

My Life Story

By

Grace Ballenger



Story Keeper



Judy Dasovitch

Acknowledgments

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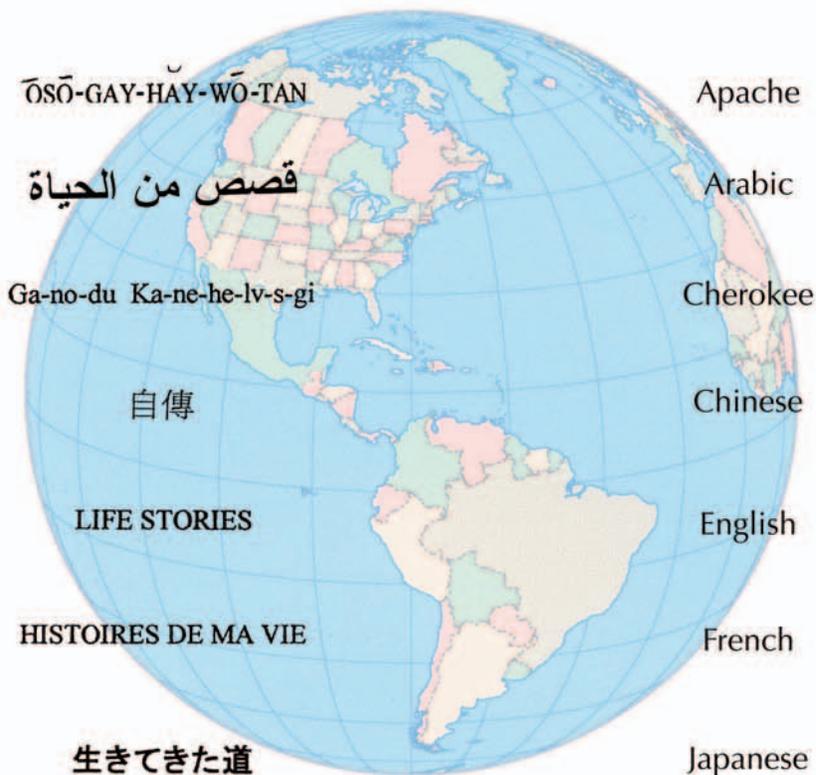
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Life Stories Project

Jim Mauldin, Coordinator
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The Ethnic Life Stories Project . . . giving the Springfield community a window to its diversity through the life stories of ethnic elders.





Preface

My heart is filled with gratitude...

To my story keeper, Judy Dasovitch. When I began putting words on paper, I kept thinking, "There is nothing very interesting in my growing years!" However, I found Judy to be such a warm, friendly person, it was as though we had been friends forever. She made me feel quite special. Thanks for all the time spent in making this happen.

To my parents, for giving me the chance to fulfill my dreams.

To Roswell and Alice Flowers, who have now gone to be with the Lord, for helping to sponsor me into the United States and for welcoming me into their home while I completed my years of high school.

And finally, to God for all He has given me.

Dedication

This story is dedicated to my husband Glenn, children and grandchildren.

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This character represents Grace Margaret Ballenger's father's family name, Chow." Her father's full name was Joseph Benjamin Ewing-Chow.

Chapter I: Family History

My name is Grace Margaret Ballenger. My maiden name was Ewing-Chow. My mother's mother was English and so was my father's mother. My mother's name is Margaret Hsia Ewing-Chow. Hsia is her maiden name. She was born in Shanghai, China. She was brought up with her father, who was Chinese, so she speaks Chinese. I don't speak Chinese at all. I wish I did know at least a little bit. I meet lot of people from China at St. John's Hospital where I work. They start talking to me and I don't know what they are saying, which is just a shame. I didn't appreciate it when I was younger as much as I do now.

I was named Grace. My mother had active TB when she was pregnant with me and was very worried that she would lose me. She felt like I was born by the *grace of God*. That's why she named me Grace. She has no signs of TB at all now, so we feel that God healed her.

My birth date is December 18, 1939. I was born in a hospital in Shanghai, China. My mother said a doctor at the hospital delivered me. Mother was in labor a long time, but there was nothing unusual during the childbirth. She was 25 when I was born and my dad was in his late 30's.

My Mother

My mother's dad was Chinese. He was a manufacturer. He owned a silk hosiery factory in China and was quite prominent. He was a graduate of Cambridge University in London and would travel to England often on business. England was very accessible. He met this young lady while in England and married her and took her back to China. (*See Addendum*).

My mother was raised English because her mother didn't know how to speak Chinese. Mother is also half English and Chinese. I remember Mother as tall and very fashionable. She was 5'6" and wore spiked high heels. She always wore fancy hats and fancy purses to go out and everything was coordinated. She is a lot shorter now. In fact, now she's almost shorter than I am.

My grandfather, my mother's dad, was a direct descendant of the Hsia Dynasty, which was the first dynasty of China. As it was the first dynasty, there is not as much documentation about it as there was about the second dynasty. It is mentioned in the encyclopedia as "Hsia."

When the kids came along, Mother said that they conversed in Chinese and English. My mother was bilingual and had to help her mother. Her mother couldn't speak Chinese so my mother would have to translate for her with the servants.

My mother and dad met in China at a ballroom dance. Mother was a ballet dancer and she taught at a dance studio. They got married and had two children. My brother is four years older than I am.

My Father

My father's name was Joseph Benjamin Ewing-Chow. He was born in Georgetown, British Guiana, South America as a British citizen. Now it's just Guyana, but back then it was known as British Guiana. We used to call it "Ge-yana." It was spelled G-u-i-a-n-a. Within the last 30 years the communists took over the country; they changed the name to Guyana.

