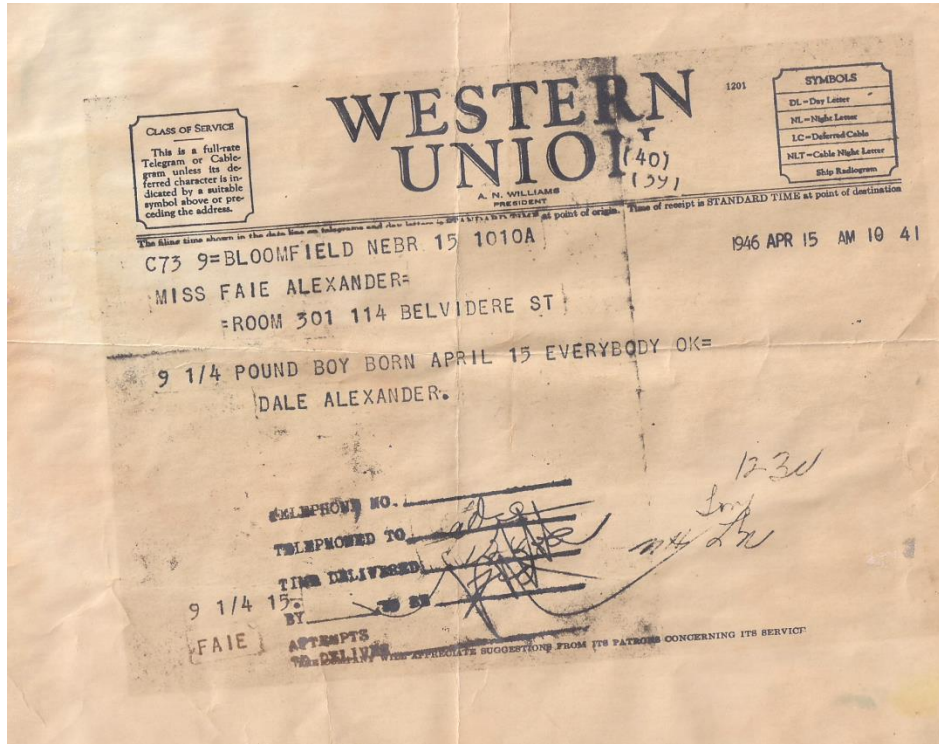


It all begins here

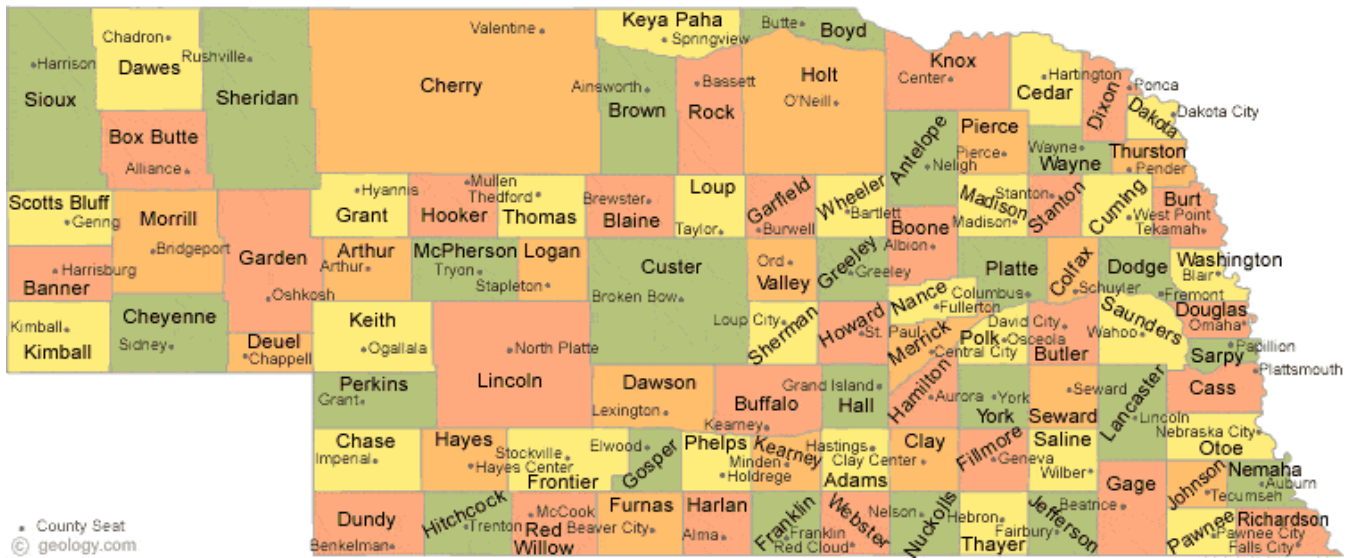


Birth announcement telegram from Dale Alexander to his sister Faie Alexander

Curtis Dale Alexander was born at 7:30 a.m. on April 15, 1946 at the home of his paternal grandparents George and Julia (Kriz) Alexander in rural Knox County, Nebraska north of Bloomfield. He weighed in at a healthy 