

Editor's Note: *Chuck Tillman, a resident of Golden Ours Convalescent home in Grant, is a former track star from the Ogallala area. His brother Jack Tillman writes for the Wahoo Newspaper. His letter to Golden Ours and his column for the paper are reprinted below.*

To the staff at the Golden Ours Convalescent Home, Grant, Nebraska:

The Golden Ours has been home to my brother, Chuck Tillman, for more than nine years. He entered the home on 9-11-01, a day none of us will forget.

My wife and I live in Wahoo, Neb., a small town of 4,000 a few miles west of Omaha. We are more than 300 miles from Grant, so our visits to Chuck have not been as frequent as we would like.

Both my wife and I have passed our 80th birthdays, so traveling is not easy. We have been to visit him many times over the past nine years. Our most recent visit was on the 29th of September.

Our visits to the Golden Ours have given us a good opportunity to observe and evaluate the kind of care my brother has received. Over the years the care has been excellent. We came in contact with several caregivers last week.

The compassion and respect you have for those in your care is obvious. As some of you know, it is emotionally difficult for me to see my brother in his deteriorating condition. I appreciated your sympathy for me, and I feel better knowing he is in your care.

For 20 years I have written a general interest column for the local weekly newspaper. I have enclosed a copy of the column which will be published on Oct. 14, 2010.

Let me thank you again for the care you give my brother.

Respectfully,

Jack Tillman

OUR TOWN

by

Jack Tillman

Memory can last 10 seconds or 76 years.

I understand the short 10 second memory. It is the length of my memory when I am introduced to a new person. And I understand no memory at all, which is trying to think of the name of somebody whom I have known for many years. No memory at all is like asking yourself the question: why did I come upstairs?

It is difficult sometimes to know exactly how long a memory is. This is especially true when one is talking or thinking about a family event that happened many years ago.

I often ask myself if I really remember an event from the far past, or do I just remember being told about it by other many times over the years.

Lately, I have been trying to remember things that happened in late July and early August of

the year 1934. I was five-and-a-half years old that summer, so I am confident that I can actually remember specific things.□

I also recognize that some things I know about that period are not memories, but things I have been told or things I have read.

The year 1934 in central Nebraska was one of the hottest and driest on record, but I have no memory of suffering because of the heat or the lack of rain. Somebody told me that or I read it. I do remember that the yard in front of our house in North Platte had no vegetation. Even weeds wouldn't grow.

I also remember that sometime in late July my parents took my younger brother and me to stay with relatives for a couple of weeks. The first week or so we stayed with my Dad's brother Chet and his wife Bertha in Holdrege, Neb.

The second week we spent with my grandpa and grandma in Wilcox, a small town near Holdrege. I don't remember the reason why we were taken to Holdrege and Wilcox, and I don't think we were told.

In those days young kids didn't ask those kinds of questions. One of the things I do remember with clarity is that neither place had indoor toilets. I liked my uncle and aunt and grandparents, but even at five-and-a-half, I did not like the plumbing arrangements. And the answer to the obvious question is, yes, the outhouses did come equipped with Sears and Montgomery Ward catalogs.

A few days after the 8th of August my parents came to Wilcox and took us home, where we found a new baby brother. Perhaps I was not as observant as most kids that age, but I can't remember any changes in my mother before she took us to relatives or when she came to get us. And I don't recall any curiosity about where the new brother came from.

We went to see that baby brother last week. He had his 76th birthday on August 8. He lives in the Golden Ours Convalescent Home in Grant, Neb. He is in what appears to be the final

stages of Parkinson's Disease. The disabling consequences of the disease are horrible.

My brother has been in the home at Grant for nine years. We will never forget the infamous day he went there, Sept. 11, 2001.

The people at the Golden Ours home are remarkable. My brother requires total care. He cannot dress or feed himself, and he can't talk. He was clean, shaved and fully dressed, and his hair was combed.

By watching them work, we could see that the caregivers had compassion and respect for those they serve.

Each and every day we should thank the good people who take care of our aged and disabled loved ones.

The oldest daughter took us to Grant, a long day's drive out and a long day's drive home. We believe that my brother was aware of our presence, even though he could not express it.

It is emotionally difficult to look at the helpless old man and remember the tiny baby in 1934.