Joseph Lomont Written 8/28/2001 Material prepared by Don Lomont with reference material from Ursula Lomont and contributions from Toni Lomont, Mary Lou Till, Phyllis Love

Joseph Alphonse Lomont and Virginia Cecelia Welling were married on June 10, 1939 in St. Louis Catholic Church, Besancon, Indiana by Rev. Andrew C. Mathieu in a double wedding with Virginia's sister Mary Louise Welling and Donald Franklin Hensel. The best man and maid-of-honor for Joseph and Virginia were Robert Lomont and Juanita Welling with Ursula Lomont, Carolyn Lomont, August Edward Welling and Cletus Lomont serving as attendants. The couples honeymooned together at Niagara Falls, New York. Rev. Andrew C. Mathieu was a family friend who in later years was assigned as the priest to St. Louis Besancon Church where Joe and Toni's children were attending Besancon Catholic grade school.



Joseph as a Child



Joseph as an Adult

Joseph Alphonse Lomont was born on September 24, 1909 in Allen County, Indiana. He was the third child in a family of three boys and seven girls born to Justin Peter Lomont and Emma Magdalene Lothamer. He was born in a new large two-story cement block house situated directly across the road from St. Louis Catholic Church on part of a forty acre parcel farmed by the family. He lived there with his two oldest siblings (Cletus Eugene, Ursula Marcella), another sibling (Esther Agnes) died when 10 days old. Their address was RFD 5, New Haven, Indiana.

The family moved after approximately two years, to a farm purchased in Trumbull County, Ohio where his sister (Edna Eulalia) was born. Next the family moved to Van Wert County, Ohio where they lived for approximately three years and where another sister (Catherine Alice) was born. When Joe was seven years old, the family moved back to Indiana and settled into the family home where Joe's father, Justin grew up. Four more siblings (Mary Elizabeth, Robert Herman, Monica Ruth, Carolyn Louise) were born here in the large brick home. Joe began his education at a public school in Ohio taught by Catholic Nuns where every child in school, except one girl, was Catholic. He completed 8th grade at the St. Louis Catholic School. He helped with the chores on the family farm, learned farming, and followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, eventually farming as many as 2000 acres.



Joseph and Virginia Wedding

Virginia (Toni) Cecelia Welling was born on November 26, 1918 to John Anthony Welling and Antoinette Frances Denzel. She was the first child in the family born in Fort Wayne. Her six older siblings, Cletus Joseph, Eugene John, Alban Edward, Marcellus Ronald (Fuzz), Mary Louise, and August Edward were all born while the family lived in New Haven, across the street from the old New Haven Catholic Church. Her younger sister, Juanita Katherine, was born in 1923. They were the two youngest in a family of eight living children. Two children died at an early age, John Anthony, Jr. born in 1916 died in 1919 and Mary Elizabeth died at childbirth in 1920. Virginia lived with her parents and all brothers and sisters in a small, seven room house at 1610 E. Wayne Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The neighbors were the Schwartz's on the west side and the Keller's on the east side of the Welling house. The Lehman's were in the second house to the East. The Rice's lived a couple of houses down. The big house on the east corner was the Smith's house. Mr. Smith worked in construction. The Hilker's owned a hardware store and lived nearby in a house that is currently owned by the Sig Ep Fraternity associated with Indiana Institute of Technology.
Toni attended school and church at St Mary's. Her parents were always buying things from the Barr Street market and giving it to the Nuns at St Mary's. Toni helped her brothers and friends mow the grass for the Nuns. From early on in her life, she was close friends with Nuns and carried this relationship throughout her life. She was always preparing special Christmas packages for the Nuns who taught at the grade school where her children attended.
St. Mary's School was about a mile and a half from her house, and she walked or roller-skated to it four times a day, coming home at lunch. In the lower grades, only girls were in her classroom. The boys were in another classroom. In the third grade, the boys and girls were mixed in the same classroom.

It was while attending school at St Mary's that Toni acquired her nickname. On the way to school she had to cross Lafayette Street, which was patrolled by a policeman named Tony Euber. Tony's daughter was a close friend of Juanita Welling's. Virginia idolized Tony and talked about him so much. Tony this, Tony that, until finally everyone just started calling her Toni, which she decided to spell with an "i" instead of a "y." because her teachers told her that was the correct spelling for a girl.

