

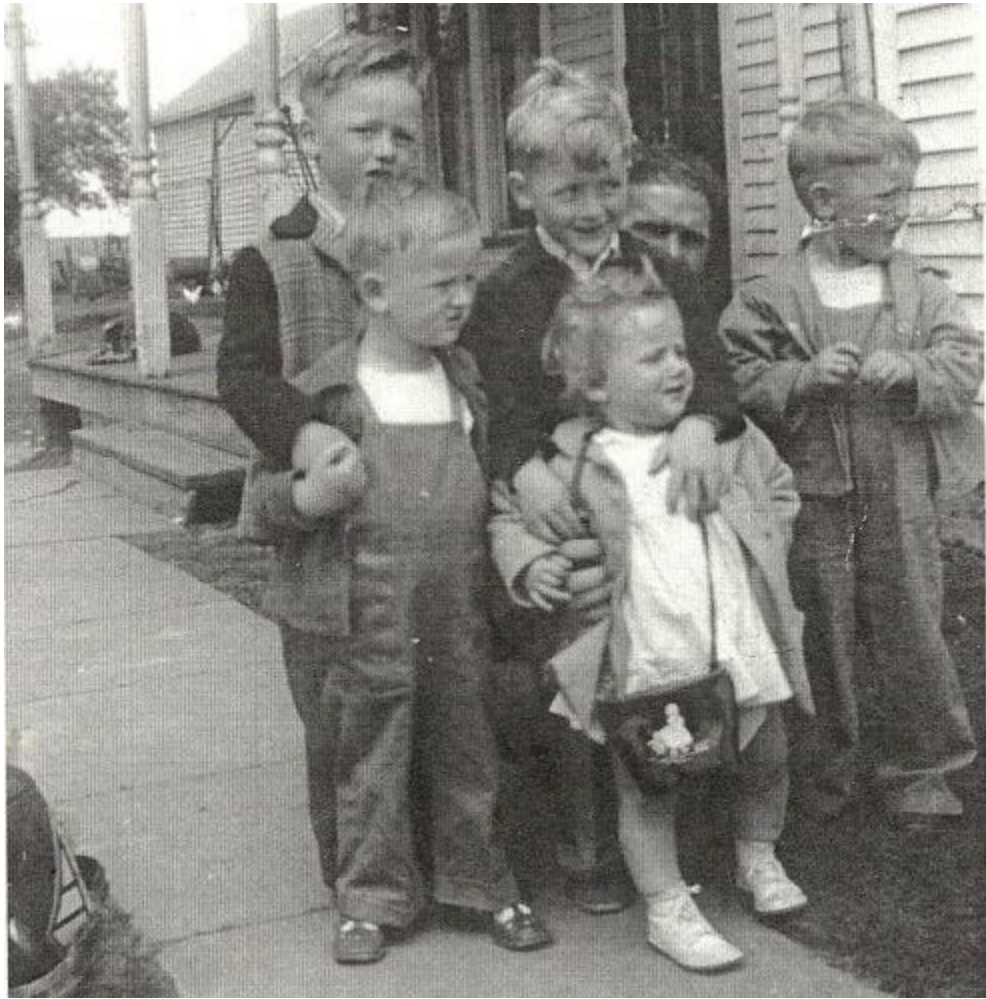
## HARRY AND ROSIE ARE COMING!

“Harry and Rosie are coming.” Whenever I heard my folks say that, I knew it was going to be a good time. Uncle Harold Suess was married to my dad’s sister, Rosa. (*That’s them below in 1941.*)



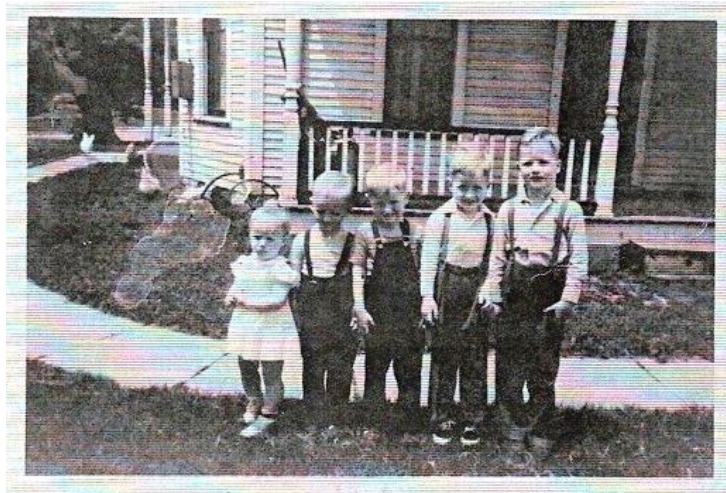
**Suess-Saayenga**  
German Valley, Ill., June 16—The marriage of Miss Rosa Saayenga and Harold Suess was solemnized Friday evening at 7 o'clock at the home of the bride's mother, Mrs. George Saayenga, German Valley, Rev. Andrew Meyers, of Scotland, S. D., brother-in-law of the bride, performing the ceremony.  
Miss Rosa Nevenhoven, of Freeport, and Miss Alvera Goethe, of Mt. Morris, were the bridesmaids; Emil Suess, of Freeport, and George Saayenga, brother of the bride, were the groom's attendants.  
The bride wore a navy blue outfit, with white accessories and a corsage of roses. Miss Nevenhoven wore a light blue dress and Miss Goethe was in a pink gown.  
A supper for twenty guests followed, a shower being given by the bride's two sisters, Dena and Hattie Saayenga, at the home of Mrs. Reint Poppen, for sixty relatives and friends.  
Mr. and Mrs. Suess left for Scotland, S. D., where they will reside on the farm, owned by the groom's mother.

