

The Things He Gave Me
and The Things I Took

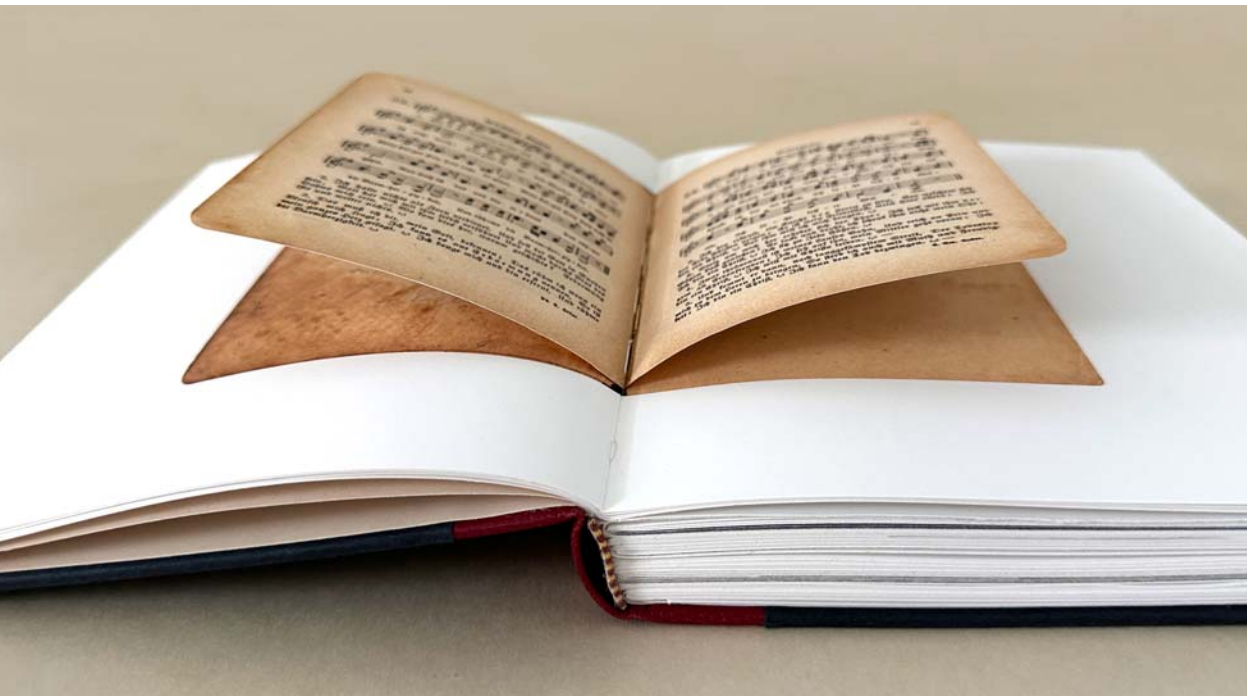
Ann Fessler



The Things He Gave Me and The Things I Took is Ann Fessler's artist's book/memoir about her adoptive father, Cliff. It is a story about loss and things left behind, from Cliff's unfulfilled dreams to the humble possessions he treasured and passed on to Ann for safekeeping. It is a book about generational legacy, keepsakes as a reflection of our values and identity, photographs that serve to both remember and reconstruct our past, and vernacular books as containers of family and cultural history.

The book uses the story of Cliff's life to address broader questions including:

- By what yardstick do we measure the life of an ordinary man?
- What is the impact of a parent's unfulfilled dreams on the lives of their children?
- What role do photographs play in the stories we tell ourselves about who we are, or were?
- Whose stories are worthy of being recorded and preserved in archives/museums?
- What might amateur photographs contribute to the historic record?
- What is the difference between an object and a photograph in relation to memory and history?
- What is our responsibility for a parent's treasured possessions after they pass away?



The book weaves together Ann’s writing about growing up with Cliff, photographs she made of his possessions, photographs Cliff made throughout his life, pages from books passed down within the family, and pages from Cliff’s hand-written financial logbooks, where he obsessively recorded every penny he made, spent, invested, and saved.

