

## FORWARD

The truth is, there's never enough time to do everything, even everything of genuine importance. However, some people seem to learn that it's not a sacrifice to give up things of lesser importance for those things of greater importance. In fact it's a bargain. Everyone dies leaving much undone. The setting of priorities is an iron-clad necessity to be successful in life. It took some time to write this journal. It was of genuine importance to me.

--Milton T. Yarbrough

## MY JOURNAL

My memory dates back to the year 1928. At the age of three, I only remember a few incidents that stand out in my faded memory. I will try to list a few things that occurred during this period that I am able to remember.

We lived on a 160 acre farm in the McAdoo, Texas community in Dickens County. My Uncle Jenk Yarbrough owned the farm. My father Marvin and mother Maurine Long Yarbrough seemed happy, although we didn't have much wealth. I remember our home was a weather beaten shack with no trees. We later planted some trees.

My Uncle Minor lived with us most of the time. He was my father's brother, one year older than my father, but unmarried at this time. Marvin and Minor were partners and rented other land besides the farm we lived on. The brothers farmed cotton and grain, and raised livestock. My father enjoyed trading and usually turned profits on most of his transactions.

My father's younger brother Darius also lived with us at different times. My uncles took up a lot of time with me and made little things for me. I really liked them both. I was the only child at the time.

In the spring of 1928, my mother, Uncle Minor and

I went to Arkansas together on the train. I remember very little about the trip. My mother and I went to Little Rock to visit her brother Maurice Long, his wife Adaline and their little daughter Virginia. While we were there, I saw my great-grandmother Bertha Benham Long for the only time. I don't remember her, but I have a family group snapshot that includes her and myself.

Uncle Minor went on to Augusta where he had lived as a boy. We also went to Augusta later, as my mother had an Aunt Gayne Preller who lived there. We also visited my grandmother Long who worked for a telephone company in Memphis, Tennessee. Grandmother was a widow at the time.

My father decided before we returned to Texas we should journey on to Shreveport, La. to visit his three sisters, Maud, Mable and Libbye. Aunt Mable and Libbye had recently moved from Little Rock and lived with my Aunt Maud and her husband Earl McQuiston.

In the summer, my father, mother and I went to visit Uncle Jenk, Aunt Lottie and my cousins Lorene, Jerome, and Penn. They lived in Brown County, Texas, in central Texas. I remember Penn. He was about 15 months old and didn't like to have his diaper pinned on him. He would kick and scrabble and make it difficult

for his mother to diaper him. I remember my mother telling me his name was William Penn. When I thought of William Penn or heard him mentioned, I would remember him kicking on the bed and the safety pin.

Uncle Jenk had just bought a new Ford. He sold my father his Model T Coupe. I remember my uncle had a green striped cloth cover over the Model T. I remember the day he took the cover off of the car and Dad took possession. The car was less than two years old. My father and mother were real proud of the car. We drove the car home from Brown County to McAdoo. The roads were dirt and some gravel. We drove into a rainstorm and almost slid into a ditch on the slippery dirt road.

Dad didn't have much driving experience, but we got home safe and sound. The car was small and I rode behind the seats on a shelf that my parents called the chicken roost. Most Model T's were black, but our car, one of the last Model T's, was grey. One day on our way home from Uncle Walter's house the car caught fire near a ditch of water. Uncle Darius was with us. He jumped out of the car, dipped water from the ditch with a tin can and extinguished the fire. I think we were able to drive the car home with no more trouble.

One day Darius took me with him to visit the Stephenson family in his car. He, after visiting for

awhile forgot he had brought me along, and he left without me. I was having a good time playing with my cousins Robena and Charlie, and I didn't see him leave.

I was told that Darius had left without me, and I would have to stay all night with them. This arrangement I didn't like and got really homesick. I didn't like staying away from home at night. When Darius got home without me my father saddled his favorite horse Rock, "Rocky Boy" I called him, and came to get me. I was really glad to see him.

Dad used to put me on front and took me many places on old Rock. He sometimes took me to school. We plowed with horses and mules. My father and Uncle got several brood mares and raised mule colts to be used as work animals. One day my mother, a city girl, and I went to the mailbox which was about a quarter of a mile distance through a lane in the field. One of the mares had a mule foal. My mother and I went to pet the little mule and he kicked me down. I wasn't hurt bad, but my dad, who was raised on a farm, told my mother to never trust a mule any age, and never get behind one. The mule was just a few hours old. He belonged to Uncle Minor and was named Jerry.

Darius was hired at a cotton gin as a bookkeeper. I didn't see much of him. I missed him playing with

me.

A Mexican family or two moved into a small tenant house behind our house on the farm to pull cotton bolls. They had two little girls, one was a little older than me, and the younger one was about my age. The girls could only speak Spanish, I, only English. We tried to talk to each other. She would say "Que?" and I would say "What?" over and over. We like each other but were never able to communicate. The older girl would run toward me, and I would run home. I'm sure she just wanted to be my friend and maybe try and pick me up. When the cotton was picked the Mexican people (there were several of them) moved back to south Texas.

I got a tricycle for Christmas that year. A really big year for a boy of three years old.

One day in the spring of 1929, Darius drove down the dirt lane and parked in front of our home. He had been away for a while, and I was glad to see him. He had left two suitcases at our house as this was his permanent home. He had gotten a new job with a telephone company. He was happy as he picked up his luggage, one in each hand. He told mother and me good-bye, and he said with a big smile, "Mom, take good care of him," referring to me. He drove away in his Model T

touring. His new job was at Hillsboro, Texas. He had not been working at his new job long, when the telephone office man from McAdoo found my father in the field planting cotton. He told my father that Darius had been hurt in an auto accident. We didn't have a telephone. Darius had listed my father in case of emergency to be notified. Dad and my Uncle Minor called their brother in Mineral Wells, Texas who lived much closer to Hillsboro. As soon as my dad and Minor could get ready, they left for Hillsboro in Minor's Model T. Jenk also left for Hillsboro as soon as possible, and in an effort to get to his youngest brother, Jenk was involved in an auto accident. Jenk's injuries were minor.

When Minor and my dad arrived at the hospital and asked about the condition of their brother, the receptionist first told them that their brother's condition had improved. There were at least four people who were involved in the accident. The confused receptionist, after getting the names straightened out, said, "I'm sorry. Your brother is dead." This was a very terrible shock and a sad time for the family to lose a brother. After the death of their father, the four brothers and four sisters were very close, and the older ones helped out the younger ones. Their mother's

sister, Aunt Edna, referred to them as "Those poor little orphans." My father later told me about the accident that killed Darius. The owner of the new Model A Ford invited some young men to take a ride in his new car. The young men were delighted and jumped in the car. Two of the men got in the rumble seat. They drove to the country and bought some wine. While driving around, it started to rain. The men in the rumble seat got in the front seat and one sat on Darius's lap. The driver started speeding and driving erratically. His passengers told him to stop the car several times. According to survivors, the driver said, "If you guys want me to stop, I'll show you just how fast this car will stop." He locked the brakes on the wet road and turned over several times.

My father didn't attend his brother's funeral in Augusta, Arkansas because my mother was expecting a new arrival. He drove Minor's car back home. All of his brothers and sisters except Libbye, who was also expecting, went to the funeral.

We lived twenty-seven miles from the nearest hospital at Spur. My mother and dad decided they would go back to Brownwood, Texas, where I was born, to be ready for the birth of their second child. I remember taking the trip, quite a long trip by car in those

days. Uncle Jenk came to take us back with him. He had a new car. Dad and I rode in the rumble seat. I don't remember if Jerome and Lorene had started to school. They boarded at a Catholic school. Jenk drove and my mother and Aunt Lottie rode in the front seat. Penn rode in the rumble seat and in the front seat with his parents.

I still remember the night Mother was taken to the hospital. I was left in Aunt Lottie's care. I liked her and I don't remember feeling abandoned by my parents. When Jenk came home he told me that my mother had a little baby doll for me, and we were going to see her. I went with my uncle to the hospital. It was the largest building I had ever seen. We climbed the front steps. This was quite an experience for me, so many steps to the main floor. Jenk held my hand. When we finally got to my mother's room, I was surprised to see her in bed. She had a big smile and was glad to see her first born. I was told to look in the crib which in those days was in the room with the mother. I had expected to see a doll, but I knew at first glance that we had a baby. I really thought she was mine, so I started to take her out of the crib. I was told that I would have to leave her in the crib. Her face was red. I was really proud of her. Mother named her Merridy

Rae. When my mother was able to travel, we returned home by train. When we returned home, everyone came to see the baby. I told Uncle Minor, "The baby was named Merridy Rae," but he would call her Mary Jane just to tease me. I would always correct him, and say her name is Merridy Rae. Soon after we got home Dad built a crib for our new baby, he made it oversized, big enough for both, my little sister and me.

One day Mother, Merridy Rae, and I had stayed home while Dad went to town to take care of business. He was gone longer than expected. It was getting dark. I told my mother that I was going to meet Daddy. She was busy and didn't pay attention to what I had said. Because she ignored me, I decided if she wasn't concerned, it would be the right thing to do, so I walked down the lane that led to the road to meet my Daddy. I didn't get far until it was dark, and mother had missed me, and called a family who lived on the farm. I heard my mother calling Sam, telling him she needed help because I was gone. I could tell by the sound of her voice that she was really upset. I knew I had better let her know I was alright. I said, "Coming, Mother," and hurried back toward our house. She ran and met me half way. By now, it was really dark. A few minutes later, my dad got home. The

lights on the car had quit working, and he drove home in the dark. Luckily, there wasn't much traffic in those days on country roads.

Rumors were flying among relatives that Minor would soon end his bachelorhood. He would tell me, "I'm going to see my girlfriend. Please go pick me some flowers to take to her." I would look for flowers. We didn't have any fancy flowers. He would always thank me and say, "She will really like these flowers." He was happy. The girl or young woman was a tall local farm girl who giggled and laughed a lot. Her name was Beatrice Barton. I didn't know at the time who I was picking the flowers for. As the year came to an end, it was certain that Minor would soon be moving out and starting a home of his own.

Our home was different after Uncle Minor married Aunt Bea. Just my father, mother, my little sister and myself were at home now. I'm sure this was a happy time for my mother because now she only had to look after my father, Merridy Rae and me. I was very close to Uncle Minor and really missed him being around as he had been all my life. I was really glad to see him when he and my new Aunt visited us, which was often. He must have missed me too because he would bring me little toys like simple little sailboats or a corn-

stalk horse which he had made himself. I was jealous of Bea and would embarrass my mother by not behaving properly when Bea came to visit. If Minor was present, I would always conduct myself properly. I didn't understand at the time why I seemed to always get in trouble when Bea visited my mother.

The last time I visited Aunt Bea in Texas was 1978. She laughed and said, "Milton, I believe you were jealous of me when Minor and I were first married." I had never thought about it before. After remembering those years for a moment, I said, "That was the reason I was such a brat."

In the late 1920's, there were a lot of my father's relatives from Woodruff County, Arkansas who lived in the McAdoo community. My Great Uncle Walter and Aunt Annie Garrett Stephenson and their family of eight, Edna, Grace, Nathan, John, Jim, Lucille, Charlie, and Robena resided in McAdoo. Robena is two weeks older than me. As a small child, she was my favorite playmate.

My Great Uncle Vic and Aunt Mamie Pollard Stephenson and their family of eight, Sam, Helen, Annie T., Gilbert, Howard, Robert, Vance, and Rosalind also lived in McAdoo. Helen Stephenson married Louis Harvey and had a little girl named Libby Jean.

McAdoo was home also to my Great Aunt Edna Stephenson Hargis Wisner and her husband Ed. She had five children by her first husband Dr. H.P. Hargis. Ruby and Margaret were married and lived in Arkansas. Amelia, H.P. and Wesley lived with their mother in McAdoo. Including my father and mother, my two Uncles Minor and Darius, and me and later Merridy Rae, we were a rather large clan in the McAdoo community.

We had many family get-togethers. We had some good musicians and dancers in our family. My Great Uncle Walter taught most all of us to play the fiddle. Marvin, Minor, and Jenk all played the fiddle or violin. Minor was a real good fiddler. Nath Stephenson was a teenage boy at the time and was also a good fiddler who improved with age. We had ice cream suppers with plenty of music and dancing or maybe watermelon most of the time. Most of the time we met at Uncle Walter's and Aunt Annie's home. The children of different age groups would play games according to their age and size. Everyone was encouraged to sing or dance to show their talents. Those years seemed to be happy times for everyone, young and old.

Hard times were being discussed by all the grown ups. We were now starting the depression years. I was too young to realize what all this meant, but I knew it

wasn't good. Farm products had little value. Most of the farmers had no money, but they had no other choice but to stay and tough it out. The city folk were losing their jobs by the thousands. In 1931, President Hoover was very unpopular.

With all these problems, we had the misfortune of our house burning to the ground. The only things saved was a chair and wash tub that had been left at the windmill. We barely got out alive. My sister and I were sleeping in the crib. The room was filled with smoke. My dad enjoyed hunting and kept shotgun shells stored in a drawer in the kitchen. Somehow the fire started (we never knew how the fire started) and the shotgun shells exploded and woke my mother. She woke up my dad. We hurried out, but Dad went back to get some money hid behind a picture of Darius. I believe it was twenty dollars. By this time, the smoke and heat was so severe he had to give up and run for the door. He barely could crash the door open. He joined us outside the burning house, and we went to the barn, in our sleepers and watched everything we owned burn to the ground.

Our neighbors had no money, but all brought us clothing, odds and ends of furniture, dishes, pots,

pans and even toys. This was really a big help to get us started again.

We moved the tenant house that had been moved to the field back to where it sat when the Mexican families lived in it, and moved in this little two-roomed house.

In the fall of 1931, I started to school. My first teacher was Miss Branon. I remember I was really glad when I was told that there was no school on Saturdays and Sundays. I still believed in Santa Claus and that Christmas Eve my father had gone to town to do some last minute shopping. My mother was busy preparing for Christmas dinner. Mother told me, "You should go to bed early so you'll be asleep when Santa comes. He won't leave any presents if you are awake."

I hurried to bed but had trouble falling asleep. I was really excited. I heard dogs barking in the distance and was sure they were barking at Santa, and I was still awake. That was the last year I believed in Santa Claus.

The next year brought about big changes in our future when Uncle Jenk lost his good job in central Texas. I remember when he came to tell us that he no longer had a job. He said he would move his family and live on the farm. This meant we must move after the

present crop was made.

The plantation in Arkansas which belonged to my father and all his brothers and sisters needed someone to take over the farm. The farm was paying little or no dividends, and the building needed repair. All of the brothers and sisters encouraged Marvin to go and save the farm where their mother and father had lived and prospered, and where they were all born and raised.

My father was happy in Texas, but due to the circumstances, he decided to move to Arkansas. He had to start making plans at once. He traded his Star Coupe that jumped out of time often and some cattle for a Chevrolet truck that needed mechanical work. He had a different engine installed to take a trip to Arkansas to prepare for the move the next year. Uncle Walter Stephenson and his son Nathan and another young man, a friend of Nath's, went along with my father.

On the way to Arkansas, they stopped in Dallas, Texas to pick up Aunt Maud to ride as far as Texarkana to stay with her younger sister Libbye who was expecting her second child very soon.

While my father was gone we stayed with different relatives. Sometimes we stayed with Uncle Minor and Aunt Bea who had a baby daughter, Wanda Lou. We also stayed with Aunt Annie and her family and with Uncle

Vic, Aunt Mammie and their family. Mother was expecting her third child in July.

Dad and the rest of his party stayed with Uncle Jim Garrett, who was Uncle Walter's half brother. While in Arkansas my father made arrangements and told the farmer he put in charge of the farm that he must be ready to move the next year because my father would take possession early in 1933. When they returned to Texarkana, Libbye and Carl had a baby girl named Beverly Jean.

After returning from Arkansas, Dad got the old Chevy truck ready for the wheat harvest. He made good money for that time, but every time he got a few dollars ahead the truck would break down or need a new tire. He did make a little after his expenses, and that was more than most were earning. He also started trading his livestock. You couldn't sell anything, as none of the farmers had any money. We had a lot of wheat and barley that brought such a ridiculous price on the market that Dad refused to sell and stored the grain in tanks, barns and the cellar. He traded for some good brood sows to feed the grain to. It wasn't long before we had a lot of pigs. Pigs were in demand.

All the farmers wanted pigs to raise for meat. He made some excellent trades, and he also sold the pigs

for \$1.00 a piece. Also, he traded pigs for farm labor. Families were really concerned about surviving the hard times. If they could rake up a dollar, they would invest it in a pig or two. The pigs would grow fast and that next winter they would have meat to eat.

We were soon moving to Arkansas and had to get rid of our livestock and give up the pig business.

On July 19, 1932, my brother Royce was born, and my sister and I were proud of him. Mother and Dad thought he was a super baby. He was a big baby and Dad said, "He'll play football, and probably be a heavyweight boxing champion." Mother was proud of his size and strength but didn't want him to be a prize fighter.

In August we were visited by Aunt LaVergne and Aunt Mable. All the kinfolk were excited and busy cleaning their homes and yards to prepare for their visit. I was told to be well-behaved and to keep myself clean while they were visiting us. We were all glad to see them and enjoyed their visit. My Aunts were glad that their brother was going to Arkansas to take over the family farm. Soon after school started, we moved to McAdoo. The house we moved into was much nicer than our home on the farm. The house had been Aunt Edna's home before she moved from McAdoo. I liked

living in town, I could go home for lunch, and made new friends. The reason we moved at this time was to give Uncle Jenk and family possession of their house and farm. We knew we would be here for only a short time, while we sold our crops and livestock and prepared for our move to Woodruff County, Arkansas. While we lived in McAdoo, Royce became very ill. He had pneumonia and an ear infection. He was a very sick baby and almost died. I remember that it snowed a lot before Christmas that year. As the year came to an end, we were starting a new year, and also a much different life. We were leaving many relatives and friends. Farming in Arkansas was much different from farming in West Texas. Just a few days before we were to leave Texas, we heard that a young couple that we knew of wanted to pay part of the traveling expenses to ride as far as Little Rock with us. They were moving to Mississippi. Mother didn't like the idea at first, but Dad and Mother talked the situation over, and decided to take them with us. So Kiefer and Buelah, I'm not sure about their last name came along. I do remember that they were related to the Took family, either she was a Took or he was.

We moved out of the rented house just a few days before we were to leave for Arkansas, we loaded the

truck, and stretched a tarp over the truck bed. We took our personal items, our cured meat, several hams, we even took some of our Turkin chickens. The Turkin chickens had necks like a Turkey.

We stayed one or two nights with Uncle Minor and Aunt Bea. The day before we left, Kiefer came over to make last minute plans with my father, for our trip. We stayed our last night at the home of Uncle Walter and Aunt Annie Stephenson's. The next morning, Kiefer and Buelah met us early for the trip.

Monday morning of January 16, 1933 was foggy. We loaded up, said our good-byes to the Stephenson family and started on our journey.

The first part of the trip was dirt roads. The old trucks in those days were slow, harsh riding, and no comfort at all. My mother, Buelah, my little sister, and baby brother rode in the back of the truck. They made their little passenger compartment as comfortable as possible. They enjoyed the scenery from the back view of the truck. I rode in the truck cab with the men, also in the back, this privilege I enjoyed, and didn't get as bored being able to change positions. The fog soon lifted and the roads improved as we headed toward Vernon.

We drove all day, and into the night. I remember I

was fascinated by the lights as we traveled from one town to another, and the roadside business shops along the way. I also liked the search-lights, and beacon lights from a airport. Later that night we were almost drowned by a terrible rain-storm, and found shelter in a rather large garage that happened to still be open. The garage workers allowed us to park inside until the rain stopped. After the storm, we continued on our way. We drove all night the first night. Some of the towns along our route were Vernon and Witchita Falls near the Oklahoma border. The next day we drove to Dallas and on to Mt. Vernon, or near there. We rented tourist cabins for a much needed rest and a shower. The trip was hard, but we enjoyed the excitement of seeing the different places and views. I also enjoyed our picnic lunches along the roadsides.

The next morning we were fresh and ready for the road. The truck was performing perfectly. We had good tires. With no major problems, we expected to spend the next night in Arkansas. We drove to Texarkana, Hope, and Arkadelphia. We decided to stop for the night in Arkadelphia. I remember it was a very beautiful place. By Thursday the 19th, we were getting close to Little Rock. We drove to Malvern, and then on to Benton. We reached Little Rock early that day and

rented a motel. Here we would part company with Kiefer and Buelah and were never to see them again. We had become very good friends with them, and Mother and Dad said they were glad they had come this far with us. Kiefer helped with the driving, and Buelah was good company for Mother, as well as being helpful in taking care of Rae and Royce. The next day Kiefer and Buelah left Little Rock for Mississippi. We visited my Mother's brother, Maurice and his wife Adeline and their three daughters, Virginia, Mary Adeline, and Elizabeth. Mother was really excited. She hadn't seen Uncle Maurice and his family for about five years. She had never seen their two youngest children. We wanted to look and feel our best for our visit, so we rested that night at the motel. The next day my parents did some shopping and got ready to visit our relatives. The day was almost gone by the time we found their apartment.

We were in the midst of the Great Depression at this time and it was devastating for many families. Uncle Maurice had a low paying job traveling between Little Rock and New York City by rail taking care of carloads of chickens. Edgar Myers and Aunt Effie Benham Myers, my Mother's great aunt, owned the large poultry and shipping business in Little Rock. Aunt

Adeline's father, Mr. David, and his two beautiful teenage daughters lived with Uncle Maurice and Aunt Adeline. Mr. David was unemployed like so many city dwellers. We stayed that Friday night with our crowded relatives.

The next day Maurice had to leave for New York, and after visiting with our relatives most of the day, we decided to drive to Woodruff County that night, a distance of about 85 miles. Earlier that day, Mr. David, my Dad, my cousin Virginia and I, went for a drive in Uncle Maurice's car. It is possible that they bought a bottle of bootleg whiskey. Mr. David was a nice man, well-dressed and very neat but had a drinking problem which got worse in later years. I'm sure he was depressed not having any means of support. I was seven years old and had never seen my father drink whiskey. I had never even seen alcohol in our home. I didn't see him drink that day either, but he seemed a little confused when a traffic cop gave a signal, and he stalled the truck at the intersection. He got the truck started and we got out of the Little Rock traffic safe and sound. The weather was dark and raining. We didn't get to Augusta until late and didn't stop at the Prellers. Aunt Gayne Preller, my Mother's aunt on her side of the family, owned a store. Mr. Preller owned a

gun and watch repair shop and the store, all in the same building. By the time we got to Augusta the rain was coming down so hard we couldn't see the road, but we drove on, planning to spend the night at my Father's uncle's house. We didn't get very far before Dad was not able to see the road at all, except for flashes of lightening. He lost control of the truck and we hit a deep ditch and were stuck there for the night. We weren't hurt, but it was frightening sitting in the truck in an electrical storm. We could see a house at the distance of about two city blocks. We decided to make a run for it. We were soaked to the skin before we finally reached the house. We knocked and the startled black family let us in. They didn't expect to see such a wet bunch of white folks at that time of night. The man and his wife were older and had a older son living with them. Dad told them that we would like to stay under their roof for the rest of the night so the woman gave us a bed. I don't think Dad lay down. Mother put us to bed and lay down by the baby. I remembered that her dress was trimmed in red and the red faded on the woman's bedding. The family's name was Witherspoon. The next morning Dad hired someone to pull us out of the ditch with mules. Dad asked the woman, "How much do we owe you?" The woman said, "I

think it was worth a dollar." Dad gladly paid her a dollar or maybe two, and we were on our way again.

After a very stormy night, the next morning was a beautiful Sunday. We had only four miles to drive to Uncle Jim Garrett's farm; two miles of it was on a gravel road, the remaining two miles was dirt road. When we arrived we were made welcome by Chester Alford and Burt Weems. Uncle Jim and Kenneth Alford were gone at the time. Uncle Jim and Aunt Blanche raised the Alford boys, Wade, Kenneth, and Chester. After the death of Chester Alford Sr., Rose Matthews Alford, the boys' mother and her three little boys lived with Uncle Jim, and Aunt Blanche. When Rose became very ill she asked Uncle Jim from her deathbed if he would raise her little boys. Chester was only eighteen months old. Uncle Jim said, "I sure will." Wade, the oldest had married, and Aunt Blanche was dead when we moved back to Arkansas. Aunt Blanche was the Alford boys' aunt. Burt Weems was staying at Uncle Jim's house while going to high school at Augusta. We stayed with Uncle Jim and the boys for about two weeks before our house was vacated. The Gamel family had farmed the place the past year. Clyde Gamel had been a good renter, and was given plenty of time to move. I started my new school, while staying at Uncle Jim's house. The Revel school

bus was a Model "A" truck chassis that had a wooden body built on it, and painted a dull gray. The driver, a young woman, Anajean Jacobs, soon married Carlos Andrews, who drove the school bus after they were married. I didn't like my new school. Arkansas schools were farther advanced than Texas schools. I had missed all of January, and was behind. Mrs Katherine Griffin didn't have a lot of patience with me. Most of the boys tried to beat me up. I had never had a fight in Texas. My parents were on my back to catch up with my school work. Before we moved on the farm, many sharecroppers, and some renters, contacted my father hoping to be selected to work the land. Farming in the south hadn't changed since the reconstruction after the Civil War. My grandfather had built a tenant house for every twenty five acres of land on the farm. The tenant was issued a mule, if they worked more land, they were issued a team of mules, or horses. Mules were favored by the landlords. Most of the sharecroppers were black. The renters owned their teams and plow tools. The renters gave the landlord a third of the grain, and a fourth of the cotton they grew. The sharecropper families gave half of their crops, and only furnished the labor. The mercantile stores gave credit to the landlord to make

the crop each year. The sharecroppers were allowed their share to feed them, and a few clothes. The sharecroppers were lucky if they paid their debts when the crops were harvested each fall. This farming system was created after the slaves were freed to solve labor problems for the plantation owners, and to give the people work. If the land owner had good land, and good tenants, they might prosper. The sharecropper had little chance of advancing, and had a hard life of barely surviving.

After only a few days, my father had to decide which tenant families he preferred to work the farm. Most of the tenant houses were occupied when Dad took possession. The only two families that were not asked to vacate were the Gideon family, who were white renters, and had lived on the farm for years, and were good farmers. The only sharecroppers allowed to stay on the farm were Booker T. Spriggs, and his wife Aldora. Dad liked Book and Al, and decided that they could stay.

The first man hired was Jim Reeves, a black man, who had worked for my grandfather, and other relatives.

Jim was divorced, and had four children. Jim and his wife Elnora, fought often. When Jim got physically abusive, Elnora would go across the road to Uncle Jim

Garrett's country store for protection. One day Jim had been drinking, and became violent, and Elnora ran to Uncle Jim, as she had done in the past. This time Jim followed her to the store, and started inside to pull his wife out and whip her. Uncle Jim said, "Don't come another step or I will kill you, Jim Reeves." Jim did not obey my uncle's orders, and was shot under the eye with a large caliber revolver. Reeves survived, but lost one eye. Uncle Jim had been sheriff of Woodruff County, and was a deputy sheriff as long as he lived in the Revel community. He recommended Jim as honest, and a good worker. Dad hired Jim while we were staying with Uncle Jim. Jim Reeves was hired as a month hand, he was not a sharecropper. Jim helped around our house, cut firewood, cooked, fed the livestock, and performed any job where he was needed on the farm. Jim lived in the office, a little house where the month hands lived, and where the worker's wages were paid. He ate at our house. In later years, Jim preferred to sleep at Booker's and Al's house.

For the next eight years, Jim stood by our family and helped my father raise my little brother, sister, and me. When Jim started working for our family, he was about forty years old. He was about six feet tall, and weighed about one hundred and sixty five pounds. He had

a wasp waist, and had a very muscular body; he was a powerful man for his size. Jim Reeves had a medium brown-skin complexion, and bragged about his American Indian blood. Dad remembered when Jim was an outstanding left-handed baseball pitcher. Dad thought he was good enough to pitch in the major leagues. Many of the blacks of the rural south had great athletic talents that were never discovered, unless they moved to the northern cities. It was over thirty years after Jim was in his prime, that blacks could play baseball in the major leagues.

Before the next crop could be made, Dad had to buy work animals, plow tools, and feed and seeds. My father had to stretch his money and cut every corner to buy these commodities. We started farming needing more mule teams to work all the land we had to cultivate. The first two weeks Dad drove all over the country, and towns out of the county, looking for good buys. He took Jim Reeves and Sam Hall with him to help load mules and supplies. Sam and Wilivia, and their baby girl lived close to the house, and were one of our sharecropper families. Sam was short and of a husky build, he moved slow, and always had a grin on his face. Sam was very dark, and was called "Black Cat." He was at least ten years younger than Jim. When the

weather was cold, Dad would tell Jim or Sam to take me to the school bus corner to meet the bus on a mule. I had never known black people in West Texas, but I had no problems, trusting Jim and Sam, and was glad when they took me to meet the school bus.

After we were all moved in our house, one Sunday we visited the Preller family at Augusta. The Preller business, or as everyone called it "Preller", consisted of a photographic studio, and a watch, clock and gun repair service, and a jewelry and bric-a-brac store, with living quarters in the back. It was truly a replica in our imagination of "The Old Curiosity Shop" of literary fame. Hugh Arthur Preller, who was born in Germany, came to this country when he was sixteen years old. He was a dignified man who wore a beard. Aunt Gayne was a good, patient woman, and had a good sense of humor. It was fun to be around her. We all loved Aunt Gayne Avey Preller, my grandmother Virginia Avey Long's half sister. Hugh and Gayne had four sons that lived to adulthood. Vic and Dewey were married, Max and Hugh were still at home. We had a very interesting visit, and took pictures that Sunday.

Everything was going well as the new tenants moved on the farm, and started plowing the soil, until one of the houses burned. Dad told me in later years that

Toad Hicks, one of the sharecroppers, was making whiskey when the house caught fire. Another house was built for Toad and Mary Francis. They had no children.

The same day that the house burned, I heard at school that four businessmen had died in a plane crash.

One of the fatalities was Nathan Gregory, a wealthy man. His son Billy was only nineteen years old and already an experienced aviator, who owned his own airplane Billy made many trips to New York, Chicago, Washington, Dallas, and was admired by the people of Woodruff County. My father had lived across the street from the Gregory family home at Augusta. Tragically, Nathan, Billy, and two other businessmen were killed. It occurred as they were on a business trip to St Louis.

The summer of 1933, we saw the Prellers every Saturday. We drove to Augusta with the truck loaded with black sharecroppers. They went to town to buy their groceries and other necessary items, and meet friends who also came to Augusta on Saturdays. Dad parked our truck near Preller's store, and the tenants would unload. Most of the farmers were in town on Saturday afternoons. The streets were so crowded, a person could barely walk on the streets. Mother would visit with Aunt Gayne, and do her shopping. Dad would

attend to his business, and drive the tenants who were ready back to the farm. Some of the younger ones would stay in town and socialize.

On Sundays we went to the country baseball games at Revel. If the games were played in another community, our truck was loaded with white neighbors. Our truck was a real "people mover" that summer in our community.

Few people had motor transportation, and really enjoyed the trips to the different communities to see the boys play ball. Revel had a good team. Mother, Rae, and Royce rode in the truck cab, I always rode in the back, where there was standing room only. The people, black and white, seemed happy, even though money was as scarce as hen's teeth. The only depression was the low general economic period that they must withstand.

Booker T. Spriggs was a favorite of my father. He was liked by the black tenants. Booker was called "Spicy" and Jim Reeves was called "Sharpie." They were number one, and number two, with our family. Booker was about twenty two years old, tall and lean, with a light complexion. His stepfather shot him with a shotgun when he was thirteen years old, leaving him blind in one eye. Booker was not a neat man, usually ragged, with his shirt-tail out. The women liked

Booker and flirted with him. I would say from my own observation, that Spicy was a "lady's man". Dad made Booker a leader of the sharecroppers, and he got special privileges. Dad would send Booker to town, and to other farms to run errands for him on horseback. One day he trusted Booker with twenty dollars to make a purchase for the farm. Booker rode a young roan mare; we had a team of young roan mares. That night Book came back with a sad story about being thrown from the mare, after something had frightened the mare. He wasn't expecting her sudden jump and he landed in a ditch. Book said, "I lost the money. I hunted for the money, but couldn't find it." Dad was upset, twenty dollars would buy a lot of goods in those days. Dad seemed to believe Booker's story, but Mother said, "He is lying to you, Smokey." Later, Hernan Steadman, one of the tenants, told my father that he saw Booker lose the twenty dollars in a crap game at Grays. As far as I know, Dad never confronted Booker. We all liked Booker, but he couldn't be trusted with money. In later years he told my father he was robbed at Augusta, or some other story, when he was trusted with money, and didn't bring the money back he owed my father. All the same, Booker was a very reliable worker. Booker and Al loved us, and were always ready to help us when

we needed them.

August was a time of the year when cultivation was completed, when the crops were "laid by", as the farmers said, between the end of cultivation and harvest time. During this time of year many farm workers looked for work other than farming to tide them over until cotton picking time. Woodcutting and logging were favorite occupations. Some of the sharecroppers would move off the plantations until the cotton was ready to pick.

Sam Hall and his family left the farm. Sam and Wilivia were having marital problems. We heard from the tenants that Wilivia had stabbed Sam with an ice pick in the chest. No one thought the wound was life threatening. A few days later Sam came back to the farm to visit his friends and to see us. Dad was gone, but Mother inquired about the "ice pick incident." Sam showed us the chest wound, which still hadn't healed. I doubt if he went to a doctor. A few days later we heard that Sam Hall was dead.

In early September Royce got sick with a stomach disorder that caused sores all over his body. Royce liked fried potatoes, and cried if he didn't get plenty of them to eat. The doctor believed he had eaten too much of the new potatoes fresh dug from our potato

patch. Mother stayed with Aunt Gayne during his illness, to be near the doctor. The doctor told mother not to feed Royce anything. The baby was weak, and couldn't hold his head up, he cried for food. Aunt Gayne killed a hen, and fed Royce the broth and like magic his health improved, He recovered fast from his illness.

Our cotton crop was good that fall, but prices were low. We had a big Christmas that year. Mother bought a lot of presents. Dad bought a used radio that used six batteries, including a six volt car battery that had to be charged every three days. On Christmas Eve, Jim hitched the team to the wagon and I went with him to select and cut a Christmas tree. We brought home a beautiful Cedar tree that reached the high ceiling in our house. Mother decorated the tree. It was beautiful. Our family was delighted. Mother seemed to be very happy. She may have had a premonition that this would be the last Christmas with her family. She was a wonderful mother who loved her family.

On Christmas Day, Uncle Jim Garrett's store burned while they were all gone away. The store was out of business, but Uncle Jim and the Alford boys still lived in the living quarters in the back. Dad gave Uncle Jim

the little house that was built for Toad and Mary Frances after their house burned. The house was moved to the Garrett farm. This move eliminated one sharecropper.

We listened to the Rose Bowl game on the radio New Year's Day. I learned about the time difference. At first, I couldn't understand how a football game could be played when it was so dark outside. My parents explained that it was not dark in California, a two hour time difference.

Uncle Maurice, and Aunt Adaline drove out to the farm from Little Rock one Sunday to visit. Mother, Merridy Rae, and Royce went home with them. Mother planned to do some shopping, have her hair styled, and get a permanent wave. I was disappointed because I had to stay with my father and go to school, but I didn't complain. I acted as though I was older, and could get along fine without my mother.

One day as I was walking home from the bus corner, Pauline Gideon, a young white woman asked me, "Do you miss your mother?" I answered, "No, I don't care if she ever comes back." I lied. In reality I missed my mother, sister, and brother very much. I can't remember how long my mother and the children were gone, but I think my uncle drove them home the next Sunday.

I was so happy to see my mother. Her hair looked so nice I thought she was beautiful. Mother brought me a toy car. This was not just a toy car, but one that the headlights really worked by batteries. This was a neat toy back in the year 1934. Mother had a lot to tell Dad and me about her trip. She had seen relatives she hadn't seen in a long time. She enjoyed her stay in the city, but was delighted to be home. Mother had a cold, and looked tired. Her health was failing. Dad encouraged her to see a doctor. At first Mother refused, but finally decided to have a physical examination. Dr. Dungan told my father that she had tuberculosis, and must go to a sanitarium at Booneville, Arkansas. I heard my father encourage my mother to go to Booneville to regain her health. He told her he was confident that she would get well. It must have been really hard for her to think of leaving her young family for a year or more. Mother made few comments. I was too young to understand the seriousness of the situation. Mother asked my father not to write her mother and explain her illness. She wasn't ready to burden her mother with her problems.

One day Mother asked me if I had told Pauline Gideon I didn't care if she ever came back from Little Rock. I lied again, and said, "I didn't say that."

Pauline had told my mother what I had said.

Dad assigned Jim Reeves to take over the cooking, and general housekeeping. Son Holden, a young black handyman helped Jim. Son was also a good cook. Mother liked Son Holden, he was always helpful. Mother once mentioned that she needed a cook table. In about two hours, Son brought her a table he had made from scrap lumber. Jim and Son kept every thing in good order, and prepared some good food. We had a lot of meat for them to cook.

My father was looked every day for a letter from Booneville. Dr. Dungan had written the sanitarium to get Mother admitted for treatment as soon as possible.

Mother was still able to show us her love and attention. Mother didn't appear to be real sick, and took care of the younger children's personal needs.

Bedford Thompson was a white boy who lived on the lower end of the farm. He was twelve or thirteen years old, and in the first grade. Bedford had lived in the woods most of his life, and had never gone to school until his family moved on the farm. He and I walked to the school bus corner together every school day. One foggy morning, I asked Bedford if he had ever played hooky. His answer was, "No." After some discussion on the subject, Bedford climbed through a wire fence, held

the barbed wire up for me to climb over the hog wire fence, and said, "Come with me." I followed him through a thicket of trees, and bushes into a swamp. We hadn't walked far when our feet got wet. We found higher ground, and decided to sit on a tree stump and spend the day. In no time we were shivering from the cold, and wished we had gone to school. After a while, Mr. Hunter and his son-in-law Edmond Weems came to the woods to cut firewood, and saw us shivering in the fog. Edmond, a good friend of my father, went straight to my father and told him where we were hiding. My angry father found me and ordered me home. I got the hardest beating of my life. Dad really burned me with keen switches. He wore out at least three switches before he stopped. Mr. Jim Thompson, Bedford's dad, gave Bedford a beating also. I was ashamed of what I had done, and dreaded telling my mother. Mother knew I had been severely punished. She was disappointed in my judgement, but had little to say. I think she knew that her young family must grow up without her help, and that her husband would be left with an awesome responsibility. Mother was only twenty six and Dad was thirty years old. The next day was Friday, playing hookey was the last thing I had in mind, but for some reason, my parents didn't send me to school. Mother

was weaker, her voice was so hoarse, and she whispered when she spoke. She said, "I can't find the Vicks salve." I thought if we could find the Vicks, she would soon get better. I looked, but couldn't find the Vicks, that my mother depended on to help her cough, and the tickle in her chest. The next time I spoke to her, I knew she was getting weaker. I said, "Someone will have to go to the store, and buy you some Vicks salve." Mother knew I was worried about her condition.

