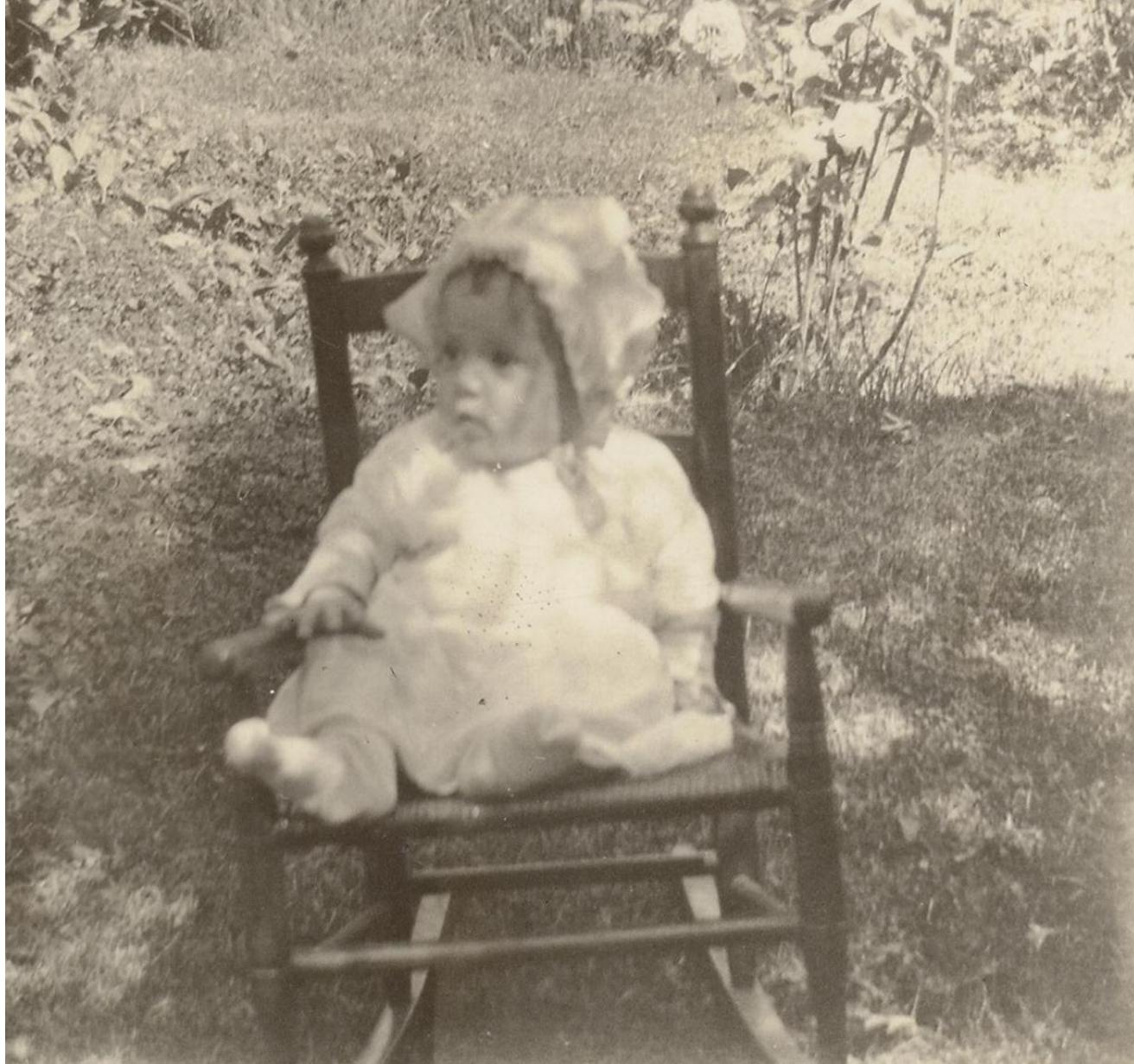


“When I die, I hope I will be missed by my family and friends. I hope they will be able to say I was a good person, having many friends, and was loyal to my family.”



*Loretta Marie Kozak*

*February 2, 1933 – October 28, 2005*



*Loretta Heitz, circa 1933*

My full maiden name is Loretta Marie Violet Heitz. I was born on February 7, 1933 in Conklin, Michigan. I was born in our home, and delivered by the family physician, Dr. Miller, from Marne, Michigan. It was very stormy weather, and the roads were closed. My dad plowed our driveway with our big horses and snowplow. Then he took the tractor down the street to meet Dr. Miller, from Marne (about 1 mile away).



*Clara, Helen, Mary, Loretta Heitz, circa 1933*

We were told to sit with our legs together because we had dresses or skirts on.  
We always called adults Mr., Mrs., Aunt, Uncle, Grandma, Grandpa.



