

## THE LIFE OF JULIEN J. MEYER

Julien Jehard Meyer was born May 30, 1912 in Roberts County, South Dakota near Rosholt to Louis and Carrie Meyer.

His sister Myrtle was almost 4 years old at the time. Her birth date was August 2, 1908.

They attended all 8 grades at a rural school in Harmon township and both graduated from Rosholt High School.

Julien's graduation date was May 30, 1930 on his birthday.

He showed an interest in radio and electronics during his High School days so his dad offered him money to put together the equipment to build a small radio station from which he and a few relatives put on a few programs from the living room in his home. There was some live music. Most broadcasts were done on Sundays. His father had taught him to play the violin and he also played a guitar and sang.

Julien helped his dad on the farm who owned a threshing rig. He liked machinery and had a knack for mechanics. But he didn't care much about livestock and milking cows.

While in High School he played cornet in the band and was a cheer leader.

When he graduated he told his mother, "No more books for me!" But that was not to be.

He decided to go to Hanson Auto, Tractor and Electrical School at Fargo, North Dakota where he received a diploma on February 14, 1931.

Now there was a severe depression, a few dry years, hard to find work and not much money to spend.

In the meantime Myrtle had attended 4 years of College at Aberdeen, South Dakota and graduated to become a teacher.

Julien "hit the books" again when he decided to go to Moorhead State Teachers College for 2 years. During this time he and 2 men, also college students, rented an apartment, took turns buying groceries and cooking the meals. So Julien turned out to be a pretty good cook from this experience. He and one of his friends broadcast live music at a radio station. Julien played the guitar and they both sang. To make a little extra money he was a pin setter at a bowling alley.

After several years he bought a second hand saxophone and learned to play that.

He didn't find a job immediately but later was hired to finish up a school year in a rural school in Roberts County near Browns Valley, Minnesota where a teacher had a tough time disciplining the students. So that was a challenge for a beginning teacher!

He always loved children, enjoyed being with them and always spent time outside with them during noon hours and recesses, beside the many projects they did in the class room. So everything worked out fine.

Just before getting this position he met Amy Anderson at White Rock where his sister Myrtle taught school and Amy was a student. Their first date was at a party at the Weiser home near Rosholt where he and his brother-in-law to be, Bertel Malm were playing in a small band.

Julien and Amy were married at Sisseton, South Dakota on June 16, 1935 by Rev. Hofstad at the parsonage with Myrtle Meyer and Bertel Malm as attendants.

They lived with his parents this summer of 1935 where Julien assisted his father with cultivating corn, harvesting and operating the threshing rig going from neighbor to neighbor with this. This was a dawn to after dark job. Julien's mother worked hard during those days to get the cows home and milked, fed the pigs, chickens, cats and dog and picked in the eggs. She had to get corn cobs and wood hauled up to the house on the cart for fuel for the kitchen stove. When it was very hot she used a kerosene stove. Suppers were very late.

In those days they had a pump in the corner of the kitchen which pumped up water from a well pit in the basement for drinking and cooking. They lowered cream, milk and butter into this pit to keep it cool. There was a generator in the basement for electric lights until the REA came along. Then they modernized the kitchen with an electric stove, refrigerator, sink with running water and turned their pantry into a bathroom.

Amy didn't milk cows but helped with such household tasks as washing the cream separator and dishes, cleaning, cooking and washing clothes.

On September 13, 1935 Julien and Amy moved to a farm home west of Browns Valley, MN about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the school where he began his teaching career. They rented the upstairs. The Leonard Doschadis family lived downstairs. Most of the furniture they had was obtained from their parents. These are some items ordered from Sears Roebuck in October: Linoleum, \$2.59; set of green glass dishes, \$1.59; rolling pin, 25¢; fan belt, 14¢; butcher knife, 18¢; cretonne, 24¢; mixing bowl, 23¢; Julien's sox, 46¢; Amy's stockings, 55¢; her shoes, \$1.98; oven thermometer, 33¢; and blanket, \$1.00.

Gary Conrad was born here March 19, 1936. Amy's cousins, first Bernice Anderson and later her sister Pearl came to help out a few days after Bernice left.

They lived with his parents during the summer of 1936.

Julien applied for another school near Peever and Sisseton in Roberts County, S.D. where he would get a better salary. So he, Amy and Gary moved into a large house which had been a parsonage and was across the road from the church they attended and the school also across the road. Another couple with their daughter lived in part of the house. This lady made a quilt for Gary's crib. Julien's mother had cousins living in this neighborhood, Ole Simonson and his brothers and families. Julien taught here 2 years, 1936-37 and 1937-38.

In the summer of 1938 Julien applied to teach at District 58 in Traverse County near Wheaton, MN. His father-in-law, Frank Anderson, had taught in this school before he married Mabel Larson who lived in that district. She had attended this school and graduated from 8th grade there.