They had kids my age to play with ---- and those kids didn't wreck my toys!  
*Below...Back L to R: George, Dick, Uncle Harry, and Harvey.*  
*Front: Dan and Sylvia (She carried a purse already at that tender age!)*



Way back in the dim recesses of my mind, I can remember going to visit my Suesc cousins when they lived north of Ridott Corners on the Goethe place east of Freeport, Illinois. I believe they lived at this house when Sylvia was born. Dad took me along one day and we delivered a baby gift, a tiny white dress with blue flowers (Mom had just finished sewing it.).

More prevalent in my memory is the day they moved to the farm south of Ridott Corners. The house seemed so huge.





During the years they lived there, I used to love to visit. My cousins let me ride their bikes and it was such fun.

Their barn had a ramp-type driveway up to the haymow level and you could really get a bike rolling -- just don't plow into a tree. Sometimes we kids played among the bales in that barn too.

If we walked down the hill toward the creek, we could crawl over fences and stand in the high cement culvert under the blacktop road and listen to cars pass above us.

The kitchen at that farm had a long built-in cabinet between the kitchen and dining room. I think you could open doors from both rooms. Those doors extended clear to the high ceilings. On the west wall were more floor-to-ceiling cabinets -- all varnished. The picture below was taken on June's first birthday. *L to R: Dick, Jim, Uncle Harry behind little June, Sylvia, Harvey, George and Dan.*



The kids attended a small brick school (Ridott Center School) east of Ridott Corners along Highway 20. After Iler Scholl closed, my beloved Mrs. Wilson went to teach at my cousins' school and I was so jealous of them! (Sylvia used to help clean around the school and says the sink was always such a mess to clean because of all the dirty little hands that used it. Sylv remembers that Mrs. Wilson gave her two small pictures when they moved to Rock Grove. She still has them in 2015.)



The Ridott/German Valley blacktop past the farm was full of speeding traffic and I can remember the excitement one night when a car hit a cow -- not sure if it was Uncle Harry's cow or Minkes'. My parents were worried that it might have been a child and wished cars would slow down.

It was such fun when the Suess family came to visit us. In summertime we kids tore around outside until it was time for them to go home. Oh, we played such great games of hide and seek, tag, and Mother, May I!