On winter days, we enjoyed tobogganing on the area hills with our neighbor friends, and then going to one of the homes after for hot chocolate, cookies, hot dogs, etc. We also liked ice skating at a friend's pond.

We had woolen snow pants that were hung by the coal burning furnace in the basement to dry. I remember one year we would wear colorful wool socks and cuff them over the top of snow shoes. What class! It took a long time for the snow pants to dry. We didn't have a clothes dryer.



*Loretta pulling Mary and Helen*

The big depression was just over when I was born and the after-effects were still there. Many people were very poor. My parents were farmers and we always had plenty to eat and a comfortable home. My mother sewed many of my clothes. During war time, one needed a government ration stamp for shoes and sugar.

Flour sacks were printed fabrics and these sacks were used to make bed sheets and pillow cases. So our sheets were all pieced together from the flour sacks. After the war my mother purchased a war parachute. She made nightgowns and slips from the nylon fabric.





*William Rasch, Helen, Mary, Loretta Heitz*

In my early childhood I slept with my grandma. It was a tiny bedroom with one dresser and no closet. The clothes were hung on a rod on the door.

Later I moved upstairs and slept in the same room as my two older sisters. We had a big bedroom – two double beds and two dressers. There was a door in our bedroom that led to a huge walk-in attic. It was fun looking at things in the attic. There were trunks, boxes, the artificial Christmas tree and a few ornaments. We did not have lights on the Christmas tree. The branches were made from feathers.

*Loretta, Anna Heitz, Mary, Helen*





I played in our barn yard, wood shed, parlor in our farm home and on our four porches. Or I would go to the neighbor's house to play. I would also go to my two classmates' homes to play and sleep over.

Many farm buildings surrounded our yard. There were two back garages, pigs' pen, chicken coops, barn, well house, a big garage for the farm truck, a wash house (where laundry was done), a smoke house (where hams and bacon were smoked), wood shed, and an outside toilet building (we also had an inside toilet with a bathtub, sinks, and toilet).



*Gregor, Clara, Helen, Loretta, Mary Heitz*



*Helen, Mary, Loretta Heitz*



We were expected to help around the house and mind our manners: eating, speaking, please and thank you's, and we always helped with clearing the table, doing the dishes and sweeping the kitchen floor. There were no electric dishwashers.

My favorite treats were:

- Ice cream at the country store
- My mom's pies and cakes
- My Aunt Kate's cinnamon rolls
- Aunt Dora Dietrich's sponge cake – which she made with 12 whole eggs!!

We always dressed up for church in our “Sunday clothes.” We always wore hats in church and the little tiny hats for the daily school mass were called Beanies. Saddle shoes were popular. My mother made many of my clothes. I wonder how she had the time to sew while living on a farm and feeding the hired help three meals a day. Long dress coats were worn for dress up. Mom bought us “Snow Shoes” which were white, high-top leather shoes.



*Gregor, Clara, Helen, Loretta, Mary Heitz*



I attended St. Joseph's Catholic School for grades 1-8, and St. James in Grand Rapids for the last 3 months of 8th grade.

My first grade teacher was my favorite. She was a young Dominican nun. She was a very sweet and gentle teacher. I corresponded many years with some of the nuns.

My best subjects in school were reading and math. I loved all my subjects and received mostly A's.

We always had a family dog or two, and several barn cats. Our dogs were cattle dogs and hunting dogs. Our dogs were all family pets and never had to be tied up on a rope. We had Shepard Dogs, an Irish Setter and an English Setter/Pointer.

The first dog I remember was Shep. She looked like a collie dog. She would go in the pasture and bring the cattle back to the barnyard.



Tig was another dog that fetched the cattle from the pasture. Our dogs were always barn dogs except for Rusty, the Irish Setter. Rusty lived in our house when we sold our farm and moved to the city.

I had fun with our cats in the barn. One especially would drink milk from a doll bottle and would let me dress her and cuddle her in blankets.



## *School Years*



My best friends in elementary school were Alice and Noreen Brown – the only girls in my class! I was also best friends with Millie Dietrich, who was my closest neighbor – about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile away, and Marquita Armock – about 1 mile away.

I also remember the annual school picnics at John Ball Park. We would ride to Grand Rapids in a large farm truck packed in the gated bed (platform) rear. We would play lots of games and eat lots of food. My parents gave me money to spend at the Pavilion for food and souvenirs, or for leaving the park and walking through the area neighborhood and stores. It was always a fun day!

My three cousins from Battle Creek often visited us and we'd always have such a good time with our "city cousins." We were the "farm cousins."



*Rasch Allen Heitz*

*Halloween party*

Slacks were not worn to school. Most girls didn't wear slacks. Ladies wore lovely hats when dressed up. Gloves were worn with a good dress. Rayon hose, at times, had a seam up the back! And many times the seam was crooked up the back of the leg. Ladies wore aprons when working in the kitchen. Men wore felt dress hats when dressed up in their wool suits.



