

The Builder

WILLIAM L. GUY

edited by Gerald G. Newborg

This article is based on a series of oral history interviews with William L. Guy and Jean Mason Guy. The Bill Guy interviews were conducted between January and June 1987 by David Gray, then deputy state archivist with the State Historical Society of North Dakota. The Jean Guy interviews were conducted between October 2003 and January 2004 by Lotte Bailey, deputy state archivist with the State Historical Society of North Dakota. The interviewer's questions have been omitted, and the presentation has been reorganized and edited. Brief editorial explanations, in italics, are scattered throughout the text. All punctuation is that of the editor. The portions of the article derived from Jean Guy's interviews are slightly shaded.

The full interviews consist of approximately thirty hours of tape. The space limitations inherent in an article for North Dakota History have required that some material be summarized or rephrased.

Interested readers may view transcripts of the full interviews, which are on file in the State Archives and Historical Research Library of the State Historical Society of North Dakota.

This is not intended to be a balanced historical account, but rather a personal perspective based on the narrators' own words. Although space constraints permit publication of only a portion of the interviews, we hope that the "voice" and personality of the narrators will be apparent.



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Drawing by Brian Austin

Part One

Fortunate to Have That Experience



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The Guy family, about 1940. John, James, and William, Jr. (1 to r) stand behind their parents, Mabel Leet Guy and William Guy, Sr.

My [maternal] grandfather's name was Ole Leet, and my grandmother's maiden name was Flatland. My grandfather came [to America] as a very young man and homesteaded north of Devils Lake. Apparently he walked north from Devils Lake until he came to what is now called Lake Cavanaugh and liked the setting there, and so established his homestead on the edge of that lake. About the same time the woman who was to become my grandmother emigrated from Norway to the Devils Lake area and worked as a housemaid. I suspect that she may have been working off the passage money that she had gotten to come over here. Somehow my grandfather met this Norwegian housemaid in Devils Lake, and they were married and took up their residence on this little homestead on Lake Cavanaugh, which is just south of the little town of Webster.

My father, William Guy, was born on a small farm in northeastern Indiana. He and his two sisters lived with my grandfather and grandmother on that farm until about 1902, when they came to North Dakota. They took up farming near Churchs Ferry and farmed for about six years. They did not care for the life they found in North Dakota, so they went back to Indiana. I have an aunt that still lives on that farm they returned to near Etna Green, Indiana.

My dad, however, liked the life in North Dakota and did return. Actually, I suspect there was not enough farmwork

for him to stay in Indiana, and he came back up to North Dakota looking for farmwork. He had dropped out of high school after two years and somehow arrived at the—I am told—barns at the North Dakota Agricultural College (NDAC), looking for a job. When he arrived he was given a job and a place to sleep up in the haymow of the horse barn at NDAC. He discovered that the college had a practice high school teacher on the campus, so he decided to go back to high school after having dropped out for three or four years. He finished high school working in the horse barns and then decided to continue on into college. He graduated from NDAC, all the time working at the experiment station, though not always at the horse barn.

He met my mother, Mabel Leet, at NDAC. Even though the Guy family had lived in North Dakota for six years and the two had been probably only ten or fifteen

miles apart, they didn't know one another at that time. My dad was a very ambitious man, a very able person. While he was going to college he worked one summer at the Langdon experiment station. His major in college was agriculture. My dad and mother were married in 1918, and Dad became the first county extension agent in Ramsey County, headquartered in Devils Lake. My dad was quite a man; I can't say enough good about him. He organized the North Dakota Wool Pool and the North Dakota Breeders Association. Later he was one of the organizers of the North Dakota Grim Alfalfa Association, and was one of several men who reactivated the North Dakota Farm Bureau into the organization that we know today.

I was born in Devils Lake on September 30, 1919. Consequently, I look at Devils Lake with kind of a feeling of warmth as my birthplace and as close to where my grandparents had their farm. In 1922 we moved to Fargo. My dad became the agricultural extension agent in Cass County. My brother Jim was two years younger than I and was born in Fargo. My brother John, who is four years younger than I, was born in Fargo also.

We lived on College Street, which was very close to the NDAC campus and was the last paved street on the northwest corner of Fargo at that time. Behind our home was a marshy area, and no houses were to the west. My memory

starts about then. As a youngster I can remember the Fargo Detroit ice wagon, with its canvas cover like a prairie schooner, that was pulled by a beautiful team of big Belgian horses that would come clop, clopping down the street with the blocks of ice in this wagon. Another memory I have of those days was the quality of tar that paved the street out in front of our house. When it got real warm in the summertime we kids could pull off chunks of that black tar and chew it like gum, although once in a while we'd hit some gravel, you know, and that would make for tough chewing. But nonetheless we did use that tar for gum.

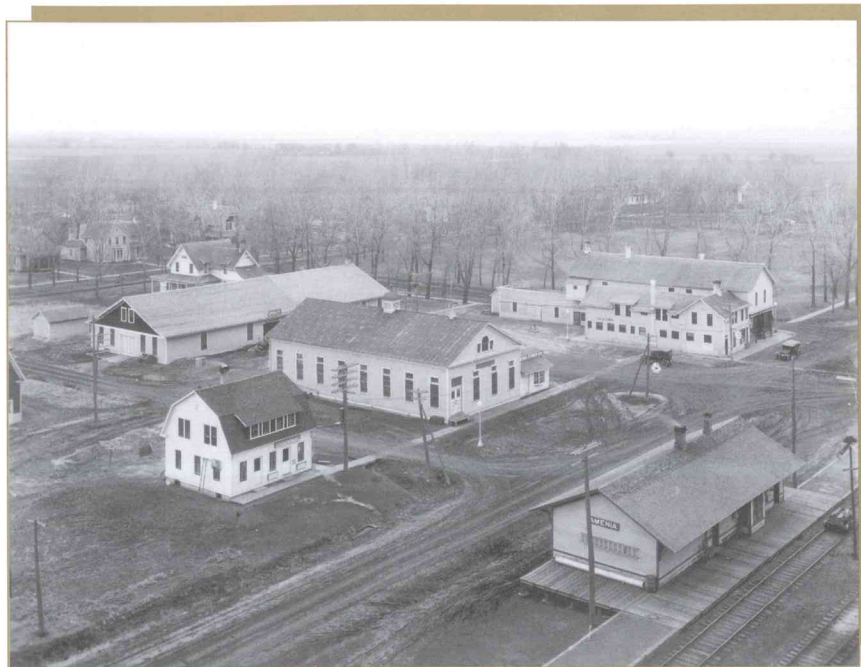
Football was played at NDAC, and one of my first athletic heroes at age, I guess, five was Claude Miller, who was a halfback on the NDAC Bison team. At that time the NDAC football field was where the present student union is. We could see the football rising up over the tops of the college buildings from our home on College Street when they were practicing their punting. We kids would sit there and watch the ball come up every so often and exclaim, "That must have been Claude Miller that kicked that ball!"

My dad was an ardent football fan, and we had a radio called the superheterodyne radio that was mostly squeals and squawks, as I remember. When NDAC was playing away and the game was being telephoned back and broadcast over WDAY Radio, which was brand new in the broadcasting field at that time, my dad and several other men would gather in our dining room and lay a big strip of wrapping paper on the table and then draw the outline of the football field with the yard lines on it. They would then move something like an inkwell representing one team and the other team, so that they could picture in their minds where the teams were on the field as they received this rather crude reporting of the game.

I started school in Fargo, going to the Roosevelt School about three or four blocks away. I went there for the first half of the year—the last of 1926. We [moved] to Amenia in December of 1926, when my dad took the position of manager of the Carrie T. Chaffee estate, which was a large remnant of the original Amenia and Sharon Land Company, a bonanza farm. The Amenia and Sharon Land Company had been broken up, and the stockholders had taken their shares in land. The Chaffees were a large stockholder in that land company and took their shares of land in and around Amenia. Amenia was a company town dominated by the Chaffee family. The estate consisted of twenty-six farms, the

elevators in Amenia and at the nearby town of Newmann, the nearby [rail] siding of Mason, plus all of the real estate in the town of Amenia.

When we got to Amenia it was quite a jolt because there was a town of about a hundred people, or maybe a few less, compared to what I had been used to—what I thought was the big city of Fargo. It had a blacksmith shop, an elevator and a feed mill, a lumber yard, a general store, a bank, a garage for repairing automobiles, a gas station, and a telephone exchange office. It had a teeny shop that sold candy and pop, and on one side of the shop it had a barber chair. A contractor lived in the town—a contractor who built houses. We had a drayman that hauled freight from the railroad station to the store, and of course we had a depot. The section workers lived in Amenia. We had a bulk oil station that the Standard Oil Company owned. We had a school in Amenia that went from the first grade through high school. There was one church—a Congregational church—a hotel, and a post office out of



Amenia, North Dakota.

which the rural mailman had his route. All of the real estate was owned by the Chaffees, so consequently all of the buildings were painted the same color—if you can imagine a town in which all of the buildings except the two Chaffee homes were painted with a yellowish color. This didn't hold true after my dad came there. People were given a choice after that when things had to be repainted. But all of the twenty-six Chaffee farms could be identified by the yellow color of the house and, of course, the red barns.

The Amenia community was very well organized socially.

We had a community club that met once a month in the town hall above the John Carley store during the fall and wintertime. We had a school band that was organized in 1932 and led by a farmer by the name of Paul Smith. We had a 4-H club; my dad was a leader of that club. Boy Scouts and Camp Fire were available to the young people, and Lawrence and Gertrude Chaffee were the leaders of those groups.

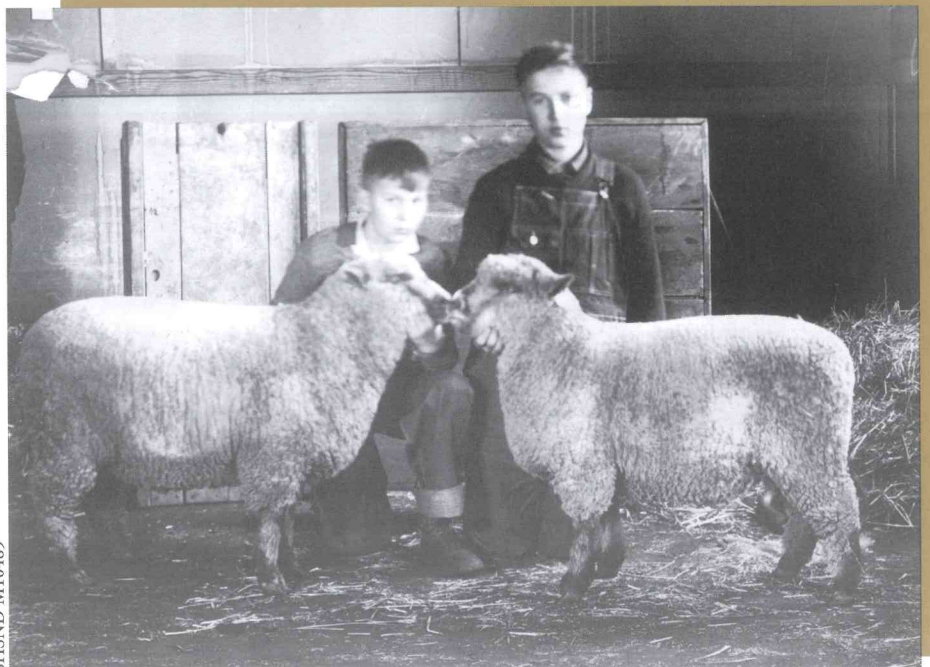
The depression hit the country in 1928, and it affected Amenia like most other communities. The bank in Amenia closed and was later moved to Casselton, where it became the Casselton State Bank. The general store—the Carley store—burned down, taking with it the gymnasium above it. The feed mill across the track from the store burned down. The hotel was torn down in about 1930. The Standard Oil Company moved its bulk oil tanks out of the city and left only the concrete cradles where the tanks had been. This, incidentally, caused the Amenia Cooperative Oil Company to start. My dad started that cooperative oil company to replace the Standard Oil bulk service that had left town. The garage that we had in town also moved. The mechanics moved to Casselton and started their business there. The barbershop closed down.

In order to increase the revenues that were coming in to the Chaffee estate, my dad started feeding lambs in a feedlot right at the edge of Amenia in about 1932. His first year he did all the feeding himself to know exactly what he was up against. But after that he branched out, and the company fed about six thousand lambs a winter, and of course they were fed by hired help from then on. Each fall my dad would go to Browning, Montana, to bring back a trainload of feeder lambs. Some of the smaller lamb feeders in the community would ask him to buy lambs for them, too. One year my brother Jim and I went out to Montana with my dad. The loading chutes were on the prairie about twenty miles north of the little town of Browning. There was nothing at this rail point except the loading yards and scales. When we drove out there, my dad had a crowbar with which he loosened the scale because it had rusted shut from the year before, and he asked me to get on the scale so he could check to see what kind of weight he could expect from loading lambs out of there. There wasn't a sheep in sight, nor was there a tree in sight. It

was just brown rolling prairie in all directions.

The next morning we got out there early, and it was a madhouse of bleating and bawling sheep milling around and sheep herders' wagons lined up. The Canadian Border collies, or the Scotch Border collies—black and white sheep dogs—were slinking around doing their work. The railcars were lined up at the loading chutes; all day they loaded until they had six thousand lambs loaded in that train, and the entire train was just plain lambs.

My dad told my brother Jim and me that we could ride back to North Dakota in the caboose. I was about thirteen years old then, and my brother was about eleven. We found that when the railroad tracks were going up a grade, all of the slack would come out of the train one car at a time, and finally the last car would have a tremendous jerk, and anybody in the caboose would be thrown against the wall, or if you were lying down you'd slide to the back end of the bunk. Then when the train would go down a grade, all the cars would telescope together, and there would be another jarring jolt that would throw you against the other wall or slide you to the other end of the bunk. The train went so slow at times that my brother and I got out and trotted along behind just for the exercise. Our job was supposed to be to get out and pound on the side of the cars with sticks to get the lambs to stand up, because when lambs are packed into double-decked cars and are thrown around by the jolting of the cars, they sometimes either lie down or fall down, and then quite often they're suffocated by the other sheep moving on top of them. There is always some loss to



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James (l) and Bill (r) Guy, with what is described on the back of the photo as the champion fat lamb of the state 4-H show at NDAC, 1935.

be expected in shipping sheep that way, and our job was to try to keep as many of them on their feet as possible.

We got to Minot, where the cars had to be unloaded and the sheep had to be fed and watered. I had an uncle and aunt living in Minot, and we went over to stay with them that night. When I knocked on their door about ten o'clock that night, our faces were so covered with soot from the smoke from the train that my aunt didn't recognize us as being her nephews. But we did get the sheep home with a minimum of loss, and that was one of the good experiences of my life. On the last leg of that trip, from New Rockford to Amenia, my brother and I rode in the engine and watched the firemen fire the engine and saw the roaring fire that kept the steam up.

The first job I had as a youngster that was a paying job was leveling grain tanks at a threshing machine on one of the farms that my dad managed. A threshing machine would accumulate a bushel of grain and then would dump it down a spout into a horse-drawn wagon. And each time the dump tripped a bushel of grain into the spout, it was recorded on the machine.

My job was to record how many dumps, or how many bushels, had been put into that wagon and also to keep the box of the grain tank evenly loaded with grain. You see, the tenant would get one grain tank to haul to his granary. The second grain tank would go into Amenia to be dumped in the elevator and would be the landlord's grain. That's why it had to be checked.

My first day on the job was a hot one, and the water jug was a large crockery jug that held maybe as much as three or four gallons. I soon became extremely thirsty, and when I went down to lift the jug to get a drink of water, I found that I couldn't lift the jug high enough to tip it to drink out of. I was parched and in real discomfort. Fortunately, somebody saw my problem and helped me get a drink, but after that first day my dad decided that I was still a little light for that job. I didn't have to do that again until the following year, when I again went back to leveling grain tanks and checking the amount of grain that went into each one.

By the time I was fifteen, however, my dad gave me a team of horses and put me to work hauling manure out of the sheep feedlots. The manure was about three feet deep, and it was an all-summer job if you wanted to make it that. So I had my team of horses and a manure spreader

and a manure fork. I had plenty of time for meditation on that job, because it was just hard work filling that manure spreader and then going out to a nearby field and spreading it. By the time harvest came along I knew my team of horses pretty well, and my dad told me that I should take a bundle wagon, which was a hay rack, on which I would stack the bundles out of shocks of grain and haul them to the threshing machine. Then I would pitch the bundles into the feeder of the threshing machine. The feeder would draw them in and thresh the grain out of the bundle. My horses were very young, just as I was. We started the season with a full set of harness and a good bundle wagon. There were seven other teams and bundle wagon drivers on that crew. We moved from one field to another and from one farm to another. My young team was not as trustworthy as they should be, and they ran away a couple of times. They broke the harness, and by the end of the run, which was twenty-six days of bundle hauling, about all that was left on my team were the tugs and the back strap and the collar. The rest of the harness had been stepped on or broken or destroyed.



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The 1936-37 Amenia High School basketball team. Bill Guy is second from right, back row. The Amenia team lost only one game that season, to the eventual state champions, Tokio High School.

My dad looked at this ruefully and said that if the season had lasted another three weeks, I would have been without horsepower. But it was a good experience.

In 1932 basketball came to Amenia High School for the first time. Our [first] basketball gym was created out of the town hall that was above Carley's grocery. It was a very small hall, then a very small gym with a low ceiling. A padded carpet had to be ripped out before the basketball

floor could be exposed and painted. We had a large space heater that burned wood or lignite coal in one corner. It had a tin jacket around it to keep people from accidentally touching the hot stove, but it was large enough and the hall was small enough so the stove actually protruded into one corner of the basketball floor. The ceiling was so low that there wasn't really such a thing as a long shot, and the stage at one end of the hall held most of the school kids that watched the games. The public had one row of chairs around the hall, and their feet were on the outside line of the basketball court, so if the players were dribbling in their direction people had to scrunch up into their chairs to avoid being hit. Scores were extremely low in those days. Fourteen to sixteen, for example, would be a common score of a close game. There was the center jump after every basket, so that slowed the game down considerably. I used to say that in the few years we played in that little gym, our coach had a zone defense, and with that stove reaching out into one corner of the floor, whichever team was defending that basket had a sixth player in that stove as part of the zone defense.

When the new gym was built, I believe I had two more years of high school left. We had a small but good group of boys that had played together ever since the grades. When I was a senior we were coached by a man by the name of Reginald Hoidahl, who was also the superintendent of schools and an instructor in high school. In that year, which was the fall of 1936 and the spring of 1937, Amenia won twenty-five of the twenty-six games it played in the Class C competition. We went to the state tournament that year and lost to the team that won the tournament. That was the only game that we lost that year. I was lucky in being named second team all-state in Class C basketball, and during my high school career I'd been named to five different all-tournament teams. So basketball was really important to me, and I wanted to play basketball when I got to NDAC, but that was not to be. It was a class of basketball that I didn't think I could compete well enough in to make it worthwhile to follow.

I graduated from Amenia High School in the spring of 1937. I think there were about twelve kids in our class. I entered NDAC in the fall of 1937. In the spring of 1937, I believe, Governor Langer had fired about a dozen department heads at NDAC because they refused to contribute money to his political campaign. This caused the North Central Association accrediting group to take NDAC off the accredited list. So when I came to NDAC there were about, as I remember, seventeen hundred students, and it was not

an accredited college. We had to have a certain grade level if we expected to transfer our grades to another accredited institution. My dad was president of the NDAC Alumni Association at that time, and he took the leadership in having the constitutional amendment drawn up that created the Board of Higher Education. The alumni association and some of the seniors at NDAC conducted a campaign across the state to get public acceptance of the constitutional amendment setting up the Board of Higher Education, which was to remove the college from interference by the executive branch of state government.

I enrolled in agricultural economics at NDSU. I joined the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, of which I eventually became the Eminent Archon, as the president was called. In 1941 I edited the yearbook, having been on the yearbook staff for three years. I was elected to Blue Key, an honorary service fraternity, and became president of that organization.

Even though I was majoring in ag economics, I was interested in livestock judging because as a 4-H youngster my brother and I had had sheep. It was quite an achieve-



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Bill Smith, Ernie Elgnie, and Bill Guy (1 to r), about 1936, on the Amenia depot platform with the thirty-one pheasants they had shot that day. Smith and Guy grew up together and attended NDAC, where both enrolled in a flight training program. Bill Smith was killed in a flying accident. Bill Guy completed the program and was licensed as a pilot, but did not continue flying.

ment, really, to be selected for the livestock judging team and not be enrolled in animal husbandry as a major. But I did get to go on an NDAC judging team to the intercollegiate contest at the Fort Worth Livestock Exposition. On the way down to Fort Worth, we knew the rings of livestock that we'd have to judge. A ring consists of four very similar animals, and you'd have to judge which of the four was the best and on down. We had been used to judging dairy cattle, beef cattle, horses, sheep, and hogs, but we had never judged mules. We knew that when we got to Fort Worth we

would have to judge a ring of mules in this contest. So we stopped at Oklahoma A&M and saw our first ring of four mules, and we were given a crash course on how to judge mules that day.

