

## **A letter from Serena Trachta and Family**

Dear Grandma and Grandpa,

I wanted to thank you for all the wonderful memories we have from our times together. The majority of my recollections are from your lives in the wild west at the farm in Loving— I always wondered what drew you to the seemingly barren landscape; so unforgiving and hard. I understand that you appreciated a challenge and the grapes, peaches, pears and other fruits that you extracted from the caliche illustrate your ingenuity and conviction. I'll never lose the sense of 'Big Sky' from your house; watching the sun set over the mountains from your balcony is one of my fondest memories.

The following are a few reminiscences, fragments of nearly 40 years of my past gratefully shared in our visits together:

On skills: Long before I knew what a 'rod' was, I recall Grandpa telling me about the work he did on the Lincoln. Later, I came to appreciate that hand-filing the transmission in the middle of a desert, is no easy task. I enjoyed his stories of fixing cars and especially liked the stories about his adventures in the Mustang. I won't forget that the front end of the Mustang tended to lift off the road at high speeds, so it was very important to hold the wheel straight for touchdown!

One summer, Grandpa taught Patrick and I how to arc weld. We certainly didn't master the skill in our short trip, but it was sure fun learning. We never had any doubt that Grandpa could fix any gadget, new or old.

On wild life: They kept a shotgun and a pair of cowboy boots at the door in case there were rattlesnakes waiting. Grandpa had been bitten and had the scars to prove it. In case I was to befall such a fate and have a 9v tractor battery handy, he taught me how to neutralize the venom — don't bother sucking out the poison like in the movies...it simply won't work.

When I expressed alarm about a large tarantula that was crawling across the windowsill, Grandma casually indicated that they are more afraid of us than we are of them and anyway, with one flick of your finger all their legs fall off.

On Patrick's first visit to the farm, Grandpa told him how the scorpions that he might find in bed really aren't much more venomous than a bee sting — just the previous night Grandpa had woken to find one which when startled bit him on the face. We checked the bed very carefully that night, and during our visits over the next twenty years, and to our good fortune found no scorpions, tarantulas, rattlesnakes or other critters.

On tradition: I've never really known what was in mincemeat pie — as a vegetarian the name alone has me steering clear, but I recall that it was important to Grandma to have one at the holiday meal.

On independence: When I pressed Grandpa, at 85, as to why he was on the roof fixing the air conditioner, he confided that he didn't think dad or Mel should be getting up there as they weren't that young anymore and he didn't want them to get hurt!

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On pass-times: I remember Grandma enjoyed wild west romance novels. Sitting on the farm, looking out over the vast landscape I imagine the adventures would spring to life; vivid and real.

Grandpa would sit with me for hours and explain computers to me, well before I could contribute to the conversation but no doubt all his coaching gave me a head start in wrestling with them later. For many visits we studied Morse code and Ham radio operation together. I always had great plans of continuing once I got home, but regrettably, never did.

On adventure: One Christmas, Kendra, Vera and I were playing in the barn and ran across a rusted container with embossed lettering. As we uncovered the dust filled letters: C • Y • A • N ..., we ran screaming into the house for a long hot soak in the tub. There was no poison left in the tin, long since used by ranchers against wolves or coyotes.

On ancestry: One year Grandma and Grandpa visited us in California and as I was helping to load luggage, Grandma loudly exclaimed, "Oh No, you got my hands!" as I shut the car trunk. I panicked for obvious reasons, but she sighed and said, "Oh, you inherited my hands...they are so large, I was hoping they would pass you by." I told her I didn't mind — all the better to hug her with.

It was our great pleasure to have Will meet Grandpa and we're so sorry he missed meeting Grandma. We will make sure he knows about his great-grandparents through photos and stories. I feel privileged to have known you for so long as so many of my friends lost their grandparents when they were much younger.

I remember your devotion to each other and how you managed to take care of each other in spite of your physical circumstances. You loved each other deeply and it showed in all you did. It was obvious that there were compromises on the way and life didn't turn out quite how you planned, but you weren't ones to complain and seemed to enjoy life for the joys it brought you. As I get older, I appreciate your example more and more. When I was young I took for granted how things were made to happen, but as I get older and have managed a household and cared for elderly relatives your accomplishments impress and astound.

Visits to see you always meant lots of chocolate, new solitaire card games, talk about computers and the Permian Basin and visits to town. I remember trips to your house in Hobbs with the beautiful red couch and the ruby red glass displayed to catch the light. I remember bread making and ice cream machines; we were never short of dessert at the Trachtas! I remember Bach and how much he was loved and loved you. I remember trips to the dinner theatre in Hobbs and to the Steven's and Lucy's in Carlsbad. I remember that Grandma used to like to get dressed up for an evening in town. So many memories that make me smile.

I love this picture taken at Vera and Jamie's on Thanksgiving day, 2003. You look so happy and it was fun to have the family together again including 4 generations with Cicely, Patrick and I, Jamie and Vera, Dad and Rita, Janice and Eddie and you both.



Even though you lived in Austin recently, we will always remember you on the farm. I can picture you in the house going about your daily routine; Grandma on the peddles, Grandpa



in the house going about  
your daily routine; Grandma  
on the peddles, Grandpa  
getting lunch ready,  
Grandma walking around  
the sofa in the living room,  
Grandpa printing checks  
from his computer, perhaps  
you'd watch a show before  
going to bed early. We will  
miss you dearly and will  
cherish our memories.

All our love,

Serena, Patrick and Will

### **A Remembrance by Vera TrachtaDyson**



This year both my Grandparents died on my Father's side. It is a shock though we expected it any time, really. I miss them though I did not see them often it being difficult to get up to them with two little ones—one of whom is ninety years younger than they

This year both my Grandparents died on my Father's side. It is a shock though we expected it any time, really. I miss them though I did not see them often it being difficult to get up to them with two little ones—one of whom is ninety years younger than they were! They are such an important and significant presence in my life. I feel a part of them and their world. It was to them that I belonged—they loved me and I them. It seems impossible that my children will not know them as I did. They will not know Grandma and Grandpa's steady, gentle presence in their lives.

I lived with them for a summer when I was sixteen. I just took up in their world for a time and was a part of them and their quiet, routine lives in the desert. We played solitaire, tinkered in the shed, mowed the tiny but much desired patch of grass in the front. We ate Grandma's country meals made the way a countrywoman would make, using everything, wasting nothing. The dogs had the scraps and were happy. Grandma and I refinished furniture on the back porch; she did most of the work. They let me just play a lot. We watched the magnificent sunsets together on the upper back deck.



Grandpa taught me to drive in their Mustang. We drove up and down the country lanes with Grandma in the back—a brave and kind woman who never once made me feel I was frightening her, even when I tried my best to drive up their gravelly, sloped driveway smoothly. I remember her head flinging back as I lurched forward. She just smiled. Grandpa talked to me the whole time and let me learn by giving me experience and telling me of his. He even let me drive them up to Cloudcroft in the Lincoln.

I remember my Grandma's hands, so soft yet so strong and capable. Even as a young person I realized her hands had done a lot of work for her family. I loved that she loved to hold hands. When I did not feel well she would sit by my bed in the front bedroom and rub my stomach and talk to me in a way that made me feel safe. She smiled and said everything would be all right. She gave me James Herriot's books, which I loved as a child. I remember her home cooking, cleaning reading, brushing the dogs, looking out the window, thinking of others. But, when I think of her face all I can see is her smiling. Always. She was able to make connection with both of my children even after she was no longer able to speak like the rest of us. They love her too.



