

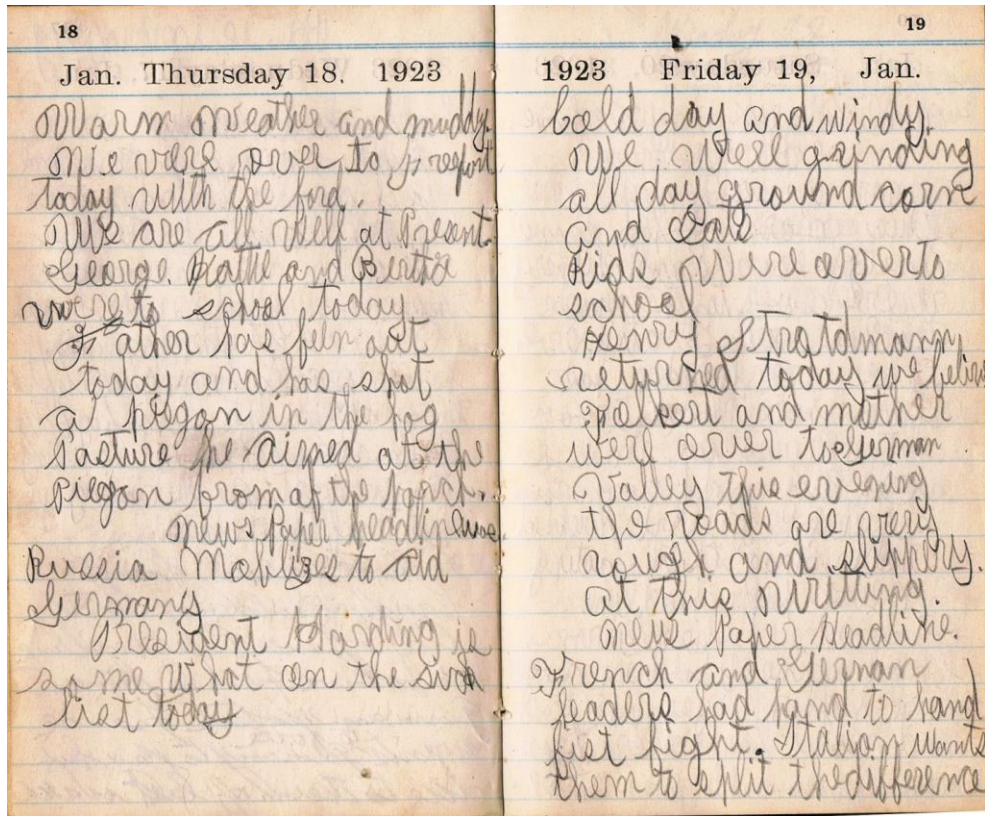
Hilvin was the second child of George and Hilka Saaijenga. His story is sad but I think it needs to be told. This is what I've been able to piece together from documents and family oral history.

Hilvin Saaijenga

Hilvin (born August 8, 1904) was a very intelligent young man.



I have a diary kept by him when he was 18. His penmanship was awful but he did just fine getting his thoughts across.



One thing I noticed...he seemed to be a sensitive sort of kid. He often copied poetry on his pages. The trouble started after that diary was written, apparently. When Iler School was closed, the directors (Dad was a

director.) had to clean up the school and I remember getting into some old record books up in a cupboard and that book had grades from early years. (All those books were burned when the new consolidated district was formed.) My mom told of finding Hilvin's name and he had all A's.

My dad once told me that Hilvin was a very smart kid and was "normal" until one summer day when there had been a very bad electrical storm and lightning hit Swantzy's barn. The old Swantzy place was at the corner of Holland Church Road and Hwy 20 where Dietmeiers live now. My dad and Hilvin were at the farm helping fight the fire. My dad came home but Hilvin stayed to help longer (because he had been employed by them as a hired hand that summer). Hilvin came home in the wee hours of the morning, crying...he had walked home thru pouring rain....this was about 3 1/2 miles. He had barely gone to sleep when there was a huge crack of thunder and Hilvin rose up out of his sleep, screaming. After that, he was never the same. Neighbors later told the family that Hilvin had been in the burning haymow, pitching hay out of a door, when some burning timbers crashed over him and somebody pulled him out of the burning hay. They had told him he better go home so he walked home alone (in driving rain and a severe thunder storm) after that horrifying experience. After that, things went downhill for Hilvin.

Dad told of people finding him walking along the railroad tracks 2 miles south of the farm. When my folks moved into the old farmstead, they discovered all the cords cut in the windows and no windows would stay open so we always propped them open as long as I lived there. Eventually, Grandma Hilka was convinced that he needed help so she signed papers to commit him to a mental institution at East Moline, IL. I once saw those papers but don't think I have them in my stash of old "stuff". I do have an old letter from the East Moline State Hospital telling that he had been a patient there since March 1934 and that he had chronic deteriorating psychosis.

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ADDRESS ALL HOSPITAL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE MANAGING OFFICER
EAST MOLINE STATE HOSPITAL

J. A. CAMPBELL, M. D., MANAGING OFFICER
EAST MOLINE, ILLINOIS
Sept. 13th, 1935

Mr. Marvin F. Burt
Attorney-at-Law,
404 Second National Bank Bldg.,
Freeport, Illinois.

Dear Mr. Burt:

We have your letter of September 11th regarding patient, Hilvin Saayenga, who is a voluntary patient at this institution and who has been here since March 1934.

The patient was willing to sign the statement giving his mother power of attorney to withdraw his savings account which amounts to \$67.47. He seemed to understand what he was signing and was willing for his mother to do this.

The patient is suffering from a chronic deteriorating psychosis and usually these cases are represented by a conservator but in this case it will be alright for the mother to handle this matter.

We are attaching the signed statement.

Yours very truly,

J. A. Campbell
J. A. Campbell, M. D.,
Managing Officer.

CEM:JFD

I remember only twice seeing him there. My folks and Uncle George went about every 3 months to visit him. Usually I had to stay in the car with Mom while Dad and Uncle George went in the old brick buildings. Then he got TB and was confined to a ward at the same place. I do remember being allowed to go in one time and we all had to put on long white gowns and masks. He looked like a ghost to me. I was probably all of 5 or 6 at the time. Sometime after 1961 he was considered cured of TB and was moved to Tunnel Hill, IL if I remember correctly. When Grandma Hilka's estate was settled, Aunt Hattie was the executor and I have papers listing Hilvin as an heir. I suspect his share went to the state of Illinois. His funeral info states that he passed away February 13, 1971 in a nursing home in Blandinsville, IL. He is buried in the Saaijenga Family plot at the Silver Creek Cemetery at German Valley, IL.

Hilvin Saaijenga

GERMAN VALLEY — Hilvin Saaijenga of Blandinsville, formerly of German Valley, died Saturday afternoon in a Blandinsville nursing home.

He was born Aug. 8, 1904, in German Valley, son of George and Hilke (Popkes) Saaijenga.

Surviving are four sisters, Misses Hattie and Dena Saaijenga, both of Galesburg, Mrs. Andrew (Bertha) Meyers of Bismarck, N.D., and Mrs. Harold (Rose) Suess of Rock City; and three brothers, Folkert of German Valley, Clarence of Polo and Harold of Freeport.

Funeral service will be at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday in Silver Creek Reformed Church here. The Rev. John Faas, pastor, will officiate. Burial will be in the church cemetery.

Friends may call at Greenfield-Eichmeier Funeral Home here this afternoon and evening, until 11 a.m. Tuesday and then at the church.

Today, there probably would be help for him but, way back then, nothing was done and the poor guy never had a chance!