When we got to Fort Worth and got into the contest, everything went along fine. I thought we had better livestock in many respects up North than they did down South. We had to place the animals by putting the placing on a card, and then later go up to a room and tell a judge of that particular ring of animals why we placed the horses or hogs or sheep three, two, one, four, or however. When I got to the room where the mule judge was sitting, he had a big sombrero on and he was chewing on a match. He was leaning back in his chair, and he looked kind of forbidding to me. But I gave my reasons as best I could in the two minutes allotted to give reasons. When I got done with my two minutes, this judge took the toothpick out of his mouth and he said, "Son, have you all ever seen a mule before?" I bristled and said, "Well, of course I have seen a mule before." He said, "How many?" and I said, "Four." He said, "That's what I thought. By your accent I thought you probably hadn't, but you done a good job." I thought to myself, "MY accent? Here I talk like the radio announcers do, and this judge has got a southern accent so thick I can hardly understand him, and he says I've got an accent!"

I met Jean, my wife, in the fall of 1940. She was a freshman and I was a senior. We became engaged on December 31, 1941. In the fall of 1941 I went to the University of Minnesota to start work on a master's degree in agricultural economics. I had an old 1936 Dodge that I would drive back and forth from Minneapolis every other week or so to see Jean. But I became a little bit apprehensive that I wasn't spending enough time with her, and I needed to do something more concrete to kind of make my claim on this very attractive woman. I didn't have any money, but I did have a French Selmer saxophone that I was no longer using. So I advertised my saxophone and sold it for \$225. I used the money as a down payment on a diamond ring, which I gave to Jean on December 31 of

1941. I have never regretted selling that saxophone and giving the ring to Jean, although six months later, when the war had broken out and had gotten well underway, they were no longer shipping French Selmer saxophones to this country, and the price of those saxophones went up about triple. I just sold too soon.

War

I was at the University of Minnesota sitting in the SAE House on December 7, 1941, when the radio came on announcing the attack on Pearl Harbor. I was not staying at the SAE House at that time, and when I went back to my little one-room cubical where I lived, I heard President Roosevelt's speech over the radio to the nation in which he spoke of the infamous attack on Pearl Harbor. I'd been

a pacifist up until that time. The war had been going on in Europe, and the United States had been moving toward participating in that war. But I was one of those students with the "Hell, No, We Won't Go" group that were opposed to going to war—were opposed to the draft, even.

I stayed at the University of Minnesota until the end of the spring semester. I had gotten a year of graduate work in. But during that spring semester my dad, who had been ill for six months or so, died at Rochester's Mayo Clinic after not surviving an operation to clear a cancer of the pancreas. During my stay at Minnesota I decided I wanted to try out for the navy midshipmen program, which was officer training. So I applied to the navy, but then my father died, and the navy extended the date that I had to report until October. I had about four months to help my mother get her affairs in shape.

My brother Jim was already in the navy at that time. Jim was on the battleship *California*, which was sunk at Pearl Harbor. He was transferred then to the

Houston, a heavy cruiser which was sunk in the battle off Java [March 1, 1942]. He and about 350 others swam to shore about seven miles away. When they got to shore Japanese soldiers captured them, and they were put on three prison



Courtesy of the NDIRS

James Guy, the first of the Guy brothers to enlist in the navy, entered that service about 1940. Bill Guy's youngest brother, John, joined the navy in 1944.

Jean Mason Guy

My father, Sidney Mason, was born on September 20, 1898, in Buffalo, North Dakota. He started school when he was five years old, skipped two grades, and was very young when he graduated from high school. He went to college at Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota, when he was only fifteen or sixteen. The war was going on in Europe at that time. The United States was not in the war, but an ambulance corps was being raised in Saint Paul. A Saint Paul millionaire, Norman Hartges, was financially backing this group. The people who joined it were to be members of the French army. My dad had just started his second year of college, and he had to get his parents' permission because he wasn't eighteen years old yet. He and a friend from college, Hadley Lidstrom, joined at the same time and went over to France together. Their unit was called the Norman Hartges ambulance unit.

My dad served over there for at least a year. He received the French *croix de guerre* and was promoted to lieutenant; he was commissioned in the field while he was there. About the time the period he'd signed up for was over, the United States got into the war. My father wanted to transfer to the U.S. Army. He couldn't do that in Europe, so he came home to the United States. He went to Bismarck, where he worked for the National Guard; they were trying to help him make this transfer. At some point he joined the North Dakota National Guard, and they had him traveling around the state and in South Dakota, showing movies of activities at the front in the First World War. These movies were especially concentrated on showing what were called the "atrocities" that the Germans were committing. That's what he was doing in Bismarck [when he met my mother].

In 1912 my [maternal] grandfather [William Wallace Bond] went out [to western North Dakota] to put the crop in, and my mother, Clara, went with him. She helped with the field work, and she did the cooking and housekeeping for him. When he went back to Iowa after the growing season to make preparations to bring the family out to North Dakota for the next year, she stayed on in Bismarck. She was a secretary for T. R. Atkinson. She always had aspirations for doing interesting things. In the fall of 1917, she rented a section of land on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation and hired somebody to break the sod on three quarters of the land. Her plan was to go to the reservation in May 1918 to put in the crop.



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Lieutenant J.G. William Guy.

ships and transferred from Java to Moulmein, Burma. On this trip the U.S. Air Force bombed the three ships and sank one of them, not knowing that it was carrying U.S. prisoners. My brother was taken to a prison camp in the jungle, where the Japanese were building a railroad very similar to the bridge on the River Kwai. He died of malnutrition in that Japanese prison camp, I think about late 1942 or 1943.

I went to Notre Dame as a midshipman in October of 1942. I don't think I've ever put in a more difficult 120 days than I did in midshipmen's school because many of these subjects were engineering subjects—navigation, damage control, and that sort of thing—and I was not well grounded in that. I really had to work to get through. On January 26, 1943, I was graduated an ensign in the U.S. Navy. I didn't know until the last day whether I'd really make it or not. My wife and I had planned to get married on January 30, so I pleaded with her not to get her hopes too high because if I didn't graduate as an ensign we couldn't afford to get married. [But we] were married on time in a very nice wedding in the Congregational church in Fargo. I was assigned to Norfolk for my first duty station, so soon after we were married, like a few hours, both of us took off toward Norfolk. She was going to go as far as she could go with me before I was assigned somewhere where she couldn't go.

She was to have a month's leave of absence from her job; she and her dad were going to put in a crop on the land she had rented. Then she would come back to her job, and in August would return for the harvest. The last weekend in April, she and my dad met at a dance. She left Bismarck and went down to the reservation, and they didn't see one another for a month. When she came back they started going together. They were married on August 26, 1918. Their honeymoon was to go down to harvest that crop.

For the first two years they were at Standing Rock, they put in the crop in the spring and then went back to their jobs in Bismarck. In the fall of 1920, September 13, my brother was born in the hospital in Bismarck. From then on they lived on the reservation year-round in the building they always called a "tar paper shack." There wasn't a well on the property. My dad hauled water from a spring in barrels on a horse-drawn stoneboat. How they did laundry in the winter I can't imagine. They had cattle at one time and some sort of a barn. There was a terrible blizzard, and they lost a lot of cattle that went over a cliff in what they called the "breaks" on their property. My mother had a saddle horse named Jane that got loose from the barn in one of those blizzards, and they found her frozen in their yard when the blizzard was over with.

I was born in the fall of 1922. My dad took their Dodge touring car into Selfridge to get it tuned up for the trip to Bismarck; he was going to take my mother to Bismarck to stay with some friends to rest before I was born. Not long after my dad left, it became apparent that I was going to be born that day. My dad didn't get back from Selfridge until around six o'clock at night. Previously he had spoken to the superintendent of the hospital on the reservation to see if, in case of emergency,

he could bring my mother there. The superintendent said, "Yes, but only in case of emergency." Well, this was an emergency, so he got my mother to the hospital there, and that is how I happened to be born in the hospital at Fort Yates.

My parents stayed on the reservation through the next year. They were having great difficulties financially and decided that it was time to give up on the farming project. So in November of 1923, I think it was, they moved to Fargo. They lived in a rooming house where they had one big room. My dad went to the Dakota Business College to prepare for some kind of a job. He was at the college only a few months when he was hired to be the cashier of the bank in Chaffee, North Dakota. My family moved there that winter. They had a nice house in town. My dad was at the bank, and my mother, like her mother, took in teachers who boarded and roomed at our house.

The Masons moved back to Fargo in September 1926 after Sidney Mason took a job as an agent with Warner Insurance Company. After Jean started first grade, Clara Mason went to work as a part-time secretary to the juvenile commissioner

and as the only freelance court reporter in the area. She was also active in the Quota Club, moving through the ranks from Fargo club president to international president. Both parents were active in community affairs.

My mother taught me the art of homemaking—I learned how to clean and keep house, to do the laundry, ironing, baking, and cooking, to darn socks, and to sew on buttons. So in the summers, by the time I was fourteen years old, I was the hired help. I got paid three dollars a week for doing that. It was really fortunate that I learned all of the things that I did about housekeeping. My mother did a wonderful job. She was



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Sidney and Clara Bond Mason, about the time of their marriage in 1918. Sidney Mason is wearing the croix de guerre he was awarded while serving in the French army. The fur coat Clara Mason is wearing was made from beavers trapped by her father in the creek near his farm outside Almont, North Dakota.



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Sidney Mason at the tar paper shack where he and Clara lived for three years.

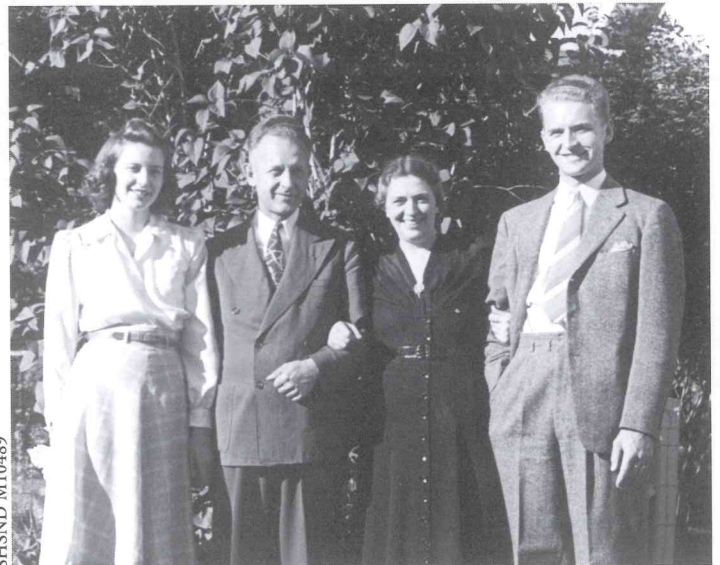
a good cook, and she was very good at managing her time and planning her work and events. My parents did a lot of entertaining, so I had the fun of setting the table when I got home from school and fixing relishes and that sort of thing. Then I would serve the food. These were dinner parties—there would be twelve or more people at them. My mother would have done all the cooking; she planned it so she could finish whatever was started after she got home at five o'clock. So later in life, when I had to do many things that a lot of people my age hadn't done, I was fortunate enough to have that experience

When I graduated from high school in 1940, the war had started in Europe. My brother, Bob, was at Northwestern University [in Evanston, Illinois]. My dad had left Warner and Company and gone off on his own to sell life insurance. Well, that was the wrong time to be doing that because the insurance companies invoked something called the war clause, which affected any male under thirty-five because of the likelihood of his going to war. That really cut down on my dad's prospects, so it wasn't a good business time for him. My best friend was going to go to Stephens College in Missouri. It was just a

two-year college at that time. Somehow or other I got a scholarship to go to Stephens. As fall approached and it was time to make plans to go, I realized that it would be very difficult for my folks to afford to send me there, even though I had a scholarship. So we changed plans, and I decided to go to NDAC. I've always been grateful that I did that. I enrolled in home economics, in the clothing and textile major.

I was always interested in clothes, and what I really wanted to do was to be a buyer of clothing for a department store. One of my mother's best friends was the buyer for de Lendrecies. She was a very attractive and vivacious person named Milda Thorson—a good example to have. Through a contest that I didn't really know if I should enter, I became the de Lendrecies store model, or representative. [I won] a contest that was sponsored by the Fargo Chamber of Commerce called the Queen of Spring Contest. It did not require any great ability of mine. The winner was the person who got the most votes, which were printed in the *Forum* newspaper for weeks. I think the smallest vote was a coupon for maybe fifty votes, and [then up to] one thousand. A lot of people in my dad's business brought votes to him, and all the people in the courthouse brought votes to my mother. I had to carry a paper sack around in school because students were giving me all their votes. For several years after that, when de Lendrecies would have a style show I was always in it—I was the bride at the end of the show.

The prize wasn't anything momentous; I think it was [a total of] a hundred dollars in certificates from



SHSND M10489

Jean, Sidney, Clara, and Bob Mason, late summer 1938. Bob was about to leave home to start college at Northwestern University.

different businesses. Plus I was given the dress that I wore to the crowning event. De Lendrecies was the only store that had a full-page ad in the *Forum* featuring me wearing ten or twelve different outfits. It took a whole day of picture taking to produce this ad, so it was quite an experience for me at the time. As usual, I learned a lot from the experience.

I pledged Kappa Kappa Gamma [in college]. One of the members of Kappa Kappa Gamma who was two years ahead of me and had been in my brother's class in high school was Mary McCannel. Mary was engaged to Bill Smith, who was Bill Guy's best friend. Bill Guy and Bill Smith had grown up in Amenia together and were a little bit competitive, but pretty good students and pretty active in everything in high school and also in college. Mary kept telling me that there was this fellow she knew that I should be going out with—that we'd make a good pair. She also kept telling this fellow, who was Bill Guy, that he should be taking me out. After about a month of this, he finally called me and asked me for a date. We went out on a Friday night before homecoming in October. NDAC always used to have a show that evening called the *Bison Brevities*, and we went to that. He asked me for Saturday night, too, but I already had a date. But Sunday he was going to drive Mary and Bill Smith to the lake. Her folks had a lake cottage there, and she was to do something there to help get ready for winter. So he asked me if I'd like to go along. I did, and we've both decided since then that that day sort of sealed the idea in both of our minds that this was pretty serious and we would eventually end up together.

Both Bill Smith and Bill Guy were taking flying lessons. There was a program called Civil Air Patrol, and you could sign up and take this course and learn to fly. On a Friday afternoon Bill Smith was out flying with the instructor. When they went to land at the airport, another larger biplane was coming in right over them. These planes did not have radios in them. There was no control tower like there is now. Neither one knew the other plane was there, and the biplane pancaked on the lower plane. The student flying the biplane was killed instantly. Bill had serious head injuries. He

THE FARGO FORUM

—Presents—

Its Annual Spring Fashion Review

With Fargo's Parade Of Queens



Fargo Forum, March 22, 1939. Jean Mason is second from the right on the bottom.

lived a week or ten days but never regained consciousness. That was a great tragedy; it just struck the whole campus. He was a very popular young man and a good person.

Following graduation from NDAC, Bill Guy started graduate school at the University of Minnesota. When Bill came home for Christmas he had enough money to make the down payment on a diamond ring. I didn't know anything about this. On New Year's Eve of 1941 we were going to a fraternity dance—a formal dance—and my parents were at a dinner at some friend's house. When [Bill] came to our house that evening he produced the ring. Then we had to stop and show my folks the ring to see if they thought this was all right.

There were a couple of things that [my parents] really insisted on. First of all, we were going



SHSND M10-489

Jean Mason and Bill Guy were married on January 30, 1942, at the Congregational church in Fargo. Bill Guy had graduated from midshipmen's school only four days earlier.

to have a big wedding, because when they got married, they went to the minister's and had one couple with them for witnesses—that was their wedding. We were going to have a big wedding; I heard that all of my life, long before I met Bill. The next one was, I had to finish college. They wanted me to be sure to do that. Well, Bill and I wanted me to finish college too, so that was not a problem. But the third one was a little bit stickier. They wanted us to save like five hundred dollars, which was a lot of money then. Well, that was fine, but we didn't have any prospects of saving five hundred dollars until Bill was given the opportunity to

fill in in his dad's place. So our five hundred and a little bit more came as a result of Bill's summer job. Bill was at home in Amenia all summer. I worked that summer in the office for the North Dakota Children's Home and Aid Society.

Our plan—which we didn't talk about with anyone else but my parents and Bill's mother, of course—was that when Bill finished with his training, if he made it and became a commissioned officer, we would get married. Our plan was that I would just not go back to school after Christmas, and I would have the month of January to get ready for getting married. Just a few days later we had this announcement tea, which I don't think surprised anybody. At that time we were a month into the term of school, and I hadn't started school, so it was pretty obvious what was going to happen. Our announcement was a walnut shell with this little typed message in it. I had cracked all these darn walnuts, and they had to be whole—each half had to be

whole. Then I'd tied them together with two ribbons: one was pale blue, and one was dark blue because those were the colors of my sorority. It gave the date and that we planned to be married.

We had a huge wedding. It was in the old First Congregational Church in Fargo. We were brought up in that church, and it was, I think, the first church that was built in Fargo. The church was full because, of course, everybody from Amenia had been invited. You either had to invite everybody or not anyone, so they were all there. It was a very cold day, and we had the reception at the church.

I traveled to Norfolk to await assignment. From there I was assigned to anti-submarine training at Key West. Jean was with me. She said she would go along as long as she could get a ticket. I was assigned from Key West to a destroyer that was near completion at Orange, Texas—a very hot, humid town on the gulf that is full of insects and all other unpleasantries. It would be several weeks before the ship was ready to be commissioned. It was so hot there that, working in the ship without any air conditioner or any fresh air below decks, the perspiration soaked every part of a person's uniform except the brass belt buckle. When our captain told me that I should go to New Orleans for three weeks to gyro school, I thought, "Boy, that's great—anything to get out of here." Jean was still with me, and we went to New Orleans—living from hand to mouth, you might say, because I was only making two hundred dollars a month, and that had to cover everything. We had a little apartment in New Orleans. We enjoyed that stay there and went back and commissioned the destroyer.

The *William D. Porter* was a brand new destroyer of the Fletcher class that, when fully outfitted, was about a three thousand-ton vessel a little over two hundred feet long. It had a crew of about 220. The crew on the destroyer on its shakedown cruise to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, was about half new recruits that had not had sea duty. We ran into a typhoon out of Galveston, and I would say that all of the recruits either felt queezy or were downright totally incapacitated from seasickness because the ship pitched and rolled so badly on the way to Guantanamo. Of course much of the equipment on the ship was new and untried, and many things were not functioning correctly—or at least the crew were not able to make them function correctly—so it was kind of a hairy experience. But that was just the first of a number of incidents that we had regarding the *William D. Porter*.

Our ship had one interesting experience. We were assigned to a very unique duty; we were told to rendezvous at the mouth of Chesapeake Bay and nest with two other destroyers—that is, to tie up side by side with them out in the bay and anchor there. We had been given sealed orders that were to be opened at midnight. When we did open the orders, we were told that we were to rendezvous with the battleship *Iowa* out beyond the mouth of the Chesapeake. The other two destroyers that we were nested with were given the same orders.

We had thought that we were going into the north Atlantic because when we were being outfitted in Norfolk, we'd been given heavy oilskin, sheepskins, and sheep-lined boots, and we'd been given gear to trail behind our destroyer that made a sound that was designed to attract torpedoes that would home toward propeller sounds. When we

Orange, Texas, was a little town on the Sabine River, which was the border between Texas and Louisiana. We found a place to live in a motel. It was appalling! The bathroom was terrible. It was very small; there was a shower, a sink, and a toilet. The drain for the shower was in the middle of the floor, and the toilet was just brown. I knew I had to do something about that. The next day when the cleaning woman came around, I told her that I wanted to clean that up. She gave me a bottle of Pine-Sol, which I'd never encountered before, and a razor blade. I really got the place looking very good. There were no curtains on the window and a very poor window shade. I got a new window shade, and I got some cheap material and made curtains, sewing them by hand. My last purchase was an ironing board. It was hot and humid down there; you had to have clean clothes once a day at least.

About the time I got this all done, Bill came home and said, "The captain says there's not really anything for me to do here. We should go to New Orleans, and [I will] take a communications course for three weeks. After that [I should] take any other pertinent courses that I can find out about. He will let us know when it's time for me to come back because the ship will then be soon commissioned." So we left all of my cleaning work and went to New Orleans.