Like many working-class men before him, Cliff was intent on giving his children what he did not have himself, a college education. But ultimately, it was not his savings but a tragic accident, that paid for Ann’s education in the visual arts.

Each book is housed in a unique clamshell box, designed to hold Cliff’s treasured objects.

For a farm family, land and family are indivisible. Cliff was an all-state track-and-field star in high school and was offered a full athletic scholarship to attend college, but his parents wouldn't let him go. They needed him on the farm.

With his education cut short, he cultivated an interest in photography and began making pictures of his father, mother, brother Vernon, and their life on the farm.

He documented the draft horses and the sequence of tractors that ultimately replaced them. Photography suited him. He was not a man of generalities. He liked documentation and facts. He wanted to keep track of things and he needed to see them on paper.

. . .

Cliff stayed on the farm for a year or two after high school and then he left Iowa, his parents, and his brother, and headed west, taking jobs along the way to pay for his travels. He wanted to see the country.

He would return to Iowa regularly to help with seasonal work, but he never moved back to the farm.



VERNON

ALONG MAUMEE
RIVER ON OUR
3RD DATE.



When Cliff settled down in Ohio, he began a life of responsibility like his parents before him. He started keeping detailed logbooks where he would record his earnings, expenses, savings, and investments. He would sit with paper and pencil and calculate his interest way into the future.

When he bought a car he paid cash. Then he bought a logbook to keep track of the car.

When he married Hazel on January 1, 1944, he started a new, bigger logbook.

10

OCTOBER-42

Room	3 20	5	52.53
GARAGE	3 00	1	51.19
BOARD	22.73	8	58.96
LAUNDRY	15	"	58.59
GAS	6.89	22	6.015
Tools	29	"	58.62
CLOTHES	6.49		287.61
ODD SPEND	58.84		
	105.95		

INCOME	237.61
EXP	105.95
SAVED	180.66

1942-TO (ALCO) PERCH	
CLOTHES	49.76
GARAGE	39.60
GAS	79.19
LAUNDRY	10.82
BOARD	250.14
ODD SPENDING	349.66
OIL	12.79
ROOM	106.00
TOOLS	39.45
MR TOTAL-EXP	977.71

NOVEMBER

Room	3 20	5	52.53
GARAGE	3 00	12	60.68
BOARD	22.00	19	53.23
LAUNDRY	17.00	28	57.25
GAS	12.86	30	13.07
Tools			230.76
CLOTHES	6.57		
ODD SPEND	22.27		
	76.68		

INCOME	230.76
EXP	76.68
SAVED	154.16

74

FLYING EXPENSE

APRIL-28	ALL PAYMENT ON INTRN	34.00
" 30	1st BALANCE FOR YHR	30.00
" "	LOG BOOK	.78
JUNE 2	PHYSICAL EXAM	6.00
" 11	FREE RENT FOR PEARL	1.00
" 11	SPECIAL KIDNEY TEST	5.00
OCT-6	PICTURES FOR STUDENT RECORD	1.53
" 6	TRIP TO CLEVELAND	2.00
" 8	MR. DUAL FLYING	5.00
" 10	SOLD 15" x 50"	5.65
" 11	35 MIN. SOLD TIME	3.00
NOV-4	45 MIN "	5.15
" 14-65	" "	6.50

75

BOND'S BOUGHT

FROM	TO	DATE	AMOUNT
MAY 7	1942	100	2.00
" 14	"	100	2.00
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-1944-

1944

Cliff's pay A. Bonds C. Victory by Hazel May H. Bonds

JAN. 1-8 Income & Expense for m.h.