When I think of my Grandpa so many things come to mind. He always surprised me with his sense of humor. Somehow I thought he was serious, but I think of his mischievous smile. I remember how smooth his hands were and how warm. And, one summer his face was like leather from the desert sun but usually soft and pink. We made a lot of brownies that summer I lived with them. We all know his fondness for chocolate, which was certainly passed on, to all of us. Everything he did he thought about so thoroughly and he changed everything, all the rules.

One time I went to visit them on my own in my early twenties. They were sleeping downstairs by then. I was upstairs unable to sleep because of the threat of scorpions so I went downstairs and curled up on the couch. Sometime in the night I heard Grandpa get up and get a glass of water and he saw me there on the couch. I felt him cover me with a blanket; looking after me as well as Grandma.

I am afraid I was a disappointment to Grandpa for never gaining enthusiasm for computers but he never gave up trying to turn me to them—he gladly ignored my pleas to talk about something else. Poor Grandma.

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They were unlike any people I have ever known. They were not just from a different time they must have been different even in their own time. I think of them and feel they lived most of their lives without me knowing them but what I know of them I love and have taken with me in my life. Strong people who I miss and cannot quite understand that they are not here anymore. I can still hear the distinct sounds of each of their voices. Both gentle but firm. I can feel the warmth of the home they made together and shared with all of us and I miss them. And, I feel so fortunate that they were my Grandparents.

### **Remembering Mother and Dad by Gregory Trachta**

My first memory of Mother is in a grocery store in Richmond, California. She had put me in a shopping cart or a stroller and gotten a soft drink, I'm sure it was a coke, from a machine. She impressed me as beautiful and worldly although I didn't know those words at the time. She and I went places together, the Post Office where I studied the cardboard displays of the Marines at Iwo Jima, Mel's school, the grocery and sometimes to the refinery. We rode the bus across the San Francisco Bay Bridge to see Grandma and Grandpa Stasey and I learned to tell which bus would take us there but I'm not sure how I knew.

In my first memories of Dad he is sitting at the desk tapping away on his typewriter. He was often at the typewriter and I was surprised later to learn that he knew how to write by hand. When he wasn't at the desk he was busy with some project: doing some grownup thing with Mother's mixer (he used it for his alabaster sculpturing I later learned), cutting a hole in the floor for the furnace (a task of high adventure to a three year old) or painting the fence or taking pictures. He worked at someplace called the

some ground up thing with Mother's mixer (he used it for his alabaster sculpturing I later learned), cutting a hole in the floor for the furnace (a task of high adventure to a three year old) or painting the fence or taking pictures. He worked at someplace called the refinery but it just looked like a metal gate to me. He had things of interest to a young person like the wallets he passed out to his insurance clients, the typewriter which was a mysterious machine of unfathomable purpose, his peculiar smelling soldering iron, his puzzling radios and the marvelous lap drawer in his desk.

Mother and Dad weren't like other parents. That was clear from the beginning. For one thing they were young. It was gratifying to me at that early age to realize that my parents weren't old like those of my friends. My parents were full of life and fun and always doing things. They knew how to do things. Mother could run the washing machine and knew what to do about bee stings and other medical emergencies. Dad knew how to fix radios. In fact, Dad knew how to fix everything.

Machines were central to Mother and Dad's life together. They classified machines into two groups, those that worked and those that didn't. The ones that didn't were worthless as far as Mother was concerned. If the car wouldn't start she had no patience with it and banged on the steering wheel, pronouncing it a piece of junk. To Dad, machines that didn't work were either projects or spare parts. There was no such thing as a worthless machine or one that was broken beyond repair. Mother's worthless junk was Dad's raw material. He always kept a supply of miscellaneous devices and apparatus on hand, his junk pile, to be used in his projects.

Dad loved visiting junkyards. There is no greater pleasure for a boy of a certain age than to visit the junkyard with his father. To wander among the heaps of cast off automobiles and engines and machines of unknown function and bizarre configuration while watching Dad select this or that item, while listening to him comment on the use and origin of things and on what was likely wrong with them was educational recreation at its best. Dad seldom bought anything new. His shop was almost fully populated with tools either from the junkyard or headed there.

Once we went to a particularly fecund salvage yard on the south side of Carlsbad where there was a huge pile of electric motors. There were big ones and small ones, motors in mounts and by themselves, motors sealed up with refrigeration units, motors burst open and motors rusted over. The owner discussed with Dad his desire to find an inexpensive way of opening the motor cases and extracting the copper wiring which was, in the owner's estimation, the only thing valuable about the motors. He and Dad theorized about using Dad's lathe to cut the motor cases open quickly and cheaply. Dad bought a half dozen of the larger, half-horsepower units for about four dollars each. At home he explained to me that people often throw electric motors away because they believe them burned out when all that is wrong with them is a gummed up centrifugal starter switch. He applied a little kerosene to the motors and used them for the next thirty years to power his shop tools.

I once got a call from Dad's nursing service asking me to intervene because Dad was insisting that his aide bore a hole in a piece of pipe with the electric drill. He was always involving them in some construction or modification. When we cleaned out Dad's apartment, after he passed away, we found several pieces of scrap wood, a good supply of tubular metal he'd salvaged from some shower chairs and various spare parts for the wheel chair and power scooter. He had four toolboxes and a filing cabinet full of electronic and mechanical miscellanea. He was never without his raw materials and always had a project going.

Mother didn't share Dad's enthusiasm for machines. She liked people. She loved making friends and handled that duty for the family. She had friends throughout her life from every place they had lived. Many of those people corresponded with them as long as they were able. She loved the stage. She read to us when we were little, selecting a book and delivering it to us in half-hour, dramatic chunks. She and Dad organized plays among the local farmers when they lived in Missouri. They would perform them at the various rural schools around the area. Dad sometimes played his trombone. His rapport with machines extended to musical instruments. He tried to teach himself to play the piano when he lived on the farm in Missouri but he said his fingers had learned the natural rhythm of milking cows and couldn't be retrained.

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natural rhythm of milking cows and couldn't be retrained.

Exactly why Mom and Dad moved to a farm in Missouri is not clear. It was a question young people don't think to ask because they don't recognize it as a question. It was a great adventure for my brother and I and later our sister. We were aware of the difficulties and lack of finances but these seemed inconsequential. We had a house and food and clothes. We went to school and, after the first year or two, listened to the radio just like everyone else. None of our neighbors had plumbing or electricity or money. We didn't miss them at the time but as an adult I can only guess how terrifying the experience must have been for Mom and Dad. If so they didn't communicate it. I have always been grateful to them for making those sacrifices and enduring those hardships. Other ways would have been easier for them but the experience of living on the farm was irreplaceable and its absence unthinkable.

Mom and Dad virtually took over the local school board and directed the hiring, and firing of teachers and the procurement of school supplies. They worked with the other residents to get electricity and road improvements to the neighborhood. They found and supported a church and Dad drove us over the dirt, sometimes mud, roads to get there on most Sundays. They made a home out of almost nothing. To go back to the area today and feel the poverty moaning from the little-changed landscape is to appreciate more fully how great an effort they made.