She said, "I'm going to be all right." I found Dad in the back yard, and told him that Mother needed some Vicks, and that we couldn't find her Vicks. I told my father that I was afraid that Mother might die. He said, "Don't worry, son. We will get her some medicine." He went immediately to her room to check on her. Dad could tell that she had taken a sudden turn for the worse. Dad told Mother he thought he should write her mother and tell her about her illness. Mother said, "I think you should write my mother, if you are ever going to write her".

Dad sent for some medicine, and wrote the letter to Grandmother. He also called Dr. Dungan. By the time the doctor arrived, our mother was barely clinging to life. Dr. Dungan told my father to send someone to town to send telegrams to relatives. Mrs. Berry, our

neighbor had a car. I don't remember all of the things the doctor wanted her to do. I did hear Dr. Dungan tell Mrs. Berry that Mrs. Yarbrough was very likely to die. On the way back to Augusta the doctor told the people all along the way that Mrs. Yarbrough was going to die. Very soon, many people came to help.

I decided to sit on the back porch, near the hall that divided the bedrooms, and connected the front and back porches. I heard a woman call my father, who was in the room across the hall at the time. Mother had called for "Smokey." Dad ran to her bedside. My mother held out her arms, wanting to kiss "Smokey" good-bye. My father said, "I kissed the last breath from her body." Dad was crying, when he and Chester Alford found me on the back porch. He said, "Son, I think your mother is dead." Dad was sobbing and asked Mrs. Hardin, "Is she really dead?" Mrs. Hardin answered, "Yes, Marvin, she is really gone." Knowing that my mother was really dead, and seeing my daddy crying was the saddest event of my life. Dad soon had to leave to take care of arrangements for the funeral.

Neighbors watched the children who were sleeping. I went to the office and slept on Jim's bed. In the wee hours of the next morning, I heard Jim say, "The ambulance is here." Hugh and Max Preller had brought

Dad, followed by the hearse. Aunt Gayne had suggested that the funeral services be at the Preller gallery, a large room where photographs were made. We followed the hearse in the Preller car, to the Preller establishment at Augusta. The next day, Uncle Maurice, Aunt Adaline, Rae, and I met Grandmother at Bald Knob.

Grandmother lived in Columbus, Ohio. The funeral was on Sunday, the fourth of March. Uncle Ernest, and Aunt Geneva Long, my mother's uncle and aunt, and a cousin, Lyla Myers, drove over from Little Rock. I liked Lyla, she talked to me a lot, and showed me a lot of attention. I never saw these relatives again. Lyla sent me field glasses for Christmas that year. Lyla Myers was a poet. Her poetry was published in many magazines and newspapers during the 1930's and 1940's.

She had at least one book of poems published. Lyla Myers never married. I remember this elegant lady as being very attractive.

Grandmother stayed with us to help Dad plan our immediate future. She had remarried, and was living in a small apartment. My step-Grandfather, Will Ruptnow, was only working part-time. Uncle Walter, and Aunt Annie Stephenson wrote Dad, and offered to keep us. Grandmother was sure that we should go to Texas, and live on the farm with the Stephenson family. She was

right, we wouldn't get proper care without a woman in the house. There was also a little girl that needed special care, and attention. Dad told me in later years that he didn't want us to go to Texas, so far from him. I was surprised to hear that we were going to Texas after all. We were going to see our cousins, and we were going to ride the train. I was excited, and ready to go.

The passengers on the train were ready and willing to help Dad with the little ones. There was one elderly woman who was great help. She helped feed the younger children, took them to the toilet and helped us change trains. She was with us for a long time in Texas. We parted company at Abilene, where she helped us change trains for Stamford. I never knew her name or destination. The train to Stamford was a fast little, two coach passenger train. The train from Stamford to Spur was a very slow freight train that made a lot of stops to drop off cattle cars at the small towns. The train crew wore Stetson hats, and cowboy boots. You had to be a cowboy to work on the cow train. Most of the cargo was cattle. There was only one passenger car at the rear of the train. Spur, Texas was the end of the road for the cow train, and we were glad to be there.

Nath Stephenson met the train and drove us to Dickens. Aunt Annie Stephenson and her school age children lived in Dickens during the school term. For some reason the Stephensons' disagreed with the McAdoo school system, and moved to Dickens to change schools.

Uncle Walter and some of the older children stayed on the farm at McAdoo to do the farming.

We had a great reunion at Dickens with the family. They were glad that we were going to live with them. We had many things to talk about. I started to school and was doing fine. One morning Dad called me aside, and told me that he would be leaving soon for Arkansas.

He said, "I don't know when, but soon." I knew that he had to get back to the farm. I didn't get upset. I thought my father would be with us for a few more days.

We lived across the street from the school, and went home to eat lunch. I was told during lunch period that my daddy had left that morning for Arkansas. I think my body went into shock. I felt sick inside. I didn't cry, but from that moment on, I was a very unhappy boy.

My cousins, Charlie and Robena had a lot of friends. Everyone was nice to me but I had lost too much to be happy. I did have my little sister and brother. We were very sensitive and protective of each other.

Soon school was out, and we were all glad to move

back to the farm. The cotton was planted and sprouted.

The plants looked good, we had a nice stand. Uncle Walter had high hopes for a bumper crop. We thought we would get some rain soon, but the rains didn't come. The cotton stalks withered. The grass died from thirst. We had a lot of cattle to feed. Charlie and I were the cattle drovers. Every day we drove the cows to the ditches and ravines where we could find a little grass to keep the cattle alive. This was a very important job. We needed the milk for our survival. We made butter from the milk, used the buttermilk to make our biscuits and corn bread. We ate bread and clabber for supper. I didn't like the curdled stuff and refused to eat it. Sometimes Aunt Annie would feel sorry for me and give me fresh milk. After others protested, I was told that I must eat what the others had to eat. I just refused to eat supper, and after a while, I didn't get hungry, and I never complained. I think Rae learned to eat clabber. Only Royce was given fresh milk, or sweet milk, as we called it.

I am proud of my cowboy experience that started at the age of eight years. I believe I deserve the right to call myself a cowboy, if I desire. Every morning Charley and I drove the cattle to graze, the sun was hot, and the Texas wind parched our lips. The

dust, and sand stung our skin, and filled our eyes with dirt. This region was suffering from a prolonged drought. We were residents of a dust bowl. This was the worst of times for the farm families who were dependent on the rains to grow their crops. The Great Depression had already devastated the country, but the people were strong, and determined to survive these hardships. We were a family of fourteen in these hard times. Uncle Walter never complained, he had many debts to pay, and no money, or crops to pay them. He often had to explain to the banker why he couldn't pay his debts, as if the banker didn't know. Sometimes, when the banker, or anyone he owed money to, would come to hassle him, my uncle would hide in a plumb thicket behind the house to avoid them. Aunt Annie would say, "Walter is gone." Uncle Walter was happy when he returned to the house, and the family would have a big laugh. When conditions and circumstances seemed too much to bear, Uncle Walter would say, "Nath, get your fiddle." Nathan, and John, the two oldest boys played music for dances, and provided the family with some income. Even in those hard times, the young folk liked to go to "dance parties." The women didn't have to pay, the men were charged one dollar, and could dance until the party was over. Occasionally a man would try

to dance without paying. The "Sneaks", and "Bullies" had to pay the fiddler. Nath could be intimidating, and he meant business. He said, "You pay or you get off the floor." The embarrassed offender would pay, or leave the floor. Jerome Yarbrough got a Model "T" for his twelfth birthday. On Sundays, he drove Uncle Jenk and Penn over for a visit. I was always glad to see my uncle and cousins. Uncle Vic Stephenson was in poor health, he was unable to walk, and spent his days in bed. We sometimes visited the family on Sundays. Uncle Vic enjoyed talking about Arkansas. He asked me many questions about the people he had known in his native state. Uncle Minor had moved to Morton, Texas, and bought a farm. He was a young man, but in bad health. He, and his family, Aunt Beatrice, Wanda, and Melvin were back in Dickens county, staying with Bea's father and Mother, while Uncle Minor's health improved. Mr. and Mrs. Barton, Aunt Bea's father and mother, were the Stephensons' nearest neighbor. We saw Uncle Minor and his family, often that summer. Uncle Minor suffered from rheumatoid arthritis. We had several parties that summer for family and friends.

Uncle Walter was a fun loving man, fifty eight years old, and a fiddler. He laughed a lot, and liked to joke and tell stories. He was always nice to me.

Uncle Walter called me "Red," even though my hair was never red. He and his oldest son, Benny, called my father's brother, Milton, who was one year younger than Dad, "Red." Benny and Milton were the same age, cousins, and best friends. Milton once had a red hat, and Uncle Walter, and Benny started calling him "Red".

I was named Milton after my dad's younger brother. Uncle Walter called me "Red" too, because of my name, and because he and his son Benny had been so fond of the first Milton. Benny died suddenly from the croup.

Uncle Walter gave Milton a knife, in the shape of a shoe, or a shoe knife, that had belonged to Benny. In just a short time Milton stepped on a nail, while trying to get some chickens out of a hog pen, to prevent the hogs from eating the chickens. He died from lockjaw, or tetanus. Milton and Benny were eight years old. The knife was passed to Darius, Milton's younger brother. Tragically, Darius was killed in a car wreck when he was a very young man. Edna, Benny's sister took the knife after Darius's death. Uncle Walter wanted the knife destroyed.

On July 23, Uncle Jenk, and the county sheriff were involved in a shoot out at McAdoo. I don't know to this day what provoked the incident. Jenk was carrying a gun. Sheriff Bill Arthur and Uncle Jenk had been

enemies years before Arthur was elected sheriff. Bill Arthur was almost killed in the gunfight. Uncle Jenk's arm was grazed. The family members were really concerned. Everyone knew that Jenk was in a lot of trouble. I had forgotten about my birthday. After all the excitement, I remembered that it was my ninth birthday.

When Dad heard about the shooting, we got a letter stating that he would see us soon. I told everyone that I was going to Arkansas with my Daddy. I was so happy to see my Daddy. I told him that I was going back to Arkansas with him. I don't think he had planned to take me. He preferred that I stay with my sister and brother. Uncle Walter knew how much I had missed my Daddy. He told my father, "Red is not doing well here," and advised dad to leave the younger children with them, but take "Red" with him. The next Friday, Uncle Minor had an appointment with his doctor at Spur. Carl Barton, Uncle Minor's brother-in-law drove Uncle Minor to Spur for his appointment. Dad and I rode with them to catch the train back to Arkansas. That afternoon we took the cow train to Stamford. Dad didn't buy a ticket for me. He told me if the conductor asks for a ticket, we will have to buy one for you. Dad and I were the only passengers on the

train that day. Some members of the train crew sat with us, and talked to my father, and didn't ask my age. Dad thought that the conductor believed I was younger than I really was. Dad decided to try the small fast train from Stanford to Abilene to see if I could pass for a six year old. By this time it was dark, the conductor was old, and didn't ask any questions. I again got a free ride. When we boarded the train that would take us from Abilene to Little Rock, (I believe this was the Texas and Pacific line), our luck ran out. The conductor told Dad that I would have to have a one half fare ticket. Dad didn't have much money. He hadn't planned when he left Arkansas to take me back with him. Aunt Bea had packed us a brown bag of fried chicken which we ate the first day. The rest of the way, we ate CheezIt crackers we bought on the train. Dad didn't say that he was short of money, but he really bragged about how good the cheese crackers were. I liked the crackers, and didn't get hungry on the trip.

The railroad took us through a poor part of Dallas. The people lived in shelters constructed of pieces of tin, wooden crates, canvas, and parts of old cars. Dad told me that this part of Dallas was called "Shanty Town." The tenant houses on the Yarbrough

plantation were far from fancy, but they all had a fireplace and were warm and dry in winter. The houses all had a big front porch, where the tenants enjoyed many summer days and nights.

Our train arrived at Little Rock after midnight, on Sunday. We had a short layover at Little Rock, and arrived in Augusta at dawn. We walked the mile or more to Prellers', where Dad had left his black Model "A" four door sedan. The car wouldn't start, so Dad let a car salesman demonstrate a 1934 Ford sedan to take us to the farm. I was really glad to be back on the farm, and see Jim, Book, and all of the tenants that lived on the plantation. My life would change dramatically at this time in my childhood. I no longer had a mother, or even a woman in the home to teach me manners and etiquette. The men in the community enjoyed visits with my father, and our home was a favorite hangout for men. I heard a lot of "man talk" at a young age. Dad never used vulgar or obscene language around me, and sometimes reminded his guests to watch their vulgarity. Nevertheless, much was heard by little ears.

Dad often took me with him to McCrory to give Jim the night off. He had to take care of business on Saturdays. We were buying most of our supplies now at McCrory. Dad was doing business with Mr. Vance

Thompson, a man of great wealth. McCrory was a town nearly as large as Augusta, and not as far from our farm. Augusta, the county seat was in our school district. Dad enjoyed drinking beer at Jim's Cafe and he bought me soda pop. After he had two beers, he would usually go to the horse and mule stables where horses and mules were sold and traded. My father liked horses, and enjoyed just looking at them. He also liked to trade. The stables were a hang-out for farmers, who told off-color jokes and stories. Jack Raymond was the manager of the stables, very shrewd, and knew horse flesh. Jack was a loud mouth little rascal, in his late forties, not much over five feet tall, and a little overweight. He wore an old floppy hat that covered his ears. In winter he always wore a tattered overcoat down to his ankles. Most of the farmers liked Jack. They often took a bottle of booze to stables to share with him, listen to his stories, and do some horse trading. On one occasion, I was not with Dad at the time. Jim Reeves found Dad at the stables, and he asked him for a dollar. Dad gave Jim a dollar. Jim left Dad at the stables and found Booker on the street. Jim told Booker about his good luck. Booker decided to try his luck, and went straight to the stables and also asked Dad for a dollar. Jack

Raymond stared at the transaction, and yelled, "What the hell is going on here Marvin? Do you punch your niggers' eyes out with a stick?" Jack got a big laugh from the crowd. Soon every farmer in the county heard the story. Jim and Booker had only one eye each, and laughed every time the story was told in their presence.

Mr. Angelo, Aunt Lottie's father, bought a new Plymouth sedan in September 1934, for his son Marvin to drive to Texas, to bring Aunt Lottie and her children back to Grays, Arkansas, to live with the Angelos'. Dad went with Marvin Angelo to drive Uncle Jenk's Marquette back to Arkansas. Al Hodgkin, one of Uncle Jenk's witnesses in the McAdoo shoot out case, who had been staying with us for about a month, went back to Texas with them. I stayed with the Prellers', and went to school. Max and Hugh helped me with my homework. On Sundays, Max or Hugh drove Aunt Gayne and me out to her farm. The farm was located about seven miles out highway 33, south of Augusta. Max had built a nice motor boat. He took me for a ride on White River, my first motor boat cruise. Dad was gone for about three weeks.

On the return trip to Arkansas, Dad and Jerome followed Marvin, Aunt Lottie, Lorene, and Penn, in the

Plymouth. In heavy traffic in Dallas, a stop light cut Dad and Jerome off in the Marquette, while the Plymouth had to keep moving with the traffic. After some distance, Marvin Angelo, decided to turn back, to find out what had happened to Marvin and Jerome. Both parties had about given up any hope of ever seeing each other again in Dallas, when Penn happened to see the Marquette. Penn shouted; " There is Marvin! There is Marvin!" The parties were reunited. Everyone was really proud of seven year old William Penn for his keen observation. Dad told this story many times, and said; "Dallas is a Wampus Kitty" to drive through, trying to follow another automobile.

After Dad returned to Arkansas, Chester Alford moved in with us. He and my father were buddies, and were gone a lot at night. Dad traded the Ford for a 1929 Chevrolet, and really kept the car on the road. I stayed with the Berry family at night, our nearest neighbor, when Jim couldn't stay at home with me. Mr. Berry had recently died of cancer. Virgil, the oldest son was in the Civilian Conservation Corps. Herbert was fourteen, and had to work like a man. Evelyn was ten, and James was six. Mrs. Berry was very nice to me.

Dad and Chester went to Duffel often, a community located northeast of McCrory. Chester's brother Wade

and his wife Beatrice lived there. Duffel was an all white community, with many parties and social events. The people were friendly, and a lot of young women lived there, anxious to meet young men from other places.

After the Berry family moved, I went with my father, Chester, and sometimes Kenneth Alford to Duffel on weekends and holidays. I stayed with Jim and Hazel Watson. They had a three year old son, Jackie. We were guests at the Watson home at Thanksgiving and Christmas that year. Dad liked a widow, named Marie Mason, she was a tall pretty woman, with good posture.

Marie told Dad that she was twenty seven years old. Dad believed her to be approximately thirty seven, and preferred a younger woman. She really loved my Dad, and was nice to me. I really believed Dad and Marie would get married. As I got to know Marie better, I decided if I had to have a stepmother, she would probably be a good one. Marie had a daughter, Margie, who was a little older than me, and an older son, who lived in Mississippi with relatives.

The road to Duffel was all dirt, and was almost impossible to get there in a car after a rain. We often got stuck on that boggy road, and had to get someone with a team of mules to pull our car out of the

mud.

There was only one building at Duffel, a little green school house. The paint was the same as used by the John Deere Implement Company, and was donated by Grover McCrory. The building was also a Baptist Church, a gathering place for many events, such as pie suppers, and the annual Christmas tree. There was a present on the tree for me that year.

Hazel Watson was a kind woman. I only saw her angry one time. After a gathering or party, Hazel was angered by her husband getting a little too interested in an eighteen year old girl. When Jim and Hazel returned home, Hazel took a 410 gauge shotgun down from the wall as if to shoot Jim. Jim was a big, tall, man. He leaped and wrestled the gun from her. Hazel told us that she was leaving Jim, but in a short time, Jim told Hazel that he was sorry, and he loved only her. The next day everything was back to normal.

Dad and Marie exchanged nice presents that Christmas, but a strange thing happened. We never went back to Duffel after Christmas. As long as I lived in Arkansas, I never again saw, "The Little Green School House". My father and I talked about Rae and Royce every day. We really missed them. Dad promised me that we wouldn't be separated much longer. The 1934

cotton crop was good, but the price of cotton was very low. Some of our stock was killed by anthrax. Some of our best work animals died and it was a loss we could not afford.

Chester Alford moved back with Uncle Jim Garrett to help him on the farm. After Chester moved out, my father was more interested in repairing things around the farm. He was also more concerned about my grades, and home work. My grades improved. Dad, Jim and I spent most of our nights at home, as the winter turned to spring. Dad would sometimes send Jim or Book to the woods of Cache Bayou to buy whisky from Mr. Harvel, the "Moonshiner", who dared Sheriff Ed Ramsey to take his still. After the Berry family moved, I didn't have any playmates that lived nearby. Bedford Thompson and I walked to the school bus corner together, he lived a long way from us, and I didn't see him much otherwise.

Bedford was about five years older than me, he slapped me when I got on his nerves. I sometimes provoked Bedford, and paid the price. Bedford was teased by older boys, because of his backwardness. He was far behind in school, because he was raised in the woods, and lived too far from a school. Bedford was not stupid, and was ready to fight when he was teased. Bedford got out of control one day on the school bus.

Babe Davis, the bus driver ordered Bedford to "sit down", and stop fighting, and really got on to him for his actions. In the heat of their argument, Bedford pulled a slingshot from his pocket, pulled the rubbers back as far as possible and aimed at close range at Babe's head. Babe was not a coward, but in this situation, he had to back down to the thirteen year old boy from the back woods. However, Babe planned to get even. One day Bedford and Herman Garton Jr. were involved in pushing and shoving. Bedford told Herman that he was going to give him a good beating later, when they weren't on the bus. Herman was not as big as Bedford, but about the same age as Bedford, but in the eighth grade. Bedford was now in the second grade. Babe Davis didn't allow fighting on the bus, but pulled the bus to the road side and stopped the bus. Babe gave Bedford the keys to the bus, and told the boys to settle differences. Babe hoped that Herman would clean Bedfords clock. With the help of everyone cheering for Herman, he won the fight, and poor Bedford got more razzing.

J.C. Gideon was also five years older than me. Everyone called J.C. "Doc". Doc was nearly blind, and didn't go to school. Bedford and Doc each rode bull yearlings all over the farm. The young bulls were

trained to rein like horses. I also enjoyed riding calves, but never trained one for transportation.

Early in 1935, Dad rented land to Henry Hall, who did not have any farm animals, or plow tools to farm with.

Hall promised my father that he would buy the necessary farm equipment needed. Mr. Hall was really not interested in farming, he wanted to move in a vacant house on the farm near Penn's Bay and Cache River. Mr. Hall was a good fisherman. The oldest Hall son, Tom, was a Holiness preacher, and married. Ewing, the second son was in the C.C.C. Camp. Mr. and Mrs. Hall had three children at home. Kitty, age eighteen, Walter, fifteen, and Annie was eleven years old. The Halls were nice to me. I now had a family living near that I could visit. Walter was older than me, but small for his age. Walter and I became good friends. Kitty was one of the kindest persons, like a mother and a big sister. Annie was always trying to get my attention.

January 1935 was the coldest weather that I can remember. A sportsman hunting near Cache River was caught in the storm, and was almost frozen to death. He yelled for help, and was rescued by Fred Lee, a poor recluse that lived in a board shack on a log raft. The hunter gave Fred Lee all of his hunting equipment for saving his life. Lee liked Jim Reeves, and visited Jim

and I at our house, when Dad was gone. Mr. Lee usually had a grin on his face, Dad referred to him as "Grinner" Jim called Lee Mr. Grinner to his face, not knowing his real name. After the big winter storm, there was a deep snow pack that covered the ground. Jim and I joined many others in a rabbit hunt. The hunters had a good day. Jim had Dad's double barrel 12 gauge shotgun, and killed three rabbits. Jesse Green, one of the sharecroppers on the farm didn't own a gun but he obviously didn't need one, because he killed ten rabbits with a stick that he threw. When a rabbit jumped, Jesse could throw his stick faster than a gun could be fired. After knocking down a rabbit, Jesse would shout, "He mine". A government program of the "New Deal", designed to rehabilitate the poor families, gave each farmer a mule, and rented land for them, which was to be paid back, depending on their eventual success. The land owners were glad to get cash rent for their land. Many poor white families, who were really not farmers, took advantage of this offer, as they had little to lose. We had many playmates in 1935.

Mr. and Mrs. De Vall, and their four children, Harold, fourteen, Gale, ten, Zeola, seven, and Kathleen, four years old moved nearby. Mrs. De Vall was

pregnant and barefoot. The DeValls were an extremely poor Cajun family, that had moved from Horseshoe Lake.

Mr. De Vall was a man that enjoyed living off the land in the woods, fishing and hunting. He was a woodcutter and lumberjack that worked for himself, when he wanted to work. Dan De Vall was thirty nine years of age, but looked much older. He seldom shaved and wore his hair long at a time when most men were well groomed. Dan was a jolly man who enjoyed telling yarns, but he never told lies that hurt anyone. As poor as the DeValls were, they seemed to be happy. Mrs. De Vall had red hair and she could have been pretty if she had some decent clothes to wear. Mrs. DeVall was a smart person and an excellent reader who often read to her husband and children. The De Vall children seldom missed school, had a lot of pride, and were good students. The DeValls moved on the Short farm. The Short farm joined the Yarbrough farm.

The Jenkins family moved from Augusta to the Short farm, and became our nearest neighbors. The Jenkins family moved in the house occupied by the Berry family the year before. Sam and Mae Jenkins had four children, Maggie, fourteen, Elsie, nine, Betty, three, and Buddy, the baby. When my grandmother, Annie Stephenson Yarbrough was a girl, she planted two black

walnut trees on the property line, between the house on the Short farm and our house. The trees were now big, and were a great place for children to play. We always met the kids who lived in the house on the Short farm at the walnut trees. Also kids from other families would come to play with us. The parents from both houses could observe their children, and call them to come home at anytime. John and Evelyn Ward moved on the farm, rented land, and got their mule through Roosevelt's "New Deal". Kathleen, age nine, and Spencer, a baby, were their children. Kathleen's mother, John's first wife was dead. Evelyn, John's second wife was much younger than he. Evelyn was attractive, petite, and friendly. She was from a small town in White County. John was a strict father, and made Kathleen walk the straight and narrow line. John was a smart man, who was out of work, and so had moved to the farm, because he had nothing better and to be near his family. The Wards' were related to the Stephenson side of our family. My father went to school with John and his brother Ernest at Revel school. Dad told me that John was quick to learn, and had a lot of time for mischief at school. Ward was at least six feet tall, slender built, with average looks. He was one of the few rehabilitants that knew how to farm.

Ward was born and raised on a farm in the Revel community. John Ward was not really interested in the Rehab program. He was just trying to survive until the economy improved.

Jim Thompson was born in California, and sailed to the Hawaiian Islands as a young man. I never knew why he moved to Woodruff county. He married a native Arkansan and raised a family in the back woods of Arkansas. Mr. and Mrs. Thompson's children were Roy and Lenonard, both grown, but still living at home. Lorene and Ruby were beautiful girls, in their late teens. Bedford, the youngest, was now about fourteen.

Bedford had accidentally shot and killed a younger sister, while playing with a broken, abandoned rifle, that happened to fire, a few years before I knew him. Bedford never talked about this tragedy, and I never mentioned the unpleasant incident. Mr. Thompson was a jack of all trades, and a master of many. He did our repair work on the farm. Thompson was a good blacksmith, woodsman, and carpenter. He had a contract with the Peabody Hotel at Memphis, to take all the bull frogs he could catch. Even with all his talents he could barely make a living for his family. Jim Thompson didn't like farming, but also got in the Rehab program. Mr. Thompson was in his sixties and withered. He

coughed a lot from smoking Bull Durham tobacco. Almost all smokers rolled their own cigarettes in those days. I remember how happy I was the day that Dad told me that he was going to Texas to bring Rae and Royce back to Arkansas. I stayed with the Prellers' while Dad was gone. Early one morning I was awakened by the sound of little voices downstairs. I was sure it was my father, sister, and little brother. Before I could get out of bed, Rae ran up the stairs to my room. We hugged and kissed, and held each other tight for a long time. I shall never forget how glad I was to see her again. We had really missed each other. I got dressed and hurried downstairs to see Royce and Dad. My father told Aunt Gayne and I that Rae got very sick on the train from food poisoning. Dad really had his problems with a extremely ill five year old daughter and a two year old son. The train conductor wired ahead to have a doctor ready at the next station. The doctor boarded the train at the next stop with some good medicine. Rae was soon feeling much better. Soon we were back on the farm which added two more children to the neighborhood. The neighbors were glad to help Dad any way they could with the younger children. There was no one that loved the kids more than Kitty Hall.

In the spring of 1935, we got a lot of rain. The

White and Cache Rivers flooded. The roads were all under water and the school bus couldn't get to Augusta.

We had to miss school for a few days. In those days we didn't get a spring break. It was impossible for some to get to a store for groceries and other needed supplies. The Grogan family couldn't get to a store to buy groceries, due to the flooded conditions. Hunting for game was almost impossible. Ernie Grogan, an unemployed lumberjack in his late forties, always wore overalls, was of medium height and stout build, with a pot belly. Ernie Grogan and his family were hungry. Grogan killed and butchered one of his neighbors big, fat hogs, to have food for his family. Someone saw Grogan steal the hog, and told Mr. Ballard, the owner of the hog. The judge, because of the circumstances in Grogan's case, gave Grogan a second chance and said Grogan must pay full market value for the hog, within a certain length of time, or he would have to go to state prison for a year and a day. Grogan was one of the rehab farmers that was new in the community. Some of the neighbors helped him pay Ballard for the hog. Grogan later proved to be a hard working, honest man.

After the floods, Ed Ramsey, the sheriff, contacted a revenue officer to arrest Mr. Harvel, the old "moonshiner", that was making whisky in the woods.

Ramsey knew there would be a shootout. The officers of the law also knew that Leonard Harvel, the grown son was gone. I was at school that day. Dad told me that Kenneth and Chester Alford and he went to Penn's Bay to buy some fish to cook. They heard what sounded like a "Young War".

The officers and Harvel were shooting and cussing at each other. Dad and the Alford's knew that the law had closed in on Harvel. Mr. Harvel was finally shot by the revenue officer. The bullet struck the old man in the neck near the left ear. After the shooting, the revenue officer drove back to the city. Dad was deputized to assist the sheriff with the wounded moonshiner. Harvel survived, but his arm was paralyzed and he was also deaf in the left ear. Harvel was sent to prison for five years.

Farming methods were changing as more tractors were being used, and sharecroppers were needed less. We now had a Farmall tractor that Booker drove. He got the tractor stuck often, before the soil was dry enough to plow. Dad had farmed with a tractor in Texas, but the soil was different. Dad had more land to work, and would try to plow too soon after a rain. The tractor would sink, and almost disappear in the mud. The tractor was abused, it didn't last until the farming

season was over that year. We had a bad year, the crops were poor and we didn't have much to farm with the next year. We had to go farther in debt if we were to continue farming. Hard times were just beginning for us. After only two years on the farm we had many tenants move for one reason or another. We had only two families left of the original tenants that lived on the farm the first year. They were the two families were there before we moved on the farm, The Gideons and Booker and Al. Al's fourteen old son, Odie was now living with Booker and Al, after Al's mother passed away. Mr. Gideon was about sixty years old, a small man with a bushy mustache. He wore a big planters hat, and many patches on his shirts and overalls. Joe Gideon was sometimes arrogant. Gideon was a thrifty man, who always had a little cash on hand. Gideon grew a large truck garden every year, and Mrs. Gideon canned a great amount of food. Joe Gideon was illiterate, but knew how to farm and save a little money. The Gideons' had two grown sons at home, Bud and J.B., both in their twenties and their daughter, Pauline.

Bud and J.B. were good workers. J.B. had a twisted leg, this handicap didn't slow down this little redhead much. J.B. could plow as much cotton, and chop as much wood as anyone, and no one in the county could

keep up with him. Pauline was in her late teens, the only Gideon daughter still at home.

My father had many young women trying to hook him.

Three were neighbors of ours. Dad needed a woman to help raise his three children, and was considered marriageable. This fact resulted in much competition between the young women. Dad had recently bought a big Buick sedan, a nice used car, and was a handsome man of thirty one, who liked the gals, but was not ready for remarriage. The three neighbor girls interested in my father were Pauline Gideon and Kitty Hall, who lived on the farm, and Maggie Jenkins, who lived on the Short farm. Pauline had a great figure. Kitty ordered her clothes from mail order catalogs. Kitty was always neat, trying to look her best, but didn't mind a little dirt on her clothes, while taking care of Rae and Royce. She was a good person, but could barely read and write. The youngest and smartest of the three, Maggie, never let the older girls get the best of her.

She came to our house every day. I'm sure she was encouraged by her parents. Maggie was cute, and it didn't take much time for Dad to get interested in her. We had a great time that summer, playing with our friends. We played games and went fishing and swimming. I wasn't ready to go back to school after

having so much fun. I enjoyed hunting with my father, and our black and tan hound, Lula. Merridy Rae started to school. Mrs. Jacobs was our new school bus driver.

There were many kids who walked to the school bus corner with us. Soon summer memories faded as autumn turned to winter. Dad bought me a Stevens shotgun for Christmas. I have fond memories of the 410 gauge single barrel shotgun.

After only one year, many of the rehabs gave up farming. The Jenkins' moved back to Augusta. The DeValls built a board shack on a ridge in the woods on Yarbrough land. The shack had a dirt floor. The Thompson's mule died, so Jim Thompson wanted out of the rehab program, but continued to live on the farm. Kitty Hall married an older man, a war veteran, and moved to Oregon. The Hall family moved to Paterson. John Ward was one of the few rehab farmers to stay in the program. Our playmates were all gone, Doc Gideon and I rode horses and mules occasionally on weekends. My sister, brother and I learned to invent games and projects we could all play. We made our own people or paper dolls. We made houses, cars, and airplanes for our people. We drew army, navy, and c.c.c. uniforms on the men in the family. My sister Rae was more interested in mothers, little girls, and babies. Royce

and I played boy stuff with the hand made cutouts. We all had to entertain ourselves the best we could. We also tried building projects. I remember on one occasion, Rae and I decided we would build an airplane.

We found scrap wood, and made something that resembled an airplane. While admiring our work, three year old Royce, not able to find building materials, nailed two pieces of bark, from a fence post to build his airplane. Instead of admiring the little fellow for his efforts, we laughed at his airplane, and called Royce, "Barky". Royce got angry, and punched us a few times, but the nickname stuck. I still sometimes call my brother "Bark", after all of these years.

The black people were excited about a young heavyweight boxer. He had knocked out former heavyweight champion, Max Baer. The black men called Max Baer "Jack the Bear". The young fighter everyone was excited about was Joe Louis. There was much talk about the fight to be held in June, between Joe Louis and Max Schmeling, an ex-heavyweight champion from Germany. Most everyone, white and black picked Louis to beat the older fighter. The fight was not for the championship, but the winner would get to fight Jimmy Braddock for the title. The black folk were really disappointed when the experienced German knocked out

Louis in twelve rounds. Jim Reeves believed that Joe Louis had been doped.

The World War I veterans were paid a bonus for serving during the great war. Some of the veterans received large checks. Most of the recipients were poor, and one would think this bonus would get them started again. In three months after the bonus checks were paid, most of the veterans were broke, and just as poor as before. Everyone was after their bonus money,

Chester Alford joined the Navy, he went through boot camp at San Diego. Chester was popular with the women when he came home on leave. In those years, a sailor was seldom seen in Woodruff County. Dad and Chester spent a lot of time together while Chester was on leave. The big blue Buick was all over the county roads during this time. After the tractor broke down, Dad was forced to go back to farming with mules. He bought some mules, but couldn't afford enough animals to work all of the land. Dad had to rent a tractor and driver to keep up with the cultivation. Our harvest was poor, and we couldn't pay our debts. Sam Jenkins' bonus money didn't last but a few weeks. He was broke without work. Sam was sure if he had a trammel net, he could make a lot of money. He talked Dad into buying the fish net, as Dad was in need of a lot of money.

Dad and Jenkins tried their luck at commercial fishing for a while. The trammel net cost Dad a good some of money. Dad and Jenkins had some fun with the fish net, but didn't make enough money to pay for the equipment.

1936 was not a good year for us.

For the past two years, Uncle Jim Simpson had spent the winters with us. He was an orphan, who was raised by my great grandparents, Sam and Margaret Stephenson. Uncle Jim enjoyed smoking his pipe and telling stories about when he lived with the Stephenson family. We got tired of the old man and his stories of the past. The things he liked to talk about would sure interest me now. Uncle Jim was a simple man. He had been called "Simp", in his younger years, which was short for Simpson, also Simple. Uncle Jim didn't like the name Simpson. He claimed his real name was Jim Johnson. I never knew his real name. He told us he was about seventy years old but Dad believed he was younger. Uncle Jim was less than five feet tall, and of stout build. He enjoyed playing with children. We teased the old man, and he would say, "I know when people are making light of me". Uncle Jim was staying at our house when the rivers flooded in January, 1937.

Rae stayed with Aunt Gayne at Augusta during the coldest part of the year. Many families had to leave

their homes and move in with friends who were fortunate to have homes on higher ground. Often families were divided; different family members would stay with two or more families.

Mrs. Berry and family had recently moved back to the Revel community. She had remarried and was now Mrs. Robert Ward, married to John Ward's younger brother. Robert was much younger than Cordia. Everyone still called her Mrs. Berry. The family moved on Ollie Short's other farm near the Cache River Bridge, approximately two miles distance from our home. When the family was flooded and forced to leave their home, Herbert and James Berry stayed with us until the Cache River receded. There wasn't much for us to do, while isolated between two flooded rivers. We played checkers and read books, but most of our idle time was spent sitting in front of the fireplace telling yarns and jokes to pass the time. All of our visitors were men with nothing to do but visit. I heard many frightening ghost stories in front of that fire.

Uncle Jim Johnson (I will call him Johnson, since he always told us, "My name is Johnson, not Simpson") told us he could call spirits. He told us we would be able to see the spirits, but only on certain times of the month. I didn't really enjoy the company of

ghosts. The adults didn't believe that he could call spirits, and made jokes about him. Uncle Jim told everyone to come on a certain night and he would show them his special powers. Everyone agreed to come, some pretending to be afraid of ghosts. I told Dad that I was afraid Uncle Jim might be able to really call the ghosts. Dad told me not to believe in ghosts, that the old man could not make ghosts appear. Uncle Jim liked the attention he was getting, so about all he talked about was calling the spirits. During this time of isolation, with much idle time and no working radio, Dad and John Ward decided to play a trick on Jim Johnson. On the night Uncle Jim had designated as the night we would see the spirits, John Ward draped in a white sheet was to lift the old man out of his chair and carry him outside the house, and drop him in the mud. Most of the neighbors were told about Ward's plan to surprise the old man. A room full of men came pretending to come to see the ghosts appear. Uncle Jim told us that the spirits had visited him earlier, and he couldn't call them back again. We all pretended to be very disappointed.

Soon we heard knocks on the door that led to the hall entrance. When Dad opened the door, a tall man wrapped in a white sheet came in the room, and we all

pretended to be frightened. Uncle Jim laughed and remained in his chair. He knew the man in the sheet was not a ghost. Ward lifted the little man, but was unable to throw him over his shoulder. When they entered the hallway, Ward was on the floor, and the strong, little, man was on top of him. Ward hadn't planned to hurt Uncle Jim, but the old man made John Ward look bad. With all of his friends enjoying the wrestling match, Ward had to get rough to finally get the old man down. John Ward wasn't able to carry the little man out to the mud hole.

When it was time to start the new crop, Ward asked Uncle Jim to stay at his house, and help him farm. Uncle Jim was no longer mad at Ward, and moved in with the Ward family. He did most of the farming, and proved to be a good worker. All he got for his labor, was his board and keep, and his tobacco.

In June 1937, Dad took a trip to Shreveport to visit his sisters Lavergne and Mable, with hopes of getting some advice concerning the farm. My father was badly in need of more mules or a tractor to cultivate the farm. Dad believed if they borrowed money on the farm, and bought better equipment, that he could make the farm pay greater dividends. When Dad arrived at Shreveport, Mable was going in the hospital for

surgery. Dad did get to visit with Maud Lavergne.

When Max Schmeling knocked out Joe Louis, American fight experts were shocked in disbelief while Hitler's Germany savored the moment, especially when Schmeling was flown home in the famed Hindenburg Zeppelin to receive Hitler's personal congratulations. In less than a year the famed but ill starred Hindenburg burned before landing in New Jersey. Germany had yet another disappointment when Louis, not Schmeling was given a title fight with Braddock, the champion. Louis had to settle for \$103,684 purse money while the 32 year old Braddock got \$500,000 up front, guaranteed. Mike Jacobs, the promoter also made an offer Braddock couldn't refuse when the champion, upon losing the title, would collect 10 percent of Jacob's share of Louis' earnings for the next 10 years.

