

Happy New Year!

January, 2009 . from the Wickham family

John

You are about to learn more about me than you probably want to know (if you keep reading!), but I need to provide some background for the thoughts I'm going to share this year. Usually my input to our family Christmas letter recaps various events and happenings over the past year; this year, I focus on one.

My Dad, Joseph H. Wickham, Jr, had two brothers, Seeley and Stanley. Seeley married Elizabeth Brooks, and they and my parents visited one another occasionally, so I have some (now distant) memories of them. They had no children. Stanley and my Dad were estranged for reasons I don't think I ever knew; anyway, I never met him or any of his family as far as I know, but I think he & his wife, Irene(?), had one daughter, Margaret. My Dad's parents died when I was a baby, so I have no memories of them.

My Mom, Florence M. (Johnston) Wickham [for those who may know that my given first name is "Johnston" - that's where it came from!], had one sister, Beth. She was married to Bill MacKinnon, and they and my parents visited a few times when I was little, but I don't have any real memories of them. They lived in Canada (near where my Mom was born in Nova Scotia); they had no children. My Mom's mother died before I was born, and her Dad lived in Canada; although he may have visited us or we him, it was when I was



little, so I have no memories of him.

My Mom & Dad married in 1947, when my Mom was 33½ and my Dad almost 50, they had me in 1950, and I was their only child. (An interesting fact Joey likes to share is that his Grandpa on his Dad's side would have been 100 years old when he was born (1997) - that's pretty old even for a Grandpa!)

Perhaps you are getting the picture that family was not a big part of my life growing up! Thus it was that I learned more about some in my family this past year than I ever had before, as the result of two special visits we had: First with Myrt Cavnar in Denver in March, and second with Dot (Dorothy) Hanna and Peggy Kays in Shelbyville, Kentucky, in April. Myrt, Dot, and Peggy are sisters whose mother was my Aunt Elizabeth's sister, so she was their aunt, too.

Our family had a vacation planned to visit Washington, DC, while we were in the Baltimore area for my 40-year McDonogh School reunion, and because of the generosity of some friends who gave us passes, we planned to visit the Creation Museum in Cincinnati on the way. I knew I had some "shirt-tail relatives" in Shelbyville, which isn't far from Cincinnati, so I made contact, via Myrt, with her sisters. They were delighted we were coming through and happy to put us up for two nights. Talking to Dot on the phone, she told me she had a big box of stuff that Seeley had left with her that she had

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Nancy

This marks the end of a year filled with travel for our family. Rather than repeat our travel log, I will only say that each trip was in a class of its own. I really enjoyed each adventure. However, I must admit that the best part of each trip was the return home to my own bed!

It was wonderful to be able to visit family - Mom and Dad, and Sue and Jim Meyer and family - three times this year. The Meyers graciously open their "Bed and Breakfast" for us when we invade. Mom and Dad are both 86 years old and have been married 58 years. Their health is fair and they still live in their own home. Sue and Jim and their kids take great care of Mom and Dad, assisting them as needed.

Our last trip to Orland was during Thanksgiving week. The last time the entire Cranston/Meyer/Wickham family was together was in 2001. Joey was too little, but the girls still remember Uncle Jim's turkey with stuffing and homemade cranberry sauce to this day. What a treat to have it again after six years! Sue and Jim's oldest son, Dave, continued the tradition by making a second turkey for the feast.

Each day continues to bring changes in my life - both how I look at life and how I choose to live it. I am truly thankful for each day and for the life, family, and friends God has given me. I would love to hear from you to find out what is happening in your life. Although face to face would be the best, a note by snail mail or email, or even a phone call would be great. Our home is open to anyone who should find themselves in



Kansas. We would love a visit, no matter how long or short. May God bless you and your family in 2009.

Natalie

Most mornings find me clasping a cup of hot tea, sitting on the living room couch, spending time with the Lord in Bible study and prayer. It is in these quiet moments that my heart experiences deep satisfaction, my mind is renewed, and I gain purpose and strength for the day.

One thing the Lord impressed on my heart repeatedly this year is the importance of walking in the Spirit. What God desires is for me to be in constant communion with Him so that He can bear fruit in my life. His fruit transcends specific situations and endeavors. It is evidenced when I display love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in my attitudes, words, and behaviors (see Galatians 5:22-23). Whether my time is spent pursuing exciting new experiences or carrying out the duties of an ordinary day, God is glorified when I abide in Him and bear much fruit.

