

memoirs of Laura Kaiser Zeltinger

Dec. 4, 1983

Dearest Mom: Write it down when you  
have a thought or remember the  
times gone by, please?

Love,  
Patsy

8/20/74

In leaving this notebook here!

! Please write <sup>the</sup> stories as you  
Mom, think of them some times?

Mom in her childhood days, was a Tomboy  
spending her play time with neighbor  
kids playing Run & keep run - Kick the  
Can - Hide and seek until Father whistled  
his piercing whistle - Then all playing  
stopped for it was 9 P.M. and time for bed.

"She was a Tomboy!" There was not a tree  
I could not climb nor a roof I  
couldnt scramble over!

Streets were unpaved in those days and  
dust was ankle deep to trod through.  
Particularly delightful it was after a good  
rain to walk over those same streets with  
mud oozing between the toes and splashing  
against child like legs.

In 1917 - We moved to Montana. <sup>Brother</sup> George  
accumulated  $\frac{1}{2}$  or maybe  $\frac{6}{10}$  Acres of  
rangeland N. of Savage, near the Yellowstone  
River. Grandfather had  $\frac{1}{4}$  of that acreage <sup>much</sup>.  
Two channels in the River to span  
an "Island" in the middle! Used to  
walk to a friends place 5 miles away  
and back again, making a 10 mile hike  
a day. In the winter <sup>had</sup> to cross the Channel  
He was to turn it over to me.

Fall water stone boat - dry run - a little  
Canyon. Mom dipped from Spring

Looked for shackled horses - away from  
the place - early in the morning to get them  
ready for Father to work at 7AM.

Used to put up a square canvas tent in  
the Spring and use it til Fall.

One winter - Broth. George went on two week  
vacation - Had to break out ice from  
Spring a gunny sack of straw tied tight by  
placed in the hole and the ice was pulled  
free allowing access to dip freely. but  
agonizingly.

One time - Mom had been on water hauling  
trip - and had her skirts frozen stiff was late  
and her mother, worried, went to George's place, made  
fire and house was warm when she finally arrived there.

Coyote bait in trap and placed up N. of  
the house across a Coyote run. - trap

Visit teacher's  $\frac{1}{2}$  mi from home - night - Heard  
a fluttering, and frightened her. Being sure a  
crashing of branches and rustle of movement  
startled her. Coyote and pups

Four Buttes were to the of "Dad's" place  
and as a girl, mom used to climb them  
stopping first at the base to glean Saskatoons <sup>(berries)</sup>  
from the bushes located there.

First year of the Flu 1918 - Boys used to come  
H. Oberkast and A. Marten. used to go to George's  
to play poker. Dwight Weber from Wibaux (Parsons  
Ranch) rode to ask mom an all important  
question. A. Marten and the boys had to leave  
the ranch - asked mom to write measure of  
flu. Relatives passing away!

Used to lay on her back with the shotgun  
to keep buzzards off the turkey. Gammie used  
to use a walking stick to herd them  
in the draws and prairie protecting them from  
Coyotes frequenting

Shooting with Dad - would beat the bushes  
and come out with Prairie Chickens  
Everyphad had gone

Heating wash water - and turned around  
saw Lonny in the bottom of the boiler Picked  
him up and shook the daylight's out of him.

On occasion - of flash flood in a dry-run -  
mom crossed the channels.



Boat service crossed the River Channels; was  
changed to Ferry - The Pontoon Bridge was  
an improvement so welcome for the walk to  
Town for services there was made so much easier  
over the years.

Grandpa's one room place was gabled and Mother  
attempted painting it. The gable was her downfall  
someone had to take over as a result of sprained "dilecti  
wrist" from wielding a heavy brush.

Georges Cow. KC Brand  
horse  $\frac{1}{4}$  CNS - quarter Circle N

Flag, scraping - hot water dip and with  
scrapers cleaned the side.

Hunting with Dad - Would beat the bushes  
and game? Flag Hen - Prairie Chicken would  
be flushed out.

Little kid on buggy ride - Horse got jittery  
backed up and broke the shaft.

About fifteen - Gran took beautiful doll and  
broke it.