9 lbs. 4 oz. and was 21 inches long. He was welcomed as the first child of Dale and Marjorie (Kruse) Alexander.

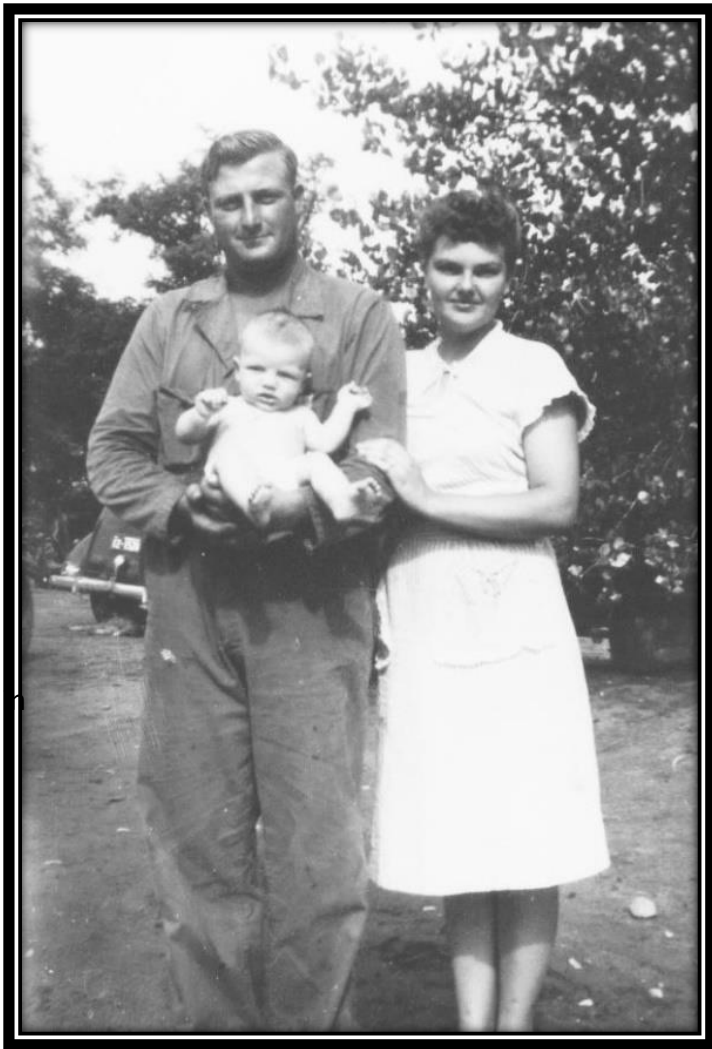


Knox County is bordered on the north by the Missouri River



A view of the George Alexander farm where Curt was born





2 months

His mother  
Marjorie wrote  
in his baby book  
that he was a  
“good baby,  
lovable and  
sweet”.