Braddock showed he had every intention of keeping his title by taking the action to Louis at the opening bell. Late in the first round, Braddock dropped Louis with a short right uppercut in a neutral corner. The tough Irishman fought with courage, but Louis' jolting jabs were taking their toll.

The end came in the eighth round when Louis feigned a left and drove a powerful overhand right on the champion's chin. Braddock was on the canvas face

down. Joe Louis was the new heavyweight champion of the world. If his race felt deeply oppressed, there had to be a tremendous thrust of hope with the emergence of the Brown Bomber.

The big news story of 1937 was when Amelia Earhart was lost in a flight east of New Guinea while attempting to fly around the world. The Navy searched for the famed flier, but no trace of her was ever found.

In the spring of 1937 we had a family reunion. Henry Stephenson and Benny Ricks came to Arkansas to visit. Aunt Edna, my great aunt corresponded with the Stephenson's back in North Carolina where my great-grandfather Sam Stephenson came from after the Civil War. Aunt Edna decided to have the reunion at our house near the farm where her father settled and raised his family. The log house had burned a few years before. We visited Mr. Tom Ward, who lived in the house in 1933 before it burned. Sam Stephenson and his wife Bell, and Sam's brother Gilbert came from Fort Worth, Texas.

Wesley Hargis, Aunt Edna's son drove her, Henry Stephenson, and Benny Ricks to the farm. The family decided to have a big fish fry. Dad bought plenty of fish for the occasion. Alonzo Fuller and Grover McCoy deep fried the fish in a large iron wash pot. Uncle

Jim Garrett and our cousin Ollie Short, and many old family friends came to visit. Everyone had a great time except Henry Stephenson. Henry was a large man of medium height. He wore an expensive brown suit, and a gold watch and chain in his vest pocket. My grandmother visited Cousin Henry at Pendleton, North Carolina, when she was about eighteen years old. Her father was very proud of his eldest daughter, and wanted relatives in Carolina to meet her. Henry's son Gilbert, who later became a great lawyer, was twelve at the time of my grandmother's visit. The trip was a great event in her life. While in North Carolina Grandmother was courted by Benny Ricks. When Henry came to Arkansas, he was in his eighties and wealthy. He was a cantankerous man that complained about everything. We treated him like royalty, but it was impossible to please the ill natured old man. Benny Ricks was a very friendly man whom we all liked. He told us he really loved Annie, and had wanted to marry her. He really liked my sister, Rae, and thought she looked like Annie. Mr. Ricks was a small man, and very polite; just the opposite of Henry. The family event was for only a day. We had enough fish left to give to our neighbors.

Grandmother still lived at Columbus, Ohio. She knew things must change. Mr. Ruptmow's grown daughter

lived with them. He didn't want the responsibility of raising his wife's grandchildren. Grandmother knew that her grandchildren needed her in Arkansas. Ruptnow didn't have enough income for a larger apartment, or house. Grandmother often wrote Dad about her problems.

Dad told us that she might visit us soon. He didn't tell me about her problems. In the later part of August, Grandmother left Columbus, and came to Arkansas. When she arrived in Arkansas, she heard that her mother, our great-grandmother Sarah Avey was very ill. Grandmother's oldest brother, Uncle Arthur Avey met her at Augusta. Max Preller drove them out to the farm. We hadn't seen Grandmother in more than three years. This was the only time that I ever saw my Uncle Arthur Avey. My sister Rae went with Grandmother to Clinton, Kentucky to be with her mother. Our great-grandmother recovered from her illness. Grandmother and Rae went to Little Rock and lived with Uncle Maurice, Aunt Adaline, and their four children. We didn't see Rae again until Christmas. Grandmother and Rae came to Augusta for Christmas. Grandmother stayed with Aunt Gayne, and later returned to Little Rock. We were glad to have Rae back with us again. Rae now talked like a city girl, but soon her manner of expression and speech habits were again typical of

rural Arkansas. Grandmother never returned to Ohio. After corresponding with Mr. Ruptnow for months, they agreed on a settlement, and ended their marriage.

Grandmother came to live with us, and everything changed. My sister, brother, and I had been pretty much on our own. We ran through the fields and woods dressed like Huckleberry Finns, if we wanted to. We had a lot of freedom. We needed more conventional care than we received, but we didn't worry about it. Our grandmother was prim and proper, very refined, and very strict. She began running our home like a household should be run. I now had to stay clean, take care of my clothes, and do chores. I didn't like all these new changes. I wished that my grandmother would leave so that things would be like they were before she came. Jim Reeves continued to work for us. He was a great help to our family, however, Grandmother took over the cooking for our family.

The economy was improving in the northern cities. Many black families were moving to northern cities of the midwest to work in the factories. The white families were moving to California. John Ward moved to California, leaving Evelyn and the children in Arkansas until he could get a job and send for them. However, John and Evelyn were never reunited; they divorced and

each later remarried. The great depression broke up many homes.

Now there were many vacancies on the plantations. Also, farming with tractors eliminated many sharecroppers. After Jesse and Ema Green and John and Cora Gibbs moved to farm with Alex Miller, Dad decided to buy a big tractor, and gave Booker T. Spriggs a crop to drive the tractor. Black families moved in our vacant houses to work by the day for us, when they were needed. When Dad had no work for them, they were free to work for other farmers that needed them. Booker and Al and the Gideon family still lived on the farm. Bud Gideon had married and also lived on the farm and rented land. Jack and Thelma Bratton and Sink and Ded Green were black families that moved on the farm to work by the day. Sink was Jesse Green's younger brother, a very polite, hard working man. Sink was very dark, tall, and strong. We all liked Ded, a very unattractive, but nice person.

The DeVall family moved out of the county, but not out of the state. Gale and I were the same age, and after a few fights at first, were the best of friends.

We did many things together. I remember once we built a little house on heavy timbered land. We finished the frame made of heavy poles, before Mr. DeVall, who heard

us chopping and hammering in the deep woods, came to investigate. Mr. Devall told us not to cut anymore trees down because we were on some timber company's property, and we had better get moving before the sheriff took us to jail. So that was the end of our project. I heard many men describing a location in the woods, near, or a certain distance from the little house that someone started building, but never finished.

I remember the day Gale, and his father came to our house to tell us that they were leaving. Mr. DeVall told Dad that he was taking his family with him for the summer, that the family would stay with relatives while he worked. I was told the same story by Gale, when we went for our last walk together. I told Gale, when he seemed sad at our parting, that he would be back, and that I see him again. Gale said, "I guess so". He knew that they wouldn't be back. He wanted to tell me so, but didn't. The Devalls' left most of their meager belongings behind. Later, the Arnett family, another poor cajun family moved in the little board shack that DeVall built on a little ridge in the Yarbrough woods. I never asked my dad if he ever mentioned mortgaging the farm to his sisters, but I do know that Dad bought the Moline tractor without using the farm as

collateral. Dad had debts of his own, but the farm was never mortgaged. With the new farming methods and having the tractor and just one sharecropper our farm was more profitable for us. Grandmother was also a great help in managing the household.

I know that Jim Reeves gave groceries from our kitchen to hungry black families, when Dad was gone. I would never tell my father some of the things I saw. We didn't want to get Jim in trouble, and Jim would never tell Dad things to get us in trouble. He would tell us he was sure going to tell Mr. Marvin. We dreaded for Dad to come. We called Jim names, and made racial slurs, as was common in those times. He also had names for us that were not complimentary. Dad did verbally reprimand Jim for giving away provisions, but I can never remember my father refusing anyone in need of food, medicine, or any commodities needed. I know that Jim loved us almost as if we were his own, and he knew we loved him. Jim Reeves and Aunt Gayne were great help to my father. Without their help, it would have been impossible for him to raise us without making some drastic changes. Jim taught us right from wrong, he played with us, told us stories, and entertained us with his box (guitar) At night we often sat on the front porch. Dad would ask Jim to get his guitar and

play some blues. Jim enjoyed playing the guitar, but when he saw flashes of lightning he always put his box away.

Booker T. and Jim were good buddies. Each wanted to be bull of the woods, or tush hog. Jim sometimes intimidated other black men. He told them he was smarter because he had traveled to northern cities. He told them he had more mother wit, and was stronger, and that they were ignorant. However, Jim couldn't intimidate Booker. I was sure at different times they were sure to get involved in a serious fight. I once told Dad to come to the barn and stop Jim and Booker from fighting. Dad told me not to worry, that they each had too much respect for the other's physical strength. Dad told me that they would go prowling together that night as best buddies. Dad was not alarmed, and never got involved in their differences.

After three bad years, 1938 was more prosperous for us. I was thirteen and had never owned a bicycle.

Grandmother knew how much I wanted one. She talked to Dad and they decided to buy me a used bike for Christmas. We couldn't find one for sale. I didn't get the bicycle for Christmas. The first day back to school after the holidays, Grandmother reminded my father to give me money to buy my bicycle. I found a

boy who had a bike for sale. I bought the bike for \$7.50 and brought the bike home on the school bus. The old bike gave us all much pleasure.

The barn was a popular place for farm children to play. My grandfather liked livestock. He built a large barn-yard consisting of a wagon and buggy shed, a huge horse and mule barn with a hay loft, corn cribs, and a harness room. The barn had large shelter sheds on each side of the barn where the animals ate from the manger. The center of the barn was open for wagon and teams to load, or unload corn, or other grains. Next to the big barn was a hog pen with a roof. There was also the pea shed, a room with a pyramid shaped roof that extended all the way around the building. Seeds were stored in the room for planting, such as peas, cotton seeds and seed corn. The extended roof once provided a shelter for my grandfather's mares and colts, Dad told me that his father spent much of his time with his horses, which were some of the best in the county. Near the pasture was the cow barn, almost as large as the "Big Barn". The cow barn also had a big hay loft. On the northeast corner was a stable, that was built for Gay Front, Grandfather's favorite stallion, still remembered by many, twenty five years later. We often played in the hay lofts of the barns. The Big Barn hay

loft housed many wasp, dirt dauber, sparrow, and pigeon nests. We had fun throwing dirt clods, or sticks at the wasp nests. The angry wasps would chase us to a ladder that was used to climb down into the harness room. We learned that the wasps wouldn't fly down into the harness room. We didn't stop the daring game until we knocked the nest down. You had to run fast to the ladder, and climb, or drop down into the harness room, or you were sure to get stung.

My sister and her friends entertained themselves playing house with their dolls, or sometimes they would play school in the loft. We made tunnels in the hay and hid. We invented many games in the barn. At the barn the men told many secrets. Much of their talk was about hard times, the price of cotton, and horse trading. The boys talked of their future dreams. There was always talk of wine, women, and song.

The barns were also a hideout for lovers. It is a good thing that the barns couldn't talk. We were always happy to see the little new born farm animals, and sad when faithful animals died. Even in the era of five cent cotton, there were happy times at the barns, with some of the young people not realizing what a happy time it was. My brother, sister, and I were members of the third generation of Yarbroughs' that

loved the barns. I heard many stories about ghosts. Most of the black people told me that they had seen haunts. Jesse Green bought a pistol, the gun made him the envy of his friends. Jesse was a protector of his people. One night Jesse claimed he saw a bear in a corn field near his house. The next morning, there was no tracks to be found in the field. Everyone believed that Jesse had shot at a ghost, not a bear. Jim Reeves told us that Jesse had seen Mrs. Goodman, that she had lived in the house where the Greens' lived. He told us that Mrs. Goodman, a white woman, had cancer and suffered a long time before she died in the house. Jim told us that a headless woman had often been seen under, or near the big sycamore tree at the corner of the fence row. I was always afraid to go near the sycamore tree at night. One night when Dad was cooking supper, he discovered that he didn't have enough lard to finish cooking the meal. Dad told Rae and me to go borrow a cup of lard from Ema Green. We were both afraid to go near the corner at night, but we were told by our father not to believe what we had heard, that people believed in ghosts because of their ignorance. We took a path behind the smoke house and chicken house to the "Haunted Corner". We didn't say a word as we got near the corner, which was only about a city block

from our house, or half way to Jesse's house. I was probably more afraid than Rae. Being older, I had heard more ghost stories. When we reached the corner, I was walking fast to get past the tree, when I looked back at Rae, I motioned for her to hurry. Rae thought I saw the ghost behind her, and screamed as loud as she could, and we both ran to Jesse and Ema's house as fast as we could run and got the lard. Dad heard Rae's scream, and thought something terrible had happened to us, and ran to the corner. We were on our way back near the corner when we saw Dad running toward us, very concerned. After we told him that we were afraid of the "Haunted Corner". Dad got very angry, he thought I was trying to scare my sister. There were plenty Sassafras switches along the fence row that were perfect to give us both a whipping that we would never forget. I was too afraid myself to think of frightening my sister.

There were times when Rae, Royce, and I had to stay by ourselves at night. We often heard sounds like someone walking up in the attic. Dad told us that the sounds were probably rats in the attic. The strange sounds weren't our imagination, we heard the same noise when Dad was there with us. Dad told me in later years, that he was also concerned about the strange

sounds in the attic. It is a good thing for us, that we believed the "rat story", or we might have died from fright. One Saturday evening Grandmother noticed that the lamp needed oil, she was upset, because Dad and Jim were gone, and we needed light for the house. The tractor fuel that we used in the lamps was stored in steel drums, and must be siphoned from the drums to get the fuel for the lamp. I assured Grandmother that I could siphon the fuel from the drum, I had siphoned the fuel before, that we had no problem. Royce followed me to get the fuel. I attempted to siphon the fuel several times, but was unable to siphon the fuel into the lamp.

By now it was getting dark, and Grandmother came to find out what was taking me so long. Royce who was almost six and too young to try anything so dangerous, had siphoned the fuel. He and I had both played with the siphon hose, and learned from watching Booker how to siphon the tractor fuel. Royce told grandmother and me that he knew how to siphon fuel. He was anxious to take the hose and show me how. I let him take the hose. After several tries he did get a little bit of the fuel to flow, just enough to strangle the little guy. He almost choked to death. Grandmother was terrified; she told me to get Al to help her. Booker and Al now lived in the house where Jesse and Ema had

lived. I ran and got Al to help; we lost little time to get to Royce. As we came to the path, we could hear Royce coughing, I was relieved that he was still alive, but I also knew that his condition was critical. Grandmother beat a raw egg, and gave it to Royce to drink, which he swallowed with no hesitation. The raw egg probably saved his life. The next day, Royce had a fever so Dad took him to a doctor at McCrory. Royce recovered slowly, his breath smelled like tractor fuel for a long time. The fuel scarred his lungs. Royce told us that he fell into a ditch three years after he strangled on the fuel, and coughed up some of the stuff that must have remained in his lungs.

I was always uneasy when I had to go near the sycamore tree at night. But the night that Royce swallowed the tractor fuel, I was so concerned about my little brother, that I didn't think about the "Haunted Corner". We later discovered that the siphon hose had a hole in it when Booker tried to siphon tractor fuel.

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland, and two days later, England and France declared war on Germany. The rural people of Arkansas believed that the United States would soon be involved in a new "World War". The people were not ready to send their sons to Europe. However, Germany was our enemy, and

Hitler was a hated man. Farm products were selling for a little more, due to the war in Europe. The hard times were softening just a little.

Dad was sure he had seen the worst of times, as everything seemed to be on the mend for the farmers. Dad was back in the hog business. We had hogs all over the woods. We took the pigs to Penn's Bay and loaded them on a large paddle boat and after we crossed the Cache River we unloaded the hogs. The hogs ate a lot of food, such as acorns, hickory nuts, wild berries, and other vegetation. Once Dad saw a boar eat several snakes from a swamp pond. The hogs stayed fat and multiplied. My father and I took a little corn in a hunter's bag, about three times a week to feed to the hogs to keep them tame. Dad said, "a hog will go wild in three days". Dad was a good woodsman, and knew how to locate the different groups, or families of hogs. Dad loved the woods and really enjoyed his hog project.

He carried my 410 gauge shotgun, and always took our two dogs, Shot and Tige, and often brought home meat for our table. Shot and Tige were faithful dogs that were always ready to hunt or help us catch the hogs. Sometimes we would catch a shoat or two to sell or trade. Once two shoats we had already caught and hog tied in the boat broke loose. The shoats swam back to

the bank of the river, and into the woods. Dad was very upset, but by the time we could beach the boat, the dogs had brought the hogs to bay. In only a few minutes we had the hogs back in the boat and on our way home.

Those two dogs knew what to do without being told. Shot was a beautiful red shepherd. Tige was a brindle pit bull mix female, and didn't like anyone that wasn't a member of our family. She was mean. But our family loved this faithful dog, and she loved us. I believe Dad was her favorite. Tige and Dad walked many miles together in the woods. Tige would never go hunting with anyone but Dad. Shot was anyone's dog that would hunt with him. The black men loved Shot, but hated Tige.

For the last five years, I hadn't been out of Woodruff County. In the spring of 1940, the Missouri Pacific railroad offered the students a trip to Little Rock to see the state capital building. We also toured the Missouri Pacific shops and got a free lunch. The ticket and tour was a bargain. Dad surprised me when he told me he wanted me to go. I enjoyed the train ride and the tour was interesting. It had been a long time since I had been to a city. The round trip was only one day. We were really tired when we returned to

Augusta. I spent that Friday night in Augusta, at Aunt Gayne's, and went to a movie. I saw "Dr. Cyclops". I walked home the next day. I enjoyed the walk of about ten miles.

My father's brothers and sisters decided to sell the farm. In June Aunt Mable Smith came to Arkansas to talk to Dad. Dad told her that he would sell the farm after the crops were harvested. I was glad we were going to move; I believed we would be better off. It was a relief for Dad to be able to pay his debts, and make a new start. We had been through many hardships, but we were doing better. After many disappointments, Dad had finally gotten a toehold. After going through, and surviving the great depression, he now had a chance to get ahead, so we had to pull up roots and start again. The timing couldn't have been worse. Just two years later, the farmers were making more money than they had made since the first World War. The price of land had doubled.

The war in Europe was going in Hitler's favor. The German troops quickly overran France, ignoring the famed Maginot Line, and coming in behind it from the north. By July 1, England was battling alone against the Nazi hordes. Dad started to sell his livestock. He hired a man who had a truck to take a load of cattle

and hogs to Memphis to sell. I was getting older, and was thrilled when dad took me with him. I was learning the farming business, like most fifteen year old farm boys. I didn't think at that time of my life I wanted to farm. As I look back I know now that I enjoyed the farm life. I was never to get a chance to farm the way things turned out. If we had remained in Arkansas, I would have probably been a farmer. In September, Nath, Jim, Edna, Lucille, and Robena Stephenson, and Barney Watts drove to Arkansas to take Uncle Jim Garrett back to Texas to live with them. Uncle Jim was old and broke. We hadn't seen the Stephensons in a long time.

They had all grown up since I last saw them. Lucille talked Rae into going back with them. We planned to move to back to Dickens County as soon as we could sell our property. Grandmother gave her consent. It must have been a tiresome trip for all, crowding eight people into a 1936 Ford two-door sedan. Rae started to school at McAdoo. She told me that she made a big mistake by going to Texas. Rae got very homesick for her family.

With the economy improving, the Democrats decided that Roosevelt should seek a third term. His campaign slogan was "Don't change horses in the middle of the stream". Roosevelt defeated Wendall Wilkie to become

the only president to be elected to a third term. Late in the autumn Dad sold the farm to Vance Thompson. He also bought our farm equipment, horses and mules. Dad owed Mr. Thompson so he paid his debts. Dad was satisfied with the amount that Mr. Thompson gave him for his farm equipment. We still had cows, many hogs, chickens, geese, corn, and a two year sorrel filly, one car and one pickup that was made from the old blue Buick, and household items that had to be sold.

Aldora Spriggs had a stomach tumor. Her doctor made an appointment for her to visit a specialist in Little Rock. Al had never been to Little Rock and had never traveled by train. Al asked my father if he would go with her. Dad told Al that he would go with her to Little Rock. Dad decided to shop for some clothes while in the city, and I needed eye glasses, so I went with them. We took the train from Augusta to Little Rock. We found the Medical Building where Al had to take her medical examination. Then Dad and I went shopping. The optometrist gave me an examination, and told me that I needed glasses. He had to mail the glasses to me after they were made. Dad bought a new green suit. Little Rock was a busy place that day. We only stayed the one day. I don't remember now what the doctor told Al, but she did come back with us. In a

few days, my first pair of glasses came in the mail. Dad's suit was real nice. The year had been eventful.

I made two trips to Little Rock, and one to Memphis.

Grandmother went to Little Rock to spend Christmas with Maurice, Adaline and family. We planned to move soon after January 1. Royce and I checked out of school just before Christmas vacation. Dad had many things to do, we had many items to sell, and what wasn't to be sold was given to the tenants. A few days before we moved, Dad traded a 1931 Model A coupe in on a 1937 Ford two door to drive to Texas. Royce and I really liked the green deluxe Ford. We sold our 1932 Plymouth coupe to Vurlin Hunter. He bought the car for his father and mother. The Hunters' didn't have enough money to pay for the car. Dad told them to take the car, and send the rest of the money to him in Texas, when they had the money. Vurlin was going to join the army. Mr. and Mrs. Hunter lived near the school bus corner. When the weather was cold, we would wait at the Hunter home for the bus. Mr. and Mrs. Hunter had a son and a daughter. Their daughter married Edmond Weems.

Vurlin Hunter was an outstanding boy in many ways.

He was a good student. He played football and basketball. He seemed to excel at anything he tried.

Vurlin was six feet, two inches in height. This handsome well built young man had a lot of pride, the son of a white sharecropper. He graduated from high school in 1939. For many years he was the biggest student on the school bus. Vurlin Hunter was just what the army needed. He was assigned to the Army Air Corps.

The Hunter family was a poor, but well respected, honest, and kind family.

The last articles we sold were the furnishings. Dad sold most of the furniture to Amos Gilson at a very cheap price. Gilson loaded the bedroom furniture on his model T truck, and asked Royce and me to go with him to Augusta, to try to trade the furniture for a used radio. We decided to go with Gilson for the ride.

The used furniture dealer wouldn't trade without some money, so Gilson hauled the furniture home. Gilson had a wife and two children, but enjoyed playing marbles with Royce and me for hours at a time, neglecting his farming and other duties. The Gilsons' were young white renters who lived on our farm. Amos was a stocky good looking man that never grew up. Royce and I sometimes called him "Goofy Gilson", but we really liked him. Dad also liked Gilson as both liked to horse trade.

Booker and Al Spriggs were faithful tenants,

almost like members of our family. We had remained close to them for eight years. Booker and Al were there when we needed them. Often Royce would go with Booker all day. Booker let Royce help him drive the teams, or the tractor. Before Royce started to school, he spent more time with Jim, Booker, and Al than anyone. Dad gave Booker the Buick and our dog, Shot. We decided to take Tige to Texas.

Many members of the Green family worked for us, Al Spriggs was the only daughter of Rodge Green. Rodge had worked hard in his young years. He was now old and slow. Three of Green's sons worked for us, Jesse, Sink, and Roosevelt. The young Greens' were good workers, quick, agile, and strong. They could kill game with clubs, bricks, or anything they could find. When there was work to do, Rodge would speak his own language to his sons. No one could understand his commands, but he could get a lot of work done, fast. I don't think Rodge knew what he was saying. I believe his father, or grandfather spoke an African dialect that Rodge learned as a boy and passed down to his sons. Jim Reeves told us he was going to Texas with us. We hoped Dad would take him with us. For the last six months, Jim had been in bad health, and had lost much of his spunk.

On January 20, Dad went to McCrory early to sever all ties with Arkansas. He told us to be ready, that we might leave that day to go to Little Rock and stay over night with the Long family. Before Dad returned from McCrory, Jack Raymond, the little horse trader, came and drove the horses and mules that we had sold to Vance Thompson, to his stables to sell in McCrory. We liked all of our animals, and it was sad to see them leave the farm. Button and Lady were beautiful horses, but our favorite horse was Pinto, a beautiful stallion. Pinto was born on the farm in the spring of 1938. Mr. Weaver used our pasture to graze his mare, during this time her foal was born. A year later Dad bought the colt before he left our farm. Pinto was red with white spots, a good reason to name him Pinto. The stallion was one of Dad's hobbies. He spent a lot of his time brushing, currying, and feeding the horse sugar. The curious neighbors came to see Jack Raymond take the animals. Someone asked Jack how much he was asking for the stallion. The little loud mouth horse trader, yelled, "he is not for sale, he is not for sale". Dad returned before noon and we quickly loaded what few items we were taking with us. We took Tige and Merridy Rae's cat. Jim got in the car and said; "I goes where this boy goes", referring to Royce. Dad couldn't say

no to him. Jim had helped take care of Royce since he was six months old for eight years. So Jim was on his way to Texas. We didn't have room for my saddle so Dad gave the saddle to Jack Crutcher for his grandson. We were in Augusta at noon. Dad wanted to stop to see Aunt Gayne, before we left Augusta. We told Dad to keep driving, we were ready to travel. We should have stopped and bid Aunt Gayne farewell. I never saw her again. Dad crossed White River for the last time, and headed for Little Rock. He commented that, "he would take one last look at White River, that he might never see it again." We drove to Little Rock, and visited with our cousins. I hadn't seen Uncle Maurice and Aunt Adaline since Mother's funeral. They now had two little boys, Billy and Charlie, whom I had never seen before. Grandmother was staying at Little Rock for a few more days, she later took the train, and met us at Spur, Texas. We took Jim to stay with a black family, whom the Longs' knew.

Early the next morning, we said farewell to our relatives in Little Rock, and were on our way to Texas. We drove to Hope, then on to Texarkana. We were now in Texas. Late that night, on the outskirts of Dallas, we were stopped by a policeman. The policeman asked Dad why he had a nigger with him. Jim told the cop, "I

take care of this baby". The policeman stuck his head through the open car window, and said. "I don't see a baby". Tige snapped, and growled. The policeman jumped back from the car. Jim said, "man, that dog will bite you". Dad explained that Royce was the baby, that Jim had worked for him for years in Arkansas. The cop told Dad how to get out of Dallas. We drove all night. After sleeping for awhile, I heard Dad and Jim talking about the miles of cars we were meeting going to work at a army depot, near Mineral Wells. The lights from the many cars almost blinded my father's tired eyes. At dawn I could see Mesquite trees, and flat land. The view was familiar. We were in the part of Texas I remembered. At noon we arrived in Spur. We went to Uncle Jenk and Aunt Lottie's home. We had to find a place for Jim to stay. Exactly eight years before, we arrived at Uncle Jim Garrett's farm in Arkansas.

We soon went to the Stephenson farm to see Rae and the Stephensons. The next Monday, I started to school at Spur. Grandmother came from Little Rock by train. We found a little house to rent near the school Rae and I attended, but Royce had a long walk. We had to buy all our furniture. We were starting all over again. Dad had some money, but no income. Starting to a new

school was always hard for me, but everyone was nice to me. Living in Spur was much different from the farm. We were again living near many relatives.

When you pull up roots like we did, you usually move near relatives, or a place you are familiar with.

We selected a poor area to locate. There were few jobs, no industry, and few business opportunities. Little money was circulating. Dad was a farmer at heart, but after two farming interruptions, Dad looked for a small business that he thought would be successful. One day while driving around the county, seeking business opportunities, Dad saw an unfinished gasoline station. The building was nice, but had no water or plumbing. Dad found the owner and was told that he didn't have enough money to have the water piped under Highway 82 to the building. The owner, Luke Harris, was ready to sell. Dad bought the building, had the water piped to the building and constructed a septic tank. I am sure by this time, Jim Reeves had decided that he should not have left Arkansas. We had nothing for him to do. There were few black families in Dickens County. Many communities, like the town of Dickens, had no black people at all. Jim stayed on the Stephenson farm for a while, but wasn't really needed. Uncle Walter had

three grown sons living at home to do the farming. Jim was a sick man but we didn't realize how sick he really was. Jim didn't like to stay on the Stephenson farm, because Uncle Jim Garrett got angry with Jim, and hurt his feelings one day. A sick and unhappy person's spirit is easily broken. Dad took Jim to the station to help with the septic system. Jim's health was worse than we realized. Jim was little help. Jim lived at the station. The Dickens people didn't want him living there. Dad hired two men to dig the septic tank. Jim told dad, that he dreamed that if he dug the hole deep enough for a grave, he would die. Dad knew Jim was unhappy, and also sick. In May Dad bought Jim a bus ticket to Arkansas. Jim lived only a month after returning to Arkansas. It was a sad ending. Jim would have probably died soon regardless of where he lived, but I'm sorry he had to be unhappy the last few months of his life.

Just before Jim went back to Arkansas, I became seriously ill. I had terrible headaches. The pain was so unbearable that I had many convulsions. My family and doctor were sure I would die. Dr. Standifer slept on the couch in our home to be near. I don't remember two weeks of my life during this illness. I had kidney poisoning. We never knew exactly what caused it. The

doctor thought that I ate too much candy at the station. Often I would eat candy bars and drink soda pop instead of eating good food. The doctor told Dad and Grandmother that there was only one thing that might save my life. He had to get my father's permission to inject a shot of medicine in my veins. The shot had the potential for being fatal. Dad told the doctor to give me the shot.

Dad didn't think I would live through the night. Dad had missed a lot of sleep since I had been sick, and went to the car to try to get some rest. Early the next morning, Uncle Jenk came out of the house to talk to Dad. My father told me that he was sure his brother was coming to tell him that I had died. Jenk got in the car and mentioned that it had rained during the night. Dad told me he was sure that Jenk was trying to find a way to break the bad news. Dad asked Jenk about how I was doing? Uncle Jenk told my dad that I was better. Dad said, "Jenk, do you mean he is still alive?" Jenk told my father that I was not only alive, but that I was much better. Uncle Jenk worked very hard with me. He was excellent with the sick. I didn't go to a hospital, but I had excellent care by relatives. Uncle Jenk and Grandmother stayed right by my bedside. Dr. Standifer didn't work with me so

diligently to make a large sum of money. He worked to save a fifteen year old boy's life. He charged very little for his services

While I was recovering from this illness, Dad drove Jim to Spur to see me the day before he went back to Arkansas. Jim told us many times that Mother asked him to help "Smokey" take care of her children, that he would need a lot of help. Jim promised Mother that he would always be there to help raise her children. Jim Reeves said many times that if he lived to see Royce twenty one years old, he would never have to work again. Jim believed that Royce would take care of him in his old years, like he had taken care of Royce as a child. Soon after I was able to be up and around, I walked to the hill top at Spur to hitch a ride to Dickens to hang around the station. After a short wait, a young man in a 1940 Studebaker drove past me, then stopped the car and backed the car to where I was standing. I told him I was going to Dickens and he said he was going to Roaring Springs and would give me a ride. I got in the car and was told that his dad was a Studebaker dealer in Roaring Springs, that the car was a trade-in he was taking back to the car lot to sell. He was driving rather fast, demonstrating the Studebaker Champion. The driver was very friendly, we

were talking to each other like we had known each other for awhile. A car stopped that was meeting us on the two lane road some distance ahead. A boy about ten years old got out of the car, and ran across the road in front of us. The driver couldn't stop at the speed we were going. The boy was hit and thrown in the air and bounced on the hood, and off in the middle of the road. The driver looked back at the boy, the car went out of control, hit a mail box and veered off the road and hit a power line pole. The driver got out of the wrecked car and ran back and took the lifeless boy in his arms. Some people stopped, and the driver got in their car cradling the boy in his arms. The boy was taken to the hospital at Spur, where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

The sheriff soon came to the scene of the accident. He asked me to describe how the accident happened. I told the sheriff as near as I could what had occurred. The people in the car in which the boy was riding also told what they had witnessed. The driver was not held. I found out later that the boys name was Billy Ray, I can't remember his last name. Billy went to school at Dickens. He went to a friend's house to get some chicken eggs to hatch. Billy had missed the school bus, and hitched a ride to near his

home in the country. Billy was carrying the eggs in a brown paper bag when he was struck by the car. Scrambled eggs and pieces of bone fragments were scattered on the road. I was reminded by some, who knew I was involved in the fatal accident, that if the driver of the Studebaker hadn't stopped to give me a ride, the accident couldn't have happened. How was I to know when I got in the Studebaker what was going to happen? Somehow this terrible experience didn't dwell in my mind. I tried not to think about it, nothing could bring Billy back anyway. We weren't selling enough gasoline at the station, so Dad decided to use part of the building for a dance hall. We decorated the room and made it look nice. Two young women that lived near the station, Mona Adams and Claudia Hawley, helped with the drapes. We built benches along one side for the customers to sit. The conversion didn't cost much. We got big crowds. The couples danced to a Juke Box. Our customers enjoyed themselves. Dad named his business the "Hill Crest". We sold Gulf products, candy, soda pop, cigarettes, cigars, bread, pastries, and many miscellaneous items. Dickens County was a dry county. We couldn't sell liquor, or beer. There was not much money in circulation, those that had a little money were reluctant to spend it. Even though we had

big crowds, we didn't make much money. Dad would often play the juke box, and give the girls free drinks, because the boys either didn't have money, or refused to spend what they had.

We tried to promote the business hoping for a prosperous fall, when most of the residents had money.

Many boys were drafted in the army. It was the first peacetime draft in our history. Too bad we didn't have a business near a military installation. Many boys were entering the military service voluntarily, instead of waiting to be drafted. With many young men, there wasn't much money spent on gasoline or recreation.

Mona Adams was a pretty young woman, who had many friends. She was a good dancer and liked to dance with my cousin, Jim Stephenson, who had known Mona for a long time. Mona also helped around the Hill Crest. Jerome and I had known Mona and Claudia before the Hill Crest opened for business. Jim Stephenson worked for my father at the Hill Crest. It wasn't long before Dad and Mona started dating. Claudia Hawley, Mona's cousin soon married and moved away. Mona and Dad had a lot of fun together, which soon became a love affair. They were two happy people. I had a lot of fun with my Stephenson cousins. I had a lot of girlfriends at Dickens. I also had a lot of fun with my cousins

Jerome and Penn Yarbrough. Jerome was older, and Penn a little younger than me. Jerome and I would go to Lubbock every time we got the urge to see the city. We did many things together. Jerome decided to leave Texas, and go to California, where there were many defense jobs that paid good wages. Jerome hitchhiked to San Diego . He had only two dollars when he left Spur, Texas. Things were never the same after Jerome left Texas.

The business improved little that fall. Dad seemed to lose interest in the Hill Crest, and started having fun with Mona, and some of his cousins and friends. One or more carloads would drive to Guthrie, a wet town, to buy whisky and beer. He would take money out of the cash box, and tell me to run the business. The Hill Crest was not making enough money to allow much spent on partying. On December 7, I was at the Hill Crest keeping the business open, while Dad spent some time with Rae, Royce, and Grandmother. I had very few customers that day. A customer, Skeet Duncan was hanging out with me that quiet Sunday. Duncan suggested that we get in his car and listen to the radio. The radio didn't work well under some power wires. Duncan backed the 1936 Ford Coupe about three or four feet, and the radio came in loud and clear.

After a short time the program was interrupted by news of the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. The world would never be the same again. Nearly every single man in the county joined the military services in the next few days.

On Monday December 22, I was alone at the Hill Crest, business was slow. There was not enough money to replenish our gasoline. I pumped one tank dry, I knew there wasn't much gas in the other tank. I decided there wasn't enough business to go in more debt to replenish our stock. I locked the Hill Crest doors, took my shotgun and climbed the hill behind the station, to hunt for quail. I didn't see any quail to shoot, so I didn't hunt long. Later when Dad came to the station, I told him I had closed the business. Dad looked defeated, But agreed with my decision to close the doors.

We had Christmas dinner at the Stephensons'. Dad was with his two brothers for the last time. There were many relatives for dinner. It was a happy occasion, but we had an uncertain future.

Early in 1942, with nothing to do, I went to Morton, Texas, where Uncle Minor and family had a farm. After a few days I decided to hitchhike to New Mexico. I told my uncle that I was going home. I got a ride

to Albuquerque in a big truck. It was in the wee hours of the morning, when we reached Albuquerque. A policeman asked me if I would like to have a place to stay. I really didn't know what to say. I decided to say yes, I didn't want the policeman to think I had bad intentions. He took me to a big jail, and locked me inside. I slept for a while, but at dawn, I was wide awake, not knowing what was in store for me. Finally, a friendly police officer told me to come with along with him. We walked a few blocks to the Salvation Army kitchen. With a smile, he told the cook to feed me, then walked out of the kitchen with a friendly smile. The cook gave me a bowl of beans, and a cup of coffee.

I told the cook that I liked his beans, trying to start a conversation, to find out what was going to happen to me. After a few words with the cook, I was sure that I was free to go. I ate the stale beans, I didn't have any money, and didn't eat again for a while.

The next ride I got took me to Grants, New Mexico.

The day was cold. The man I rode with had a Ford ball gum machine. He was a nice middle aged gentleman, the car was warm. There was a lot of snow on the ground as we drove through Navajo country. The driver stopped and gave two Navajo girls a ride for a few miles. He

bought me coffee and donuts once. I decided this is as good as it gets, I think I will take route 66, all the way to Los Angeles, and on to San Diego, where Jerome had a good job.

I got out of the warm 1940 Ford at Grants. I started walking west on "Route 66", to keep warm. After walking some distance, some men in a truck, probably a crew of workers, told me I could ride in the back of the truck. There were three men in the cab. The men told me that they were going to Gallup. I gladly accepted the ride, it was a cold ride through the mountains. I was glad to get to Gallup. I got on the road, hoping to get a nice warm ride west. I really got cold, and had to find gas stations to warm myself.

The gas station workers were very unfriendly and would tell me to warm and get out. The traffic was heavy out of Gallup, but no one would give me a ride. I gave up after it got dark. I knew I was stuck in Gallup for the night. I walked the streets, not knowing where to go, or what I should do in this strange, unfriendly place.

The Navajo Indians were everywhere. Many drove horse drawn carts and wagons. At the edge of town, there were many wagon yards, where the Indians camped. I met a man on the street who took me to the Santa Fe train depot and Harvey House where travelers ate.

However, I didn't have any money, so all I could do was to think about the good food. I sat in the big waiting room, glad to be out the cold. I was sure that I would get a ride west the next day. I was surprised when a tall tough looking man asked me why I was hanging around the depot. I told the man that I was there to stay warm. The man was a Santa Fe rail road "Bull". He didn't treat me like a sixteen boy that had done nothing wrong. I had never been cussed and called so many bad names by a man before. He asked where I hailed from. I told him I was from Arizona and was traveling to Phoenix. He told me I was from Texas. That if he saw me anywhere west of Gallup, he would personally kick my ass all the way back to Texas. He believed that I rode the rails, a little run away rail road bum. The rail road detective took the wind out of my sails. He did me a favor, I decided to turn around and go home where I belonged.