Exciting New Experiences:

*An 18-day trip to Austria to visit friends. My time included a road trip through Germany, France, and Switzerland, including the fulfillment of my long-time dream of revisiting my childhood home in Germany. I was even able to reconnect with one of our former neighbors and spend some time visiting with her, which was a specific answer to prayer. Thankfully her English was better than my German!

* Writing a book, and embarking on the journey to self-publish it. What an amazing journey it has been! The Lord has faithfully provided the people and resources to help me every step of the way. Lord-willing, *Pajama School – stories from the life of a homeschool graduate*, will be released in March, 2009. I've set up a website that you can visit for more information, if you are interested - pajamaschool.com.

* A 2-week trip to Oregon at the end of summer to visit Nicole and Andy. I began each day of my visit with an attempted run up the butte in their backyard. Apparently, running the speed bumps here in Kansas like Andy suggested wasn't sufficient training, because I never made it all the way to the top running. :-) It still made for a refreshing and invigorating morning hike, though! We finished out my time there with a 4-day driving/camping trip up Oregon's gorgeous Pacific coast!

I am so grateful for each year that the Lord gives me, and for the foundation that He continues to lay in my life. At the ripe "old age" of 28, I get asked often about my relationship status. I certainly didn't anticipate that I would be single this long, but I was just reflecting the other day that it is part of God's intentional plan. He has specific reasons for the ways in which He works in each of our lives, and "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (see Psalm 84:11). What a great promise!

May each of you experience hope and joy this coming year as you seek the Lord with all your heart. And may you be the recipient of many good things as you walk uprightly before Him!



Nicole & Andy

The year 2008 has been quite a whirlwind for us! Just one year after our initial move for Andy to begin working with Cessna Aircraft in Kansas, we were on the move again - this time 1500 miles away to the newly acquired Cessna plant in Bend, Oregon.

The idea seemed a bit crazy at first, moving across the country, no family and no friends close by. But we felt certain this was the Lord's direction for us, so in May we packed up and headed west. We arrived in Bend just in time for summer, and what a summer it was! Andy and I bought mountain bikes right away and thoroughly enjoyed exploring the countryside every moment we could on the weekends. It was quite the new experience, considering the biggest hills we had to conquer in Kansas were the speed bumps!

The first two weeks of August we enjoyed a visit from Amos and Aaron (Andy's younger brothers) during which time we did more outdoor stuff than I think I've done in my entire life! We biked, hiked, fished, swam in the river, and most impressive of all (for a bunch of Kansans) summited the third highest mountain in Oregon - the South Sister. It was an incredible hike with a gorgeous view in every direction as the reward for reaching the summit.

The final two weeks of August, Natalie (my older sister), came for a visit. Her visit was a little more laid back than when the boys were here simply because Andy and I were too exhausted to keep that pace up any longer! The final days of her stay here overlapped

with Labor Day weekend so we took the opportunity to travel over to the Oregon Coast and spent four days driving through all the little coastal towns and camping along the way. What an amazing trip, and an absolutely beautiful part of the country!

One of the things we were not looking forward to as a part of our move was trying to find a church to attend. Thankfully, we were saved the painful task of church hunting as our first week in town we visited a church and immediately felt like it was home! The Lord blessed us with many great friendships early on and as a result Bend came to feel like home much sooner than we would have imagined.

While we miss our family and friends very much, we are confident this is exactly where the Lord wants us right now and we are excited to continue life out here and see what 2009 has in store!

"He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end." -Ecclesiastes 3:11

Nadine

At the beginning of summer, Nadine began her moving adventures by relocating to Lake of the Ozarks. She lived and worked there through the summer, and then packed up her bags and headed to the big city. It's been a dream of hers for years to move to Chicago, and now that dream is being fulfilled! She is living with Mom's sister and her family, working, and getting ready to start taking classes next spring.



Noelle

This year has been filled with lots of wonderful times. While finishing up school, I have also been busy babysitting for some great families, as well as continuing to spend time with the 11 girls at a Tuesday Bible study. Spending time with kids is always fun, and usually full of surprises, too. Learning the differences in the character and personality of even small children is a marvelous adventure.

Going to YWCF (Young Women's Christian Fellowship) each Tuesday is one of the highlights of each week. The atmosphere of love and encouragement for one another is a blessing every time we're able to meet together.