Eventually they finished so many improvements to the house that I began feeling strangely embarrassed when my friends stopped, as if they would think I was putting on airs. Then we moved. It was a pattern repeated several times by my parents: buy a fixer-upper, fix it up and move. When they began repairing the burned out house in Loving, New Mexico Mother hung a picture of a derelict home on the back porch. "I can shake my fist at that one," she said, "and say, 'I don't have to fix you up.'" But it was a long time before they moved out of the house in Loving.

Dad's mind worked thoroughly and exasperatingly slow. His thoughts were intricate and opaque, needing several attempts to communicate them like a car taking successive runs at a steep hill. He loved to play bridge. His opponents and partners would sometimes wonder if he'd fallen asleep. Sometimes he had. He was usually at a loss to know how to go about explaining something because he couldn't fathom how to get his holistic, broad and deep understanding pressed down into a linear string of words. He once gave me instructions on how to start his old pickup truck. I was going to take the garbage over to the dump. He scrawled several steps out on a piece of scrap paper, which I have saved as a relic. The instructions began, "Find an empty tin can and a crescent wrench." At first I tried ignoring them and cranking the engine. Eventually I went back to his first step and followed the instructions through. Only then did the engine start. His intricacy and opacity defined his personality but they were a vessel for a life of amazing sweetness and courage and humility and strength.

Mother and Dad shared many traits but the most obvious was their determination and utter refusal to give up. In the sixty-three years I knew them I never saw either of them yield even an inch to defeat. All obstacles were temporary. Everything could be made to turn out all right. If their work came to nothing they did it again. If one thing didn't work then something else would. If they ever became discouraged they didn't speak of it. There was never a point in their long lives when they just threw up their hands and let misfortune rain down on them. Dad confided to me, shortly before he left us, that his desire in life was to know the answers to a few simple questions about the purpose and origin of life. He said he had the same questions at that moment that he'd had when he was a little boy. But he wasn't discouraged by his lack of success. He was still wrestling with those questions when he passed away.

Mother once told me she was happy everywhere she had lived. Wherever her family was, that's where she felt at home and where she wanted to be. They were both very proud of family, their children and grandchildren and great grandchildren. Dad loved taking a count and including all descendants and step children and expected children and marveling at how the group had spread itself out.

Even up to the end it seemed like they might just keep on going forever. Mother fought every day to prevail against her steadily deteriorating physical condition. Dad, battling his own health problems, devoted himself without stint or thought, to her care.

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fought every day to prevail against her steadily deteriorating physical condition. Dad, battling his own health problems, devoted himself without stint or thought, to her care. They became his project. He engineered their health care and tuned their medications. He tolerated his doctors, to a point, and then found others. It was pretty scary for his children but it's hard to argue with a ninety year old man about longevity. They just kept going. And, then quite suddenly they were gone. It seemed unbelievable. No more gentle humor and self-deprecating comments about her handicap. No more theories on the origin of the universe and the high-energy particle that blasted the moon out of the earth and made the oceans. No more lectures beginning with the Precambrian age. No more confident affirmations of knowledge surprisingly and mysteriously attained. And yet, it is impossible to mourn without feeling their presence, and yielding to the patient expectation that we will get on with things, do what needs to be done, never stop.

## **Remembering Wanda Trachta**

Greg Trachta

Memorial Service

The Court at Round Rock

June 29, 2005

The name of Mother's great-grandfather appears in some of the histories of Northern Missouri. Most references are unflattering but one, by a colleague of his, presents the gentleman, as his friends undoubtedly knew him. He is described as having been a "resolute" man. It is an adjective even his detractors could have used. Everyone recognized him as a determined and purposeful individual. Resolve seems to have been a family trait.

Mother believed, and taught her children by example, that going where one needed to go and doing what needed to be done took precedence over most everything else. She didn't believe in doing a lot of second-guessing and complaining about it along the way, either. She tried desperately not to be surprised by things and succeeded surprisingly well in a world that sometimes must have seemed one long surprise. She believed in knowing herself and presenting that self to the world without artifice or pretense. She knew what she was good at and what she was not. She believed a person could do whatever they wanted if they applied themselves properly. She believed a person should be what they were and if they didn't know what that was she was happy to tell them.

She loved people. She loved being with people, talking, working, playing being part of the great sea of humanity. She liked being noticed and did things noteworthy. Before her eyesight failed she was an accomplished amateur sketch artist and drew her own greeting cards and made illustrations for purpose and pleasure. She reveled in amateur theatre and dealt with dramatic and comedic roles both on the stage and behind the scenes. There are people in Carlsbad, New Mexico, to this day who speak of her 1962 performance in "The Little Foxes" in enthralled tones, calling it the best reading of the part they've ever witnessed. She belonged to numerous clubs and gave her time and abilities to any enterprise she believed needed help. Most of her time and energy went to her family. Whatever she did she made her mark. People loved her for what she did and who she was.

She taught her children how to judge people by their actions, not by their names or nationalities or any other external marker. She repeated to us time and again, that people were people and there are good ones and bad ones mixed into every group we would ever encounter. She held no truck with knowing people by categories or classes or color or geographic border. She wanted to know the person, not the group.

There were things she didn't do. She freely admitted to anyone that she didn't swim, she didn't play most sports, she said she had no sense of direction or balance, and she didn't play music, she said she had no ear for it. She sometimes wistfully allowed that she wished she had these talents but she spent no time worrying about it or burdening other people with these and other areas where her abilities didn't meet her standards. She



she didn't play music, she said she had no ear for it. She sometimes wistfully allowed that she wished she had these talents but she spent no time worrying about it or burdening other people with these and other areas where her abilities didn't meet her standards. She concentrated on what she could do. She concentrated on being herself.

Life did not cooperate in helping her talents to shine. Her health gradually robbed her of most of the faculties she used for the things she did best. Her eyesight failed and the sketching went, as did her driving. Eventually even her speech and the ability to use her arms and legs slipped almost entirely away. This woman whose life seemed defined by her desire to communicate was almost entirely shut in on herself. And yet, she was the same person. Fighting her handicap and struggling to get her words out she would sometimes look at a picture of herself as a young woman and say, "I feel the same as I did then." And she was the same: young in mind and spirit.

She just kept going. She would double up the fist of her good hand and shake it in the air. "It's hard. It's so hard," she would say. "But I'm going to do it." And she did. Nothing could stop her. She still knew, beyond question, she could do and be anything she wanted.

It was a family trait. It is who she was. Ruby Wanda Stasey Trachta was a resolute woman.

## Wanda Trachta

April 3, 1916-June 27, 2005

Wanda Trachta, 89, the wife of Joe Trachta, passed away on June 27, 2005 in her home in Round Rock, Texas. Mrs. Trachta was born Ruby Wanda Stasey in Cherry Box, Missouri, on April 3, 1916 to Thomas and Mamie Stasey. She graduated from high school in Rawlins, Wyoming where she met Mr. Joe Trachta. The two were married on March 18, 1939. During the early years of their marriage they lived in Richmond, California, where their two sons were born, and on a farm near Macon, Missouri, where their daughter was born. In the winter of 1953-1954 they moved to Rangely, Colorado.

March 18, 1939. During the early years of their marriage they lived in Richmond, California, where their two sons were born, and on a farm near Macon, Missouri, where their daughter was born. In the winter of 1953-1954 they moved to Rangeley, Colorado, and in 1955 to Carlsbad, New Mexico and later to Hobbs, New Mexico and Odessa Texas before returning to the Carlsbad area. They made and enjoyed lifelong friendships in each place.