In one later entry in the baby book however, she says that his father gave him a dog, which he did not like at first. He then grew to like the dog and “him and that dog tear everything up” (there is no mention of what age he was at that point).

5 months:  
a professional  
photo





With dad



at right  
Dec 1946



Bath time

Sept 1947



another  
professional  
photo



Feeding chickens with Mom



Chickens!

Chickens!

Chickens!

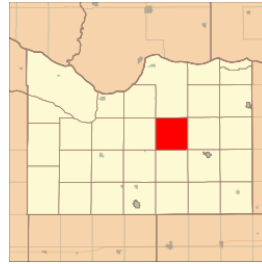


Curt was the eldest of eight children. Next in order of birth were Judy, Vicky, Gail, Richard, Patricia, and twins Lori and Lisa. Curt and Judy were born at the home of their paternal grandparents in Harrison Township of Knox County Nebraska, north of Bloomfield. Later Marjorie and Dale acquired a farm in adjacent Peoria Township, about 7 miles north of Bloomfield.

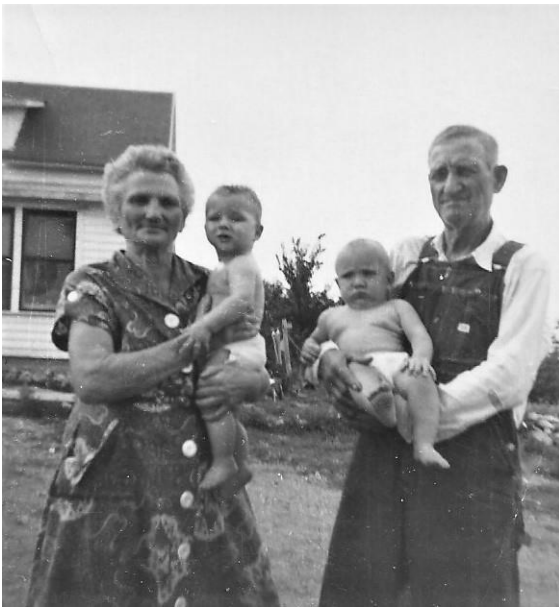
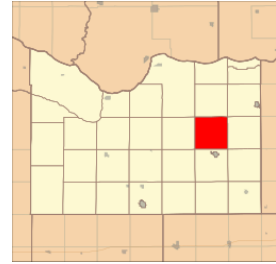
Julia and George Alexander



Harrison Township



Peoria Township



Grandma Julia holding Curt  
Grandpa George holding cousin Neal Alexander  
Neal was born about one month before Curt.



With  
Grandpa  
George



Too big for the wagon



No license to drive



Waitin' for the train



Feeding time



1948



1948

Curt gets his first little sister - Judy





On Curt's maternal side, his grandfather Paul Kruse, was present in his life but died when Curt was not quite 8 years old. His maternal grandmother left her marriage to Paul Kruse and Curt's mother stayed with her father.

Through the years, Curt's mother Marjorie did have contact with her birth mother and half siblings but Curt always stated he really never knew his maternal grandmother. There is only one known photo of Curt with his maternal grandmother Naoma (Larkin) Hanville Kruse Root Bryan (maiden + 4 married names) and that will be shown in a later chapter.

(Paul Kruse pictured right and left with Curt)



On the paternal side, there were lots of aunts and uncles but there were two aunts in particular that were closer to Curt's family. Elsie Alexander was a maiden aunt who lived nearby and was very helpful in times of need for the family. Another of Dale Alexander's sisters was Faie, who went to live in the Chicago area. This proved valuable when two of the Alexander children needed medical evaluation and treatment at hospitals there.



Aunt Elsie and Curt



Curt, Elsie, Vicky, Judy and Mom Marjorie



Dale, Elsie, Vicky, Curt, Judy



Aunt Faie and Curt at right





And there were cousins!