This also seemed to be the year for our family to take trips. In February, we went skiing in Colorado, which we usually do every year. My brother-in-law's family came as well, which was really exciting and lots of fun. In May, we were able to travel out east to Maryland where we stayed with friends as we toured all of the great landmarks. It was especially exciting to see Gettysburg and Mount Vernon. They are both beautiful places! On the way home we got to stop off in Chicago for a short time, to visit my grandparents and aunt and uncle. Spending time with our relatives is always a blessing.

As July came around, we packed up again and headed down to Branson, Missouri, for an Answers in Genesis conference. The time we spent there was a wonderful learning and growing experience. For Thanksgiving we traveled up to Chicago, where we were

joined by Andy and Nicole, who flew in from Oregon. It was so nice having everyone together again and spending the time with family.

Overall, this year has been a wonderful time of continuing to deepen relationships with family and friends. I hope each and every one of you experiences the love and joy of the Lord as you walk through this next year with Him.

Naomi

Wow, what a year this has been! I cannot believe how much the Lord has been working on me, and how many opportunities He has provided.

At the beginning of the year God entrusted a laptop to me. When it comes to resources, this has been such a blessing. Through the Lord's leading, I purchased it from Natalie in February; although there were many reasons as to "why" He led me to buy it, the main one was to further His Kingdom through it. And who would have ever guessed that by June I'd have my own blog (NaomiAnne.com)! Even though starting a blog wasn't on my mind when I bought the laptop, apparently God had it all planned out, because approximately 4 months later He had me running my own site, keeping up with posts, and developing my writing skills. Owning an expensive item has taught me that everything I have is the Lord's, and whatever happens to them, happens. They are just "things" of this world.

Though there are many different characteristics of God shown throughout the Bible, the one that stood



out to me the most this year is His mercy. Not only did He reveal how great His mercy was to the Israelites, but also to me personally. Day after day, I am continually surrounded by God's mercy and feel the way David did when he prayed this:

"Who am I, O Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?"

-1 Chronicles 16:11

I don't deserve to receive any of the Lord's good gifts, and yet He gives unreservedly! It seems as though I have had to receive more of God's love and strength and mercy than any other year. I think this is the reason why: In an age where the world is trying to convince teenagers to rebel against their parents and their faith, it's a lot harder to keep standing on your own two feet...alone. And unless I wanted to look to the world for support, I had to cry out to the only One who I knew could help in time of need-Jesus!

The other thing that God has shown me is that the purpose of Him having a people of His own was so that there would be a nation who would spend every minute of their day bringing Him glory. As one of God's people I need to spend every breath that I take, and every moment I am alive, to bring my King glory!

Opportunities: Visiting the amazing Creation Museum, our Nation's Capital, Gettysburg, and Mt. Vernon. Oh, and the AIG Branson Conference. This was the most life changing conference I have ever experienced!

Currently keeping me busy: graphic design and photo editing, blogging, piano, and babysitting.

Joey

Early in the year the Bloyer's and our family went to Colorado to ski and let me tell you, we had a blast. It was so awesome - we went to ski for 4 days in a row! And then when we got back to the condo each night, we got in our nice hot hot tub. :-)

Then we had our big OUT EAST TRIP. When we visited St. Louis, we visited the Gateway Arch. Everything looks like little bugs. After that, we headed to Kentucky where my Dad's aunt's sister's daughters live. You would think they are cousins, but I'm not sure (it's confusing, I know). While we were in Kentucky, we visited the Creation Museum. My favorite part of the Museum was the planetarium. It was the first one I had been in - the ceiling is like a dome and the seats that are on the ground recline really far. I guess there's a projector on the floor that shines up at the ceiling and it gives it a 3D effect. The next stop was Baltimore. Baltimore is where my Dad grew up and went to school. That was the reason we were going on the trip - for his 40th high school reunion. We spent the night at some old friends of ours, and on the first day we went to Washington D.C. Then we spent one day at Gettysburg, and then another day in Washington D.C., and another day at Mount Vernon. From there, after we had all our goodbyes, we went to Chicago where we stayed for a week at my Aunt and Uncle's house. Then we came home. But not too long afterwards we went over to Branson for a conference that had Voddie Baucham, Doug Phillips, and Ken Ham. I'm sure if any of you have heard them speak, you know what I mean when I say it was awesome!!! It was an apologetics conference, which is one of my favorite



topics, so that made it even better.