Automobiles were not common when Toni was a child. Her father, John Welling, rode the trolley to work every day at General Electric. Both parents, John and Antoinette, rode the trolley to the market each week. On Sundays, Toni's father sometimes gave her trolley fare so she and her friend, Phyllis, could go for a ride. She could ride wherever the trolley went for two hours. Because she didn't have

any spending money, the kids just rode around on the trolley looking at the sites. (note: she had told me that the trolleys were free on Sundays – did you validate that this was not so?)

The Rice boys who lived down the street made some soapbox cars that the kids liked to race on the sidewalk in front of their house. Toni still has scars on her leg from the time they pushed her in one of the cars, and she wrecked into some horseshoe stakes, lacerating her leg. Since the kids didn't want to get in trouble, they wrapped her leg in a towel to stop the bleeding. When it heeled, she was left with a jagged scar.

One afternoon, a stranger walked up to the kids playing with the cars and asked them how to get to the cemetery. They gave him directions – go this way, turn at the corner, go that way and then look for the stones. He asked them to show him the way. Toni explained that they were not allowed to cross Wayne Street so they couldn't take him any farther than the end of the block. He then asked a neighbor girl if she would show him the way. She said she would and went with him to the cemetery. The next day, she was found dead. Toni remembers having to describe the man to the police. It was a very scary time.

Never a model child, Toni was always attracting the attention of the Nuns in school. Sister Agnes was Toni's first grade teacher and Sister Humility was another of her early teachers. One day in the sixth grade, Sister Andrew walked down Toni's aisle to investigate some talking and nailed Toni as the instigator. As she leaned over and told Toni to be quiet, her flowing sleeve brushed against the inkwell on Toni's desk, causing an ink spot on her paper. Sister Andrew did not notice she had caused the problem and returned to her rounds. When she noticed what happened, Toni whispered to the kids next to her that she was going to be in more trouble because of the ink spot. Sure enough when Sister Andrew returned, she asked about the ink spot. Toni refused to say how it happened and was sent to sit in the front of the room.

Her dad worked at General Electric until he was laid off during the depression. He then purchased a 40 acre farm in Tillman, a small town east of New Haven. The move occurred just after Toni graduated from the eighth grade at St. Mary's Catholic School at 14 years of age. Al, Fuzz, Mary, Eddie, Toni and Juanita moved to the farm and helped with the chores of raising cows, collecting and separating milk and housecleaning.
Her oldest brother, Clete, had worked for General Motors while studying in college and moved to Detroit, Michigan, to work for them after graduation. Along with the job, Clete got good discounts on GM cars. So when the family moved to Tillman, Clete gave his dad his old Chevy so that the family could get around.

Just down the street from their home on Wayne, was the Barr Street Farmer's Market. Farmer's brought their produce to this open-air market, which took up a couple of blocks. Each week, Toni's parents shopped there. After moving to Tillman's, her parents continued to return to the Barr Street Market each week. Toni pestered her parents to take her with them. They couldn't understand her sudden interest in shopping, but finally they relented and let her go along. As it was, moving to Tillman's, Toni missed her friend, Tony, the cop. The Barr Street Market was on his beat. So each week Toni followed Tony around as her parents did their shopping.

After Toni's mother became ill with uterine cancer, her father pulled Toni out of St. Mary's Commercial Course (High School) where she was a few months into her sophomore year. By this time, Mary was out on her own and Toni was the oldest female at the house. After her mother died several years later, Toni returned to St Mary's High School, however, reminded daily that all her friends had long ago graduated and her classmates being four years younger making her feel out of

place caused her to drop out. Toni always regretted not being able to finish high school and made sure that each of her own children worked hard in school and were able to graduate from high school.