We stopped in a nice apartment hotel on Saint Charles Avenue, which is one of the main thoroughfares in New Orleans. We had worked up this system where, if the person [to whom] we were talking [about] a place to live was a man, I did a lot of the talking. If it was a woman, Bill did the talking. An elderly lady was the manager, so he talked to her and, yes, she had a very small apartment that was available, and it was something we could afford. It was a little living room with a Murphy bed in it. There was just a tiny dining area with a table and a couple of chairs next to a window well. There was a little stove and refrigerator. It turned out that we were there about six weeks before the captain got in touch with Bill again. When we went back to Orange, we were able to get a room at the same motel. I don't think we got the same room, but the one we got was cleaner than the first one.

pulled away from our nest at midnight, there was a slight breeze blowing in from our port bow. As we backed away the breeze moved our bow against the other ship, and our anchor raked along the side of the other ship and tore off the captain's gig, or motor boat, which was hanging from davits. We also tore the lifeline, or railing, all along one side. So we started out in a very inauspicious manner. The next thing that happened to us as we moved to position was that one of our big depth charges on the stern accidentally

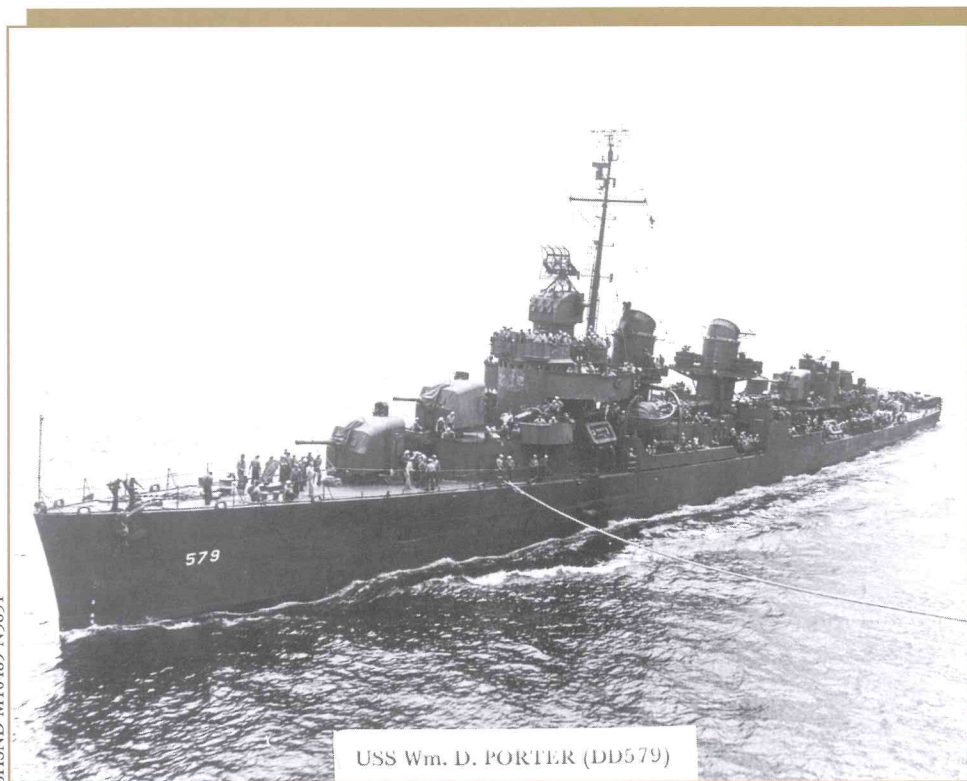
It had a duplication of this board that was shorted out, so we were able to continue on, but we had lost an important element of our ship.

A few days out, we were sailing east of Bermuda toward England, and there was a bright, sunny day. We were practicing our general quarters positions, or battle stations, as they were called. Our ten torpedo tubes were trained by hand, in that practice, on the battleship *Iowa*, which was at a distance of about three thousand yards—a little over a mile

and a half. But three thousand yards is considered point-blank range for torpedoes. People in a small room in the bowels of our ship, which we called the combat information center, were tracking the battleship by radar and giving orders by phone to the torpedo men on top side so that they could pretend they were firing torpedoes. They gave the order "Fire one; fire two; fire three," and when they got down to about "fire eight," all of a sudden there was a sound that was kind of a "whamp," and this torpedo shot out of the tube and slapped into the water and began churning its way toward the *Iowa*. The captain was thunderstruck. My position—I was in charge of the antiaircraft batteries right above the bridge—gave me a good point from which to watch both the track of the torpedo and the expression on the captain's face. The captain's face drained of color, and he shouted to the signalman to signal the battleship that a torpedo was

approaching on its starboard bow. The signalman ran up his signal pennants, and we realized then it was the wrong signal, and since we were not allowed to break radio silence it presented a moment of real serious question. The captain's face was now a deep purple, and he grabbed the TBS, or "talk between ships," and shouted that the torpedo was coming from the port bow rather than the starboard bow. We'd sent the wrong signal in the excitement. We watched that torpedo as it made its way for a mile and a half, and slowly, very slowly, the battleship made its turn away from the torpedo. It seemed like the battleship would never turn in time, but it did. The torpedo exploded as it should have in the wake behind the battleship, but it had not harmed the battleship.

Admiral King, of course, was extremely embarrassed that one of his escort destroyers had fired this torpedo. So we were ordered back to Bermuda for an investigation. We



USS Wm. D. PORTER (DD579)

Bill Guy served on the *William D. Porter* from its launch in 1942 until it sank in 1945.

rolled off. But since it hadn't been set, it did not explode; it just sank into the depths.

The next thing we knew, it was becoming daylight and we were rendezvousing with the battleship *Iowa*, on which President Franklin Roosevelt, Admiral King (who headed up the U.S. Navy), Admiral Leahy, and other nationally known leaders were aboard and headed for the Teheran Conference. Our assignment was to escort this battleship, along with two other destroyers, to England, and they would get another escort from that point on. We did have some rough weather soon after we left Norfolk, and it was rough enough so that at night one of our sailors washed overboard. We did not find him; he was lost at sea. In this same storm, seawater entered one ventilation opening and washed down below decks and shorted out one of our big electrical boards. A destroyer has two propellers, four boilers, and four fire boxes. It has a duplication of almost everything.

SHSND M10489 N5651

were quarantined on board our ship for two weeks while a naval board of inquiry went through everything, including losing the depth charge, losing the forward electrical board in the storm, and having a man washed overboard and lost. Finally, one of the sailors confessed that he had seen the chief torpedo man take a spent cartridge out of the impulse charge and throw it overboard. Firing the cartridge fires the larger impulse charge, which forces the torpedo out of the tube. So after two weeks the case was finally broken. The torpedo had not fired accidentally because of a malfunction in the electrical system, as originally alleged. The chief torpedo man was given two years in Portsmouth [Naval] Prison for that indiscretion. The executive officer of the ship was given a letter of admonition in his record, and the captain was beached, never to command a naval ship again. I was given the job of temporary torpedo officer as well as being the antiaircraft officer, and we were sent back to the United States, where we got a new captain. This new captain was an entirely different individual, and turned our ship around and raised our morale immediately.

We went through the Panama Canal into the Pacific in the late fall or early winter. When we got to San Francisco we were outfitted with winter gear—that is, fleece-lined boots and fleece-lined oilskins—because we were to be sent to the Aleutian Islands for what turned out to be a nine-month tour of duty. We were with the squadron of destroyers based at Adak in the Aleutians, and on three different occasions we escorted convoys from the Aleutian Islands to Honolulu, or from Honolulu to the Aleutian Islands, so we did get a few momentary breaks in our tour of duty. The Aleutian Islands have no trees on them whatsoever. They're heavily vegetated with a tall grass. I went ashore and packed a burlap bag of grass to take home with me to run some nutrition tests on it because I thought this would be an ideal area to grow sheep commercially.

We went to Lingayen Gulf for the landing there. We were part of the bombardment of the shore in preparation for the landing of the troops. While we were at Lingayen Gulf the naval ships were forming, and we headed eventually then for Okinawa. It was a most incredible sight to be up as I was in my battle station about fifty feet above the waterline. Line after line of warships and supply ships, for as far as the eye could see in all directions, were headed for Okinawa. When we got to Okinawa we were assigned to the landing, and our job was to fire five-inch rounds into the shore to, as they said, "soften it up" so there would be very little resistance when troops were landed. Some of the first rocket-firing ships that we had in our fleet were engaged then. To see them fire a bank of rockets that would just bathe the shore—the explosion was really awesome.

We had done so much bombardment that the five-inch

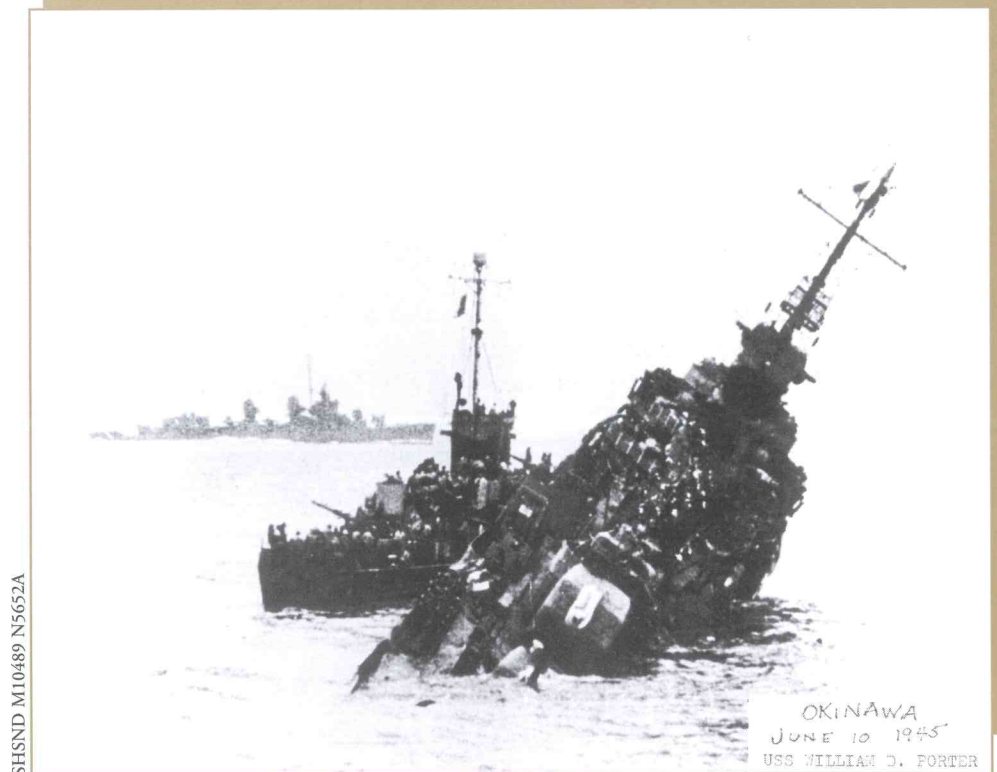
I went to Miami and stayed with a friend for six weeks because the ship was due to come into Charleston, South Carolina, after the shake-down cruise. All of the wives whose husbands were with the ship met in Charleston. We had a good time there. While we were waiting for the ship to come in, we had to go downtown to eat. One night we had eaten, and there were little curbside places here and there where they sold flowers. We had all decided that our husbands had to come pretty soon, and so we bought flowers so we'd have them in our rooms. Well, ahead of us there was a young woman walking down the sidewalk towards us. There were some Marines walking behind her. They weren't menacing her or anything like that; they were just admiring her—she was very attractive. We were watching this, and a taxi came behind us with these young men sort of hanging out the windows, watching what was coming up the street. When the taxi got abreast of us, it stopped in the middle of the intersection, and our husbands spilled out. That was our reunion in Charleston. We were there for a couple of weeks, and then Bill left. The captain said, "Don't expect to see your husbands for two years." We were all kind of glum over that.

I went back to Fargo and started school again; that was in October. I was quite late getting back to school. I was just getting caught up with my classwork when, one Sunday in the first part of November at about two o'clock in the afternoon, I got this call from Bill, and he was in Norfolk. He said, "If you can get here before Tuesday, come, and we could have some time together." So I called my dad and told him what had happened. I was on a plane at four o'clock that afternoon to go to Norfolk. I'd never been on an airplane before. I think it was just because I was so excited, but I was on the verge of being sick during the whole flight. The plane was going up and down all the time. It landed in Minneapolis and four more times on the way to Washington, D.C. I had to get off each time it landed to see if my reservation was going to be good and I could keep my seat. I got to Washington about midnight. I had to wait until six o'clock for a flight to Norfolk, so I just sat in the National Airport until time to leave. Unbeknownst to me, my dad had sent a telegram to Bill in care of his ship at the Norfolk Navy Yard. Well, you know there were all these signs around during the war [that said] "loose lips sink

ships.” We weren’t supposed to send telegrams like that. Bill got that telegram [and] headed for the airport. I guess our taxis passed on the way. Anyway, I went to the hotel he’d told me about. Just a little bit later, Bill arrived at the hotel. We had a week together there, then I went back to school, and [Bill] went to sea and was gone for a year.

guns we had were no longer thought to be that accurate. So we were assigned to what was called picket duty. It was something like the spokes on a wheel, with Okinawa being the center of the wheel. We were stationed with two other destroyers about fifty miles out between Okinawa and Japan, and our job was to intercept by radar incoming Japanese aircraft, warn or alert the shore people as to the course and speed and number of these aircraft, and intercept them if possible. One morning I had just come off of the four-to-eight-o’clock watch on the bridge, and I had gone back to the stern to talk to a sailor about getting a haircut sometime during the day. I was standing talking to this sailor, and I heard the gun on the next ship go off—a five-inch gun. I looked up, and I noticed that there was a puff of black smoke where their shell had burst, and out of the clouds was coming a single Japanese airplane. It seems that this Japanese airplane had tucked itself in the clouds just over the marine aircraft that we were supposed to vector for intercept. He had not been picked up on radar, and he peeled off from his position above our fighter planes and was diving for our ships. I could see that of the three destroyers, he had picked out ours. So as he was diving down, I decided that I should try to be on the side of the ship where he wasn’t. So I waited as long as I could. He came down, and one wing struck the mast of our ship and spun the airplane around; he hit the side of the ship, slid over, and was dragged under. When he was dragged under his bomb must’ve hit the propeller or something, because it went off with a tremendous explosion that threw the ship a little bit into the air with a sharp crack and bounced me about twenty feet in the air.

When I came down, the deck that I had been standing on was already rippled by the force of the explosion. That sailor that I had been talking to dove over the side when he saw the airplane coming. He was picked up by one of the other ships. Of course I didn’t really get very far in trying to pick a good spot—maybe two steps before the airplane hit. But the force of the explosion under the ship opened up so many seams that the heavy oil we burned was leaking out, and water was coming in, and quite a few of the sailors in the engine rooms were injured by the force of the explosion. They were brought up covered with blood and oil, and it was hard to tell how badly injured they were. As we battled to keep our ship afloat—and it took about two hours before the ship finally sank—we stripped the ship of everything that we could to make it lighter. We stripped it of torpedoes, the heavy doors on the five-inch gun turrets, the forty-millimeter guns. We threw everything overboard that we possibly could, but still the water was coming in faster than we could pump it out. The oil was fouling up the pumps, so finally we were given orders to abandon ship.



The *William D. Porter* was sunk by a Japanese kamikaze pilot off Okinawa on June 10, 1945.

The ship sank stern first into 2,600 fathoms of water, and if you multiply that by six feet you get the depth that the ship sank in. When the ship sank, we all sadly realized that one compartment was completely filled with canned beer that we had been saving for some celebration on some lonely tropical island, but we never did get around to that celebration,

and we lost all of our beer. I lost my sack of Aleutian Island grass that I had been saving, and all we really took with us were the clothes that we had on.

We abandoned by going onto these little LCIs that came alongside. [LCIs were] little tiny ships that were designed to land just a platoon or maybe a couple of platoons of soldiers at a time. When they sent destroyers out on picket duty, they sent these little landing craft out to pick up survivors if a ship was sunk.

We got back to Hawaii and got onto another troop ship going back to the United States. When we got back to the United States we were given a chance to buy new uniforms and clothes. I was given a survivor leave then and came back to North Dakota for a two-week leave. The ship was sunk on June 10, and I was back in North Dakota about thirty days later. I then received orders to go to Washington to destroyer school until I got orders to be placed on another ship. But while I was in North Dakota the Japanese surrendered, so it was kind of an empty gesture to go back to Washington, D.C., to this destroyer school. But I did, and Jean went with me. We had a small apartment there and lived there for about three months, actually. Jean worked at the Red Cross as a volunteer every day, and I went to school every day. Finally, we were mustered out in October and returned to North Dakota.

The war interrupted the sequence of events that I had planned. In some ways the war probably was beneficial to me personally, in that during the time I was in the service I know I matured quite a bit, so that when I came back to school I did a better job in my studies and got more out of graduate school. It gave both of us an opportunity to see much more of the United States and much more of the world than we would have otherwise. It gave me a healthy appreciation of the terrible waste in lives and material that war brings on. It also, I think, created some resentment in me as to how unfair war is, where some are called upon to serve and in many cases lose their lives—certainly lose years out of their productive lives—while others don't have to make that sacrifice and are able to achieve their goals and become settled without the competition of those that are away.

Life after the War

I wanted to get back and finish the master's degree work that I had started, so we went back immediately to North Dakota and then to Minneapolis to see if we could register for the spring semester, which I could and did. But housing was very difficult. There was no housing at all for servicemen, and they had just a very limited amount of married housing. So we put an ad in the newspaper and then watched the newspaper. We'd park our car right at the dock where they delivered newspapers so that we'd get the

first one off the pile before anybody else did, but there were other people doing the same thing. Our son Bill was born there [in Minneapolis] on April 27 of that spring [1946]—our first child, Bill.

When I came back to graduate school I still wanted to be a commercialized stock feeder. So as elective courses I did take advanced livestock feeding, and finally graduated—got my master of science degree in agriculture economics—in the spring of 1946.

When we left the Twin Cities and came back to North Dakota, I took a job with Balthauser and Moyer, a livestock buying and selling firm at the Union Stockyard in West Fargo, where they also had a large commercial lamb feeding lot. I thought that the best way to learn the commercial livestock business was to get right in and work for them. My job, at first, was to go up and down the Red River Valley and contact lamb feeders to see if they would order feeder lambs out of Montana and Wyoming for fall delivery. I worked that winter, after the lamb delivery season was over, at the Balthauser and Moyer feedlot in West Fargo. The crew was mostly pick-up people from Front Street [Fargo's skid row], so they were not a reliable crew. I found myself being regarded as the one person that they could rely on to be at work Sunday morning to feed these lambs while the rest of them were nursing a hangover back on Front Street. On holidays also I was the reliable one, so it was a pretty steady diet of hard work for me. We fed about seventeen thousand lambs that winter. When the spring thaws arrived, the last of our lambs were being fed out and the yards were extremely sloppy. I would come back home with my overalls pretty well covered with the sloppy manure, and I'd have to hang them outside in the back hall. We lived in an apartment building, and I am sure that the other residents in that building were very pleased when we moved from there to a kind of duplex.

I am glad that I worked that year feeding the lambs because I realized what a precarious business it was, what hard work it was, and what the chances of great losses were in that business. So I got rid of that idea. I joined the Cass County agent's office as an assistant county agent in the fall of 1947. Hal Stefenson was the county agent; he was a real nice fellow to work for. It felt kind of good, in a way, to work in the same office room and at the same desk where my dad had worked as a county agent years before. But I also wanted to start farming, so in the spring of 1948 I decided that the time had come for me to try. I was able to buy a few pieces of machinery, although it was very difficult for me to get anybody to sell me machinery because I didn't have any to trade in. But I did get a WC Allis Chalmers three-plow tractor. I was able to borrow a grain drill. I bought a fifteen-foot disk at a sale—a used disk.

With this meager equipment I started out farming a half section. I later added the rest of our family farm land holding to make a larger farm out of it, but the first year I farmed less than half of the farm that we had. I went out to the farm from Fargo in the spring—that was a bitterly cold spring—and stayed in the farmhouse. The farmhouse had no electricity, no running water, and no heat in it, so I never took my clothes off. I was heavily bundled up for working outside, but I would come in and just lie down on a cot at night to sleep. I would bring food from Fargo to eat, and the house had a lot of mice. I remember the mice would come out and wait for me to throw them some crumbs when I was eating and then scamper back when I would stand up. The house was cold and I was dirty, and every two or three days I would go into Fargo to take a bath and get some clean clothes and more food, and then I'd come back and continue farming.

The house on the farm had been a tenant farmhouse and was part of two small adjacent farms that Bill's dad had purchased. He thought that when he retired from his job managing the Carrie T. Chaffee estate, which he'd expected to do in two years, he and Bill's mother would move to one of the farms; he was going to feed sheep because it was an ideal location.

I moved out to the farm with Billy, who was two and a half years old, and Jim, who was about six months old, in November of 1948. We lived in one room, which eventually became the office. We had bought a studio couch, and Bill and I slept on that. Jim was in a crib. I can't remember what Billy slept on, but it was some kind of a cot. So we were scrambling. But the house was eventually fixed up quite nicely; it was attractive. This was before

the advent of sheetrock. You had to plaster walls and ceilings in rooms, and plasterers were not to be found. They were building a big addition on the Veterans' Hospital in Fargo at the time, and all of the plasterers seemed to be working there. We did locate one plasterer who had been working on a friend's farmhouse. There were many attempts to get this guy out to the farm, [but when] he was supposed to follow Bill out, he'd always wander off someplace en route. Finally, Bill brought him out to the farm in our car and got him stationed there. We figured he couldn't get any alcohol, so he'd have to do the job. He did a terrible job! Just awful. Later on Bill found an empty whiskey bottle for every

Meet Bill Guy



Meet Jean Guy



People around Amenia, N.D., all say the same thing—"The William Guys are folks who do things." Aside from operating an 820-acre livestock and grain farm, Bill Guy is active in civic, political and social affairs. Jean has her hands full with household chores and four children, but still finds time for committee and welfare work, group entertaining.



