ Claude S. Fischer and Michael Hout, *Century of Difference: How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006), 107.

on July 26, 1966.³²

Nannie Pirtle Phillips (1873-1921) was born on September 30 1872 in Spencer Indiana. She married **Frank Lowrie Phillips (1873-1966)** and had four children. She died on February 25, 1921 due to the flu.³³ Her case may have been linked to the post-WWI influenza pandemic discussed by Claude S. Fischer in his book, *Made in America*.³⁴

George William Jeffries (1879-1948) was born on June 18, 1879 in Kentucky. He was a carpenter.³⁵ He married **Bessie Ellen Cundiff Jeffries (1883-1974)** on June 21, 1902. He died on October 25, 1948.³⁶

Bessie Ellen Cundiff Jeffries (1883-1974) was born on August 16, 1883 in Kentcuky. She married **George William Jeffries (1879-1948)** on June 21, 1902. She died on November 16, 1974.³⁷

Herbert Guy Johnson (1871-1955) was born on February 2, 1871 in Wahoo, Nebraska. He was a carpenter.³⁸ He married **Nancy Ann Lamb Johnson (1875-1947)** on February 22, 1899 in Almena, Kansas. He died on March 27, 1955 in Corvallis, Oregon.³⁹

Nancy Ann Lamb Johnson (1875-1947) was born on Mach 3, 1875 in Arlington, Nebraska. She married **Herbert Guy Johnson (1871-1955)** on February 22, 1899. Their first daughter was born two years prior to their marriage. They had five additional children, four of which survived to adulthood. She died

³² Debra Phillips, "Frank Lowrie Phillips – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

³³ Debra Phillips, "Frank Lowrie Phillips – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

³⁴ Claude S. Fischer, *Made in America: A Social History of American Culture and Character*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 25.

³⁵ "United States Census, 1930," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/XHF6-F7B> : accessed 5 November 2016), George W Jeffries, Kansas City, Jackson, Missouri, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 226, sheet 26A, line 34, family 489, NARA microfilm publication T626 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2002), roll 1202; FHL microfilm 2,340,937.

³⁶ Debra Phillips, "George William Jeffries – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

³⁷ Debra Phillips, "George William Jeffries – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

³⁸ "United States Census, 1930," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/X7QT-9M9> : accessed 5 November 2016), Herbert G Johnson, Almena, Norton, Kansas, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 3, sheet 3A, line 12, family 56, NARA microfilm publication T626 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2002), roll 714; FHL microfilm 2,340,449.

³⁹ Doris Phillips, "Herbert Guy Johnson – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Debra Phillips (Address omitted by request).

November 6, 1947 in Bakersfield, California.⁴⁰

Charles Luther Ross (1879-1949) was born on August 1, 1879 in Cedar, Kansas. He was a farmer.⁴¹ He married **Arzena Hixenbaugh Ross (1880-1952)** on December 10, 1902 after welcoming their first child a few months prior. He died on September 25, 1949 in Logan, Kansas.⁴²

Arzena Hixenbaugh Ross (1880-1952) was born on December 8, 1880 in Plano, Iowa. She married **Charles Luther Ross (1879-1949)** on December 10, 1902. She had six children over the next fifteen years. She died on October 5, 1952 in Logan, Kansas.⁴³

James William Bybee (1862-1937) was born on January 1, 1862 in Benton County, Missouri. He was a farmer.⁴⁴ He married **Mary Elizabeth Rank Bybee (1864-1918)** on February 19, 1882. He later remarried twice following the deaths of his first and second wives. He married Mary Trim on October 24, 1920 and Rosie Stratton on December 30, 1930. He died on September 14, 1937 in Warsaw, Missouri.⁴⁵

Mary Elizabeth Rank Bybee (1864-1918) was born on December 2, 1864 in Duroc, Missouri. She married **James William Bybee (1862-1937)** on February 19, 1882. They had fourteen children of which thirteen reached adulthood. She died on June 8, 1918 in Benton County Missouri.⁴⁶

George Washington Foster (1827-1905) was born on January 6, 1827 in Tennessee. He fought in the Civil War in the Seventh Regiment of the Missouri State Militia on the side of the Union.⁴⁷ After the war,

⁴⁰ Doris Phillips, "Herbert Guy Johnson – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Debra Phillips (Address omitted by request).