Well, finally the next stop was HOME. For a while it was low key, but you know the Wickham's - always keeping busy. Our next trip was up to Chicago again, but this time my sister Nicole & my brother-in-law Andy who live in Oregon were coming too! And we got to see my sister Nadine who's been living in Chicago for a while. While we were there, we went downtown and got to go up in the John Hancock Tower - my favorite part of the trip. We ate the most disgusting food in the Signature Room restaurant up on the 95th floor, which is one story higher than the observation deck. The view was awesome (but not the food!). After that, we came home for a week and then we headed to Kansas City for a walk that we have been doing for 20 years (well I guess I haven't been doing it for that long, but I've been doing it ever since I could). Andy's sister, Melodie, came with us. And then there was the Christmas recital that Natalie has been doing for 11 years. I've also been doing that ever since I could, which is 9 years. Well that's pretty much everything up till now, so Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

been meaning to mail to me, but now I could just look through it while I was there and take what I wanted with me. That box was a treasure! Of course there were the usual people in photos that nobody could positively identify and the occasional letter that was a mystery (also some diaries written in shorthand!), but there was much that provided a patchwork history for this "non-family" person!

Looking through the treasures in the box revived many memories and created some! Two, especially, stand out. First, I learned that my Uncle Stanley was in the Army in WW2 and fought in the Pacific, especially the Philippines. Four of the letters he wrote to Seeley in early to mid-1945 were in the box. Let me share a few of the thoughts of this man who, like millions of others, fought for his country:

Monday, January 1, 1945...somewhere on the Philippine Islands. "Sending you some Jap[anese] money and you can send Margaret one of the four One Peso notes." (I noted that the envelope now contained just three Peso notes, indicating that one had indeed been sent.)

Wednesday, March 14, 1945...somewhere on Bataan (part of one line was cut out, with scissors, by censors!) "When you don't hear from me you know I am on the move and cannot write...they keep us so busy when we get to another place for 2-3 days...only getting about 4-5 hours sleep/night and sometimes we don't get that much I am in no shape to write...[what] we do at times is very sickening...not very good sights to look at...it is hard to be nice to each other as we all get on [illegible]...say when we are in the front lines and heavy shooting is going over our head for two weeks at one place we were in and it was going day & night...I was across the [censored] when the big battle was going on and saw lots of it being bombed I am feeling fine and hope this letter finds you all the same...weather here is really hot and no rain since we've been here...I am now about 30 miles from the place where I wrote you from last time and expect to move again sometime this month with love to all and God bless you and keep you all well...so long for now & good luck to all...P.S. Hope Mother & Dad had a very happy birthday together...your last letter I received was written 2/18/45."

Although I never knew my uncle, I am very proud that he was willing to serve and, if called upon, as it was for thousands of his fellow soldiers, give his life for his country. Did you notice his concern for everyone back home, even though he was the one facing danger and death every day?! My Dad also served during WW2, in the Coast Guard and, another point Joey likes to share about his grandfather, he served during WW1, too, in the Army! (In the box were some pictures I had never seen before of my Dad in his WW1-era Army uniform!)

But why include this in a Christmas letter you may ask? Because Christmas often brings thoughts of family, and as I reflect on those in my family who have gone before me, I am humbled by their legacy, and I hope that I and our children will carry it on with honor.

Second, I found a Bible that had belonged to my Dad's father. Toward the back I found a chart he had typed up and taped onto a blank page estimating how long it would take to read the Bible at 6 minutes/page - about 122 hours. On another page was a chart titled, "Dates finished reading Bible," below which were ten typed dates and three handwritten ones, beginning with 3/10/1928 and ending with 1/17/1945. How many other times my grandfather may have read through the Bible, I do not know, but regular reading of God's Word was obviously a habit he cultivated. My Dad, while not a daily Bible reader as far as I know, nevertheless gained from the godly habits of his father a deep-rooted morality and uprightness evidenced by his being faithful to my Mom during their 36 years of marriage, never uttering a profanity, never getting drunk, thinking the best of me all through my life even when it took monumental faith(!), almost never getting angry, and the list could go on. Once again, I am humbled by the spiritual and moral legacy of those who have gone before me, and I hope their godly standards continue being passed on to future generations.

This Christmas, I treasure my family, and the heavenly Father who placed us together, more than ever. I hope you, too, will treasure your family and the Son whose birth we celebrate! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

earn! *ew* *W*

Psalm 89:1

to all generations."
thy faithfulness
will I make known
with my mouth
of the LORD for ever:
of the mercies
"I will sing

W

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