She and Joe retired to a farm near Loving, NM in the mid 1970's, where they resided until moving to the Austin, Texas area in 2003.

While living in Carlsbad, New Mexico, Mrs. Trachta was active in the First Methodist Church, the League of Women Voters, the Carlsbad Woman's Club and the Toastmistress Club of Carlsbad. She was also centrally involved in the Carlsbad Little Theatre and participated in several productions over the years as actress, director and in other support roles. While living near Loving, NM she was a member of the Loving Methodist Church.

Mrs. Trachta's remains are to be cremated and committed to the family plot in the Carlsbad Cemetery, Carlsbad, New Mexico. A memorial service will be held Wednesday, June 29, 2005 at 2:00 PM at the Court of Round Rock, 2700 Sunrise Road, Round Rock, Texas.

Mrs. Trachta is survived by Joe Trachta, her husband of 66 years, three children, seven grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, two step-grandchildren and four step-great-grandchildren. Her children and their spouses are Melton Trachta and wife, Lesta; Gregory Trachta and wife, Dr. Rita Schindeler-Trachta; and Janice DeRoulet and husband, Eddie. Her grandchildren and their spouses are as follows: Kendra Trachta and her husband, Mac Magruder; Tracey Trachta-Ferstl and her husband, Chris Ferstl; John Joseph Trachta and his wife, Yvonne; Serena Trachta and her husband, Patrick Sheaffer; Vera TrachtaDyson and her husband, Jamie Dyson; Paul Little and his wife, Leah; and Rebecca Little. Her great-grandchildren are as follows: Adair and Arden, daughters of Kendra and Mac; Parker and Carson, sons of Tracey and Chris; Will, son of Serena and Patrick; and Cicely and Clovis, children of Vera and Jamie. Other surviving family members include Marissa and Alexandra, the daughters of John Joseph's wife Yvonne; Cade Rensmeyer, the son of Melton Trachta's wife, Lesta; Ryan and Kira the children of Cade and his wife Ruth; Jeremy Shamblee, the son of Gregory's wife, Rita, and Jeremy's wife, Kim.

## Joseph Ellis Trachta

April 19, 1915-November 6, 2005

Long-time Carlsbad area resident Joe Trachta passed away on November 6, 2005 in the Seton Northwest Hospital in Austin, Texas. Mr. Trachta was born in Meeker Colorado, on April 19, 1915, the second born, and last surviving of Joseph Sr. and Glenn Trachta's four children. He graduated from the Oilmont, Montana High School in 1934 and earned a bachelor's degree in Chemistry from the University of Montana in 1938. He was hired as a chemist by Standard Oil Company in Rawlins, Wyoming, where he met Wanda Stasey who worked at the local post office. The two were married on March 18, 1939. Mr. Trachta was transferred by Standard Oil to Richmond, California, in 1939 and they resided there during the early years of their marriage. In addition to his employment as a chemist Mr. Trachta operated an electronics repair business, sold life insurance, created and sold alabaster statuary and volunteered with the San Francisco Opera where he appeared in some productions. He and Wanda had two sons while living in California.

Mr. and Mrs. Trachta moved their family to Missouri in 1946 and took up farming in Macon County where their daughter was born. Mr. Trachta used his knowledge and natural talent in electronics and mechanics to create his own farm machinery. He and Mrs. Trachta were active in the local school district and both of them were on the school

natural talent in electronics and mechanics to create his own farm machinery. He and Mrs. Trachta were active in the local school district and both of them were on the school board and served as president multiple terms. In the winter of 1953-1954 they moved to Rangeley, Colorado, where Mr. Trachta was again employed by Standard Oil. In 1955 Mr. Trachta moved to Carlsbad, New Mexico, where he was employed as a chemist by International Minerals and Chemical Corporation. Again he applied his training and talent in electronics and physics to become the instrument engineer for their Carlsbad Potash refinery. In 1961 he was certified by the state of New Mexico as a professional engineer. He was employed by and consulted with other refining operations, moving to Hobbs, New Mexico in 1965 and back to Carlsbad in 1971. In 1974 he moved to Odessa, Texas and worked as a structures engineer for a company that designed and fabricated offshore oil production equipment. In 1978 he retired and they returned to the Carlsbad area, residing on a small farm near Loving, New Mexico. They remained there until moving to the Austin, Texas area in 2003. Joe and Wanda made and enjoyed lifelong friendships in each place they lived including three retirement homes in the Austin area.

While living in Carlsbad Mr. Trachta belonged to the Carlsbad Jewish Congregation and participated in activities of the First Methodist Church with Mrs. Trachta. He was also a member of the Carlsbad Toastmasters and was centrally involved in the Carlsbad Little Theatre. He participated in several stage productions over the years in both acting and behind-the-scenes roles. During their retirement years he and Wanda were members of the Loving Methodist Church. Mr. Trachta was also a member of the Bay Cities Masonic Lodge in Richmond, California, as well as a member of the Order of Eastern Star.

Mr. Trachta was a man of wide ranging interests and unbounded curiosity that led him into legion endeavors. He was a self-taught musician, playing the slide trombone in the University of Montana marching band while still in High School. He read, transposed and transcribed music and taught himself the art of piano tuning. He loved restoring machinery of all types including radios, automobiles, machine-shop tools, farm implements and, once, a grand piano, displayed in a Carlsbad music museum until it burned sometime in the 60's. He was an amateur radio operator, learning Morse code after his retirement, and built computers and wrote software, built and operated a machine shop, dabbled in photography with his own dark room and picture enlargement apparatus and loved creating gadgets and contraptions for any purpose. He developed a broad knowledge of and conceived theories in cosmology, geology, theology and archeology and brought these to bear on his first question: the meaning of life. His conversation was often sprinkled with extemporaneous lectures on these subjects.

Wanda suffered a debilitating stroke in late 1996 and during his last nine years Mr. Trachta was her primary care giver, devoting his time and creative talents to making her safe, comfortable and as active as possible. She preceded him in death on June 27, 2005 at their home in Round Rock, Texas, after sixty-six years of marriage.

Mr. Trachta's remains are to be cremated and committed to the family plot in the Carlsbad Cemetery, Carlsbad, New Mexico on December 3, 2005. A memorial honoring Mr. Trachta and his wife will be held in San Antonio, Texas, on January 7, 2006.

Mr. Trachta is survived by three children, seven grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, two step-grandchildren and four step-great-grandchildren. His children and their spouses are: Melton Trachta and wife, Lesta; Gregory Trachta and wife, Dr. Rita Schindeler-Trachta; and Janice DeRoulet and husband, Eddie. His grandchildren and their spouses are as follows: Kendra Trachta and her husband, Mac Magruder; Tracey Trachta-Ferstl and her husband, Chris Ferstl; John Joseph Trachta and his wife, Yvonne; Serena Trachta and her husband, Patrick Sheaffer; Vera TrachtaDyson and her husband, Jamie Dyson; Paul Little and his wife, Leah; and Rebecca Little and her fiancé, Victor Hunt. His great-grandchildren are as follows: Adair and Arden, daughters of Kendra and Mac; Parker and Carson, sons of Tracey and Chris; Will, son of Serena and Patrick; and Cicely and Clovis, children of Vera and Jamie. Other surviving family members include Marissa and Alexandra, the daughters of John Joseph's wife Yvonne; Cade Rensmeyer, the son of Melton Trachta's wife, Lesta; Ryan and Kira the children of Cade and his wife Ruth; Jeremy Shamblee, the son of Gregory's wife, Rita, and Jeremy's wife, Kim.

