



Tony met Mary Ann Brown, a waitress in the railroad restaurant in Morton. Mary Ann's family immigrated from Cork Ireland via the St. Laurence Seaway to Canada where Mary Ann was born in 1865. A short time later they moved to the United States, settling in Morton, Minnesota. They married in 1894. Tony remodeled the upstairs of his hardware store for their first home where they raised their family of four daughters and three sons. My father Harold Poss was their second child born in Franklin in 1896. The boy's all grew up working in the Poss Hardware business.

My parents Harold Poss and Alma Erlandson married in 1925. Alma was a Norwegian schoolteacher working in Franklin. Her parents immigrated from Dove Village, Norway to Mankato, Minnesota where my mother was born and grew up. She attended the Normal School in Mankato and became a teacher. Harold following high school graduation in Franklin attended St. Thomas College in Minneapolis Minnesota in their military cadent program. I was their 3<sup>rd</sup> child, born on September 29, 1933 in my mother's bedroom in Franklin, Minnesota. I had three brothers, one older and two younger plus an older sister. We were half Norwegian plus a quarter each of German and Irish.

## Growing up in Minnesota

I grew up in our family's home on a 20 acre farm on the north side of US Highway 19 in the village of Franklin with a population of 430 people. The farm had a livestock barn with stanchions for 2 milk cows, a calf pen and hay mow plus a chicken house that later was big enough for 100 chicken layers. There was a corn crib to dry and store cob corn, a fenced cow yard and a pasture plus 10 acres of crop land. Also, a large garden and a clay tennis court my dad made that was well used.

My siblings and I walked the mile to school no matter the weather. Our Franklin School was built in



1899. My dad and his siblings attended the same school. It housed grades 1-8 in 4 classrooms, with 4 teachers. The upper floor had one large assembly room with about 90 desks for grades 9 through 12. Several other smaller classrooms were



rotated for the various high school classes. The basement provided space for a large coal fired gravity furnace with a coal bin, plus toilets and several classrooms including industrial arts and music for choir and band.

All my four siblings and I were in music including, band and choir. I played trumpet in the band and did solos at events. During 10th grade I and three classmates had college plans and the superintendent, had the principal provide us the time and a special class space in the library that we used for trigonometry and geometry studies working alone. The principal gave us weekly assignments and periodic tests that he corrected and graded.

All the high school boys played competitive sports except farm boys needed for chores. The girls were cheer leaders and the boys played, basketball, track and six-man football. We did not always have 12

players during practice for football scrimmage and the coach would find a volunteer stand in uptown as needed for practices. We also played baseball in a summer program. I was a 9<sup>th</sup> grader in a football game when an opponent and I together dove on a loose ball that fractured my distal ulna at the wrist. The doctor had a difficult time using the wet Plaster of Paris splint to dry and my wrist is crooked today.

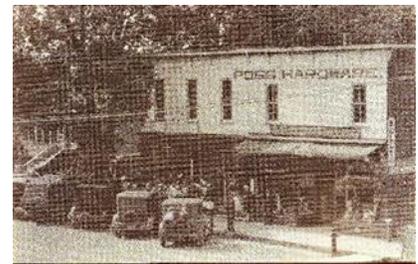
I was a Boy Scout in Franklin in 1950 and attended the National Boy Scout Jamboree at Valley Forge, PA. with a classmate. We travelled by bus and train, had a tour in Philadelphia to see the Liberty Bell and New York City to the Statue of Liberty. On our first night in Valley Forge, President Truman arrived in a black limousine with US Flags flying on both front fenders. On an outside stage, he welcomed and addressed the 45,000 scouts at Valley Forge. General Eisenhower was featured speaker the last night.

I graduated in 1951 with my Franklin High School class of 18 students. Only 5 of us went on to college.

### **The Poss Hardware and Lumber Family Business**

My older sister and 3 brothers all worked in the Poss Hardware and Lumber business. We started at an early age on Saturdays during the school year and during summer months.

While in grade school and in early spring, my dad trained me for a unique job in our store basement without windows that required determining percent germination of the bulk bags and containers of garden and flower seeds. We made tin trays for garden dirt to plant 20 individually spaced seeds that we kept moist under fluorescent lights until they sprouted to determine percent germination. The bulk containers of seeds were counted into brown paper envelopes, sealed and identified with percent germination for sale.



My dad gave us many store jobs such as unpacking, marking sales price and also coded cost needed for the end of year inventory. We replaced merchandise on display and put new items together as needed. Also we did sweeping, dusting, cleaning displayed merchandise, and helping customers find their needs. Also important was collecting payment and pulled the cash register lever to ring up the sale and open the cash drawer that popped out to make change. For charging customers the information was entered in the office ledger. Then there's the hardware service of helping customers how to use items and later fix items they bring in expecting anything they bought could be brought back for repair anytime.

Another job for school children was the annual inventory counting or weighing every item like bolts, screws, nails and every item in the store. Then record the cost using the cost code, not the sales price, of every item to be added up at the end of the year for tax purposes. To add \$ values on the many inventory pages, we used a large mechanical adding machine with 12 keys across and 10 keys down and a right hand pull lever that accumulated totals displayed at the top of the machine.

My dad taught me how to cut glass and replace broken window glass using triangular shims and putty for customers. Also we replaced wire mesh for screens, mixed paint, weighed out nails, counted and priced bolts, washers, screws and more, all sold from bulk containers.

I learned how to mix and make concrete using a gasoline powered mixer. How to fix and replace parts when the dasher quit on a Maytag washing machine we sold and replace worn out ringer rollers. Before REA came, farm families without electricity had a kick starter two cycle gas engine on the lower frame of their washing machine that needed cleaning, lubrication and replacement of needed parts. Also make everything work.

He taught me how to sharpen the rotary reel blades on the old style push grass mower. Also, how to clean, replace and adjust parts including points and condenser on gas powered lawn mowers. Also how to remove and clean the carburetor, replace needed parts, make adjustments, check for leaks, sharpen the blade. Then replace or clean spark plugs and adjust the spark space setting.

My older brother and I plus my younger brothers all worked in Poss Hardware & Lumber Company before and after becoming teen's. We did tinsmith and sheet metal work in the shop, heating and plumbing, repair on all thing's hardware. There was more such as unloading a railroad car of lumber or 80 pound cement bags. When the farmers got electricity in the 1940's, they replaced windmills with pumps and dug in underground water pipe to buildings. They wanted bathrooms and central heat plus much more. Plastic pipe fittings using glue came many years later. Water lines were galvanized pipe and the needed length required a vise, hack saw and a manual pipe threader. Factory made elbows and unions were expensive. Sink drainpipes were made from a sheet of lead until later when manufactured fittings were made available. Septic tanks and trench work was hand shovel and pick work and sewer pipe was cast iron with hubs that were fitted with oakum and hot lead using a gasoline fired blow torch.

Homes had coal bins, and a coal burning furnace in the basement that had clinkers to clean out. Warm air rose in pipes up into the house. Later coal was replaced by a 160 gallon fuel oil tank raised up on legs outside with flexible copper tubing that supplied fuel oil by gravity into the house to a carburetor on the parlor furnace in the living room. The carburetor dripped the right amount of fuel oil into the fire pot of the heater to control house heat. My dad taught me to clean and adjust the carburetor accuracy that was an important job every year to prevent excess oil in the heater and a fire up the chimney or worse.