Julien, Amy and Gary moved into a rural home which had been owned and lived in many years by Amy's great aunt and great uncle, Frank L. Andersons. They were not blood relatives of Amy's father but her mother's aunt and uncle. Their nearest neighbors were her aunt Minnie Anderson and family. Mabel's sister had also married an Anderson.

Dannie Lee was born here October 20, 1938 on a beautiful fall day. Dr. Ewing, from Wheaton, went hunting after he and a nurse delivered the baby. Minnie came over to help out as did her daughter Pearl who stayed for a few days and nights.

While still teaching at this school Julien decided to buy a building on Main Street in White Rock, South Dakota where they fixed up an apartment upstairs in which to live. He opened a shop on the main floor, a "fix it shop" where he repaired radios, appliances and cars. When he wasn't teaching at District 58 he worked at the shop on Saturdays, evenings and summer vacations.

Myrtle and Bertel Malm lived next door in a building where they had an apartment upstairs and a cream station downstairs where farmers came in and sold their cream.

In the fall of 1941 Julien, Amy, Gary and Dannie moved to a large house near Browns Valley, MN where Julien taught in a school 1 mile from home. Often on week end evenings he went into town to work at repairing radios at a store there.

On December 7, 1941 while eating a Sunday dinner the news came that Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese and World War II began.

During the summer of 1942 the family lived at a small rented house on Wheelock Parkway where Julien was employed repairing cars at a garage in St. Paul. They also spent the summer of 1943 in St. Paul where he worked at the same garage but the family lived at the home of Julien's aunt, Gunda Frohn where she rented out apartments and rooms on Minnehaha Avenue.

In the meantime between those 2 summers Julien and family had moved to Holt, MN on September 19, 1942 in northern MN where Julien began teaching in his first town school, just a couple grades instead of eight. He also taught the term of 1943-1944 there.

The first house they moved into had no electricity so on November 10, 1942, after a few weeks they moved to a house which had electricity. They lived across the street from the Lutheran Church and parsonage where Rev. T.C.L. Hanson and family resided. Amy often played the piano and organ and accompanied the choir there. She also had a class of piano students.

Marguerite Lee, a teacher whose home was in Newfolden, MN roomed and boarded with them for awhile.

Julien taught the term of 1943-1944 here too. He got called to serve in the army but was deferred, being a teacher, to finish the school year.

Gary entered the first grade at Holt and finished second grade.

It was here that students and faculty participated in gathering scrap iron, etc. for the war effort. Gas, tires, and food were being rationed and tokens and booklets were required in order to buy these commodities.

George Karvonen was the school superintendent. His wife's name was Eunice. They had 2 children, a boy and a girl.

After 2 terms at Holt, Julien decided to take a Civil Service position, so the furniture and several boxes of household items were stored at his parent's farm.

The move was made July 9, 1944 to their next home near Omaha, NE at Martin View, not far from Bellevue.. Julien worked at Ft. Crook as a civilian instructor to soldiers (OAS) teaching mechanics, working on Army vehicles, especially jeeps.

Janet Arlene was born here November 13, 1944 at St. Joseph's Hospital in Omaha, Nebraska.

Julien's mother and dad, Louis and Carrie, came to stay before and after her birth. When they left we sent money to Amy's mother, Mabel Anderson, to come down on the bus to spend a few days.

Gary was now in the 3rd grade and Dannie in 1st at a two room school.

Shortly before the school year ended Julien got a notice that he was to be transferred to the Ordnance Depot at Igloo, S.D. near the Black Hills to do the same work.

April 9, 1945 was the day the family left Nebraska.

President Roosevelt died April 12, 1945.

Amy and the three children stayed with her parents near Wheaton, MN while Julien went to find a place to live at Igloo. Gary and Dannie went with Millie and Kenny to their rural school to finish the last few days of school.

Our belongings were packed in Nebraska and sent on to Igloo, so Julien unpacked after finding a place in a barracks type of homes there. He made a sofa and a chair from the crates and I made cushions for them when arriving there. Someone wanted to purchase them when we left but Julien needed to take them apart for crates again.

He came to get us in May 1945 in the big old Pontiac we had. Luckily we could get enough gas and our tires held out so got there in fine shape.

The stay there wasn't long as the war ended in August. Julien acted quickly to get a teaching position in Minnesota again and was lucky to be offered a position as teaching principal at Southside Elementary School in Benson, MN and taught a combined 5th and 6th grade. Gary was to begin 4th grade and Dannie 2nd.

So the move was on to Benson in September 1945. Housing was a bit difficult to find so lived in a Simonson cabin at first, then moved to an apartment over the Gamble Store owned by Philbricks.

On May 1, 1946 the family moved into an old brick house on 2106 Atlantic Avenue which was purchased for \$2500. Amy's dad and mother came from Morris to help paper and paint. Julien did some remodeling and dug a ditch for the water line from the avenue back of the house and did the plumbing for the bathroom and kitchen.