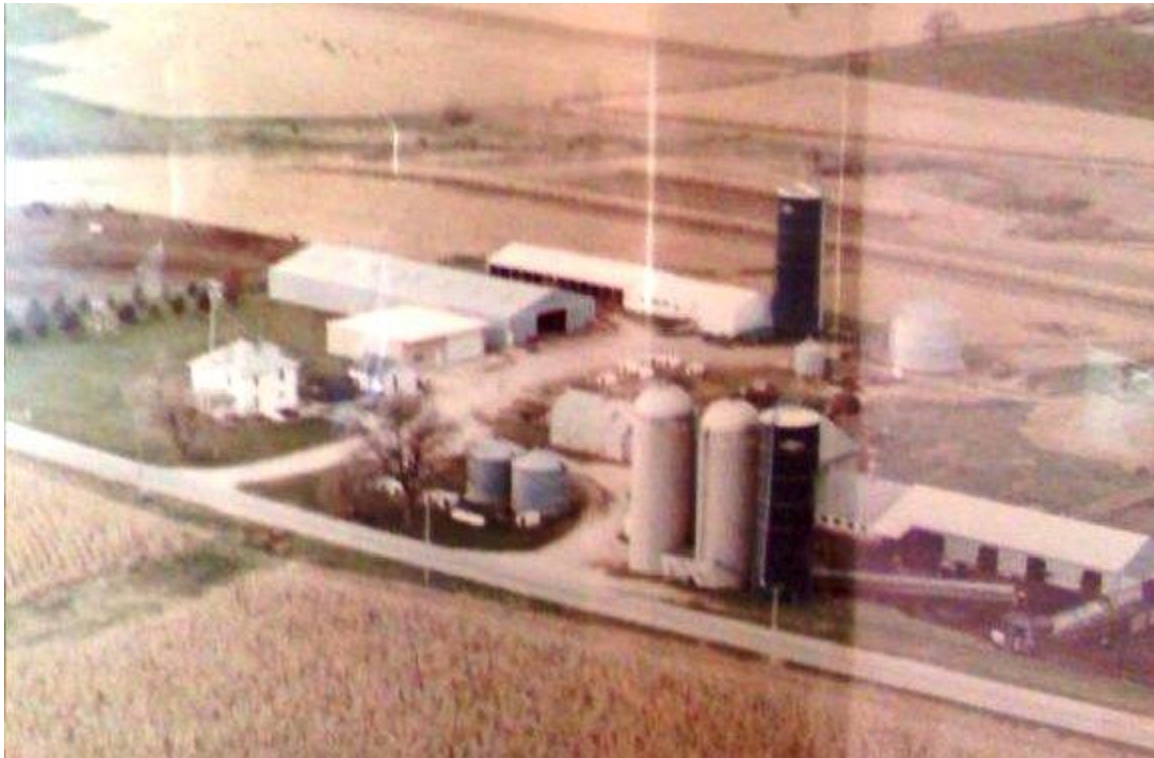
One scene that replays in my noggin must have happened when we kids were very young. I had an old Victrola in the dining room (before my folks divided the room to make a bedroom for me) that had to be cranked up to make it play. *The picture below is not the same Victrola but it gives you an idea of what a “cool” thing it was.*



We all took turns cranking and choosing which records to play. Due to our acute lack of stature in relation to the tall Victrola, we had to climb on a stool to reach the turntable. We stood in line waiting for our minute of fame. The records were mostly 33's and 78's plus a few “little kid songs” 45's that my mom bought for me. When I got too old for the “little kid songs”, Mom threw out all the old records and dismantled the Victrola, recycling its lower half into a magazine rack.

My dad often told of the day he was at Rosie and Harry's home when Harry arrived home from the grocery store. Dad helped him unload the pickup truck. There were cases of cereal...not just one box at a time like we bought.

Then Uncle Harry and Aunt Rosie bought a farm near Rock Grove, Illinois, and I remember that moving day, too. They had a marvelous “4-square” house and I can still see it in my mind. The barn was modern and large and there were oodles of sheds and outbuildings. There was a cement block pump house just east of the house yard.



It was twenty miles to their new home but I loved going there. One day my folks were in our west lawn, watching a plume of smoke to the north/northwest. They decided that it had to be the cheese factory just east of the Sues farm. I wished the kids would go to the cheese factory so we could wave at each other.

Every year Aunt Rosie got a new set of dishes. With seven kids, the old ones didn't last very long. Aunt Rosie once complained that she had such a problem keeping cookies on hand. There was a large freezer in the pump house and she hid some goodies in the freezer when company was expected. Problem was, when she wanted to serve those cookies, they, too, were gone!

Mom baked a lot and put any extras that we didn't eat in her freezer. Whenever we went to visit my cousins, she took along all the extras and the kids met us at the driveway, looking for their treats. Mom often chuckled at the time she overheard Dick and a brother discussing how to share a candy bar. Dick told his brother that the brother should cut the bar in half, then the brother needed to give Dick the largest half.

The cousins had an old car with its top cut off and we had a blast driving that thing out in the pasture north of the buildings. They even drove through the creek.

Once, some relatives from Minnesota stopped at Aunt Rosie's on their move to Florida. They had a large family and the oldest kid was LeRoy. None of us appreciated LeRoy because he was pretty sure that moving to Florida made him better than the rest of us.

Several times a month our families were together and I loved those cousins so much!



About this time the whole family began to give programs in churches. Each of the kids played some instrument and sang, Uncle Harry was the MC, and Aunt Rosie accompanied them on the piano. *The picture below was in the Freeport, IL paper in 1960.*



THE NINE MEMBERS OF THE SINGING Harold Sues family of rural Rock City rehearse one of their numbers as Mrs. Sues accompanies them on the piano. Family members are, from left to right, June, 6, Jim, 10, Sylvia, 13, Danny, 14, Harvey, 15, Dick, 17, and George, 18, and Harold Sues. The farm family has been singing together for the past 12 years.—Journal-Standard Photo.

## Rock City Farm Family Finds Singing Together Is Ideal Hobby

By ARLEEN ETNYRE  
For The Journal-Standard  
ROCK CITY — The nine members of a singing Stephenson County farm family, whose combined voices sound much like a chorus, feel they have found an "ideal family hobby" through music.