Later electricity became available and we had fuel oil basement furnaces using an electric fuel oil pump with a spark plug ignitor. That meant service and cleaning problems. Everyone was happy when propane or natural gas arrived. We sold propane gas in 40 and 100 pound cylinders that required a pickup truck delivery to replace when empty that was always an emergency. Kitchen cook stoves became mostly propane fueled and home refrigerators were powered by propane gas. Later, electricity became dependable and refrigerators and many cook stoves were electric.

The new basement furnaces had a hot air plenum on top that we made, with an electric blower to move warm air into 3 by 12 inch heat ducts we made. They were installed by working them up into the

2 by 4 stud wall space from the basement to a register opening cut in the upper floor rooms. We had a heavy 4 foot brake to bend 3 foot wide 30 gauge sheet metal into ductwork using a Pittsburg seam. In the late 1940's during World War II due to steel shortages we replaced galvanized sheet metal with sheet aluminum to make duct work for the furnaces.

We sold and serviced Maytag wash machines that had a dasher and rubber clothes wringers requiring service and repair when gears and rubber wore out. I could almost do it with closed eyes. Before electricity came to farmhouses, wash machines had a two-cycle gasoline engine with a kick starter that also meant more service and repair work.

Plumbing and heating work expanded when electric power reached the farms and well pumps, furnaces, kitchens and bathrooms required installations. Pipe was galvanized steel requiring a hacksaw or pipe cutter and hand threaded joints. Water lines had to be 5 or 6 feet underground to keep from freezing. Water and sewer lines required hand digging needing a pick and crumbing shovel to dig in the clay below the black soil. Four and six inch soil pipe for sewers was cast-iron and the fittings were sealed with oakum and hot leaded joints.

There was plumbing and other items to order and unload, and customer sales needing change using the cash register operated with a pull lever or a ledger to enter customer charges. We received mill run lumber (all sizes) in railroad cars that had to be unloaded sorted and stacked in our lumber sheds to prevent warping. I remember learning from our hired man.

## **Animal Experience Growing Up**

My parents assumed I would be a veterinarian when I grew up because of my interest in animals. A dog was necessary for children on a farm and for hunting. Our barn and a milk cow or two required cats for mouse control and a yard dog for playing and hunting, occasionally having puppies and a kitten litter was not news. My first experiences with a veterinarian was artificial insemination of our milk cow and diagnosis and treatment of our family dog with mange.

I remember the Minnesota Armistice blizzard of 1940 when I was 7 years old. Human and animal loss was significant. After the storm my 2 younger brothers and I dug out several caves to play in the snow banks.

My dad made good use of the boys in our family, doing garden and yard work and making use of our barn and pasture. Prior to chore work age, my younger brothers and we learned to chase chickens around the yard until they would squat, so we could catch them. I also remember a sow farrowing pigs and helping to feed the weak runts. One winter my dad borrowed an incubator we fixed up and hatched chickens in the spring that we fed out in our cow yard. They were butchered using an axe when needed for the kitchen. When I was still in grade school dad had the chicken barn remodeled for a flock of 100 laying hens and gave me the job to take care of them. I sold excess eggs for a couple years and had spending money.

One Easter we got two pocket sized white rabbits to play with and that fall fixed them space in the barn for the winter. After harvesting our garden cabbage heads to make sauerkraut, my Dad had us save the cabbage plants in a corner of the barn to feed greens all winter. That spring with many new rabbits, I made several wire range crates to hold the young rabbits and moved them around the pasture all summer for grass to eat in addition to rabbit pellets and sold them in the fall.

My grandfather owned three farms a few miles north of town that he rental and when I was 11 he had me drive him around for his visits to them. He could not see very well, had thick glasses and showed me how to drive his Studebaker car. Mostly I remember him telling me to stay well to the right.

For my growing up years we had one or two cows in our barn that my grandfather taught me to milk and take care of. My older brother wanted out of cow care work and I got the job with no help from my younger brothers. We put up hay every summer, cutting the grass in the road ditches for hay and pitching it up into the hay mow from our hay rack. I pitched hay down and milked twice a day. Most all winter I had to carry 5-gallon pails of water twice a day for the cow from our well house to the barn when the water line was frozen. The milk we didn't drink, my mother used to skim off the thick cream my dad liked for his coffee. Then with the skim milk she made cottage cheese using muslin cloth bags.

For various reasons when I entered high school, the milk cow operation was discontinued. Entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade in high school I took the new Vocational Agriculture teachers' class. He interested me in a sheep project and helped me find and buy a dozen ewes that I bought with a loan from my dad. I fixed up our cow barn to winter the sheep and my teacher contacted a farmer to borrow a ram to breed the ewes when it got colder in early October. He came and we marked the ram's chest with red wax and when all my ewes had red wax on their rump, we sent the ram home. It only took a few days.

We had the hay we needed, and I spent a lot of time during lambing and saved 20 lambs to feed that summer. The Ag Teacher told me how to dock lamb tails with a wide chisel and control bleeding with flour, which I did. I bought pelleted feed, used our pasture that summer and sold the 90 pound lambs in the fall. After my second lambing year I, paid off my dad's sheep loan.

After high school graduation and preparing for college at Saint John's University I offered my lamb project to my next youngest brother Paul. His low animal interest resulted in saving only a half dozen lambs over the winter, ending the sheep project and we sold out. Paul went on to Minnesota's St. John's University, but before graduation he was drafted in the US Army for 2 years in Germany and on returning became a successful dentist.

## **Grade and High School Jobs and Experience**

My dad hired me to work in our hardware & lumber company at a \$100 for the summer following 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The work included putting farm equipment together, helping my older brother doing furnaces and plumbing work, cleaning up in the hardware store and storage sheds, delivering 100 pound cylinders of propane gas to customers, unloading railcars of lumber to be sorted and stacked in the lumber sheds and unloading delivery trucks with bagged concrete.

The summer after 11<sup>th</sup> grade in high school I was hired to do mechanic work with a classmate Dick Olson in his dad's business and was hired for the summer to run a grain combine. Their Franklin combine crew started in Oklahoma in the spring and moved up through the Dakotas in the fall. As soon as school was out we started replacing a motor and servicing their combines in Franklin and then joined the crew in South Dakota. I drove a semitruck pulling a bunk trailer when travelling and ran one of their four combines doing both oats and wheat fields as we moved up into North Dakota. Then in the fall, some of the crew travelled in the back of a grain truck back to Franklin in time for school to start.

## **Education of a Veterinarian**

My interest in college was veterinary medicine. My family selection St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota became the choice and I received a great start with their premed class. My second year transferred to the University of Minnesota for the required animal science classes plus the rest of the requirements and was selected to the veterinary program early that spring. At that time most of my class members had only two years of pre-veterinary college and we were the 7<sup>th</sup> veterinary class.

I expected a difficult first year program and it was. I did well and after the first quarter, our anatomy professor Dr. Kitchell hired me to work on a dissection project for his research. It was great experience and some income as well. The second year I was given another student job by Dr. Zemjanis obstetrics professor to pick up slunk's at a local cattle abattoir to be used in his obstetrics classes.

My interest became dairy cattle and during the spring of my 3<sup>rd</sup> year a farmer friend of my older brother asked, and I did a rumenotomy on his dairy cow with hardware disease that was successful.