Henry Abergast. Dinner rode out helped mom  
Catch Chicken - bowlegged runner - Ⓞ

Of an afternoon to amuse herself she'd watch  
the buzzards and try to hit them with a shotgun  
in her hands but they'd circle too high

Mother and kid were going up back to collect  
cedar that smelled so good. Mendy - Ray in  
flannel drop seat that tied in front. Came  
in, crying and moaning and pointed to his  
seat. In checking it was obvious he'd be in pain,  
apparently from being blown into a cactus patch

Ray and "Uggi" were out playing. He came  
in crying excitedly "uh-uh-uh" - pointed  
outdoor in vicinity of the Chicken Coop -  
mother looked to see her bottom and legs  
with head in the ground and the ape  
handle erect! In terror Mom rushed to the  
site to discover that the kids had dug a  
hole and it had caved in - partially covering  
her -

Scoria butter - shells found at the base -  
maybe lifted from water pools by funnel cloud

Eddie Weber (Boots) and Henry Abergast had  
come to Grandpa K's ranch for dinner one  
evening sat playing cards (poker) after-  
ward until 11 o'clock or more. Mom  
went outdoors with big white water pitcher  
for refreshing drink. The men's two horses

at that time. Play continued until about twelve P.M. when men departed only to come back to the house to report that only one saddled horse was tied up. Apparently the second was tied loosely and managed to pull away to wander off. Mother felt the men were certainly had something to do with mischief but she didn't. The men had to ride away "double decker".

Eddie Weber was riding fence and Ted ran into him, about his own ranch riding duties, and he asked what Eddie was doing out there. "Oh, I'm just gapping the fence." was the reply as he looked for a gate to enter.

"Making fence" - dug post holes with post hole digger, and pulled up fence tight with claw hammer.

Butcher pig - salt brine - no other way of keeping it.

good old days.

I wonder why I say that  
when you ~~nap~~ ~~across~~ at them  
well, I think they were  
in early child hood when  
dandelions were in profusion  
the making of dandelion stem  
chairs + some with the flowers  
attached made pretty necklaces.  
The thick stems were  
impossible to get out of one's  
dresses. Little tan ring  
marks were rather  
interesting.

and the large bumble bees!  
they were buzzing among  
the dandelions + I dug  
a deep hole about 8 inches  
+ lined it with green leaves  
+ would catch the bees + put  
in and cover with a piece of  
broken glass, then inspect  
their activities!

When a large circus came  
to town + I mean just that -  
a bunch of us kids would get  
up at 4 a.m. + watch the unloading.  
What excitement! The afternoon  
the tents were up + ready for  
business. Dad would take us.



a small one with pretty small shells pasted on. To me it was beautiful. a balloon wouldnt last long. a little whip was thought a lot of. In later years my dad beat me with one & took the flesh out of my back. There wasnt any excuse for it. but life cant always be beautiful.

my brother kid (walter) had a place in the barn for him & friend secret meeting place - I'd kept it locked. He & a friend would have a small wooden chest - take it down to the woods a couple of miles away & bury it. Hence Capt. Kid!

We werent allowed in the place. When we had a horse & a cow. Dad rode the horse. I would hitch it to the buggy and go for a ride. It backed up when near a train. I was scared a shaft would get broken & used to walk for miles in the country over past the St Alexius Hosp where it now stands. It was pasture land then. The convent I attended was two rooms - sliding

upper grades in the other.  
We had desks + seats that  
seated two. Some times a mix up  
would occur in the desks.  
I would watch lice crawl  
down the braids of the girl in  
front of me. We or I caught the  
damn things. Mother asked the  
doctor what to do for them + the  
nits. He said use alcohol. How  
I hated to sit + have my head  
examined!

Our neighbor kids would gather  
for marbles as soon as a dry  
spot would appear in the spring.  
Then it was baseball, kick the can  
hide and seek + Run sheep seen.  
When at 9 we heard Dads  
whistle + that finished the day.

I did an awful thing  
once - just for devilment. I  
carried a pail of water to the  
roof of the kitchen of a neighbors  
house + tied a rope to the handle  
then to the door knob. then  
knocked + ran. Cowardly +  
must admit. when the gent  
opened the door. Wham! He was  
bathed! We should have  
been punished. Mother didnt see  
much + what went on + I cant

I should have been  
permitted but then my mother  
& friends did the same thing!  
That was the worst of our  
tricks tho - only I would  
stay up on Halloween night  
to see their trick go on.

The young bunch, my brothers  
included who were in high  
school would hang a wagon  
on a light pole - also gates  
attach wagons to train etc.

Police never caught them  
tho. Really no harm was  
done.

On hot days we kids would  
follow the ice wagon to get  
chunks of ice to suck on, boy it  
was sure good. Went bare foot  
& in the street we were ankle  
deep in it. The water wagon  
would come and sprinkle the  
street. We played hop scotch  
a lot also Annie one.