## **The World of Joe and Wanda**

### **1915 to 1955**

#### **International Affairs**

\* May 7, 1915. The British steamship Lusitania is sunk without warning off the coast of Ireland by a German submarine. 1,198 drowned, including 114 Americans. American indignation over the sinking led to U.S. entry into WWI against Germany in 1917.

\* 1916. First U.S. troops are sent to Europe because of the escalating conflict that was to be known as the Great War (WWI). Troops did not officially participate in battle until after the United States declared war in 1917.

\* 1916. Jones Act restates U.S. intention to grant independence to the Philippine Islands once a stable government is formed.

\* April 4, 1917. President Wilson calls a special session of Congress to declare war on Germany. The Senate votes 82-6 and the House votes 373-50 in favor of war.

\* 1917. Brazil declares war on Germany.

\* 1917. The Russian Revolution is successful in overthrowing the Czar and instituting a Communist state.

\* 1918. Canadian women are granted the right to vote.

\* 1918. World War I ends on November 11th.

\* July 10, 1919. The Treaty of Versailles, including the League of Nations covenant, is sent to the United States for ratification. Congress rejects the treaty and the U.S. never joins the League of Nations.

\* August 25, 1921. A peace treaty is signed with Germany in Berlin, nearly three years after World War I fighting ends.

\* 1922. Gandhi is arrested in India for civil disobedience and is imprisoned for six years.

\* January 10, 1923. U.S. occupation troops in Germany are ordered home.

\* 1924. The Dawes Plan, a program to reorganize German debt payments and stabilize the German currency, is introduced.

\* 1927. U.S. Marines land in Nicaragua to protect U.S. lives and property during the civil war there.

\* 1928. U.S. signs Briand-Kellogg Pact, outlawing war.

\* 1929. U.S. warships arrive in Shanghai, China to protect U.S. lives and property from war.

\* 1929. Collapse of stock market in the U.S. causes a world wide depression.

\* 1932. Antonio Salazar becomes Premier of Portugal and rules as a dictator for 36 years.

\* 1933. During this year in Germany: President Hindenburg appoints Adolph Hitler Chancellor of Germany; the Nazis burn the Reichstag and accuse the Communists of doing it; the democratic Weimar Republic falls; the government outlaws all parties other than the National Socialists (Nazis); Adolph Hitler rises to power, ousting the President and establishing himself as Führer and supreme ruler.

\* 1933. Stalin begins the great purge of the Communist party in the USSR. He arrests, imprisons and executes many old Bolsheviks. The purges continue until 1939.

\* 1936. Germany invades the Rhineland, which it had lost to France in WWI.

\* 1936. Italy annexes Ethiopia.

\* 1936. The Spanish Civil War is fought. Many Americans volunteer, including novelist Ernest Hemingway.

\* 1936. The Spanish Civil War is fought. Many Americans volunteer, including novelist Ernest Hemingway.

\* 1938. President Roosevelt sends private memoranda to Britain, France, Germany and Czechoslovakia recommending arbitration of the Sudetenland crisis. This set the stage for the Munich Pact (Sept. 29). Neville Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, declares "peace in our time" after Hitler agrees to sign the non-aggression pact.

\* August 23, 1939. Nazi - Soviet Non-aggression Pact signed, including the Secret Additional Protocol regarding the division of Poland between Germany and the USSR.

\* September 1, 1939. Germany invades Poland.

\* September 3, 1939. Great Britain and France declare war on Germany. The U.S. and Belgium declare neutrality, as World War II begins in Europe.

\* May 10, 1940. Winston Churchill becomes Prime Minister of Britain after the resignation of Neville Chamberlain.

\* September 27, 1940. Germany, Japan and Italy sign the Axis, or Tripartite, Pact.

\* 1940. Germany occupies Norway, Denmark, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands and France. The Battle of Britain begins.

#### International Affairs

\* May 27, 1941. Unlimited National Emergency declared in the U.S. after Germany invades Yugoslavia, Greece and Crete.

\* June 22, 1941. Germany invades the Soviet Union.

\* December 7, 1941. Japan attacks Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The U.S. officially enters World War II.

\* 1942. Battles rage in the Pacific Ocean.

\* November 7, 1942. U.S. forces land in North Africa.

\* July 19, 1943. Rome is bombed by the Allies. It had previously been spared because of its religious significance.

\* September 3, 1943. Italy is invaded by the Allies. On September 9, Italy surrenders but German forces in the country continue to fight.

\* June 6, 1944. D-Day. The invasion of Normandy by the Allies.

\* August 25, 1944. Paris is liberated.

\* December 16, 1944. Battle of the Bulge, the last major German offensive of WWII.

\* May 7, 1945. Germany surrenders to the Allies.

\* August 6 1945. Hiroshima, Japan is destroyed by the first atomic bomb used in a war.

\* August 14, 1945. Japan surrenders.

\* 1946. The International Tribunal at Nuremberg convicts 22 Nazi leaders of war crimes. Goering commits suicide before his scheduled execution.

\* June 5, 1947. The Marshall Plan, which outlines U.S. involvement in the reconstruction of Europe, is introduced.

\* 1947. The Truman Doctrine establishes the U.S. policy of providing aid to any government resisting Communism.

\* 1948. Gandhi is fatally shot by a Hindu fanatic in New Delhi.

\* June 1948. The Berlin Airlift begins and lasts until May 1949. The airlift was a humanitarian effort of the United States, Britain and France to preserve the non-Soviet held portions of the city of Berlin, which had been isolated from all access to trade, including the importation of food and necessary goods.

\* October 10, 1949. Communists establish the People's Republic of China.

\* October 24, 1949. United Nations headquarters are dedicated in New York City.

\* 1949. The United States and West European countries establish the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for collective security.

\* June 27, 1950. Truman orders troops to South Korea to participate in a UN force that will help repel North Korean troops from the country, the beginning of U.S. involvement in the Korean War.

\* The Korean War ends in 1953, after lasting three years. U.S. casualties totaled 137,051; 25,604 of those resulted in death. 7,955 soldiers remained missing after the war.

\* May 7, 1954. French forces withdraw from Vietnam. The country becomes partitioned into northern and southern states.

\* 1955. Foreign aid to South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos is begun by the United States.

\* Feb. 26, 1955. U.S. stockpile of atomic bombs reaches 4,000. The U.S.S.R is

\* 1955. Foreign aid to South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos is begun by the United States.

\* Feb. 26, 1955. U.S. stockpile of atomic bombs reaches 4,000. The U.S.S.R is estimated to have 1,000.

## **U.S. Politics & Government**

\* 1916. Woodrow Wilson is reelected President by a narrow margin over Charles Evans Hughes.

\* April 2, 1916. Jeannette Rankin, a Republican from Montana, is the first woman to be elected to the House of Representatives.

\* 1916. Louis Brandeis is appointed to the Supreme Court, the first Jewish person to reach that position.

\* January 16, 1919. The 18th Amendment is ratified, forbidding the manufacture, sale, import or export of liquor in the United States, and beginning the period known as "Prohibition."

\* 1920. The 19th Amendment is ratified, giving women the right to vote.

\* 1921. Warren G. Harding is inaugurated as President.

\* October 3, 1922. The first female United States Senator, Mrs. W. H. Felton of Georgia, is appointed by the Governor after the seat is vacated mid-term.