4127	413	660	3498
7152	715	1260	4682
7152	715	1260	4550
7152	715	1260	4550
1070		214	753
26653	2558	4654	17333

FACTORY BONUS

FEB. 10-6

7152	715	1260	4550
7322	732	1260	4550
6743	674	820	4550
7504	750	1020	4550
28721	2871	4360	18200

MAR 10-5

6523	652	820	4725
6840	684	820	5084
7258	726	1020	4883
7452	745	1020	4550
7350	735	1020	4550
1001		200	651
36424	3542	4900	24443

FACTORY BONUS

APR 14-3-10

7001	700	1020	4550
6533	654	820	4550
6728	673	820	4550
7290	729	1020	4682
27552	2756	3680	18332

MAY 15-7

6553	655	820	4620
6783	678	820	4620
6772	677	820	4550
7436	744	1020	4550
997		199	664
27441	2754	3679	19004

Bonus

JUNE 1-4

2430	243	486	4550
7319	731	1020	4550
5836	584	486	4640
2498	249	486	4640
7284	728	1020	5346
2498	249	486	4640
2052	205	1020	6764
2052	205	1020	6764
5326	533	620	3090
45393	3241	6776	24590

July 1st 6MA TOTAL \$194184 16722 28049 121902

H. Victory by Francisco. Rent Gas Electric Telephone. HAZEN'S INS. CLIFF'S INS.

460	825	2750				
660	860		214	303	95	95
660	573		565			
660	686				PRUD. 208	175
171						
2611						



900	1181		409			
1100						
900						
900						
900						
130						
4830						
900						
900						
900	610		409		PRUD 208	
3600	3033	2750	409	131	303	303
						270
900	701	2750				
900	852					
900	879		257	175	316	PRUD 208
900	708					EMBA 95
133						CAR INS. 479
3733	3140	2750	257	175	316	MULTA 660
						HOSPIT. 175
						868
						1312
900	590	2750				
900	1072			127		PRUD-208
1100	1034		75		316	EMBA 95
1300	809					EMBA 95
760X						
4960	3505	2750	75	127	316	HOSPIT. 175
						270

23094 19056 16500 2247 1045 1844 3043 3142

12-43 WAFFLE IRON.
10-1-43 ENGAGEMENT RING 129.95
8-12-43 WAFFLE IRON. 6.60
10-18-43 FLOOR LAMP (GROSS ELEK) 31.00
11-6-43 (HORTON) WASHING MACHINE. 60.00
11-11-43 WASHING BENCH LUMBER 2.60

11-6-43 WASH TUB
12-4-43 1ST DESK & CH.
12-8-43 DRUM TOP T.
12-31-43 WEDDING SU
12-31-43 WEDDING - R
12-31-43 WEDDING D.
2-12-44 KIDNEY DES
2-11-44 DAVENPORT F
1-14-44 WEDDING PIC
2-27-44 END BED SIO
(LAWES)
4-29-44 ERMUSTER KIZ
3-44 MADESTER LA
3-44 MADE TELEP
4-13-44 GOT SEWING
4-15-44 GOT OVEN TH
8-2-44 SLIP COVER
SPITZER AR
8-26-44 HAZELS BROK
5-8-45 3 H.P. MOTOR &
7-20-46 PRESSURE SACK
1-19-47 MOMIES FO



3-22-47 TAPPEN GAS STOVE. 194.95
6-21-47 ELECTRIC CLEANER 69.75
6-22-47 BOUTHE ADDING MACHINE 10.00
12-20-47 MOMIES HAMILTON WATCH 62.95
10-15-47 CLIFFS SEASON SKIPPER COAT 65.00
3-30-48 MOMES " " 65.00
4-10-48 SILVERTONE CONSOLE RADIO 489.25
8-23-48 LAUNDROMAT WASHER 288.95
10-14-48 REFRIGERATOR WESTING 331.35
12-12-48 SUN BEAM MIX MASTER #4119
6-3-49 " SHAVER MASTER 15.40
12-24-49 SMITH CORON TYPE WRITER 65.92
6-31-50 CARPETING MAUMEE HOUSE 788.90
7-29-50 TWO HAND SAWS 8FOOT 10.90
8-12-50 BREAKFAST NOOK SET 77.77
7-11-50 LAWN MOWER 18" SEARS 25.90
7-23-50 DAVENPORT (SCHMID) 225.17

7-23-50 EASY BOY CHAIR 102.31
7-9-50 NEW WESTING HOUSE STOVE. 200.00
7-15-50 SOLD TAPPEN GAS STOVE. 135.00
8-2-50 DRAPES-RAINES-8ER 103.00
8-2-50 TRAVELERS RODS
7-24-50 CHERRY BEDROOM SUITE.