This home originally housed the office for the brickyard west of it in which Julien's grandfather, Jorgen Simonson had worked when they lived in Benson before homesteading near Rosholt, S.D. in Roberts County many years ago.

Maynard Ray was born at the Swift County-Benson Hospital on July 19, 1952. He entered 1st grade at the New Northside Elementary School where Julien became the first elementary principal there in the fall of 1958, a position he held for 20 years.

Maynard had attended Kindergarten the previous year at Southside.

Through the years Julien has been Cub Scout Master, Sunday School Superintendent and teacher, operator of church P.A. system, a member of Our Redeemer's Church Council, president of Kiwanis, President of Sons of Norway for which he received a plaque honoring him as President of the Year for the District in 1972. He taught adult education classes on Radio and Electronics. He was the Engineer of KBMC and part time announcer from its beginning and continued on for a short time after his retirement as long as he could. He assisted in getting the FM station together.

After 20 years as Elementary Principal he spent 5 years as Audio Visual Director at Benson High School. There had been a dark room provided when the school was built so Julien organized a photography class. Throughout all his years with the Benson schools he spent much time on repairing projectors, tape players, and clocks to be set at all schools. He had an old sewing machine on which he sometimes had to mend rips in student's clothing.

After living at 2106 Atlantic Avenue for 20 years Julien bought a home at 902 - 15th St. South and he, Amy and Maynard moved in April 28, 1966. Julien's mother Carrie lived with them about 4 years after his father passed away.

Julien had to retire in 1975 due to his Parkinson's disease which was getting somewhat worse after the diagnosis in 1973. He'd been in the school system at Benson for 30 years and was of retirement~~at~~ at the time.

During summer vacations Julien continued his education at Moorhead State College and received his Bachelor of Science degree August 26, 1960. He also received credits on continuing education at St. Cloud State College and some correspondence courses. On January 16, 1959 he received a diploma from Cleveland Institute of Radio Electronics on completing a Master Course in Electronics by mail. In 1981 the FCC granted him a license as a First Class Radio Telephone Operator needed to be an engineer.

Julien had many hobbies which are listed here.

1. MUSIC - played violin, guitar, saxophone, cornet, piano and organ by ear, sang, took a few piano lessons when young. Had a school orchestra in Southside Elementary with students helping make music stands.
2. GARDENING AND FLOWERS
3. SOME OIL PAINTING AND OTHER DRAWINGS, SOME WOOD CARVING
4. WROTE POEMS AND ARTICLES - some published in MEA MAGAZINES
5. GOLFING
6. CROCHETED - taught some girls how to in his classroom
7. PHOTOGRAPHY - has many albums of snapshots, numerous slide travelogues with narration and tapes to go with them, home movies, 8mm and 16mm. Developed films, sometimes using his enlarger. Had a TV Camera in basement and often took visitors down to see themselves on a TV Monitor.
8. TRAVELLED to many states, Canada a few times to Regina, Sask. where Amy's uncle David Anderson and aunt Ruth lived; to Montreal in 1973 as President of Kiwanis; and to Norway, Sweden and Denmark the same summer, accompanied by Amy on all these. When the children were small and even through the High School years they travelled with us, covering Minnesota quite well and to many other states. On arriving home Julien set up his slide sorter and got busy on travelogues, scripts and tapes. He also has many parades in his collection. Many have been shown at Nursing Homes, churches, schools, Kiwanis and other places.
9. AMATEUR RADIO - WØDYC call letters. He could communicate with son Gary Meyer WØDYD in Minneapolis and had many contacts with other "hams". Before getting their licenses at the same time they practiced the code at home, one upstairs and the other downstairs sending and receiving messages.

Julien was a very busy person, always "on the run". He didn't give up easily when Parkinson's disease slowed him down.

He had to enter the hospital a few times to get adjusted on medication, and before that has had hernia surgery twice. On March 27, 1986 he was discharged from the hospital and admitted to Meadow Lane Healthcare Center in Benson for custodial care. Amy was discharged from the hospital the same day. At this writing Julien is still at MLHC and Amy continues to live at 902 - 15th St. S. attempting to do her best to keep up the house, mow the lawn and shovel snow when it isn't too deep.

She plays the piano and organ quite often at the Nursing Home for pastors of area churches, "Name That Tune" and occasionally for Sing Along times.

Although Julien has to be restrained in his chair and bed so that he won't fall, and it's difficult to communicate with him and at times when there is music he is able to sing and even harmonize and he likes to eat. He seems to enjoy when his family visits, especially the little ones and had a very good day when all 4 children and their spouses, some grandchildren and friends came to help him celebrate his 80th birthday on May 24, 1992. His birthday was on May 30th.

\*Written by Amy Meyer in June 1992