The next morning my morale was very low. A young man about thirty years old gave me a ride to Albuquerque. His name was Eddie. He drove a International pick up truck. Eddie was dressed like a prosperous rancher or farmer. He knew businessmen along the stretch between Gallup and Albuquerque. I didn't ask many questions, but I'm sure he was a

salesman that had something to do with agriculture. We stopped once and had doughnuts and coffee (on Eddie, of course). By the time we arrived in Albuquerque, I was feeling much better. I was probably in Albuquerque one hour, when two brothers in their early twenties gave me a ride in a 1933 Chevrolet sedan. The men were friendly, seeming to enjoy my company. I was told that I could ride to Cline's Corners, where I would take the road to Vaughn, and on to Clovis. As we got near Cline's Corner, the driver told me that he turned north twenty two miles west of Santa Rosa, that I could ride to where they turned off. I could ride with them a hour longer, and go to Santa Rosa and take highway 84 to Clovis. The sun was getting low, so I decided to stay with the guys until they turned north. By the time we reached the turn off, the sun had set. I was in the middle of nowhere, except for a little gas station, that was located near the corner. I noticed the crude sign, "Bert's Place", on the little building. I was twenty two miles from Santa Rosa, the next town. I knew it would be difficult to hitch a ride at night. I stopped at the crude little station, the family lived in the back, but were in the front, or the business part of the station. The family treated me a little cool, I knew I couldn't stay there long. Bert

told me I might have trouble getting a ride, now that it was dark. He told me he had walked to Santa Rosa and I should start walking the twenty two miles; by daybreak I would be there.

I started walking on the shoulder of Highway 66, eastbound. The night was pitch dark, and freezing cold. I was afraid I would freeze to death, before I walked very far. Two or three cars passed me, I decided I would flag the next car that came along. I was desperate, northern New Mexico is bitter cold in January. After approximately five minutes a car came along the lonely road. I flagged the driver, and the man pulled off the road, and stopped the 1931 Buick. The car was old, but looked like new, inside and out, the heater felt great. The driver had been working in Los Angeles, but was originally from New York, and was going home before he entered the armed forces. He must have been thirty five years old. The man told me he was spending the night in Santa Rosa, and stopped at the first motel. I found a restaurant that was open all night. I would stay in the coffee shop for a while, then for a while I would walk around and freeze.

I didn't want to wear out my welcome, and be told to stay out of the coffee shop. The police were in and out of the place all night, but asked me no questions.

The Mexican waitress asked me if I would like a cup of coffee. I told her "no, thank you". I think she was going to give me the coffee, but I didn't have a nickel to pay for the coffee, and I sure didn't want any misunderstanding, it was more important to have a warm shelter from the bitter cold. The next morning, I had to walk some distance from Santa Rosa to connect with the road to Clovis. The road is now Highway 84. In those days, it wasn't much of a road, and not much traffic that morning. After a long walk, a truck load of workers gave me a short ride. The next ride took me to Texico, at the Texas line. I hadn't traveled many miles, and it was getting late in the day. I dreaded one more night on the road. I waited a long time for a ride with no luck. I saw a truck at a little truck stop, I thought maybe, the driver would give me a ride.

The sun was getting low, so I decided that I would walk back to the truck stop, where the driver was eating. Just as I walked back to the coffee shop, the driver came out, and got in his truck. I asked him if he was going to Lubbock. He told me he was going to Lubbock, and I could ride with him. The driver was in his late thirties. He told me that he owned his truck, a late model big rig Ford. The nice trucker told me that he lived in Dallas, which was his destination. I

told the man that I lived in Spur, and had been in business in Dickens. He told me that he was going through Dickens, on his way to Dallas. This was really great news, maybe I could sleep in a bed that night, and get something to eat. After riding for six hours, we arrived at Dickens. The time was 9:50 PM, and time for the driver to have a cup of coffee. He stopped at the Rock Inn. He offered me a cup of coffee, he told me after we had coffee, that he would drop me off at the Hill Crest, where he had stopped before. I thanked the trucker, but told him I would walk from the Rock Inn to the Hill Crest. I ran that mile to Ed and Sammie Adams' little house, next door to the Hill Crest station. I told Ed Adams my story of six days on the road. The Adams' had a big pot of red beans cooked. Mr. Adams asked me if I would like some beans. Since I had had little to eat for the last four days, I eagerly accepted his offer. The beans sure did taste good. Ed made me a bed on the floor with a extra mattress used for company. I was very tired, and slept sound until morning. The next morning was Friday. I got a ride to Spur. The family believed I was on the farm at Morton visiting with Uncle Minor and family. I had written a post card to Dad, telling him I was at Minor's, when I first got to Morton. The family hadn't worried much

about me, However, they were glad to have me home. The trip had been hard, but I learned not to hitchhike in the winter, in cold climates, also you can really get hungry, and tired on the road if you don't have money.

It was great to be back with my family again.

Soon after I returned from my trip, we moved out of our rented house at Spur. We moved in the Hill Crest station. We sold the station fixtures, made a few changes, and moved our furniture in. The project turned out nice. The place looked quite cozy. Our new home was near the Dickens school. I didn't go to school at Dickens. Dad and I looked for employment, but there was no work. We decided to go to Morton, and work for Uncle Minor, hauling feed bundles from the field to the barn. The bundles were heavy for me to handle, but Dad and I worked hard and finished the job. We went home with a little money. After we were home for a few days, we decided to hitchhike back to Morton, hoping to find more work. We spent the night with Uncle Minor and family, Uncle Minor had no work for us at the time. Minor told us that we might get work at Sundown oil field, so we went to the oil fields. We didn't find work at Sundown. We didn't have enough money to hang around until something came along for us to do. In fact, we were broke when we left Sundown, and had to go

home. The reason we had to hitchhike was because the car needed tires.

Dad knew he must leave Dickens, and go where he could find work. Not only did he have his family to support, he was planning a future with Mona. From all reports, California defense, and war effort employment was the highest in the nation. Many people were moving to California.

Dad talked to Uncle Jenk and Aunt Lottie about moving to California. Aunt Lottie told us she was ready, the sooner the better. Uncle Jenk needed a little more persuading, but not much. Uncle Jenk had new tires on the Marquette, and a little money to make the move west. He bought a trailer to take a few household and personal items. The Marquette was old but in good mechanical condition. Uncle Jenk, Aunt Lottie, and Penn were ready to travel. The move to California was more difficult for us. We didn't have the money to get the car ready to make the trip. We needed money to rent a place to live and to buy groceries until we found employment. Dad decided that I would go with him. Grandmother, Rae, and Royce would stay in Dickens, until he could send for them. Mona would stay with her mother for a while. Ed Adams, Mona's dad was now in California.

Uncle Jenk happened to meet a friend from the past that had lived in California for a few years. His name was S.B. Scott. Scottie and his family had spent the winter in Texas to be near Scottie's father. He sold his car after it developed expensive mechanical problems. The Scotts needed transportation out to Brawley, California, where Scottie had a job working on a hay bailer. Scottie was glad to find someone interested in going to California. Uncle Jenk told Scott that his brother Marvin, was interested in moving to California, that they could work something out. Then uncle set up a meeting between Dad and Scott. To make a long story short, Scott had a little money he had borrowed from his Dad. We borrowed a little a little money on our car. We needed Scott, and he needed us. With luck we would all get to California. The tires on the car were not very good. Due to the war, tires were hard to find. Uncle Jenk bought his new tires just before Pearl Harbor was bombed.

On Monday, March 16, Uncle Jenk, Aunt Lottie, and Penn left Spur, Texas for San Diego. Dad, Scottie, and I went to Lubbock to get a loan on the car. We didn't get to Lubbock until late that day and had to stay in Lubbock that night, so we would be there when the finance company opened the doors the next morning. We

got the loan, and drove back to Dickens. Dad gave Grandmother a little money. We then drove by the school to say goodbye to Rae and Royce. Once again we were to be separated. We drove south of Spur to where the Scots' lived. Frances Scott, and her three children were ready to travel. We quickly loaded the car, and got on the road near sunset. We were well loaded. We drove south to Post, and west towards Roswell, New Mexico. We had our first flat tire, just before we reached Roswell. We slept in the car until daybreak, changed the tire, and drove to Roswell, where we repaired the spare.

The flat tire delayed us, so we got a late start Wednesday morning. We drove to Willcox, Arizona, and rented a cabin. The next morning we ate at a restaurant. The prices were much higher than Texas prices. Dad told the waitress he could buy better steaks for half the price in Texas. The waitress laughed and told my father, you are not in Texas now, mister. We had a flat on a rough gravel road. The gravel road was a shorter route to Tucson. When we got to Tucson, we went to a tire shop to buy a tire. While Dad was looking for a used tire that would take us the rest of the way, Scottie told me to put a tire boot under my coat. I refused at first, but Scottie

insisted. When we got back to the car, I told Dad that Scott told me to take the boot. We couldn't buy a tire, and needed the boot to fix the spare tire. Dad became angry with me for stealing the boot. Scottie convinced my father that we had little money, and really needed a spare. We drove to a gas station and put the boot in the damaged tire to make it useable again. While we were at the station repairing the spare tire, a police car drove into the station and parked. Dad was sure the police were there to arrest us. The police didn't ask any questions, so we continued our journey. I had never seen scenery like Arizona's desert. We drove that night and arrived at Brawley before dawn. I barely remember when we arrived at Frances Scott's father and mother's home. I must have been tired. I slept most of the night while we drove through the desert.

Scott took us out in the country to where Pop Green lived. Pop was an elderly Texan who lived alone with chickens that had the run of his shack. He talked to his chickens, and had names for them, like Little Joe, Ragged Charlie, and Long Neck Bill. Pop had lived alone for a long time since his wife ran off. Pop Green wasn't concerned about sanitation. We spent one night and went back to Brawley. Dad decided to leave Brawley

and go to San Diego to seek employment there. We left Brawley with a little gas in the tank and no money. We drove to Imperial, and turned west on the road to San Diego. We hadn't driven far before we gave two Mexican boys a ride. Dad hoped the boys had a dollar or two, in case we ran out of gas before we got to San Diego. The boys were going to San Diego, but told us that they had no money. We ran out of gas in the middle of the city. A Mexican woman in a new Pontiac pushed our car out of traffic to the curb. She probably would not have pushed our car, if she hadn't seen the teenage Mexican boys in our stalled car.

We knew the name of the boarding house, or hotel, where Jerome lived. Jerome bought gas for our car, so we found where Uncle Jenk and Lottie had rented a cabin in a court. Uncle Jenk informed Dad that the birth certificate that a county clerk at Dickens had prepared for them was worthless. They had to send back to Arkansas, and get Mr. Lee Miller, who had known them all their lives, to get a legal birth certificate, so they could work at defense work.

Dad decided to go back to Brawley, until he got a legal birth certificate. He could get a job in the hay, or something that didn't require a birth certificate. Dad borrowed a few dollars from Jenk to

get back to Brawley. We gave a man a ride who was going to El Centro. The man was a drifter, but very intelligent. He told us many things about California that we didn't know. He had been many places. The drifter was about thirty years old. He was interesting to talk to. You could learn a lot from talking to this drifter. When we got to Imperial, he decided to ride to Brawley, instead of going to El Centro. He told us it didn't make any difference to him, that any place was home to him. The drifter said, "I might like Brawley, and stay for a while". He had a little money. When we got to Brawley, he told Dad to stop at a little grocery store. He bought some salami, bread, and a cola drink for us. We ate lunch together. We thanked the friendly vagabond for the lunch, and went our separate ways.

Dad got a job on a hay baler, I think Pop Green knew Mr. Palmer, and told him that Dad needed a job. Pop Green got credit for us at a country store. Dad went to a cabin court and talked to the court manager.

The manager allowed us to move in, with no money in advance. The manager, Mr. Stearns, was an elderly man whom everyone called Dad. Mr. Stearns and my dad became good friends. Mona later gave him haircuts.

Dad made good wages working in the hay. The work

was hard for Dad. It had been years since he had to work so hard. He didn't bale hay long before Mr. Palmer told Dad that he wouldn't have any more work for a while. Dad was able to send the family in Texas some money, pay our rent, and buy some groceries. Dad met Bert Lindly at the court where we lived. He was a little older than Dad. Bert had once been married, but now lived with his sister and brother-in-law in a cabin next to our little cabin. Bert told Dad if they joined the union, they could get a construction job building a marine camp for the Navy. To join the union, they would only have to pay five dollars down on a fifty dollar membership. Dad told Bert that he didn't have five dollars. Bert liked to gamble; he had no one to support but himself, so he told Dad that he would loan him the five dollars. Since Dad had a family to support it was important that he go to work first. After Dad got a job, he could give the five dollars back and Bert Lindly would join the union. Bert sometimes made a little money gambling at the card rooms. Bert took Dad to the union hall in El Centro, so Dad could join the union. Dad paid the five dollars down, and was hired.

When Dad received his first paycheck, he gave Bert back the five. Bert joined the union, Dad helped him get a job. Dad made good wages, and got promotions. I

soon joined the union, and went to work. Dad and I were making a lot of money and our money worries were over for a while.

I liked the money and liked California. When I first came to California, I was disappointed. I now decided that California was the best place for all the family. The people at Brawley were friendly and I soon had many new friends. However, Brawley was very hot in the summertime. On the fourth of July, Dad and I and two friends we met went to San Diego to visit Uncle Jenk and his family. Uncle Jenk got a good job after he got his birth certificate. Jerome also had a good job.

Dad and I were employed, and bought nice clothes. I had a wrist watch, and had money in my pockets. We went to the bull fights at Tijuana, Mexico. I have never had any desire to see the bull fights again. The weather was nice in San Diego, after living in the heat of the Imperial Valley. Many people left Brawley to work in a cooler climate every summer. The weather was really hot, but it didn't bother me too much. We worked through the hottest part of the year. Many workers had heat strokes, some even died. After Mona came to Brawley, I no longer had to cook or keep house. Mona took care of the domestic chores. Dad, Mona, and I had a lot of fun together. Mona also liked Brawley

and she and Dad were happy to be together again. There was always something to do. Mona and Frances Scott became good friends.

Dad and I got out of bed at 3:30 in the morning, started work at 5:00, worked nine hours, and quit work at 2:00. The drive home was hot. Cars didn't have air conditioning in those times. When I got home, I would shower and go to town. I liked to go to the air conditioned pool halls and card rooms. I would play the pea game to kill time. I was often lucky, sometimes I would win enough for spending money for the evening. The town was crowded with men in the military service. There was a shortage of girls. The civilian teenagers had a hard time competing with men in uniform. Late that summer, the marine base was almost completed and I was transferred to another base. Dad was one of the few left to complete the job. Dad didn't want me go to Sandy Beach to work because I didn't have transportation. So, I was now unemployed.

I did have a few hundred dollars saved. I bought a 1930 Model A rumble seat coupe. I had a lot of fun with that car. I drove the wheels off it! The car got hot in the Imperial Valley heat. Often the water in the radiator would boil. The little car didn't last long.

I was bored after the car was put out of commission.

I decided now that I was between jobs, I would go back to Dickens and visit my brother, sister, and grandmother. I rode the greyhound buses back to Texas, taking me to Tombstone, Douglas and along the Mexican border. I had a layover in El Paso. The trip was interesting, but tiring. The Greyhounds were slow during the war years to conserve fuel and tires.

I surprised everyone when I walked up the hill that Sunday afternoon. I hadn't written the family telling them that I was coming to visit them. This was another happy reunion for my sister, brother, and me. My sister was now a teenager and much taller than when I had last seen her. Royce had been lonely, with Dad and me both gone. It was great to see them again.

I saw some old friends but most of my friends were in the armed forces. I saw a few old girlfriends that were still around. I hitchhiked to McAdoo to visit my Stephenson relatives. While at McAdoo I saw Dickens and McAdoo play a six man football game. I spent most of my time with the family. There wasn't much to do in Dickens County. After two weeks, I returned to Brawley to try to go back to work. I wanted to buy a nice car.

When I got back to Brawley, Dad had finished the job at the marine base at Niland. My stepmother was ready to have her baby any day. Dad and I needed to go

to work. We listened to the World Series on the radio.

The St. Louis Cardinals beat the New York Yankees in a five game series.

On October 6, my brother Stanley was born. He was a good looking, healthy baby. Mona was really proud of her firstborn. We couldn't agree on a name for the baby. Mona's friend Grace told Mona that she liked the name Stanley so Stanley it was. I also liked the name.

When Stanley was a few days old, Dad got a job at Thermal near Indio. Dad had worked less than a week when he was run over by a grader, a machine for leveling earth. Dad was buried in the deep desert sand. No bones were broken, however, Dad was unable to work for a long time. He returned to work before he was able because the boss needed him. If he didn't get back to work, he would be replaced. A worker had few benefits in those times. I also went to work with the dirt movers, building a runway for a landing field for the Army. We worked the night shift. We moved from Brawley to some cabins behind Post's grocery store and restaurant, approximately fifteen miles south of Indio.

There was nothing to do at this desolate place. I missed my friends at Brawley. Of all the places I have lived, this was the worst. I didn't like my job, because I didn't like where I lived. We bought most of

our groceries at Post's store. There was a shortage of many items such as meat. The Post brothers tried to ration the meat among their customers. We had a hard time finding enough to eat. John, the older Post, would tell me when I came to buy meat, "Yes, I have ham, but you're not going to get any". Old John snorted and talked through his nose. The nights really got cold on the desert. The tank trucks hauled water to wet the desert sand. We built fires to warm by. I really got chilled to the bone. The work was easy, I walked in front of the grader, I read the grade stakes, and signaled the operator how much dirt had to be cut or filled, by using hand and finger signals. If my three fingers pointed down, that meant cut three inches, fingers up, meant fill. Sometimes I had to find buried grade stakes, using a shovel to uncover the stakes. At times, there was nothing for me to do, so I rode on the road grader and talked to the operating engineer.

In December the night shift workers were transferred to the day shift. The days were sunny and warm. I was soon made a flagman, directing trucks. I worked for a while after Dad got laid off. I was really dissatisfied, working at a place I didn't like, alone, without Dad to encourage me.

We moved back to Brawley after Christmas. It was

lettuce harvest time in the Imperial Valley. Many families came to Brawley for the winter harvests. It was a place for them to earn good wages in the warm and sunny Imperial Valley.

We soon started a new construction job. Dad and I were some of the first hired. We worked for contractors, building a Navy air base at Holtville. I had several jobs at first, soon I was working with the dirt movers again, helping the grader operators build the runways. I was restless, knowing that in a few months, I would be drafted into military service.

Most of my friends my age were now in the service, or talking about going into the service soon. It was difficult to get interested in a civilian job, when you know that a big change in your life is inevitable. I wanted the war to end. I was patriotic, I wanted to do my part to win the war, and get things back to normal.

Many commodities were rationed, sugar, coffee, meat, tires, and gasoline. Many items that were not rationed were no longer on the grocery shelves. We had money, but there were many things we couldn't buy.

I decided to quit my job, go back to Texas and visit a few days with grandmother, Rae, and Royce. I had made up my mind to join the Navy. My father told me to stay out as long as I could. He knew I would be

drafted soon enough. The main reason I wanted to volunteer was to be sure to get to serve in the Navy. If I waited to be drafted, I would probably serve in the Army. I have great respect for all the armed services, I just preferred the Navy. All of my friends were in the Navy. When I went back to Texas, I told my family that I was going to enlist in the Navy when I returned to Brawley. They didn't try to change my mind. Grandmother told me that my life had been spared when I was so sick and near death, two years before and that I might die serving my country.

While I was home on that trip, Royce and I hitchhiked to Lubbock, so Royce could see the city. Lubbock was a very busy city. Many soldiers and aviation cadets crowded the streets. In later years, Royce told me he was impressed by the sights and sounds of that modern Texas city, during World War II. After two weeks, I returned to Brawley.

The next few weeks, I enjoyed doing things with my friends. We could always think of something fun to do.

We often went to Mexicali, Mexico which was only a short drive from Brawley. We could drink beer in the bars and eat Mexican food. The prices were much cheaper than California. We were never asked our age; if we had the money, the bartenders would sell us

drinks. I finally convinced my father that he should sign for me to join our Navy. He knew that I would soon be drafted and if I volunteered I would get to choose the branch of service I preferred. On July 7, I left Brawley for San Diego to start my training at the U.S.N. Training Station.

The recruiting chief petty officer suggested that I report to the Navy on Wednesday. Recruits were interviewed on the radio every Wednesday. The chief told me that I would be the last recruit to go from that area, direct to San Diego. In the future, new recruits would be sent to Los Angeles, before going to the U.S.N Training Station at San Diego.

On Wednesday, July 7, I rode a Greyhound bus to San Diego to report for duty. I went to the information booth at the Plaza to get directions to the address on my papers. The Federal building was only a few blocks to walk. I found the Navy section of the building, presented my papers to a Navy officer, and was sworn in the Navy. The officer called a sailor to drive me to the training station. I had forgotten about the radio program. I was given a bunk for the night. We asked the barrack's guard a lot of questions. The guard was friendly and enjoyed telling us what to expect in the weeks to come.

The next day we were issued our clothing, and assigned to a new company, 254. I heard the Los Angeles recruits talking about the radio program. I had missed it for some reason. I really wasn't interested in the radio program. There were so many things to learn about the Navy. The next three weeks were the busiest time of my life. The first morning we took too much time getting dressed. We had problems lacing our leggings. The company commander gave orders to the guard on the morning watch to call all hands at 0430 until we became more familiar with getting dressed in our uniforms. Reveille was at 0500, but the new recruits needed more time. I was lonesome and homesick for awhile, starting a new life, with new surroundings and new friends. We were getting our first taste of military training. It was hard at first because it was new, nothing like my civilian life.

We were in the receiving unit for three weeks without liberty being granted. This three weeks was the hardest part of our training. During this period of detention we got our vaccinations. We drilled and marched for hours, washed our clothes and rolled them for sea bag inspection. We also had to keep our quarters immaculate. We burned so much energy that we craved chocolate candy bars. We had four hours guard

duty at night. We also had classes and lectures and if we fell asleep in class, we were given extra duty. We were exhausted, it was almost impossible for us to stay awake in class. After three weeks we got our first liberty on Saturday from 1200 to 2400.

Since I didn't qualify as a Navy swimmer I had to stay until three to take my swimming lessons. Dad came to San Diego to visit with me on my first liberty. We also visited with Uncle Jenk, Aunt Lottie, and Penn. Dad, Penn and I went to Mission Beach amusement park, and rode the roller coaster. The time passed quickly and it was soon time to report back to the training station. The fact that Dad came to visit was a big boost to my morale.

After the first three weeks, I learned my drills so boot camp was easier. I was also getting used to the regulations. I qualified as a swimmer and jumped off a forty foot tower. I was now in pretty good physical condition. I gained both weight and muscle. Dad and Mona moved up to San Jose for the rest of the summer to get out of the Imperial Valley heat.

My company only got seven weeks training. We were needed in the Southwest Pacific. The seven weeks of training passed fast. I was glad to complete my training.

Only the Navy personnel living five hundred miles, or less from San Diego were eligible for leave. The men from a distance of more than five hundred miles were very disappointed. At least half of our company were from Texas and Tennessee. I was glad that I lived less than five hundred miles from San Diego because I got five days leave plus two days travel time. Our Navy needed us to man the ships at sea.

I was disappointed when Dad and Mona moved to northern California. I expected to go back to Brawley when I got my leave. I had a lot of friends I wanted to have some fun with. Brawley was near San Diego and I didn't care to spend my leave time traveling up and down the state of California. I had received a letter from Dad while they visited Mona's Aunt Dora Mae at Centerville. I found Dora Mae's residence with little trouble, as Centerville was a very small place. Centerville is no longer listed as a California town at this writing. I found Laverne, Dora's fourteen year old daughter at home. Laverne told me the last she had heard, Marvin was working in a cannery at Dakota. I hitch hiked to Dakota, but Dad no longer worked there. I had to go back to Dora's to spend the night. I had known the family at Dickens, Texas. I was told that Dad and Mona at one time were staying with Mona's Uncle

Grover Adams, at a farm labor camp, in a field next to the Winchester Mystery House at San Jose. I was ready to give up any hope of finding Dad in the Bay Area. I would try to find Grover Adams at San Jose, hoping he knew the whereabouts of Dad and Mona. If Grover couldn't help me, I would go to Brawley, where I had friends.

The next morning was Sunday. I hitchhiked to San Jose, asked directions to the Mystery House. I walked several blocks, when I saw our 1937 Ford meeting me. I waved my arms, shouted, then Dad recognized me. Andy Adams, Mona's cousin was driving the car. I had finally got lucky. Andy Adams was road testing the car, after working on the brakes. I got in the car, and rode a short distance to the camp. Dad told me he and Mona were ready to leave for Brawley. This was great news, if I had been an hour later, I would have missed connections with them. I was glad to see Stanley, now walking all over the place. I don't remember now where we spent the night. We arrived at Brawley the next day. I was on the day four of my seven day leave. I sure wasn't ready to go back to duty. I knew I would soon go overseas and it would be a long time before I saw my family and friends again.

I wasn't at San Diego long before I was sent to

the Bay Area to the same area I had been on leave. I was sent to the U.S. Naval Personnel Distribution Center in Pleasanton, California. We had very few duties, good food, and liberty every other night. However, I only got liberty twice. On my first liberty, I went to Hayward. I didn't have any money in my pocket. I had money on the books, but couldn't get paid because I was waiting for transportation to Australia. On my second liberty I went to visit Dora Mae Choate and her daughters. The next morning, a young Baptist minister gave me a ride. His wife and two little daughters were with him. The minister and his wife were very pleasant and friendly. I told them that I was going overseas very soon. I didn't know that very day I was going aboard ship. When he stopped to let me out of the car, he asked if I would like to pray with he and his wife for the war to end soon. I told the minister, that I would be glad to pray with them. The clergyman prayed for my safe return to my family, and that I always have faith in God. It was a good feeling to meet this man and his family, not being sure of my future.

When I returned to my barracks, I was told that I had been paged on the public address system. I hadn't stayed over liberty, as I had about two hours before I

had to sign in. I reported to the duty petty officer, who informed me that I was on a sea draft list, that to be ready as soon as possible, that we were going aboard a troop ship, ready to set sail to the Southwest Pacific. We loaded in several buses, singing and joking, ready for action and adventure. While waiting for a boat to take us to the troop ship, some of the sailors started a crap game. While standing in line to go aboard the boat, a sailor, not on the sea draft, told me and some other sailors that he would mail letters for us, if we quickly wrote a note home. I wrote Dad a note to tell him I was standing in line to go aboard a boat to take me to my ship, that I was being sent to the southwest Pacific.

That evening we boarded the Willard A. Holbrook, a U.S. Army transport ship loaded with Army troops, and only three hundred Navy personnel, excluding the armed guard that was assigned to the ship. The ship was really crowded. Some salty sailors who had been in the Navy for a long time were in my quarters. The Salts had been to submarine school, and were going to man submarines where needed. I had a lot of respect for the experienced sailors, who were nice enough to me and the other men just out of boot camp. We learned to talk salty.

We had little to do on the troop ship, but keep our quarters as clean as possible. The troops played cards, and passed their days at sea watching the ocean waves. We watched the porpoise jump. We had some good boxing matches. On September 24, we crossed the equator, on this date I was initiated into the mysteries of the deep. The ocean was calm for most of the voyage. We had one day of rough and stormy weather. I didn't get seasick, but many were not so lucky.

After eighteen days at sea we saw the coast of Australia. We were greeted by waving Aussies. We docked at Brisbane, Australia on Sunday, October 3. We slept in an empty warehouse on a cot issued to us. I was given liberty the first night, but I had no money.

I went to the amusement park, where I was surprised to hear recorded American music and singers. The first record I heard was Gene Autry singing "Blueberry Hill".

Its a small world! The Aussies spoke their English, but I couldn't understand them at first. Most of the people liked American movies better than English. There was no Coca Cola, or hamburgers to buy. I didn't have any money, so I didn't get to try their fish and chips, or their sarsaparilla.

I was not at Brisbane long before I was assigned

to U.S.S SC-748, a Sub Chaser. When Shirley Holdren and I went to the dock to report for duty, we were told the ship had sailed for Cairns, Australia. We were sent by train to Cairns to catch our ship.

Shirley Holdren was put in charge of our travel orders, also our money for food. Holdren was from Roanoke, Virginia. For some reason he was not very friendly on the train. I had missed a work party at Brisbane, and was verbally reprimanded by a petty officer, and I got a little wise in our exchange of words. The petty officer must have told Holdren, that I might cause trouble for him, to give me no privileges, that I was a wise guy. Holdren thought because he was put in charge of our transportation detail, that he had to show his authority. Holdren didn't give me money for food. He would get off at stops along the way to get something to eat, and sometimes drink a beer, without giving me any money. I hadn't had any money since I left San Diego. If I had known Holdren was given money for me, I would have probably fought him for my share. The train was slow and crowded. The passengers were Army and Navy, both Americans and Australian servicemen.

Some of the train passengers were civilians. I remember a mother and two pretty teenage daughters who

looked like twins boarding the train at Townsville and going to Cairns. The mother was not too happy about the Yanks occupying their country. She believed the U.S. government would take over Australia, because the Australian government would never be able to pay their war debt. I told the woman that I was sure the Yanks would leave their country as soon as the war was over.

Just before we arrived at Cairns, Holdren gave me my share of the money. He told me to take the money and spend it any way I liked, but I would have liked to have had it for the trip. Holdren and I later were to become the best of friends. I soon forgot about my first impression of him. I never asked him why he had been so hostile on the train.

When we arrived at Cairns, we discovered that our sea bag and hammock were not on the train. All of our possessions were in our sea bag, except the undress blue uniform we were wearing. A sailor drove us to the U.S.N. repair base dock, where the S.C. 748 was docked.

The ship was small, 110 feet long. The Captain and crew were friendly. The skipper told us that he had just had two new men report for duty, that we would probably be reassigned. The bos'n mate told the skipper that he needed us on deck, to try to keep us. The skipper said, "I will try to keep them on board".

However, we were soon reassigned to Commander Escort and minecraft squadron, service force, Seventh Fleet. Holdren and I were assigned to boat crews. At first we cleaned our boat and learned to tie and secure them. The chief bos'n mate told us that we had a lot of seamanship to learn, and to learn fast. There were three men on a boat: the coxswain was in charge of the boat, the motor machinist was the mechanic, and the bow hook, and a seaman who tied and untied the boat lines by using a boat hook to pull the boat alongside a ship or dock. I learned boat seamanship, rules of the road, and how to keep the boat in shipshape. My coxswain was Marvin Murvine, a big burly young man from Ohio. Murvine was a good coxswain, a good worker, who knew a lot of seamanship. He was a good instructor. I had respect for Murvine since he was placed in authority over me, respect was essential, but I didn't like him. I wasn't the only one, none of the other sailors liked him, either.

One day at work on the docks at Cairns, Murvine made Chester and Cunningham angry. Everyone but Murvine knew the two Tennessee boys were going to confront Murvine that night. Cunningham called Murvine outside, Chester pinned Murvine's arms behind him, while Cunningham, the smaller of the two, almost beat

him to death while many of us watched. The next morning, Murvine told his superior, the chief bos'n mate, that he didn't know who beat him. He thought he better forget the incident. Murvine was a loud mouthed braggart, but didn't deserve such a beating. After I went aboard the Otis, Delbert Whitehead was the coxswain on my boat. Whitehead became my best friend in the Navy. After many trips to the Cairns rail road baggage station, Holdren and I got our lost seabag and hammock. We now had our uniforms, and could take liberty in Cairns. The Disbursing Officer got my back pay for me. I now had a good sum of money on the books after drawing a few dollars to go on liberty. I didn't take liberty often. Cairns was a crowded town, more military personnel than the original population. The pubs were standing room only. It was almost impossible to get a date.

One night six or seven of us went on liberty together. We knew how to get something to drink after the pubs closed and on Sundays. A rather attractive woman about thirty years old known as "Motorcycle Mary" would ride her motorcycle near American sailors. If we wanted a bottle or two, we would wave, and Mary would approach us and take our orders for most any kind of booze we liked. In fifteen minutes, Mary would deliver

our orders. We paid double, but got what we wanted.

"Motorcycle Mary " was reliable.

On this occasion the guys were short of money, and asked me if I would put a little extra in the pot to buy a quart of rum and gin. I agreed, but didn't want to be taken advantage of by older and experienced men.

We got our money together and waved to "Motorcycle Mary" She came to take our orders. Mary met us at a park with the two bottles. We sat in the park and passed the bottles. I was taking big drinks from the bottles because I was greedy and was determined to get my share. In a short time I was drunk. Up till then, I had drank very little. My buddies were feeling good and they decided to go dancing. I was barely able to stand so the guys helped me back to the Red Cross center. They put me in the back of a liberty truck and told the driver to see that I got back to the docks. The truck driver took me to my quarters, where I started giving everyone a bad time. The guys wanted to sleep, but I wouldn't shut up. Some of the men shoved me in the shower and turned the cold water on me. The cold water just put more life into me, making me belligerent. The police petty officer reported me to Lieutenant Mc Elroy, the Duty Officer, who had the guards take me to the sick bay where the pharmacists

mate gave me something to knock me out. It didn't work and the duty officer finally told the guards to lock me in the brig to sober up. The next morning, I was sure I would be punished for the disturbance I had caused. The brig guards asked me my locker number, so they could bring my dungarees. The guards told me that I had better hurry, or I would miss breakfast. I asked them if I was free to go to mess. The guards told me that Lieutenant Mc Elroy was not going to make a report, that I was young and couldn't handle my liquor. I was ashamed of my conduct, and decided it was time that I started acting like a man. From that day until now, when I drink alcoholic beverages, I try to take control of myself, never let the alcohol take control of me.

I wasn't in Cairns long until I met the Quick family, Mr. and Mrs. Quick and their four daughters. The oldest was twenty, Irene was eighteen, Joyce was sixteen, the youngest girl was twelve. I was interested in Irene and Joyce, but became more involved with Joyce. Bill Quick, the father was nice to me, but the girls all told me that their father hated Yanks. This fact didn't make me too comfortable at the Quick home. He was always friendly if I brought him American cigarettes. I was invited to one of the girl's

birthday party. I thought that I might have fun at an Aussie party. Many rowdy Aussie Army and Navy men were at the party, only two Yanks, a little army fellow, who played the piano, and I were included. The girls and the women were very friendly, but the men decided that I had to go. One big soldier started making unfriendly remarks. At first I thought it was a misunderstanding, and tried to explain. Then a sailor started picking a fight. The next thing I knew I had many against me. I knew I had better leave as soon as possible. There was no way I could come out ahead in this situation. I had to take some verbal abuse, but didn't get beaten by some Crocodile DunDee.

Whitehead and I soon got orders to report aboard the U.S.S. Otis, anchored at Milne Bay, New Guinea. We went on a drydock towed by a seagoing tug. The dry dock had been towed from the east coast of the U.S.A. to Australia. The friendly dry dock crew had been at sea a long time. The skipper, a warrant officer, was a grouchy little man, old to be in the Navy even in wartime. There were approximately a dozen of us on the dry dock for transportation to New Guinea. We had little to do. The warrant officer expected the petty officers of the dry dock to keep us busy. We crossed the Coral Sea following the Great Barrier Reef; the sea

was rough and bouncing on a flat bottom dry dock which made the voyage somewhat unpleasant. I didn't feel my best, but I didn't really get seasick.

The skipper told his petty officers that we were the laziest bunch of transient sailors he had ever had to deal with. The crew all liked the skipper, but didn't take his grumbling too seriously. They called him Sam. One of the transient sailors was a little Greek from New York. He was a good singer who claimed he knew Frank Sinatra personally, and had sang with Les Brown and his Band of Renown. We called him "The Singing Greek". The Greek was a ship's cook who had his rate taken away for threatening other cooks in the galley with a knife. After work the Greek would sing for us. The only other entertainment was a wind up phonograph that we enjoyed. I was glad when this voyage was over.

The next six months were busy. I had duty on two flag ships, the Otis and the Oglala. Whitehead and I worked long hours preparing for invasions, transporting personnel and supplies for the Escort and Minecraft ships under our command. Whitehead got his coxswain rate, and I made seaman first class. There was no liberty in New Guinea and the smaller islands. Sometimes we had beer parties on the islands.

One day Whitehead, the coxswain, Harvey Whitsett, the boat engineer and me, the bow hook of the boat, decided after securing the boat, to take a hike in the New Guinea jungles, which was off limits to any unarmed American or Australian military personnel.

We walked through thick vines and bamboo. We didn't intend to walk far into the jungle because we were unarmed and knew that Japanese soldiers who had survived the invasion were still hiding there. We saw some beautiful birds, including parrots, screaming, and flying from tall trees. We found a narrow trail, leading to a few abandoned huts made of coconut palm branches. We knew that we should turn around and return to the beach. The New Guinea natives would kill us as quick as the Japs. There were still cannibals in parts of New Guinea. While walking the trail, we heard strange voices, almost like singing coming from the jungle. Three natives with long machete knives suddenly appeared on the trail. The natives were chopping the underbrush to keep the trail clear. The natives were startled when they saw us, and immediately stopped singing, or talking in cadence. It was hard to tell by their expressions if the natives were mad or frightened. We didn't know what to do. We were just frozen in our tracks on a narrow trail, unarmed, facing

three New Guinea natives, maybe head hunters, with long knives. The natives kept coming toward us, and passed very close to us with the strangest expressions on their faces. Needless to say, we got out of the jungle and back to the beach.

Sometimes our mail would follow us for months. While I was on the U.S.S Otis, I received a big stack of mail that was sent to Australia and forwarded to the ship. I hadn't heard from home in a long time. One letter from home informed me that I had a baby sister, named Carolyn. Mona had mentioned while I was on leave at Brawley, that she was expecting a baby.

After six months I was put in charge of a LCVP, Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel boat. The thirty six foot ramp boat, powered by a two-hundred-fifty horse power diesel engine was designed to land troops, Jeeps, and other supplies on the beaches. I was the coxswain, but didn't get the coxswain rate until I had been operating the boat for months. I was responsible for the lives of many. We had to battle storms, darkness, and coral reefs that would rip gaping holes in the plywood bottoms of the boats. One dark night, I ran aground on a coral reef, wrecking the bottom of my boat. The boat was so badly damaged it couldn't be repaired. My next boat was a newer model with power

steering, which was a great improvement. I was also caught in some terrible storms, my boat heavy-laden with frightened personnel. I was helpless when the boat lost power. After the storms, harbor boats would rescue us, and tow us to safety. I was lucky that my boat always stayed afloat.

The versatile LCVF was used for so many different purposes. I will name some of the duties I performed while a LCVF coxswain: I towed targets for gunnery practice, my boat was used as a tugboat to tow and turn small ships. I carried the mail, took beer parties to the recreation islands, and movie parties to the beach, and returned them to their ships when the movies were over. I carried supplies to the smaller ships, and ran a water taxi from one island to another, landed troops, and searched for, and retrieved bodies from the water.

My boat was also used as a hearse to take the dead to the Army Quartermasters for embalming. I really got tired at times, getting very little sleep. We had to keep our boats in perfect condition at all times. We had boat inspections to check the boat equipment. Each boat was outfitted with two circular life buoys, one aft and one forward, neatly secured where readily detachable, life jackets readily accessible, and the complete equipment of a power boat. The paint on the

boat must be in good condition. We made landings for the inspecting officers. I always got good grades.