SHSND M10489

The Business of Farming magazine, published by the United States Gypsum Company, featured the Guy family and their remodeled farmhouse in its April 1958 edition.

day he was there. The bottles were out in some weeds behind the house.

We painted the house a nice shade of green called Wedgewood green. Then we had maroon trim around the windows. One day the U.S. Gypsum Company came to the lumberyard in Casselton and said that they wanted to do a story on a remodeled house. They wanted one that was painted a color, not just white.

They came out to our place and did the story, and the house was on the cover of their magazine. That was a fun experience.

I had never put a crop in. I had worked on the farms through my youth in the summertime and in the fall, but never in the spring. So putting that crop in was a real learning experience. Thank goodness I had some real fine, understanding neighbors that advised me and helped me and lent me machinery when I needed it.

In 1948, the year that I started farming, Corman Bean, who lived in the next house to us in Fargo and whom I'd known in college, had just finished getting his master's degree in chemistry at NDAC. The two of us had talked back and forth about how we could start a fertilizer and farm chemical business in which he, with his chemistry knowledge, could formulate herbicides and insecticides and fertilizer mixtures, and I, with my farming experience—which I thought I had a lot of at that time but really didn't—could see that these products were sold in a way that would make farming better in that area. So the two of us decided to go into a partnership in the summer of 1948. Fertilizer was extremely hard to get because this was after World War II, and high-analysis fertilizer was almost unobtainable. We also went into insecticides and herbicides. We had Paris green, for example, and 2-4-D was just coming in. We kept our business at West Fargo and opened a warehouse and an office in Casselton in the third year. Then the Korean War broke out, and that killed the source of sulfuric acid that is used to make superphosphate. Because we were working so hard unloading and loading fertilizer and making so little money, we finally decided that this was a good omen for us: if we can't get this fertilizer anymore, we'll quit. So we quit after about three years of operation, never having made any money but not having lost any money. It was a learning operation.

Then I went back into full-time farming from that time on until about 1954. We had livestock. We had considerable pasture on this farm because of the river going through it, so we put in about 350 western ewes about the second year I was farming and lambed them out. I also had a few head of cattle. I wanted to start raising purebred shorthorn cattle because the farm across the road from us was the old Wallace Brown farm that had some of the finest shorthorn cattle in the world. One of the Chaffees—Lester Chaffee—still had some remnants of that shorthorn herd. I went to him and said that I would like to buy six purebred shorthorn heifers from him if I could. "Well," he said, "you can, provided that you take ten sows that are about ready to farrow

off my hands at the same time." I didn't want the sows; I didn't want to get in the pig business, but I thought that if I had to buy the sows to get the heifers, I'd do that. I'd sell the sows right away to somebody and get rid of them. So I bought the heifers and bought the sows.

I brought the sows home and put them in an old horse barn in the set of buildings right across the river from where we lived. That was on a Saturday. Sunday my wife and I were planning to attend the potluck dinner about a dozen of the younger farmers in that community had every month. So at about three I said to my wife, "I'm going over to feed those sows and water them, and I'll be back and we'll get dressed and go over for potluck dinner tonight at Bill Sinz's place." I went over to the barn, and to my horror one of the sows was farrowing in the alley of this old horse barn. I quick got my hammer and nails, and there was a lot of old boards lying around there, so I quick built a pen across one of the horse stalls. There was straw in the loft, so I got straw



In 1948 Guy and Corman Bean started the Guy-Bean Farm Supply Company. Bill Guy recalls constructing the first buildings near the rail yards in West Fargo.

down and got this sow in there and got her little pigs in there. I just looked up, and here another sow was farrowing. I ran and got more boards, and I looked up and a third sow was farrowing. I could hardly build pens across these horse stalls fast enough to keep up with the farrowing. Finally Jean came over, and I said, "You go to the potluck; I've got to keep working. I don't think I can get there tonight." By ten in the evening eight of the ten sows had farrowed. I had them penned up, but the little pigs were running all over the place; they had climbed through the boards, and they did not know which sow they belonged to.

I'd been used to raising sheep since I was in 4-H club, and I knew that ewes would not take any lamb except

their own. They would fight them away, and I thought sows would not take little pigs except their own. I also knew that sows would eat little pigs on occasion. So I was getting pretty desperate as to how to handle this situation, and about that time my wife came in—it must have been about eleven—to see how I was coming. I explained to her, “Look, I got a terrible mess here. I’ve got eight sows that have farrowed. I think there are more than fifty little pigs running around here. I don’t know what pen they belong in. We’ve got to figure out some way to make these little pigs smell the same to these sows.” So she went back home, and about a half an hour later she came back with a pint jar—a mason jar—with holes poked in the middle of the cover. She had mixed half a pint of salad oil with about a full bottle of Old Spice aftershave lotion. So she ran around after these little pigs, sprinkling this solution on their backs to try and make them all smell the same. It was really humorous to see her chasing those little things, because how did you know whether you were treating the same pig the third or fourth time and were ignoring some others?

Well, to make a long story short, we put all these pigs in with sows so that they had a nipple to nurse on, and the sows didn’t care whose little pigs were nursing, and we finally boarded them up so that the little pigs couldn’t get out. It was midnight before we got things settled down, and my neighbor who raised pigs came by from potluck then to see how things were going. He walked in the barn and closed the door, and he said, “My God, what’s that terrible smell in here?” He told me what it smelled like, but of course it smelled like Old Spice. When we told him what we’d done, he laughed till the tears rolled down his face. He said, “Those sows don’t care whose little pigs they have.” He told us how to take care of them the next morning and so forth. From that involuntary start, we remained in the hog busi-

ness. We were eventually farrowing twenty-six sows twice a year. So we liked the pig business, but we got to know about it the hard way.

We starting farming with no money, and except for what little backing my mother was able to give us,



SHSND M10489

Jean, Jim, Deb, Bill III, and Bill Guy enjoy a field lunch, about 1952.

no loans were available to speak of. We were always seeking ways to make a little bit more money. So when NDAC offered me a job teaching in the agricultural short course in 1954, I was glad to take it. They started that short course that year, and I took several courses in farm management from them each winter for sixty days from 1954 through 1957. During those four years I taught in the short course, and one year I also taught some courses in the college curriculum. During those four years something like 640 young men went through the classes that I taught, and so from that I knew young people all over the state of North Dakota, you might say. When I went into politics and toured the state, I would run into these young fellows that would come up and say, “Hello, do you remember me?” and so forth. So it helped me lay a little political groundwork that I wasn’t aware I was laying.

I didn’t get into college instructing intentionally; it was just accidentally that I got into that. At the time there were four professors at NDAC who were fired by the Board of Higher Education. One of them had done some research on

taxation and published a bulletin recommending graduated land taxes on real estate, as I recall. This was considered to be confiscatory communism by the right-wing political people in this state. So they put the pressure on to have this professor fired. The other professors were so irate to think that freedom of education did not exist that they made some loud noises, and they were fired. So I wound up finishing a couple of agricultural economics classes that had been taught by one of the fired professors.

One night I was plowing late, until about ten o'clock, and just as I walked in the door the telephone rang. It was Alex Nelson, who was a Bell Telephone repairman in Casselton. He said, "How'd you like to come with me into Fargo the day after tomorrow to a Toastmasters meeting?" Immediately my mind conjured up men sitting around a round table telling jokes, toasting each other with steins of beer, you know, and I said, "Boy, that sounds like a lot of fun, Alex; I'll do that." So I went to Casselton and rode into Fargo with Alex Nelson to a Toastmasters meeting. I was surprised to find out that here were about twenty-five very serious men who were all courageous cowards. In other words, they were cowards as far as public speaking goes, but they had the courage to try to overcome it. Well, this was down my alley because I was a public speaking coward of the worst order, and I could see that this was something that could help me and that I needed. So I joined the Toastmasters club and was a member for about four years. Every week, no matter what I was doing on the farm—no matter whether it was cloudy in the west and I was still combining—I'd get off and I'd go to Toastmasters. It did me a lot of good, and I hope I helped a lot of others in that club.

I entered the public speaking contest in our club in 1957 just as a routine contestant. I won our speech contest in our club. I went to a district contest in Cooperstown and was even more surprised to win that. That took me to a sub-regional contest in Jamestown, and again I won. So I went to the regional contest, which was an international contest with Canadians and Americans in Winnipeg, and won that. That allowed me to go to the international contest at the Toastmasters International convention in Dallas in 1957. And whereas I did not win that, I was a runner-up to one of the four that went into the final speaking contest. So for a person who hates to speak, is very nervous speaking, I felt that I'd gone further than I really had a right to expect.

In 1950, my wife and I had been living on the farm for about a year and half when a group of people from Amenia came out and asked me if I would run for the school board. They said that all three members of the Amenia school board had resigned because of the discipline problem in the school. The final crowning blow was when a bunch of

students, one night, took the forty-foot flagpole down and rammed it through the front doors of the school and out a window on the other side of the first grade rooms. So they thought they'd had enough. I was not really ready to become a school board member, but I said I would, and I was elected to the school board. I stayed on the school board until about 1956, I believe. During that period we reorganized the Amenia school district and took in another, smaller district. The emotions and the animosity that are created when you try to enlarge a school district were my final undoing, because in the last election that I ran in I won by only one vote, and I decided that the voters were trying to tell me something in a gentle sort of way. So when my term was up I decided not to run again.

Politics

In 1950 I started to become more interested in politics, so one day a Republican friend of mine—I think it was George Smith—drove into the yard and invited me to go to the legislative district political convention in Buffalo, North Dakota, about twenty miles away. I had nothing pressing that day, and I said that I would be glad to go along just to learn how a district convention was operated. I was stunned to find out that the district convention was being held in an unheated gymnasium attached to the Buffalo school. The chairs from a previous dance or meeting were scattered round the floor, and only four people other than my friend and I showed up for this district nominating convention. The Republican district treasurer and secretary, Louis Easton, was there, along with Alex Watt (a legislative candidate), his father, and one other person. That's all that showed up. Alex Watt's father, who was a former legislator himself, remarked that in the old days, when people would have to come to a district convention on horseback, in buggies, or by train, they used to get several hundred people at a convention. But now, since you could drive to this location in half an hour from anyplace in the district, they got only four people; so the interest in politics was extremely low in western Cass County. I was told by Louis Easton at that meeting that there was a vacancy in the office of precinct committeeman in Amenia township, and would I be interested in running for that office? I guess I was so overwhelmed to think that Louis Easton thought I was a likely candidate that I said yes, and took his petition back to the farm with me. With some reluctance I went around to my Republican friends and got them to sign this petition that I was to submit to the county auditor to get my name on the ballot to run for precinct committeeman.

I was troubled because I knew that I did not support the philosophy of the Republican party, and even though the

Republican party was the only party in which you could get anywhere in politics in North Dakota, I was a hypocrite by masquerading as a Republican. My wife noticed that I was really having trouble with this, so she suggested that I go in and get a petition from the auditor and come back and get signatures from the few Democrats in the township and run for Democratic precinct committeeman—because there was nobody in that office, either. I did that. When the election came, my Republican friends were surprised to see that my name was not on their primary ballot, so they wrote my name in. The Democrats saw my name on their Democratic primary ballot, so they voted for me, and when the votes were counted I had won both offices. So you might say I had the choice of becoming either the Republican precinct committeeman or the Democratic precinct committeeman. I chose to be the Democratic precinct committeeman. My wife convinced me that it would be far better to start working to try to build a party in the district than to be a hypocrite and sail under false colors.

I think I saw [entering politics] as an opportunity to change some of the things that were being done in North Dakota, and to hopefully change North Dakota's thinking toward national politics. North Dakota had always been known as a Republican state, a conservative state. I didn't think our state was justified in being Republican because after all, in many ways we were the most liberal of all the states, having still in place many of the institutions that the Nonpartisan League had brought about in 1919, like the Bank of North Dakota, the state mill, the state hail insurance program, the Workmen's Compensation Bureau, and the state bonding fund. So I thought there was a great opportunity here to try to build a liberal philosophy in the state because there seemed to be a deep reservoir of that philosophy that was latent here.

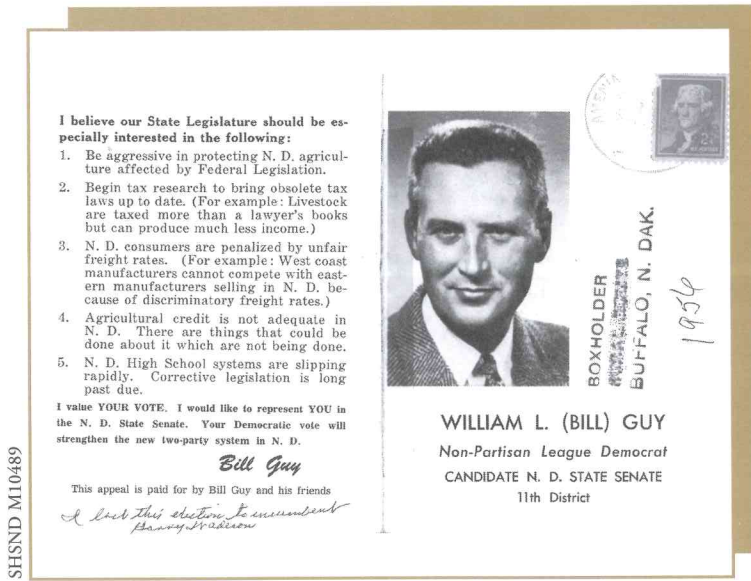
In 1951, a year after I had become a precinct committeeman, two farmers—one of them was George Nesemeier, Sr.—drove into my yard one day and suggested that I run for the legislature. I was overwhelmed to think people would actually come to me and ask me to run for the legislature. I halfway agreed to do so, but my bubble burst a couple days

later when I found out that these farmers were just a mile into the adjacent legislative district, and they were wanting me to run for office in a district in which I didn't reside, so I wasn't eligible. So my bubble was pricked. But in 1952 I did run for the state senate in District 22 as a Democrat. I did some door-to-door campaigning, but not as much as I needed to do. I lost by fifteen hundred votes to Harry Wadeson, the incumbent. That was a bad loss, and I think it might've discouraged most people, but I kept on feeling that I'd like to be a candidate again.

That same year of 1952 I attended my first Democratic state convention in Minot. It was a very small convention; I would guess, in retrospect, that it was less than 150 people. Ed Nesemeier, a farmer friend of mine from our district, and I had planned to see if the two persons running for Democratic national committeeman would be defeated if a third candidate were introduced to the race. Gorman King was challenging David Keller, the incumbent and the longtime national committeeman. Herschel Lashkowitz was the chairman of the Cass County Democratic party at that time. Lashkowitz had a very short fuse, and the contest for national committeeman became so bitter between the supporters of Gorman King and Dave Keller that emotions ran very high. Herschel Lashkowitz got up and made such an ass out of himself making a speech that Ed Nesemeier

and I looked at one another and shook our heads and decided that we couldn't nominate Lashkowitz for national committeeman. So Dave Keller won over Gorman King in that contest, even though many of us didn't want to support either one of those candidates. I found myself to be kind of the go-between for the young turks that were supporting Gorman King and the old turks that were supporting Dave Keller.

Bill Murray was the president of the state's AFL-CIO organization. He was also a delegate from Fargo to this convention. Because of the contest between King supporters and Keller supporters for national committeeman, two delegations came from Fargo, so only one could be seated. To show you how naive the Democratic party was at that time, the leaders—or at least the credentials committee—decided that the delegation on which the state president of the AFL-CIO was a member could not be seated. So here was one



SHSND M10489

of the Democratic party's main backers going back to Fargo in a huff. That convention was so rancorous and bitter that it did not adopt a platform and did not nominate a single candidate. We all went home, and I don't think the newspapers paid much attention to it, either, because Democrats in those days had difficulty even making the newspapers. About the only way you could do it was to get out and lie down in front of a truck and get run over, it seemed.

In 1954 the Democratic convention was held in Fargo at the old Crystal Ballroom. I can still hear the creaking folding wooden chairs that we had to sit on in the cavernous ballroom and [see] the sparkling globe that hung from the middle of the ceiling. At that convention it was very difficult to get anyone to run for office on the Democratic ticket because it was considered a hopeless gesture at best. I was talked into running for commissioner of agriculture and labor. It wasn't that I sought it; as a matter of fact, I was disappointed that they couldn't fill out the ticket in that position unless I took it. I had hoped to run again for state senate in my district, but I took it.

I think the reason [the Democratic party had so much difficulty] was, first of all, there were so few people that would associate with the party. Most of the liberal philosophy seemed to rest with the Nonpartisan League, which was the contender with the Republican party each year. Also, the Democratic party didn't have any kind of a record in North Dakota. There were no outstanding citizens to point to as Democrats. There was no outstanding officeholder in the past that you could applaud. People kind of ridiculed the Democratic party, and for good reason, I guess. Dave Keller, the national committeeman, enjoyed his position because when there were no elected officials in the state and no congressmen from North Dakota who were Democrats, he had control of all of the patronage—and during the years when Roosevelt and Truman were in office, that was quite a bit of patronage. All the rural and city postmasters, for example, were appointed by the president, as were the [federal] district court judges, so it was a prestigious job to have control of the patronage. So Dave Keller was really not interested in building a strong Democratic party because it served him best not to have one.

I lost by 75,000 votes, as I remember, to Math Dahl, who had held that job of commissioner of agriculture and labor for many, many years. I guess 75,000 votes should have told me something, but it didn't. I didn't seem to understand that I wasn't wanted; so in 1956 I again ran for the state senate. This time I lost by ninety votes in our district. But in 1958 I ran for the house, and in my third legislative race in District 22, I finally won by 350 votes.

I was elected to be the assistant minority floor leader, which was quite an honor since I was a freshman legislator. Art Link was the minority floor leader, and I sat beside him during the session. I learned an awful lot from Art Link. During that session I discovered that the Republican party played hardball with their opposition, and they would do anything to humiliate the Democrats, or Democrat-Leaguers, as we were known at that time. After the session was over Jack Hagerty, who wrote for the *Grand Forks Herald* as a political observer, noted in one of his columns that he'd been watching the legislature during its two-month session, and he was sure that there was no gubernatorial material in the legislature; it would have to come from outside the legislature. As in most everything else that Jack Hagerty wrote about in politics, he was wrong. In that session I voted against an appropriation of \$250,000 to build a new governor's residence, never dreaming that my wife and family and I would be living in that new residence within two years.

While we were in Bismarck we made some real good, lasting friends that made a big difference in our political life. I think they helped us—and when I say “us,” I am talking about Jean and myself—bring together our political philosophies and goals and objectives. I think especially of Charles and Joyce Conrad, who were in the publishing business in Bismarck; Dick [Adrian R.] and Lu [Luella B.] Dunn (Dick was executive director of the North Dakota Education Association, and Lu, his wife, was chief clerk of the North Dakota Supreme Court); and Bill and Ann Murray (Bill was a former Nonpartisan League legislator and an attorney in Bismarck). Because we got to know them, they brought in other friends that we got to know, like Charles and Dorothy Tighe and Dr. Gardebring and his wife, to cite some examples.

When I first became interested in the Democratic party, it was in such issues as the party's attitude toward world trade, the United Nations, agricultural programs, and organized labor. There were some issues I had never given much thought to that began to enter in, such as civil rights and mental health. Charles Conrad was the president of the North Dakota Mental Health Association, and he put a lot of pressure on me to become conversant with that issue. Social services—that is to say, the programs that have to do with aid to dependent children and so forth—were issues brought in by Dr. Gardebring, for example. Adrian Dunn opened my mind to a lot of the liberal education issues. I think I grew quite a bit in knowledge of the issues and felt very comfortable with the Democratic party's approach to them by knowing people in North Dakota that were involved with those special interests.

Part Two

A Chance to Change North Dakota

When the Democratic state convention met in Bismarck [in 1960], there had been quite a bit of work done by people who were supporting my candidacy. I was considered to be the front-runner for nomination for governor. The Nonpartisan League had a candidate of their own by the name of Laverne Schroeder. The Nonpartisan League called their state convention in Bismarck at the same time that the Democratic party was holding their convention. The Democrats were meeting in the city auditorium, and the Nonpartisan League was holding its convention in the Gold Room of the Patterson Hotel. Senator Quentin Burdick (then Congressman Burdick) was hoping to be nominated as a candidate for the United States Senate to fill the seat left vacant by the death of Senator William Langer. When the Nonpartisan League convention met in the Gold Room, Congressman Burdick and I retired to the basement because we wouldn't want to be involved in what was going to take place. So we had a small television set in the basement of the Patterson Hotel where we could watch the goings-on a couple of floors up. It was kind of humorous because Senator Lashkowitz was at the League convention, and in his usual oratorical way he was trying to influence the convention behind some cause, and while he was speaking an overlay came on the television advertising Elephant Brand fertilizer. The senator and I broke out laughing, thinking that was a particularly appropriate ad to put on while Herschel Lashkowitz was speaking. Of course the Nonpartisan League convention became very tumultuous, but control was wrested from the old guard at that convention, and the League opted to meet with the Democratic delegates in their convention at the city auditorium the next day. It was quite a dramatic moment when the league delegates marched into that auditorium and took their seats

among the Democratic delegates. The nominations for the various state offices of the merged ticket then took place.

