

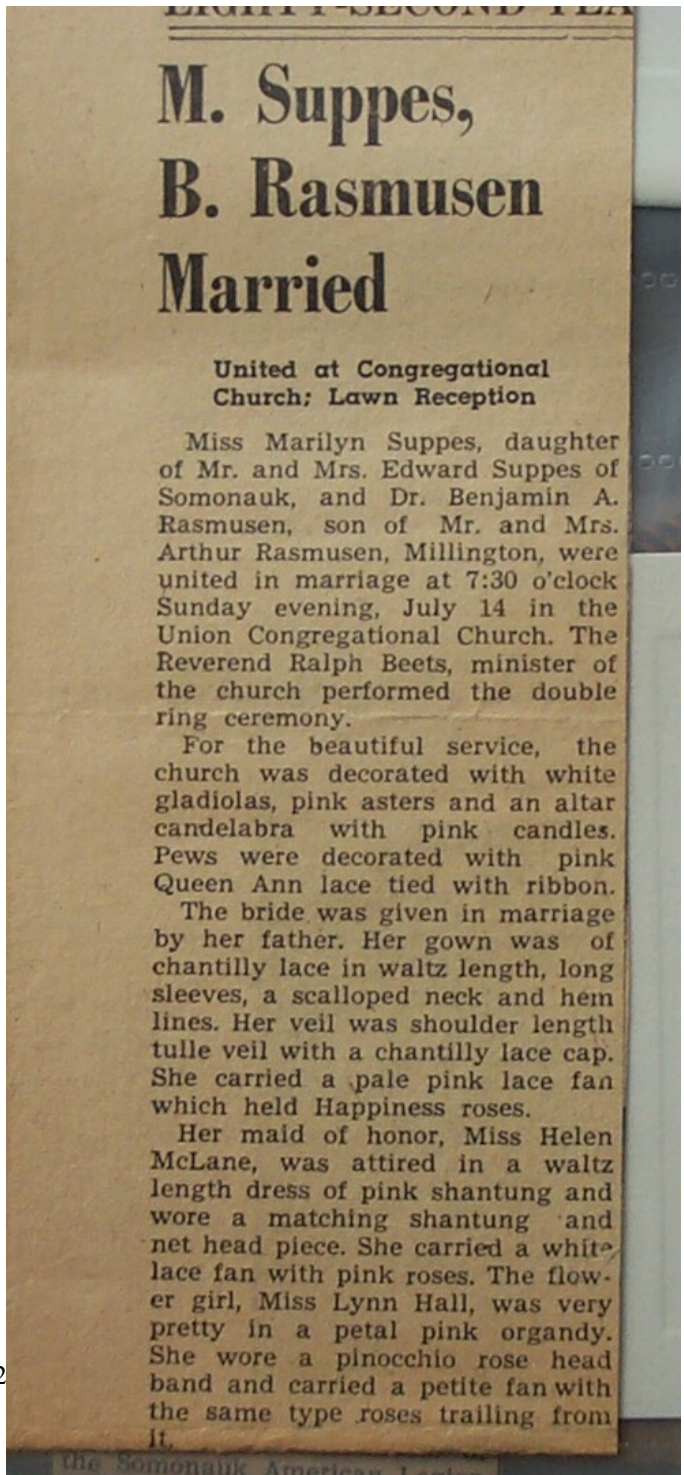
A History of Ben and Marilyn Rasmussen

By their children

July 22, 2007 (revised December 6, 2009)

Benjamin Arthur Rasmusen and Marilyn Rue Suppes were married at 7:30 p.m., July 14, 1957, at the Union Congregational Church in Somonauk. This history is prepared for their 50th Wedding Anniversary, when the family is gathering at Grand Bear Lodge in Illinois to celebrate.

Newlyweds





“The honeymooners stopped the first night at a cabin in Pines State Park. They arrived at Lake Namekagen so late the next night that they just said hello to Managers Bill and Helen Amos and went on to the cottage. They were awakened late the next morning to hear loud banging of pots and pans and lots of yelling. Bill Amos and a group of carpenters from nearby had decided to chivaree. Marilyn and Ben were pleased but wished they would go away. They did, and the happy couple chatted with them later while the cheery carpenters hammered away on the nearby structure.”



“The wedding trip a cross Canada with destination Davis, California included grand scenery and interesting side trips along the Pacific Coast. The couple took up residence in an apartment at a dear Danish-American lady’s home; Mrs. Simonsen was more of a kind aunt than a landlady; she told Marilyn of the gay waltzes of her youth and advised her on the proper way to iron Ben’s shirts - she’d once worked in a laundry. The next year when Ben had finished his Ph.D. at the University of California in Davis, he was offered a position at the University of Illinois, beyond his expectation for the immediate future.”

Urbana

The Rasmusens moved into a house at 402 South Coler, Urbana, Illinois, 61801.



Eric was born December 20, 1958, Mary on July 25, 1960, and Andrew January 26, 1962, a year-and-a-half between each child.