I was offered a nickel once to  
roll a peanut by my sense to  
the Bijou theater two blocks  
away. I did & got the nickel  
which meant a lot to us those  
days.

as we got a little older we



50 kid did the washing-machine with  
a wheel to turn. waded & dried diapers also.  
I could go on & on but I get weary thinking of  
writing it all.

to see Uncle Tom's Cabin -  
my how our hearts would  
bleed for the Liza & Uncle  
Tom. & tears for little Eva.  
We were allowed to go to the  
matinees on Saturdays for  
momies & entertainment between  
shows or half the show. also got  
little gifts. I especially like of  
the phial of perfume. One matinee  
a friend (Miss Mercers) who was  
in my grade at school gave me  
a ticket that was given me  
for prize that was given away.  
My ticket won a book called  
'Lena's Ringers'. I don't know  
what happened to it tho mother  
would destroy books I was  
reading. I still don't see why  
as they were nothing to take  
exception to. Books then weren't  
as they are now. Mother didn't  
read them as she couldn't  
read very much English. - she  
learned a lot as her family  
grew up. We used to spell  
words for her when she asked.  
I think she did very well  
tho she still had a slight  
Swedish brogue.



In 1914 we went to Savage  
mont to visit brother Geo who  
was starting to ranch. He quit  
his post office job - To see  
the scoria buttes were beautiful  
Red. other buttes were white  
with dark markings some  
all colors. in layers of course  
mica sparkled on some.

Then back to Bismark  
for school. In 1916 we  
moved there (most) too. Dad  
took up land, joining Geo's.  
When Geo was in service  
Kid took care of the place  
Dad worked on the roads which  
he wasn't fit for. I had to get  
up at 5 a.m. Round up the  
horses that were hobbled but  
would wonder for. got them  
hitched to the wagon ready for  
Dad to take off when he  
finally went to Miles City  
to start a business. Then  
Kid took off to fume around  
the world. I took over until  
Geo came home. When he  
would go on vacation in the  
winter time I would walk to  
his place & go over the flats to  
a dry run. down at bottom was a

couple of springs see  
as thick as my arm was long.  
Had to dip pails of water to  
empty into a tub for the stock.  
When there I'd put a gunny  
sack of straw in the hole + then  
start up + on the flat to  
see shank to build a fire  
to throw out. I was a sheet of  
ice + the wind wasn't too  
pleasant, then I'd pitch  
fuel to the stock. Then  
after that I'd warm up  
+ take off for home.  
I enjoyed the spring +  
summer.

a school was built. The  
Pasky Pasky children + no  
went. Then I was there  
I did the chores around  
the place Cowboys from  
the Parker Ranch, a large  
holding - came up + we  
would horse around, play  
poker etc. One eve. 2 of them  
came + they tied their horse to  
the drag. we played poker  
then I went out for a pail  
of water. (I hauled water on a  
stone boat 2 miles to the river for it  
+ back.) When the boys were

ready to leave their <sup>one</sup> horse  
was gone! They were there  
when I got the water + told  
them so but they didn't believe  
me. They came by next morning  
looking for the one horse. (They  
doubled decked it home + came  
that way the same next morning;  
well the horse wandered to the  
end of our land where the fence  
stopped it - during the night  
it snowed.

I'll never forget the sight  
of the crocuses. bright patches  
of them so purple against the  
red social peonies. The sage  
lilies were beautiful. all over  
the ground roses + the odor  
were out of this world. Blue birds <sup>and</sup>  
when I went anywhere <sup>sage brush</sup>  
I walked. I went to visit friends  
over the ridge which Geo  
didn't like - called them outlaws -  
We had basket socials there  
+ plays. It was fun. Later  
Geo left + went to Bismarck  
to work at the Post Office again -  
so there was just me as  
head of the clan. In winter  
I would walk to town for  
mail <sup>get</sup> a few groceries, all I could  
carry which wasn't very much.



Five miles to town & back.  
One Xmas eve or New Years  
eve Bert (Granny) & I walked  
to town to visit the Brazils  
we had a hilarious time &  
started home at 12. We  
crossed one channel of the Yellowstone  
River then an island most  
a mile wide then cross the  
other channel of the Yellowstone  
River. snow was deep but  
we arrived home OK but  
oh so tired. The Brazils  
boys were considered outlaws  
a short time before. They were  
friendly & nice to me as all  
the people were.

anyway one day I wanted  
mother to go to Miles City.  
Kid was home & he took her  
to town to catch the train.  
I crossed the Yellowstone 2  
times on pontoon bridges.