I remember the speech that I gave to accept the nomination. One of the Republican party stalwarts, State Senator Ed Becker of Willow City, had been given the job of organizing the Republican women. There had been a news article about his work three days before the Democratic convention. This article quoted from a brochure that Ed Becker had put out, and it told the Republican women, "When you're out passing out literature and going door-to-door, you should take off your diamond rings and not wear [your] fur coats, but appear to be very common, everyday people." So I took the tune of "St. Louis Women" and formulated a little lyric to go with it that had to do with

"Oh, you Republican women with all your diamond rings; oh, you Republican women with all your furs and things," and it really brought down the house. I even got a few offers to sing in a couple of church choirs after that. But not being a singer and all, I didn't take it. The Republicans were listening, too, because I got a few irate comments from them afterward.

As the convention hall was being

vacated, the ticket that was nominated was approached by the announcer from KFYZ Television, which had a mounted camera facing the stage off to one side in one of the boxes. The announcer said, "We have about thirty minutes left in that hasn't been programmed. The convention has ended a little bit before we thought it would. If you candidates want to be on the program, we can put you on." We said, "Oh wow, we sure would." This was free television, you know. So the candidates that had been nominated gathered at a long table on the stage of the auditorium. The left surface



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Governor Guy at the 1962 Democratic-Nonpartisan League convention.

of the table had a long sheet of white wrapping paper that had been used as a tablecloth. We all sat down at this table to wait our turn at the podium with the camera turned on it. There were some ads, and there was some speaking; the announcer was recapping the convention while we were getting our thoughts in order. We were all writing notes down as to what we wanted to say in the two or three minutes that we were given. Senator Burdick, who was writing madly and obviously very nervous, was at the end of the table. When the announcer called him (as the senior candidate on the ticket) to be the leadoff speaker, he grabbed his notes, which happened to be written on that long piece of white wrapping paper. As he moved quickly to the left, dragging that ten-foot-long sheet of wrapping paper—thinking that he had a [regular] sheet of paper, I'm sure, with his notes on it—I had the presence of mind to grab that long sheet and tear it in half so that he didn't drag it all up to the lectern.

A while after the Democratic convention in North Dakota—that was in March or April—Jean and I began campaigning for Senator Burdick. We went around with a big orange and black sign with Burdick's name on it wired to the top of our station wagon. We spoke at as many rallies and banquets as we possibly could to help Senator Burdick. Burdick was running for the Senate seat in a primary election. *The special election to fill the seat vacated by the death of Senator Bill Langer was held with the primary election.* The rest of us were simply trying to establish our names in this primary election, because we were not being contested. Burdick won, I think, at the finish of counting on the second day because some precincts were slow in coming in; he barely, barely edged John Davis out in that close race. It was good for Jean and I to get around the state because, speaking in banquets and rallies, we got to know the political leaders in every district, and we also got to know a lot of newspaper people and party workers. From that heavy primary activity to try to get Burdick into the Senate, the Democratic party now had more momentum going than it realized. Immediately after the primary we kept right on campaigning wherever there would be an invitation to an old settlers' picnic or a Farmers Union county convention.

In 1960 the mayor of Fargo, Herschel Lashkowitz, a well-known Democrat, decided not to challenge me for the nomination in the Democratic-Nonpartisan League convention nor in the primary. But Herschel Lashkowitz decided that he would enter the race as an independent,

which he did, and of course many Republicans believed that Herschel Lashkowitz would split the Democratic vote and that the Republican, C. P. Dahl, would come in the winner because of this. So Herschel Lashkowitz's candidacy was suspect as far as I was concerned. From the very beginning I wondered what it was that motivated Herschel to get into the race. Was his motivation to elect C. P. Dahl and defeat me, or was it really to get Herschel Lashkowitz elected governor? During the campaign I had several reports that Herschel Lashkowitz was seen coming or going from the room of the Republican state chairman, Arly Bjella, who had



President John F. Kennedy, Senator Quentin Burdick, and Governor Bill Guy in Grand Forks, North Dakota, on September 25, 1963.

his headquarters in the Grand Pacific Hotel in Bismarck. If those reports were true, it would explain a little bit how Herschel got some of his financial backing. I don't know that the reports were true, but during the campaign I was asked by a reporter what I thought of Herschel's candidacy, and I said, "Well, I don't regard him as a bonafide candidate," and by that I meant that I didn't think he was a serious candidate or that his motive was to become elected. But the word "bonafide" apparently had some legal connotation that I was not aware of, and Herschel sued me for libel. After the election was over and I had won, the suit was still pending in the Cass County District Court, and I had to hire Milton Higgins, a Bismarck attorney, to represent me

in that suit. It cost me seven hundred dollars, as I recall, to have Milton Higgins carry the suit as far as it went. It never came to trial and was eventually dropped. But I'm happy to say that Herschel, I think, only got about twelve thousand or fifteen thousand votes, and I won with a sufficient margin over C. P. Dahl not to run into any recounts.

I think that age, as much as anything, was an underlying issue [in the 1960 campaign]. C. P. Dahl was looked upon as an elderly professional politician, and I think that I was looked upon as a younger, more ambitious person who had not been in elective office to that time. I think those were big issues. But there were other things, like just getting out and shaking hands. A lot of people in this state are fairly independent, and the issue is, Is the candidate willing to come to my small town and walk through my small town's businesses and around my residential area? Which of these candidates is willing to come out and talk to the small Farmers Union picnics or tribal council's powwow? I don't think issues necessarily elect candidates. It wasn't mainly the issues; I think it was the face-to-face campaigning, plus maybe the projection of youth on my part compared to the projection of an elderly politician on the part of my opponent, that caused many people to vote as they did.

I think that the success that we had—a great deal of it, at least—has to rest with Jean because Jean is a very gregarious person. She likes people, likes to talk to people, remembers names well, understands the political issues, can speak [about] issues, and has the same philosophy on most issues that

I do. She is a good judge of how good or how bad certain issues are going over when I'm talking to a crowd; she offers a critique of the way I'm saying things and what I'm forgetting to say. So she was a very essential part of this whole operation. She was with me 95 percent of the time. That is most often not the case with politicians—their wives will

show up once in a while, but they don't travel with them. But Jean did. She saw to other things, too: that my clothes were washed and pressed, that telephone calls were answered or made, that newspaper articles were read, and that those of interest were torn or clipped out. Being a politician's wife can be—if you want it to be—a full-time occupation and then some. It is very hard for a politician's wife in many ways, too, because the criticism that is aimed at politicians is criticism that the wife would like to counter but doesn't have the podium to do it, or doesn't have the press release to do it, so she just has to grit her teeth and smile, although she feels like crying.

The Transition

In 1960 I was considered to be an anomaly. Nobody was much worried about seeing me for more than two years. There was no effort to help us. I was the only Democrat elected on the ticket. Lloyd Omdahl, who had run for secretary of state on the same ticket with me, and Bruce Hagen, who had run for commissioner of agriculture,

helped from November until I was inaugurated. Bruce was single; Lloyd was living in Bismarck with his family. There was no money whatsoever for this transition. It cost me about fifteen hundred dollars out of my pocket for the typing that I had to do, and I had to rent a room at the Grand Pacific Hotel.

We had hearings on education, mental health, economic development—I forget how many issues. People like Charlie Conrad,

Bruce Hagen, and Lloyd Omdahl would set these meetings up. They would invite authorities in that field to come into Bismarck so we could pick their brains and find out what they thought should be proposed to the legislature to improve state government or the special interest they were involved in. When the inauguration came along I was pretty



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Jean and Bill Guy, probably at the 1967 National Governors' Conference, which was held aboard a cruise ship. Seated next to the Guys are Governor and Mrs. Ferris Bryant of Florida. According to Bill Guy's estimate, Jean accompanied him on his travels "95 percent of the time." Guy notes that "a great deal of the success that we had has to rest with Jean."

well grounded not just in what Democrats thought, but also in what people in education and other fields thought. I wrote those ideas that I thought were sound and progressive into my message to the legislature. My message to the legislature was handwritten on a legal pad. It was written and rewritten right up to New Year's Eve. Lu Dunn, clerk of the Supreme Court, was doing whatever little typing that I had to do on my message. That's the only thing she typed for me. I remember on New Year's Eve, that poor woman was willing to stay on and type for me so that we could get that message to the printer in time to have it printed up before the opening of the session. Lloyd Omdahl became my assistant—"director of administration," I think, was the title we gave him. Bruce Hagen worked in my office for a while until one of the public service commissioners died; I appointed him to that office, and he's been there ever since. *Bruce Hagen retired as a public service commissioner in 2000.*

Immediately after the election John Davis took advantage of [what] I think was a National Governors' Conference invitation that had been given by the Navy Department to board a heavy cruiser and sail to Argentina and back or some such trip. He was gone for quite a long stretch of time, and he had left no orders for his staff to assist me in any way. Those three secretaries and one male helper were kind of sitting in his office just twiddling their thumbs, not doing very much. I was getting an awful lot of mail as the incoming governor. I was finally given an office off the senate, which was the office of the lieutenant governor during the senate session. So I finally got a desk to sit at, much to the anger of C. P. Dahl, who was the lieutenant governor—it was his office. He was going out of office and I had defeated him, and he didn't like the idea that I was moving into his office. I did not have contact with [John Davis] until quite late in December, and he didn't really have much to suggest, and I didn't have much to ask them about. I must say here that John Davis has been good to me. We've been good friends always; that election didn't change it at all, and to this day he is a good friend of mine. I think the fact that he didn't help me was because there had never been a transition in recent years in which a Democrat had taken over from a Republican. In previous years the incoming Republicans would simply be helped by the outgoing Republican staff, and everything went smoothly. So I don't think John Davis really knew how to interact with this new Democrat that had been elected. I've never felt that Governor Davis was a vindictive sort of person. I'm sure he was disappointed [with the loss of the Senate race], and maybe there was a tinge of bitterness, but it certainly didn't show in his relation to me in the brief time we were together before I was inaugurated.

The first inaugural was very exciting. I'd never been to an inaugural before. We had the ceremony at the capitol building in the afternoon, and of course my parents and family were there with Bill's mother. All of our relatives on both sides were there. We had them all at the governor's residence for dinner that night; we had to set up card tables in the living room. We served Kentucky Fried Chicken. I think we made scalloped potatoes, but we got coleslaw and rolls from Kentucky Fried Chicken. We had bars and cookies for dessert. We did that every inaugural after that.

Of course we both had to have new clothes. As farmers, we didn't have a lot of dressy clothes. Bill purchased some new suits; he had a really nice black suit that he wore for the inaugural ball. I had selected a really pretty tan satin dress. We decided not to have this be a formal inaugural. People weren't wearing long dresses at that time, and we didn't want people to stay away because they didn't think they had the right clothes.

The governor's residence had been completed nine months prior to my taking office. When I was elected I came almost immediately to Bismarck to start working on the transition that would take place, so all of the responsibilities of completing the work at the farm and packing up the family and furniture went to my wife, Jean. But Jean had the strength and, I guess, the enthusiasm that was needed to bring that family of five children and all of the furniture into the house and get the governor's residence settled as a place where we would spend the next twelve years.

We enjoyed life in the governor's residence. It's a very fine home. It has two fireplaces, and we learned that a fire lit in the fireplace every evening from about the first of November until the first of April was a must. Our children liked the residence. They had plenty of room to themselves. They could have friends over. Later on during our term in office, a friend by the name of Harold Frederickson gave us an old pool table that had been rescued from a pool hall that was being destroyed in downtown Bismarck to make way for a parking ramp. Harold Frederickson gave us this old pool table and had it set up, so we had a lot of young people in our basement playing pool, and it was a good place for our children to grow up.

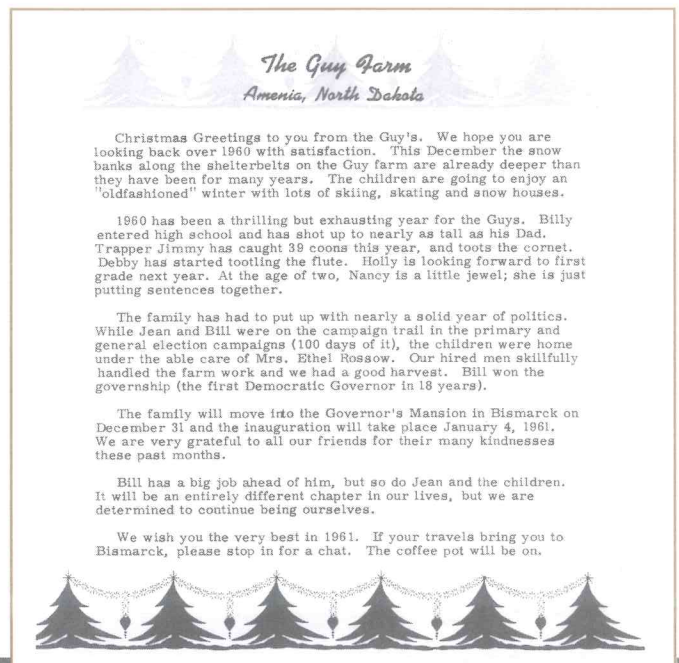
I don't know all the first ladies that the state has had, but I know that there's never been a first lady that's been more able and more outstanding in carrying out the obligations of that quasi-official office than Jean was. Jean meets people

very easily. She has a good sense of political sensitivity. She has a good memory of names. She enjoys being around people, and people enjoy being around her. Really, I think often that, with the narrow margins that I won elections by, had I not been married to Jean I probably wouldn't have won any elections at all. She is an exceptional person, and she was raised in an exceptional family—that is, with a very strong mother—so she came to the job of being first lady with a lot of self-confidence and poise, which I think you need.

In past years Republicans had been able to disqualify a Democrat who had been elected back in the 1930s by the name of [Thomas] Moody. They had disqualified him by proving in court that he had taken a fishing license, I think, in Minnesota and listed himself as a resident of Minnesota. So they said he hadn't lived in North Dakota long enough to be a legal resident, and the supreme court, which I have always said has been Republican-oriented, went along with that argument and disqualified him. On the morning of the inauguration I came up to the governor's office quite early, and about eight o'clock the phone rang; it was Chief Justice Peter Sathre, a very elderly man who had once been a Nonpartisan League attorney general, so his roots went back to the liberal branch of the Republican party. He said, "Bill, can I come down and talk to you?" I said fine. I didn't know Judge Sathre; I'd never had any contact with him. He came in and said, "Bill, I hear by the grapevine that you're going to be challenged as to your qualifications to be governor. It could happen today at the inauguration. They could come marching up the aisle and present some papers that would stay the inauguration. If you don't mind, I'd like to swear you in right now." I said, "That's alright." So he said, "I'll get a couple of witnesses." He brought down the Bible and the witnesses and swore me in [in] the governor's office that morning. So at the inauguration that afternoon, when we all stood up to raise our right hands—I guess I did it separately—the chief justice kind of winked at me because he knew that I was already inaugurated and that this was purely for ceremonial purposes. My political opponents did not walk down the aisle that day, but I think the next day they filed a motion with the supreme court based on the fact that elected officials could not serve in an office for which the emoluments had been increased if that elected official had been a legislator at that time. I had been a legislator the year before I was elected governor, and John Jellings, my opponents' attorney from Jamestown, argued that the rate on Social Security had been increased by one-fourth of one percent the year I was in the legislature, and I had voted in an appropriation to pay that. Also, an automobile

had been provided for the governor for the first time in the session, and I had voted for that, so I was ineligible to hold office. *The North Dakota Supreme Court ruled on January 19, 1961, that Guy was eligible to hold office.*

When we knew that we would be moving to Bismarck, of course we made a lot of plans. Bill was in Bismarck. He stayed there most of the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas of 1960. We left for Bismarck on the morning of December 30, 1960. I was driving our station wagon, and we had a U-Haul trailer behind it with most of our clothing and personal effects. Marge and Duane Hersch, who had been working for us for about three years and lived in another set of buildings on the farm, came with the farm truck. We all stayed at the governor's residence that first night. One



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Bill III, Jean Guy, Holly, Nancy, Deb, Jim, and Bill Guy (1 to r), in 1963.

of my memories was that there was no coffee pot. There were big coffee boilers to make fifty cups of coffee, but no coffee pots for a family.

Before I knew it, our boys had taken a corner of the unfinished basement downstairs and arranged our living room furniture and television set and bookcases down there. In our farmhouse we had hardwood floors in the living room and dining room. Bill's mother and grandmother had made us two huge braided wool rugs for those two rooms, and the boys had the largest one of them unrolled on the floor down in the basement. Then there was another area where all of the girls' things were—their little stove, refrigerator, cupboards, and their toys and dolls. We were pretty well settled by that evening.

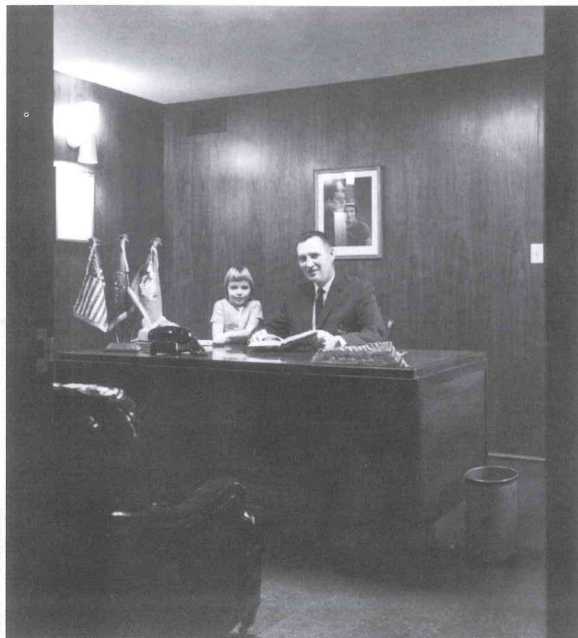
That was how we got moved and settled in the governor's residence. Of course the children were intrigued by the house and the size of it. They thought it was quite wonderful. They loved the fireplace, too. We had a fire there every night, I think, from the first of November until the first of April. Sometimes we'd get up in the morning [to find that] our younger son, Jim, had already lit the fire in the fireplace, so you know that we really enjoyed it. We got the children enrolled in school; the schools were not far away.

Early on, right after we moved to the governor's residence, I had a conference with the man who'd been the architect for the house [Bob Ritterbush]. The other house had always been called "the mansion." We were concerned about our children growing up in a house that everybody called a mansion. We didn't want that; we wanted to call the house "the governor's residence." So I talked to Mr. Ritterbush about that, and he said that was fine. He said, "Actually, a mansion should be at least a two-story house, and it should be larger than this." We felt good about calling it the governor's residence. That

was what we used for our return address, and I think it was much healthier for our children to think of their home as being a residence and not a mansion.

The house, of course, was new when we moved there. In many ways I didn't really know what to expect. The day after Bill's inaugural I had a phone call from a lady who wanted to see the house. When could she come and see it? Well, I was sort of stunned, and I didn't know if I should be doing this or not. I asked her to call back. I called Bill and talked to him to see what he thought about it, and he said, "Well, it's a public house; it belongs to the people of the state, so you better show it." So we did. We made an appointment for her to come that afternoon and showed her the house. That was sort of the beginning of many tours. The house was new and different. It cost \$250,000, which was a lot of money in those days—still is. But the people wanted to see it, and they deserved to see it; so we had many public open houses. Usually we showed the state part of the house, the kitchen, and the family living and dining room—that was as far as we went. The lower level was not completed, of course, so there wasn't anything to show them down there. People enjoyed the tours and appreciated seeing the house. We developed a group of ladies in Bismarck who helped us with the tours.

One of the problems we had in the family part of the house was that there were only three bedrooms, and we had five children. So the boys were in one bedroom and the three girls in the other. But the girls were of such different ages; that was not good because Nancy needed to go to bed earlier than Holly and Debby. So the first summer we were there, they finished two bedrooms in the basement. Debby, our oldest daughter, moved down to one bedroom. That left Holly and Nancy in the bedroom upstairs. Jim stayed in one bedroom upstairs, and Billy had the other bedroom downstairs. We also got a clothesline in the backyard. There had been no clothesline, and we really needed to air clothing. Bill was smoking at the time—everybody seemed to be smoking at the time—and we needed to air his suits every time he wore them.



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Guy and his daughter Nancy in his office at the governor's residence.

That first year [I was in office] North Dakota went into an extreme drought, so some of the actions that we had planned to take in state government had to take a backseat to facing up to drought relief. I can't say that we had a grand plan when I came into office. Having received the nomination only nine months earlier, and having accepted it as kind of a sacrificial lamb, you can understand there wasn't much of a chance to organize a grand plan.

One of my lifelong political ambitions, of course, had been to build the Democratic party to be a contender in a two-party state, and I wanted our administration to prove to the people of North Dakota that Republicans weren't the only ones that could successfully operate big business, which state government is. I wanted the public to know that the Democratic party had a wealth of talent which wasn't being used in government. I wanted the voters of the state to know that the Democratic party had honest people that could operate state government corruption-free, and I would say those were the major goals that I had when I started as governor. Many of the things that happened in the years after that happened because I became acquainted with problems that I didn't even know existed when I became governor.