STAIRS (LAWES) 22.00
SET 274 TAX 296.79

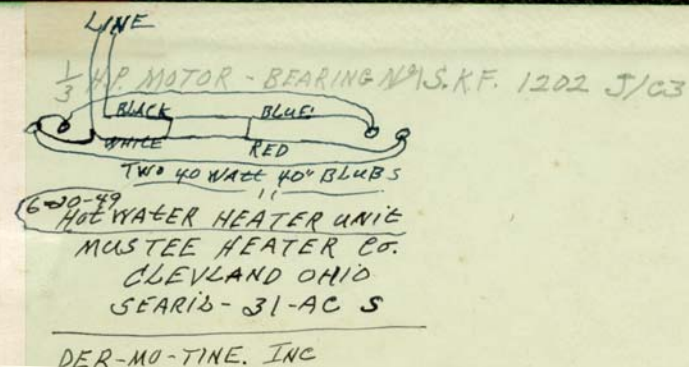
water 69.85
Up press 80.00
metal lathe 150.00
Chop parts 279.00
in suit 185.00
for aural 67.00
15.00
(Kauermat 130) 50.00
69.00
21.00
ice work bench 18.37
Drill press 7.50
121.75
chisel 84 41.25
JAMESON Co. 58.06
Dryer 190.55

6-7-54 Wash Fatigues at Chamber for well 9.00
8-56 Johnny's bed 69.00
7-20-56 Rotary mower 30.00
11-16-56 ANN'S TWIN Bed 74.00
11-21-56 Mattress for Twin Bed 96.00
10-10-56 sleeping house master 199.00
3-2-55 Screen Door airming Deck 21.00
5-5-57 China Closet 75.00
3-23-57 Drop leaf table 35.00
6-6-57 Knew Dining room China 60.00
7-8-57 Fur neck piece 123.00
11-14-57 Black Cloth Coat 69.00
11-2-57 Piano 566.00
6-18-57 Garage Roof 67.00
11-12-57 Kitchen Cabinet Door 100.00
7-14-62 BREAKFAST NOOK SET 72.80
8-6-61 NORGE REFRIGERATOR - 239.00