Ferry before (2 ferries).  
I decided to take off to  
visit my sister at 7 Lakes.  
during the 1918-1919 flu  
epidemic my sister passed  
away in child birth.



I took care of the two boys - the baby was taken by my brother-in-law brother + wife.

When my brother-in-law was married (L + Matt were also) that is a while before - He married later - He had his lady friend take care of the boys.

There in the town the 3 girls were born.

We left for Montana when Matt liquidated the bank.

Funny no matter where I was I enjoyed my family + myself. No matter how hard the going was at times. I guess I just did what I had to do.

Cans - washings done a board ironing sewing gardening. No modern conveniences - oil lamps, gas lamps + iron on gas iron first. I don't think the children ever heard me complain.

I played the organ for school plays at Indian Church for Xmas

This was after we left  
Montana & came back  
to do so.

Played piano for dances.  
Other pieces included by  
others who were interested.  
drums. say violin.

No use in going on  
as you will remember  
most of the latter  
years.

Hope you can  
read this & enjoy it.  
might be interesting for  
the younger generation  
maybe sub.

3/14/75



Dec. 4, 1983

Dear Mom, I'll wonder about you and miss you  
This time spent with you had  
passed all too quickly! There is so much  
left to do, that usually is the case! There  
are so many more places to go! I've enjoyed  
being in the West again being with you  
and "family" Take care of yourself; follow doctor  
orders! I'll remember you often and you'll be  
Love,

"We had one beautiful tree, beautifully decorated. It was tall, from the floor to the ceiling. In those days we had no electricity and used candles having to be very careful. In the evening of Christmas eve we were sent to the movies, (to get us out of the house), after the movie and we got home, we learned that Sam had been there; we even saw his <sup>prints</sup> footprints in the snow up near the chimney! We then went into the "parlor" the tree in all its glory with the candles lit, making the room alive with light. Under the tree there was a box for me and in it, a beautiful doll I was a Tomboy - but I just loved dolls! The best part is - the hair on my doll's head left its lovely set and stood up in the air. I'll never forget my sister broke <sup>one of</sup> my dolls (when I was 15) and I was surely mad at her

Long beaded candy ropes were draped around the tree with the ends toward the back and I would sit back there chewing of the candy gathering a big wad of string in my mouth.



6/19/85

When I was eight years old, about  
I went to Catholic School in Bismark.  
It was one room but a sliding door  
would close that off and it  
separated upper grades from lower grades.  
The Sister School was located near the  
Hospital. In Montana she went to  
a Country school and walked a mile  
or so, all girls did. Honey stayed with  
friends in Fargo, later in life she took  
nurses training in Miles City, Mt, still  
later went to California and got mixed  
up with a 'fast' crowd. moved in the  
social circle of movie people including  
Peter Lorre, etc. Later in life I went with  
Missy to help with her third pregnancy  
in Flasher, N.D. I baby sat her two small  
boys and helped with housework. Missy  
died after child birth, having got the flu - born was  
Emma Jean. Mother was Godmother  
and my Dad was Godfather. (Since, <sup>(Recent year)</sup> Emma  
Jean - Emma Jean) has passed through Missoula  
staying with Vivian

I was about 18 when I left Savax  
George "proved" land near Savax, Montana  
having  $\frac{1}{4}$  section and  $\frac{1}{2}$  section across  
the river, plus one whole section. Looking  
across the Yellowstone River and to  
the east you can see three large buttes  
near where our family lived, different ones  
at different times. George also had land



With all the horses on the place we "never had a damn one to ride. We always had to walk. I remember walking seventeen miles during one daytime visiting friends. I had always to water George's horses.

Kid was supposed to go to war, being drafted, but the war was declared over, armistice signed before he got to go.

I remember we had good times in Bismark. used to make paper boats and sail them in the rivulets ~~along~~ side the road after a rain - there were no streets at that time. There were only sidewalks. We'd walk barefoot, and would for rain so we could walk in sloppy, squishy mud.

I wanted some overalls so damn bad! (New) and cut my hair like a boy's. I used to make a hole in a dirt bank, line it with green grass, place into it a big bumble bee, cover it with glass and watch him buzz around.