\* August 3, 1923. At 2:30 in the morning, while visiting in Vermont, Vice President Calvin Coolidge receives word that he has become President, following the death of Harding.

\* November, 4, 1924. Coolidge is reelected.

\* The first woman Governor of a U.S. state, Nellie Tayloe Ross of Wyoming, is elected.

\* 1926. Congress creates the Army Air Corps.

\* 1928. Radio plays a role in the Presidential election for the first time. Herbert Hoover defeats Alfred E. Smith.

\* 1929. Public Origins Plan goes into effect. U.S. consuls are told to turn away any immigrant who might become a "public charge."

\* September, 1931. A bank panic spreads across the nation. Over 800 banks shut down in September and October.

\* 1932. Unemployment reaches 13,000,000 in 1932. Two and a half years after the 1929 stock market crash the U.S. economy operates at less than half its pre-crash volume.

\* November 8, 1932. Franklin D. Roosevelt is elected President in a landslide.

\* 1933. Frances Perkins becomes Secretary of Labor, the first woman cabinet member in U.S. history.

\* 1933. The new FDR administration demands, and receives, unprecedented power in an attempt to control an economy that has spiraled out of control. The new program, known as the New Deal, restructures the monetary system and creates an array of federal agencies to regulate private industry and find jobs for millions on government-sponsored projects.

\* 1933. The New Deal agencies that are created this year include the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA). The CCC is established to create more jobs by employing people to take part in a national reforestation campaign. The AAA restricts the production of crops and pays farmers a bounty for their unused land.

\* March 12, 1933. President Roosevelt's first Fireside Chat is broadcast on radio. These chats are an attempt to calm people during the tumultuous years of the Depression.

\* December 5, 1933. The 21st Amendment to the Constitution repeals prohibition, allowing the manufacture and sale of liquor in the United States once more.

\* 1935. The Social Security Act is passed.

\* 1936. Part of Roosevelt's New Deal policies, the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA), is deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

\* 1938. Wheeler-Lea amendments to the Federal Trade Commission Act granted the FCC added power to curb false advertising.

\* May 26, 1938. The House Committee to Investigate un-American Activities (HUAC) is created.

\* November 5, 1940. FDR is elected to an unprecedented third term.

\* 1942. Sugar, gasoline, and coffee are rationed.

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- \* November 5, 1940. FDR is elected to an unprecedented third term.
- \* 1942. Sugar, gasoline, and coffee are rationed.
- \* 1942. Sales of new cars and trucks are banned.
- \* 1943. Meat, fat, and cheese are rationed. Shoes are rationed to three pairs per person per year. Canned goods are rationed.
- \* April 7, 1943. Essential workers are frozen in their jobs by the federal government.
- \* 1943. Salvage drives produce 255,513 tons of tin cans, 43,919 tons of fat, 6 million tons of waste paper and more than 26 million tons of iron and steel scrap collected for use in essential industries.
- \* May 3, 1944. Meat rationing ends
- \* June 22, 1944. Servicemen's Readjustment Act, known as the GI Bill of Rights, is passed.
- \* January 15, 1945. A nationwide dim-out is ordered to conserve fuel.
- \* April 12, 1945. President Roosevelt dies of a cerebral hemorrhage in Warm Springs, Georgia, at the age of 63. Vice President Harry Truman becomes President.
- \* April 30, 1945. Sugar rations are cut by 25% as reserves near empty.
- \* 1947. A housing crisis becomes a major national concern in the United States.
- \* November 2, 1948. Harry Truman is reelected President.
- \* 1948. The term "Cold War" becomes widely used to describe the U.S. relationship with the U.S.S.R.
- \* 1951. Price controls are introduced to curb high inflation.
- \* March 2, 1952. The Supreme Court rules that "subversives" can be barred from teaching in public schools.
- \* 1953. Dwight D. Eisenhower is inaugurated as President.
- \* 1953. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg are executed for espionage.
- \* January 2, 1953. Republican Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin is investigated by the Senate Privileges and Elections subcommittee, which finds his political activities to be motivated by self-interest. Sen. McCarthy led the congressional investigation of hundreds of accused dissidents. These investigations centered around the perceived threat of communist infiltration into United States society.
- \* May 17, 1954. In the case of Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas the Supreme Court rules racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional.

### **Companies, Inventions, Discoveries & Technology**

- \* 1915. The Victor Talking Machine Co. introduces a phonograph, the Victorola. By 1919, Americans spent more on phonographs and recordings than on musical instruments, books, periodicals and sporting goods.
- \* January 25, 1915. First transcontinental phone call is made.
- \* July 27, 1915. Direct wireless service between the U.S. and Japan is established.
- \* October 21, 1915. The first transatlantic radio-telephone communication is made between Virginia and the Eiffel Tower in Paris.
- \* December 10, 1915. The One-Millionth Model T is produced by Ford.
- \* 1916. Electric clocks are introduced.
- \* 1916. The average price of a new car is \$600. A Model T costs \$360. There are over 3.5 million cars on the road.
- \* May 15, 1918. First airmail flights are started between New York City and Washington, DC.
- \* 1919. The Radio Corporation of American (RCA) is established.
- \* 1920. KDKA, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is the first commercial radio station. Its first broadcast is the presidential election results.
- \* October 5, 1921. First radio coverage of the Major League Baseball's World Series.
- \* August 28, 1922. First radio commercial is broadcast over WEAJ in New York City.
- \* 1922. Philo T. Farnsworth, a 15 year old Idaho schoolboy, designs an image dissector system that is later used to help develop TV.
- \* 1922. First portable radio and first car radio are manufactured.
- \* 1922. Herbert Kalmus makes first successful use of the Technicolor process, which began to be widely used to create color films after WWII.

- \* 1922. First portable and first car radio are manufactured.
- \* 1922. Herbert Kalmus makes first successful use of the Technicolor process, which began to be widely used to create color films after WWII.
- \* December 6, 1923. First radio broadcast of a Presidential address.
- \* 1923. There are 15 million cars registered in the United States. One out of four families either bought or sold a car during the year.
- \* 1924. Over 2.4 million radios are in American homes.
- \* January 7, 1927. Commercial transatlantic telephone service is opened between New York City and London by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T).
- \* April 7, 1927. First successful demonstration of television takes place in New York City. Televisions were not for sale to the general public until after WWII.
- \* July 30, 1928. First color motion picture is exhibited by George Eastman.
- \* By 1929, radio accounts for \$10.5 million in advertising in the U.S. It was the most rapidly growing medium in the 1920s.
- \* 1929. The first flight to the South Pole.
- \* 1929. Three quarters of inter-city travelers moved by automobile.
- \* 1929. Advertising expenditures, only \$2,282,000,000 in 1919, rose to \$3,426,000,000 in 1929.
- \* 1930. There is one automobile for every 4.9 Americans.