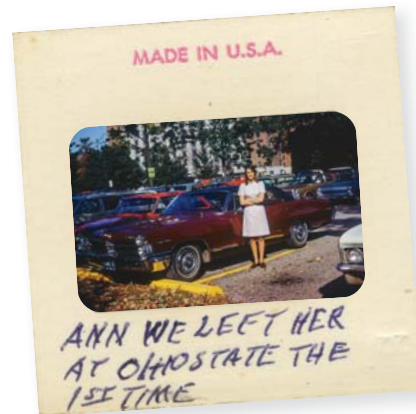
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JAN-1-86 28,815.27
FEB-1-86 29,026.58
MAR-1-86 29,239.44
APRIL-86 29,453.86
MAY-86 29,668.25
JUNE-1-86 30,104.25
JULY-1-86 30,325.01
AUG-1-86 30,547.39
SEPT-1-86 30,771.40
OCT-1-86 30,997.40
NOV-1-86 31,224.71
DEC-1-86 31,453.69
JAN-1-87 31,684.35
FEB-1-87 31,916.70
MAR-1-87 32,150.75
APRIL-87 32,385.25
MAY-87 32,619.75
JUNE-87 32,854.25
JULY-87 33,088.75
AUG-87 33,323.25
SEPT-87 33,557.75
OCT-87 33,792.25
NOV-87 34,026.75
DEC-87 34,261.25
JAN-88 34,495.75
FEB-88 34,730.25
MAR-88 34,964.75
APRIL-88 35,199.25
MAY-88 35,433.75
JUNE-88 35,668.25
JULY-88 35,902.75
AUG-88 36,137.25
SEPT-88 36,371.75
OCT-88 36,606.25
NOV-88 36,840.75
DEC-88 37,075.25
JAN-89 37,309.75
FEB-89 37,544.25
MAR-89 37,778.75
APRIL-89 38,013.25
MAY-89 38,247.75
JUNE-89 38,482.25
JULY-89 38,716.75
AUG-89 38,951.25
SEPT-89 39,185.75
OCT-89 39,420.25
NOV-89 39,654.75
DEC-89 39,889.25
JAN-90 40,123.75
FEB-90 40,358.25
MAR-90 40,592.75
APRIL-90 40,827.25
MAY-90 41,061.75
JUNE-90 41,296.25
JULY-90 41,530.75
AUG-90 41,765.25
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OCT-90 42,234.25
NOV-90 42,468.75
DEC-90 42,703.25
JAN-91 42,937.75
FEB-91 43,172.25
MAR-91 43,406.75
APRIL-91 43,641.25
MAY-91 43,875.75
JUNE-91 44,110.25
JULY-91 44,344.75
AUG-91 44,579.25
SEPT-91 44,813.75
OCT-91 45,048.25
NOV-91 45,282.75
DEC-91 45,517.25
JAN-92 45,751.75
FEB-92 45,986.25
MAR-92 46,220.75
APRIL-92 46,455.25
MAY-92 46,689.75
JUNE-92 46,924.25
JULY-92 47,158.75
AUG-92 47,393.25
SEPT-92 47,627.75
OCT-92 47,862.25
NOV-92 48,096.75
DEC-92 48,331.25
JAN-93 48,565.75
FEB-93 48,800.25
MAR-93 49,034.75
APRIL-93 49,269.25
MAY-93 49,503.75
JUNE-93 49,738.25
JULY-93 49,972.75
AUG-93 50,207.25
SEPT-93 50,441.75
OCT-93 50,676.25
NOV-93 50,910.75
DEC-93 51,145.25
JAN-94 51,379.75
FEB-94 51,614.25
MAR-94 51,848.75
APRIL-94 52,083.25
MAY-94 52,317.75
JUNE-94 52,552.25
JULY-94 52,786.75
AUG-94 53,021.25
SEPT-94 53,255.75
OCT-94 53,490.25
NOV-94 53,724.75
DEC-94 53,959.25
JAN-95 54,193.75
FEB-95 54,428.25
MAR-95 54,662.75
APRIL-95 54,897.25
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DEC-33 163,704.25
JAN-34 163,938.75
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JUNE-35 167,925.25
JULY-35 168,159.75
AUG-35 168,394.25
SEPT-35 168,628.75
OCT-35 168,863.25
NOV-35 169,097.