I was surprised when I got a letter from my sister Rae. I recognized her handwriting, but noticed on the return address that her name had changed to Merridy Rae Flucard. I knew before I opened the letter that my little sister had married. I was shocked, to say the least. I thought she was too young to get married. I didn't know her husband, John Flucard, who was in the Army. I could only hope that he was a good man, and pray that my sister would be happy. John was soon sent to the Pacific. John and I were on the Admiralty Islands at one time, but didn't know it until after the war was over. John and Rae celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary, June 19, 1994.

I learned a lot in the Navy about people from different parts of the United States. I also learned about the customs of many nationalities. We kidded each other about different customs, also the city and state we were from, all in good humored fun. I had friends from all parts of the United States, and many ethnic groups that still retained the customs, language, or social views of their parents. We had a lot of fun together, and never got angry at each other while kidding around. We were very busy, but we did

occasionally get to see some good entertainers. I really enjoyed Jack Benny's show, he had a lot of celebrities with him. Irving Berlin also had a good show. We saw Gene Tunney, ex heavyweight champion, and also some current contenders of that time, and some great boxing matches on the beaches. We played softball. I saw Phil Rezuto, the little Yankee shortstop. I also saw some good movies. I have some good experiences and memories of World War II, also a lot of bad. I am glad I served. I learned to do what was asked of me, promptly, to the best of my ability.

I qualified for leave at Sydney, Australia for rest and recreation. I had heard good reports concerning leave at Sydney. I decided to request the ten day leave, plus travel time. Whitehead told me that he wasn't going to take the ten days at Sydney, that he would soon be going home to Elkhart, Indiana on thirty day rehabilitation leave. Whitehead had been overseas longer than I and would soon qualify for leave Stateside. When Whitey was convinced that I was going to take leave with, or without him, he decided to go on leave with me. We only had to wait two days for air transportation on a C-47. We had seen nothing but jungles for months. We departed New Guinea at approximately 10:00. We flew across the Coral Sea to

Australia. We refueled at Townsville. We were back in civilization again. We landed in Brisbane at dusk. The lights of the big city were sure inviting. We rented a room at the American Red Cross. The next morning we had cereal, fresh fruit and milk for breakfast, a great treat for us.

The next day we bought a train ticket to Sydney. We had to tip the porter about \$15.00 to ride. Sydney was a big city, with many things to do. We met a boatswain's mate second class named Dunne on the plane, that had been to Sydney for ship repair after the battle of Midway. He knew a nice little hotel where he had stayed two years before. The lady who ran the hotel, and her daughter remembered Dunne. They pronounced his name Don. Later Dunne met a buddy he knew on Manus, one of the Admiralty Islands, named Freeman. We became a foursome. Whitehead, Freeman, and I were coxswains, third class petty officers, Dunne was a boatswain's mate second class, a second class petty officer that had been in the Navy about six years. We all wore the eagle and crossed anchors on the right arm of our uniform. We met some pretty girls, rode a ferry boat to the zoo and amusement park. We took the girls out to eat and went to movies almost every night. We had more money than the sailors who were stationed at

Sydney. When we had a drink, we pulled out six months pay. We had been unable to spend our money for months. Just before our leave was up, Whitehead, Dunne, and I got in a fight with some U.S.N Navy sailors. A big sailor knocked Whitey down and blacked his eye. A plate glass window was broken. The men we were fighting ran. We had to stay and take care of Whitey. Dunne, Whitey, and I had to pay thirty three Australian pounds to replace the glass. I don't remember what caused the fight. Whitehead made a fast recovery. The ten days passed fast. I spent a lot of money, but have never regretted taking the leave at Sydney. This was one of the most enjoyable events of my life.

During the summer of 1944, rumors were flying that we were soon to invade the Philippines. We were anxious to recover the Philippines from the Japanese. The Japanese had occupied the islands for nearly three years. The Philippine invasion would be one of the turning points of the war. Until 1944 the progress of the war had been slow. The D day invasion in Europe, and some key invasions in the Pacific were indications that the enemies were taking a pounding.

Four U.S.Army divisions came ashore on October 20, 1944. This was the first American landing on the

Philippines to take back the islands from the Japanese who occupied Leyte in early 1942. What followed was history's biggest battle of the seas. U.S. forces destroyed the Japanese fleet within days, but it took six months and nearly 4,000 American lives to gain complete control of the island.

The news was good from Europe, however, and our spirits were high in the Pacific. However, there was much left to be done before this war was won. We soon started planning for the invasion of Luzon. The mammoth assault forces headed back to Navy supply bases. Many ships of all types and sizes took on supplies at Manus Island. The boat crews worked day and night to supply our escort and minecraft fleet for the landing at Lingayen Gulf.

Early in 1945, I was qualified to submit my request for rehabilitation leave. This day was a day I had waited a long time for. The request was a start, many men that I knew had been waiting for months since requesting rehabilitation leave.

Joe Damalta, a boatswain's mate first class had been overseas much longer than Whitehead and was still waiting. I had known Damalta at Cairns. Joe Damalta had been on a submarine chaser since we were at Cairns. He was now assigned to us awaiting orders for

rehabilitation.

Joe Damalta was from New York, a good gambler that usually won. He had more money than the rest of us. Joe had been in the Navy during the early depression years, and made enough gambling to buy a night club in Panama, where in 1933 he was discharged. Damalta hit a streak of bad luck, and was broke after a year, then returned to New York. Joe was my boss, but left most of the leadership up to Whitehead and me. Joe Damalta was a street smart hustler that knew how to pick men under him that could do his job as well or better than he, relieving him of a lot of responsibility. Joe was a likable man, who you couldn't help but admire. He didn't have much education, but was very neat and trim. He looked a lot like Caesar Romero, but not as large.

I decided to take the tests for boatswain's second class. I told Whitehead he should also take the tests. He told me he would be taking his leave soon, that he would be stateside before he could complete the tests and go before the rating board. I finished my tests and soon got the rate. Whitehead and Damalta were still there awaiting orders, as I was. Delbert Whitehead was older and more experienced than I. I knew he would be a better boatswain's mate, but I had the rate and was now over him. If Whitey had taken the tests, he also

would have been promoted. After the landings on Luzon, approximately half of us who were waiting for rehabilitation got their orders. Damalta, Whitehead, and I were not on the list. I was glad that my friends were going home. I was also disappointed that we all didn't get our orders. The fact that many of us on the waiting list were going stateside made me optimistic that we would all be leaving soon. I wrote home and told my family that I expected to see them soon. However, I had to stay longer than I expected. We got our orders, but not what we expected. We were all transferred aboard the U.S.S. Indus at Manus and sent to the China Sea, Luzon, and Manila. We would be at sea a long time. I now thought of going home as something in the distant future. I didn't like the lonely watches at night, as we floated along the Philippine Archipelago, passing island after island still held by the Japanese. The fleet speed advance was slow as ships of all types headed toward Manila Bay. We had to be alert at all times, not knowing what to expect in the still of the night. We had to keep a close watch for ships in the fleet that drifted too close to our ship in the crowded sea.

Manila had been devastated by bombs. Manila Bay was full of sunken Japanese ships. There was a stench

of death still in the city. Manila's streets were crowded with people. Many hustlers dealing in the black market had a lot of money. Ten year old boys were carrying hundreds of Philippine pesos. At that time, two pesos were equal to one dollar. Japanese invasion money covered the streets and sidewalks, now worthless trash. The black market dealers were trying to buy our watches, rings, clothing, or anything we would sell them, offering good prices. There was great demand for American merchandise. The boys were good gamblers, always ready for a crap game with Joe Damalta. We didn't eat their food or drink the water, because the Japs had poisoned much of the food and water. We had to stand in long lines at the American Red Cross to get a drink of water, the only water considered safe to drink in Manila.

I didn't get liberty the first day that liberty was granted. My shipmates came back telling of their experiences. They found wine, women and song, something they hadn't experienced in months, or in some cases, years. There was a lot of mail for the Indus since we had been at sea a long time. The big news was that all of us waiting orders for rehabilitation leave, got our orders. We all shook each other's hand yelling we are going stateside! The next day I got liberty.

Manila had been known as the Gem of the Pacific, and the Pearl of the Orient, but was now all bombed and burned out. There were no stores open, just people on the streets buying and selling. I did enjoy my leave, though. The natives spoke good enough English to communicate with us. The Army troops were selling Japanese swords and other war souvenir items to the sailors. The Army and the Marines got all the good stuff before the Navy went ashore. I thought about buying a sword, but decided not to give fifty dollars for one. However, I could get five hundred dollars for a nice Japanese sword today.

All of us that got our stateside orders were sent to a transient base at Pasay, a suburb of Manila, to wait transportation across the Pacific to San Francisco. At Pasay I had great duty as a master at arms. Boatswain's mates are usually given master at arms assignments at transient bases. I was over work parties, I wrote chow passes, assigned new personnel to barracks or tents. I sat at a desk and gave orders.

I enjoyed my short stay at Pasay. I had great duty, liberty every night. There were night clubs and bars in walking distance of the Navy base. Teen age girls gathered around the base from dawn until dusk every day. I made a few dollars every day selling to

the Filipinos and spent most of it every night. I was in no hurry to leave Pasay.

Soon we were sent aboard a troop transport ship. We stopped off at Leyte gulf and picked up some very sick and badly wounded troops. Some died at sea during our voyage to San Francisco. We brought back Filipino women and their children who had married U.S. servicemen before the war. Some of the servicemen had been killed or were prisoners of war. We also had a lot of just released prisoners of war on board. Some had Filipino wives and children before the war that had been reunited after three years in Japanese prison camps and were returning with their families. We were at Tacloban for about two days.

Glad to be underway again, our next scheduled stop was Pearl Harbor. While aboard the ship all Navy passengers were assigned to a work party that usually took only two hours to finish. The public address paged Joe Damalta to take charge of a work party. Damalta was involved in a crap game, and wouldn't report for duty. Joe knew that as a transient on the ship, that someone else would be called, rather than try to find him. The next name called to take charge of the work party was Yarbrough, boatswain's mate second class. I was to report to one of the supply

rooms. I was put in charge of the work party by one of the ship's storekeepers.

I was in charge of a lot of petty officers first class. When Damalta didn't report, they looked for another boatswain's mate on the muster list to take charge. I was a second class petty officer giving orders to machinist, and electrician first class petty officers. The petty officers first class complained, They were right to do so. I told the first class petty officers that it was the ship's supply petty officer that assigned me. The first class petty officers complained to the ship's storekeeper, but he left me in charge. I assigned all my men to jobs. After the second day the men quit complaining. I had no trouble with the men. Actually a boatswain's mate was often put in charge of all different tradesmen, but not over petty officers of a higher rate. In the old Navy a boatswain's mate was one of only a few that wore his rate on the right arm. The Navy taught that a boatswain's mate was a jack of all trades, and a master of them all. I sure had a lot to learn to measure up to their standards. Boatswain's mates were not popular with seamen or other petty officers.

Joe Damalta won a big sum of money on the ship, but after a few days at sea, he lost all of his money.

There were some slick gamblers on the ship. Joe borrowed some money from me, but he also lost the money he borrowed. He told me that my money was unlucky, because he was afraid of losing it. He later took charge of a crap game, counting money, paying the winners, making change, and taking a percentage cut for his services. Joe was good at counting money, and refereeing crap games. In a short time, Joe was able to get back in the big games. Joe was a good gambler, but he was not the only good gambler aboard the ship. One old master sergeant who had been a prisoner of war acted dumb, but he was dumb like a fox. Damalta didn't trust the old sergeant, and watched him like a hawk. The old man had three years back pay as a master sergeant. He was married to a young Filipino woman, and had a five year old son. The sergeant's little son often came to the crap game to tell his father that his mother needed him for one thing or another. Most of the time, the sergeant was a big winner, a good time to quit while ahead. When the sergeant quit the game a big winner, the other gamblers were furious. I'm sure the old sergeant won thousands of dollars. Joe Damalta told me that he was four thousand dollars ahead at the end of the voyage. He paid me all the money he borrowed.

We were at Pearl Harbor for a short time. I didn't hear anyone complain. We were anxious to get underway and to complete our voyage to San Francisco. The first night after leaving Pearl Harbor, we could see the active volcano Kilauea, the pit of eternal fire, light up the sky. It was a beautiful sight I will never forget. The next beautiful sight was the Golden Gate Bridge.

We cheered at first sight of the Golden Gate, all of us were on deck cheering and celebrating. We would soon set foot on good old California soil. Whitehead and I were some of the first to disembark, while the big band welcomed us home. I don't remember much about the music, I had my mind on something else.

We were sent to Treasure Island, where our leave and new assignments were processed, and were given some inoculations. We were told that all the processing would take two or three days. At Treasure Island we had a large area where the transient sailors could shower, shave, and were assigned a locker. We had no bed, or quarters assigned to us, unless we requested a billet. Everyone was anxious to get to the streets of San Francisco. We were free to go on liberty, and report back the next morning.

While getting dressed in this area of showers and

lockers, I lost my wallet containing two one hundred dollar bills. The Navy dress blues had shallow pockets, making it easy to lose wallets and combs. I didn't miss my wallet until Whitey and I were walking to a bus stop. When I missed my wallet, I told Whitey.

He was very upset with me for my carelessness. Whitey encouraged me to go back to the shower and locker area, and report my loss. I was sure I would never see that wallet, or the money again. I actually told Whitey that I would borrow some money from him until I could draw my pay I had on the books. I thought it a waste of time to go back to the lockers. Whitey encouraged me to at least try. Whitey and I walked back to the lockers and described my wallet and contents to the sailor at the public address desk. In a short time the man that found my wallet returned it to the podium, money and all. He refused to take a reward. I was feeling much better when we caught the bus.

We walked the streets of San Francisco, staying on Market Street most of the time. We really enjoyed being back in the United States. Whitey and I didn't get a room that night, we finally went to an all night movie theater. I really was tired the next morning. I had lost a lot of weight the last two months. The next night, Whitey and I stayed at the Red Cross. I was too

sick to walk the streets that night; Whitey was eager to go out that night, and I begged him to go, but he refused to go, and stayed with me. I was feeling better the next morning. I knew I needed rest, and was anxious to go home. Our leave papers were now completed. Many of us had been together for a long time and it was hard to go our separate ways, but we were happy to be going home after two years. We all shook hands and took leave of each other. These men were all my friends, but Whitey and I were more like brothers. When one of us made a mistake, the other was quick to let him know about it. When one of us was down, the other was there to give a lift. Whitey was short of money so I loaned him money to get back to Elkhart, Indiana. I had often loaned Whitey money.

The only shipmate to travel with me on the Greyhound bus was James Eley, a Texan. When we arrived at Los Angeles at 8:00 in the morning, I checked the schedule to Brawley. The next bus to Brawley was at noon. I told Eley that I was going to hitchhike the two hundred miles to Brawley. I took a taxi to the highway that would take me to Brawley. The cabby couldn't make change for the large bill I gave him. I should have got the bill changed before taking the taxi. The cabby told me to forget the fifty cent fare, that the ride

was on the house. In my wallet was a Philippine Peso, so I gave him that. I told the cabby the peso was worth fifty cents, that he could exchange the peso at any bank. He thanked me, and told me he thought he would keep the peso as a souvenir. I soon got a ride to San Bernardino with a lady in a big Packard. She appeared to be wealthy. At San Bernardino a very nice family going back to Oklahoma, gave me a ride to Brawley. Everyone was patriotic and very nice to the servicemen returning from overseas. We were treated like royalty. I beat the bus schedule by probably six hours or more. When I got to Brawley, I walked downtown before going home.

Brawley looked the same, but I didn't see anyone I knew. I wanted to look my best before going home. When I went into a washroom to freshen up, I looked in the mirror and saw a tired looking young man. I was not pleased with my appearance.

I was almost afraid to go home, I was afraid that something might be wrong, that I hadn't been told about. And I had hoped to look more physically fit than I appeared.

I took a taxi to the address where my folks lived. They had moved at least twice since I had left Brawley. It wasn't exactly like going home. I

surprised Mona, when she opened the door. Dad was at work. Stan had made a big change, he now had his little friends he played with in the neighborhood. I saw Carolyn for the first time. I thought she was a very pretty baby girl. When Dad came home, he was also surprised to see me. I could tell that Dad had gained a few pounds, and looked older. Dad barely recognized me, he told me later. Rae and Grandmother lived in San Diego. Royce was visiting them. That evening, when demonstrating a new injector razor, I cut my finger, the slight cut didn't bleed much, but I fainted. It was the only time in my life that I ever fainted. I had been home only a few hours, I was embarrassed, and Dad was very concerned about my health. That night Royce came home with a guitar that Grandmother had bought him. He had learned to play it and sing. Dad liked to play the violin and was really proud of his thirteen year old son. I was proud of him too. My health had deteriorated, but I was home again. My spirits were high. I thought a little rest would mend my health.

I saw only a few of my friends, most of them were in the military services. The war in Europe was over.

Leonard Thompson, who had lived on the Yarbrough farm, now lived in Brawley, and was back from Europe. He had

fought in the "Battle of the Bulge". Most of the girls had married. I did meet a woman who was older than me who chased me. I liked her, but she was married to a man in the Army. I didn't have much fun on my leave. Things had changed, but I had changed, too. I preferred to stay at home, or go places with my family.

I was also very nervous and I was thirty pounds underweight. I went to the family doctor, who told me that I needed to be hospitalized.

After I rested a while, I was anxious to visit my sister and grandmother in San Diego. Dad, Mona, Royce, Stan, Carolyn, and I rode a bus to San Diego. Rae met us at the bus depot, she was now a beautiful young lady. Grandmother was at work; she now had a government job, working for the Navy at North Island. When she came home from work, I was happy to see that she looked so well, even younger than when I had last seen her. We had a great visit with Uncle Jenk, Aunt Lottie, and Penn. Penn had grown a foot in height since I had last seen him.

Carl and Lorene and their little daughter, Minnie Louise now lived at San Diego. Jerome was now out of the Army, working for the Navy on the Hawaiian Islands.

Our relatives showed us around San Diego, I appreciated the cooler climate.

The days were passing fast, my health had not improved much. Dad wrote a letter to the commanding officer at Camp Elliott at San Diego, where I was soon to report for reassignment. Dad stated in the letter to the base commander that I needed medical attention before I was reassigned to duty. I told Dad that I thought his letter would get results.

When it was time to report to duty, Dad went to San Diego with me. I had to report for duty on Sunday, and was told we could have liberty but to report back Monday morning. I went back to spend the day at Uncle Jenk's home, where Dad was still visiting. Everyone was surprised to see me back so soon.

Monday morning, I reported to sick bay, and asked to see a doctor. The Navy doctor gave me a physical examination and sent me to the Navy hospital at Balboa Park, next to the San Diego Zoo. My father's letter was not needed, however, the commanding officer wrote Dad to inform him that I had been hospitalized, as he had requested. Some of my relatives came to visit every weekend. My cousin, Gilbert Stephenson, who lived in McAdoo, Texas, when I lived there as a small boy, was at the hospital with me. Gilbert was now living at Fort Worth, Texas.

I had read in the newspapers about a secret

weapon. I didn't think much about it. I was sure we had another year of war with Japan, that the invasion of Japan would be the biggest battle of the Pacific. The Japanese Navy had been permanently crippled in the battle for Leyte, but the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa proved the Japs had a lot of fight left in them.

President Truman asked the Japanese to surrender.

He told them the weapon was devastating. The Japanese didn't know how bad the weapon really was, and refused to surrender. After Hiroshima and Nagasaki were hit with the atomic bomb, the Japanese knew that they must surrender. The war that changed the world was over, and the world would never be the same. I was in the hospital and didn't celebrate the end of the war as many did.

Soon after the war was over, I started taking liberty. We could take liberty every night and on weekends. I visited with my sister and grandmother almost daily. We had parties and played records at Carl and Lorene's apartment. They lived in the same building as Grandmother. Rae lived in a house trailer in the same court. Uncle Jenk and Aunt Lottie lived near. I met some of Penn's friends. Penn and I did a lot of things together. My health was improving, but I

couldn't gain weight. I only weighed one hundred and thirty pounds. All of my relatives were concerned about my health. I was right at home at San Diego.

I was discharged from the Navy about two months after the war ended. I went to Tijuana two times after my discharge, before leaving San Diego. I went to Lodi to be near Dad.

The Imperial Valley heat, and the fact that there was little defense work available near the end of the war, made Dad decide to try working at farm labor. Ed and Sammie Adams had done quite well following the harvests. They told Dad and Mona that it was not difficult to make twenty five dollars a day field packing Tokay grapes in Lodi. Dad told me that if he and Mona together, could make twenty five dollars a day, that would be better than he had been earning. Mona encouraged Dad to give the grapes a try.

I rode the Santa Fe buses to Stockton. The Greyhound buses were on strike at the time. At Stockton I didn't wait for a bus to Lodi. I rode a city bus to Wilson Way, then hitchhiked to Lodi. I didn't have Dad's address. I remembered that they lived in a trailer court. I went to all the trailer courts that I could find, but was unable to locate my family. I decided that the next morning, I would go to

Lodi High School and get Royce to give me directions. My first night in Lodi I slept in a car near a gas station. The car appeared not to be in running condition. I was tired from the ride the night before.

That night we got a good rain, but I didn't know it until the next morning. I slept like a log in that old Chevy Coupe.

I went to Lodi High School and found Royce in the gymnasium. Royce was surprised to see me and he and I walked to George's Trailer Court. Dad and Mona couldn't work that day, due to the rain. Dad was cutting up deer meat that a friend had given him. That was the first deer meat that I ever eaten.

Dad had bought a small house trailer. There was really not enough room for me, but we all lived in the crowded little trailer. Houses and apartments were almost impossible to find. Dad had sold his car even though we needed a car to drive to work. I had about three hundred dollars. I also had mustering out pay due me. Dad and I walked all over the town of Lodi to find a car to buy. We only found three cars for sale.

I bought a car from L.G.Brown, a 1932 Chrysler Imperial coupe, a real gas guzzler. I traded a Gruen wrist watch for partial payment on the car.

I went to work with Dad and Mona cutting wine

grapes. This was a different kind of job, known as piece work. We got paid by the box, the harder we worked the more we earned. I knew there was no future in cutting grapes, but I made a few dollars a day, and provided my family with transportation.

Soon the grape harvest was over and Mona and Sammie went back to Texas to visit. They stayed until after Christmas. Royce was going to school. Dad and I couldn't get jobs. We had rain nearly every day. Dad and I talked about moving back to Brawley, where the winters were nice and sunny. I had planned to live at Brawley after the war, and wished I was there.

Penn traded his car for a Indian motorcycle and dropped out of San Diego State. I don't think his Dad approved of Penn's actions. Penn rode his motorcycle to Lodi and stayed with us. Penn took us everywhere on the motorcycle that winter. The Indian was cheap, but cold transportation. Penn and I rode to Stockton often, also once to Sacramento. We almost froze stiff, and I knew after that trip that motorcycle transportation in the winter was not for me.

Many veterans were at the employment office seeking jobs. I was encouraged to go to school. The Veterans Administration would pay me to go to school, also pay my tuition. I applied for the twenty dollars

a week veterans unemployment check. I was raised on a farm, so the man at the employment office told me that being an agriculture inspector would be a good job for me.

I was all set up to start classes at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo at the start of the next semester.

I met a high school sophomore that lived in George's Trailer Court. We were together every day, and talked about marriage after Delores finished high school. The Mehlhaff family were from South Dakota, who came to Lodi to spend the winter in a warmer climate. They also had friends and relatives that lived in Lodi. Mr. Mehlhaff bought a nice mobile home to live in while spending the winter in Lodi. They owned a farm in South Dakota, and would be going back to the farm in March. When it was time to go to college, I couldn't leave Delores. One reason was, she would be going back to South Dakota soon, and I wanted to be with her until she went home. I knew it would be a long time before I saw her again. When the Mehlhaffs' left Lodi in March, I was sure I would see Delores again. We corresponded for awhile, but I never did see her again. One mistake I made was not going back to school under the GI Bill of Rights.

I soon was satisfied at working on farms, picking fruit or working part time. I didn't have much ambition anymore. Also, most of my friends were farm workers. Farm workers were nice, hard working, law abiding people. Some days we did make good wages, but there were too many days that there wasn't any work. No work, no money.

I finally got to meet my brother-in-law, John Flucard. I liked John. He and Rae came to visit soon after John was discharged from the Army. John and Rae soon moved to Willows, California, where John worked at construction work. Rae was expecting her first child.

Rae bought a trailer while John was overseas. They didn't have a car to pull the trailer, and had to leave the trailer in San Diego. I traded the Chrysler for a 1935 Graham. John, Rae, and I drove the Graham to San Diego, and pulled the trailer back. We had to replace the trailer hitch and bumper at Anaheim, and later a cylinder head on the car, but we did enjoy a short visit with Grandmother and our other San Diego relatives. It was a hard trip for us and the little Graham.

When the baby girl was born, Royce and I rode a bus to Artois, where John and Rae lived to see our first niece. We found Rae and little Connie doing

fine. There was a big fire at Artois. A fire started in the huge grain tanks where John worked. John, Royce, and I were hired to fight the fire. We were paid well. The hot grain fire was hard to contain.

When there were no jobs available, Dad, Wendell Vandre and I would trade, buy and sell anything. We bought fruit, vegetables and chickens to peddle in Stockton. We went to the sales and bought cheap and often made a good profit. There were shortages, and a demand for any kind of merchandise after the war. Vandre was a character, we had a lot of fun, and some days, we made some money. Sometimes we found some jobs that paid good wages.

Vandre would often get work, and decide that he would rather do something else, like trading, and let Dad and I finish the job. We all went to work for a grape grower that wanted stakes driven, and the young grape vines tied to the stakes. After two days Vandre quit the job, leaving Dad and I to finish the job. The work was hard, but we had work for a while. I was able to save a few dollars. Whenever we needed help, we could always depend on Vandre to help us. He was a shade tree mechanic, who could keep a old car running by going to junk yards to find parts. If I had car trouble on the road, Vandre was always glad to help me

get my car home. A friend in need, is a friend indeed.

After the death of Mrs. George, Mr. George sold the trailer court to his step son, Ed Viel from South Dakota. Ed and Ida Viel had three children, Alice 17, Betty 14, and Sonny 12. Alice was almost as tall as me, and slender. Alice was of average looks, with a great personality. We were together every day after work. We would join other young couples and talk and have a lot of fun. I liked Alice, we dated some. I didn't have a good car, or much money to spend on dates. One night Alice and I went to a Lodi High football game in my old Graham. After the game the brakes froze, and we barely got back to the trailer court. I was embarrassed, to say the least.

Alice was a hard working girl, working at canneries, during summer vacation. She also worked at department stores after school and on weekends. Alice cleaned the lavatories and showers at the trailer court, and was always cheerful and happy. There were a lot of young bachelor war veterans that lived in the trailer court. We were all good friends. Some of the boys liked Alice, too, but I was sure that Alice was my girl, and that I had nothing to worry about. There were times when Alice would ask me to take her out. I would make some excuse, or at times I would refuse to

take her someplace, if I didn't want to go. After a while she started going out with other guys. We remained friends, and occasionally went out together. I had no claim on her, but I must confess, I didn't like Alice dating other men. I supported my Dad and family, and that was the main reason I never had much money to spend. I was in a rut.

One day two couples in a beautiful Oldsmobile club coupe with Oklahoma license plates moved in the trailer court. I soon got acquainted with the men, who were near my age. They were from Tulsa, Oklahoma. Bob Anglin was the owner of the car. I soon learned that Bob and La Wana were not married or involved. La Wana was a beautiful girl, and soon returned to Tulsa. Ray Vaughn and Mary were married. I liked Bob and Ray, we became good friends. Bob Anglin and I were single, and soon started double dating girls that lived in the trailer court.

Most of the young people that lived in the trailer court worked at the same fields and orchards. After the cherries were picked, we all went to Brentwood to pick apricots. We all went out together at nights. We had a lot of fun together. Bob and I liked to go to Stockton, where there were many things to do at night.

After school, or on weekends, Bob and I took the teen

age girls that lived in the trailer court all over. It was nice to have Bob's nice car to get around in and to have Bob Anglin as a friend.

Before coming to California, Bob Anglin had worked for a oil company in Columbia. Anglin had a good education, and earned a large salary. Bob had returned to Tulsa with a lot of money and bought the car, and other nice things. Ray Vaughn and Bob had grown up on the same block in Tulsa. Vaughn had lived in California for a short time and got Anglin interested in California. Bob was now broke, picking fruit for a living, but he did have his nice car, which he loaned to every guy who asked him. One of the guys wrecked the car. That cut out a lot of our fun, because the car was in the shop for more than a month. Bob had to send home for money. When the car was finally repaired, Bob's dad came to California and paid his expenses back to Tulsa. Bob and I had some good times together. I only knew him for a short time. I often think of him. I never saw Bob Anglin again. Ray Vaughn later saw Bob in Tulsa. Bob was manager of his dad's nursery.

After Bob Anglin went back to Tulsa, Ray Vaughn and I got a job knocking almonds. The work was hard climbing trees and beating branches. I was now in

better health and didn't mind the work. Vaughn had a wife, and decided that to ever get ahead, he must quit the farm work. We knew a young couple that lived in the trailer court, Joe and Wanda Crow, from Arkansas. Joe worked for the Navy at Rough and Ready Island. He told Ray about some of the benefits. Ray asked me if I was interested in taking the next day off and going to Rough and Ready and applying for a job with the federal government. I agreed so we told the farmer about our plans, and he told us he thought we should. Ray drove his little Willys coupe to the Navy base. We put in our applications, but didn't get hired on the spot. We went back to the almond knocking.

While I was knocking almonds, Uncle Minor, Aunt Bea, and my cousins, Wanda and Melvin came to California to visit relatives. Uncle Minor had been in bad health for years, suffering from inflammatory rheumatism. He weighed less than one hundred pounds. Uncle Minor had gone to many doctors during the fourteen years he had suffered with the disease. None of the treatments helped him. Uncle Minor decided with his health rapidly deteriorating, to go to California to visit his two brothers and one sister. Uncle Minor and his family spent the weekend with us at Lodi. We went on a picnic and Melvin did some fishing. On

Monday, I went to work before the family left for Texas. The last words my uncle told me was, " Son, save your money". It hurt me to see Uncle Minor in such bad health. For the first seven years of my life, only my mother and father were closer to me than Uncle Minor. I didn't expect to see him again.

Before the almond harvest was over, I received a notice in the mail to report to the Naval Annex at Rough And Ready Island. I was interviewed and hired to work as a stevedore. My starting pay was \$1.18 an hour. Most farm labor was \$1.00 an hour or less. Most of the stevedores were young war veterans who welcomed me aboard. I had a lot in common with my co-workers and I fit right in, making my new job easier for me. Two weeks later Ray Vaughn was hired as a stevedore. Vaughn and I rode to work with Joe Crow. Joe's 1934 Ford was much more dependable than my 1935 Graham, or Vaughn's 1935 Willys.

I liked my work better than most jobs I had held. The waterfront was cold in winter. I worked on the docks in the rain and wind for eight hours under the crane boom, loading barges. I was almost frozen stiff at the end of the day. I would back up to the heater for an hour after I got home from work, trying to thaw my body. In less than three months, my salary was

raised to \$1.24 an hour. My future looked brighter, but I hoped to someday own a business of my own.

I liked the men I worked with. We had a lot of fun talking baseball, football, hunting, and fishing. We also often bet on the games. Sometimes we competed in wrestling and weight lifting on the barges. We were equally divided between Blacks, Mexicans, and white stevedores. We were all friends, and worked well together. However, I didn't like some of the supervisors that would sneak around and try to catch us not working, or tell lies to get us in trouble. The supervisors would give some of the working men bad efficiency ratings, because they didn't like them personally. I always worked hard, I also tried to please my supervisors. For some reason, I was never promoted to supervisor. I thought I was more qualified than most of the stevedores.

Soon after I started working on the waterfront, Uncle Minor was hospitalized. Aunt Bea wrote Dad that his brother didn't have long to live. Uncle Jenk, Aunt LaVergne and Mable went to see their brother, but Dad was short of cash and didn't go. Aunt Bea wrote Dad after Uncle Minor's brother and two sisters returned home, that Minor wanted to see him. I helped Dad pay for the trip back to Texas. Dad spent most of his time

with his brother, to the end.

Uncle Minor told Dad just before he died that he had a dream, and that everything was bright and beautiful, you and I were farming large cotton plantations that joined. The cotton was tall and beautiful, also Marvin, your cotton crop was even better than mine. The two brothers enjoyed farming, and had been partners as young men. Minor was now a successful farmer. Dad had good health, but had probably given up hope at this stage of his life of ever being a successful farmer again. Dad really enjoyed farming.

The year 1948 was to be a better year. I had a decent job. I traded a small trailer house, and the 1935 Graham for equity in a 1941 Chevy club coupe convertible. The Chevy convertible was a nice car for a young single man. The big problem now was having enough money for dates.

In July we drove the Chevy to San Diego to visit Uncle Jenk and Aunt Lottie. Penn had recently been discharged from the Navy. The car was well loaded, Dad, Mona, Stan, Carolyn, John, Merridy Rae, Connie, Royce, and myself. The car developed an oil leak on the way to San Diego. We poured 33 Quarts of oil in the engine on the way to San Diego. We had a nice

visit at San Diego. John Flucard and Carl Gregory repaired the oil leak.

We had planned to see Aunt Lavergne and Uncle Charles at San Diego, who now lived in Arlington, Virginia. Aunt Lavergne had married Charles Schwer a few years earlier, and now worked for the federal government at Washington. We didn't see Aunt Lavergne and Uncle Charles at San Diego, because they were visiting Uncle Herman and Aunt Lucy Montgomery at Burbank, California. We did have a nice visit with them all on our way home. The Chevy only used one quart of oil on the way home. The trip was hard, six adults and three children in a club coupe. Dad and Mona decided to go to Empire to work in August, with Ed, Sammie, and Arless Adams. Royce also went with them to work. I had a steady job in Stockton, so I stayed in Lodi by myself. I had planned to attend the San Joaquin County Fair on Saturday. My brother Royce surprised me by coming back to Lodi on Friday. He missed me and his friends in Lodi, where he went to high school. I was glad to see my brother, after living alone.

Royce told me about a girl that he and the family had met in Empire, who they all liked. Royce also told me that she was interested in meeting me. Royce needed

transportation back to Empire so I decided to take Royce back to Empire and visit with Dad, Mona, and the children. I was also interested in meeting Mattie, the girl that Royce had told me about. I'm glad I missed the San Joaquin Fair that year.

I heard some good things about Mattie from my family before I finally met her later that Saturday. While talking to Dad in the cabin, Mona saw Mattie walk across the street to visit a friend. Mona told me to look, if I wanted to see Mattie. I did look, and decided I was definitely going to meet her.

I waited for Mattie to come back by our cabin, without being introduced, I started a conversation with her about Texas. I had learned that she was from Texas. Mattie was easy for me to talk to, but very shy, also pretty, with a good figure. I asked Mattie for a date that evening, and she consented.

We drove the few miles west to Modesto. We drove all over town, talking, neither Mattie or I was familiar with Modesto. We later saw a ferris wheel, so we stopped at the carnival midway. I remember we rode the ferris wheel, but by this time it was getting late. The ferris wheel operator let us ride for a long time.

Mattie and I was glad when the ride finally ended. Not much happened on our first date, but we did have a

lot in common. We both liked midget auto racing. We became good friends on our first date.

The next day we drove around the Empire, Hughson area, getting better acquainted. Mattie told me that her home was at Strathmore, California. Mattie hadn't been back in California long, she had lived in Texas and New Mexico for more than a year, before returning to Strathmore with her oldest sister, Corene, who now lived at Delhi. Mattie and her father, Elzy Rowell, were staying at Empire to work during the peach harvest. Later Mattie worked at a cannery at Riverbank. After the peach harvest, Elzy, and Mattie, planned to return to Strathmore to work. Mattie's brothers Fred and Loys lived at Strathmore.

I returned to Lodi, after giving Mattie my Lodi address. The next week, I often thought of Mattie, and our past weekend experiences. I also received a letter from her. I was anxious for the week to pass, so I could see Mattie the next weekend at Empire. For the next two weekends, I drove to Empire to spend my leisure time, and get better acquainted with Mattie.

Arless Adams and Ruth Myres were planning a trip to Reno to get married, and asked Mattie and me, if we would go with them to Reno to witness the ceremony. Before we had decided to go to Reno with them, Arless

and Ruth suggested that we go with them, and have a double ceremony. After some serious thinking, we decided to have a double wedding the next weekend at Reno, Nevada. I had barely enough money to make the trip. I had planned to work the next week, with the understanding that Arless and Ruth would bring Mattie, and that I would meet them at the main gate after work.

I did work until Thursday, when I decided to take Thursday and Friday off to do some shopping. I bought engagement and wedding rings for Mattie. I made some preparations on Friday, then drove from Lodi to the naval base to meet the rest of the wedding party. We left Arless' car at my place at Woodbridge. On the way to Woodbridge, I stopped to buy gasoline for our trip, where I gave Mattie her engagement ring. She was surprised.

On September 4, 1948 , Arless and Ruth, Mattie and I were married at Reno, Nevada. We couldn't afford a honeymoon. Monday was Labor Day so we spent the holiday at Empire. Romance is really about the little things. When we returned to Lodi, we lived in Dad's trailer house, while Dad and Mona were at Empire. We had fun together, cooking our meals. We didn't have a cookbook, I would suggest food that I enjoyed, that Mattie or I had never prepared before. Most of our

experimental meals, adding a dash of this and a dab of that ended up as a tasty dish. Mattie liked my friend's wives, Wanda Crow and Mary Vaughn. Our marriage got off to a good start. We had little money, but a lot of hope for our future.

When Dad and Mona moved back to Lodi, Mattie and I moved into an unfinished trailer house which Royce and I had lived in. We lived at Payne's trailer court in Woodbridge. Dad told me he would help me finish the trailer. It was almost impossible to find a house or apartment to rent. I decided we would rebuild the trailer. Mattie didn't have much to say about my decision to fix up the trailer. I don't think she liked the idea. Mattie was packing Tokay grapes to earn the money to pay for building materials to finish the trailer.

Dad and I worked on the trailer, which turned out to be a disaster. We didn't have enough money to finish the job, after the grape harvest was over. The roof leaked, because we built the roof too flat. We lived in the trailer until after Christmas. After Dad and Mona went back to Brawley to work that winter, Mattie and I moved into their cozy little trailer house.

We spent Thanksgiving and Christmas at Strathmore

and Porterville. I met Mattie's brothers Fred and Loys and their families. Fred and Loys married twin sisters, Loretta and Laura. I had met Mattie's sister Ola Mae and her husband Melvin Cantwell at Empire, and her sister Hazel and husband Bill Mays at Ceres. Mattie's brother Altus and family lived in Modesto. Altus' wife was named Vernece.