⁴¹ "United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/M2ZQ-KBJ> : accessed 12 November 2016), Charley Ross, Towanda, Phillips, Kansas, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 147, sheet 4B, family 75, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 452; FHL microfilm 1,374,465.

⁴² Doris Phillips, "Charles Luther Ross – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Debra Phillips (Address omitted by request).

⁴³ Doris Phillips, "Charles Luther Ross – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Debra Phillips (Address omitted by request).

⁴⁴ "United States Census, 1920," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M8WG-X2P> : accessed 12 November 2016), James W Bybee, Fristoe, Benton, Missouri, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 4, sheet 1A, line 39, family 10, NARA microfilm publication T625 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), roll 903; FHL microfilm 1,820,903.

⁴⁵ Debra Phillips, "James William Bybee – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

⁴⁶ Debra Phillips, "James William Bybee – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

⁴⁷ "Find A Grave Index," database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/QVK7-8ZK7> : 13 December 2015), George Washington Foster, 1905; Burial, Edwards, Benton, Missouri, United States of America, Mossy Cemetery; citing record ID 32195533, Find a Grave, <http://www.findagrave.com>.

he became a farmer.⁴⁸ He married Margaret Ann Lindsey on April 8, 1852 and later remarried **Sarah Eliza Davis Foster (1848-1912)** on March 11, 1873. He dies on May 17, 1905.⁴⁹

Sarah Eliza Davis Foster (1848-1912) was born on September 22, 1848 in Indiana. On March 11, 1873 she married **George Washington Foster (1827-1905)** and became the step-mother to his eleven children. They had an additional six children together. She died on April 9, 1912.⁵⁰

Emil Otto Schmidt (1873-1919) was born on March 30, 1873 in Berlin, Germany. He immigrated in 1887 with his parents. He married **Margaret May (Maggie) Armstrong Schmidt (1880-1956)** on May 24, 1899. He was a coal miner. He died on May 9, 1919.⁵¹

Margaret May (Maggie) Armstrong Schmidt (1880-1956) was born on May 24, 1880 in Belton, Missouri. She married **Emil Otto Schmidt (1873-1919)** on May 24, 1899. They had six children that all reached adulthood. She died on August 24, 1956.⁵²

Ernest Frederick Hergemueller (1880-1953) was born on July 5, 1880 in Morrison, Missouri. He married **Anna Eliza Green Hergemueller (1883-1966)** on February 28, 1906 in Wellington, Missouri. He was a farmer. He died on March 1, 1953.⁵³

Anna Eliza Green Hergemueller (1883-1966) was born on September 22, 1883 outside of Odessa, Missouri. She married **Ernest Frederick Hergemueller (1880-1953)** on February 28, 1906. They had five children with the four youngest surviving into adulthood. She died on September 25, 1966 in Lexington, Missouri.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ "United States Census, 1900," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/M3H2-65N> : accessed 12 November 2016), George M Foster, Union Township (north half), Benton, Missouri, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 7, sheet 1B, family 14, NARA microfilm publication T623 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1972.); FHL microfilm 1,240,839.

⁴⁹ Debra Phillips, "George Washington Foster – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

⁵⁰ Debra Phillips, "George Washington Foster – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

⁵¹ Debra Phillips, "Emil Otto Schmidt – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

⁵² Debra Phillips, "Emil Otto Schmidt – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

⁵³ Debra Phillips, "Ernest Frederick Hergemueller – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).

⁵⁴ Debra Phillips, "Ernest Frederick Hergemueller – Family Group Record," supplied 28 May 2016 by Phillips (Address omitted by request).