Expenses on place 1951

1-7	Fire brick & insulation for furnace	732
10-6-50	Cement sewer tile & sand.	475
10-18-50	Screen.	400
11-2-50	Window glass storm window ^{24x24}	1.60
10-8-50	Chicken yard fence & supplies	810
8-12-50	42' of 1/2" pipe & 42' of 3/4" ducking rod. (WELD IS 73' Deep 43' of water tank 53' of pipe)	1410
1-22-51	LAUNDRY STOVE (SPEIGEL)	1050
1-22-51	50' OF 10YR. GARDEN. HOSE.	579
1-22-51	ANNO WAGON (SPEIGEL)	829
1-22-51	GARDEN & TREE SPRAYER. (SPEIGEL)	750
9-15-50	30' EXTENSION LADDER	2650
9-24-50	6' STEP LADDER.	595
2-24-51	1948 CHEV. MOTOR COMPLETE	27116
3-2-51	TWO PEACH & ONE CHERRY TREES	405
3-5-51	STAINLESS STEEL SILVERWARE	1540
4-2-51	2 ROSE BUSHES 2 CRISANTHEMS	500
4-4-51	100 DUNLAP STRAWBERRY PLANTS	240
4-5-51	72"X42" MIRROR 53.99 4.50 TO HANG	6500
4-12-51	65 LB. Roofing / GAL Cement WORKSHOP.	1087
4-12-51	TWO RUBBER DOORMATS - 10 STAR TREDS	370
3-30-51	HOOVER VACUUM CLEANER	8795
8-7-51	4" P. TRAP EYE SPOUT DRAIN.	198
7-18-51	5 gal. VORTEL TILE RED NY 1853 ⁽⁶⁶⁰⁾	1990
6-29-51	10 LB. WHITE TEXTURE PAINT	237
8-20-51	1 gal. white paint (sears)	410
8-12-51	2 ft 1/2" & 2 ft 1" Galv. pipe	1190
1-15-52	2" Conduit wire, Fittings & outlets	2149
1-15-52	15 WATT light in West closet.	300
10-51	Living room & Dining room painted	13000



Carpeting Sept. 1950	788.14
Dugwell Departure 54	121.75
Kitchen floor 6-62	121.10
Tiled Bath Room - 11-62	290.00
Septic Tank Lead Bed - 7-64	382.20
Cement front of garage 5-58	350.00
Over head Garage doors 4-57	250.00
Cement pad for wheel well 58	200.00
City water footage - 61 -	682.93
Water tap - 61 -	90.00
Ditch & City water - 61 -	125.00
aluminum siding - 59 -	1170.00
Kitchen Casework - 52 -	200.00
Black Top Driveway 66 -	340.00
Carpeting Nov. 1966 -	741.00
July - 67 ROOF ON HOUSE -	338.00
63 ROOF ON GARAGE -	203.00



One evening my brother and I were at a movie theater and an usher found us with his flashlight and called us by name. He said there was an emergency. When we got to the lobby my mother was waiting for us. By the look on her face, I thought my father was dead.