My sister Rae, was expecting her second child, early in 1949. Mattie went to Willows, California to stay with Rae, until after the baby was born. I went to Willows almost every weekend. I don't remember for sure, but it must have been four weeks that Mattie was at Willows. The baby came later than the doctor predicted.

On February 13, 1949, Mattie assisted the doctor in delivering little Gaye Flucard, a beautiful, healthy, little girl. I was at John and Rae's home that weekend. Mattie stayed one more week with my sister to help her with the baby and Connie. Grandmother was also staying with John and Rae at this time. It was nice to have Mattie home again.

The winter of 1949 was a cold one and antifreeze was in short supply. I was unable to find antifreeze for the radiator of my car. I drained the radiator every night, and refilled it every morning. One

morning, on the way to work, the water in the radiator froze solid. After the radiator thawed, it leaked profusely. The car had other mechanical problems. On the way to Willows to bring Mattie home, I stopped at Sacramento and traded the Chevy convertible in on a 1946 Ford sedan. Mattie was surprised to see me driving a different car.

One day while I was at work, Mary Vaughn took Mattie to Stockton to look for a house or an apartment to rent. There was no apartment available at the time, but Mattie rented a nice trailer at the Edison Villa housing project, with the promise of an apartment as soon as one was available. We lived in the trailer from June until September, when our apartment was available at the Riverview housing project.

Riverview housing was originally built for shipyard worker's housing during World War II. Mattie and I enjoyed our new home. We only paid thirty dollars a month, and for seventy five cents extra, we had a refrigerator instead of a ice box. The project was clean, with free garbage collection and lawn maintenance. I could walk to Louis Park, and ride the Navy ferry across the channel to the Navy base where I was employed on the water front.

I now had permanent status. I worked in a ship's

gear room, where I checked out tools and ship loading equipment to the stevedores. The supply room was nice and warm in winter. I was glad that I no longer had to work on the cold dock.

The Rowell family lost a son and brother in World War II. Harold Gene Rowell was killed in Germany December, 21, 1944. He had been wounded in the battle of France and had returned to the front lines only a few weeks before his death. Gene was buried at Henri-Chapelle, Belgium, a temporary burial location before permanent burial in a private cemetery at Lindsay, Calif. July 30, 1949.

Mattie's sisters, Dorothy Stapp and Ollie Strange drove out from Texas, and her sister Jessie Cox, who lived at Roswell, New Mexico to attend their brother's funeral services. By now I had met all of Mattie's brothers and sisters except Henry, who also lived in Texas. Henry's and Viola's son Lawson was being treated for polio at the time.

Several young men that I knew from Arkansas and Texas made the supreme sacrifice in World War II. Our family was deeply saddened to hear that Vurlin Hunter was one of them.

1950 was the year I fired the ice man. One evening when Mattie was out visiting neighbors, a

refrigerator salesman, with a truck load of new frigidares came to the door. I only had to pay a small down payment and the monthly payments were little more than the cost of ice. I told the man to unload the refrigerator and set it in the kitchen. When Mattie came home, she was surprised to see a new refrigerator in her kitchen.

I ordered a new 1950 Ford 2 door in June and it was delivered in July. I had always wanted to buy a new car. For four years after the war was over, you had to sign up and wait your turn to buy a new car. In 1950, cars, refrigerators, and washing machines were available if you had the money, or good credit.

We also bought a house that year. The house was old and needed a lot of repair. We planned to remodel the house. We should have bought a new home with a G.I. loan. We moved in our house in October, after waiting three months for the house to be vacated. We had a good year, although our debts mounted. The next year we had to make payments on the purchases we made the year before. We had to spend all of our extra cash fixing up the house. We painted, repaired, and installed a new bathroom and septic system. We spent a lot of money on the old house, but there was so much to do and we realized that it would take much cash and a

lot of time and hard work remodeling, to ever make this old house our dream home. We now knew why the Jordans, Jim and Juanita, gave us a good deal on the house. Jim and Jaunita were our neighbors and our very good friends for many years. Jim Jordan and I worked on the Navy base together.

Mattie and I had been married three years, we were really excited and happy because we were expecting our first child in June, 1952. The Flucards were the proud parents of little Terry, their third daughter. Dad and Mona were expecting twins in March. Our clan was expanding. Dad was now fifty years old.

I was again working on the dock, no longer in the supply room. I was dissatisfied with my job. I wanted to own my own business. I knew that I didn't intend to work all my life as a stevedore. There was a lot of work, we worked many hours over time, as the Korean War had grown from a police action, to a full blown war, after the Communist Chinese troops crossed the border.

My paychecks were larger, but I never seemed to get ahead. It was hard to save any money, but we were happy, that our first child was on the way.

The Korean war dragged on, our work load was heavy, but we no longer got much overtime pay. The war had lasted longer than most expected. We were tired of

war. World War II had only been over less than seven years. The Korean war was now two years old, with no end in sight. President Truman wasn't interested in another term. We were going to have a new president. Eisenhower resigned from the army and was nominated to run for president by the Republicans.

Adlai Stevenson was the Democrat nominee. We hadn't had a Republican president for twenty years. General Eisenhower, a war hero, was popular. However, the Democratic party was popular with many working people. I could barely remember President Hoover, the last Republican president. I wasn't sure that Ike could beat a Democrat. However, many were saying, "I like Ike!". Eisenhower, promised, if elected, he would end the Korean War, which helped him win the election. On June 11, Greta Rae, our first child was born. I will never forget the way my little newborn daughter looked at me. When I moved, her eyes followed my movements. Mattie was in labor longer than she should have been, waiting for Dr. Lynch, who was on an out of town call. When Mattie could hold back the birth of the baby no longer, a hospital doctor delivered little Greta. We were so glad to have our little girl. We had waited a long time for her.

When Greta was just a few days old, we bought our

first television, a Crosley, seventeen inch screen. I told Mr. Rowell, who was visiting us that day, that we would be watching television before the day was over. I had bought a television set, also I was promised that the antenna would be installed on the roof, and all set up for watching that day. Mr. Rowell told Mattie that he doubted that the television could be installed that soon. Television was a new thing and hard to comprehend. The television was delivered, and we were watching the one snowy channel that we could receive in less than a hour. There were many television sets sold in 1952. Even though the reception was bad, they sold like hot cakes.

Dad and Mona's twins, my little brother and sister, Marvin Edward and Marilyn Edwina, who were called Eddie and Winnie, were nearly three months older than Greta. When the twins started walking, Greta was determined to walk, but wasn't quite ready. Mattie and I worked with her, teaching her to balance and take steps, walking from me to her mother, then back to me again, after walking from one of us to the other a few times, Greta took off on her own, letting us know that she no longer needed our help. Greta wouldn't be the baby for long, because we were expecting our second child.

Dad and Mona moved to Stockton. The place that they rented had room for chickens and some calves. It had a large barn in which to keep livestock. Dad bought, sold, and raised farm animals. Dad and Mona now had five children, Stephen was born June 23, 1953.

Dad told me about a little grocery store with gas pumps that had been closed for a while. Dad believed that I might be able to buy the store at a bargain. I didn't have the cash money, but I did have some retirement money built up. I could quit my government job and draw my retirement and make the down payment on the store on a corner acre of land. The store was located at highway 88 and Kettleman Lane, near Lockeford, California. I decided that this was my chance to get my own business.

I didn't like my job. I made decent wages, but I didn't intend to spend the rest of my life working as a stevedore. Dad and I talked to the owner of the property, who was anxious to sell. I really made a good buy. I explained to Mr. Gory, the owner, that I would have to wait a few weeks until I got my retirement money before I could pay him. I got immediate possession of the store. I had a considerable amount of work to do to get the store ready for business. We moved in the living quarters in

the back and started the big task ahead of us. Soon I knew I needed a lot of money to get the store stocked.

There was less profit in groceries than one would think.

I soon opened the doors for business. The sales were poor, due to the fact that the store had been closed for a while. I was disappointed, I also realized that it would take time and money to build up the sales. I would have to find a part time job to keep the business open until my gross sales improved. We sold groceries, beer, and wine. Some of our best sellers were the wine and beer and soda pop and candy.

We didn't sell many groceries. Every time I got a lot of money in the cash box, I had to replenish the gasoline, which took most of the money we had.

On October 23, our second child was born. We named him Milton Thomas Jr. but we called him Tommy. I had a daughter, I was sure glad that this one was a boy. I was sure proud of those little ones. Mattie had her hands full taking care of the babies.

The Pepsi Cola distributor and I became friends. He also sold Valley Brew beer. When customers asked for a beer and did not specify a brand name, I would sell the customers a Valley Brew. Valley Brew was an old beer, made in Stockton with a good taste. The

owners of the brewery were old men, who weren't interested in advertising, or selling a great amount of beer. The wholesale distributor offered me a job driving a truck, delivering beer and soda pop to the farm labor camps two days a week. Mattie would run the store the two days I was delivering.

Before I took the truck driving job, I left Mattie in charge of running the store one day, while I took off to take care of some business in Stockton. While I was gone, Mattie was pumping gas, when Greta somehow got out of the store and ran across Highway 88. Mattie had to stop pumping gasoline, and bring Greta back across the road, before she was hit by a car or truck.

After experiencing what could have been a terrible tragedy, Mattie refused to be left alone at the store.

I agreed with her that we better let the business go.

I needed to work part time to keep the store going until the sales improved. Both Mattie and I were needed, so that at least one of us could keep an eye on the children at all times. We were able to break even on the store, but I was now unemployed with a wife and two kids.

We had rented our house to a man that worked at the Naval Supply Annex on Rough and Ready Island, where I had worked. Our house was vacated a few days before

we moved out of the store. We were glad to move back to 1423 Williams street. I had a little money to take care of the family needs for a while. I knew I had made a big mistake, leaving a secure government position. There was also a recession at the time, and it was winter. I was worried, however, I knew I must take any employment I could get, until I found a decent job. Government workers had no unemployment benefits. We were not covered by social security. I wasn't able to find work that winter, but early the next spring, I got a job selling insurance.

Life insurance is hard to sell because all the customer gets is a contract that states that your premiums are due the first of each month. Insurance is one of the best commodities a person can own. However, insurance is not something pretty that you can see and admire. I was paid a small salary to take care of the accounts of my debit. I could sell only in the boundaries of my debit. I also collected premiums which took much of my time. I was good at collecting and bookkeeping, but selling was difficult, and that's where most of our money came from. I had to wear a suit and tie, drive my own car, pay for gas and car expenses. We didn't have a place to park our cars. I got a parking ticket at least once a week. When the

boss told us that we going to transfer the accounts to different debits, which required a lot of home work, I decided when I finished the extra work, I would quit the company, because I saw no future there.

Mattie and I went to Patterson to pick apricots. Loys Rowell, Mattie's brother and family would leave Strathmore every summer and contract to pick fruit at Patterson and Modesto. Loys had trucks and made good money. I was never a good fruit picker. Mattie had our two children to take care of but, she did skirt the trees, picking some fruit. The apricots were not good.

We had too many culls. We didn't get any money for the culls we picked. I worked hard for little pay.

After a few days, I told Mr. Rowell, who was working with us, that I had decided to return to Stockton, where I had applied for employment. I couldn't afford to not be available if called. Mr. Rowell agreed that we were wasting our time at Patterson, and gave me twenty dollars, insisting that I might need the money.

Dad and I went to Brentwood to pick fruit for 80 cents an hour. We had nothing else to do at the time. We worked for a week, and went back and worked Monday, starting our second week. We lived in company cabins during the week. We stood in long lines and collected

our pay at the camp every day after work.

While standing in line to get our pay, a woman asked us our name, telling us that two women with babies, were looking for us. We knew it was Mattie and Tommy and Mona and Stephen. We saw each other about the same time. What could have happened?

Mattie and Mona had good news for us. We had a job in Stockton. Mattie had Joe Peirano, who had a garage on Williams and Waterloo road, a block from our house to wire a long battery that was made for a Buick in a 1940 Mercury, our second car. That day was one of the hottest days I can remember. We stopped at places all the way to Stockton to buy cold drinks, but the drinks were warm. I drank water all that night, trying to quench my thirst.

The old Mercury was in bad shape, but Dad drove the car to Stockton, with no trouble in the extreme heat. I drove the Ford. Our neighbor, Jean Johnson told Mattie that her husband, Dick had just quit his job, tearing out large brick ovens at a large bakery in Stockton. Dick Johnson had been in bad health. He was not strong enough to do the work. The contractor told the Johnsons' that he needed two good men that could push a wheel barrow up a steep ramp, loaded with sand.

Jean asked Mattie if Dad and I would like to give the

job a try. I didn't know if I could do the work or not, I also worried about Dad, now in his fifties and not used to this type of work. We worked at night, stirring up the sand, while the bakers made their bread and pastries. The work was hard, but we got stronger and better at wheeling up the ramp. The job was short, but we made more in a week than we could have made in a month, doing farm work. I was able to pay the bills. Soon after we completed the bakery work, Mattie, the babies and I, took Ed and Sammie Adams to Graton, near Sebastopol, to work at a apple shed, packing apples for shipment. I was hired by the box maker as a helper. I liked the man whom I worked with. I didn't work long until a lumber strike stopped the shipment of materials to work with. The apple harvest was nearly over, so I decided to return to Stockton. One thing I shall never forget was how cold it was after the sun went down at Graton, but the days were hot.

I had to work at many different jobs, but I managed to pay my bills and keep plenty of food on our table. I knew that I had been fortunate to always find some low paying employment. I had no security. I applied for any job I thought I could qualify for, with the federal government, state, and county. I had passed tests and was on the waiting list for several positions. I

really needed to get called to work because we were expecting our third child in January.

Soon after we got home from Gratin, Mr. Rowell came to spend the weekend with us. He told us he was going to Texas to visit his mother. Mattie's father was in a happy mood. That Saturday night my dad, Jean Johnson, our neighbor, Mr. Rowell, Mattie and I visited until the wee hours. We all talked about many subjects. We enjoyed a very pleasant night together. Elzy Rowell told us that he was going to work one more week, that he would come back to see us before going to Texas.

The next Thursday, August 12, Bill Mays drove from Modesto to tell us that Mr. Rowell had suffered a heart attack. Mays told us that Mr. Rowell was in a hospital at Modesto. Mattie and I got the children ready and took them to stay with Dad and Mona. When Mattie and I arrived at the hospital, we were told that Mr. Rowell had died about thirty minutes before we arrived. This was a real shocker, the sudden death of her father was extremely painful for Mattie. I had known Mr. Rowell for six years, we were good friends. We had never had one disagreement during the six years that I had known him.

Mr. Rowell was buried at Lindsay, California, near

his two sons, Elmer, who was hit by a car near Modesto at age 32, and Gene, who was killed in World War II at the age of 21.

I was hired at Sharpe Army Depot in September as a temporary employee. I was glad to get the temporary job, hoping to later get my permanent status restored.

I didn't earn as much as I had earned at the Navy base, but I was making much more than I had made on all the other jobs since. After two months I was sent to Tracy to work, moving medical supplies in new warehouses. This was a big operation, with a lot of confusion and pressure on everyone. I was rehired temporary, not to exceed a year. We were promised permanent employment. We really worked hard that winter. The supervisors were never satisfied with the amount of work we did. Working conditions improved some as we got more workers.

Our third child was born January 30, 1955, a beautiful little daughter. We named her Lou Ann. We now had three children, under three years old. The children kept Mattie busy. Greta and Tommy, still babies themselves, would swipe Lou Ann's bottle and hide under the bed. When Lou Ann cried it was often because her bottle had been stolen.

Only one man that was hired as a temporary

employee got permanent status. Just before I was to be terminated, I was hired by the state as a correctional officer at Deuel Vocational Institution. I now had a good job with good starting pay, a chance for advancement, and excellent benefits. New correctional officers worked on the graveyard shift for the first six months, while in training. I liked all of the officers and supervisors, but I didn't like working at a prison, and I didn't like working in the maximum security wards. However, I was glad to have the job, and hoped to like my work better as I became more experienced. Most of the prisoners were young and unpredictable. One day I decided to drive out to the Navy base to explore the possibility of employment. I was told at the gate, that one of the base security police had recently resigned. When I went to the personnel office to inquire, I was told that they had no positions open. I told the woman that the guards at the gate told me that there was indeed an opening for security police. I told her that I would like to talk to Chief Jolley. Chief Jolley called the woman at the personnel office, and told her he wanted me for the position. I asked the personnel woman if my permanent civil service status would be restored. She told me that the position was permanent, and that I would start

as a grade three patrolman. I had eight years with the federal government that I would get credit for. Mattie was glad I took the new job. I was glad to be back at the Navy base, for several reasons. I lived much closer to my work place. I got a pay raise, My status was reinstated. I liked the captain of my shift and the men I worked with. I worked the graveyard shift because I got night differential pay.

Royce served in the Navy during the Korean War, spending much of his service time at Guam. Soon after Royce was discharged, he married Peggy Higday, whom he had known for almost five years. Royce's and Peggy's first child, Vince, was born in 1955. Royce returned to the Stockton Box factory, where he had worked before serving in the Navy.

John and Rae moved to Missouri to take over John's father's farm, or small dairy, milking several cows. After some disagreements with John's father, John and Rae moved to Springfield. Rae worked at a hospital, John worked at construction. Rae and John missed living near relatives in California, we also missed living at short driving distance to frequent visits with them.

In 1956 I bought a new 1956 Ford station wagon, which was ideal at the time for our young family. We

drove to Chico to visit Grandmother.

Dad and Mona moved to Lindsay Calif. They were now employed at an orange packing shed, making good wages.

I was sure glad to know that they were doing so much better financially, also they were much happier at Lindsay.

I hadn't been in Texas in over fifteen years. Mattie had a brother and two sisters who lived in Texas. I also had cousins living there. In May 1957 we loaded our station wagon and took a trip. We stopped at Lindsay to visit our relatives. We visited a while with Loys and Laura Rowell. Loys had been sick for some time, with Bright's disease. After a short visit with our relatives that Sunday at Lindsay, we drove all night, and arrived at Gilbert, Arizona, early the next morning, where Mattie's sister Jessie Cox lived. Mattie had lived with C.T. and Jessie Cox, when they lived at Roswell, New Mexico. We spent the night with the Cox family. The next morning, we headed for Texas.

We drove to Lockney to visit Mattie's sister Dorothy and her husband, Louis Ray Stapp. Louis and his brother owned a auto body shop at Lockney. The morning we arrived, the weather was beautiful, but the afternoon was windy, then a gully washer, also hail.

That night, tornados were all around us. Silverton, a town nearby was half destroyed by a tornado, killing twenty two people. We were afraid that we had brought our three children to a dangerous situation. After the first day and night, the storms subsided, but we got plenty of rain when we visited with Ernest and Ollie Strange, near Silverton. We had to take a dirt road to the Strange farm, where the station wagon slid into a ditch. The car was half filled with water, when Ernest pulled our car out of the ditch, the next morning, with a farm tractor. Mattie and I enjoyed visiting with the relatives, spending time with Mattie's brother, Henry, also Dorothy and Ollie, and their families. We saw a lot of destroyed homes after the storms. Our relatives knew most of the people that were killed. Our visit was at a bad time for us and a sad time for them.

I decided to drive to McAdoo to try to locate some of the Stephenson family. Uncle Walter died in 1953. Uncle Jim died in 1949. Charlie and his wife, Grace lived on the home place. The old house was gone, but a new house was built near where the old house once stood. Charlie and I talked nearly all night about old times. The next day Nath, Edna, and Lucile came to visit. I spent the next night at Barney and Robena's home at Lubbock. I saw Cousin Wanda at Lubbock. We

drove to Morton to visit Aunt Bea and Cousin Melvin Yarbrough, before returning to California.

On the way home, we stopped at Lindsay to spend the night with Dad and Mona. That same evening, Wade and Bea Alford, also Chester who was on leave from the Navy came to visit with Dad. We hadn't seen the Alford brothers since we all lived in Arkansas. We had a lot to talk about. We discussed many of our Arkansas friends, some of the men were now Los Angeles policemen. John Ward was now a union leader in the Bay area. Kenneth Alford was in charge of a large farming enterprise at Le Grand. Wade Alford owned a pool hall at Chowchilla. Bedford Thompson was a preacher, still living at Brawley. About half of the families that once lived in Woodruff county, were now living in California.

Dad and I planned to visit Wade, Kenneth, and Chester at Le Grand the next weekend. We all went bull frog hunting that Saturday night. We caught so many frogs we could barely carry them back to the car. The next day we had a lot of frogs to clean, butcher and fry. Dad and I brought frogs legs home, packed in ice.

I planned to visit the Alford brothers again, but I never saw Wade and Kenneth again. Chester came to Stockton to visit Mattie and I. He also visited Dad

often at Lindsay.

John and Rae moved back to California. John was hired the day they got to Stockton as a carpenter at Sharpe Depot. John, Rae, and their three daughters lived with us for about a month. John and Rae rented a house in our neighborhood for a short time, before moving back to Chico. It was great to have the family living in California again.

When I was hired, there were as many security police with less seniority than me, as there were with more seniority. I was near the middle. However, after the Korean war ended, many government employees were terminated, because of reduction in force. The Navy base was a supply annex for the Naval supply at Oakland. The Oakland supply no longer needed the Navy base on Rough And Ready Island, near Stockton. The Naval Annex was converted to a communication center, but many employees were no longer needed. As I was now low on the totem pole, I transferred to Sharpe Army Depot to avoid a lay off. I didn't like the supervisors at Sharpe Army Depot. I didn't like the hours I had to work. I was tired of working the different shifts. I decided to try to buy a truck and haul vegetables from the fields to the canneries. Loys Rowell had brought his trucks from Strathmore to

Stockton to haul tomatoes. Loys encouraged me to try the trucking business. Loys was in very bad health at this time. When Loys was hospitalized, Mattie went with family members to visit her brother. I kept our three children while Mattie was gone. I was working nights at the time. Jinx Johnson, Jean and Dick's oldest daughter slept at our house, with the children while I was at work. Tommy had recently recovered from the measles. While their mother was at Strathmore, Greta and Lou Ann got very sick with the measles. I really had a hard time taking care of three children, two of them sick with measles.

Mattie had only been home a short time before Loys died. He was only forty three. While we were at Strathmore for Loys' funeral, Donnie, Loys' son, told me that he was coming to Stockton for the tomato harvest. Donnie thought I could earn good money with a truck. I had always wanted a business of my own.

I bought a truck that was reasonably priced, but I couldn't find trailers at a price I could afford. The Bank of America had a set of reposed doubles which needed some repair. I decided that I would rent trailers for a while to find out if I should go in more debt. I was getting cold feet.

At the time I bought the truck, I had plans for

Royce to drive the truck, while I continued to work at civil service, until we started making a profit with the one truck. If Royce and I made enough money in the trucking business, I would buy another truck, then quit my job at Sharpe Army Depot.

Royce had been unemployed for a while. I believed Royce would be helped by this venture as well as myself. The next time I saw Royce, he told me that he had found a good job at Sacramento, where he and Peggy now lived. I wasn't as interested in hiring someone else to drive my truck, as working with my brother. I needed to continue to work, because I needed money to get started in the business. I didn't have enough capital to get into the business without risks, I was afraid to take. I sold the truck. I still had my government job, also I decided that I had good retirement benefits. With a wife and three children to support, the best thing for me to do was to make a career out of civil service. I never again considered leaving the government. Before I sold the truck, I transferred out of security at Sharpe Depot. My new assignment was at Tracy, working in the warehouses, loading box cars and trucks. I had much farther to drive. The work was hard, but I wanted a change. I didn't like working at Tracy, but I was determined to

get a warehouseman job at Sharpe Depot. After eight months of applying for warehouse positions, I was sent back to Sharpe Depot as a warehouseman. It was a promotion and a much better place to work. I was sure glad to be back at Sharpe Army Depot. I was glad that I no longer had that long drive to Tracy in the fog during the winter months.

I liked my new job, and most of the people with whom I worked. I worked in the storekeeping branch of the Transportation Corps. We warehoused aircraft, watercraft and railroad parts. After working our regular eight-hour shift, we worked two hours taking inventory. We had to identify every part in every warehouse, wall to wall. I was able to save some of my overtime pay. I was better off financially than I had ever been. I knew the overtime wouldn't last, but I decided to sell the old house and buy a better one.

We sold the old house to a neighbor. Mattie and I were glad to sell the old house which had been our home for over nine years. We looked at many houses before we found one that we liked and could afford.

We finally found a neat two bedroom, but we needed a three bedroom. We went ahead and bought the smaller house because we liked the school and neighborhood. The monthly payments were lower than a three bedroom.

We planned to add on a room, when the children were older. 1960 was an uneventful year, but a good year for us. We enjoyed our home and neighborhood. I had a good job at Sharpe Depot. The children had made new friends, and were doing well in school. Lou Ann started kindergarten. We now had three kids attending Lottie Grunsky school. It was indeed a happy time.

We didn't take long vacations, but we often visited relatives. John and Rae now had two more children, Guy and Joni Rae. Royce and Peggy had two more children, Royce Anne and Ricky. Dad and Mona also had one more, little Sam.

Early in the year of 1961, I noticed on the job opportunity list that was distributed by the depot from time to time, a job that would promote me to a higher grade. The position title was "Tool, Stock and Parts Keeper". A storekeeper in the maintenance Shop Supply Division, at Sharpe General Depot. I had experience in supply rooms listed in my records. I applied for the position along with many others. I was interviewed and offered the position. I was happy to get the job, but I liked my present job. You never know how everything will work out on a new assignment. I had to take the promotion, although sometimes it is not for the best, when you like your present job. However, advancement

is the name of the game.

My job was to supply the mechanics, machinists, and electricians with tools, parts and any supplies needed to do their work. I liked the maintenance supply people, and the men who worked in the shops. After a short time, I knew almost all of the shop supervisors and journeymen. I listened to their requests, and usually agreed with them. The shop supervisors and I became friends. The shop supervisors were not my supervisors. My supervisor was a supply supervisor. I enjoyed my work, trying always to order any supplies needed to keep the working-men working and not waiting for supplies.

I remember the summer of 1961 as one of the hottest. Ice was delivered to the shops and offices to keep the personnel cool. When the heat spell cooled some, we took the kids to Disney Land. We went to El Segundo to visit Arless, Ruth and family. We also visited Jim and Jaunita Jordon at San Bernardino. We had a nice little vacation. When we returned to Stockton, so had the heat. Our children really enjoyed Disneyland.

Hazel and Bill Mays separated. Hazel and the children had been in Texas for awhile. Hazel returned to California to precede in a divorce. During this

time Hazel and her five children lived with Mattie and I. We didn't have much room which caused some problems. The children had their differences. They were always feuding and a fighting. Somehow we managed to all live together for two months without too many serious problems. I know Hazel was concerned about her new responsibilities. She needed all the help she could get.

During the summer of 1962, John and Rae, and Mattie and I went to San Francisco for a weekend. We had a lot of fun sightseeing. We also rode a boat, doing many things of interest. We found some good places to eat, also some expensive places that were disappointing. We all enjoyed ourselves.

I had rented a camp trailer for the next week at Pinecrest. The children were excited, being at the right ages to enjoy camping, but Lou Ann did get carsick. The next week we went fishing every day. One rather cold and windy morning, only Greta and I went trout fishing. I caught more fish that morning than any day that I fished at Strawberry. Greta was shaking and chilled from the wind. I asked her at different times if she wanted to go to the trailer. Greta didn't want to leave the lake as long as I was pulling those trout out. I almost caught my limit before I decided

Greta had been chilled enough. I believe that she would have stayed there all day, as long as I was catching fish. We had a great time at the beach area, also hiking around Strawberry Lake.

When we bought our house, we had to assume a small second mortgage. The monthly payments were small. The loan was to be paid off by the end of three years. Raising three children took all of my income. Mattie packed grapes every season to help pay off small bills, or buy some needed item. In 1962 Mattie's income from field packing Tokay grapes, paid off the second mortgage that was due Nov., 1962. After paying off the second mortgage, we were able to buy a new Dodge Dart GT. Mattie was surprised when I drove the little black Dodge with red upholstery home. Tommy, my son, was with me when I bought the car. Mattie really liked the car.

For a year or two, I worked in all the supply rooms at Directorate for Maintenance, including the air craft supply rooms. Wherever in the supply system I was needed, I was trained to work at that capacity. I liked working in the different supply rooms and shops, but I was selected to replace the machine shop supply man. I also was put in charge of the property books. I was responsible for the machine shop tools and

supplies. I also ordered the tools for all shop workers at Directorate of Maintenance, including the aircraft shop personnel. I was no longer able to move around after being responsible for the machine shop property.

Penn and Aunt Lottie visited us in early Jan., 1965. Penn was in the Air Force, being transferred to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Penn was a career man.

Mattie and I enjoyed their visit. Aunt Lottie and I had many things to talk about, including Arkansas people we both knew.

We had recently learned that we were going to have another baby in August or early September. Aunt Lottie was surprised to hear about the baby. She was also happy for us. I would be forty years old before the baby was born. It was sad news when Lorene called and told us that Aunt Lottie was dead. It had been about two months since she had visited us. Aunt Lottie was seventy years old. Uncle Jenk died on Christmas Eve, 1960. Aunt Lottie had moved back to Texas to live, later moving back to her native state of Arkansas, after Uncle Jenk died. Aunt Lottie decided she had rather live at San Diego, where she lived the rest of her years.

Our work load was getting heavier, the war in

Vietnam was escalating. The government was hiring many new employees.

On September 1, Dad and Mona came to Stockton to work in the grape harvest. The kids were all thrilled to see one another. We had a nice visit before retiring. Mattie was feeling great, the baby was due at any time. We had only been in bed a short time, when Mom felt her first labor pain. We soon knew that it was time to get to the hospital.

On the early morning of September 2, 1965, we were blessed with a beautiful, healthy, baby daughter. We named her Janet Kay. We brought Janet home from the hospital on September 4, our seventeenth wedding anniversary. Our children were older, and all loved their baby sister.

Many civilian employees were hired in 1966. Most of the men were young, and right out of military service. Most of the new employees learned fast. Many of the young men were raised on farms, learning to repair farm equipment at a young age. I was kept busy issuing tools and safety equipment, as new personnel were hired daily. I had to replenish my stocks daily, so we had to inventory, and order daily.

I couldn't have performed all of these duties without help. Sam Alcarion was assigned to help me

during this busy time. It was fortunate for me that Sam made a devoted effort to do his best, which was outstanding. Sam was from the Philippines, and didn't speak, or understand English well. Once Mr. Alcarion understood what was expected of him, I could depend on him to do the project with excellent devotion.

The decedents of Thomas Elzy and Mattie Holliman Rowell had their first family reunion at the Rocky Mountain Resort, near Antonito, Colorado. Louis Ray and Dorothy Stapp were part owners of the resort, where the reunion was held. There was much interest in the reunion.

We loaded our children, luggage, and plenty of milk and pampers for the baby, in the Chevy station wagon. Janet had recently learned to walk. Greta was a typical fourteen year old girl. Tommy liked to eat at restaurants, and complained when we ate picnic lunches. Lou Ann liked the Beatles' music.

There was something for everyone at the Rocky Mountain Resort. We played volley ball, rode horses, fished, and rode Tote Goats, a mountain motor scooter, that was popular at that time. The scenery was beautiful, Tommy enjoyed hiking. Greta probably had more fun than anyone at the reunion, riding the horses most of the time, when she wasn't riding the Tote Goat

with the Stapp brothers, Louis Stapp's nephews. We had a good turn out at the reunion, visiting, playing games, and relaxing. Most of the Texas relatives were present.

We had a great vacation, with our four children. I regret that we didn't do more things together. I heard Dad say many times, " that time and tide waits for no one".

Sharpe Depot was a very busy place in 1966. We worked long hours and weekends for a while, sending air craft, heavy equipment, also spare parts to Vietnam. I was able to save a few dollars during this time. We needed more money as the children were growing up. We built a bedroom and a bathroom on the house. We built on the house before construction prices increased much.

If we had waited another year to build on to the house, we would have had to pay much more, as homes started to double in price. The cost of labor and building materials also increased a significant amount.

During the 1960's, Mattie and I were interested in auctions. We seldom missed Otto's auction on Wednesday nights, and on Sundays. I bought anything that I believed to be a bargain. The items that I didn't have any use for, or things I didn't keep as collector items, we would take back to the auctions and sell. We

usually made a profit, but not a lot of money. I was able to repair some of the merchandise that needed fixing. I learned a lot, also I enjoyed the hobby of collecting.

John Flucard and Larry Mc Neil poured a patio for us in March 1967. Later in the year John Flucard, Larry Mc Neil and Jim Bearden helped me recover the roof on the house. John, Larry, and Jim were constructing Butler Grain bins in the Stockton area. John was now a general contractor.

I took some days off from work to help roof our house. I also took care of Janet, barely two years old, while Mattie worked a few days with a friend. From the roof of the house, I could see Janet playing in the yard below. I became so monopolized in my work, that I forgot about Janet, my most important obligation, for a short time.

Jim Bearden remarked; "that he didn't see Janet in the yard. We all climbed down from the roof to try to find my daughter, but she had left the neighborhood. John Flucard and I drove all over searching for Janet.

I thought of many terrible things that could have happened to my child. I was about to lose my sanity when I saw a small child several blocks down another street too far away to recognize her, when I saw her

walk, I was sure that was my little girl. It is the greatest relief of mind, to find your lost child unharmed.

When our three oldest children were very young, we took them to the San Joaquin County fair. We were trying to hold on to our three small children, when we lost Tommy at the crowded midway. He had only been out of our sight for less than a minute, when we missed him.

After a few minutes, Mattie took one daughter, and I took the other and we struck out in different directions, hoping that one of us would find our lost boy. A woman that saw Mattie with tears in her eyes, asked her if she had lost a child? Mattie said; " I sure have, I have lost my little boy". The woman said; "Is his name Monty?" "Oh yes!" Mattie replied. "That is my little boy, Tommy. He can't say Tommy, and calls himself Monty." Mattie was told that the police had Tommy at the Police booth. The police officers gave him some candy, and were asking him questions, trying to get some information, so they could page his parents. Mattie had to prove that she was Monty's mother. Tommy didn't seem worried, he liked the attention he was getting, also the candy. Tommy told us later, that he went back to see the baby ducklings, at

one of the booths, but got lost in the crowd. Tommy gave us a scare once again, while we were visiting with Loys and Laura at Strathmore. Tommy had no one his age to play with, and decided to take a hike. We soon missed him, we looked all over the neighborhood for him. We were very upset to say the least. Where could he be ? We were ready to drive all over town to search for Tommy, when a man stopped in front of the Rowell home, with Tommy in his car. Loys knew the man, who was a butcher at a grocery store. The man probably knew the Rowell's had visitors from out of town. Strathmore is a small town, where most everyone knows the families and their children.

On one of our trips to Disneyland, we lost Lou Ann. It was a huge crowd that night watching Tinker Bell fly. After the presentation, the large crowd dispersed in all directions. We didn't walk far when we noticed that Lou Ann was not with us anymore. We were worried about how we would ever find her in such a large, crowded place. We stayed close to where we last saw Lou Ann, while we discussed what to do next. We were really upset, when Lou Ann found us. We were sure glad to see her, our daughter was safe, now we could enjoy Disneyland. When Greta was two years old, we were enjoying our dinner, Greta finished her meal, then

went to the bathroom for only a minute, when we heard a thump, something fell to the floor. We knew that Greta was exploring the bathroom while we were eating.

Mattie ran to the bathroom and discovered that Greta had climbed on the bathtub and stepped in the bathroom basin, somehow, opening the medicine chest. She opened a bottle of Hexol and took a drink. We never knew if she actually swallowed any of the stuff. I am sure Greta didn't like the taste. We could smell Hexol on her breath, also on her clothing. We rushed her to the emergency hospital, and had her stomach pumped. It only takes a minute for a two year old to get into trouble.

Royce and Peggy had recently moved to a larger house. We went to visit them and to see their new home. There was a nice big yard for the children to play. We didn't see anything that could harm the kids.

We could see Greta and Tommy playing in the yard. The children found a blue bottle of crystallized ant poison that the previous occupants of the house had left.

Greta, prepared a meal for her younger brother, including the ant poison. Tommy got really sick, again we had to rush to the emergency hospital, this time to get the contents of Tommy's stomach pumped out. When Lou Ann was three years old, she saw her brother and

sister run across the street to play with the neighbor's children. When Lady, our Dalmatian also ran across the street, where the older children were playing, Lou Ann darted across the street to follow the dog. I heard our neighbor scream, then the sound of screeching brakes. I only had to run a few steps from the driveway to see the street. I saw the car come to a stop just as the bumper touched Lou Ann, knocking her down. We took her to the emergency hospital. Lou was so scared that she went into shock, but was just slightly bruised. I believe the driver was looking to his left at some property that he was interested in buying, and didn't see little Lou Ann and the dog run in front of him. I believe that when Mrs. Lopez screamed, she alerted the driver to look ahead, as he should have been doing, giving him time to stop the car one second before a tragic accident. The loud scream of Inez Lopez probably saved our daughter's life. Of all the bad things that happened to our children, which were fortunately not all that many, the one thing that stands out the most is when Greta was bitten by a dog.

John, Rae, and three daughters, also Inky the family dog pulled in our driveway, with luggage trailer in tow. They were moving to Missouri. John Flucard chained the dog to the fig tree in our back yard. Dad,

Mona, and family were visiting with us that day. We had plans for a family get together. Mattie went to Pierano's Market, a small neighborhood store, to buy groceries to prepare a big dinner. John and Dad were out near the driveway. I had gone in the house for some reason. I heard Dad say, "Did the dog bite Greta"? Greta came in the house to tell me that she didn't like Inky anymore, that he hurt her. She must have been in shock, she was not crying. Greta's face was severely torn on her cheek and right under her eye.

It is impossible to describe how severe the jagged tares on her face appeared. Mona ran to the store to tell Mattie. I believe that Mattie and I both went into shock. We hurried to the emergency hospital. The nurse finally got Dr. Candalla to stitch Greta's wounds. Dr. Candalla was tired from performing delicate surgery on a child that day. The doctor decided that he would repair, or stitch the wounds at the emergency hospital. As long as I live, I will never forget Greta's loud screams, as the doctor attempted to stitch her torn wounds.

Mattie and I had to take a walk. We could hear Greta's screams a block away. When we went back inside, I told the doctor to stop, that my child was in too much pain for him to continue with his work. "I am

not hurting her," the doctor snapped at me. I said, "No, please stop, my little girl is in much pain, she is also frightened". The doctor asked if we had hospital insurance. I told the doctor we did not. John Flucard informed me that he had insurance that would take care of the expenses. The doctor seemed relieved, suggesting that we take Greta to St. Joseph's Hospital. Dr. Candalla proved to be excellent in his field, and a caring doctor. During Greta's stay at the hospital, she got first class treatment by the nurses and Dr, Candalla. One nice nurse was named Lucille. She also hand fed her cookies to her doctor. The wounds healed fast and after a short time, the scars on her face were barely noticeable.