## **Veterinary Education and Funding**

### **Pre-Veterinary College**

**Year 1.** During my first year at St. John's University my mother borrowed me the thousand dollars I needed for tuition, room and board from her savings earned weekly as a Franklin interest writer for the New Ulm, Minnesota newspaper. My dad also helped, and I received a US Army \$10 a month allotment from my older brother Jim serving in Korea. I provided the required B grade or higher college results to my Renville county draft board evading Army draft while in college.

**Year 2.** A Saint John's University classmate invited me to do summer road work with him that his dad supervised for S.J. Groves & Son's Co on a blacktop road crew on US Highway 29 west of Wausau, Wisconsin. The job paid for most all my second year college costs while I finished pre-vet requirements at the University of Minnesota. I also served evening meals in Bryans Tea Room at 1005 University Avenue in Minneapolis near Dinky Town, wearing a required tie and jacket for college women living in upstairs rooms. My pay was tips, supper and breakfast every day.

### **College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Minnesota**

**Year 1.** Before the school year that summer, I worked again for S. J. Groves on the New Jersey turnpike near Atlantic City. I had a better job running the screed on a Barber Green blacktop paver that adjusts the dept of the blacktop mat. The job required joining and paying union dues. However, I could work double shifts most days and the weekly hours over 40 paid more per hour. I brought home over \$3,000 that summer and paid back my mother's loan so that she could help my younger brothers' in college. I was accepted and enrolled in the first year of Veterinary School at the UofM. I roomed with 2 classmates on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor attic of a home with a kitchen for meals that was close enough to walk to school and bring our own lunch.

**Year 2.** The previous summer I again got a job with S.J. Groves but doing gravel work versus blacktop and no overtime. However, I had made enough the summer before for my 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Veterinary College. My same 2 classmates David Meyers and Delmont Lieske and I found a first-floor rental room in a home in Minneapolis Dinky Town. That summer I had bought a black 1936 Chevrolet for \$60 that got us to and from school. Again, we made our own meals and brought some food from home.

**Year 3.** The Minnesota Board of Animal Health hired veterinary students for summer work in northern Minnesota, where veterinary practitioners were scarce to test cattle for Bangs and TB. I applied and was hired along with a group of my classmates and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students as well. We were required to arrive with our own vehicle and the needed equipment and supplies were provided. The first day of work, State Veterinarians took groups of students to a herd demonstration on record keeping, obtaining blood samples for Bangs testing and tail injection for the TB test. We received a list of supplies to be picked up as needed and forms to provide weekly hours, mileage etc. We had a weekly check to pick up covering pay and expenses. We were on our own and learned fast, but the experience was valuable. The income paid for my 3<sup>rd</sup> year of veterinary college.

**Year 4.** The summer prior to the 4<sup>th</sup> and last year of Veterinary School I decided I could afford working in a practice for experience with little pay. I found a job 10 miles from home in Morgan, MN in a general small town farm practice with two veterinarians. The owner was Dr. Preston an Iowa graduate and Dr. Norm Mueller a 1952 Minnesota graduate. I worked mostly with Dr. Preston and most every morning holding pigs on several farms for him to vaccinate for Hog Cholera by injecting live virus and antiserum into separate front leg armpits. To improve on time, he trained me how to hold the pigs better than the farmer who then handed them to me. If the virus and the right amount of antiserum did not get injected properly, that pig could or would die of Hog Cholera. The farmer or a helper caught the pigs and handed them to me. We did several herds early most every morning before it got too warm. Holding every squirming pig with their head up in my face was hard on my ears as every pig squealed. In some herds the farmer dipped each pig in a barrel with lindane or chlordane for mange and then handed them to me. Both my coveralls and body absorbed insecticide that I likely still may have in my body fat. The squealing may have be why I wear big hearing aids.

## **Graduation**

June 15, 1957 our class of 48, was the 7<sup>th</sup> veterinary class graduating from the "College of Veterinary Medicine" at the University of Minnesota. The first Dean was Dr. W.T.S. Thorp who had been Assistant

Dean to the Dean of the Institute of Agriculture for the “School of Veterinary Medicine.” Dr. Thorp worked with AVMA to meet their required standards and when voted by the Regents of the University of Minnesota May 10, 1957 became Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine. The first six classes had graduated from the “School of Veterinary Medicine” in the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics in the Institute of Agriculture.

## **United States Army Draft Experience**

Upon graduation day from the College of Veterinary Medicine, I immediately received a 1A classification card from my Renville County Board plus a US Army Draft notice to report for a physical. I had been exempt from the Draft by maintaining a minimum B average grade in college. The day of my 1A notice, I applied for work with the USDA Agricultural Research Service in St. Paul to continue exemption from the draft. I was accepted and sent to Alexandria, Minnesota to work with Dr. Bob Page who was in charge of the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis control program for 5 counties. In the meantime, I learned veterinary commissions had become available in the US Army. I applied and was accepted to a two-year commitment to report in March 1958 to the US Army Meat and Dairy Hygiene School in Chicago Illinois. Our class of 12 new DVM’s from 10 different states found apartments together but did not have army uniforms for over a month. We learned we were the first veterinary group commissioned since World War II. Then one day our Adjutant, a Major at the school took us all upstairs to a storage area for an hour or so. He taught us to march, how to wear a uniform and how and why to salute and address officers. Then we had measurements taken and received a \$200 check to buy a uniform that came a week later. Then we were US Army Officers ranked Second Lieutenant and wore army uniforms every day to report in.

## **United States Army Career**

Upon completing the US Meat and Dairy Hygiene School, the class was interviewed and the next day learned the location of their food inspection jobs in the Fifth Army area. A day later, I received orders to report for another requested interview and after a tour of questions in a food laboratory, I was assigned to the Fifth Army Medical Laboratory in St. Louis, MO. The laboratory had sections for pathologists, biochemist, a parasitologist, a virologist plus the Veterinary Laboratory. I served as a 2nd Lieutenant Veterinary Medical Officer and later a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in charge of the Veterinary Laboratory. I had a dozen US Army Specialists & civil service workers doing primarily food laboratory safety and quality evaluation for Fifth Army food purchases. In addition to the chemistry and microbiological work, we maintained mice, rats, rabbits and toads for laboratory use. I did the annual pregnancy tests for WAC’s (Women’s Army Corp) mostly using mouse injection with urine samples. I also purchased and housed laboratory animals for the laboratory virologist and others doing rabies tests and research.

The Veterinary Medical Colonel in charge of the Veterinary Laboratory had 2 weeks left prior to his retirement to introduce me to the laboratory and staff. Most every morning while visiting with me he signed test reports with little reading. He enjoyed telling me his mule stories and how to pack a mule. I spent the first couple months, reading books (no computers) to learn and write US Army SOP’s for each laboratory procedure. I required duplicate test results with little differences. Most all the laboratory

technician's had been reporting test results, to meet specifications, not their actual test results. Our job was to report the facts so the US Army got what they paid for and was safe to consume.

Our first laboratory report not meeting specifications resulted in an emergency meeting with the laboratory officer in charge, a Major Medical Pathologist. After our meeting, he understood.