The Harold Sues family of rural Rock City, whose seven children range in age from 6 to 18, has been singing together since 1948.

The closely-knit farm family makes between 15 and 20 singing appearances each year and is becoming well-known in the Rock City area. The energetic family is easy to spot with its characteristic honey blond hair, blue eyes and rosy cheeks.

**Boys Play Football**  
Four wiry football players, the oldest boys in the family, form the backbone of the smooth-sounding singing group. George Sues, 18, Dick, 17, Harvey, 15, and Danny, 14.

The Sues children also play musical instruments well. George, Danny and Jim play the trombone, Dick the violin, and Sylvia, 13, one of two girls, the piano.

"The oldest boys are soloists,"

Sues said, "but when they start getting too cocky we remind them of the time when their voices were changing. The sound is hard to describe but it came close to that of a rooster beginning to crow."

### Operates Dairy Farm

The Sues family, which operates a 406-acre dairy farm near Rock Grove, has always derived "a lot of fun out of singing together." The family appears many times each year before church groups, civic organizations and in community celebrations such as Rock City's centennial observance in 1959 and "Frontier Days" there this year.

"We very seldom turn down an invitation to sing," Sues said. "We've sung in Dakota, Orangeville, Freeport, Durand, Baileyville, Forreston and Afolkey, just to mention a few towns. We try to limit our appearances to a 25-mile radius though."

Mrs. Sues, who plays the piano for the group while her husband acts as master of ceremonies, also directs the choir at Evangelical United Brethren Church in Rock Grove. The children all sing in her choir.

It was while they attended Sunday School that the children acquired their interest in singing.

"We discovered our children had nice voices and before long we started singing as a group," Mrs. Sues said.

The Sues singing group plans to test its prowess this Friday evening when it enters the Music Talent Jamboree at the State Theater in Freeport. The contest is sponsored by the Freeport Order of Eagles and is a benefit for the National Heart Fund.

Concerning the contest, Sues said, "It would be nice to win the local talent contest but how we do is not awfully important in the long run."

"The important thing is that we've found an enjoyable hobby that the entire family can participate in."

It's not hard to see the children readily agree.

I don't think I ever attended one of their concerts. Dick played the violin and he was a natural. I do have a cassette of the Sues grandkids singing. *That's the grandkids below, singing at my folks' 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary open house in 1981.*



As happens in the normal progression of life, all of us kids grew up and married. I still saw Aunt Rosie and Uncle Harry at times but rarely saw my cousins. Some of the boys took over farming and Rose and Harold moved to a pretty house in Rock Grove.





I remember a picture in the kitchen of Jim in his Army uniform.



My cousins grew to adulthood and married. I only have wedding pictures for Dick, Sylvia and June.



Now that some of us are almost senior citizens, I reflect on those care-free days of our youth.  
*Below are June, me, Dick and Sylvia in 1997.*



I am especially happy to be in contact with Sylvia, June and Dick by e-mail. George and Harvey came to help me load the Ryder when I moved to Virginia in 2000.



Sylvia recently sent me the following forward by e-mail and it nicely sums up Uncle Harry and Aunt Rosie's method of raising decent, respectable children.

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## Drug Problem

The other day, someone at a store in a small town read that a Methamphetamine lab had been found in an old farm house in the adjoining county and he asked me a rhetorical question, "Why didn't we have a drug problem when you and I were growing up?"

I responded that we did have a drug problem when we were kids growing up on the farm or in the city. I had a drug problem when I was young:

I was drug to church on Sunday morning.

I was drug to church for weddings and funerals.

I was drug to family reunions and community socials no matter the weather.

I was drug by my ears when I was disrespectful to adults.

I was also drug to the woodshed when I disobeyed my parents, told a lie, brought home a bad report card, did not speak with respect, spoke ill of the teacher or the preacher. Or if I didn't put forth my best effort in everything that was asked of me.

I was drug to the kitchen sink if I uttered a profane four letter word. (I do know what Lye soap tastes like.)

I was drug out to pull weeds in mom's garden and flower beds and cockleburs out of dad's fields.

I was drug to the homes of Family, Friends, and neighbors to help out some poor soul who had no one to mow the yard, repair the clothesline or chop some fire wood, and if my mother had ever known that I took a single dime as a tip for this kindness, she would have drug me back to the wood shed.

Those drugs are still in my veins; and they affect my behavior in everything I do, say, and think. They are stronger than cocaine, crack or heroin, and if today's children had this kind of drug problem, America

might be a better place today.

The Sues kids were the cousins I knew best because they lived close by but I know I was the big winner in having them as cousins. “Harry and Rosie are coming!” Oh they certainly did come and left a marvelous legacy.



*Rosie and Harry with front: June and Jim. Middle left to right: Dan and Sylvia. Back left to right: Harvey, George, and Dick.*