Greta remembers giving the dog water in a leaky pie pan. When the pan was empty, she attempted to pick up the pan to get more water for the thirsty dog.

John and Rae were hurt and sorry for what happened to Greta. They were glad that their insurance paid the hospital expenses, which was a big help to me, as I had no money saved at that time. The Flucard's move to Missouri was delayed a few days.

Ed Adams died in the spring of 1967. Ed Adams and I had some good times together. Mr. Adams was a fun loving man that we all missed.

Uncle Cliff Avey, my mother's favorite uncle came to California to live with his sister, my grandmother.

I had never met Uncle Cliff until he came to California, but I had heard a lot about him from my mother and grandmother. He lived with Grandmother for over five years before he died in 1967. Uncle Cliff was a very nice man. He lived in Texas for many years, and was never married.

I spent some time in the VA Hospital at Livermore taking a series of physical examinations. I got good care, but sure missed being with my family. I was not home but a few days, when I came down with pneumonia and almost died. Dr. Weys came to our home daily to give me antibiotic shots. One day the needle broke and the doctor couldn't pull it out of my arm. Mattie became upset and asked the doctor if she should bring him the pliers. The doctor wanted the pliers and asked if Tom could help him. Dr. Weys was getting old, and was also a small man. Tommy held the little doctor to support him while he tugged to extract the needle from my arm. I was not hurting, but Mattie almost fainted before Dr. Weys finally pulled the needle from my arm.

Mattie often tells the "needle and plier" incident to friends and relatives.

Henry and Viola came to California to visit their

many relatives. Henry Rowell was driving a new Buick.

I took a few days off from work while they visited us.

We went to many local places of interest. I remember that the Buick sure drove and rode great. We had a great visit.

The Vietnam War had the people divided in 1968. Many thought the war was wrong. College students were demonstrating all across the country. The mood was ugly. President Johnson decided not to seek reelection. The Democrat Party was divided. There was much civil unrest. Martin Luther King Jr. and Sen. Robert Kennedy were assassinated. We had race riots which showed that not all the problems were related to the Vietnam War. Vice President Hubert Humphrey was nominated to run for President by the Democrats. Humphrey was unpopular with most young Democrats for being in the Johnson administration which supported the war. Richard Nixon was elected president.

Dad was now 65 years old, and not in the best of health. Dad and Mona came every year to work in the grapes. Mattie worked with them. Dad had trouble packing the Tokay grapes because he was almost blind. 1968 was the last year that Dad and Mona worked for the Beckman brothers. Dad took physical examinations when he returned home to Lindsay. From that time on, Dad

had to take a lot of medication. We missed having them come to the grapes every year. Dad was never able to work again.

Greta, our first born, and Gary Roley were married in a simple ceremony at the Eastside Presbyterian Church, They were very young. Gary has always been a very likable man. He is a good friend, as well as a good son-in-law. At forty four, I became a proud grandfather, when little Gary Roley was born.

Gary worked with his father, Leonard, and brother, Craig. They were in the gas station business. Gary was manager of a Chevron station, and Leonard and Craig operated a Shell station. The gas stations were very successful. Leonard Roley was a good businessman.

Now that our children were older, Mattie worked during the summer. When Janet started to kindergarten, Mattie was hired at the Stockton Inn. Our neighbor Mary Marquez helped get Janet off to school and took care of her after school. Mattie's paycheck helped. We were able to save a few dollars. More mothers were now working as never before. Mattie had to work on weekends, that I didn't like. I made breakfast for Janet, she liked the way I cooked her scrambled eggs. I also had Sunday dinner ready, when Mattie got home from work. Mattie's employment didn't cause too much

inconvenience for us.

The summer of 1971 was busy for us. Tommy graduated from Franklin High. A woman pulled out in front of me in Lodi. I was not able to avoid hitting her. Both cars were totaled. Janet was with me. There were no serious injuries, but Janet was really frightened. I replaced the wrecked Oldsmobile with a 1970 Mercury sedan. Dorothy and Louis visited us that summer, We had a family get together. Mattie had been taking a prescription drug that contained codeine. Mattie is allergic to codeine, sulphur, and penicillin.

After all the company left, Mattie was hospitalized in serious condition. She was swollen so badly, she barely resembled herself. The itching almost drove her insane. Once she was hospitalized, Mattie made a fast recovery. After Mattie recovered from the negative reaction from the codeine, we took Lou Ann and Janet to Disneyland. On our return, we drove by Strathmore to visit Fred and Loretta. Fred had been diagnosed as having Bright's disease. Fred had been a strong man, who was a good wrestler as a young man. He was seldom sick. For the last four years, Fred had been in bad health. When we visited Fred and Loretta that summer, it was obvious that Fred's health was rapidly declining. Mattie, and Hazel visited their brother in

the hospital in January 1972. Fred was glad to leave the hospital and go home to be with his family. Fred Rowell didn't live much longer. He died February 4 of a heart attack. Mattie's father and four brothers are buried at Lindsay, California. Mattie's sister Jessie Cox, who died of cancer in 1963, is buried in Mesa, Arizona. School was out on June 9. We started our Texas vacation after I finished my days work. We drove to Lindsay and spent the night with Dad, Mona, and family. We left early the next morning for Texas. We ate breakfast at Bakersfield, and were on our way. I was stopped near Tehachapi by a Highway Patrolman, and given a speeding citation. The Mercury had a lot of power, it was a "ticket getter". I got more than one ticket driving that car. I had new tires on the car, but we had a blowout just before we got to Needles, California. I changed the tire in 110 degree heat, which was cool for Needles, and drove into town and bought a new tire. With all the delays, we needed to make up some time. We drove to Holbrook, Arizona, before stopping to get a room. Only Lou Ann and Janet were with us on this trip. We arrived at Louis Ray's and Dorothy's at about 4:30 PM on Sunday. It was June 11, Greta's birthday. We phoned her from Lockney to wish her a happy birthday. We visited Henry and Viola

at Lockney the next day. We visited Ernest and Ollie Strange in the country near Tulia after going to Silverton where Mattie was born, where Mattie visited her Aunt Molly. We went by to see Uncle Homer and Aunt Savanna at Tulia. They have a beautiful home.

After visiting Mattie's relatives, we drove to McAdoo Texas, where I lived as a young boy. We took pictures of my first school and play ground. The school looked the same as it did forty years before, the slide and swings had probably been replaced, however, everything was in the same place, and appeared the same as when I started to school in 1931. We rented a trailer at Dickens, where I pumped gasoline at our Gulf station, as a teenage boy. That night the wind blew so hard, we thought the trailer would become airborne.

The next morning, we drove to East Afton to visit Annie T. and Cornie Roberts. Annie T. as she was always called, was named after my grandmother, Annie Tabitha Stephenson Yarbrough. Annie T. Stephenson Roberts, was one of my favorite cousins.

We had a nice visit, talking about the past, also family history. We ate dinner that night at Edna Stephenson McCoy and daughter Baby Roe Took's home at Lubbock. Edna, a cousin was near my mother's age was also her good friend. We spent the night at Robena and

Barney Watts' home. Cousin Robena is my age.

The next day, we drove to Morton, Texas to visit my cousin Melvin Yarbrough and family. Melvin and his wife Pat, live on a farm near Morton. Pat prepared a good dinner for us. We had a nice visit. I didn't get to see Aunt Bea that trip. I did see Charlie and Grace Stephenson for a little while. We also visited Jim Stephenson and family at Lubbock. We drove back to Louis' and Dorothy's house. We had a Rowell family get together on Sunday. Most of the relatives were there. We left Texas to return to California on Monday. We had a good trip, after the first day. We had no trouble returning home.

When I returned to work, I was told that now that the troop Vietnamization withdrawal policy was soon to bring the last combat troops home, that only one man would remain in a supply room. The work load was now slowing down each month. Sam Alcarion was transferred in January, 1973. A supply man had been promoted, leaving a position for Sam. From that time on I had to order all supplies, issue all machine shop equipment, and take care of the machine shop property books alone.

However, the work load was much lighter now. We had a heavy work load when the U.S. had over 500,000 troops in Vietnam. On St Valentines Day 1973, Mattie and I

got the best Valentine ever, when our first granddaughter was born. This beautiful little Valentine was named Jennifer Lynne Roley. I called her "Jenny Jingles". The Rowell reunion was held at Oak Creek Canyon near Flagstaff, Arizona. The family agreed to have a camp out reunion near Flagstaff, about the same distance for Texas relatives as California relatives. We were all told to bring our tents. We arrived at the camp grounds about 5:30 PM, Aug. 3rd. We stretched our tent before the rain. There was heavy rain that first night. We were almost washed away, but the tent held the runoff from the flash flood until morning. The next morning I made some improvements. It rained every day, but we had a great time. Most of the families left for home on Sunday. Billy and Norma Mays wanted to stay one more night, because they were late getting there. We decided to stay one more night with them. Billy, Norma, Hazel, Roy, and Mattie, Lou Ann, Janet, and I had the large camp grounds all to ourselves that night.

We stayed Monday night in Las Vegas. We played the machines but we were not lucky. We drove by Lindsay, and visited with Dad and Mona for about two hours. We also stopped and visited with Oather and Corene Graham at Delhi for a while. We arrived home about 6:00 PM,

after a busy day.

Mattie and I celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary September 4th. I went back to the same jewelry store where I bought her original rings in 1948, and bought her a white gold wedding band.

The Rowell family reunion was held again at Oak Creek Canyon in Arizona. We borrowed Gary Roley's Dodge Van. No more tents for us. We took Mattie's sisters, Corene and Hazel with us along with Janet and Lou Ann. More relatives came this year than last. There were fewer tents and more motor homes and trailers.

On our way back we decided to go to Disneyland. We were lucky to rent a reasonable motel in walking distance to Disneyland. We also went to the Wax Museum and Knots Berry Farm. Corene was older, but rode all the rides, and did all the things we younger ones did.

She did at times have trouble keeping up with us. We all had a great time.

The big news of 1974 was the resignation of President Richard Nixon. Gerald Ford was sworn in as the 38th U.S. president. The bad news for the Directorate for Maintenance employees at Sharpe Army Depot, was that maintenance was closing. In 19 months or less, we would all be gone. I was lucky that I had

nearly 30 years with the government. I could bump many employees; that is the way the game is played. When you bump into a new job, however, you are not popular with the supervisors, or the other workers. I was eligible for retirement, at reduced annuity. If I worked until I was 55 years old, I would be paid full annuity. I decided to go for the full annuity at age 55. I would have liked to retire at this time, but after all my years service, I didn't want to take less than full annuity. Many eligible employees chose to retire. During 1975 many positions were found for employees that didn't have enough time to stay at Sharpe Army Depot. These employees transferred to government installations across the country. I was kept busy checking the transferring employees out. The employees had to turn all tools and equipment in to me to get their clearance to leave the depot. I had some friends leaving the depot every week.

In May I had hernia surgery, having to take six weeks off from work. When I returned to work in late June, I started turning in machine shop equipment that I thought wouldn't be needed. I knew the cutting tools that were used the most. I also had records showing how often the equipment was used for several years back.

In the spring of 1975, Gary, Greta, and my son Tom took a Florida vacation. They also took Little Gary and Jenny with them. I was in Dameron Hospital after my hernia surgery. I told them that they had relatives that lived in Florida, three great aunts. I encouraged my daughter Greta, to look the aunts up, if she got a chance. I gave my kids their addresses, so they did visit Aunt Lavergne and Uncle Charles at Hialeah, also Aunt Lucy Montgomery, Aunt Libbye and Uncle Carl Hucabee at Jacksonville. Later the kids went to Shreveport, Louisiana, to visit Aunt Mable and Uncle Robert Smith, also Woodruff County, Arkansas.

Grandmother Long fell when she attempted to answer the phone, fracturing her hip. The doctors preformed surgery to repair her hip. Grandmother grew weaker and died two days later, on March 4th, 1976, at the age of 90 years old.

On May 11, I closed my supply room. I had safety equipment that had to be available for the workers use.

My supply room was the last to close. I worked with other supply personnel, identifying equipment that had been turned in. After two weeks we were sent to the sheet metal shop to assemble storage bins, to keep us busy until we were reassigned to our new permanent positions. I had known for some time that I was going

to the shipping division at Sharpe Army Depot.

I went to shipping on June 16, with a good attitude. For more than thirty years I had been a government employee. I had never had much trouble adjusting to different departments or assignments. I had been a shop supply employee for more than fifteen years, and would have preferred to retired there. I had only four more years until retirement. I was told by many that shipping was a difficult place to work but, I believed that with my experience in supply, and with the many times I had to adjust to different situations during my long government service, that I would have no major problems. I was ready for the challenge. I soon found out that there was a lot of work at the Shipping Branch. The supervisors were under much pressure, and often made mistakes in handling personnel. To make a long story short, the workers in most cases actually hated their bosses, from the man at the top down to the lead man. They all tried to give me a bad time at first. The worst problem I had was with the woman I had bumped, or replaced. I had known Inez for a long time. We had been neighbors on Williams Street. Mattie and I considered Inez a good friend. We sold our home on Williams street to her. I was really surprised at the

attitude of that woman. Inez would not help me, or tell the locations of anything. My second day at shipping, Inez took off from work, hoping to make my new job as difficult as possible for me. I complained to the supervisors, but got nowhere. I soon learned to do my job without the help of anyone but it wasn't easy. I didn't like the system, I had no respect for my boss, and was determined to transfer out of shipping. I was determined that my performance on the job would be excellent, to show everyone that I didn't need or want their help. Eventually, I think I earned respect from most everyone but, I never forgot how much easier it could have been for me if the supervisors had forced Inez to give me some help, like she was suppose to do by government regulations when someone with more time bumps them.

On Sept. 4th, Our daughter Lou Ann, married Thomas Ransom, a young man she had known at Franklin High. Tom and Lou were married at Reno, Nevada, on our 28th anniversary, or seven leap years after Mattie and I were married at Reno. Tom has proven to be a very respectable family man.

Time passed fast at Shipping, In late autumn, I saw Jim Camblin at the Directorate of Supply office at Sharpe Depot. Camblin had worked briefly in the

machine shop. Jim Camblin was now Chief, Watercraft Storage Division at Rough and Ready Island, a division of Directorate of Supply, Sharpe Army Depot. I liked Jim Camblin. I told Camblin that I would like to work at Watercraft storage. Camblin said, "Milt, come on over to Rough and Ready". I wanted to transfer out of Shipping Division, so Mr. Camblin just might be my ace in the hole. In only a few days, there was a job opening at Watercraft Division. I was sure I could qualify, after reading the job description. I submitted my application papers, and soon got a notice from the Personnel Office that I did not have the experience in watercraft preservation to qualify.

As a boat coxswain, I thought I was experienced in the preservation and maintenance of landing craft that must be ready at all times. As a boatswain's mate, I was in charge of many boats and coxswains, also responsible for maintenance. Boats always need maintenance. I have never desired a boat of my own.

I remembered that I had listed my boat experience, when I first applied for civil service employment. I decided to go to personnel and have someone explain to me, why I didn't qualify for the job. The young man at Personnel retrieved my records and decided after checking twenty years of my service, shook his head

saying "I don't see anything in your records, Mr. Yarbrough". I informed the man that I listed the boat experience on my original employment papers. After reading my original work records that I submitted in 1947, the man agreed that I had enough experience to qualify.

I was sure that if I was referred to the Watercraft Division for an interview, I would be selected for the position. I was hired by the foreman before I sat down for interview. I had known Chuck Hamond, the foreman, for a long time. I am sure that the Chief had told Chuck Hamond to hire me.

I started working at Watercraft Storage Division on January 17, 1977. The Waterfront at Rough and Ready was as cold as I remembered it to be when I worked there as a stevedore, when I started my civil service career thirty years before.

On my job, the work was sometimes dirty and difficult, there were many unforeseen problems encountered in activating and testing obsolete machinery, getting vessels ready for shipment on time.

We knew what we had to do to make each vessel ready for shipment. The old, rusty, boats looked almost like new when shipped. Every detail was done to restore the boats, we even restored the wood work on the tugboats,

this took a lot of time but, we were never rushed, or told how to perform our tasks. We were on our own, but our work must pass rigid inspections.

I will admit that I had a feeling of demotion, although I made more money at Watercraft Division. I had worked in an office at shipping, I worked in a supply room for over fifteen years. I now climbed down in the bilges of dirty, rusty boats. I had to work with, or around chemicals, smelling the fumes. The change in my working conditions were hard for me to take physically. I was sick a lot until my body adjusted.

On September 2, 1977, while I was working on an old rusty tanker, I was informed I had a new granddaughter. I now had a daughter and a granddaughter born on Sept. 2, Janet and Jill. They were great anniversary presents. September 4th is our wedding anniversary, also Tom and Lou Ann's anniversary, the proud parents of little Jill Nicole.

We went to the Rowell reunion near Sedona, Arizona. We drove Royce's motor home. Many of the relatives came that year. We went by Las Vegas on the way. Gary, Greta, and family drove their van. We all traveled together going to Arizona but, Gary and Greta went on to Colorado. We traveled at night on our

return trip. The desert was hot even at night, when we were at Needles, the temperature was 110 degrees at 10 PM.

In 1978, Dad decided to go to the Stephenson reunion at Crosbyton Texas. Dad and Mona ask Mattie and I to go with them to help drive. We decided that we would like to go with them. My sister Rae, had recently bought a new Datsun. John and Rae decided to travel with us, driving their new car. Planning to go on to Arkansas after the Stephenson reunion, we all spent the night at Dad's and left Lindsay, August 2, at 6:46 AM. We had a nice time traveling together. Dad's Chevrolet used a lot more gasoline than Rae's little Datsun. We stayed the first night at Holbrook, Arizona. We spent the next night at Aunt Bea's house on the farm, near Morton, Texas.

The next day we visited my cousins, Melvin and Pat Yarbrough. We ate dinner and had a great visit. Melvin is a good farmer that works hard to grow the best crops in the county. Melvin has been named, "Farmer of the Year". Melvin and Pat really enjoy farming, they also make a good living.

The next day we drove to Lubbock, where most of the Stephensons' now lived. Mattie and I spent the night at my cousin, Robena's home. Barney Watts,

Robena's husband had recently died of cancer. We had a nice visit, also a few relatives came by to play music.

Robena is a good musician.

At the reunion I saw cousins that I hadn't seen in many years. Many relatives that were young when I lived in Texas, were now getting old. I enjoyed talking to everyone.

After the reunion, John and Rae drove to Woodruff County, Arkansas. We drove to Dickens, about 65 miles east of Lubbock. Mona had relatives that lived at Dickens. We planned to rent a motel, but the one motel was full. The refrigerator at the restaurant quit working. The desk clerk called Matador and reserved a room 30 miles away. We were tired and hungry.

When we arrived at Matador, the restaurants had closed. There would be no Texas Chili for us as we had planned. Mona and Mattie opened our ice box and found only some bread and mustard. Mona and Mattie made them each a mustard sandwich. They asked Dad and I, to have a mustard sandwich. Dad was disappointed that we found no place to eat, and at first refused the mustard sandwich. After watching everyone eating the bread and mustard, Dad decided that he was too hungry to refuse food of any kind. We were all so hungry that the mustard sandwiches actually were delicious.

The next day was Sunday, we drove to McAdoo and to the farm where we lived before we moved to Arkansas. The house was gone; only a few houses in the community were still standing. Large farmers had bought the smaller farms, and tore down the houses, where so many happy families once lived. We drove to the Stephenson farm. Joe Nathan Stephenson, a musician owned the farm at the time. Joe, the son of Nath Stephenson leased the farm to a big farmer. Joe Stephenson was on the road most of the time as a professional musician.

We visited Mona's relatives at Dickens and some of the Stephenson's at the home of Lewis and Helen Stephenson Harvey. We tried to see as many relatives as possible before driving to Lockney to visit with Mattie's brother and sister. Mona's Aunt Ruby Smith also lived in Lockney. Dad and Mona visited with Ruby, while Mattie and I visited with Mattie's brother and sisters and families. Louis Ray Stapp recorded some fiddle tapes for me. Texas people like fiddle music.

I borrowed Dad's car to drive to Tulia, to visit O.B. and Ernestine. We spent the night with them. The next morning, O.B. Barnes and I flew over his many acres of land in his small airplane. We also flew over and into a canyon. I enjoyed the flight very much. We enjoyed our visit with O.B. and Ernestine. After lunch,

we drove back to Lockney to get Dad and Mona and drove to Jim and Jewel Stephenson's home. We heard some old family tapes made by Nath, his son Joe Nathan, also their friend, Raymond Brown. Raymond Brown was at the Stephenson home that night and played the fiddle for us. Nath Stephenson was now deceased. I recorded some of the tapes. Mattie got very sick that night, and didn't enjoy herself at all. Being sick at someone's home that she barely knew also made things more difficult for her. We spent the night at the Stephensons'. The next morning, Mattie was over her sickness. It was probably food poisoning! I enjoyed our visit, but I know Mattie did not.

We left Lubbock for Morton to visit Aunt Bea on our way back to California. We spent the night with Aunt Bea, before returning to California the next morning. We left Bea's house at 8:07 AM, Aug.11. We had a nice trip home.

Dad had been failing in health for some years, and didn't get out of the house much. After the first few days on the trip to Texas, Dad's legs got much stronger, and his eye sight improved considerable. We were amazed at how much the exercise of getting in and out of the car improved Dad's health. We all enjoyed the trip. I am glad I was able to go back to Texas,

and be with Dad each day for twelve days.

In December, my brother Stephen Penn died of a heart attack. He was only 25 years old, and had only known for a short time that his heart was defective. Stevie and my son Tom were the same age. It was a terrible shock and a sad time for our family. Stephen had a young wife Shirley, and one son, Stephen P. Jr.

I remember that 1979 was a busy year. We shipped some tugboats, also many landing crafts. This was my last full year to work before retirement.

Uncle Charles died in early May. Aunt Lavergne called my son Tom to come to Hialeah, Florida, to help her take care of business. Auntie no longer drove, due to poor eye sight. Now in her eighties, Auntie needed help. Tom was unemployed at the time, and glad that he was able to help. Gary and Greta decided that they would go and help for a few days. Greta, Gary, and Tom got a flight to Miami that evening. Little Gary and Jenny stayed with Mattie and I while Gary and Greta were gone. Aunt Lavergne gave Greta and Gary her Volkswagen camper to drive back to California. Gary decided to have a nice vacation at New Orleans, before visiting Greta's Texas relatives. They had some mechanical problems with the Volkswagen, but managed to drive it home.

Tom stayed in Florida for about three months but he missed his friends in Stockton. After getting Auntie's business taken care of, Aunt Lavergne had little use for her Lincoln. Tom called each week encouraging me to come to Florida to visit Auntie and drive the Lincoln back to California. We decided we would visit Aunt Lavergne and visit the other two aunts at Jacksonville, and Aunt Mable at Shreveport. Mattie had a brother and two sisters in Texas we could visit after touring the southern states.

After I worked all day July 17, Mattie, Janet, and I got ready for our flight to Miami. Gary and Greta drove us to the San Francisco airport. We boarded the plane about 9:50 P.M.. We were airborne about 10:30 P.M. We had a nice night flight, non-stop to Miami, arriving at 5:45 A.M. the morning of July 18. We spent most of the day visiting with Aunt Lavergne. We drove around some, we also changed the title on the Lincoln.

We liked the car. We would put many miles on it on our trip. The next day we went to the Hialeah Race Track, and later to Miami Beach, and on to Ft. Lauderdale. We ate that afternoon at the Reef. We had a very enjoyable Thursday.

On Friday, July 20, we drove to the Everglades. We rode an airboat, and we went to a Miccosukee Indian

village, where we saw a man (with some fingers missing), wrestle alligators. We also cleaned and arranged Auntie's garage later that day, Aunt Lavergne wanted me to try to sell Uncle Charles' tools and a lot of miscellaneous items that I could not take back to California with us. Auntie told me to take any tool or any item in the garage, that I had room for in the car. We did make room for a few items that I brought home. On Saturday Tom and I went to a huge flea market and found a man who was interested in buying Aunt Lavergne's tools and miscellaneous items from her garage. I didn't get much for the merchandise, but we cleared out everything from wall to wall. On Sunday, we went shopping for souvenirs.

Monday, July 23, was my birthday. We did some yard work for Auntie, we dug out some shrubs and pruned. That evening we celebrated my birthday at the Kapok Tree. We had dinner and drinks at this beautiful place. The Kapok Tree was a restaurant and a park with many statutes. When we returned to Auntie's home that night, we packed our luggage and loaded the Lincoln to be ready for the road the next morning to begin our tour of the southern states. We all loved Auntie, it was hard to leave her. The drive up the Florida coast is a day's drive to Jacksonville. We stopped at

Daytona Beach and ate a late lunch. We also stopped at St. Augustine for awhile. We stayed in Jacksonville that first night on our trip. The next day we visited Aunts Lucy and Libbye, who now lived at the same retirement home. Their apartments were next to each other. Later we visited Aunt Libbye's daughter, my cousin Beverly at her home. Beverly's husband Don Fletchall was at work, we didn't get to meet him. After a nice, but short visit with Beverly, We headed for the Georgia line. We rented a motel at Macon. On July 26, we spent some time at Nashville. We went to the "Country Music Hall of Fame". We also went to a recording studio, we didn't stay in Nashville but a few hours. We spent the night at Jackson, where we found food and lodging very reasonable. I liked Jackson, I don't think I ever heard so many birds singing at twilight time as I heard when I was in Jackson. The next morning we drove to Memphis and went to Graceland, and to Elvis Presley souvenir shops. At the time we visited Graceland, there were no tours inside the mansion. Tom drove us around the Memphis loop a few times before some nice people showed us the way to the Mississippi River bridge to Arkansas.

I could remember the names of the towns between Memphis and McCrory on Highway 64. It had seemed like

a long distance to Memphis in 1940, when I had last been on that road in a cattle truck. The roads and cars were much better in 1979. Before I realized it, we were in Woodruff County. There was nothing that looked the same at McCrory or Augusta. We drove to the Revel community and stopped at the Revel store which was still in business. Everything had changed; the roads, the houses were gone. I didn't know when I got to the farm, where I lived for eight years. The old home place had burned years before. The only thing at the sight was the old oak tree that once had a hitch chain that my grandfather used to hitch his saddle horses.

We went to the Memorial Cemetery at Augusta where my mother, my grandparents, two uncles, and one aunt were buried. I had always thought I would like to go back to visit Woodruff County, but hardly anything was like I remembered it. Instead of remembering the fun times, I must confess, I was depressed.

I did get to see a few people that I knew who remembered me. Talking to my old friends and neighbors helped me to overcome my depression. I regret that I didn't have the time to visit more

I will mention some of the relatives and friends I did visit: Mrs. Ollie Preller and her children, my

cousins Gayne, Menord, and Arthur. (Victor Preller the father was now deceased). We visited Miss Lucille Miller at her home at Revel, and we her brother, Mr. Alex Miller at the bank at Augusta. I remembered Dorothy Willis who worked at the bank. I saw a classmate, Hellmuth Unverricht at his store at Augusta.

I saw Bud and J.B Gideon, (the Gideon brothers lived on the Yarbrough farm for many years). I saw Helen, and her son Buster Fuller, black neighbors at Revel who now lived in Augusta. I was really surprised to find Sink and Ded Green living on the farm at Revel, after so many years. I was really glad to see them.

We stayed two nights at Augusta, on Sunday morning we drove to Little Rock to visit my cousins. I called Aunt Adaline, Charlie and Tom Long, but got no answer.

I couldn't remember the married last names of Virginia, Mary, and Elizabeth. The weather was very hot. After calling back, I decided that the Long clan must have gone to Hot Springs to the family cabin, or maybe to a family get together at the home of one of the women. I decided that we would head for New Orleans. We stopped at Gould, Arkansas to buy something cold to drink, but the drinks we bought were warm. We were glad to get back in the air conditioned car, and be on our way. We bought some souvenirs at

Vicksburg, Mississippi and spent the night at Jackson.

We ate breakfast at Crystal Springs, a neat old town that we toured and enjoyed just walking around and looking at the stores and buildings. The prices were very reasonable.

All of my life I had wanted to go to New Orleans.

We rented a room early in the day. The Big Easy was a busy city, with many tourists, also much traffic. We waited until later to take a bus to the French Quarters, we stayed until about midnight. We all enjoyed the excitement, but one night was enough for me.

On Tuesday we left New Orleans and drove to Shreveport and rented a room and Mattie found a place to wash our clothing. We noticed that prices were higher at Shreveport. The markets had beautiful displays of produce. They were breathtaking. Wednesday morning we called Aunt Mable Smith before going to visit her. We had a nice but short visit, leaving about noon for Texas. The rain at Fort Worth was such a downpour, that we had to pull to the roadside and wait for the rain to let up some before we could travel on. We arrived at Louis' and Dorothy's home at Lockney just before eleven that night. We spent the next day with Louis and Dorothy Stapp. Henry and Viola were on

vacation at the time. We spent Wednesday and Thursday night with Louis and Dorothy, and drove to Tulia on Friday to visit O.B., Ernestine, and Mattie's sister Ollie. Mattie's family all got together that evening for a potluck and fish fry. We had a great time that evening, seeing most of the relatives for miles around.

On Saturday morning we left early to go to the Stephenson Reunion at Crosbyton, Texas. It was good to be able to attend the reunion again. We had planned to be at Crosbyton at this time anyway when we decided to go to Florida and tour the southern states. This was the last time I would see many of my cousins.

After the reunion, we drove to Brownfield, to visit my first cousin, Lorene Yarbrough Gregory. Lorene had cancer, and was not able to attend the Reunion, as she had the year before. I'm glad we went to see her, because Lorene died the next year.

We stayed at Lubbock that Saturday night, and left for California on Sunday. We had a good trip to Lindsay, where we visited with Dad. Mona, Carolyn, and Winnie had gone back to Texas, to the Stephenson reunion, and were still visiting relatives in Texas. We spent the night with Dad.

We left Lindsay on August 8, for the last leg of our trip. We were gone for three weeks, seeing many

interesting things. I have many memories of this event, also the comfortable ride we enjoyed traveling in the 1968 Lincoln, a beautiful car. We arrived at home at 11:40 A.M, August 7. Tom had been gone exactly three months from California and was glad to be back.

I hadn't been back at work long after our vacation before I was needed in the Supply room because the supply man got in trouble over the records and property books that were not in regulation order. I spent three months in the supply room. I preferred working in supply, but to stay there I would have had to take a cut in pay. I only had a short time to go before retiring. However, I enjoyed the three months while it lasted.

I didn't take a vacation in 1980, planning to retire soon with a lot of time on my hands. I was ready for future travel. I had planned to retire as soon as I turned 55. When it got closer to my birthday, I decided to stay on the job until I had 35 years government service, which would be in October. I certainly didn't have any intention of spending another winter on the waterfront. The summers on the waterfront were nice because we spent a lot of time testing vessels. We often took long cruises down the channel to make sure the boats were ready for service

and could be shipped. The testing of the boats was what I liked best.

The decedents of Marvin Yarbrough had our family reunions around August 20 each year. Because of conflicting trips the past two years, we had not had a reunion since 1977. Gary and Greta encouraged us to be sure to have a reunion that year. Gary and Greta had also planned a retirement party at the same time for me. I was asked by relatives about retiring and I told everyone I planned to retire in October. The retirement party was a surprise. At the time it seemed a little too soon for a retirement party. However, the party turned out great, with just about everyone present. I had a cake, champagne, plenty of food, and even a pretty girl dressed in a Bunny outfit to sing to me. I had no idea at the time that I would retire in less than a week. I am sure glad that we had the reunion that year, it would be the last time that Dad would ever come to Stockton. I think Dad enjoyed the bunny girl as much as I did, although I noticed a tear in Dad's eyes while the girl was singing to me.

I went to work Monday thinking about retiring in two months. I also had many pleasant thoughts about the last weekend. I remember that we had plenty of work that last week. On Thursday about a hour before

quitting time, a call was received at our Watercraft office, to inform all employees eligible for retirement that a raise was due September first. We must retire the next day, which was Friday, to be eligible for the raise. I got more money by taking the early out than staying until I had the 35 years completed. I chose to retire. The next Friday after retirement, the Watercraft Division gave us recent retirees a steak dinner. My former working buddies presented \$50.00 cash to me instead of the customary fishing rod and reel. Because of my sudden departure, there was not enough time for anyone to buy a gift. Mattie and I had our picture made with a colonel, who gave a short speech and presented me with a retirement certificate. Mattie and I enjoyed the delicious steak cooked by Watercraft employees. I received a notice that I had been elected to receive the Degrees of Masonry. September 10, 1980 was the night of my initiation. I was busy the next three months going through the Degrees. I had a great coach, John Bradford, who spent many hours with me. The fact that I had recently retired gave me more time to learn and advance through the Degrees of Free Masonry. The day on which a man is initiated into this Venerable and honorable Institution is one of the more important days of his life and one

he will never forget. I had been concerned about my father's failing health for sometime. On Sunday, November 2, 1980 , my brother Eddie phoned from Lindsay to tell me that Dad had collapsed and was gravely ill.

The next day my brother Royce and I drove to Porterville, where Dad was hospitalized. John and Rae drove from Chico. Mona and all my brothers and sisters were at the hospital. We were told by the doctors that Dad had little chance of recovery. He was living on life support. On Tuesday our father died. It was difficult for us, yet living on life support is no way to live.

Dad had been both a father and mother to me since I was eight years old. He was also like an older brother, and my best friend. Always just one of the boys. Dad was a wise man, that profited little himself from his wisdom, yet he gave his children good advice.

Dad was a loving father, who tried to bring us up right. I have sure missed him.

I had never returned to Brawley after my discharge from the Navy. I had planned more than once to take a trip to the Imperial Valley to see that country again.

Always something would interfere with my plans. After my retirement the first trip we took was to Brawley and Mexicali. I also hoped to see some old friends. We

picked a hot time of the year to visit Brawley, leaving Stockton on July 6, 1981 for the hot country. My son Tom and daughter Janet, also granddaughter Jill, went with Mattie and me. We stopped at Indio, where the heat devastated us. I knew it would be even hotter at Brawley. Brawley is not a popular tourist attraction in July. The air conditioner had been turned off in our motel room due to the slow time of the year. It took a long time to cool off our room, so Janet and little Jill decided to take a dip in the swimming pool. They didn't linger in the pool, because the water was too hot. Mattie and I took a walk downtown, where there was no one on the streets, and few businesses open at sundown. I reminisced back to the World War II years, when Brawley was a very busy town. Even in summer, the streets were crowded with military servicemen. The jukeboxes were booming like everything else. I was unable to find any of my old friends in the telephone book. The heat must have moved them to cooler places. As hot as Stockton gets, the summers are cool compared to Brawley. The next day, we went to Mexicali, Mexico. After shopping and sightseeing for a while, we drove to San Diego. We went to Sea World while at San Diego. We all enjoyed the show at Sea World. We drove to Orange, California to spend the

night. The next day, we drove to Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, then back to Orange, and spent the night at the same motel. That night we went to Disneyland, and stayed until closing time.

We left Orange on July 9, and drove to the Universal Studios, spending most of the day. We spent the night with Mona at Lindsay. The next day we visited the graves of our departed loved ones at the Lindsay Cemetery, before returning to Stockton.

After our vacation, I helped John Flucard some, at Manteca, remodeling a building for an arcade that Gary had leased for that purpose. Our remodeling project turned out good. Gary ran the "Spacecade" arcade for three years.

We planned a trip while returning from our trip to Mexico, the year before. Tom, Janet, Mattie, and I had been from coast to coast and across the Mexican border.

We decided in 1982 that we would drive to Canada. This would complete our trip from ocean to ocean and border to border. Tom drove the same car, the 1968 Lincoln Continental all the way. We left Stockton on July 3, spending the first night at Eugene, Oregon. We watched the July fourth fireworks at Bellingham, Washington. On July 5, we drove to Vancouver, BC.

We shopped and ate dinner. Our stay in Canada was

short, yet very enjoyable. We left the border for the U.S.A. at 5:40 P.M. We spent the night at Seattle. The next morning we went up on the Space Needle and bought souvenirs. The scenery was beautiful. From the Space Needle we got a good view of Puget Sound. After leaving Seattle we drove to a rain forest in the Olympic National Park. We had planned to take a ferry at Port Angeles to Victoria, but we were too late for the last ferry. We drove late, arriving at Aberdeen at 10:00 P.M. that night.

We enjoyed the Redwood Forest. I drove the Lincoln through the Chandler tree with no room to spare on either side. We arrived at home at 6:00 P.M. on July 8. Trip completed coast to coast and border to border.

Janet worked at the Spacecade at Manteca for Gary and Greta, after school and on weekends. Mattie and I were proud of Janet's grade average through high school. Janet graduated from Franklin High in 1983, and applied for admission to the University of the Pacific, and was accepted. We were glad that Jan could attend a good university and live at home, this arrangement was convenient, and saved us thousands of dollars. Most of the tuition was paid by scholarships and the California Student Aid Commission. Janet and I

had many applications to complete by a certain date to qualify for the grants.

After graduation, a group of Franklin High School students, including Janet left for Hawaii on June 13. Lynn Imperial, Sandy Laguna, Shagay Davis and Janet were roommates. Janet said, "It was a great experience." Janet met Sherry Pratt, a young teacher at Franklin High. Mrs. Pratt wasn't one of Janet's teachers, yet they became best friends. John Pratt, Sherry's husband, was a teacher at Edison High. John and Sherry had three children, Rebecca, Brendan, and Brian, the baby. Janet was often a baby sitter for the Pratts', and became very close to Brian, a little rascal. Mattie took care of Brian sometimes. John Pratt bought some land near Arnold, and started construction of a big house in 1984. John asked Janet to help them build the house. Janet seemed thrilled to get to help. The Pratt family and Janet camped out that summer, while the house took shape. The exterior and roof were completed the first summer, before school started. Mattie and I were amazed at the progress that was made on the construction of the house.

Janet worked hard at U.O.P.; she made good grades. Her mother and I tried to support her any way we could. At this time Janet's education took first

priority. Gary and Greta decided that they would rent out their home and move to Arnold. Gary still worked in Stockton, driving a great distance back and forth to work. Gary II and Jenny liked their new school, and made good grades.

Greta and Gary invited Mattie and I to spend the Easter weekend with them, they had just moved into their rented mountain home. On Saturday before Easter, we were all enjoying the early spring, mountain air and sunshine. My granddaughter Jenny was riding a bicycle, playing daredevil, I think. Jenny came in the house after a fall, holding a crooked little arm with tears in her eyes. I had never in all my life seen a broken arm that looked as bad. I didn't know what to do. A neighbor made a temporary splint for Jenny. Gary had to drive to Angel's Camp to find a doctor to set Jenny's arm which had almost as many twists as a pretzel. Needless to say, all of our Easter plans were suddenly forgotten. Janet helped the Pratts' with the interior of their house in 1985. Janet enjoyed riding Little Gary's motor trail bike, while at Arnold. Janet was hurt riding the motor bike, and had to come back to Stockton for medical treatments for a deep puncture wound near her ankle. This ended Janet's house construction early, she enjoyed working with John

Pratt, learning a lot about building in the process. Janet was planning a trip to England as a U.O.P student early the next year.