*Loretta, Helen, Mary, Rosie Heitz*

I remember an ice man with a horse and wagon would deliver a big block of ice to Aunt Violet's icebox (refrigerator). Colonial Bakery would deliver their baked goods via horse and wagon, and the bakery man would bring a metal rack with assorted sweets and breads to the door for Aunt Violet to purchase. The milk man came around , also with a horse and wagon, to deliver milk, butter, chocolate milk and eggs. The dairy products were put in an insulated box on the doorstep.



*Mary, Rose, Loretta, Helen Heitz*



*Loretta Heitz, Dorothy Glick, Rosie, Mary, Clara, Helen Heitz*

# High School Years

- I went to Mt. Mercy Academy, an all-girls school, for high school.
- My favorite high school teacher was Sister Mary Boniface – my Biology teacher. I was her pet! I helped her work in our school chapel. She was kind and gave good advice. I wrote her at Christmas time for at least 40 years until her death. Sister always boiled Eucalyptus oil in our class when someone had a cold. She was tiny, very ambitious and fun.
- The most important thing I learned was that we should be honest, faithful, and do our very best in school. We should obey, and stay out of trouble at school, home, and away.
- I was Senior Class President. I held other offices during freshman, sophomore and junior years. I was always in the National Scholastic Group.
- I spent time with Loretta Bart, Maureen Carroll, Camille Tomaszek, Mary Jane Hogan, Katie Garbula, Fran Derrick and Marian Van Oostendorp, plus many others.
- Popular fads were broomstick skirts, varsity cardigan sweaters, saddle shoes, football games, the Charleston (dance), dances, and navy wool pea coats.



*John & Mary Nowak, Steve & Loretta Kozak, Larry Mikula*

*Gregor & Clara Heitz, Rosie Heitz, Helen Mikula*



We were married at St. James church in Grand Rapids on August 29, 1953 in the morning. I wore a lovely white, satin, beaded gown, with a crown and veil (it was the year of the Coronation). I made my underslip. It was 99 degrees that day! My attendants were Kay Wurm and Maureen Carroll. Mary Catherine, my sister, was my maid of honor. My sister Rose was my junior bridesmaid. They wore light blue, taffeta, long formals.

We never went on a honeymoon. We drove straight to Milwaukee (stayed overnight in the St. Joe area) to find an apartment. We slept on a bare floor on our second night of marriage in the apartment we had just rented. Steve was in dental school, with 3 more years to go. I immediately looked for a full-time job.

A year later, we drove to California, as Steve thought he would like to practice dentistry there. After seeing all of the brown grass, he decided Michigan was fine.

Moulin Rouge Sunset Blvd. Hollywood 1954



*Loretta Kozak, circa 1955*



The first time I drove a car, my dad had me back it out of our narrow driveway. It was a brick home on one side, and a cement wall on the other side. We had a new Packard car, and I banged it slightly on the brick while backing it out. I was so scared that I said, "I don't want to drive." Dad said, "You stay behind that wheel and keep driving." He made me drive for almost  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour on the road. It seemed like an eternity.

I was the first employee in City Hall to receive an electric typewriter. I did the billing for Special Assessments, and many employees would stop by to see the Electric IBM typewriter. "What an invention!"





*Ken, Loretta, Bob, Steve Kozak, Loraine Simhauser*



*Loretta, Rosie, Helen, Mary, 1977*

My sisters and I talk often to each other on the phone. Several times a year we have dinner with each other. Sometimes we go shopping or help each other when one needs help. We have even vacationed together in California, Las Vegas, Traverse City, and Florida



*Mary Nowak, Helen Mikula, Rose Roberts, Loretta Kozak*

# Growing in Wisdom

- In my twenties, I realized I was a grown up lady and had a great responsibility bringing up my children in the best way I could, and seeing that my husband was cared for in a loving manner.
- In my thirties, I became a mother of three children and wanted to be the best mom ever. I tried to be active in school and home activities. At times I knew I was overprotective of my children and was overly neat. My children poked fun of my cleanliness. I always wanted my husband to look his finest when he was out socially or for business.
- In my forties I was thankful for our good life of having a wonderful family. Each of our children were very good students in school. I thanked God daily for that! Steve and I always wanted to have our children attend college, which we paid for.
- In my fifties I did many exciting things in my life for myself and others. I tried to make a good balance.
- Now that I am a grandmother I feel I have made a good accomplishment. I have been a loyal wife, brought up 3 wonderful children, and now I want to see my children be good parents, and that they can be proud of their children's accomplishments. And I hope I can see my grandchildren grow up to be loyal to their country and family.



Being a grandparents means being around when you are needed. I often say to call if any of you need something. I want my grandchildren to be happy when they see me and to say "I love my Grandma."



*Christmas 2002*

*Thanksgiving 2004*