My first term was rather tumultuous. We had very serious abuses at the Soldiers' Home, and I had to fire the superintendent. The state hospital was under tremendous criticism. The Bank of North Dakota had been engaged in some practices that were not good, and the state Insurance Department was run by A[lfred] J. Jensen, who was suspected of activities that were not legal. It was a kind of a rancorous period in which Republicans fought back [and] tried to defend these institutions and agencies that they had

been in charge of for so many years. But when we got in to examine them, [they] were not well run, and there were many illegalities going on. I think the public looked upon me as an activist governor. Also, I was pretty much alone as an officeholder; all of the other offices and most of the state's district attorneys and judges were Republicans, so it was tough going, and I think the public had some sympathy for me on that score. So in 1962 I think the public was saying, in effect, "Keep on going, Governor; let's clean this thing up even more."

Re-election Campaigns

Mark Andrews was the Republican national committeeman in 1962 when he was nominated to run for governor. He represented the new generation of Republicans that had finally broken through since C. P. Dahl, representing the old guard in the Republican party, was defeated by me in 1960.

Mark was very active as a Republican. He's an extrovert, outspoken, tall, and quite imposing as a figure. He apparently had no problem with his finances because he found plenty of time to engage in politics when he was living on the farm and being involved in the Garrison Diversion Unit board. I was a little bit surprised when he was nominated for governor, but we went head to head. Mark Andrews advocated North Dakota completing the Garrison project if the federal government wouldn't complete it. At that time the federal government had appropriated no money whatsoever, and the project had never been implemented, so Mark Andrews was talking about his dream of digging the McClusky Canal with state funds. That was a mistake, I think, because many people thought it wasn't a very wise


proposal to transfer what was, to most North Dakotans, a federal obligation to the state treasury. It was a close race, although I felt that I would win it all along.

I've always wondered about the Republican party's nominating process. The Republicans had a lot of strong potential candidates in their ranks, but for some reason they didn't seem to bring their strongest candidates up and nominate them. I didn't regard Don Halcrow [in 1964] as a strong candidate—certainly not the strongest that the Republicans could have fielded—but obviously they must have thought so. All I can remember about Don Halcrow's campaign was that he had a television picture


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Give Governor Guy a working team!


Elect a legislative team that will build North Dakota




Elect an Industrial Commission that will build North Dakota. (Left to right) Harold Hanson for Commissioner of Agriculture and Labor; Bill Guy for Governor, and Charles Tighe for Attorney General.




For Lt. Governor
LEONELL FRAASE




For Secretary of State
LARRY SCHNEIDER




For Commissioner of Insurance
HANS WALKER, Jr.



For State Auditor
FLORENCE SWENSON



For Public Service Comm.
E. ODIN SJAASTAD



For State Treasurer
ELMER STRAND

Pol. adv. sp. & pd. for by the Democratic-Nonpartisan League, Howard E. Dahl, Director

Material from Guy's 1962 re-election campaign. Building the Democratic party into a viable contender with the Republican party was a long-term goal of Governor Guy.

showing an empty padded chair that you would find behind an office desk, and he would say, "Do you want to return an empty chair to office?"—implying that I didn't spend enough time in the capitol. My answer, of course, was that, yes, I certainly did travel the state a lot and tried to make myself available in every community I could, and if Don Halcrow would just furnish a list of the communities that he felt I should not be seen in, I would be willing to give that some thought. So it really wasn't, as I recall, a very outstanding campaign.

My strategy from the very beginning was that the moment you start a term you're campaigning, and the best campaign is good government. So we tried to establish a record that we could refer to and that would be as defensible and as criticism-free as it could possibly be. So with that in mind, simply going around the state and appearing as often as I could—leaving that empty chair, as Don Halcrow [suggested]—being involved in town meetings and accepting invitations to speak at the North Dakota Education Association and the Farmers Union convention and this sort of thing: that was my campaign, really.

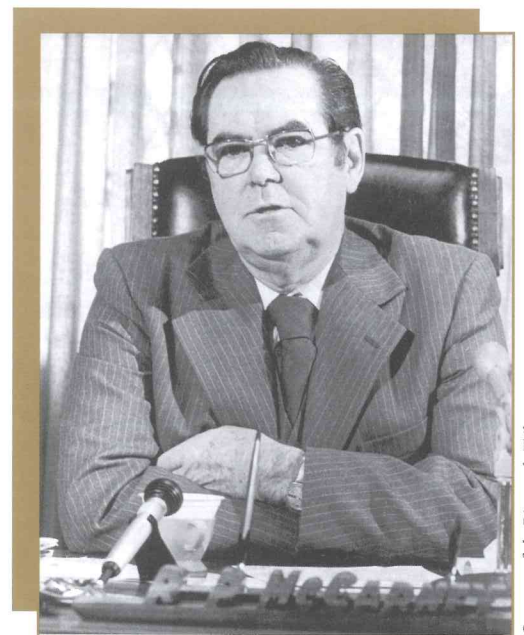
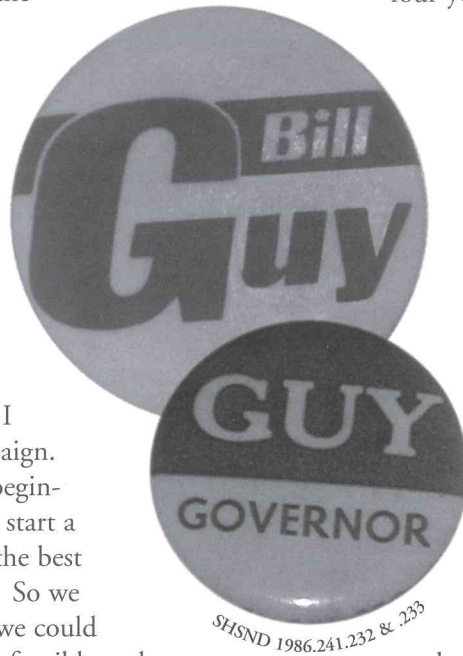
My third term would be the first four-year term since the constitutional amendment had been passed [in June 1964] to lengthen the terms, and I think there was some apprehension among my opponents that if I were to win, it would extend my term to eight years, which would be longer than any other governor had served. The people that sponsored the legislation to extend the term of the governor to four years intentionally put it in a presidential election year for several reasons—and incidentally, the Democratic-Nonpartisan League party was very active in sponsoring and pushing that constitutional amendment. They felt that it would serve democracy, as well as the Democratic party, the best if the election would be in the same year as the presidential election. That way, the state term could be synchronized with what went on in Washington, and we wouldn't always be two years out of step. Also, in the presidential year we always got the greatest turnout of voters, and democracy would be best served if the governor were chosen by the greatest number—which also means the greatest number of Democratic voters. So that pleased the Democrats. The Republicans have always felt that if they could reduce the number of voters that would turn out,

through voter registration or whatever, their chances would be better—and of course they would be, so they weren't too happy about having this election for governor for the first four-year term coordinated with the presidential election.

Robert McCarney [the 1968 Republican candidate for governor] was a media-made politician. He had absolutely no credentials as far as education or experience in government and politics. He had only two things going for him: (1) he had enough money to do what he wanted to do, and (2) he was such a laughable person that the press enjoyed quoting him until, after many years of this, I think they discovered that too many of the public were believing some of the outlandish things Mr. McCarney had said and which they had been reporting.

I think the Republican hierarchy—that is, the party officials—were rather embarrassed that McCarney had won the primary and were embarrassed with the campaign that he conducted. I don't recall any particular criticism that he had of my administration, although obviously there would be many. But he didn't need to have my record to criticize; he could make up my record as he went along and criticize it. It didn't trouble him at all.

My first experience with Robert McCarney occurred early in my first year in office in 1961. He was the wealthy Ford dealer who had put in the lowest bid for the first state-owned car that the governor was to use. It was discovered, however, that the bid process had been rigged so that only the Lincoln car which Robert McCarney sold could qualify. So that easily explained why he won the bid. I drove this big Lincoln car that the state had bought for several weeks, and then one day the little side window up near the driver's side was opened and



Robert McCarney, 1968 Republican candidate for governor. McCarney and Guy had clashed since Guy's first year as governor.

Courtesy of the Bismarck Tribune

wouldn't close. Since it was ten or twenty below zero at that time and the air came rushing in, it was very uncomfortable. So my driver took the Lincoln car down to McCarney Ford and had it fixed. The bill finally came for \$158. At that time \$158 was quite a bit of money, and I thought that here was an example of somebody shaking government down, so I wrote a letter to the president of Ford Motor Company. I didn't know who it was, but I told them that they had a lot of gall advertizing the Lincoln car as a fine automobile when it cost \$158 just to close a side window. I kind of forgot about the letter, but about two weeks later an engineer from Ford Motor Company arrived in my waiting room with a tall, bushy-haired man with beetle-like eyebrows who was chewing a big, fat cigar. I later learned that this was the local Ford dealer, Robert McCarney. So the two of them came in my office, and I told the Ford engineer all of the things that were wrong with this car, and I said I kind of object to having to go and pay \$158 every time the window sticks. So the engineer turned to Mr. McCarney and said, "I don't know what you did to repair that window, but if you replaced every part that there was in the window it wouldn't have cost \$158." Mr. McCarney's cigar was moving from one side of his mouth to the other; his face was red, and he was mad. The engineer said to him, "You had better refund the money to the state, Mr. McCarney," and they left. Well, at that point, in retrospect, Bob McCarney didn't like me because I was forcing him to be honest in the bidding process for the first time. That's the way it was from then on, and Robert McCarney no longer sold cars at any price he put on them to the state, which he had done before I implemented the Department of Accounts and Purchases and forced him to bid along with everybody else. But in that race with him he could make such outlandish and untrue statements, which the press would print, that it was impossible to campaign against him. In other words, if you spent all your time refuting the foolishness that he gave the press, that's all there would be. So I didn't spend much time campaigning against him.

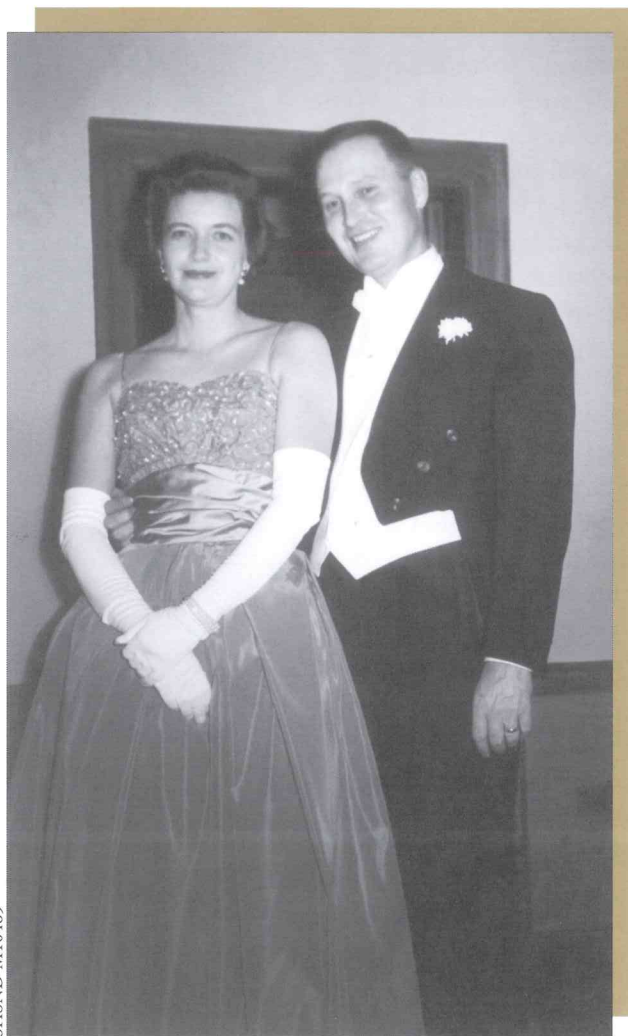
The National Scene

Once Kennedy was elected, my wife and I were invited on at least two different occasions to formal dinners at the White House, and several times my wife and I stopped in at the White House to visit with him. My main concern at that time was to try to get the support needed for two things: (1) the loan money to get the first REC electric generation started in North Dakota, which now is known as Basin Electric, and (2) to get the funds started for the

Garrison Diversion Project. I talked to the president about his support for those items on several occasions.

There were several instances when I had some relationship with Lyndon Johnson. On one occasion when I was chairman of the National Governors' Conference, I and three other governors were invited to the White House to have lunch with LBJ and his economic advisors, and for an hour or more we sat and listened to LBJ. When we were all done with the lunch, I suddenly realized that LBJ had eaten an entire luncheon and had not stopped talking in the process, and nobody else had spoken and no questions had been asked. When it was all over, I wondered why LBJ had invited us to come from the far corners of this country to hear his discussion of why we should not raise taxes in the pursuit of the Vietnam War. Some

of us felt pretty strongly that the people of the United States should make a commitment to that war by raising taxes and paying for it as we went along, instead of charging it to future generations and to the young generation that was actually doing the fighting in Vietnam. But LBJ had told us that Wilbur Mills, who was then the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, would not stand still for any request from him to raise taxes. We of course later learned that Wilbur Mills was an alcoholic of the worst order, and it seems tragic to me that the nation went into debt because



Jean and Bill Guy, dressed for the Kennedy inaugural ball in January 1961.

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an alcoholic would not listen to a request to raise taxes to finance a war that we were involved in.

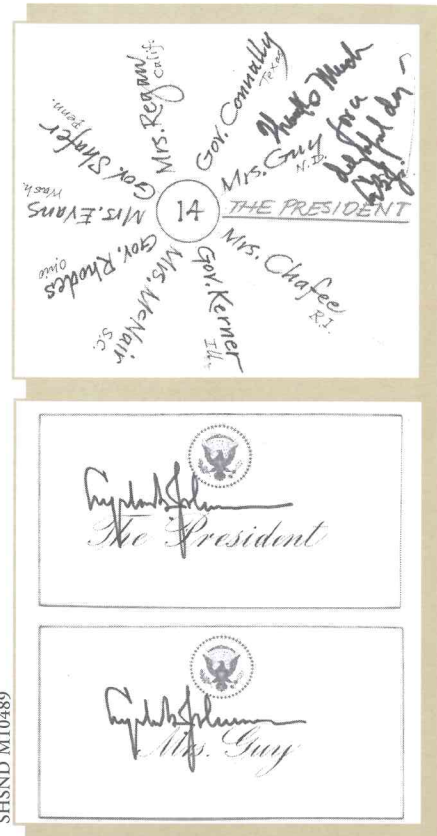
In 1966 and '67, when the Vietnam War was heating up, I don't think it was clear-cut that the U.S. government's best interests were not being served by being in that war. I think there was the feeling then that Vietnam was similar to Korea, and that in order to prevent communism from sweeping down from China—down through that peninsula and on into the Philippines, and so forth—that the Western countries had to make a stand. I was asked in 1967 by President Johnson to go over to South Vietnam as an observer in the first presidential election in that country. In returning, I had the feeling that those people in South Vietnam did want to develop a communist-free democracy and that our presence there was justified. I guess [1968] was the year that my faith and confidence in President Johnson's judgement on being in Vietnam was beginning to waver, and by the time the Democratic National Convention came along I was sure that the United States' best interest would be to pull out of Vietnam. I think Hubert Humphrey's feeling was the same, although he was vice president for Lyndon Johnson and had to support the president's line and view.

A lot of young people, including the Chicago Eight, that had been so opposed to the draft and to Vietnam generated a huge following of people to come into Chicago. These people wanted to force on the Democratic convention by their presence what Hubert Humphrey was already willing to do. I think it irritated Humphrey—and it certainly irritated a lot of Democratic delegates from around the United States at that convention—that what they would do anyway in advocating a peaceful solution was being, by all appearances, forced on them by these young demonstrators. The demonstrators were not very peaceful. One night we watched as they actually forced their way through the ring of Chicago policemen surrounding the headquarters hotel, and in the process the policemen batted a lot of these demonstrators over the head. This led to great criticism of police brutality. But these police had been fighting demonstrators for several days. They had had beer cans filled with urine thrown down on them from hotel windows above, and they were in no mood to have what looked to them like this hippie crowd of bearded, sandaled, unprincipled people breaking through their lines. So I said after the convention that the police had not really gone out seeking heads to hit; the people had brought their heads to the police line to be hit. I thought there was too much criticism of Mayor Daley and the police for the way they handled those demonstrators. After that affair and what I had said, you might think that the 1968 election would have gone against me because there were a lot of people in this state against the Vietnam War. Maybe it did have a negative factor in that election as far as I was concerned, but I don't know that for sure.

In later years, in speeches that I made after we left office, I told about going to dinner at the White House when Lyndon Johnson was president. That was the year that Bill was chairman of the National Governors' Conference. We received many invitations to state dinners at the White House; we couldn't go to all of them. I don't think Lyndon Johnson understood that we couldn't pick up and leave whenever we wanted to.

The year that Bill was chairman, the National Governors' Conference reorganized itself. One of the changes was that a governors' conference office was to be established in Washington, D.C. The conference also initiated having a mid-winter meeting in Washington in February. At that time one of the events that went along with the meeting was a formal state dinner at the White House. So when we were at that dinner, we found that we were the titular honored guests because Bill was chairman. When they had the receiving line in the East Room, we were the other two people in the line besides President and Mrs. Johnson. When we were at dinner tables, Bill was at a table with Mrs. Johnson; I was at table number one on the president's right.

That evening President Johnson's dinner conversation was about his coming election. John Connally was still a Democrat at that time; he was the governor of Texas. He was on my right. President Johnson



Bill and Jean Guy were the honored guests at a formal state dinner at the White House in 1967, when Bill Guy was chairman of the National Governors' Conference. The seating chart from the dinner shows the arrangement at the table where President Johnson and Jean Guy were seated.

thought John Connally should be chairman of his re-election campaign. So they were talking back and forth, and I was very interested in what they were saying, of course. During the time that we were



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Bill Guy, Mrs. Lyndon Johnson, Jean Guy, and President Lyndon Johnson (l to r) in 1964.

visiting there, I told them a couple of jokes that Bill had made up, and the president laughed. He really thought they were great jokes, and he said, "I'm going to use those." Well, one of the jokes was about sheep; we raised sheep on our farm. I said, "Well, you can't use that joke because you raise cattle; you don't have sheep." He said, "Oh yes, we have lots of sheep on our ranch." So I think he did use the jokes.

Johnson was a huge man. Everything that he did was bigger than life. I remember that night he was leaving to go to Midway. He was going to meet the man who was premier of South Vietnam. He left from the party just at the end of it. He got on the helicopter in the clothes he was wearing and left on that trip. He was an interesting man, just a very compelling individual.

During the years of Presidents Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, Milton Young was our Republican senator in the U.S. Senate. Whenever I needed something done on the national level, rather than going to Senator Young—who I thought was more interested in seeing that

I had a poor record than achieving things—or going to Senator Burdick, I would go to Hubert Humphrey. So during those years you might say Hubert Humphrey was the third senator from North Dakota. I first knew him when he came to Minot to speak to that first Democratic convention that I had attended [in 1952], and I admired his way of speaking. Knowing the man personally, then, I became more interested in following his career. He came to North Dakota in 1968, when he and Eugene McCarthy were both seeking the [Democratic presidential] nomination. Both of these men had been invited to speak at the Democratic convention in Bismarck, and I invited both to come to the house for lunch the day they were to speak. Both of them accepted, and so I still see that day when Jean and I entertained those two contenders at the same luncheon in the governor's residence in Bismarck, with a huge mob of press having their lunch at picnic tables outside in the backyard.

Then later, Hubert Humphrey was invited out to the plowing contest at Buffalo on the farm of Lee Fraase's parents, right on Highway 94. Humphrey and his wife came out, and I remember Jean and I were riding with them in the car out to the plowing contest. As we drove by the entrance to the farm there was a barn nearby, and a manure spreader was parked near a pile of manure by the barn. Hubert's wife, Muriel, nudged him and said, "Hubert, I think we're going past your speaking platform," and she pointed at the manure spreader. I say that simply to illustrate what a trooper she was and what a good sense of humor she had as a political wife.

President Richard Nixon was of the Republican party, so [after 1968] Democratic governors did not expect to receive the same entree to the White House that they did under Democratic presidents. We did meet with President Nixon in the White House once at a dinner in which he hosted governors and their wives and children; the theme was anti-drug abuse. We also had pictures taken of President Nixon giving the state one of these little plastic bubbles that contain moon dust in it; it is still on display at the Heritage Center.

Accomplishments in Office

There are some things that I should talk about from those four terms—things that I'm proud of. I think one thing that stands out, that is of lasting significance, is that the personal property tax was abolished during my term in office. Obtaining money to get the Garrison Diversion Project underway in 1965 was another item that stands out in my mind. We worked awfully hard on that, and that would not have been achieved had there not been a Democratic administration in Washington, because President Eisenhower, in his previous terms, had stated and followed the rule that there would be no new water development.