#### Humanities and The Arts, Entertainment & Sports

- \* 1932. The first Polaroid glass is devised by Edwin H. Land.
- \* 1934. Nylon is first produced by a chemist in DuPont Labs.
- \* 1934. Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad buys a diesel powered passenger train, the Burlington Zephyr, which sets a speed record for the trip from Denver to Chicago. Lines begin to adopt diesel powered locomotives because of their speed, relatively low noise levels and cleanliness compared to steam engines, which virtually disappear by 1960.
- \* 1936. The perfusion pump, the first artificial heart, is invented by scientists at Rockefeller University in New York.
- \* 1936. The National Guard prepares to assault strikers at the General Motors (GM) plant in Flint, Michigan. At the last minute Walter Knudsen, head of GM, agrees to recognize the United Auto Workers union.
- \* May 6, 1937. First coast to coast radio broadcast is a report of the Hindenburg disaster. The Hindenburg, a transatlantic lighter-than-air floating passenger ship, crashed and exploded upon landing in New Jersey.
- \* 1940. Rh factor in human blood is discovered.
- \* June 28, 1939. The first regular transatlantic passenger air service begins when Pan American Airways (PanAm) flies 22 passengers from Long Island to Lisbon, Portugal. The trip lasts 23 hours, 52 minutes.
- \* October 25, 1939. Nylon stockings are first sold in the United States.
- \* 1940. Radios are in 30 million American homes.
- \* During WWII Lucky Strike cigarette ads change their theme to "Lucky Strike Green has gone to War" and change their packages from green to white ink in an effort to "save green ink" for the war cause.
- \* 1941. Penicillin is mass produced.
- \* April 11, 1941. Ford signs its first contract with a labor union.
- \* June 27, 1945. Commercial television comes closer to reality when the FCC allocates 13 channels for the new medium.
- \* June 17, 1947. The first globe circumnavigating passenger airliner is inaugurated by Pan Am. The fare to travel around the world was \$1700.
- \* October 11, 1950. A license to begin color TV broadcasts is issued by the FCC to Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) causing a controversy when RCA claims that they had developed a superior color broadcasting device.
- \* In 1950, 9% of homes own TV sets. By 1979, 98% of U.S. homes had a television.

#### Companies, Inventions, Discoveries & Technology

- \* June 25, 1951. CBS presents the first commercial color TV broadcast. It lasts for four hours. There were no color TV sets owned by the public at this time, so only CBS executives and engineers viewed the accomplishment. By 1954 1% of televisions owned in the U.S. were color, a decade later the proportion had increased to 3.1%. By the early



hours. There are no color TV sets owned by the public at this time, so only CBS executives and engineers viewed the accomplishment. By 1954 1% of televisions owned in the U.S. were color, a decade later the proportion had increased to 3.1%. By the early 1980s, over 90% of televisions sold were color.

- \* September 4, 1951. The first transcontinental television broadcast is presented.

- \* November 10, 1951. The first transcontinental direct dial telephone service is introduced in New Jersey.

- \* April 12, 1955. The Salk vaccine against polio is introduced.

- \* 1955 sees dramatic increases in the sales of home appliances, new homes, and televisions. By 1954 54% of American homes had television sets.

## **Humanities and The Arts, Entertainment & Sports**

- \* 1916. Norman Rockwell begins to create cover illustrations for The Saturday Evening Post. He continues until 1963.

- \* 1918. Willa Cather writes My Antonia.

- \* 1919. Ten Days that Shook the World, by John Reed, a firsthand account of the Russian Revolution, is published.

- \* 1920. F. Scott Fitzgerald writes This Side of Paradise.

- \* 1920. Joseph "King" Oliver establishes a jazz band in Chicago and invites Louis Armstrong to join.

- \* 1920. Eight members of the Chicago White Sox are indicted for fixing the World Series. They are ultimately found not guilty, but are banned from baseball.

- \* 1921. Edith Wharton wins the Pulitzer Prize in the Novel category for The Age of Innocence.

- \* 1921. Knee length skirts become fashionable.

- \* 1922. The Women's Amateur Athletic Association is founded.

- \* 1922. T.S. Eliot's classic long poem, The Wasteland, is published.

- \* 1922. The novel Billy Budd, Foretopman by Herman Melville is published posthumously.

- \* 1922. Jazz music peaks in popularity.

- \* 1922. Robert Flaherty, known as the "father of documentary," produces Nanook of the North, an ethnographic film about Eskimos.

- \* 1923. Maude Howe Elliott and Laura Howe Richards are the first women to win the Pulitzer Prize for biography, sharing the award for their profile of their mother, Julia Ward Howe. In this same year, Edna St. Vincent Millay becomes the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for poetry.

- \* 1923. Yankee Stadium is built in The Bronx, New York.

- \* 1926. Don Juan, perhaps the first talking picture shown to a public audience, premieres in New York City.

- \* May 20, 1927. Charles Lindbergh, a 25 year old pilot, flies 3,600 miles from Roosevelt Field, New York to Le Bourget, France. The solo trip lasted 33.5 hours and made him an international hero.

- \* 1928. Women compete for the first time in Olympic field events.

- \* 1928. U.S. anthropologist Margaret Mead publishes Coming of Age in Samoa.

- \* 1929. A Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway is published.

- \* 1930. Literary censorship increases. James Joyce's Ulysses is seized by custom's officials on the grounds that it is obscene. Leon Trotsky's work is banned in Boston.

- \* 1931. Sanctuary by William Faulkner is published.

- \* 1932. Amelia Earhart becomes the first woman to fly across the Atlantic alone.

- \* 1933. Aaron Copland composes Short Symphony, considered one of the finest works of classical music of this era.

- \* 1934. Tender is the Night by F. Scott Fitzgerald is published.

- \* 1936. Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell is published.

- \* 1937. Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck is published.

- \* December 21, 1937. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, the first animated feature film, is released by Disney.

- \* October 30, 1938. Orson Welles broadcasts an adaptation of the H.G. Wells' book War of the Worlds. Hysteria ensues across the country, especially in New York and New

- \* October 30, 1938. Orson Welles broadcasts an adaptation of the H.G. Wells' book War of the Worlds. Hysteria ensues across the country, especially in New York and New Jersey, as many listeners mistake the dramatic play for actual news coverage of an alien invasion of the United States.
- \* 1939. Gone with the Wind is released as a movie.
- \* 1940. For Whom the Bell Tolls by Ernest Hemingway is published.
- \* 1941. Edward Hopper paints "Nighthawks."
- \* 1942. "White Christmas" and "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" are popular songs.
- \* January 9, 1942. Joe Louis successfully defends his heavyweight boxing title for the 20th time.
- \* 1943. A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith is published.
- \* 1945. Fashion magazine Elle is founded.
- \* 1945. Black Boy by Richard Wright is published.
- \* 1947. Jackie Robinson becomes the first black baseball player in the major leagues when he joins the Brooklyn Dodgers.
- \* May 5, 1947. The Pulitzer Prize is awarded to Robert Penn Warren for All the King's Men.
- \* December 3, 1947. A Street Car Named Desire by Tennessee Williams opens in New York.
- \* December, 1947. The children's television series "Howdy Doody" premieres on NBC.
- \* April 7, 1949. The Rodgers and Hammerstein musical South Pacific opens on Broadway.
- \* April 1950. The first National Basketball Association championship is played. The Minneapolis Lakers defeat the Syracuse Nationals.
- \* 1950-1955. Marilyn Monroe releases some of her most notable films and becomes a movie star of legendary proportions: All About Eve, 1950; Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, 1953; The Seven Year Itch, 1955.
- \* 1951. The Rodgers and Hammerstein musical The King and I premieres on Broadway
- \* 1951. Bedtime for Bonzo, starring Ronald Reagan, is released by Universal Pictures.
- \* 1952. Ralph Ellison's The Invisible Man is published.
- \* 1954. The children's morning television series "Captain Kangaroo" premieres on CBS.
- \* July 1954. Elvis Presley joins Sun Records and what would come to be called Sun's "Million Dollar Quartet" - the foursome that also included Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, and Johnny Cash. By 1955 Elvis had recorded 5 songs and gained some popularity in the South. By 1956 Elvis had achieved national fame by making appearances on such television shows as "The Ed Sullivan Show".