I received allotment pay for housing expense. However I obtained a loan from my Minnesota Bank and bought a trailer house instead of paying apartment rent. The trailer was hooked up in a trailer park near the airport. I paid the monthly park fee and didn't have to move it. I sold it as is when I left St. Louis. An elderly lady in the next trailer needed help with her scratched up free running tom cat and I needed someone to watch my trailer house.

During my army career free time in St. Louis, I often worked nights and Saturdays mostly free of charge for two small animal practices, Dr. Belkin in northwest St. Louis and Dr. Dunlop in East St. Louis. My exposure to small animal medicine was great. I did drive to Columbia, Missouri to take their licensing test that included an interview to earn a Missouri veterinary practice license.

## **Marriage in Missouri**

Emilie Nauman Dick was born in Sedalia Missouri and worked for American Airlines in St. Louis. My buddy parasitologist Captain John Moose whose lab was next door to me in the 5<sup>th</sup> Army Medical Laboratory met Emilie on the same daily bus trips to work. He gave me her description and phone number. I still remember the day Emilie opened her door for our first date. We were married February 13, 1960. We had a two week honey moon on US Army time with a trip to the Winter Olympics in Squaw Valley California and the western United States. My two-year Army Active Duty career as a First Lieutenant ended March 17, 1960 when I reported for an overnight in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. I left for Sedalia the second night at midnight when I had put in the 3 day discharge requirement and drove to Sedalia, Missouri where Emilie and her parents and family lived. Then we packed up for Minnesota and a waiting veterinary practice. My favorite joke, I needed a wife to answer farmer phone calls and communicate on my mobile radio.

I transferred out as Reserve Commissioned Officer grade of First Lieutenant(Reserve) in the Army of the United States and a month later in the mail, I received the grade of Captain in the Reserves.

## **Veterinary Private Practice**

Emilie and I began general practice in Paynesville, Minnesota in 1960 with Dr. Reuben Thompson a Canadian Guelph graduate. My monthly US Army pay had been \$350 plus \$90 DVM pay and a living allotment. My monthly pay started at \$300 a month and we lived in the Thompson town home while they moved to their lake cottage for the summer. In the fall with a pay increase, we rented our first home together.

I had spent some work time with Dr. Thompson prior to my US Army career, and when he knew I would be coming back he bought a vacant building uptown in Paynesville. He made it into a veterinary clinic with drug supply and sales space, office, small animal exam & surgery room plus a break room. It

also included an autopsy room and a laboratory room to do bacterial investigation. Dr. Thompson owned a mink ranch and other mink ranches in the area were clients. Our lab provided diagnostic work on mink and a mastitis testing and treatment program I developed for dairy herds. We also provided sensitivity testing and udder treatment and the dairy herds increased in milk production.

The many turkey growers with large flocks in the area began to make use of our autopsy and sensitivity testing service. Later, I suggested the growers needed more than just autopsy and lab work and I began doing turkey flock farm calls. The turkey business expanded and overtook the dairy mastitis work.

During three years in Paynesville, I saw my first case of Hog Cholera, did my first horse castration and had a 2+ hour calving dismemberment late on a Saturday night. Another first was a cow cesarean that was done when Emilie and I were on the way to visit my parents on Christmas Eve 50 miles away in Franklin. The farmer with a small herd had no electric lights in the barn and I had him hold my 6 volt battery light. When I made the foot long incision in the cow's side and the blood came, the farmer passed out and his head hit the concrete floor. I stopped my work, put on my shirt and helped him up and out of the barn heading for his house. Then I talked Emilie in our car to come in the barn and hold the light so I could deliver the live calf and sew up the cow. She was seven month pregnant with our first child at the time. We still enjoyed our Christmas Eve trip.

Several drug companies offered field testing of their turkey products that I helped set up with growers and observed and collected results for the drug companies with good pay. Dr. Thompson also developed a poultry medication sales deal for our clinic with "Dr. Salisbury's Laboratories" poultry products in Charles City, Iowa (a museum now). This all became important practice income for our clinic.

While living in our rented home and raising two boys, my youngest brother, Tony stayed with us after being discharged from a two year army career in Germany while enrolled in St. Cloud University 30 miles away for a year.

In the fall of my third year in Paynesville practice, Pfizer Drug Company began marketing their broad spectrum antibiotic Terramycin and built five free service livestock diagnostic laboratories to service livestock producers in the United States. One laboratory was in Willmar, Minnesota 30 miles away and essentially all our turkey clients left us for Pfizer that fall, and our practice income dropped. Dr. Thompson continued farm call practice and our clinic alone, while I spent most of the winter and into spring in northern Minnesota testing cattle for Tuberculosis and Brucellosis.

## **Solo General Veterinary Practice**

Word spread of the change in our Paynesville practice by the veterinary drug and supply salespeople travelling in Minnesota and in the spring of 1963 Dr. Douglas Murray a 1952 Minnesota graduate practicing 25 miles away in Litchfield, stopped in offering to sell his primarily dairy practice to me. I made the trip to visit him and bought it. Dr. Thompson was not happy. However, my wife and I moved to Litchfield and spent two years there doing very well with our growing family and the animal practice I liked, even without turkey work. However Emilie had to handle practice phone calls, a mobile radio

and our home with two renters in the basement apartment plus our two active boys and our first daughter just born.

Worth a story is a Saturday night dairy farm call to an off-feed steer being fattened in a pen that was kicking at his stomach. I pumped a gallon of mineral oil into his stomach and asked to let me know his situation in a day or so. Monday morning, I saw what I hoped I wouldn't. The steer was trying to drink water out of a pail but couldn't swallow. Since I had saliva contact treating the steer, I cautioned the farmer and family and asked him to call when the steer died as I needed the head for a rabies exam. The result for me was 14 days of injection's in a circle of red sores around my navel. I survived.

After two years in Litchfield in January of 1965, I was offered a full-time turkey job by two major Minnesota turkey growers. Lloyd Peterson in Paynesville who I had done turkey work for with the largest turkey operation in Minnesota, and Earl Olson in Willmar who had turkey farms and several processing plants.

My wife and I decided turkey work might be better than Saturday & Sunday night calving calls. So, after 5 years in general practice I decided and selected the turkey processor and turkey grower in Willmar. I sold our practice to a younger veterinarian and became a full-time employee of Farmers Produce in Willmar owned by Earl B. Olson that later became Jennie O Foods.

## **Jennie O Foods Career**

Earl B. Olson hired me during a lunch meeting at the Willmar Hotel. I asked him what he expected me to do. He didn't have a good answer but I guessed he had recommendations from his banker to hire a veterinarian. I accepted the job based on my current annual practice income and suggested I would bring up to date veterinary science information and service to his operation. His Willmar processing business then was Farmers Produce. He had three processing plants, several turkey farms plus contract turkey growers.

I started in March 1965 working for Earl's Live Turkey Production Manager Dick Elliot. However, he left a couple years later for an Iowa turkey operation and I became General Manager. In 1969 after Farmers Produce expanded into Jennie O Foods Inc., I became General Manager of Earl B. Olson Farms and one of five Vice Presidents of Jennie O Foods.

## **Jennie O Foods Turkey Production**

In 1965 we raised bronze turkeys brooded early spring in brooder barns. Poults were purchased and were manually sexed in the hatchery. The brooder barns were divided with a center wall for hens and toms. Then as early as 8 weeks of age or later, they were moved to range starting late April or early May and raised out on range. The last birds to market were processed in early November as it was difficult to provide water that froze on range and the birds couldn't drink.