I think the implementation of the Department of Accounts and Purchases was perhaps the most significant of all state government reorganization that's happened in North Dakota. That was a law passed during the Republican administration prior to mine, but not implemented and manned until the Democrats got into office in 1961.

The first constitutional convention since statehood was opened by me in 1970, and the loss of that new constitution—which was redrawn by what I think was the most able group of men and women ever collected in one body in North Dakota—was, I think, the biggest disappointment, ranking maybe barely above the loss of the Garrison project years later. Developing the North Dakota lignite beds as a generating center for electricity was another achievement of those years. Today there is no state that generates as much

electricity at mine mouth from coal as does North Dakota. I think the sixth outstanding thing that came about during our years was bringing the Heritage Center up from an idea to the point where the legislature finally was willing to finance it, or establish an appropriation for it, the session after I left office.

Interspersed with those outstanding happenings in our administration were some others—and I need to stress that the people in my administration and myself had varying degrees of responsibility, or can take varying degrees of credit, for these things. Quite often it was bipartisan work, or maybe even activity outside of government, that brought certain things about.

Other outstanding things, I think, were organizing the Midwest Governors' Conference, which I did in 1962, and organizing the Old West Trail Foundation and the Lewis and Clark Trail up each side of the Missouri River (also about 1962). I give [Highway Commissioner] Walt Hjelle much credit for the Lewis and Clark Trail, which is now marked by the numbers 1804 and 1806 here in North Dakota. Participating [in] and organizing the Old West Regional Commission to try to generate more activity in the Upper Great Plains area was [also] important. I organized the Souris-Red-Rainy River Basin Commission soon after the 1965 law was passed that established the National Water Resources Council, and I organized the Missouri River Basin Commission about 1972.

I think establishing the child psychiatric section at the state hospital was another big accomplishment, along with establishing the eight regional mental health clinics that we now have.

Cleaning up the abuses at the various institutions were accomplishments because those institutions and agencies have compiled excellent records since that time. The state Insurance Department was one of the departments that was festering. It was under A.J. Jensen [insurance commissioner, 1951-62], who had taken a thirty-day vacation [with] his wife and charged all of the travel and expenses to



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Bill Guy (center) at the Indian Head Mine near Zap, North Dakota. Guy identifies the development of North Dakota lignite for electrical generation as one of his achievements in office.

Impact of Government Reorganization

In 1959 the legislature passed an act on governmental reorganization that was based on recommendations made in a 1957-58 Legislative Research Council study and a 1942 report by the North Dakota Government Survey Commission. The purpose of the act was to centralize the fiscal, administrative, and purchasing functions of state government under the authority of the governor. In the process, it eliminated a number of overlapping boards that had previously been responsible for the budgeting and auditing of agency receipts and expenditures. The new Department of Accounts and Purchases was to have an effective start date of July 1, 1960, for purchases and printing and of July 1, 1961, for all other functions. Implementation required the transfer of appropriated funds from existing agencies to a not-yet-established successor. At the time Governor Guy assumed office no action had been taken to implement the legislation.

Governor Guy appointed Ralph Dewing to head the new department. A respected former Democratic legislator from Columbus, North Dakota, Dewing had chaired the subcommittee of the Legislative Research Committee that had recommended the reorganization. The new department gave the governor a level of information and control that had not existed and significantly enhanced the authority of the governor's office. Arguably the most significant development in the modernizing and streamlining of state government fiscal practices, the department gradually assumed responsibility for all executive budget preparations, the review and audit of claims against the state, accounting and payroll functions, central data processing, printing, purchasing, and planning.

In 1965 the Office of the Budget was established within the Department of Accounts and Purchases, and the existing, less effective State Budget Board was abolished. The name of the department was changed to the Office of Management and Budget in 1981, and central data processing later evolved into the Information Technology Department.

The improved information and supervision this reorganization gave the governor through the Department of Accounts and Purchases allowed Guy to raise questions about the expenses claimed by A. J. Jensen, the elected state insurance commissioner.

Gerald G. Newborg

the state. That irked me a little bit because I didn't think that was what he had been elected to do, so I asked him for a report. He said he had stopped at insurance companies on this thirty-day vacation trip, and therefore it was state business. So I asked him to give me a report of the insurance companies he had stopped at, the places they were located, the dates he had stopped there, and whom he had talked to so we could recheck. He asked the attorney general for an opinion whether he, an elected official, had to answer a request by the governor for such a report. The attorney general's office wrote a very political opinion saying that Jensen did not have to report to the governor. I can recall Jensen coming down to my office after I had complained to the press that the attorney general was playing politics with his opinions by letting Jensen refuse to divulge to the public where he had been on this all-expense-paid trip that the taxpayers had financed. Jensen came into my office to try to talk me out of pursuing this, and I said that I would not, at which point he got extremely angry and shouted at the top of his voice, "You're sick, you're sick, you're sick!" He left—stomped out of my office, much to the fright of the office

staff that heard the shouting going on. But he later decided not to run after [that] disclosure and others we made about the way he had been operating that office. He was succeeded by a man by the name of Frank Albers [insurance commissioner, 1963-64], who was one of A. J. Jensen's deputies. Well, Albers turned out to be almost as bad as Jensen, and like Jensen, Albers was an extreme embarrassment to the Republican party because he represented the best that the Republicans could put up for that office.

Making the Economic Development Commission bipartisan and using Bank of North Dakota financing in state development were achievements. Three sugar beet refineries at Drayton, Hillsboro, and Wahpeton would never have come about without Bank of North Dakota participation. Steiger's tractor company in Fargo, the West Acres Shopping Center there, the Pembina bus assembly plant, the Grafton potato flake and starch plant, and the Wahpeton canvas plant are examples of economic development that came about in part because of the Economic Development Commission's work and the Bank of North Dakota's financing. But I should emphasize that

the EDC was not alone in providing the impetus for this kind of economic development. Other state agencies, such as the state laboratory, the Highway Department, the Tax Department, and the Workmen's Compensation Bureau, had a share in providing the backup and the help in getting these industries started.

In 1959 I had served in the state legislature and was appointed to the Legislative Council's Committee on Taxation. I realized that there were many people, including farmers and contractors, who needed to have investments in equipment in order to make a living, yet there were many other people, such as teachers and lawyers and auditors, that needed relatively less equipment or investment to make a living. It seemed to me that a tax on the tools of the trade was an unfair burden, and I wanted to see that eliminated. I also felt that people who spent their earnings on such things as pianos or expensive antiques or oriental rugs should not be penalized over those that would rather spend their money on liquor.

The 1965 session of the legislature finally eliminated the personal property tax in what was called a Democratic tax package. In that session, the Democratic-Nonpartisan League representatives had a majority for the first time. They were determined to eliminate the personal property tax. The Republicans were less agreeable to eliminating the tax, but a few [of them were] very influential in the senate in supporting its elimination. The personal property tax came up in the house late in the session. The opponents of the tax believed that they had discovered a method forcing the Democrats to kill their own program: in a house committee they amended the personal property tax to secure the replacement revenue not from income tax increases, as the Democrats wanted, but through an increase in the sales tax, which the Democrats at that time were vehemently and adamantly opposed to. The Republican opponents to the

elimination of the personal property tax decided that if they would put a half-cent increase on the sales tax in the plan, the Democrats would be forced to vote against the plan and thus kill their own personal property tax repeal.

The Democratic house and senate members met in the state side of the governor's residence the night before this was to come to a vote, and we discussed and debated the question of what to do with this maneuver by the opponents of the personal property tax repeal. We decided that what we would do—and we would keep it secret—was that the house members would all vote the tax program with the sales tax increase . . . and if you can imagine keeping something like that secret for twenty hours until the next day. It's hard for me to imagine it now, but looking back, I can still see

the vote-counting board. When they counted the votes on the repeal of the personal property tax with an increase in the sales tax, just about the entire board seemed green, and I think the opponents of the repeal—the Republicans—were stunned when they found out that the Democrats were not going to kill their own tax program. So the tax program went over to the senate, and with the help, as I say, of a couple of key Republican senators the tax package passed.

There was one tactical error in the Democratic tax program. The sales tax had been broadened to include sales tax on mixed drinks and haircuts, and so immediately the bartenders throughout the state began bad-mouthing the Democratic tax package, as it was known by

then; and as soon as the people had left the bars and gone to the barbershop, they got another dose of bad-mouthing of the Democratic tax program from the barbers. Several Republicans, including Evan Lips, joined me in supporting this tax package in many, many appearances around the state. We worked hard to get the people to accept that, but Robert McCarney saw a political chance to use people's natural reluctance to pay taxes to feather his own political nest.



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Guy (right) and officials at the rededication of the North Dakota State Mill and Elevator in 1972, following extensive renovations.

So he referred this tax program, and again, from that point on until the election, I spoke at dozens of places in favor of that tax package, as did Evan Lips and other legislators that supported it. But the public voted the tax program down, and once again we had personal property taxes.

Four years later, when the Republicans controlled both houses of the legislature, they again enacted the Democratic tax program almost verbatim, but they did not tax haircuts and mixed drinks, and the tax program passed. So that was how the personal property tax was eliminated, and had it not been for the competition between the Republican and

wanted to be sure that some outstanding, progressive citizens were in the constitutional convention, so I called a number of people and asked them to become delegates. For the most part I was successful. When I saw the makeup of the constitutional convention, I thought that, easily, never before had such an outstanding group of individual North Dakotans gathered together for one purpose. They were tremendous, and they did a really good job, too.

[However,] many of the things that were hoped for in the new constitution didn't come about. For example, organized labor wanted the constitutional provision that establishes

the right-to-work law in the state removed from the constitution. If the state wanted to have a right-to-work law, it should be a statutory law and not a constitutional provision. The constitutional convention turned organized labor down and returned the right-to-work law to the constitution. That caused organized labor in our state to be so frustrated, discouraged, and angry that they not only quit supporting constitutional revision but joined those who actively worked to defeat the revised constitution. I think most labor leaders today, in looking back, would say that they gained nothing by opposing the revised constitution and might have lost quite a bit. And the REAs [rural electric associations] were told, I think erroneously, by their attorneys that the new constitution might be construed by the courts in such a way as to be detrimental to the cooperative movement. I don't believe that. But the REAs dragged their feet on supporting the revised constitution, so it went down to defeat, and it was a real sad day when that happened.

In 1961 the legislative council had prepared a report which asked the governor to contact other

states in our region to see if we couldn't set up some kind of a device whereby college students from the smaller states could go to colleges and universities in the larger states and take courses and get degrees in disciplines that we couldn't afford to establish in our own colleges. That included things like medicine, dentistry, psychiatry, and so forth.

So with that mandate from the legislative council—at that time it was the Legislative Research Committee—I went to the National Governors' Conference in Hershey,



Guy and State Senator Evan Lips at a ceremony on the state capitol grounds in September 1963. Lips received a peace pipe from Standing Rock Tribal Chairman Aljoe Agard at this ceremony.

Democratic parties (with the Democrats intent on eliminating this tax), it would never have come about because they rather shamed Republican legislators into supporting a repeal of the personal property tax.

The legislature had a committee early in my first couple of terms that dealt with constitutional revision in a piecemeal way; so there had been piecemeal activity going on prior to the time when the legislature passed its resolution establishing the Second Constitutional Convention. I

In recent years I have heard about a lot of things that our children did in the governor's residence that I didn't know about at the time, which I guess is maybe par for the course. One of them involved a clothes chute from the main hall in the family part of the house. Apparently when we were gone, the older children would put Nancy down through the clothes chute. Well, this is lined with tin, and you can imagine. But all the things that could have happened fortunately didn't happen. There was [also] a cubby hole right next to the door going into the family part of the house from the outside. If something needed to be left there for the family when nobody was at home, you could open that door outside and put whatever it was in the cubby hole. (There was a door into the hallway in the family part of the house to take things out of the cubby hole.) Of course Nancy went through this, too.

The children would also tent out in the trees in our backyard in the summertime. The boys didn't do it so much because they were getting a little bit old for that, but the girls did it. They'd have a friend over, and they'd stay in the tent all night, or try to stay in the tent all night.

Pennsylvania, with the idea of calling a meeting of about eleven of the governors in our general region, which included North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Ohio. After an afternoon of discussion, it became apparent that there were other [common] things concerning the governors of these midwestern states, and since the southern states had a Southeastern Governors' Conference that had a long history of great success in bringing political pressure to bear on Congress for their best interests, and the northeastern states had a [New England] Governors' Conference, it was only natural that these Midwest governors would wonder if there wouldn't be an advantage in getting together. So at that meeting these eleven governors elected me to be their first chairman and instructed me to take the steps necessary to draw up and incorporate the Midwest Governors' Conference.

Our second meeting was in Chicago, and again I was elected chairman. These were precarious years because we were not used to working together and hadn't developed a full agenda. Kentucky and West Virginia [then] joined these eleven states to make thirteen. I never could quite understand how Kentucky and West Virginia considered themselves midwestern states, but I discovered that people who live on the East Coast believe that anything west of the Alleghenies is the Midwest. But they joined, and the Midwest Governors' Conference has continued on to this very day.

In 1961 North Dakota and South Dakota celebrated a territorial centennial, and North Dakota had a legislative appropriation that allowed us to hire an executive director of the centennial celebration. That person, hired by my predecessor, Governor Davis, was Marion Piper, who wore her floor-length frontier days gown the entire year of 1961. She was a very effervescent, enthusiastic person, and one day several months into my first administration she came into my office and said, "We've got to do something to commemorate this centennial year. I'd like to get Lawrence Welk back here to kind of add to the festivities. What could we do?" And

I said, "Well, that fits in kind of good with something that I've been thinking about. I've been thinking about a North Dakota Hall of Fame whereby we might recognize North Dakotans and former North Dakotans for achievements on the national or international scene. That way, young people in our state would know that, even though they're born and raised in North Dakota, if they're talented, have the desire, and have a little stroke of luck to go with it, they can be right up with the winners on a national or international level." So I said, "Let's establish a North Dakota Hall of Fame and put Lawrence Welk in it as one of our first members." We had decided that Theodore Roosevelt, being the most prominent former North Dakotan, should probably



SHSND SA31843

Guy presents journalist Eric Severeid, a North Dakota native, with the Rough Rider Award in April 1964.

head up our Hall of Fame. And because he was a Rough Rider at San Juan Hill in Cuba, and because Rough Rider went with our western heritage, we—Marion Piper and I worked this thing out together—decided to call the award the North Dakota Rough Rider Award. We hired an artist to paint a portrait of Lawrence Welk and one of Theodore Roosevelt. Since that time we have recognized many outstanding North Dakota men and women who have accomplished great things on the national and international scene, and in many facets of life, too.

Oftentimes things happened that I didn't anticipate. Usually these were interesting and fun and added to whatever the event was. One of those occasions was in the first or second year that we were in the governor's residence. It was for a private, personal event: my homemakers' club from Amenia was coming for the day. They'd arrive in time for lunch, and then we'd be touring the capitol and the museum. They were going to see the things of interest, and then they'd return home late in the afternoon.

Well, Marion Piper breezed into the kitchen and wanted to know what we were doing. She was full of enthusiasm, as always. I told her what we were doing, and she said, "Well, how would you like to have a real live 'duke' as another guest at your luncheon?" I said, "Well, that would be just fine." She said she had the grandson of the Marquis de Mores with her for the day. He was visiting in Bismarck. She wanted to bring him to the house for lunch, so we set two more places at the table. He came, and he was a very delightful, sophisticated man. The ladies were excited to meet him; he really enjoyed all of them, too.

I depended upon the press to inform the public as to what we were trying to do. For example, in my battles with A. J. Jensen, the insurance commissioner, to clean up his department, if it hadn't been for the press putting out the information that we dug up, there never would have been enough public demand built up to make a change. There never would have been enough public demand built up to force the Republican party not to give him his renomination. So by and large the reporters were fair with me, and I needed them badly. I always tried to be open and available to them, even by telephone. They didn't have to wait for a press conference; if they had a question, they could call me at any time and I'd give an answer. I tried to write out the things I was afraid might be misstated or misconstrued. I wrote them out in printed form and gave them to reporters so they would know that, if it came out wrong, there was a printed

record showing how it came out wrong.

Early in our administration, one of the most effective television news outlets was the Farmers Union *Focus on the News*. It was handled by Fred Simonton. That was a fifteen-minute program that dealt behind the news rather than just pick up the stories that came over the AP or UPI wires. Fred Simonton was kind of an investigative reporter and a liberal in his political philosophy, which

was contrary to the editors of all of the state's newspapers and, I think, all of the state's television stations at that time. So he was the only outlet we had who was willing to air some of the things that newspapers and television studios thought were either not newsworthy or for other reasons declined to make public.

We were going against the tide all the time. I think we grudgingly gained the respect of the newspapers over time, though. The newspapers may still call themselves conservative Republicans, but I think they grudgingly have to admit



SHSND SA31843

Tea at the governor's residence. Jean Guy commented that the seating arrangement seen here was unusual. Visitors were usually seated in small groups for easier conversation.

that, after twenty-five years, the Democrats have proven they can be as concerned about North Dakota and as able to run state government as the Republicans.

The *Minot Daily News* wrote an editorial [that was] very critical of the fact that we had not—we'd been in office a year—cleaned up the festering situation at the state hospital. This state hospital had gotten to that condition over a period of fifty years or more, and the *Minot Daily News* thought it should have been cleaned up the first few months [after] we came into office. So I wrote a nice letter to the editor of the *Minot Daily News*—and it was a sincere letter; I wasn't trying to be funny or smart or anything—that said, "I agree

with your editorial and your criticism of me and my administration. We haven't cleaned up that state hospital; we need help, and I want to appoint an interested lay committee that will study the state hospital and advise me as to what they think I should do. Since your editorial has indicated

that you have a deep interest in the state hospital, I would like to have you be on that committee and serve as its chairman, and I'd be glad to do whatever you think is necessary to correct that situation." I didn't have another peep out of the *Minot Daily News* on the state hospital from that point on. And I got to know and admire and like Ray Dobson, the editor up there, very much. I wasn't trying to smart off or anything; I truly wanted help. But I also knew that newspaper editors are very prone to be free with their advice, but very unwilling to lower themselves to the community level to participate in correcting the things that they see are wrong in the community or the state. That's true of almost any newspaper editor you can name.

When I came into office, the state party activated itself perhaps less than a year before an election by hiring a secretary, or executive director, and we would always be using some basement or vacant storefront. It was hard to get people to want to work full-time in those kinds of surroundings, and it was hard to maintain records and equipment. So we finally decided it was time to build a headquarters building where we could keep our equipment and keep somebody full-time from one year to the next—not just during the campaign season.

We finished up paying for the building through the sale of the Kennedy rocking chair, which was the idea of Gordon

Gray and Bud Stenson. Gordon Gray ordered 620 replicas of John Kennedy's presidential rocker from the same factory that had built the original, and they came here in two train boxcar loads. The idea was that there would be one rocker made available to the public for every one thousand people in the

state, and all 620 rockers were sold with a profit of about forty dollars a rocker, which was enough money to retire the debt on the Kennedy Center.

1974 Senate Race

Running for the U.S. Senate had been a goal of mine for many years. So when I left office in January of 1973, I knew that my next objective was to win a U.S. Senate seat in 1974.

Sometime early in 1974, David Strauss showed up at our front door saying that he had been referred to me by a Democrat in Fargo. I didn't know at that time what a jewel David Strauss would turn out to be as a political operative, but I hired him at a very minimum wage, and we bought a



SHSND SA31843

Press conference with Bill Guy in the governor's conference room.

small, used Volkswagen car for him to travel in. The early polls looked very good for us. As I recall it now, one poll showed that the public approval of myself was about 74 percent, which is exceedingly high, and that the approval for Senator Young was just slightly below that—about 73 percent. But unbeknownst to us, this poll also told the Republicans that they had to do something to diminish that 74 percent public approval.

Our finances were always touch and go, but I felt that we had to establish some rules early on in our political campaign about receiving political contributions. We decided that there would be no political action committee [PAC] contributions accepted. This was a shock to organized labor, who had contributed through their COPE [Committee on Political Education] program to my gubernatorial campaigns. I believe that when we established this new policy of not accepting PAC contributions, organized labor began to mistrust me a bit for refusing to take their political money. We also set the limit on how much we would accept from any one individual at one hundred dollars.

This was an off-presidential, off-gubernatorial election year, so all of the emphasis was on the U.S. Senate race. I had strong support at the Democratic convention in Minot, though there should have been a straw in the wind that I didn't quite interpret properly when a University of North Dakota student delegation walked out of the convention, during the voting to endorse me, over my support of the Garrison Diversion Project. I should have realized that there had been a lot work done on the college campuses to alienate students from the Garrison Diversion Project.

I had nobody contesting me in the Democratic convention for the nomination for candidate for U.S. Senate. Jim Jungroth had been rumored to be ready to enter the race as an independent, and I called Jungroth and asked him if this was true, and he said yes, he planned to do that. I asked him why he planned to do that, and he couldn't give me a very good answer. Jim Jungroth had been the state Democratic chairman in the early 1960s and was an attorney from Jamestown. The primary election came, and Jungroth did not challenge me then. However, Robert McCarney, whom I had beaten in the race for governor in 1968, filed against me as a Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate in the primary, so McCarney showed up now as a Democrat whose sole mission was to discredit me.