## **Miscellaneous**

- \* November 14, 1915. African-American educator Booker T. Washington dies.
- \* 1916. Margaret Sanger opens the first birth control clinic.
- \* August 15, 1916. Tobacco baron James B. Duke orders the design and delivery of a private Pullman railcar. The cost was \$38,050.
- \* 1918. The cost of living in New York City increases 17% between July 1917 and July 1918.
  - 1920. The railroad industry peaks in importance. About this time other forms of transportation, particularly the automobile, begin to diminish the significance of the rail system.
- \* 1921. The Ku Klux Klan, a white supremacist group, is resurgent in the southern United States.
- \* May 30, 1922. The Lincoln Memorial is dedicated in Washington, DC.
- \* July 10-21 1925. The "Scopes Monkey Trial" takes place in Dayton, Tennessee. John T. Scopes is arrested on May 5th for teaching the theory of evolution in violation of state law. He is convicted and fined \$100.
- \* 1925. The name Duke University is adopted by Trinity College in Durham, North Carolina to meet the terms of a \$40,000,000 endowment established by James B. Duke.
- \* 1928. Great Britain lowers the age of suffrage from 30 to 21.

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- \* 1928. Great Britain lowers the age of suffrage from 30 to 21.
- \* 1929. National incomes statistics show that 60% of U.S. citizens have annual incomes less than \$2,000, an amount which is estimated as the bare minimum on which a family can survive.
- \* 1929. Gangs control the illegal liquor trade especially in Chicago, where Al "Scarface" Capone emerges as the top gangster. On February 14, 1929 seven members of "Bugs" Moran's gang are killed in a mass murder which became known as the St. Valentine's Day Massacre.
- \* September 22, 1929. Construction of the Empire States Building begins in New York City. It was completed in 1931.
- \* October 24, 1929. Known as Black Thursday, on this date the New York Stock Exchange crashes, with \$4 billion lost in trading. This marks the beginning of the Great Depression in the United States.
- \* 1930. The world population reaches two billion.
- \* March 1, 1932. The Lindbergh kidnapping, one the of most highly publicized crimes of the 20th century, occurs. Months after the \$50,000 ransom is paid, Charles Lindbergh, Jr. is found dead in woods near the Lindbergh house. Kidnapping becomes a federal crime.
- \* 1936. Boulder Dam, later renamed Hoover Dam, is completed, creating the largest reservoir in the world.
- \* 1938. Three Russian women set a world record with their non-stop 6,000 km flight from Moscow to the southeastern tip of Siberia.
- \* 1939. Konrad Zuse of Berlin creates a prototype mechanical binary programmable calculator.
- \* Without federal control, railroads, during each year of WWII, surpass the amount of freight moved during WWI, their previous peak of capacity. They did this with fewer cars, locomotives and employees.
- \* 1945. George Gallup conducts a poll, including the questions: "Do you know what television is?" and "Have you ever seen a television in operation?"
- \* 1946. Strikes this year involve 4.6 million workers and cost 116,000,000 hours of labor.
- \* March 8, 1948. Offering religious education in public schools is declared a violation of the First Amendment by the Supreme Court.
- \* December 9, 1953. General Electric announces that all communist employees will be discharged.
- \* 1954. 45% of Americans smoke at least one pack of cigarettes a day. 90% of adults drink 3-4 cups of coffee a day. America's favorite meal is fruit cup, vegetable soup, steak and potatoes, peas, rolls with butter, and pie a la mode.
- \* 1955. Blue jeans, rock & roll and comic books become increasingly popular.

### **Major World Events after 1955**

- Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia become independent (1956)
- Suez Crisis (1956)
- Treaty of Rome establishes EEC (1957)
- Pope John XXIII (r.1958 - 1963)
- Cuban Revolution (1959)
- International Antarctic Treaty (1959)
- Nigeria, Zaire, Niger, Mali, Upper Volta, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Senegal, Dahomey, Togo,
- Cameroon, Central African Republic, Gabon, Congo and Somalia become independent (1960)
- Sierra Leone becomes independent (1961)
- Berlin Wall built (1961)
- Amnesty International founded (1961)
- Jamaica, Uganda, Cyprus and Algeria become independent (1962)

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Jamaica, Uganda, Cyprus and Algeria become independent (1962)  
Cuban missile crisis (1962)  
Pope Paul VI (r.1963 - 1978)  
Malaysia becomes independent (1963)  
Kennedy assassinated (1963)  
Kenya becomes independent (1963)  
Aberfan landslide (1966)  
Palestine Liberation Organisation formed (1964)  
US Civil Rights Laws (1964)  
Rhodesia makes unilateral declaration of independence (1965)  
Botswana becomes independent (1966)  
Abortion Act in UK (1967)  
Military Coup in Greece (1967)  
Biafran War (1967 - 1970)  
Six Day War in Israel (1967)  
May Unrest in Paris (1968)  
Prague Spring (1968)  
USSR invades Czechoslovakia (1968)  
Stonewall Riot (1969)  
Biological Weapons Convention (1972)  
Bloody Sunday killings in Derry (1972)  
Yom Kippur War (1973)  
Bahamas becomes independent (1973)  
UK, Eire and Denmark join EEC (1973)  
Cod War between UK and Iceland (1973)  
VAT introduced in UK (1973)  
Military Coup in Chile (1973)  
Watergate scandal (1973 - 1974)  
End of military rule in Greece (1974)  
Turkey invades Cyprus (1974)  
Angola becomes independent (1975)  
Pope John Paul I (r.1978)  
Pope John Paul II (r.1978 - )  
Iranian Revolution (1978 - 1979)  
USSR invades Afghanistan (1979)  
Eruption of Mount St. Helens (1980)  
Start of Gulf War (1980)  
Zimbabwe becomes independent (1980)  
Inner-city riots in UK (1981)  
Falklands War (1982)  
USA invades Granada (1983)  
Bhopal chemical disaster (1984)  
French government agents sink Rainbow Warrior (1985)  
Chernobyl reactor accident (1986)  
USA bombs Libya (1986)  
Marcos overthrown in Philippines (1986)  
Intifada started (1987)  
Stock Market crash (1987)  
Iran Contra affair (1987)  
Piper Alpha fire (1988)

Iran Contra affair (1987)  
Piper Alpha fire (1988)  
Armenian earthquake (1988)  
Lockerbie air crash (1988)  
Tiananmen Square massacre (1989)  
Berlin Wall brought down (1989)  
Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia (1989)  
Romanian Revolution (1989)  
USA invades Panama (1989)  
Poll Tax riots in UK (1990)  
Prison riots in UK (1990)  
Iraq invades Kuwait (1990)  
German reunification (1990)  
USSR dissolved (1991)  
UN forces attack Iraq (1991)  
Czechoslovakia divided into Czech and Slovak Republics (1992)  
USA invades Somalia (1992 - 1995)  
Oslo Accord (1993)  
Convention on Chemical Weapons (1993)  
Start of Hutu-Tutsi wars (1994)  
Battle of Wanstonia (1994)  
Barings Bank collapse (1995)  
Luxor massacre (1997)  
NATO forces attack Serbia (1999)