

Keith Riedemann

Written by Gloria Riedemann

Narrated by Hugh Johnson

I was born in the Hand Hospital on April 29, 1932, to Harold and Lois Dutton Riedemann. After my parents divorced, I remained my mother's only child, but my father remarried and had five more children. I rarely spent time with those siblings, but we became good friends later on.

They say it takes a village to raise a child...I had a big village. I lived with my mother and spent time with my father. Others in my life were my Aunt Opal, Aunt Velma, Florence and Emil Leth, and Amanda and Harry Lage, the town cop. Harry, and his big dog that rode shotgun for him, often took me to school in the morning and waited for me in the afternoon. I spent a lot of time with my Grandpa Dutton. I had a village... a kind, concerned village.

I lived with my mother and her new husband, Ray Holmes, mainly in Hartley, but at times in Sanborn. Sometimes I played junior high football in Sanborn and sometimes in Hartley. It was hard to know which way to run.

In 1951, I enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served aboard the USS Sperry in San Diego and Hawaii. While in Hawaii, I had the pleasure of meeting and spending time with the Unser brothers, who went on to become Indy 500 Race winners.

On one of my first furloughs, I was baptized into the United Trinity Church in Hartley. The summer after I was discharged, my mother and I often went to stock car races at Milford. I worked for a well-digging firm in Sanborn, and married Gloria Stinehart in the little country church in Montgomery.

Since I'd enjoyed barbering in the Navy, I decided to go to Sioux City Barber College. I graduated in April, 1956, and immediately returned to Hartley to work with Bill Goering in his shop on Central Avenue.

About that time, I became involved in dog training and dog trials. I had adopted a Brittany spaniel from a shelter on my way out of Sioux City from barber school. Since she had no American Kennel papers, I was allowed to run her in the puppy trials only. She did well in the trials.

I have good memories of helping my mother run the Stockman's Club, a private key club, in Everly. It was an era of "feather parties," card game tournaments, and whiskey brought in by the members.

My best memories are times spent with my children. In 1957, our daughter, Dawn Lea, was born, followed by Mark in 1958 and Robert in 1960. If I am remembered for anything, I want it to be for my children and their families. Their mother and I watched them grow up in simpler, gentler times; my generation's great blessing.

The whole family shared my interest in fishing and boats as well as in hunting and dog training. We vacationed at Lake Okoboji; Glenwood, Minnesota; and in a cottage at Spirit Lake near my cousin, Ronnie, and his family.

Ronnie and I had grown up together, spending time on his family farm as well as on our Grandfather Fred's place. We had one pony between us and being the oldest, I claimed the pony and Ronnie had to ride the "dog house." He never forgave me for that, but I repaid him by taking him on furlough with me one weekend in Tijuana, Mexico. We both escaped with our hides intact but barely!!

After working as a well digger, barber, bar tender, truck driver, and farm hand, I went into law enforcement. It was my true calling. Hartley's mayor, Earl Norton, called me in 1974 and asked me to serve as night cop on a part-time basis. Later, I earned my diploma in Law Enforcement from Northwest Iowa Community College at Sheldon. Fortunately, there were few physical qualifications at that time. Although, I'd spent every spare hour and minute outdoors hunting, fishing, golfing or dog training, my ability to do push-ups did not exist.

My three children didn't think it was a good time for me to be in law enforcement when they were having such a good time in high school. Later, I became Chief of Police in Hartley, and in 1977, I was also named a Special Deputy for O'Brien County.

I enjoyed my relationship with Sheriff Mike Anderson and his deputies. That was before the time of computer accessibility. We did things the hard way by asking questions as to the whereabouts or the character of suspects. Mayor Norton and city council were super to work with, and I especially enjoyed working with young people in the community.

I witnessed both happy and horrible things. The horrible times included high speed car chases, hunting for a murderer, and witnessing an accidental shooting of a child. These events were offset by the joys of assisting little old ladies or helping a teenager put his life on the right path.

I was never without at least one dog as part of the family. My love of pets was passed on to my children and grandchildren. I believe a person's character is revealed by the treatment of animals. In the early 1980s, my son Robert and I spent thousands of hours training our Labradors and entering them in dog trials in Iowa and South Dakota. Sometimes we didn't place as high as others, but we always enjoyed the dogs and the time spent together. Often we recruited Mark or my wife to help train the dogs. They got the work, and we got the glory.

During the late 60s, I learned how to golf at the Hartley Country Club, thanks to men like Harry Brazzle, Mac Mc Croskey, Bill Loder and Robert Burt. We often have rematches now and we get a lot of "Mulligans" in Heaven.

I had too many fishing and hunting buddies to name. My best hunting trips were with "THE COUSINS." The Riedemann boys, along with their boys and selected friends had an annual "Opening Day Pheasant Hunt. Many stories were told and retold every year. Not a minute of the hunts were forgotten....sometimes embellished, but not forgotten.

In addition to their love of hunting and fishing, I was happy when all three of my children and later my grandson became avid golfers.

When our first grandchild, Robert's son Neil, was born in 1986, it became a contest to see who could love him the most and still keep him from being spoiled. I was able to see him through most of his high school years and we talked of his dream of going to college.

In 1993, Dawn presented us with a granddaughter, named Kristen Lea. We had, in previous years corrupted Dawn's husband, Glen into loving to fish. In 2001, we were blessed with a second granddaughter. Robert and Sheila were the proud parents of Jennie Grace. I did not get to see Jennie but for a short three months.

Some years after retirement, I contracted leukemia in the late 1990s. Due to complications, I passed away in Rochester, Minnesota on June 14, 2001. However, I have recently spent some years (they pass like minutes in Heaven) with the last of my five dogs, Tasha. She says that the family misses me, and has told me a lot about them.

Robert and Sheila have another girl, Jessica, born in 2003. Tasha says she is a "wild child," but I don't believe it. Neil, a determined Riedemann, did go on to get a college degree, and Dawn is now a teacher at NCC. Kristen, who recently graduated from high school, will attend college in the fall after spending the summer helping her father on the farm. The news from Mark and Kay is she has recently acquired a college degree, and he has brought home his first dog, a beautiful white Labrador named Rider.

My life was blessed by family and friends and dogs. Everyone should be so lucky!

KEITH RIEDEMANN