We called our Minnesota turkey buildings barns and I learned later most states call them houses. Our barns were cleaned and ready to brood poults in the spring. The last week in April or first week in May was the safest early dates to go on range. Range shelters provided minimum shelter and the first

flocks hauled out to range were 8 weeks or older to survive cold or rainy weather. When rain or snow was involved straw would be spread in the shelters to improve conditions. Hens were loaded for market at 12 to 15 pounds live and toms at 22 to 25 pounds. A large crew chased the birds into a fenced area to load on semi-trailers with coops piled 4 to 5 high. Crew members stood on 6 to 8 foot long boards hung on the side of the trailer to stuff birds into the coops, while other crew members caught and handed up the live birds.

Range pens fenced for groups of 5,000 birds worked best using moveable range equipment to clean ground every other week for fresh grass and Blackhead and round worm disease control. Shelters, water troughs and metal range feeders were moved with a tractor. Six to eight foot long trough waterers with a float control hung on a pipe stand. They were supplied water with hoses strung out from the farmyard's frost-free water hydrants. With good planning on a farm, 2 or 3 range flocks could be grown out annually from one brooder barn.

Later turkey brooder barns were utilized in winter to raise Beltsville small white turkeys like the Wrolstad breed. They were brooded in the fall to be finished for sale at 9 pounds and sold in the New England States. The cost to produce them was significantly higher per pound and were eventually discontinued.

Bronze turkeys were replaced when the Broad Breasted White breeds were developed. Initially they were not quite as big but were better market birds without the black ink skin marks left from pulling out the bronze turkeys feathers during processing.

The California turkey breeders learned to produce turkey eggs year-round by building dark-house barns. All the doors and ventilation openings had to be closed or fitted with dark house fan boxes. The breeder hen flocks, when half grown were moved into a dark house with only 6 hours of light each day, but would not start laying eggs as they matured. Then when mature at 30 weeks of age the lights were tuned on to provide 15 hours of day length and all the hens would start laying eggs. We bought poults from a California producer that flew 40 to 80 thousand day old poults to us in Willmar in remodeled air-condition controlled DC3 airplanes. We met them early in the morning at our airport with poult vans to fill our barns in the winter and early spring.

Soon we and others built breeder farms in Minnesota using dark-houses to raise our own poults and raise turkeys year around. We also encouraged private growers as well to produce turkeys year around for Jennie O to make full efficient use of processing plants plus year round sales.

### **Turkey Manure Problem**

In the 1960's and 70's turkey growers cleaned out their brooder barns in the fall and pushed the manure into piles outside the ends of the barn or moved it to a waste area on the farm. Crop farmers did not realize the value or how to utilize turkey manure. The previous flock that had diseases such as Salmonella, Blue Comb, Blackhead, or Roundworms and Darkling Beetles provided infected manure piles that froze over winter preserving the problems. The growers walking around the farm in the spring would walk the manure into the barns they just cleaned infecting their new spring flock of

turkeys and perpetuate disease problems year after year. Some manure piles were used by farmers to fertilize their corn land, but was spread at 8 to 10 tons per acre using their cow manure spreaders. They moved some manure away from their barns, but it was spread too rich and uneven for their crops. Manure piles accumulated on most turkey farms.

In the 1980's fuel costs increased and Minnesota growers were concerned loosing competition heating winter barns versus the warm weather southeastern growers. They tried to use coal or wood and even turkey manure for fuel. MTGA funded research on burning turkey litter for the Agriculture Engineering Department at the University of Minnesota and in 1982 organized a full day energy symposium for the industry at the UofM that I chaired and was published for distribution. The litter can be burned and the residue has valuable feed minerals, but it takes starter fuel to heat and burn manure plus the cost and upkeep of furnaces is expensive.

Turkey manure assays of nitrogen phosphorous and potassium were significant and we promoted and worked with the owner of a local farm chemical fertilizer company owner and an interested crop farmer to utilize turkey manure. We learned that 2 tons of manure was adequate to fertilize a corn crop. We also worked with a Texas company manufacturing and selling chemical fertilizer trucks to sling and cover a 40 foot wide strip with 2 tons of turkey manure per acre. We paid the farmer and fertilizer company a dollar a ton fee that year and they were able to sell and remove many of the manure piles off our farms over the next year or two. Then we developed a payment system for us based on the fertilizer value to the farmer.

Minnesota Pollution Control requires manure cannot be field spread in winter to prevent melting run off in the spring. So spreading manure on cropland is only possible early spring before planting or late fall after harvest, which works the best. Since most of the manure is spread in the fall on next year's corn land, the manure sale must be planned a year or so ahead and the manure pile for each field planned and placed while the previous crop is growing. Most piles look best to the public when placed off the road a distance into the field with minimum crop destroyed.

Later on others became involved and most all manure is being removed, sold and utilized efficiently since with nutrients and trace minerals in manure being recycled. Burning manure was tried, but not sustained.

### **Fast Growth, Least Feed Cost, Bird Health and Disease Control**

Since proper feed is essential to nutrition, health, and growth, and is 70% of production cost, feed manufacturing is one of the first obvious problems I needed to address. It was a major project and Professor Paul Waibel Poultry Nutritionist at the University of Minnesota was my source of information and help. That eventually led to many research projects and the building of a 36-pen research barn that continues to be utilized by Jennie O today. I also was able to update our small feed mills and built a large computerized feed mill so we could design control and manufacture our own feed. I spent considerable time working on feed formulas for all ages of hens and toms to produce fastest growth at least cost that changes weekly. I was manager, veterinarian and became nutritionist.

A long list of diseases and health problems caused mortality, stunting and processing losses that affected our turkey farms and turkeys over the early years. The average annual mortality due to disease, weather and management losses for tom turkeys was 20% or more in the 1960's and provided plenty of interest and work. Turkey health problems not addressed or up to date in the latest edition of Diseases of Poultry resulted in my many trips to Dr. Ben Pomeroy at the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul. Several years later Dr. Pomeroy told me I probably earned a master's without the degree.

## **Management of Disease Problems of Interest**

### **Blue Comb Disease**

In 1965 most all Minnesota turkey growers experienced the disease in their flocks, even with empty barns in winter. All ages were susceptible, but most severe effects were in brooder barn flocks. The birds were peeping and running around the barn. They quit eating, passed watery yellow/brown smelly cecal droppings creating wet litter and suffered expensive mortality loss. Stunted survivors and condemnation at processing added to the loss. It was caused by an unknown agent that required research work.

We did on the farm research using the unused red cow barns on our turkey farms as research facilities. The disease was easily replicated in research barn pens using cecal droppings from a sick flock in the drinking fountains of susceptible poults. Since the sick flocks did not eat feed and had diarrhea, we first developed a water treatment mix with calf milk replacer, potash (potassium) fertilizer and antibiotics that helped recovery.

A study was done setting up small round wire pens 3 feet apart for ten 3-4 week old poults. Then only one person cared for the study, but without stepping into the pens by reaching over into the wire pens to provide feed and water for the birds. When the birds settled in, every other pen was infected with cecal droppings in their water fountain. The non-infected pens 3 feet away from infected pens did not come down with Blue Comb. We learned the unknown agent was not airborne 3 feet away. We also had pens that were stepped into that became sick with Blue Comb. More pen work provided more useful information, including that the agent was preserved in a refrigerator or by freezing but in cecal droppings, was not infective in a few days at room temperature.