Ben became a full professor in 1965 and remained at Illinois in the College of Agriculture's Department of Animal Science, Animal Genetics, which was housed in the old university stables, for his entire career (sabbaticals to Edinburgh and Babraham aside) until he took early retirement in 1983. He worked on the blood groups of pigs and sheep.





. Many vacation trips were to International Society of Animal Blood Groups (ISABR) meetings --- Vienna in July 1972 (without the children), Davis in 1974 (with a 3 week camping trip), Dublin in 1976, Leningrad in 1978, and Ottawa in 1982 (where they had their 25th wedding anniversary). Ben was twice elected President of the ISABR (the first time narrowly in a contested election), serving from 1976 to 1984.



Marilyn served as Secretary to the Civic Symphony. They were active members of a Gourmet Club which met at different people's houses for meals on different themes.



For some time the Rasmusens, Gorskis, and Nanneys would meet for socializing and singing folk songs.



In 1964 we went to Colorado's Garden of the Gods. There was a little tunnel passage up that we kids went through, but Dad could just climb up to the top in one big step.



The family attended the Presbyterian church on Green Street, just a few blocks

from 402 South Coler, at first. Later, Ben was Recorder at the Friends' Meeting. Eventually, we ended up at the Free Methodist Church on Springfield and Lincoln, where Ben was on the Board of Trustees.



Andrew was always getting stubbed toes when he was little. He would sing phrases to himself in a charming way.

In 1965, we went to Edinburgh on sabbatical leave from Illinois. Grandma Suppes came along (Grandpa died the year before.) The children went St. Monica's, a private school very close to our house. We bought a Volkswagen to be delivered there, and shipped it back at the end of the year. Ben taught Marilyn to drive a stick shift during the time in Edinburgh and the kids heard him cry out, "Clutch, Clutch!" quite often while she was learning. Andrew liked to ride in the back compartment and enjoyed the hum from the engine below. During the summer of 1966, we traveled through several other European countries as a family: England, France, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

We had a Rambler in the early 60's. We went drive-in movies in it, with the big speaker on the front window. One movie was the Don Knotts turning-into-a-dolphin movie: "The Incredible Mister Limpett.". Other movies from those years that we saw were: The Sound of Music, Mary Poppins, Goldfinger, Oliver, Fantasia, 2001 A Space Odyssey.

Later we drove Grandpa Suppes's Chrysler Imperial after he passed away-- a big car with power windows. When we went to Cambridge, we

bought a Ford Zodiac—a “Zed Car”, of the kind police used--- because it would hold six people.



We would go up to Lake Namekagon in Wisconsin for summer vacation. Dad and Grandpa Rasmusen would go fishing at night--or was it early morning? Cranberry Lake was a favorite,

where there were lots of bluegill, easy to catch. We liked to go walking in the woods. There were old abandoned logging roads, and raspberries growing.

Once Andrew was with someone--Bobbie Scheppler, I think-- who stepped on a bee's nest. Eric was further off. We all ran, but poor little Andrew got stung a lot. Mother stripped him and put him in a baking soda bath. We hit bees with flyswatters.



Grandma Suppes moved down to Urbana around 1967, where she lived in the Landmark Apartments.

We went to Tucson Estates around 1970, to visit Grandma and Grandpa Rasmusen during Christmas vacation.



Clyde Stormont was Ben's advisor at Davis, and Betty Tucker was a

colleague in England.



Our next door neighbors were first the Ebels, then the Bilsons, then the Francisconos. The picture here is of Renee Franciscono.



Marilyn painted a mural on the basement wall at the bottom of the stairs.



Ben built a brick sandbox next to the brick wall behind him in this picture.



Eric took piano and violin lessons, and Mary took violin lessons, from Sol Cohen, who lived on Orchard Street only a few blocks away, with his brother Julius, who taught voice. Sol would come over to our house and we'd all play folk songs together--- Mary, Sol, and Eric on the violin, Mother on the piano, Dad on the accordion, and Andrew on the recorder.

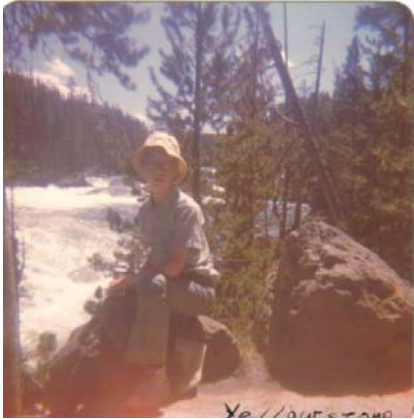
Dad took up the accordion when he was about 50, and got great pleasure from it.



We had pets. Our first cat, Lisa, a half-Siamese, had two litters of one kitten each: Fluff, and Tiger. Tiger, a careless cat, was hit by a car after some years. Baron was our Schnauzer, who loved running from one side of the backyard to the other to be able to bark at people turning the corner. We had tropical

fish, too.

In 1972-73, we went on sabbatical leave to Cambridge, England. Grandma Suppes came along. Ben worked at Babraham, an outlying village.



Below are the campsites from our 1974 drive to Davis, California. Each night, until Sacramento was a new place to pitch the tent.

