

Genesis, 1936
A homage to my remarkable parents
Walt Weidenbacher (aka Walt Lohr)
&
Jane Weidenbacher (née Doherty)

Before 1936, before this irresistible force met this immovable object, life was busy and eventful. And when they did meet, and at long last in 1936 sealed the deal that began (begat) a new world, they must have known this would be the start of something big. It was! My world, where today I am one of 84 fortunate souls—children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great grandchildren, all engendered by this most fruitful of unions—enjoying the afterglow of a certain ring around a certain finger.

I remember my Mother every now and then during my childhood, singing, “A ring around your finger, to tell the other boys, they’d better stay away...,” and mentioning it was a song she and Dad had written during their long engagement—she the lyrics, he the music. It was a long engagement because money during the Great Depression was scarce. But instead of biding their time depressed, this enterprising dynamic duo busied themselves with productive pastimes: writing poetry and songs; playing music—Jane piano, Walt violin and piano; playing chess with a chess set hand-carved from scrap wood by always-the-artist Walt; and exchanging love letters—he being on the road or train frequently with his professional traveling troupe of Shakespearean actors, likely supported by the WPA’s Federal Theatre Project of the ‘30s, and going as far west one year as Denver. I recall Dad telling me about watching the Rockies rise awesomely on the horizon as the train drew nigh their next show.

Roughly four score and seven years later, I started thinking I might be able to restore or recreate that catchy Ring song, to tell as best I could the story of the storied courtship of these two good people. Remembering only the first two verses, I asked big sis Kirsten, who remembered the entire song, word for word, plus enough of the melody that I decided to go for it.

Digging through family archives I discovered the complete “A Ring Around Your Finger” text among other lyrics typed out on two sheets of paper, confirming Kirsten’s recollection. Bingo! Dad wrote many songs during the 30s, 40s, and 50s.

Based on the pooled memories of sisters Kirsten and Karen, and myself, the typed sheet, and a little (inherited) inventiveness on my part regarding the accompaniment, and especially the photos, mostly provided by Weidenbacher *archivist* Karen and she with great memory, thank you Karen, I was able to cobble together this little tribute to our wonderful parents, Walt and Jane, presented here for the listening and viewing pleasure of their descendants, ad infinitum. What fun this nostalgia thing is.

Submitted with highest honor and love for my most honorable Mother and Father, without whom we, the Weidenbacher descendants, would not be.

Walter Weidenbacher, der Jüngere
Proud son, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, uncle, great-uncle of many
December, 2021