Biosecurity was not a word in the 1960's but we designed and built a clean entry room on every brooder barn with an outside entry door and a door into the turkeys area. The room had a concrete floor and a floor drain near the entry door with hot water plus a spray hose to clean the floor plus a soap squirt bottle and boot brush hung on the wall so that every worker or person wears rubber boots we provided that must be cleaned summer and winter both entering and leaving the barn.

Blue Comb eradication was possible in Minnesota because the entire turkey industry held many meetings planned and initiated by University of Minnesota personal for the industry to share information that was responsible for our success. As in the example on boot cleaning, a processors example involved turkey live haul trucks that were not being washed between farms and in winters

zero temperatures could not wash their trucks and cage trailers. However, during one of our eradication meetings a processor shared the washing procedures they developed that works and then was adopted by others resolving the problem.

Sharing worked and the entire Minnesota turkey industry suffering with the disease attended and communicated during the many meetings held to eradicate Blue Comb.

The last Minnesota flock with Blue Comb was a breeder flock in northern Minnesota and in 1970 Blue Comb was eradicated and the disease never returned. Dr. Pomeroy's research group identified the agent later as a Corona virus by electron microscopy in 1973.

**Psittacosis** from migrating birds infected our range turkeys one fall on several farms that then infected processing plant workers and farm workers including myself. I came down with ornithosis after I autopsied a flock of range toms that looked like Erysipelas and later showed psittacosis. Many farm employees and processing plant workers tested positive and many received treatment. With help and follow up by Minnesota Public Health workers no personnel mortality occurred during the outbreak.

**Aspergillosis** became an unusual and serious disease problem when new confinement farms with buildings were built to increase tom turkey grow-out and processing year around. Growing toms in confinement year-round created new problems to resolve. In addition to needed heat and ventilation systems, dust control in winter barns was a new problem for our tom turkeys. Aspergillosis lung infection and airsacculitis with soapy exudate resulted in condemnation during processing. Since we were able to minimize it as a public health issue USDA Inspection allowed processing plant development of an online vacuuming system that removed lungs and air sac tissue, including condemnation and an off the line hang back system to allow additional vacuuming, water flushing and trimming of individual tom turkeys. We developed many management changes in tom barns for winter production to reduce dust conditions to minimize condemnation and the processing hang back system.

**Avian Influenza** appeared in 1970 first with the turkeys we raised in barns in the winter. Then our Minnesota range grow-out system became a severe problem as the disease occurred most every year that we found due to wild duck migrations mixing in with our range turkeys and later bringing more severe strains. I retired from Jennie O in 1990, and during 1995-1996 the Minnesota industry moved off range into year-round confinement. Many more barns were built to grow out turkeys in winter and Avian Influenza almost disappeared. However in 2015 a High Path H5N2 virus moved east across the United States with major disease losses of both turkeys and chicken layers that were destroyed by USDA crews to eliminate the virus. An example of the viral pathogenicity can be described when a 10,000 bird healthy flock of 25 pound tom turkeys eating a truck load of feed every couple day , on a Monday morning completely stopped eating and by Thursday 90% had died from the disease. Many states were involved with major losses, until the virus was eliminated by USDA.

### **Other Disease Problems**

The latest publication of "Diseases of Poultry" was essential to identify and to work with the many diseases occurring in a turkey operation. Turkey diseases often started in other states and eventually

made it to Minnesota. Many diseases came and went as we learned how to treat and manage them and some just disappeared without a clue. Interaction with other states disease problems and meetings became important in my job.

## **A Jennie O Advantage**

My boss Earl Olson had a management committee that recommended his growing a third of the live birds required for his processing production. That meant increases in our farm production most years. He also approved my providing helpful information from our farms that helped the many independent growers to do well and vis versa, providing adequate supply of good quality turkeys needed for his processing plants. Earl Olson also understood my needing interaction with Minnesota growers and producers in other states and their meetings. I also traveled with Earl to many meetings and to other turkey operations that improved disease control and management both in live production and processing improvements for Jennie O, including our Minnesota industry that helped us to continue to grow.

## **General Farm Management**

My work at Jennie O evolved and grew into three jobs: farm manager, veterinarian, and nutritionist.

Management is a major factor in profitable turkey production. Maintenance of turkey buildings and finding, hiring and training people to manage and also care for barns and flocks of live turkeys 24 hours a day and seven days a week is a daily and constant requirement. As a manager you need to learn and work at it every day. In addition to disease problems, bird losses and production time with barn fires and winter building snow collapse all need planning and prevention. Learning to prevent tom losses in barns year round creates a whole new management program for summer and winter. Winter barn dust control and summer heat require ventilation control and sprinklers. Losses on range include rainstorms and snowstorms and in summer heat stroke. Frozen drinking water on range can be a problem in late fall or early spring and sprinkler hoses are required on hot summer range.

## **Turkey Barn Fires**

During my early years, turkey barn fires and bird losses to fires was a major problem and our insurance company helped us with prevention plans. After many barn fires, I engaged Dr. Bill Junilla, a retired agricultural electrical engineer and professor at the University of Minnesota to evaluate our turkey barns. He helped me develop a detailed fire prevention plan for our farms that later was picked up by insurance companies and by our Minnesota turkey industry.

The major problems were due to electrical and propane gas problems. Electricians were wiring all our turkey barns with aluminum conduit pipe that was dissolved by ammonia gas developed from the urea molecule splitting in the wet turkey manure pack. The exposed wiring then caused sparks and fires. Dr. Junilla had us replace electrical conduit wiring with 3 wire UF (underground feeder) cable to wire all our barns. We strung and fixed all UF cable on inside the barn walls exposed for ease of examination and damage by mice or other problems when putting it up in the attics. Also we used dust tight fittings

and switches to prevent turkey barn dust accumulation and moisture that would cause conducted electric current to heat and ignite fire in the fittings and switches creating a barn fire.

We developed a written wiring and fittings plan for our barns that we required by our electricians and we rewired all our barns. Also, the use of propane gas lines and propane brooder stoves and other gas heaters were inspected by a nonfarm worker utilizing and checking a prepared list before heaters were put in operation and new poults were to be placed. The barn fire problem ceased. Minnesota electricians then adopted our plan for other growers as well, that insurance companies later required.

### **Water Systems Chlorination**

Another serious health issue I learned as a dairy veterinarian while examining an off-feed milk cow in a winter stanchion. She was trying to get a drink from her empty fountain cup. I helped the farmer with pipe wrenches to take apart the fountain and its galvanized pipe supply system. We pulled a bacterial and fungus chord of growth the full length of the pipe system that had plugged and stopped the water flow. Also, what was it doing to the cows digestion system and health? I related that problem to our turkey barns as we used gravity flow water supply tanks raised up on a frame so that medications or treating Blue Comb Disease with milk replacer could be mixed to treat turkeys. We did not have injectors then. I had the water pipe system taken apart and flushed on several turkey barns and found a similar fungal/bacterial chord of growth as in the cow barn. We developed a water flushing system and chlorination between flocks on all our barns. Later when injectors were available, we and the industry adopted continuous chlorination.