After moving to Tillman's, Toni joined the Catholic Youth Organization where she met Jake Giant. They quickly became friends and partners in crime through their teenage years. Jake's father, Josie Giant, and a young man named Joe Lomont hung around together. One year, Josie and Joe decided it would be great to plant some watermelon in one of the cornfields. As the melons matured, Joe and Josie spotted a melon, which they watched with pride anticipating its sweet, cool, moistness in their mouth. Jake and Toni heard them bragging about their prize melon. One afternoon, when Joe and Josie were off working in the fields, Jake and Toni snuck into the cornfield, cracked open the prize watermelon and, using their hands, scooped out the heart of the melon and ate it there on the spot. The next day, when Joe and Josie went out to check on their melon, they knew exactly who to blame for the theft.

John Welling raised cows and collected and separated his own milk. Because there was so much milk, often, the cream was separated out and the whey thrown to the pigs. One winter day, Jake and Toni decided to make ice cream. Using ice they had collected in containers outside and a bucket of pure cream they found, they made up a batch of homemade ice cream, which they shared with Josie and Joe. Josie and Joe complimented John on what great ice cream Toni made. John couldn't argue, but he no longer wondered what had happened to all his cream.

Toni took her housekeeping duties seriously, but was not bashful about making goodies for herself and her friends. One of her specialties was taffy and caramel candy. She would give pieces of candy to Jake who took it to school with him. With both cheeks bulging, Jake often got in trouble with his teachers for bringing the candy to school. Several years after Joe and Toni married, Jake married Joe's sister, Monica (Mickey).

At the time of their marriage, Joe and Toni lived at the Welling place in Tillman with the family. After a few months, they moved to a house owned by Joe's parents at 17230 Rorick Road, Monroeville, Indiana across from Joe's family home. Joe supported his family by farming for his father and other farmers in the area. Their first two children, Phyllis Ann and Donald Joseph, were born while living in this house. In 1941, Mary Denzel, Toni's grandmother, lived with Toni and Joe while Toni was pregnant with her first child. Toni always referred to Phyllis as the free baby. When Phyllis was born in 1941, Toni's regular doctor had been partying, had too much to drink, and arrived late to the hospital, after the intern had delivered the baby. In those days, there was no charge for the services of an intern. About 18 months later, Donald was born in 1943.

In the summer of 1944, when Joe's father sold the house and 40 acres to Norman Sarrazine, Joe and Toni moved to and rented the Nail place about 2 miles Northeast of the family farm. Joe began his own farm business, renting several farms and borrowing machinery from his brother-in-law Lawrence (Weenie) Reuille. He proceeded to grow grain crops and raise animals to support and provide food for the family. He raised cows, pigs, and chickens. The cows provided the much-needed milk products, the chickens provided eggs and all were a source of meat when they were butchered. He also raised sheep and sold the wool.

Although they still did not have indoor plumbing, it was at the Nail place where they got their first telephone, Windsor – 1609. Over fifty-five years later, they still had the same basic phone number, 749-1609. Their next three children, Mary Louise, Ronald Eugene, and Thomas Edward were born there. The Nail place was located at 18719 Edgerton Road, Woodburn, Indiana on a stone covered

dirt road, miles from the nearest hospital. It was a snowy, blizzardy day in January 1945, when Toni began feeling cramps. She and Joe jumped into the family car and headed off through the blowing snow, following a snowplow until they could get to one of the main roads. At 7 a.m. the next morning in 1945, Mary was born. Ron arrived uneventfully, nearly two years later in 1946. It was corn-picking time when Tom, born in 1949 decided to make his appearance. Toni was helping Joe harvest the corn. While driving a tractor across the field from Joe, Toni began feeling her first labor pains. Quite experienced at this scenario with her 5th child, Toni calmly timed the labor pains and realized they were only 10 minutes apart. She got off the tractor, walked across the field to get Joe's attention. Having children was apparently becoming old hat to Joe. When she told him she was having labor pains with contractions 10 minutes apart, he told her to ask a neighbor lady to take her to the hospital. He would be up later when his work in the field was complete. As it turns out, this delivery was especially hard, and Dr. Baltus informed Toni it would be life threatening for her to have any additional children.

In November 1954, Joe's parents moved to Florida because of his mother's health. Joe, Toni, and family moved into his family home to care for it while they were away. This was the first encounter with indoor plumbing, which was a major fascination to the children. Florida did not help with Emma Lomont's illness, and by springtime 1955, she and Justin (Jess) returned to Indiana where Emma was put in the hospital for a couple of months while Joe and Toni lived with Jess. After her release from the hospital, Emma moved back in with Jess (and Joe's family) on the family farm, where she died in November 1957.

