

I am Anneke Letitia Crans, also known as Anne Crans, or Ann Crans

My book, "Pictured Life" is a memoir, a collection of true stories written from the perspective of a young immigrant girl, like I was. The following is my personal story, told so that you will have an understanding of the person who wrote "Pictured Life," and know what to expect if you invite me to present my book to your group.

I am so very humbled and privileged to share my story with you!

The waves were gigantic. Our enormous ship swayed. A ferocious storm. Our family was assigned to the lower level, in a corner. A small table, two chairs, a bunk bed ... for six. The table and chairs tipped; our morning porridge splattered on the floor. We huddled in the corner, the youngest a baby. After ten days in-route, our ship, the Rotterdam, arrived at the shores of the United States of America. As the ship approached the Statue of Liberty, I ran up the iron steps to join the passengers to view the tall statue. The wind was blowing; rain fell on us all. It was cold; I peered through the rail at the great statue.

Highlights

Waves ... lightning, thunder ... calm. Waves thunder, thunder, lightning ... calm. ... for most of us present today. This is the story of our lives.

Holding the hand of my sister, Tineke, I walked to school at age three. Along the canal in Friesland. 1949. Our immigration ... 1951. Can you imagine!

Immigration caused me to be very, very shy – a new country, a new language, a new school, and I had to hope for new friends.

At age five I was sitting on a piano bench next to a piano teacher. All eleven children in our family were privileged to take piano lessons. My father was a musician and artist.

On family vacations to the UP always, we sang around campfires. We ate Smores, picked wild berries, and took daily walks in the woods with our father. My mother was the fisher lady ... catching sunfish and bluegills for our dinner. My father cleaned the fish. Morning breakfast was always pancakes with freshly picked wild blueberries. My father built a car-top carrier which was converted into a picnic table. State Forest parks were free, so this is where we camped. And we had to use the pit toilets, I plugged my nose. In grade five, I received a new "voice", I began flute lessons. I practiced and practiced ... my flute became my voice. After four months, I played "Joy to the world" by memory, for a PTA Tea at Jenison Christian School. I practiced

and practiced. A scholarship to Calvin College was awarded ... I joined the band and orchestra. I was privileged to study with the best teachers and played Principal Flute. I practiced and practiced. My flute was my "voice". Then there was a terrible accident ... my legs and left wrist were mangled and broken. I was in a coma for seven weeks and in double traction for twelve weeks. My right leg would not heal. Recovery was longer than a year, but by the grace of God, my family, my church, and my Calvin professors and students (they picked up my wheelchair and lifted me up the steps of the Science Building so I could attend classes.) My flute became my "voice" again. Calvin band students continued to pray for my recovery. I saved the large box of cards for many years and many beautiful hankies. In 1969 I graduated; one year later than my classmates due to a lengthy recovery. My major at Calvin switched from physical education to music education. My legs would never run again; but today, with every step I take I give thanks to God. I became the second lady band director Calvin College graduated; the first lady band director is my friend Mary Hoekstra. What a privilege to teach music to children and follow them through the high school level. What a privilege to direct students in a performance of beautiful musical concerts. My students became my gift. Music Theory instruction, as Adjunct Professor, at GVSU became my finale ... after class, in the hallway, students came to speak to me about their faith, and asked me about mine. I was nominated as Professor of the Year.

Though I presently perform in three ensembles, photography has taken my life into paths unknown, I often feel like Moses, "Lord, I know not how to speak ... I am not eloquent." Ex. 4:14. But God, His Spirit gives me words. What an amazing God we have, His power, His love, forgiveness – and the revelation of His brilliant design for us all.

Don and I met in 1968 at First Church. We adopted three children from Korea. Our youngest child has special needs. John and I have had to be extraordinarily strong advocates to address the help he needed to become the best person he could be. The challenge was great, but clearly God loves Ed, and our Ed loves God, in his uncomplicated way.

Don and I live a simple life on a small farm. We grow our own veggies, make our food from scratch, and take delight in the beauty of wild flowers and birds on our five acres. Come sit at our table for a cup of tea; taste the homemade bread, jellies and jams and test the wildflower balms. Walk through our

woods; pick a few veggies in Don's veggie garden. Listen to the call of the piliated woodpecker; view the flight of the goldfinch. Be amazed. We all have had challenges in life that lead to a new path. "Pictured Life: and True Stories from Northern and Upper Michigan" is resultant of life challenges. I walked paths within nature; God's design and beauty was revealed to me. In the nighttime, I was given songs for healing; in the daytime I was given songs for healing. The spirit of God spoke with clarity, through songs and hymns, that I must speak for Him. For four years, I lost my flute "voice". Then, God told me I must "speak' for Him, with words He promised to give me.