David Kriz, Neal & Dixie Alexander, Ruth Wilson, Curt



Curt, Judy, Dixie, Neal

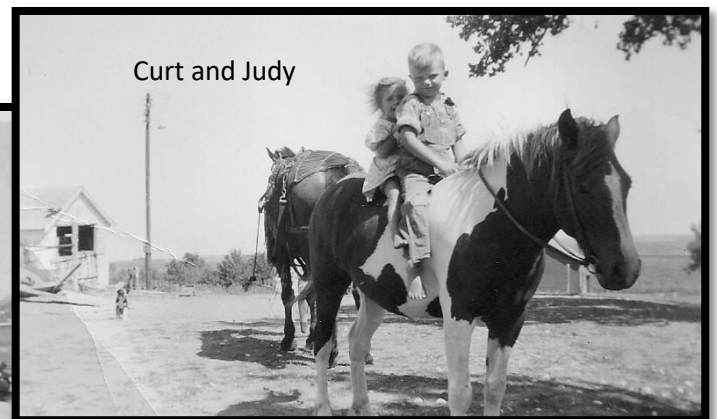


Curt, Dixie, Neal

1955 Curt and Neal – a month apart in age



The 1950's brought two more daughters into the Alexander household; Vicky in 1950 and Gail in 1953. Then along came another son, Richard, in 1957. And then there were five. I have often heard Vicky refer to them as the Fabulous Five!



The 1950's also brought years of hardship for the family. Articles culled from the Bloomfield Monitor detail part of the struggles.

Dec 10, 1953

Vicki, three-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dale Alexander, suffered third degree burns over her body Tuesday afternoon when her clothes were accidentally ignited.

She was taken to the Sacred Heart hospital in Yankton, S. D.

Dec 17, 1953

★ Vickie Alexander, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dale Alexander, who was severely burned recently, has been undergoing the grafting of skin on her neck, arm and hands at the Sacred Heart hospital in Yankton. It is expected this series of operations will take several months.

March 3, 1954

### Vicki Alexander's Folks Need Financial Help

Little Vicki Alexander, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dale Alexander, is spending endless days and weeks in the Sacred Heart hospital following an accident in which she was seriously burned last December. She suffered second degree burns on much of her body and face.

At present Vicki is able to be at home for a little at a time, and in the meanwhile is continuing

April 15, 1954

### Vicki Alexander Enters Omaha Hospital Monday

Mr. and Mrs. Dale Alexander took their daughter, Vicki, to Omaha where she went through the Clinic and entered the University hospital Monday afternoon. She will undergo further skin-grafting and possible plastic surgery to help correct the damage from the burns suffered last year.

This will be quite a lengthy procedure, but it is hoped that she will be able to come home around Christmas time.

Dec 30, 1954

★ Little Vicki Alexander, four-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dale Alexander, spent Christmas with her parents, after being a patient for so many months at University hospital in Omaha. She is expected to return to the hospital after the first of the year to undergo further surgery.



VICKI ALEXANDER

Feb 23, 1956

### Alexander Girls Enter Hospitals for Treatment

Vickie and Gayle Alexander, daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Dale Alexander, were guests of honor at a birthday and going-away party on Sunday, Feb. 12th, at the home of their parents.

A host of relatives and friends gathered to wish the little girls all the luck in the world and a speedy recovery to normal health.

The little girls and their mother left the following week for Chicago where both children entered hospitals for major surgery and medical treatment.

Vickie, who was seriously burned a few years ago, will undergo plastic surgery at the Children's Memorial hospital, and Gayle, who suffers wryneck, will be a patient at Shriner's Hospital for Crippled Children. It is expected that they will spend at least six weeks in Chicago before being able to return home.

Now, and as before, the little girls' welfare will be looked after by their uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Kaminski, while they are in the Chicago area. Anyone wishing to write the Alexander girls may do so by addressing the mail in care of the Kaminski's at Grayslake, Illinois, Route 2, Box 227-A.