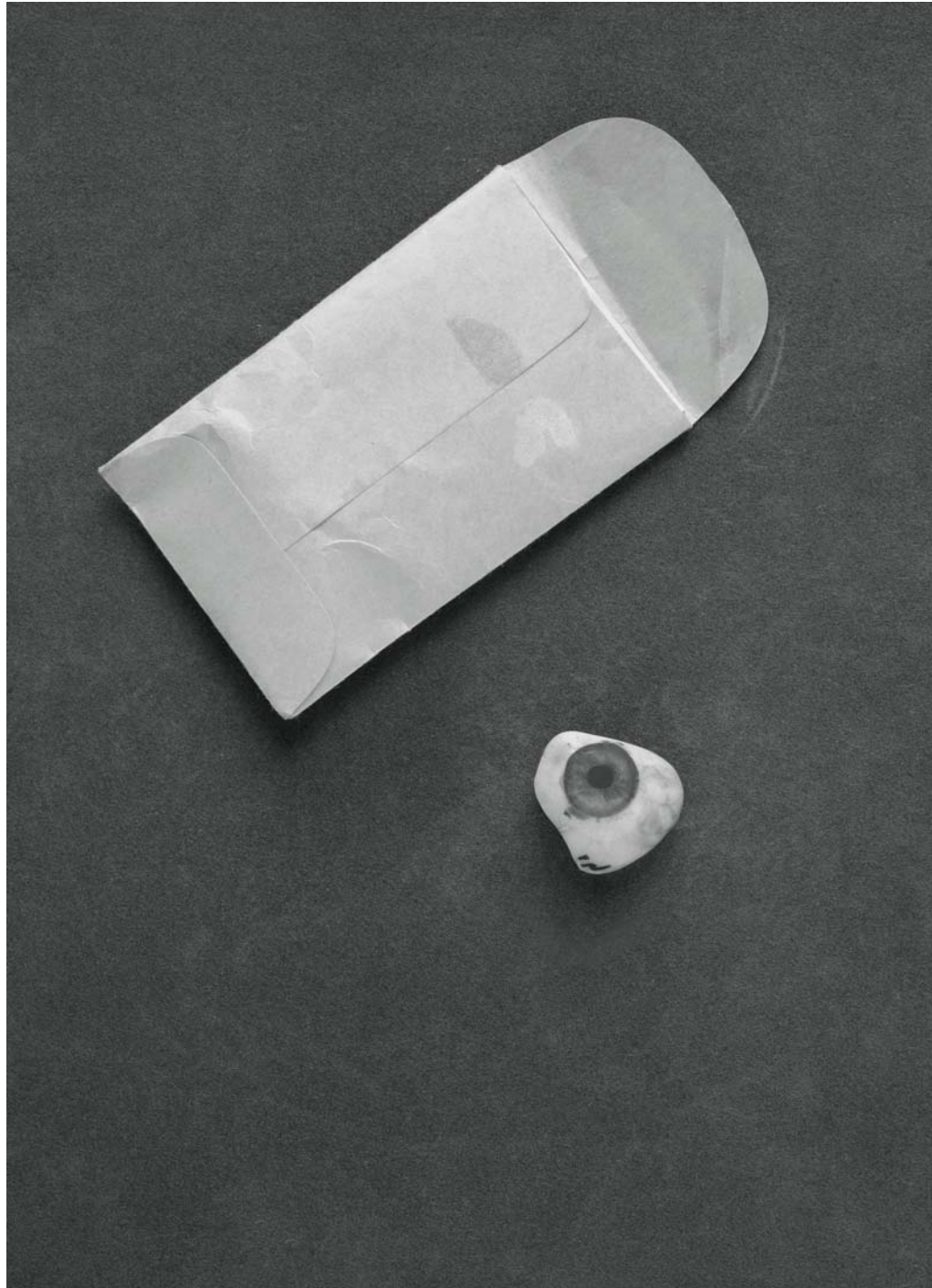
As it turned out, through someone's negligence at work, a tiny piece of metal flew across the factory floor and lodged in my father's right eye. When he went to the hospital, they tried to pull it out with a magnet but it drove the metal deeper into his eye so they replaced it with one made of glass. The insurance company paid him a little money for "loss of a body part" and he put it in a special savings account for my college education.

Years later, I was able to do what he was unable to do — go to college. And though it must have seemed like a frivolous decision to him, he continued to support me when I decided to major in art.



Long after I had moved away, on one of my infrequent trips home, my father called me into their bedroom where he had an array of books and boxes spread out on the bed. I recognized the items on display. They were the things that meant the most to him, objects he had saved and treasured for forty years. He gestured towards the bed and with very few words he gave me my inheritance:

- Two rattlesnake skins from snakes he shot in 1935 while herding sheep on horseback in the west
- A box with 9 rattlesnake rattles
- A shoe box containing petrified wood from his travels in Arizona
- An arrowhead he found along the way
- Four oversize leather-bound volumes of *Shakspeare's Works: Comedies, Tragedies, and Histories*, and a volume illustrating the plays
- His mother's German hymnal
- His mother's Bible with funeral cards, obituaries of dead relatives, pressed flowers, and newspaper clippings of Cliff's athletic triumphs, tucked between the pages
- His track and field medals
- A flag with 48 stars
- His father's gold pocket watch



Cliff had always planned to travel when he retired, but his knees began to give out. He was afraid that he wouldn't be able to properly maintain the house and land, so they moved to a condo, and that did him in.

He never had the opportunity to be alone. There was no field to plow, no bikes to fix, nothing to be responsible for. He spent his days watching the news and cursing at the TV. Near the end, he was moved to a nursing home where he did more of the same.