Hamme made her own noodles. She'd put a white sheet, floured it and made up the dough. Had warm grease handy

and work it into flour with fingers <sup>(+egg?)</sup>  
Roll and stretch til you could see a  
newspaper through it - paper then  
Laid this sheet around a large pan and first  
Put apple slices into it - also cottage  
cheese, raisins, sugar and egg filling.  
could be used. Her hands would start  
to roll, then she'd lift the sheet to  
roll the dough and filling to the other  
side, "jelly roll fashion": to form a large  
roll. Lift and stretch the roll around  
the pan that had been greased. Bake -  
cut off large "chunks" to serve warm  
or with cream. This is called Streusel.

The noodles Gammie made were mixed  
flour and lard in those days. In a  
large pot, with eggs and rolled out,  
sliced thinly into strips. She'd make a  
noodle pudding warm noodles (cooked)  
in lard, sprinkle with sugar and  
ground walnuts, heated up in a pot.

In Bismark Gammie used to send  
me to shop at the meat market, to  
the bakery to haul home loaves of bread;  
she even had me buy Baby clothes, to get  
infant wear! "I was just a kid (10-11)

Jan 1 - ~~1974~~ 1974

a bright - sunny day  
but cold.

It was a busy one for me,  
am happy that I got no money  
back for Xmas. Paulette plant  
from Louts besides 2 pr p. go.  
money from Jim. Diary from  
Pat. nice + some money +  
for birthday a cake with candles.  
+ money.

Pat, Gwen called to-day, Louts  
had vto. Brian + Ruby called  
this eve. Jim called this eve,  
talked to Pat's army.

Gwen + Jim called. They  
subscribed for the US magazine  
for me for Xmas.

It seems a bright day I had  
misc take pictures of the snow,  
can't find my new diary so  
am writing in this until I locate it.  
My arm is still bothering + I  
heard from Jim this eve, it  
would be a year B/4 it heals.  
maybe Brian told me.



Grandpa and Grandma were married when he was stationed at Fort Keogh. "Maybe we didn't live on the Fort!"

(Aunt Vivian said the home occupied a lot on which now exists the drug store on main street). I remember a log house west of town; was born Jan. 1, 1900 in this area. Mom and Dad met in Connecticut or New York.

I was "Old Maggi" - a Creche baby - they were always telling me to shut up. When I'd be dancing around the house, crying like mad, they'd say "Shut up or the folding bed will get you!"

12/5/85

Ran into a rattlesnake den and was scared - to - death!

I used to be so mad at Mother and the rest of them would run off and leave me with the babies - I'd have to sit Sonny + Vivian etc.

I'd have to drag the washing machine around the back of the house and get the water for the wash heated in a boiler on top of the range. The family wash was left to me - while Hammie was out with a stick - "guiding" her down turkey - "Wouldn't help if

a coyote wanted one" - it seem to me!

Henry Arbigist Chased a turkey and didn't do so bad. He didn't do so bad for a Cowboy who made out with the wife of the depot agent either!

We'd go up to George's and play poker (with friends) to get away from it all.

I was about seven and walked around the lumberyard and spied Guinea Hens - Crawling under piled lumber to (flush) get them out in Bismark, N.D.

6-9-86

On a summers day on the ranch (approx 18 yrs ago) lying on my back and holding a double barrel shotgun to shoot the eagles or hawks that were after Gammie's turkeys.

May 1-79

Some memories

While watching TV a  
few things came back  
to me. One was the old  
pop corn machine on  
the street. The young  
man who operated it was  
a spastic - but was very nice -  
at Bismarck <sup>and</sup> no Saks and  
I use to enjoy the organ  
grinder and his monkey.  
The latter held his cup  
for our pennies. We  
looked for anything that  
was brass, copper & rubber  
for our pennies or wickets  
for candy if we wanted.  
sticks was to chew like gum.  
it always had a ring on each  
stick or was piped with sweet  
water in them. drink that then  
chew the wax ~~at~~ pip-

to sell to the junk man



also ~~low~~ horses -  
and, cracked jack.

now - the box of that  
is about the  $\frac{1}{2}$  of what  
we got then.

We wanted run & when the  
gypsies came to town, they  
were usually run out of town.  
Liked to see their colorful  
clothes & the petticoats they  
wore! they drove horses  
hitched to their wagons.

now they drive Cadillacs.

they could steal one  
blind blind while you  
watched them.

of course when one  
is a child our  
imagination can run  
away with us.

Those wooden Indians  
advertising cigars - in front  
of the store.