Mrs. Alexander returned home on Tuesday of this week after making the Chicago trip.

We join with friends in the hope that the young ladies may find complete recovery in their latest quest for medical help.

July 7, 1955

★ Vicky Alexander, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dale Alexander, is now undergoing plastic surgery at Children's Memorial hospital in Chicago. She underwent her first of a series of five scheduled major operations on Friday of last week. Vicky, you will remember, was severely burned in a fire at the Alexander home several years ago.

Nov. 17, 1955

★ Mr. and Mrs. Dale Alexander and children and Elsie Alexander went to Sioux City Wednesday of last week where Mr. Alexander and his three-year-old daughter, Gail, took the train for Chicago. On Friday, Gail entered Shriners hospital for treatment.

March 29, 1956

★ Dale Alexander and Elsie Alexander went to Chicago on last Thursday where they visited with Vicky Alexander at the Children's Memorial hospital and with Gail Alexander at Shriners hospital. While there they were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Kaminski. Vicki underwent more major plastic surgery on her lip Friday. Gail returned home with her father and Elsie on Monday and will get to remain at home for about six months before returning to Shriners hospital for further treatment.

Nov. 21, 1957

★ Dale Alexander was taken to the Methodist Hospital in Omaha last Thursday by Mrs. Alexander where he was to have undergone a fusion operation for a slipped disc. Dale injured himself while picking corn and again when he stepped into a hole. Since being hospitalized he has contracted double pneumonia and will have to recover from that before he undergoes surgery.

Dec/ 5, 1957

### Husking Bee Monday at Dale Alexander Farm

Friends, relatives and neighbors gathered Monday afternoon at the Dale Alexander farm for a husking bee, and before the day was done they had cribbed 35 acres of corn. Mr. Alexander recently underwent a back operation and was unable to keep up with his farm work.

Lunch was prepared and served to the men by Miss Irene Busch, Miss Elsie Alexander and Mrs. George Alexander helped serve the lunch.

On hand to do the work were six corn pickers, three elevators, 15 wagons and nine tractors.

Among the men helping were Alvin Peitzmeier, Hilbert Wegner, Joe Kriz, Harold Alexander, Harold Reisz, Eddie Wenke, Rudolf Wiese, Kenenth Zimmerman, Art Meirose, Harold Lukens, Melvin Thompson, Loyd Kriz, Mike Supik, Emil Huttman, Wm. Huttman, John Ermels, Ted Dreismeier, Donald Buschkamp, Don Lauman, Dennis Buschkamp, Gordon Fehringer, Sylvester Tramp and Mr. Sladek from Ed Herzog's.

#### CARD OF THANKS

We wish to thank all our relatives, friends and neighbors for their kindness and neighborly help in getting our corn picked and cribbed; also thanks to the ladies for helping with the lunch. Your thoughtfulness in our need for help is sincerely appreciated. May you all be richly rewarded.

Mr. and Mrs.

DALE ALEXANDER.

June 26, 1958

★ Miss Elsie Alexander, accompanied by Vicki and Gayle Alexander, returned Monday from Chicago where the young ladies had undergone medical treatment the past few days, Vicki at Children's Memorial hospital and Gayle at Shriners Hospital. They were taken to Sioux City June 15th by Mr. and Mrs. Dale Alexander. They were met at the depot in Chicago by Mrs. Faie Kaminski.

These articles provide a snippet of some the family's troubles in the 1950's.

All those months in the hospital for Vicky, and the many trips to Chicago for treatments for both Vicky and Gail must have been extremely difficult for the entire family in so many ways, including financially. I am sure those two aunts were of great assistance – one on the scene locally and one in Chicago.

In the late fall of 1957, the Bloomfield Monitor detailed that Dale Alexander suffered a back injury that required a spinal fusion operation in Omaha. This would have meant he was not able to tend to farming for a good period of time. A couple years later, Dale was also absent from the farm for a period of months.