As he grew old, the disappointments of his life increasingly filled the spaces in him that had formerly been occupied by the traveler, the pilot, the inventor, the photographer, the gardener, and the farmer. I think that's why he saved the things he gave me. They were proof of the man he once was. Maybe he favored me because he knew I could still see that man in him.

. . .

I don't know whether it ever occurred to Cliff that the loss of his eye made it possible for me to learn to see. I know that's not what he meant when he said, "One day you'll see. When you're my age you'll see."

But here I am at his age, and it turns out he was right. The education that he enabled taught me to see, and my belated gift to him is to use what I learned to document and preserve my inheritance from him.

The Things He Gave Me and The Things I Took

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Photographs by Clifford Fessler and Ann Fessler

Designed and printed by Ann Fessler

Bookbinding and custom boxes by Amy Borezo

Book

Book dimensions: 9¼" x 7⅝" x 1⅛"

Pages: 112 full size pages, 24 smaller interior pages

Paper: Hahnemühle Photo Rag Book and Album

Ink: Canon Lucia Pro pigment-based ink

Type: Iowan Old Style

Cover leather: Chieftain Goat, J. Hewit & Son Ltd.

Cover paper: Saint-Armand handmade 100% rag

Cover label: Sakamoto Japanese paper

Handsewn silk endbands

Clamshell Box

Box dimensions: 10⅞" x 8½" x 2½–3"

Exterior: Iris Bookcloth

Chieftain Goat label with gold foil stamping

Interior: Sakamoto Japanese paper

and Ecological Fibers Rainbow acid free paper

Optium Tru Vue Museum Acrylic

Edition of 9, plus 1 artist's proof

Available to institutional collections

Books will be signed and numbered in the order sold.

ISBN: 979-8-218-54988-6

Price: \$4,600

For questions and information about availability:

afessler@risd.edu

cell 401-440-1962

www.annfessler.com



Flag with 48 stars



Cliff's track-and-field medals



Nine rattlesnake rattles



Rattlesnake skin #1



Petrified wood #1



Cliff's father's pocketwatch



Arrowhead



Cliff's glass eye



Rattlesnake skin #2

Ann Fessler Biography

Ann Fessler is a non-fiction author, artist, and educator, with a wide-ranging practice that includes photography, film, audio and video installations, and artist's books. Her work brings the untold stories of ordinary people into the public sphere where they can contribute to a more expansive and inclusive understanding of history. The majority of her work over the last 30 years has addressed feminist issues and themes of family and adoption.

Fessler is Professor Emerita at Rhode Island School of Design, where she taught for 24 years and served as both the Head of the Photography Department and the Director of the Graduate Program in Photography. She is the recipient of numerous grants and fellowships including an Artist's Fellowship from National Endowment for the Arts, and a Radcliffe Fellowship from the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard.

Her non-fiction book, *The Girls Who Went Away* (2006, Penguin Press), was chosen as one of the top five non-fiction books of the year by the National Book Critics Circle, and was the recipient of the Ballard Book Prize. She has produced numerous audio and video installations, and three independent documentary films including *A Girl Like Her* (2011, Women Make Movies, NY), which has been screened widely at colleges and film festivals and was subtitled in five languages.

Fessler has produced seven previous artist's books, including two unique bookworks, *Michele's Prayer* (1981), and *Alphabetical Index: Descriptions of Rape Paintings from the History of Art* (1994), a 12-volume set. Her offset multiples include *Guide to Coloring Hair* (1982, Tyler Offset Press); *First Aid for the Wounded* (1987); *Water Safety* (1989, Visual Studies Workshop Press); *Genetics Lesson* (1992, Nexus Press); and *A. H. Fessler's Art History Lesson* (1991), first published as an insert in *American Art* (Fall 1991), a journal published by the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. All of Fessler's artist's books make reference to existing book forms that are intended to educate, such as manuals, textbooks, and reference books.

Fessler's books are in more than one hundred university and museum artist's book collections in the United States and abroad, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum, and the Whitney Museum in New York; the Tate Britain and Victoria and Albert Museum in London.