Gary and family didn't stay at Arnold long. I remember that I helped them move back to their Stockton home, on my birthday, the day I turned sixty. The family enjoyed their brief stay, at Arnold, but were glad to move back to their Stockton home. Mattie and I were glad that they now lived closer to us.

During the autumn of 1985, Janet was selected for the "College Semester Abroad Program." The students must have a 3.0 G.P.A., to qualify for the program. Janet could have gone to many different countries, she chose England. Most of her studies were to be at Oxford. This was a great opportunity for her and an experience Janet would never forget.

Mattie and I were glad that our twenty year old daughter was going abroad. We were also concerned that Janet would have to fly many thousand miles to complete the round trip, spending many hours in the sky. Janet would also be in a unfamiliar country, even though the people spoke English. She would be gone for nearly four months. These facts are certainly a cause for parents to worry. Janet was always a responsible person, we trusted her judgement, but parents do worry.

On February 7, 1986, Gary, Greta, Mattie and I, drove Janet to San Francisco to take her flight to Newark, New Jersey. The plane started to taxi out to the air strip at dusk.

The following is a brief account of Janet's semester abroad compiled from her letters and things that she later told me:

Jan enjoyed the company of some Australian men on the plane that were going to Colorado to ski. The weather was cold at Denver. After a short stop over at Denver, Jan was on her way to Newark. After arriving at the airport, Jan took a shuttle bus to J.F.K., where she spent the day. During this time she got acquainted with some of the other students from all across the country who would be studying with her at Oxford. The plane was to leave at 9:00 P.M., but for some reason the flight was postponed until midnight. The Air India plane was huge, most of the passengers were East Indians. There was a lot of turbulence during the flight. Jan didn't sleep much, and didn't like the food that was served on the plane. Janet was tired from the long trip, and happy to set down at Heathrow Airport near London. A bus was there to take the students to their rooms.

After some rest, Janet called home to tell us that

she was in London. I remember that it was early in the morning. What a great relief it was for Mattie and me to know that our daughter had landed safely. The group met their contact, who would be one of the teachers and was responsible for their well being, like a chaperon.

Janet liked her director, David Whyte, a very nice and friendly man. It was snowing, and very cold, when the American students arrived at London. Janet was at London for about a week, and saw many interesting things, such as the British Museum, the Tower of London, Buckingham Palace, also the Tate Museum, to name just a few of the famous places she visited, before leaving for Oxford.

In a letter dated 2-16-86, Janet wrote, "Our last night in London was bad. Early in the morning, around 4 or 4:30, a maid fell from her balcony, and later died. She was really a nice and friendly girl, around 26, who had moved from New Zealand with a friend to London. Apparently, she got sick after a night out drinking too much, and went out on her balcony to throw up and lost her balance. She lived right across the hall from my room. I heard noise all through the night. I didn't know what was going on. Some of my classmates had stayed out late and I heard them come in. Then I heard more people come in, laughing and

talking, being noisy. I fell asleep again and was awakened by a woman, or two women crying. Then, I heard footsteps banging up the stairs, and a police radio. I thought that someone in our group had got in trouble. Now, the C.I.D, which is like the F.B.I, are coming out to question all of us. I'm afraid I may get what I heard turned around because I was sleeping. Oh well, it shouldn't be too bad. Love you, Janet"

After a week at London, Janet started her School for International Living at Oxford. She liked the family she stayed with. Pat, the mother was about 30, Mick the father was about 40 years old, the two children were, Lee 9, and Carly 6 years old. Pat was a friendly woman, who talked a lot, asking many questions about the States. Mick enjoyed teasing his wife and family. Janet was kept busy while at Oxford, doing a lot of writing, and going on interesting field trips to the Cotswolds, Stonehenge, and many other places. The sights were unbelievable, but hard to get to. There was also a lot of snow. Janet was sad to leave the Perkins family, Mick, Pat, and the children at Oxford, but looked forward to meeting her homestay family, Fred and Olive Munden, at Reagil, in the Lake District, in northern England. The train was late arriving on March 29. The weather is still very cold in March and April.

On Easter, Fred and Olive took Janet to Penrith for lunch, they had a huge meal and wine, later driving to a lake and hiked around. Janet liked the country living. Holly, a girl in the program lived right across the street. Janet said; " Reagil is a beautiful hamlet, it is very peaceful." Janet met Fred and Olive's daughters, Leslie and Georgie and their husbands, also Nicola, their younger daughter. The Mudens were a very nice middle class English couple, probably in their late 60's. The students in the program went to Scotland with their homestay families.

Scotland was nice, they went to Edinburgh Castle, and took pictures. Janet liked the Mudens very much.

The group were so glad to see each other, after they met back at Oxford after Homestay. It was hard to soon leave again for their Independent Study Projects.

Janet decided to do her project on English Folklore. After spending some time in a residential area of the Worchester district, she decided that to properly do her project, that she would have to move to a bed and breakfast in the country, a farmhouse. She needed to do fieldwork in the countryside where folklore was used and believed.

Jan found a bed and breakfast at Castlemorton, at a farm. Pete and Sue Rimell, the owners of the dairy,

were nice to her. They had two little boys, Oliver, 3 years old, and James, 5 months old. "It was nice to be around children again", Janet wrote us in one of her letters. The best place to learn about folklore was to drink hard cider with the farmers at the pub. Janet was encouraged to try the cider by the old boys. Jan drank some of the cider, and found it to be a tough drink, it was better never to drink more than one pint of the stuff. Jan found it difficult to get some of the people to talk, because they were scared to talk about ghosts and superstitions. There was a lot of work to do to finish the project. The project had to be thirty typed pages and there was little time left.

When the group returned to Oxford, the weather was nice. Janet and some of her friends rented a punt which was similar to canoe and went up a tributary of the Thames River before leaving Oxford.

On May 23rd, we received a phone call from Newark from Janet telling us that she would arrive in San Francisco before noon the next day, which was Saturday.

Mattie, Tom and I met her at the airport. That day will always remain one of the happiest days of my life, to have my daughter home safe.

We had a surprise homecoming for Janet. When we got home from San Francisco everyone was at our home.

The reception was great. With many friends and relatives present, I believe this was the biggest and best affair we ever hosted.

Mattie, Tom, Janet and I went to Orlando, Florida to visit Aunt Lavergne. We left the night of December 25th, arriving the 26th. We had a short but very nice visit with Auntie. We rented an Alamo car. We went to Walt Disney World. We returned December 30th, to the cold Stockton fog.

The big event of 1987 was when Janet graduated from U.O.P. She took a computer class that summer after graduation to earn her teaching credential. It took Jan four and one half years to earn a degree in English, communications and her teaching credential. She worked hard, making her mother and I proud of her accomplishments.

Mattie and I went to the Rowell reunion near Pinetop, Arizona, a beautiful place. We all had a nice time. The place where we all stayed was like a Dude Ranch. Our meals were cooked and served for us. We slept on cots in the bunkhouses. There were horses we could rent, a dance hall with a piano, also a ball diamond, a volleyball court, and a ping pong table. I didn't enjoy our drive back through the desert, looking direct at sun. The car didn't have air conditioning so we had

to roll down the car windows to breathe. The wind blowing in the car felt like a forced air heater. I got a terrible headache, I felt dizzy. We stopped at Bakersfield and rented a motel. I decided after that trip, I would never own another car without air. I planned to travel, now that Janet had finished school. While she was going to college, our most important concern was to help her get her education.

I bought a new 1988 Ford Taurus, a comfortable car for travel. Janet helped Mattie and me select the car. Janet, Mattie and I were anxious to see some of the interesting and historic places in our country. Mattie, Janet and I decided to take Jill and Tommy, our grandchildren to Disneyland, and the San Diego Zoo. We also went to Tijuana, Mexico. The grandchildren really enjoyed the trip. Janet worked as a substitute teacher the first semester of 1988, after her student teaching at Lincoln. She was hired as a regular English teacher for the fall semester at Franklin High, where she had graduated only four and one half years before. Early in 1989, we heard that Aunt Libbye Huckabee had died December 28, 1988. Aunts LaVergne and Mable are the last two of their generation.

I had, for a long time been interested in genealogy, but never got involved in searching old

records. My father was young when his mother and father died, and knew little about the family history.

Aunt LaVergne knew a little more about our family, because she was older. I asked her many questions, many of them she couldn't answer, but the few facts that she remembered helped me get started.

On March 10, 1989 Mona died. She had been in bad health for a few years, but didn't tell us her problems. Mona was a fun-loving person, she had many friends. Mona took good care of Dad after he became feeble. Mona worked hard to help her family in many ways. Our family will never be the same without her. Mona was the glue that held our family together. We sure miss not having Mona around. Mattie and Mona were the best of friends.

Ever since I was a boy in grade school, I had been interested in our founding fathers and the places involved in our independence. I planned a trip that would take us from Williamsburg, Virginia to Bunker Hill and many historic places in between. From Stockton to Boston is a long way to drive.

I decided that the thrifty and less time consuming way to take such a trip would be air travel to Norfolk Virginia, then rent a car, to visit the places that interested us. We would drive back to Norfolk, drop

off the rented car, and fly back to San Francisco.  
Next trip we might drive the Ford Taurus.

Tom drove us to San Francisco airport in the Taurus on July 7th. We were airborne at approximately 8:00 A.M., flying U.S. Air. We arrived at Pittsburgh at 3:30, stopping over for about an hour. We arrived at Norfolk at 6:00 P.M., and called the car rental to get a bus to take us to pick up our car. Soon we were on our way to Five Forks, near Williamsburg, where we had a reservation at the Five Forks motel.

The next morning we were at colonial Williamsburg before the Visitor Center was open for business. It was good that we got a early start because the weather was hot. We enjoyed Williamsburg, by 2:30 we had seen most everything, we were also exhausted, yet we had a lot of time to do other things.

We drove to Jamestown Island, only six miles from Williamsburg. The walk around the Island was relaxing, as there were only a few people there at the time we were there. The first thing that comes to mind at Jamestown is the world of John Smith and Pocahontas, and the Powhatan culture which relied on nature for all it needed.

We went to Yorktown, where General Cornwallis surrendered to General Washington. This completed our

tour of the "Historic Triangle," a region which had a major role in the creation of the United States. We drove back to the motel exhausted.

On Sunday we toured the house and grounds at Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson. Later we drove to Ash Lawn, near Monticello, the home of President James Monroe. We didn't tour the house, after touring Monticello, any other house would be a tough act to follow. We ate a picnic lunch on the grounds. We stopped at Manassas Park and looked around, before heading for Maryland, where we had made reservations near Forestville. We had trouble finding our motel on US RT 301 in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. The motel was small and well kept, located on Rt. 301 all alone. The place was nice and clean, but the water had a sulfur odor. We took showers, but we didn't drink the water. We rented the motel for four nights, while touring the Washington area. We took the train to Washington, having to drive several miles to get to the train station.

There is so much to see in Washington, much in walking distance. We walked instead of riding the Tourmobile.

On Monday we walked from the Smithsonian Museums to the world reknown monuments and memorials. We went

to the top of the Washington Monument. By the time we walked back to the U.S. Capital, it was late and time to take the train back to Maryland, where our car was parked. When we got back to the motel it was dark. As tired as we all were, we found a Chinese restaurant and had a nice dinner.

On Tuesday we toured the White House, the Ford Theatre and two more Smithsonian Museums, the Museum of American History and the National Air And Space Museum. Washington has it all! From Presidents to pottery, daVinci to dinosaurs, Kermit the Frog to the Kitty Hawk Flyer and the Spirit of ST. Louis. Only in the Nation's Capital can you enjoy such a unique mixture of history and novelty, most everything is free except transportation and food.

On Wednesday we drove back across the Potomac to Mount Vernon. After going through the beautiful old mansion, we spent a lot of time walking around the grounds, the gardens and outhouses. We walked along the Potomac River, where ships once unloaded supplies and loaded tobacco.

The next stop was at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial at Alexandria, Virginia. The vastness, dignity, and atmosphere of this beautiful Temple is unlike anything comparable in the world. The

movement to erect a Masonic Memorial to George Washington had its origin in a strong desire on the part of the Masonic Fraternity of the United States to safeguard the Washington relics in the possession of Alexandria- Washington Lodge No. 22. Washington was the first Master of Lodge No. 22 under its Virginia Charter and served in that office while he was President of the United States.

We drove to Arlington National Cemetery. We walked a great distance, finding many interesting graves. The beautiful, wooded hills of Arlington, on 617 acres is the final resting place of many of America's patriots, from foot soldiers to Presidents, from the well known to the unknown. The cemetery lies on land once owned by the Custis and Lee Families.

After leaving Arlington, we drove around Georgetown and looked around for a while. We were not able to find a good parking place. This would be the last day in the Washington area. We saw many interesting things, However, there is a lot we didn't see. It would take a long time to see everything in and around Washington D.C.

Our intentions were to spend some time in Baltimore on our way to Philadelphia. When we arrived at Baltimore a drenching rain was falling, and showed

no sign of letting up. Janet drove around some, but if we had got out of the car, we would have been soaked in one minute, so we had to travel on.

We had a reservation at the Budget Lodge at Valley Forge Exit of Pennsylvania Turnpike on route 202 at King of Prussia near Philadelphia. The location of this motel made it almost impossible not to wind up on the Turnpike, a toll limited access highway. Sometimes it is better not to get motel reservations.

We got to King of Prussia in time to visit Valley Forge that Thursday. On Friday we drove to old Philadelphia, and found a place to park on Arch Street.

We walked to all of the historic places, the Betsy Ross House, Liberty Bell, Carpenters Hall. and Independence Hall, America's Birthplace of Freedom.

We arrived at our motel at Union, New Jersey, with time to cross the Hudson River and get a look at "The Big Apple."

We rode a train to the World Trade Center in New York. We went to the top of the building, getting a nice view of New York City, also the Statue of Liberty.

By the time we stood in a long line to buy our tickets and get to the top, and back down to the first floor it was too late to go to Liberty Island. We did some shopping before taking the train back to the Maplewood

station, where we parked the car, and drove back to Union.

On Sunday, we returned to the World Trade Center to take a boat to Liberty Island to get a good look at the Statue of Liberty. We really enjoyed the cruise to Liberty Island and back to Manhattan. On our return, a light, refreshing, rain fell on us, making our day. Mattie remarked, " This is so nice and pleasant!" We walked the sidewalks of New York on that quiet Sunday, shopping and looking. There is not much going on in New York on a Sunday afternoon, but we enjoyed ourselves. When we returned to Union we bought a New York Pizza, we had some beer in a leaking icebox. We put the ice and beer in the bathroom basin and had beer and pizza that evening, instead of a hamburger. Mattie and Janet later found a place to wash our clothes. We would be leaving the New York City vicinity the next morning, on the road to Boston. We decided to go by Hyannisport, then to Plymouth, where we saw the Plymouth Rock and the replica of the Mayflower. There was a strong wind blowing that day. We had to unpack our coats. We had a reservation at the Chisholmes Motel at Saugus, near Boston. We had some trouble finding this place.

The next day, July 18, was a busy day, we walked

the Freedom Trail all the way to Bunker Hill, then back to Boston. We saw all the historic buildings along the way. We went on-board the U.S.S Constitution. When we walked back to Boston, needless to say, we were about to drop in our tracks. Gary had mentioned to Janet, that while we were in Boston, that we should stop in at the Cheers Bar, of T.V. fame, and have a cold one. I suggested that we should go to the Cheers Bar before leaving Boston. This was a unpopular idea, Mattie and Janet weren't interested in walking any farther. I was also tired but I told them that this was the last thing we would do before driving back to Virginia.

I finally convinced Mattie and Janet that we should go to the Cheers Bar, so we could tell Gary about the place. After quite a walk, we found the bar.

The place was nothing like the T.V. setting. We were lucky to get a table at the crowded bar. Janet ordered Samuel Adams beers for us, that we all enjoyed. I would liked to have drank one or two more, but we had a long way to go to get back to our motel at Saugus.

On Wednesday we drove back to Virginia Beach, a long drive. Janet did all the driving on the trip, and was tired of driving. We went to the beach the next day for a while, but we rested most of the day,

preparing for our flight back on Friday. We ate at a seafood smorgy that evening.

On Friday we returned to San Francisco. Tom was there to bring us home. The trip was great, we saw many things that I remembered from my history classes.

We had to keep moving to do all the things that we did in just two weeks.

I continued to research old records, I thought I had found my family line in Davidson, County, North Carolina. I called the library at Lexington, and was told that the Genealogist, Jeanette Wilson, was ill and not in that day, also that Mrs. Wilson's mother was a Yarbrough, before she married. I wrote Jeanette and soon got a reply sending family records. What a break for me. Jeanette Wilson is a distant cousin, I was on the right track. Soon another cousin, Karen Mazock, the Yarbrough family historian wrote me. I was told about a National Yarbrough Conference that was held every year. I learned more than I thought I would ever learn about my family.

In March 1990, our granddaughter, Jennifer Roley was in a terrible auto accident. While driving alone to a basketball game at Lodi, Jenny lost control of the compact car. The car turned over, throwing Jenny through the rear window. The car rolled over, on top

of her, resting on her chest.

A woman who drove by the scene of the accident saw a small person underneath the car, and called on a cellular phone to report the accident. A highway patrolman happened to be nearby and hurried to the scene. When the policeman arrived, Jenny was not breathing. The policeman stopped a man to help him rock the car enough to release Jenny from beneath the car. By inserting a tube down Jenny throat, she started breathing again, but her breathing stopped again in the ambulance, again the same procedure was necessary to start her breathing. The accident was at 4:59 P.M., Greta received a call at 6:25, reporting the accident. When Gary and Greta arrived at the hospital, they were told by the doctor that it didn't look good for Jenny. Gary called me from Dameron Hospital, Mattie and I rushed to the hospital. We were shocked and hurt beyond being able to explain our feelings even at this later date. I was very concerned about Jenny's condition. I was also pained to witness the hurt that Greta and Gary were going through. Jenny had many friends and relatives at the hospital. I think most of us said a silent prayer for her to survive that terrible accident.

Jennifer suffered internal injuries and head

injuries, a crushed sternum and broken collarbone, and many cuts and scrapes from glass and the barbed wire fence, that her body contacted after being thrown from the car. After several hours of unconsciousness, almost like a miracle, Jennifer commenced to respond. She healed fast, with only minor permanent injuries.

During the spring of 1990, we had a new roof, carpets, and wiring installed. We also added other improvements to our house. The reconstruction of our house took six weeks to complete. This was an expensive project. We were really glad when the work was completed.

I decided to attend the National Yarbrough Conference at Springfield, Illinois in July. After the conference, we planned to tour the Midwest and the South. The trip I planned, covered many miles, and several states.

Mattie, Janet, and I took a shuttle flight from Stockton to San Francisco on July 25th. We left about midnight for Chicago arriving at approximately 6:00 A.M. at O'Hare Airport. As soon as we rented our Buick Skylark from Alamo, we were on our way to Springfield to attend the National Yarbrough Conference. We met some nice Yarbrough cousins from different states. However, I was disappointed that Karen Mazock and

Jeanette Wilson weren't able to attend the conference that year.

There were a lot of historic places to visit at, or near Springfield where Lincoln lived from the time he was a young man until he became president. We drove to New Salem, 20 miles northwest of Springfield where Lincoln arrived at age 22. I really enjoyed our stay in Lincoln country. The conference was well planned. Roger and Delores Yarbrough of Champaign, Illinois, were the hosts of the conference.

On Sunday, we left Springfield to start our tour. We stopped at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and the Hall of Fame Museum. We took a bus tour around the famous 2 1\2 mile race track. We later drove to another famous race track in Louisville, Churchill Downs. We drove from Louisville to Cincinnati and followed the Ohio River for many miles. We spent the night at Portsmouth, Ohio. It was late when we arrived.

On Monday, we drove through West Virginia, stopping for a while at White Sulphur Springs, where twelve presidents took the mineral baths. We drove to Richmond, Virginia and visited the Museum and White House of the Confederacy. We drove from Richmond to Petersburg.

At Petersburg we went to the Civil War Battle Field and found the Crater. The time was late, so we didn't stay long. Everything was so peaceful. The quail were whistling "bob white", a sound I had not heard since a boy in Arkansas. Once this place was a bloody stand off between Generals Grant and Lee, that lasted for 10 months. It soon becomes clear why the siege of Petersburg is known as the longest and deadliest battle ever waged on American soil. Near the battlefield is the Old Blandford Church.

We found the old church at dusk, there was a meeting at the visitors center. The place was closed for business, but we were allowed to buy some picture cards of the Church. We also visited the grave of Richard Yarbrough, the oldest known grave dating to 1702. We are descendants of Richard Yarbrough, who came to Virginia from England about 1640. We spent the night at Petersburg. We had five busy days behind us on our trip.

The next stop on this trip would be the small community of Pendleton, North Carolina. My great grandfather, Sam Stephenson, left Northampton County after the Civil War, and settled in Woodruff County, Arkansas. When his daughter, Annie Stephenson, my grandmother was about 18 years old, she visited

Stephenson relatives at Pendleton. This was quite a long trip in those years. Grandmother often told her children about the trip.

We stopped at the post office to find out if any of the Stephensons' still lived in the community. The woman who worked at the post office told us that two Stephenson sisters lived about two blocks away. You could see their house from the post office. We drove in the driveway and saw a woman hanging clothes in the back yard.

After telling the woman, Ruth Phillips, who was one of the Stephenson sisters, who I was, and a few things I remembered about the Stephenson family, we were invited into the house. We met Mr. Phillips, a Baptist Minister, and Ruth's sister. Gay Stephenson was gone at the time. The home was a beautiful old house, that was once owned by some of the famous Lee family of Virginia, who were related to Ruth Stephenson Phillips. We had an interesting visit. When I returned home, Ruth had sent some Stephenson family history papers.

The next stop was at Hillsborough, where Captain Benjamin Merrill was hung for treason against the British Crown. I am a direct descendant of Benjamin Merrill, a leader in the Regulator movement which

preceded the American Revolution. Jemima Merrill, granddaughter of Benjamin Merrill, and Thomas Yarborough were married in 1798. The Yarborough and Merrill families lived near Lexington, North Carolina. We went to the Davidson, County library at Lexington, where Jeanette Wilson was employed. She had a doctor's appointment that afternoon. We didn't get to see her.

We visited the town square, where there is a bronze marker in memory of Capt, Merrill, erected by The Captain Benjamin Merrill Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution ( D A R ).

We missed our road at Charlotte, we stayed on Interstate 85, and drove to Gastonia before we realized we were traveling west instead of east. Due to the way the road system is laid out, it was very easy to make such a mistake. We had to drive all the way back to Charlotte to take 74 east. We stayed that night at Rockingham. We drove until after dark, we had a busy day.

On August first, we drove to Wilmington, and saw the battleship, North Carolina. The drive to Myrtle Beach, and on to Charleston was pleasant. We had planned to spend the night at Charleston. We took a bus tour of the city. Before we got back to the visitor's center the bus stalled from a dead battery,

near a flea market. While we were shopping at the flea market a wind storm blew in from off the Atlantic Ocean. The flea market people immediately closed their booths for the day. In all the confusion, Mattie lost a souvenir she had bought at the flea market. It had been less than a year since the Hugo storm had caused much damage to Charleston. The people were taking no chances. After the wind, then came the rain. We walked back to the visitor's center, where our car was parked just before the hard rain. Because of the rain, we couldn't see or do much. We left Charleston, and headed for Georgia. I would have liked to have spent more time at Charleston.

The next morning, we spent some time at Atlanta, shopping and looking, before heading for Birmingham. When we arrived at Birmingham, it was raining so hard that we had to park on the shoulder of the road for a while. The trucks ahead of us were slinging muddy rain water on our windshield. There was no reason to tour Birmingham in a rainstorm. We had to travel on. The weather was nice at Nashville, we were able to look around before dark, due to the long summer days. We spent the night at Nashville. By this time we had made up some time we had lost earlier, We were now on schedule again.

On Friday we drove to the Hermitage, touring the house and grounds, before driving to Paducah, Kentucky, later to Golconda, Illinois. I found the old Benham's Pharmacy building that was once owned by my great-great grandfather, who served in the 6th Illinois Cavalry during the Civil War. His grandson Cecil Long, also my grandfather was manager of Benham's Pharmacy early in the 20th century. I was surprised to find information, also pictures of my great-great grandfather, Captain Benham and my grandfather Cecil Long at the Library in Golconda.

We drove back to Kentucky where my grandmother Virginia Avey Long was born at Columbus. There is not much evidence that a town was once on the banks of the Mississippi River. The old town of Columbus slid into the big river. Grandmother told us about the excitement when the Showboat came to Columbus when she was a girl.

The sun was low in the west when we arrived at the place that looked like the sight of the old town, where the bank had broken. I decided to climb up the bluff to look for relics like old bottles. I only found a few broken bottles that I didn't keep. After a short time I attempted to climb down the bluff. I had to jump down to a lower level of the bank, when my leg

collapsed causing me to fall hard. I was barely able to walk to the car. We drove until 10:30 P.M., spending the night at Covington, Tenn. Mattie and Janet had to help me to walk. The next morning, I could not bear any weight on my leg so Mattie and Janet, each on one side supported me like crutches to get me to the car. It is a good thing that they are strong women. Our trip had been almost perfect until my accident. I couldn't get in and out of the car without help. There was little I could do.

We drove to Woodruff County Arkansas, Janet bought me some crutches at Augusta. I was able to get out of the car to eat on our way to St. Louis on Sunday, but it wasn't easy. We spent that Sunday night at St. Louis. On the way, we stopped and looked around at Advance, Missouri, the birthplace of my mother.

On Monday, we drove around St. Louis, I climbed the many stairs, on crutches, to get to the visitors center at the famous Arch. After crossing the river we visited the Cahokia Indian Mounds in Illinois. Mattie and Janet climbed to the top of the Monk Mound. The great platform mound at Cahokia-Monks Mound is the largest Indian mound north of Mexico. I didn't attempt to climb on crutches. We spent the night in Chicago.

We returned to Chicago one day earlier than we

planned due to my accident. On Tuesday we drove around Chicago, seeing many interesting buildings, Comiskey Park, Wrigley Field, and Lake Michigan. I know that Janet was tired of driving. On Wednesday we rested for our flight back to California.

On Thursday I was provided with a wheelchair and a aide to push me at O'Hare and at the San Francisco airport. The aide really had to run to connect me with the shuttle flight to Stockton airport. Tom and Nick were at the airport to bring us home, arriving before noon.

Mattie provided day care services for two boys, Nick Zarate and his cousin, Ben Romero. We kept Nick from six weeks old until he was nearly two years old. We kept Nick during summer vacations, also any time that his parents needed someone to look after him until he was twelve years old. Nick was like one of the family. We will always be close to Nick, and always glad to see him. We started baby sitting Nick in 1980. We started keeping Ben Romero when he was about six weeks old in 1989. Ben stayed with us until he started to a day care school in 1992. From 1992 until 1994, we kept him every Friday. Ben liked for me to play ball with him. Ben still comes by to see us sometimes. He always has a good story to tell us. We miss Nick and

Ben.

Mattie and her brother Altus, sisters Hazel and Ola Mae drove back to Tulia, Texas in our Ford Taurus for Thanksgiving, 1990. Their sister Ollie had been sick for a long time. After changing her prescription, her health improved. Ollie also changed doctors. The family had a great reunion that Thanksgiving. I stayed home and held down the fort.

The National Yarbrough Conference was changed to the Yarbrough National Genealogical & Historical Association, Inc. The conference was held at Decatur, Georgia in 1991. Bill and Reba Rice lived at Decatur and were great hosts that year. Several people that I wanted to meet were planning to attend the conference, that were unable to attend in 1990. Janet taught summer school that year and had little time for a trip to Georgia. We decided to leave on Friday, the last day of summer school. Jan had to have someone substitute for her the last day of summer school. I didn't like the idea of going alone, Mattie was going to a family reunion in Arizona the next weekend. I asked Jan if she would go with me, and she decided to go.

We only planned to stay in Georgia four nights, two at Decatur where the conference was held, and the

last two days near the Atlanta airport. Janet phoned Reba Rice and was told that her husband Bill would meet us at the airport at Atlanta and take us to the Holiday Inn at Decatur. Bill Rice was also going to pick up former U.S. Senator Ralph Yarborough of Texas about the same time, that we would be riding together from Atlanta to Decatur, no need to rent a car. Every thing went as planned at Atlanta International airport.

There were some confusion, but we all made connections, Ralph and Opal sat in the rear seat, Janet and I sat in the front seat with Bill. We had a nice visit with Senator and Mrs. Yarborough, two very likeable people.

Bill and Reba Yarbrough Rice are also very nice. I was pleased that Jeanette Wilson and Karen Mazock were able to attend the conference. I had corresponded often with Jeanette and Karen, it was nice to meet them in person. We had a big turnout that year. We met a lot of new people.

After the conference meeting was over, Jan and I had Sunday afternoon and Monday to visit some of the interesting places in and around Atlanta. On Sunday, we went to the Coca Cola Museum and Underground Atlanta. It was a nice way to spend a Sunday afternoon. We got a early start Monday to see some of the attractions of Atlanta. The MALTA Rail System is

modern, also one of the best transportation systems, and made most attractions easily accessible. We had little trouble getting around in Atlanta by rail or bus. Some of the places we visited were the CNN Broadcasting Station, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, Martin Luther King home and church. We had a busy and interesting three days and four nights.

Tom and Mattie brought Nick and Ben with them to meet Janet and me at the Sacramento Airport. Ben was two years old, and couldn't understand how I got there, asking me over and over, Papa, where did you go ? He called me Papa or grandpa.

Janet and Mattie drove Hazel and Ola Mae to the Rowell Reunion at Arizona that same week after Janet and I returned from Atlanta. They had a great time at the reunion. Janet had a short, but interesting vacation. The trip to Atlanta was expensive for such a short time, but I'm glad I was able to go.

Janet and I spent the rest of the year making copies and arranging genealogical records for family members. We spent a lot of time researching and did a lot of traveling to compile those papers. There is more research I would like to do.

The National Yarbrough Conference was held at Richmond in 1992. I planned a trip to fly to Detroit,

rent a car and drive to Quebec to see some of Canada, also New England, and eventually winding up at Richmond Virginia for the Yarbrough Conference. Mattie wrote notes as we travelled.

On August 6, 1992, Tom took us to the Sacramento airport to take Continental flight to Detroit, leaving Sacramento at 6:30 A.M. We arrived at Denver at 9:45, had a short lay over, leaving Denver at 10:30 A.M., arriving at Detroit at 3:30 P.M. We rented a car at Budget, leaving Detroit at approximately 4:30 for Windsor, Ontario. We saw some pretty farms on our way to Niagara Falls. We spent the night in Canada at the Horseshoe Falls Motor Inn, at Niagara Falls. The next morning we walked down to the Falls and took pictures.

The scenery was so pretty. The roar of the water is awesome. We went on a tour, 125 feet down under the falls. We left for Toronto about 11:00. On the way we saw Lake Ontario; it is really pretty. We didn't stop at Toronto, due to the noon hour traffic, leaving the city about 1:00 for Montreal. We arrived at 7:00, went shopping at Old Town, and took pictures. We stayed all night at Mont St-Hallower, Quebec, just outside of Montreal. We got an early start for Quebec. We went sightseeing, and did some shopping. We had a language problem, as none of us speak French. Quebec was one of

the most interesting places we visited.

We bought gasoline as soon as we found a service station in Maine. Gas is really expensive in Canada. We stopped at Augusta for a while, and bought post cards and took pictures of the State Capital. We had a problem finding a room at Concord, New Hampshire, We went to several motels that had no vacancies. It was a rainy night. We were really glad to find a room with only one bed. Milton slept in a chair that night. August 9, was a long day for us. We drove through the White Mountains of New Hampshire. At 11:00 we were in Montpelier, the capital of Vermont, a neat town. We bought food for lunch and some pure maple syrup. We had a quiet picnic lunch at a rest stop. We were in the state of New York at 2;30 P.M., stopping at Lake George to enjoy the scenic beauty and take pictures. Lake George is at the edge of the Adirondack Mountains.

We later drove through the Catskill Mountains. We were in a rainstorm when we drove near Woodstock and didn't take the exit. We lost our way in New Jersey, because of a road construction detour. A nice woman that worked at a supermarket, who was getting off work, told Janet to follow her to the Days Inn Hotel at Secaucus, New Jersey. We followed the woman from Harrison to Secaucus. We were tired, and glad to get

off the road. On Monday morning, we took a bus to New York. We went to the Empire State building. We went to the top of the building to take one more look at New York City. We had a nice lunch on the first floor. We walked the streets of the city, sightseeing and shopping on Fifth Avenue and Broadway. We were tired of walking early in the afternoon, and took a bus back to Secaucus to get our car, to head for Pennsylvania.

We spent the night at the Nomad Motel in Ronks, Pennsylvania near Lancaster. I discovered I had left my Shell credit card at South Brunswick. We went to a Amish Village and discovered we had left our camera on the bus in New York, also the Camcorder batteries were dead. Janet bought a throw away camera at Lancaster. We bought a few things at the Amish Village.

We drove to the Gettysburg Battlefield and museum.

Before we could tour the battlefield it started to rain, actually it was a downpour, we couldn't complete our tour. Well, we ate a cheeseburger at McDonald's, life is not all bad.

We drove in the rain all the way to Baltimore, We wanted to spend some time in Baltimore, it was raining too hard to look around. The last time we were at Baltimore, it was raining. We drove on to Springfield, Virginia, and spent the night. Not one of our better

days. We were sure the next day would be a better day.

On Wednesday we left the car at a parking lot, and took a train to Washington. We went sightseeing by Tourmobile this time. We went to the Arlington Cemetery, and watched the changing of the guard at the tombs of the Unknown Soldiers. We toured the U.S. Capital. We also spent some time at the Air and Space Museum. We drove to Fredericksburg and spent the night.

On Thursday, we went to a Civil War battlefield. Four major Civil War battles were fought at or near Fredericksburg. We drove to the home of Mary Washington, George Washington's mother, also the Kenmore Place, the home of Washington's sister, Betty.

We went shopping and bought a Bavarian cup and saucer, also a Washington, D.C. drum cup at an antique store at Fredericksburg. We had a relaxing change of pace, but we did do our laundry.

We drove to the birthplace of Washington in the rain, hoping the rain would let up. Well, the rainstorm got worse. We stopped at the Visitor Center and bought a souvenir but had to give up the tour, due to the gully washer. We drove back to the motel and watched television.

On Friday, we drove to Richmond to attend the

National Yarbrough Conference. The conference was held at the Holiday Inn Koger Center. On Saturday, we took a bus tour to Petersburg to the grave of Richard Yarbrough, the oldest marked grave at the Old Blanford Church yard, dating to 1702, age 87. We also toured the Petersburg Battlefield. I never thought in 1990, when we were at Petersburg that I would ever return. However, we can't read our future. We went shopping Saturday afternoon. We enjoyed the banquet, the food was good and the program was well presented that evening.

On Sunday morning, Aug.16, We headed north to Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and stayed all night at Clairsville Ohio. We found a pizza place, and had pizza and beer after a long days drive.

August 17th, we stopped at Columbus, and drove around the city. We went to see Columbus' Discovery of America, 500 years 1492 to 1992. A replica of the Santa Maria was docked there. We spent the night at Findlay, Ohio. Findlay is a neat and nice town.

The next morning we went shopping at Findlay. We bought a cream pitcher and matching sugar bowl at the Spayth Decorating Company. The set was made by the Imperial Glass Co, out of production since about 1982. We drove to Romulus, Michigan, near Detroit, also close

to the airport, and rented a motel for two nights. We went to the Henry Ford Museum on Wednesday. There was a lot of interesting things to see, taking most of the day. We returned to the motel and rested the rest of the day. On August 20th we didn't leave Detroit Metro until 4:30 P.M. to return to California. We left Denver at 6:19 P.M., arriving at Sacramento before dark at 7:50. It had been a busy two weeks, we were tired, but we saw many interesting places and things. It was a great experience.

On July 2, 1992 Aunt Maud LaVergne died at age 94. Auntie had a long and eventful life. She will long be remembered for her intelligence, kindness, and unconditional love for her family.

We didn't take a trip in 1993, I installed ceiling fans. My grandson Gary Roley, and I built a sturdy redwood back fence. We worked hard digging out old concrete, so we could dig new post holes. I enjoyed working with my grandson. The work was hard, but we had a lot of fun. Mattie helped us with the fence, also making our lunch and making us cold drinks. The July heat was a killer.

We had a Rowell reunion at Greenly Hill in 1994 at Lonnie Ray Rowell's trailer park. Henry and Viola, also their son Lawson, drove out from Texas. We had a

good time, most everyone from California was present. Corene Grahm, Mattie's oldest sister died January 29th, 1995. Mattie was a baby when her mother died. Her older sisters Corene and Ollie had to take over and raise the younger children. Corene was 85 years old, and the Rowell family's head "Honcho". We miss her.

Mattie and I had a busy summer, painting the house, repairing and painting the shop. The yard and garden takes at least two days a week. Mattie and I work well together. We still tackle some tough projects, and accomplish each with great results, by working together. Hard work has never bothered Mattie, she works too hard, but enjoys making improvements.

I celebrated my 70th birthday this year. All of our clan were present for the occasion. They had Thanksgiving dinner with us again, as usual in 1995. We get together during the holidays, but the children and grandchildren don't come around as often as they once did. They are all busy and have a life of their own. Tom has been very ill this past year. He has also experienced a great deal of financial problems. I hope things will turn around for him and Mattie and I.

When were the good old days? I've lived most of this century and I don't know. Every decade had the good as well as the bad. Looking back it seems that

when our nation had a great problem confronting its people, like the Great Depression or the World War, we the people pulled together. I have enormous respect for what the human spirit can accomplish in a troubled time. Why have the citizens of our nation become so willing to change our society? Change for change's sake is not always good. Our morality has been changed to fit our needs, instead of fitting our lives to morality. Our city, state, and federal governments have grown to the point that we can no longer support them. Too many of us want something for nothing. Pleading basic human rights as the reason given to acquire our desires. We no longer take responsibility for our actions but blame society for our problems. Redesigning civilization will only cause chaos, not a perfect society. We can be a great people. I believe that, we, the people must change our attitudes and go back to the values that made us great. No one person can help. The politicians tell us if they're elected they will fix everything. I'm too old to believe this nonsense. We, the people, must fix our problems by doing what we know is the right thing. I was raised during a critical time in my childhood without my mother. Our father raised us in an environment where pride, thrift, tolerance, and learning were important.

Today's children are raised by television where sex, violence, and a lack of morality are publicized and applauded. People need to take back their children and raise them with the same ideals the people of generations ago were raised with. Television doesn't have to promote a lack of morality; it can also foster good values in our children. This is the way I see the year of 1995 ending. I have hopes that 1996 will have better things to offer, but we, the people, must be the one's who do it.