Curt did not talk a lot about this period in his life. He was quite young when his sister was burned so some of those early memories of course dimmed with time. In the succeeding years, Curt as the oldest child likely had to assume more and more responsibility. He always had a special affinity for his mother and knew that she was one tough woman!

The farm meant work. There was planting and harvesting, spraying, livestock chores, cow milking, fence fixing and all that goes into living on a farm. They raised chickens, ducks and geese and sold milk and cream from the cows. Kids were expected to help. Curt likely built up his muscles throwing hay bales.

After Curt's death, his sister Vicky wrote down some memories for us.



She said their Mom always told the story about a very young lad who liked to explore. One day Curt and "that dog" wandered out into a big pasture east of their house. It required help from neighbors to locate the two. A scolding ensued.

Curt was always out in his hooded parka, carrying his rifle; hunting rabbits that came in helpful for a family meal. He would also trap and Vicky would walk with him to check the traps for a catch.



It was not all work on the farm. The kids had time for a lot of fun too. The following was written by Vicky:

"Before there was a dam north of the house, there was a ravine and we called it the BIG HOLE. We would go there and climb up and down it. There was a stream there that we caught frogs in and played with them.

Fishing: All of us kids (Curt, Judy, Gail and Rich) would go over the hill behind the house with a tree limb as straight as we could find- or a bamboo pole - anything we could put a fishing string and hook on. The weight would be a washer or a nut with a hole in it out of Dad's tool shed. We dug up worms by the sewer area and put them in a tin can. When we ran out of bait we would catch grasshoppers or use a flower from clover to see if we could tease the fish to bite. We had a large amount of bluegills and they would bite on almost anything. There were bull heads too. Boy those stingers did hurt when you got poked! Curt sometimes would get the gun and shoot snapping turtles that would come after the bait as well."

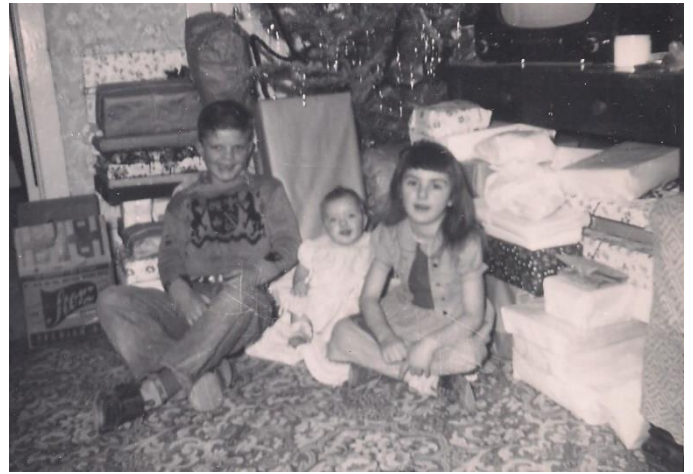
Around Fourth of July time, Curt loved throwing M-80's into the dam and making the water boil.

"During blizzards we would be snowed in for weeks. We would go out and make tunnels in the big snow banks. Of course there would be the snow forts and snowball fights. We had wonderful hills to go sledding on behind the house. The cow trails would give us an extra thud as we went down them."

If there were not enough sleds to go around, they sometimes used an old car hood. "One time it split in half going down the hill and went two different ways!" We used aluminum scoop shovels and sat with the handle between our legs, lifted our legs up, leaned back and went down the hill. We often stacked up two on a sled as we went down with one lying on top of the other. "



1951 a doll, Judy, Vicky, Dale, Marge, Curt



Christmas 1953 Curt, Gail, Judy



In California



Curt, Judy, Vicky



1955 Lake Michigan with Aunt Elsie at left, Marge, Dale, Gail, Curt. Vicky and Judy in front



1955 Marjorie, Gail, unknown, Curt and Judy - New bike



August 1956 Gail, Vicky, Judy, Curt - with Dale in right photo



Now there are five: Judy, Vicky, Curt holding Richard with Gail in front

Lake Michigan at Waukegan Pier



Dale holding Gail, Judy, Vicky and Curt posing



"Five" Curt & Judy, Vicky & Gail with Richard

Judy with a bunch of books, Marjorie, Dale, Curt, Vicky, Elsie with a box of Corn Flakes. In front are Richard and Gail