### **Personal Activity**

#### **Personal Partnership and Real Estate Investment**

I invested in a number of farm land purchases with a partner that we developed, managed and sold. Three of the farms were improved for crop production and sold later. One was drained with field tiling and a drainage pump for crop production. A significant portion of one farm was sold for a church and commercial business's. Later the larger portion was sold into the RIM program (Reinvest in Minnesota) at 90% and after several controlled burns and tree control, it was sold for deer and pheasant hunting. The income added to our retirement. The last purchase we made, a low wet farm with tilling and a pump that took a lot of maintenance and time. Later we also sold the farm into the Minnesota RIM Program and is being managed for waterfowl production and hunting.

#### **Regent Candidate Advisory Council (RCAC)**

A short job I took on by request, the RCAC was established by the Minnesota Legislature in 1988. The RCAC job is to advise the legislature in electing Regents for the University of Minnesota. I was one of the 24 members selected and approved by the state legislators for the first council. I represented veterinarian medicine and farm livestock producers. It was an honor and my boss allowed the mostly week end time.

After several meetings in the Minnesota capitol building a plan was developed, names were collected and mailings out to make selections. We recruited a large number of interested persons, then spent all day on a Friday and Saturday to review for our election. That Sunday morning in church looking around during the service, I could not remember the name of any of the individuals in church even though I knew them all. I was only 55 then. Later during mass I finally got one person's name and slowly I got over it on the way home. Others later told me it was "just" mind overload.

## **Eulogies**

Many close family and friends have passed into our next world that I was honored to provide with a eulogy. My younger brother dentist Dr. Paul Poss, my land partner CPA Ken Parker, my veterinary cohort and turkey manager Dr. Dennis Rahn, my close veterinary classmate Air Force Colonel Dr. Rollie Olson, and close neighbor friends Duane and Martha Westermann who Emilie and I served as estate representatives and co-trustees of their will.

## **The Peter and Emilie Poss Family**

### **The Family Growing Up**

My wife Emilie was born in Sedalia, Missouri to a German father and Irish mother. We were married in their Catholic church. Our five children began arriving a year later and every year or two later.

I snow skied in college and taught our family early to ski. While in grade and high school our family spent 9 years every Christmas week skiing in Colorado. Attending Christmas Eve Mass, and leaving early Christmas morning, and then returning after New Year's worked well with my job and kept our high schoolers safe with us on New Year Eve. Having our family vacation together was great and later several other families joined us.

Emilie and I also were able to have our family experience Disney world in Florida in when our youngest, Patti was 5 and got lost for a time and again in 2005 when Disney had updated with improved shows and our kids were older.

Living on Eagle Lake in Kandiyohi County we were able to have a five family summer vacation week and family reunion in August just prior to school every year. Included is a dinner out party on Saturday night after church for all 25 family members. The highlight of the evening is a report from each person on what they did last year and plans for the new school year. Our grandchildren all keep in contact. Especially easy now with smart phones.

Our five children all graduated various colleges with graduate degrees. Included are: Hospital CEO Respiratory Therapist with a Masters, Chemical Engineer with Masters degrees and Global Business Mgr., Medical Technician with a Masters in Research. Medical Doctor with Masters degrees and Chief Medical Officer at Ascension Hospitals. Lawyer with a Masters at Federal Trade Center. They all married and provide us with 13 grandchildren.

.....0As of August 2019, ten of our 13 grandchildren have graduated from college. Starting with the oldest we have a Mental Health Counselor with a Masters, a Medical Doctor in Pediatrics Primary, a BS in Forestry and Army Ranger Combat Medic, a Physics BA, Chemistry BA and PhD student, a Master's in Business Analytics, a Law student, CPA, a Mechanical Engineer BS and PhD student in Mechanical Engineering and Applied Mechanics, a BA in Psychology, a Masters in Accounting and CPA, a mental health therapist and a College Graduate in Exercise Physiology. Then an electrical engineer in 2 years, plus one in High School and one in Middle School. We have no great grandchildren as yet, but an older granddaughter married October 2019 and possibilities are expected.

## **Jennie O Retirement**

In 1988, Jennie O Foods was purchased by Hormel Foods of Austin, Minnesota and in March of 1990, I retired from a 25-year career with Earl Olson and Jennie O Foods. However, I was not out of work very long.

**Brinton Veterinary Labs** owner, Gene Brinton in Willmar hired me as Vice President of his company for a year and a half in 1990-91, during business changes that I helped with.

**Dr. David Thawley Dean** of the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Minnesota hired me to replace the Admissions Director Dr. Wendell DeBoer who had a heart attack and resigned in January 1991. With a knowledgeable secretary help, I learned the process and system of selection and admitted 80 students for the 1991 class in March. My position was a halftime job for 6 months and was extended for another year to admit the 1992 class and a replacement was hired. Dr. Thawley then hired me as Assistant to the Dean. I resigned 4 years later when a new Dean was hired.

**Dawes Laboratories** in Chicago hired me to work periodically with their poultry customers in several states for many years working with salesmen Tom Chapman from Iowa and Jeff May from Missouri. They continue to have me work in March in their booth at the Midwest Poultry Convention.

**Turkey Growers Processors and Suppliers** in Minnesota and outstate hired me for help with specific problems.

**The National Turkey Federation** hired me on a part time basis for several years, assisting with their annual convention and meeting programs. The job included writing "Best Management Practices for Turkey Production." It was updated and published by NTF in April 2004 for distribution.

**Dr Mike Hansen**, a veterinary classmate in Paynesville, Minnesota with turkey experience developed Poultry Intellimetrics Inc., a unique and very successful program for processors and growers improving their product value. I helped fill in for him to have time off and later he provided his program to me for several years that I utilized with Bilmar Foods in Zeeland, Michigan and in Storm Lake, Iowa for many years. Dr. Hanson is retired, but sold his program to his son Greg who continues and has expanded the program into Canada and other countries today.

**Lawyers** hired me for information or as expert witness mostly involving turkeys and chickens. For many years I had a case or two pending most all the time that I worked on. Some were information only, others depositions only with reams of paper to review and field trips to investigate. Others a court case as a witness, all usually interesting and very good income.

**Gorans Brothers Farms** in Svea, Minnesota, a large tom turkey grow-out and cropping operation hired me part time for more than a dozen years to help organize a family farm management plan and turkey health management program, feed formulation and production.

## **Foreign Work Experience**

**Philippines:** VOCA “Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Operations” a USAID Farmer to Farmer program engaged me along with my wife Emilie to spend a month in the Philippines In 1991. It was my first of many overseas tours with VOCA and my work was primarily feed mill management and feed formulations for poultry and swine. Another University of Minnesota veterinarian Dr. Earl Thompson with his wife also were there. He was inseminating the milk cow many families had and we transported a supply of semen for him in a can of dry ice on our airplane trip. I made several other VOCA trips. It became ACIDI/VOCA “Agricultural Cooperative Development International” later on.

**Moscow, Russia:** The Wayzata Rotary Club hired me at half fee to raise a flock of turkeys on a farm in Russia a group of members had visited. We spent ca \$10,000 to raise 3,000 poults that I bought in Great Britain and flew into Moscow from England and had feed trucked in from Belgium. They provided a college agricultural teacher to work with and two women I needed, a veterinarian and engineer to create a ventilation and heating system in the typical concrete Russian farm building about a 100 miles north of Moscow. I planned for their sale of turkey meat at high prices in Moscow, but they sold live birds locally and kept most of the flock for breeders.