Jean and I campaigned very hard that summer and that fall, and we won the primary very handily, but Bob McCarney had done his bit by publishing full-page ads that printed lies about my past record in government and about my family. He always had a disclaimer on these full-page ads in fine print saying that he didn't know whether or not this information was correct. Of course none of it was correct, but many people believed it. His full-page ads



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Jean Guy and Vice President Hubert Humphrey at the ground breaking for the Kennedy Center.

After John Kennedy was assassinated, there was some talk about building [the Kennedy Memorial Center]. People wanted to build a public building that could be leased for a permanent state office for the Democratic-Nonpartisan League party in North Dakota. After Robert Kennedy was assassinated the movement was really seriously under consideration. There were several meetings among Democrats held around the state where this plan was discussed.

I was asked to be the honorary chairman and president of this group. We had a board of directors and a fund-raising committee. I found my position was not just honorary.

I was to be the actual president of the foundation, and I was very involved in raising the money and supervising the construction of the center. I believe I was president all of the years that Bill was in office, and I have been on the board of directors of that group until a year ago [2002]. We've been very involved with the Kennedy Center from the time of its inception.

A very good location was found for the building on the corner of Nineteenth Street and Divide Avenue in Bismarck. Bernard Hillyer designed the building. In the spring of 1968, when Hubert Humphrey was vice president, he was in Bismarck for an event. We held a ground breaking ceremony for the center at that time.

contained reprints of what were supposed to be evidences of misdeeds. I recall a reprint in [one] full-page ad of a letter from an aide to Hubert Humphrey, who was running for president at that time, and this aide's letter to me said he thanked me for supplying the girls during Humphrey's visit. Now this made it look like I had supplied prostitutes to Humphrey and his aide. But what the aide was referring to was my eighth-grade daughter, Debby, and her friends, who had spent days hand-sewing their own dresses, which were all of same fabric and color and had a huge "H" printed on the front in honor of Humphrey's last name. They were the welcoming committee when candidate Humphrey landed at the airport. Bob McCarney knew this, but he also knew that that letter could be arranged to make it look like we had hired prostitutes for Humphrey. Now the question has come to my mind, How did that letter, and some of the other records that he used to distort the past, get into Bob McCarney's hands?

My wife served on the board of the Kennedy Center, which received interim financing during its construction from the First Western Bank in Minot, whose board of directors were mostly Democrats. The bank had received some notoriety several years before because it had illegally made a contribution to the campaign of Rolland Redlin, a Democrat running for Congress. So Bob McCarney tried to distort the record to show that the First Western Bank somehow or other had been engaged in the devious practice of supporting a political party by supplying the interim financing—as any bank would—for the construction of the Democratic headquarters in Bismarck. He accused my wife, as a member of the board of directors of the Kennedy Center, as being part of a devious and probably illegal activity, which of course was absolutely untrue.

The Associated Press as a corporation has had a practice of sending their young people to the North Dakota post in Bismarck to get experience in newspaper reporting. Consequently, we get many reporters that have very little background information on North Dakota history or North Dakota politics. About the time they have come up to speed and understand North Dakota politics, the Associated Press transfers them out to a larger station and brings in another new and young reporter. So the political reporting through the Associated Press over the years has left a great deal to be desired. [For example,] a story about my attitude on coal development written by an Associated Press reporter in the early stages of the race was so totally erroneous that I protested to the Associated Press, who told me

that I was free to write a letter to the editor if I thought their reporter's story was erroneous. Well, that's hardly a good way to answer an erroneous story.

I noticed that Jim Jungroth used reprints of this very erroneous story as a political handout in his campaign against me on the college campuses. Jungroth's mission, when he entered the race as an independent candidate for the U.S. Senate after the primary, seemed to be to paint me



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Guy and David Strauss, who worked on Guy's 1974 Senate campaign, standing in front of a portrait of Jean Guy.

as an anti-environmentalist, and he did most of his diversion tactics on the college campuses. I was accused of wanting to develop North Dakota's coal resources with total disregard to the environmental consequences, and at that time the environment was a hot issue on college campuses. Actually, my own record and philosophy on the environment, both personally and in office, was probably stronger than anybody else's in the political field.

Our campaign cost us, as I recall, in the neighborhood of \$125,000, which at that time was, in my judgement, sufficient for a good campaign, and I've never complained about being underfunded in that campaign. Jungroth was well financed. Where his finances came from has never been revealed.

My attempt in that campaign was to be positive—to give the voters my feeling, my thoughts, my philosophy on certain problems of the time that affected North Dakota, such as agriculture, water development, natural resource development, and this sort of thing. My strategy was not to try to find an issue that would separate me from Senator Young, because I didn't want to attack Senator

Young. I felt that would be a negative campaign method. Senator Young, historically, had always carried the sympathy of voters. First of all, he was a very poor speaker. He had a serious speech impediment, and he wanted the voters to feel sorry for him because of that impediment. Secondly, if opponents didn't attack Senator Young so he could complain that he was being unfairly attacked, he would actually provoke the suggestion that his opponents were attacking him. For example, we gave our supporters in that Senate race explicit instructions not to attack Senator Young on the basis of his age. He was seventy-six at that time, and would be eighty-two if re-elected and if he finished out the term. So because he wasn't being attacked because of his age, he would always bring this up and say, "My opponents are attacking me because of my age." He was currying favor—sym-

pathy, you might say—from the voters. Here was an old man who had served honorably in the U.S. Senate being attacked by this young upstart, Bill Guy—when in fact I wasn't attacking him. My supporters were not attacking him, either, but he was opening his own veins so that he could bleed in public and curry sympathy.

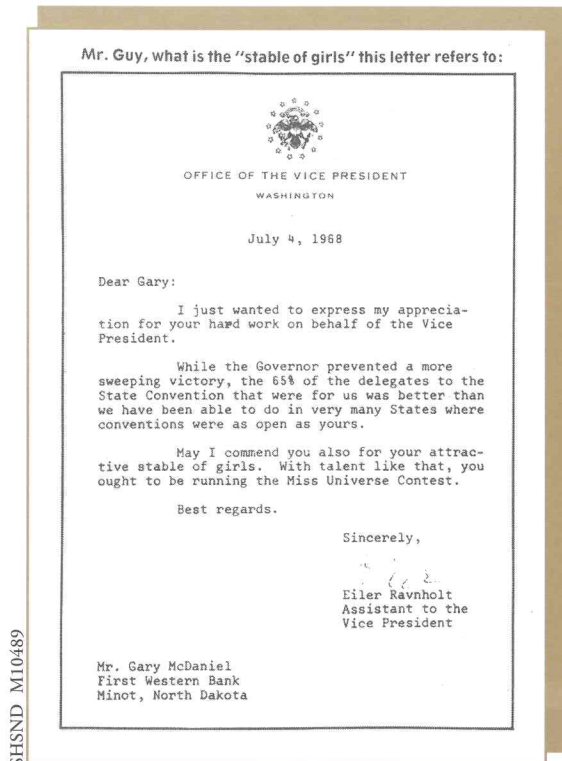
At 8:05 on the night of the election, CBS announced nationwide that the polls had closed in North Dakota and that Senator Milton Young had been declared the victor. This was surprising since many polls west of the Missouri River in North Dakota were still open and would be for another hour. We never knew whether that CBS announcement of Young's victory had an influence on the outcome of the race or not. But at midnight I was 2,500 votes ahead of Senator Young, and commentator Eric Sevareid, who was with CBS at that time, called me at midnight and asked what was happening in North Dakota. I told my friend Eric Sevareid that I hoped CBS would be found wrong, because

I was much opposed to the national television networks predicting the outcome of elections on the basis of a few exit polls. The following morning I discovered that I had slipped in the vote tallies during the night and was now 196 votes behind Milton Young. A recount was allowed by law, and the district judges in the state were assigned the job of overseeing a recount. Finally, early in December, Senator Young was declared re-elected by 186 votes.

In retrospect, I should have struck out at Young's record and his age, and I should have countered both McCarney's efforts and Jungroth's efforts more strongly than we did. Actually, we pretty much ignored those two. Had we arranged our campaign differently, I feel confident that we could have won that U.S. Senate race. So I don't blame anybody in particular for that loss other than myself.

Senator Burdick's relationship with me was in some ways, I suppose, strange. My wife and I had worked hard to elect Senator Burdick in all of his elections. But Senator Burdick, I must say, contributed very little to my elections as governor. We didn't get along as well as a governor and a senator from the same state should get along. I blame this in part on Senator Burdick's staff, who seemed to be quite jealous and suspicious of my staff in North Dakota. I would call Senator Burdick every so often on a piece of national legislation or a national administration activity to give him my thoughts on the matter as to how it would affect North Dakota. But in the twelve years that I was in office, I never had Senator Burdick call me to find out what my opinion was on any matter. The senator never stopped in my office in Bismarck, although on every trip to Washington that I made I would stop by his office and talk to him or his staff.

It seemed to me that Senator Burdick, consciously or unconsciously, always feared that my political growth and political success would eventually bring me into the U.S. Senate, and when that happened his chances of being re-elected as a second Democratic senator would diminish. It seemed to me that he was protecting his own turf by giving only lukewarm or very little support to my candidacy. This is not to say that Senator Burdick didn't give support to the Democratic party as such or to other candidates on the state ticket, but Senator Burdick was in some ways a political loner whose orientation seemed to be centered around the re-election of Senator Burdick rather than the advancement of the North Dakota Democratic-Nonpartisan League or any of its other candidates. I noticed in the campaign against Senator Young that Senator Burdick did not endorse



Portion of a McCarney ad that ran in 1974, making insinuations about a group of eighth-grade girls who appeared at a campaign rally for Humphrey.

me. He was asked by our party leaders to endorse me on television, and on two occasions during that campaign he agreed to come to the television studios and cut endorsement speeches for television advertising, but in each case Senator Burdick failed to show up to cut those television ads. So following the election in 1974, party leaders were extremely disgusted and angry with Senator Burdick for his very apparent foot-dragging and failure to support me in that Senate race. So I guess I have to say that the relationship between Senator Burdick and myself during the twelve or fourteen years when he was in Washington and I was in Bismarck was not as good as it should have been.

After the Election

I think most people thought I would run again for the U.S. Senate someday, and I guess I thought I might soon after the election, but I gradually began to realize that at my age, I could no longer afford to waste the time between campaigns that needed to be spent in securing some financial security for my wife and me when we retired. Politics is a very expensive business, and if you're unsuccessful there's no way to gain a retirement position. There's no retirement pension for losers, and we were not wealthy people. We were not poor, but we were not wealthy people. The 1974 campaign taught me that campaigns were beginning to become extremely expensive and that political action committees (PACs) were becoming more of a part of raising finances. I objected strongly to political action committees, and I didn't think I could put together enough money to campaign again without PAC money, so I didn't want to do that. There weren't any races opening up very soon after I lost in 1974, so I decided I'd better remain active as a possible candidate until I retired the lingering debt that we had from my Senate campaign. So for at least two years I went around the state at the invitations of district chairmen, appearing at district rallies and banquets as a possible candidate to run again, but really I was simply trying to help the party raise the money to retire the debt they had—including the debt from the recount procedure, which never did get fully retired. I paid off the last six hundred dollars of that debt about four years after the election.

I might say here that the retirement program for twelve years as governor was almost nonexistent. The state did have a retirement program, but because of reverses in the financial markets at the time, state law required me to accept my share in the state retirement plan as a lump sum. The lump sum that I received was about equivalent to the money that had been withheld from my salary in the retirement program from the time the program began in 1965. So really, you can say that I received no retirement whatsoever from the state of North Dakota for the twelve years that I spent as governor. So I couldn't afford to neglect planning for retirement in some other way.

The day after the 186-vote recount loss was announced in December of 1974, Elliot Richardson,

who had been the secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare and also the attorney general under President Nixon, called me from Washington. Richardson said he sympathized with me in losing the election, but because of that, he said, "Perhaps you would be willing to consider applying for a fellowship in the Woodrow Wilson International Institute for Scholars." *The Woodrow Wilson Center supports research in social science and humanities issues*



Cartoon from the *Casselton Reporter*, January 4, 1973.

that intersect with public policy questions. It awards residential fellowships to scholars, public officials, business professionals, and others to pursue research and writing at the center. At that time Richardson was the chair of the center's committee for state and local government. I said I'd never heard of the institute and asked him to send me material on it, which he did.

I agreed to apply for a fellowship at the Woodrow Wilson Center. My wife and I then went off on a vacation to Florida in January. I was waiting for a decision by the board

of trustees on my application for a scholarship to the center, and finally I was told that my application had been deferred, which is a polite way of saying it had been declined. I called the executive director of the Woodrow Wilson Center and asked him why I had been deferred, and he said, "Well, the board of trustees is a presidentially appointed board. They were appointed by President Nixon, and since there is one Democratic governor, John Gilligan of Ohio, at the center now as a scholar, they felt that it was too much to have two Democratic governors at the center among the scholars, and so you were declined on political reasons, but if you say that I told you this I will deny having even talked to you."

So I knew why I was not going to be appointed as a scholar, but I thought back to my second meeting with Elliot Richardson. I'd gone into his office in the old Smithsonian building in Washington, and we talked for about two hours. He questioned me at great length about state government and state planning, and he took copious notes while we talked. I thought from this conversation that my acceptance was assured, and in my mind I was making plans to go to Washington for possibly a year as a scholar. I also was surprised several years later to see the book that Elliot Richardson had written, and in that book to see a number of passages that were almost verbatim from what I had told him the day that we sat and discussed state government for two hours. So even though I didn't get to the center as a scholar, I got a couple of lines into Elliot Richardson's report.

When Jimmy Carter was elected president, I wrote to him and said, "There isn't anything that I want from this Democratic administration except to be considered as an applicant for the board of trustees of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars," and I never even had an acknowledgment from Jimmy Carter that I had sent my letter to him. This was to become kind of a hallmark of the Carter administration—an administration that was very inept at establishing ties with party leaders in the various states and at using the Democratic party nationwide to advance its own success.

After I discovered that I wouldn't be a scholar, I got a call from Art Link. He said the western governors had gotten together and were putting together an organization that would help them, in their approach to Congress and the administration, to get a better shake for energy development in their states. Would I be interested in becoming the organizer and first executive director of the ten-state Western Governors' Regional Energy Policy Office? I went out to Billings, Montana, to meet with the ten governors to talk over the possibility of becoming the executive director, and at the Billings meeting the governors did agree to employ me in that position. The ten governors

came from five states that were in the Old West Regional Commission—South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, and Nebraska—and five states that were in the Four Corners Regional Commission—Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Colorado, and Utah. The headquarters of the office was to be in Denver.

About mid-April Jean and I went to Denver and rented an apartment in a huge apartment complex in the southeast part of the city, and I set about organizing the office. I hired six professionals and three clerical people for the office, and set about carrying out the wishes of these ten governors. I soon found that I was dealing not just with ten governors, but with ten governors and ten assistants, plus two federal officers who directed the two five-state commissions and their assistants. So I had twenty-four people telling me what to do, which irritated me to no end because I wasn't used to having that many bosses—as a matter of fact, I wasn't used to having any. So it was kind of a difficult assignment. I also found that some of the states were energy producers, such as New Mexico, which produced oil, gas, and coal, while other states were energy consumers, such as Arizona, its neighbor, which had no energy resources whatsoever. So it was hard to get everybody to march to the same drumbeat.

The function [of the office] was to coordinate the testimony and political pressure of those ten western states in order to influence legislation coming up in Congress and the energy policies of the executive branch. One big victory that came out of this organization was to get Congress to give the energy states a larger share of the federal royalty collected on coal, gas, and petroleum mined and extracted in those western states. [The organization] also had to do with environmental legislation dealing with coal and extraction and the administration's Department of Interior policies. We monitored the Federal Register, and whenever a new policy would be printed in the register, we would notify our states and try to put together a unified response to that regulation.

So we did have some positive effect on energy in the West, but I soon found that the intense interest in energy that had come about because of the Arab embargo on oil in 1973 and '74 gradually subsided, since the governors thought they had done all they needed to do by establishing this ten-state energy policy office. So after two years I was glad to leave this office and return to North Dakota. There were more reasons than having to work for twenty-four bosses that caused me to want to come back. Nancy, who had one year of high school left, decided that she didn't want to be bused into the center of Denver to go to high school. [So] Jean and Nancy lived in Casselton during that school year, returning to Denver the following summer. Well, by that time I had decided that living apart from my family was

not a good way to live. Jean has a congenital heart problem which she has lived with very gracefully all of her life, but the high altitude of Denver made it very uncomfortable and difficult for her, so she didn't want to live in Denver. So it was very easy to accept an invitation to come back to North Dakota. I resigned from the Western Governors' Regional Energy Policy Office on December 31, 1976. The following day, back in Casselton, I started as the organizing executive director of the North Dakota Community Foundation.

The North Dakota Community Foundation (NDCF) was started through the efforts of the Otto Bremer Foundation of Saint Paul. They believed that a statewide organization—a sort of umbrella charitable organization—should be established in North Dakota to receive gifts and grants in order to build up an endowment fund, which would earn income that could be given back to eligible charitable organizations in the state. The Otto Bremer Foundation put up several hundred thousand dollars to research the need for a statewide foundation in North Dakota and then to establish one by subsidizing the salaries and first grants that the NDCF made. I think the NDCF has now developed into a permanent, very helpful institution for the state. I served as the executive director for two years; Dr. Richard Timmons took over when I resigned, and the office was moved from Casselton to Bismarck. But one of the things I did when I was executive director was to start a program whereby a small town could establish its own small community foundation within the NDCF. For example, the town of Minnewaukan has set up its own Minnewaukan Community Foundation. Money that is earned by the Minnewaukan foundation from investments made by the

North Dakota Community Foundation is given back to Minnewaukan to be distributed, according to a local committee's decision, to the eligible non-profit organizations in that community—such as the senior citizens' organization, the local library, the Boy Scouts, the volunteer fire department, or the local volunteer ambulance group. I think there are now about thirty communities in North Dakota that have such a foundation of their own. So the North Dakota

Community Foundation now has an endowment fund of more than a million dollars that it administers, and that fund will continue to grow.

But I did resign from the foundation, and in 1979 accepted an invitation from Basin Electric to come to work as a resources consultant. I started work with Basin Electric on September 1, and later that fall we bought a townhouse in Bismarck and sold our home in Casselton; we moved into the new townhouse in December of 1979. At the time I went to work for Basin Electric, the electric generating companies could not keep up with the

growth in electrical demand, and since it takes about ten years from the decision that more electricity will be needed until you can get that electricity online, a lot of very serious preplanning has to be done. The service area of Basin Electric encompassed parts of eight states—more than half of North Dakota, all of South Dakota and Nebraska, and parts of Minnesota, Iowa, Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. Basin Electric had one large coal-fired electric generating plant at Stanton, North Dakota. It was build-



SHSND SA31843

Bill Guy turns over the keys to the governor's office to his successor, Governor Art Link.

ing a large coal-fired electric generating plant at Wheatland, Wyoming. It had a large gas-powered peaking plant in South Dakota, and it helped to distribute electricity from the hydroelectric dams on the Missouri River. It had just started to build a new electric coal-fired generating station at Beulah, next to the American Natural Gas plant.

So those were exciting days. We had to seemingly run to keep up because the projections for electric power growth were at a rate of about 7 percent per year. We needed to locate the water resources for new coal-powered power plants in Wyoming and in North Dakota—two 500-megawatt unit plants on the west and east sides of this eight-state distribution area. My job was to help with governmental relations having to do with water resources, coal resources, and power plant locations. At least two mornings a week I would take off early in the Basin Electric airplane, fly to Wyoming or Montana or Colorado or Nebraska, and return that night. So I got to see a lot of new people and new country and new

government relations in those first few years.

Toward the end of my six years with Basin Electric, the power demand had subsided and the need for new power plants had vanished. In the last year it was really a struggle to keep the volume of electrical consumption up to make full use of the utilities that were already built. So when I reached sixty-five, I told Basin Electric management that I would work for another nine months and then retire, which I did in the spring of 1985.

Since 1981 **Gerald G. Newborg** has been North Dakota State Archivist and Director of the State Archives and Historical Research Library Division at the State Historical Society of North Dakota.

William and Jean Guy currently reside in Fargo and remain active in state and community affairs. Both have been honored by their alma mater, North Dakota State University, with alumni achievement awards—Bill in 1963, and Jean in 1979. In addition, NDSU awarded Bill an honorary Doctor of Laws in 1973 and Jean an honorary Doctor of Humanities in 1994.

Jean Mason Guy remained on the board and served as president of the Kennedy Foundation Memorial Center, served on the board of directors of the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation, chaired the National Women's Committee to build the NDSU Family Life Center, served on the NDSU President's Advisory Council, and was a member and president of the State Board of Higher Education. William Guy is the author of a 1992 autobiography, *Where Seldom Was Heard a Discouraging Word . . . Bill Guy Remembers*.

The Guys have five children: William, James, Deborah, Holly, and Nancy.



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Jean and Bill Guy at the 1999 ceremony marking the naming of the William L. Guy Federal Building in Bismarck, North Dakota.