

## **A Week in the Life of Minnie Schellhamer**

January 1942

By Julie (Lilly) Lubinsky, great-granddaughter of Minne Schellhamer



**Minnie and Elmer Schellhamer 1942**



### **Minnie(Metzger) Schellhamer**

#### When

The first week in January, 1942. The United States was still in the midst of World War II and the attack on Pearl Harbor had just happened less than a month ago.

#### Who

Minnie (Metzger) Schellhamer, she was 51-years-old when she wrote in this diary. She was the wife of Elmer George Henry Schellhamer and they lived on Madison Street, New Tripoli, PA. And she was my great-grandmother.

Note: These are actual entries from her diary. I did not change her words to correct for grammar or misspellings. Read her entries knowing she had a Pennsylvania Dutch accent to get a sense of why she spelled words as she heard them.

Thursday, January 1, 1942

Starting the year of Jan 1, 1942 was unsuccessful, didn't feel good almost all day. Mr. Schellhamer started out for Lancaster at dinner. It started to snow around 12 o'clock. The men defrosted the refrigther in the slaughter house. After it snowed followed some rain.

Note: The Schellhamer Butcher Shop was started in 1878 by Elmer's father, George. George, with wife Mary Weiss, had two children, Elmer and Mary. George ran the butcher shop for 35 years. Elmer took it over in 1913, with the help of his two sons, Ray & Kermit. George passed in 1928.

The sausage they made became fairly well known. They bought the cows from Reading and herded them back to the shop in New Tripoli.

Friday, January 2, 1942

Second day of Jan. It was nice and clear, towards evening it got very cold. I fetch my Mother and Sister Annie to stay til spring, til the weather changes again. I duck a big basket of celery out of the garden.

Saturday, January 3, 1942

This morning I got up early and got my breakfast ready, left to go to Lynnville to help to watch airplanes, so at dinner I came home, started out to work, killed a chicken, cleaned the living room, got supper ready, wash dishes and Kermit, Catherine and Kenneth took supper with us.

Note: Watching for enemy aircraft was commonly done by civilians during this time, although none were ever spotted. I thought this was mostly done along the coast line, but found it interesting that volunteers also were spotters in this area. Minnie mentions Lynnville and Steinsville as the two places she goes on Saturdays to watch for airplanes.

Sunday, January 4, 1942

This morning is was nice and fair it had a depth of snow from 6 to 8 inch dep. I had a goose for dinner. Kermit and his family, Ray and his family, Fred Weis and Mother and Sister Annie were with us for dinner. In the afternoon Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Rabert and family were here stayed for supper. Ray and his family and I were to Christine in the evening.

Monday, January 5, 1942

Mr. Schellhamer left at 8 o'clock. Afterwards I starting to wash. Washed for 3 familys, took dinner, washed the dishes, went to store. Got supper ready and was unlucky again broke my Silex coffee maker.

Note: At this time, most coffee makers were made mostly of glass. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, which had just happened under a month ago, US domestic production was suspended for the duration of World War II, metal was all used in the war effort. Glass was the alternative.

Tuesday, January 6, 1942

This morning is a very fair morning, but it is very cold. Washed my dishes, helped in the slaughter house to get the bologna ready to put in the smoke. Got dinner ready. Catherine ironed some cloth for me in the morning and I done up the white shirts in the afternoon. Mabel Loch and son Ronald was here in the afternoon, then we made some ice cream.

Note: Catherine, my grandmother, was Minnie's daughter-in-law. She married Kermit in 1936. They had three children, Kenneth, Marilyn and Mary Jane (my mother).



**Catherine Schellhamer (Kermit's wife) on Butcher Truck**



**Brothers, Ray and Kermit Schellhamer**



### **Schellhamer Home in 1947**

Wednesday, January 7, 1942

This morning I had the Doctor, had haeadacke and was dizzy, so afterwards I straiten up in the kitchen, sister Annie and I were sewing, I had still some iron to do. In the afternoon, I was in bed. Toward evening, Edna and Louise came to my house. James Seid died from Steinsville.

Thursday, January 8, 1942

Today it was a very fair day, but not cold, I was still sewing and striating up in the sewing room, I made dinner, washed my dishes, killed a chicken for supper, was to Loy's store, came home baked a nut cake and got supper ready.

Note: It seems most of my great-grandmother's time was spent cleaning, washing, ironing, sewing and cooking. A chicken dinner started not with going to the grocery store but with catching the chicken and killing it. For the most part, women during this time were expected to be primarily involved in "duties at home." It's a reminder to me, to appreciate the many choices I have today.

About Elmer Schellhamer, Minnie's husband

Elmer Schellhamer was a County Commissioner for Lehigh County in 1940. He ran for County Treasurer in 1947, but he did not win that election. Elmer then ran again for County Commissioner; Elmer won that election. Elmer was also one of the founding fathers of the Game Preserve (today, it's the Lehigh Valley Zoo).

Being in politics, as is still true to this day, he was the brunt of many jokes. Often tied to his owning the Butcher Shop. Below are some examples.



Comic about Elmer Schellhamer - December 1942-



Poking fun at Elmer Schellhamer