**Samara, Russia:** ACCDI/VOCA financed a trip to teach at the Samara Training Center for two weeks. Land o’ Lakes and Winrock International developed and continues to support the Training Center, including planning schedules and identifying and supporting teachers from the USA. Most all the participants and teachers facilities were in the Training Center building. The classes were 20 or more and many were military personnel. The program slides I provided earlier were transposed to Russian as well as my speech. I flew to Moscow and took an overnight train to Samara. On the return I was flown in a 20 seat Russian airplane to Moscow.

**Poland:** I was forwarded a request previously sent to the UofM Agriculture Department for travel and evaluation of a turkey operation in Poland that a Canadian Company was interested in buying. I reviewed and agreed to the project. Together we flew to Berlin and drove into Poland. We visited management and owners and then breeders, hatchery, farms and processing plant to help evaluate the operation along with personnel from the Canadian Company. Personal from Canada were helpful but some growers were not. In the end the sale did not happen.

**Nigeria:** The state of Kebbi in the far northwest of Nigeria requested a proposal for a poultry operation, a crop storage, and a rice production operation. A Twin City company needed three knowledgeable persons for the three projects and offered me the poultry portion. Following many meetings and work plans an offer was prepared and we flew to Abuja, the “new” capitol of Nigeria for meetings. Then we flew in a small plane to Kebbi to observe the area and provide our proposed plan. However, we lost out to a proposal from China.

**Turkmenistan:** Dr. David Thawley past Dean of the Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine while living in Utah asked me to teach farmers in Turkmenistan, a project he organized. I provided poultry information, Dr. Thawley provided swine information, and a University of Utah extension expert taught vegetable production. We traveled with an Army Major who had arranged the plan and all of their farm workers are military. We were given tours of their operations and then taught classes as planned. One of our field trips was a field of potatoes on the Iranian border and when I walked around the field, a soldier stopped me to stay in the group as gun power was pointed at us from the Iranian mountains.

**Republic of Georgia:** ACIDI/VOCA financed a trip providing partial expenses for my wife Emilie on the trip. The assignment in Tbilisi involved independent chicken broiler farms with mortality problems. A diagnostic lab was available in Tbilisi that I visited for autopsy. The laboratory was serviced by several women, none of who had much training and no facilities for bacterial cultures. A Russian male veterinarian was in charge, but not available for me to consult. He had a fancy dressed secretary with colorful expensive looking window dressings in both of their offices. He was busy, but later I was able to have a visit with the veterinarian but with little help and expensive fees for autopsy work and no bacteriology. I was able to provide some management help and vaccine programs for their poultry farms. Their grapes and home-made wine and vodka were plentiful and tasty.

**Italy:** The veterinarians in Cremona requested a speaker from the College of Veterinary Medicine in Minnesota on Avian Influenza control in the United States at an Agriculture Fair for their producers experiencing Avian Influenza. They were having serious losses and continuous spread of the disease. I spoke at the meeting and then had a discussion with local poultry veterinarians. I sent ahead slides that were transposed to Italian and provided with an interpreter for my speech. My wife Emilie went along and we traveled Italy and a railroad trip to Nice, France before flying home.

## **Peter and Emilie World Travel Events**

During my turkey work career I attended many meetings across the United States and my wife Emilie and I traveled together most trips, taking time to tour before or after the meetings seeing most all our United States. When the National Turkey Federation held their annual meeting in the Hawaiian Islands we bought a 10 day tour with 2 days on each island with a car to travel. Our 5 children with their families living in 5 states from Montana to Washington DC also provided us USA travel trips.

Following retirement from Jennie O in 1990 our children and their families were doing well and my other jobs and projects were short-term and Emilie and I travelled abroad enjoying our world. After our VOCA month long experience in the Philippines in 1992 we began buying world trips and tours. We spent 2 weeks on a sail boat with 2 other couples in the British Virgin Islands and a week in Bonaire

twice later on. Also we had great visits with our 2<sup>nd</sup> son Steve and Marilyn and their young family during his 4 year 3M job in Belgium with 3 children. We made several vacation trips to Mexico and many tours and fishing trips to Canada. Later we planned a couple weeks in Alaska.

Our first long trip, was a 60 day circumnavigation tour around South America visiting all but two countries. Leaving from Florida it started with a Columbian island, then through the Panama Canal and south on the Pacific Ocean through the Strait of Magellan and around Cape Horn to the Atlantic Ocean and north to Florida visiting all but two of the South American countries.

We toured many European countries like Germany, Poland, France, Italy, Spain, England, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Later was Antarctica, Australia, New Zealand, China, Vietnam, Jerusalem, many to Russia, Turkmenistan, Iceland, Greece, Turkey, Africa, India, Bhutan, Bahamas, Canada, Mexico, Panama, Bonaire, Tahiti, and more. We traveled all seven continents. With foreign service jobs, tours and fun trips, we experienced more than 40 foreign trips meeting many new people and we saw and learned the amazement of our world.

## **Minnesota Veterinary Historical Museum**

My last major retirement job that required donations and no pay is the MVHM. The museum was founded in 1985 by College of Veterinary Medicine professors and veterinarians. It became a 501 c(3) organization with articles of incorporation and by-laws in order to receive tax free donations to operate. The web site is [hist.cvm.umn.edu](http://hist.cvm.umn.edu)

In 2004 my mentor Dr. Ben Pomeroy passed away and in 2006 the Minnesota Legislature provided \$4 million in his honor to renovate the condemned CVM Dairy Barn that now provides a large classroom in the hay mow and first floor offices for student recruitment and enrollment plus two gallery conference rooms.

In 2006 my classmate Dr. Rollie Olson on the MVHM Board of Directors recruited me to join the Board to help honor the legacy of Dr. Pomeroy in the new building named the Pomeroy Student Alumni Center by the UofM Regents. Initially I was joined with Dr. Don Sime as Co-Chairs of the Major Donor Committee to develop funding to operate the Museum and to develop an endowment fund to provide future funds to hire a part time curator.

The legacy in the Pomeroy Center includes a large conference room on the first floor that is the Pomeroy Gallery. A large plaque I provided identifies Dr. Pomeroy's teaching, research and political service to the poultry and livestock industry of Minnesota and to the College of Veterinary Medicine. I included the list of current Directors on the Minnesota Turkey Growers Board who then paid for the plaque. The Pomeroy Gallery has wall cabinets displaying his legacy and on the far wall a large mural picturing Dr. Pomeroy in white coveralls standing in a range of several hundred mature white turkeys. The mural is the work and donation of both our Museum Treasurer, Dr. Carl Jessen and I. There are few turkey pictures in the College of Veterinary Medicine and I like to show the mural to others on tours and point to seven foot tall Dr. Pomeroy.

Museum operational space is provided by the College of Veterinary Medicine including an office with library space, three safe rooms for artifact storage and numerous spaces for displays and exhibits throughout the college. A Museum 12 year goal for a million dollar foundation has been established with more than the goal, providing for part time curators and expenses. I was elected MVHM President in 2010 and continue part time to this day in 2020.

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A curriculum vitae is available with this autobiography

Autobiography solicited by the Committee on the History of Avian Medicine, American Association of Avian Pathologists