1959 Curt with his hog



Richard, Vicky, Curt, pony, Gail



Curt's Mom Marjorie in 1960 (age 35)



At left is the only picture in the albums with Curt and his sister Patricia as a baby. She was born in 1965. There are none with his twin sisters when they were infants. They were not born until 1968.

**I am going to let his sisters Vicky and Gail tell a couple little tales here (from their writings).**

***Vicky Alexander Johnson***

“Curt loved to run around the house in his underwear. Before the dining room was made into a dining room there were windows on the south side. Anyone driving up and parking outside could see through those windows. Curt saw the car lights and he tried to run to the hallway, but his feet got tangled and he ran into the table instead.

Curt and I would walk across the fields in the winter to the Herzog’s and play for the afternoon. On one of these trips he gave me my first cigarette and also told me it would be my last he did not want to ever see me smoke again.

When he was in football he thought he was tough and offered to have us hit him in his gut. Sometimes he was ready and sometimes not. He also used to tackle us girls out in the yard for his football practice.

He would take me along to basketball games so I would get out of the house. He had real neat friends and I enjoyed seeing them. In my senior year in school, Curt had a red and white ‘53 Chevy that he let me drive to school which made me feel ten feet tall. My Senior Prom he bought my corsage and loaned me his new car to go to the Prom. Well when after the meal I took the car to the fairgrounds and nearly hit one of those wooden posts, my night was over and I decided I would get his car back to him one piece so I went home.

I was cleaning his car and condoms fell out of the horn. I just put them back and kept on cleaning. My high school graduation gift from Curt was a small radio which I still have today.”

***Gail Alexander Suhr***

“Where do I start? So many things. Curt was always the big brother and he looked out for all his sisters. We all looked up to him. He always smelled nice and looked cool, with his crewcut. He loved to hunt and fish. He would shoot the jack rabbits because there was a bounty on them (50 cents). He would put them by the door and tell Mom he killed the Easter Bunny and I would cry! That is what big brothers did – teased the little ones.

He bought a motorcycle and Mom never wanted him to have it. He was showing off and tried to do a wheelie on the back tire. He lost control and hit the tractor right between the tire and the axle. He got bruised up and Mom got mad. But the next day he fixed the handle bars and was back on the road.

It was an honor to have him as my big brother. I am so proud of all he did in life.”

*(Curt always said that he and Gail were the ones who always helped with the spraying on the farm. He said they did not wear protective gear and would come in soaked with chemicals. He believed that is why he and Gail were the two siblings who first struggled with cancer.)*

Curt always groaned about growing up with SIX SISTERS! Too many females he would say. As the oldest, he helped care for some of the younger ones. He also liked to tease them but when needed, he was their defender. The youngest ones were so much younger than him that he said he never really got to know them until they were adults. Through the adult years if there was drama (and there always was), he preferred to stay away from it. Everyone married and went their own way, with several of the sisters eventually ending up in Idaho. After the 1980’s, it seemed as if the entire family was never in one place together at the same time for a picture.



These are the only two professional family portraits that were ever taken with everyone present.



Dec 1988 Lori, Vicky, Curt, Patricia, Richard, Lisa, Gail  
In front is Judy, flanked by Dale and Marjorie

In 2012, Curt, with the help of me, another sister and some subterfuge, we somehow managed to get all eight siblings together at our house in Dodge, Nebraska for an afternoon and we got a photo. It was the last time all eight siblings were in one place at one time. Curt seemed very driven to make this happen, so perhaps he had a feeling this would be the last one.

Back: Curt, Lisa, Pat, Richard Front: Gail, Vicky, Judy, Lori