Columbia, Missouri - woods on a hill, delicious mulberry

Cedar Bluffs, Kansas - a lake with tamarisk. (I think this is where Mary claims to have saved Andrew from catastrophe by yelling "Jump" as he galloped over a rattlesnake—Andrew remembers the diamond pattern.)

Lathrop, Colorado - a state park on a bluff with cedars and aggressive birds, blooming Prickly Pear

Mesa Verde - a pine and some cedars, a pit house on the hill behind our camp

Flagstaff, Ponderosa pines

Bryce Canyon - shady with yellow flowers

San Onofre Beach - sand hill, surfers

Beulton, California - grassy, open

Big Sur - huge coast redwoods, blue jays

Sacramento - camped on a lake, muskrats, willows

Near Reno - grassy mowed slope to river, big dust storm

Salt Lake City- Cherry Hill :picked sweet cherries in the campground orchard, could look down at city lights, early morning storm when we quickly folded up camp and drove out midst campers twisted into their tent canvas in the rain and wind, trying to get organized

Gros Vente, Wyoming -rocks, swollen river, Tetons

Wapiti, Wyoming -full moon on Shoshone River, horses, loud water
Rapid City - full orange moon - this is where we spent 4th of July in the city park, along with all the population shooting off firecrackers, many of the revelers were overly casual with the fireworks,

In 1980 the ISABR meeting was in the Netherlands, and Andrew came along. Mary was working in Paris, where they visited her. They went to Belgium, Italy, and Germany too.



To the left is a picture of Dora Suppes, Ben and Marilyn, and Harriet Gorski, who with Jack, Michael, and Joey had lived just down the street.



M. Y. Huang was a Ph. D. student of Ben's.



Grandma Suppes stayed in the Urbana house on Coler Avenue in the 1980s after she had a stroke. She died in 1984.



The ISABR Dublin meeting, during a side trip at the racetrack.



Back to the Farm



In 1984, Ben retired and Marilyn and Ben moved out of the Urbana house and up to the old Suppes Farm near Somonauk, to the house built by her grandfather where Marilyn spent her first eight years.



In July 1986,
went on a trip with

Friends of the Ban de la Roche to the area of Alsace where some of Marilyn's
ancestors had come from. Andrew and
Mary went along on that trip.

they
the



More travel followed: Scotland
and Wales with Margaret Hanlon in
1987; the 1988 ISABR meeting in
Turin, Italy.

Andrew married Gloria Kalinieć June 20, 1987, in Chicago in the Ukrainian Catholic cathedral.

Mary was married to Scott Beale in an outdoor wedding ceremony at the farm in May 1989.



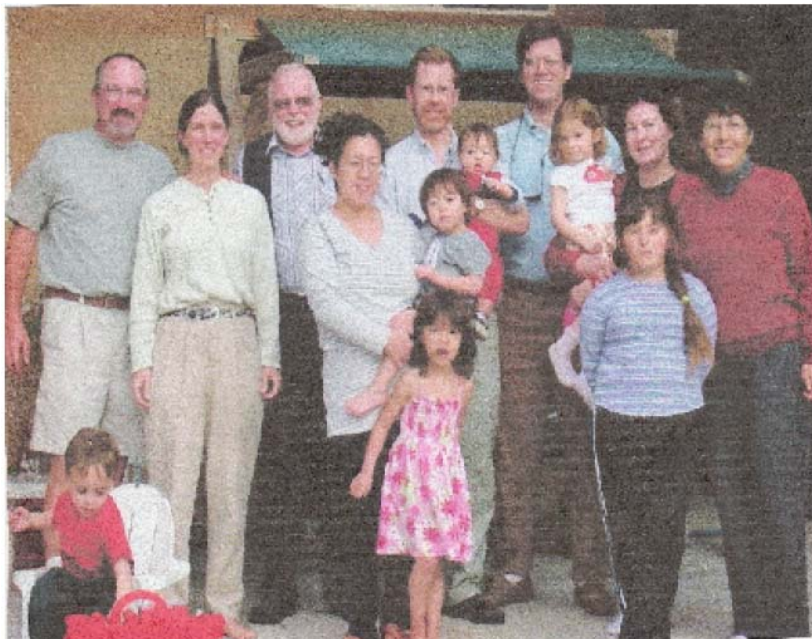
Eric, Ben and Marilyn had an idyllic fall visit to a farm on Mazon Creek, finding nodules and splitting them to find fern fossils.

Eric married Helen Choi in February 1994, down in Bloomington, Indiana.



There was a family vacation in New Glarus, summer 1998. We went to an Albanian pizzeria in New Albany, and to the Mustard Museum.





The number of grandchildren increased.



The woods for the Jones Farm became the Rasmusen Nature Preserve, a donation to the LaSalle County Soil and Water Conservation District.





Gourds volunteered next to the cornfield field.



The wettest part of the farm became The Prairie, planted with native prairie plants. Ben made paths through it, rather like an Indian maze.



Seven grandchildren in summer 2005.



Ben and Marilyn started wintering with Mary in Leucadia, north of San Diego, building a second story onto the Beale house.