After Justin and Emma decided to move back to the family home, Joe and Toni purchased the Diebert home at 12509 US 30 East, New Haven and farm of 65 acres. The house required extensive renovation, but by the end of the summer (August 1955), Joe, Toni and the five children moved into it. Extended family living with Toni was a common occurrence. Shortly after moving to the Diebert place, Toni's father, John, moved in for the summers. He stayed with one of her two sisters through the winter.

This era was the beginning of relatively large scale farming by Joe and Toni. They had purchased the 40 acre Welling family farm in Tillman and adjoining properties to the Diebert farm. Together these properties totaled 270 acres, now known as the Joe Lomont farm. This acreage, along with the tenant farms rented, including the Justin Lomont family farm, amounted to over 2000 acres of farmland tended with grain products. By this time, Joe had sold off all his animals. In winter's, Joe performed jobs, including TV repairman, County Farm Auditor and Corn Sheller. Some winter's, he was employed at International Harvester, he considered it the easiest job he ever worked.

After retiring from farming, Toni volunteered as a substitute teacher at both Besancon Catholic Grade School, where her five children attended, and later at nearby St John's Catholic Grade School in New Haven. All five children were baptized at St. Louis Catholic Church, Besancon, schooled through 8th grade by the nuns at St. Louis Catholic School and finished high school at New Haven High. After her children finished high school, Toni began her volunteer coaching career. She coached girls softball, basketball, and volleyball and became a legend in her own time. In her mid-sixties she took up bowling and had several 600+ series to her credit. Never taking the game seriously, she livened the entire alley with her antics (cartwheels when she made three strikes in a row) and jokes that she told up and down the alley. She continued to bowl, carrying an average in excess of 150 until her late 70's when carpal tunnel surgery in December 1995, and injuries from a rear-end traffic accident in January 1996, put an end to her bowling hobby.

Joe retired from farming in 1975, passing the baton to his sons Ron and Tom. He vacated his spot as a board member for E&M Grain Elevator as well.

In 1988, the State Highway Department used powers of eminent domain to purchase Joe and Toni's home on US 30 for highway expansion. They selected a plot on their farm at 3920 Franke Road, less than a mile away where by the spring of 1989, they had built their very first new home. By this time all the children had moved out. Nevertheless, Joe and Toni wanted to insure that there would always be room for their families to come visit. So the home they had built had three bedrooms on the main level and three more in the basement. It has since come to be known as Mom's Motel, which can accommodate fourteen adults comfortably and additional children on couches and the floor.

Justin Peter Lomont was born on July 23, 1876 in Allen County, Indiana. Justin died from injuries resulting from a traffic accident on October 30, 1964 at the age of 88. Emma Magdalene Lothamer was born on January 8, 1885 in Allen County, Indiana. Emma died of natural causes on November 19, 1957 at the age of 72. Justin and Emma are buried in the new Besancon Cemetery.

John Anthony Welling was born in Allen County, New Haven, Indiana on May 1, 1875. He died October 5, 1958 at the age of 83 from pneumonia as a complication from a fall in which he broke his hip. Antoinette Frances Denzel was born in Allen County, New Haven, Indiana on May 21, 1884. She died August 30, 1934 at the age of 50 suffering from uterine cancer. John and Antoinette are buried in adjoining plots in the New Haven Cemetery.

Joseph John Denzel, Sr. who was Antoinette Frances father was born in March 1845 in Alsace-Lorraine, Germany and died September 24, 1902 in Allen County, Indiana at the age of 57. Mary Elizabeth (Lampke) Denzel was Antoinette Frances's mother. She was born May 26, 1854 in Allen County and died June 6, 1951 at the age of 97.

Joseph Alphonse died of lung cancer on October 10, 1995 at the age of 86. Virginia Cecelia currently resides at Harborside Healthcare in New Haven at the age of 82. Joe is buried at New Haven Cemetery with an adjoining plot reserved for Toni.