He was born and raised in British Guiana. He went to England to study medicine and left after he graduated from Cambridge University. He received many honors. Back then they didn't have scholarships. He received letters and awards in cricket and tennis. Then he went to Shanghai to work for Shell Oil Company. Because he had British citizenship and wasn't a Chinese citizen, the Japanese took everything that he owned during the Japanese war--just confiscated it all.

Dad and Mother met at a social event for business executives. It was a dance. They had a lot of fun. Mother told me that when young gentlemen came over to work for companies that were in China, they would have these dances. Young ladies that could dance real well would be invited as chaperones, you might say, and dance partners. In his courting days, Dad was an excellent ballroom dancer! That's how they got together. My father planned to enter a medical residency at Cambridge but he decided not to after he met the love of his life in China.

My father was always a very stately, dignified person. He carried himself high and he was a tall person. You might not think of the Chinese people as being tall but he was six-feet tall. I remember Dad was always spotless. He was just that way, meticulous in whatever he did. I guess I most admired my dad, probably because we are a lot alike. He was always goal oriented and I tend to be that way. He was tall and handsome. He was always neat in his attire. Most of the time he wore a tie. Even at home you never saw him in just a regular T-shirt. I don't remember ever seeing him in that. He always had a shirt on. Dad always dressed to come to the table. And when he got up in the morning, he made his bed. When he came out of the bedroom he was fully attired. This is the example he set for us.

Dad died at 87. He was sharp-minded right up to the end. He died a natural death in his sleep. He was tall and handsome. He had some ailments from old age. He had a couple of carotid artery surgeries, kidney problems, and some high blood pressure, but nothing major.

I was closer to Dad than to my mom. Our personalities were very much alike. He and I could talk. He was always the businessperson; that's where I picked up my business sense. I am also goal oriented. Dad was that way. If we set a goal, we were to proceed with achieving it. Don't wait for tomorrow. My mother is more laid back and it's hard for me to deal with that. Mother and I weren't that close. I think my brother and my mother have a close relationship.

Dad and Mom were very devout Christians. Whenever I was in trouble or had a worrisome feeling, I called my mother to pray for me. I still do to this day. I'll ask, "Mother, pray for me. I'm going through a trial." I feel like she will handle it. I don't know what I'll do when she's gone. I'll have to ask God myself. That sounds terrible. No, I do pray, don't get me wrong. But Dad and Mom were just really very good Christians and very devout. They prayed for us and brought us through a lot of times when we weren't close to God.

My Brother

My brother's full name is Joseph Bruce Ewing-Chow. He goes by his middle name, Bruce. He lives in New Orleans. He's single. My brother is tall; he's 6'2" and has very high cheekbones, as my dad did. He looks like an American Indian. When he lived in Oklahoma the Cherokee welcomed him in and thought he was Cherokee because of his features. It was ironic; he could have pretended that he was. He loves a lot of the Indian culture and he always has. He has a lot of Indian art; he goes to a lot of their sales. In fact, he's in Seattle, Washington right now. He's a consultant and he travels a lot. He went on into Montana and they have a lot of these sales where the Indians come in and sell their wares and if you are truly an Indian they gave you a discount. They were giving him the discount prices, thinking he was one of them; he purchased many bargains. But he does look very definitely Indian, more so than Chinese.

He worked for Service Master, which is the cleaning company. He was one of the managers who go around and get bids, set them up and get them started. He worked with the school system and with hospitals. Right now he is retired, but they have him doing consulting when they have a problem area. He travels, but he has a choice of saying, "Yes I want this job, or no, I don't want this job." He is doing very well.

Chapter II: The Early Years

I don't remember much about Shanghai other than what Mother tells us. We left when I was about three. Maybe that's good because Mother says that there were some rough experiences that we did have. (*See Addendum*) My brother remembers some little things but really not much--probably more so from talk.

During the Japanese War the Japanese took our home and all of our possessions. I don't remember any of this, but Mother says that she prayed that both Bruce and I would not be effected by all of this. She said that they did try to put us in a camp. It wasn't really a concentration camp. It was kind of an intermediate camp. Food was limited. They would give us cereal with weevils in it. Mother said that she would feed us first and then maybe they would eat. My folks were there for just a short period.

My family all had British citizenship. We were released to go to my grandfather who was Chinese because we did have some Chinese in us. He had a home in Shanghai, so we stayed there. He lost all of his silk factories during the war. The country was turning to communism at that time. Not him, but everything was going that way. He lost everything. They were just happy to hold on to the home they had and their lives. My mother said that right around where my grandfather's home was, they would ward off a block. In order for you to get to the next block you would have to go through these barricades. The Japanese checked everyone out. They just took control. I don't remember any of that, thank goodness.

Since my Dad was born in South America and had British citizenship, we were given permission to leave and go to Guiana. Then the war broke out. I was about three when we finally left. They let us leave right after the war because my dad had British citizenship. We could have stayed, but the communists were taking over and we didn't want to get into that. Dad decided we had better get out while the going was good.

We went to England. I don't remember a whole lot about England. We were in London for about a year. I barely remember that. The most I remember about London was VJ Day - fireworks and big celebrations, like our Fourth of July, if not bigger. I remember going up in a big tower overlooking London and everything was ablaze with all of the fireworks; it was beautiful. I don't remember where it was. Mother said we went to Buckingham Palace and went to all the tourist sites. I vaguely remember some big huge carriages, which must have been the coaches. I remember the coaches because I remember stepping up this little step. I must have been real tiny then and, oh, everything was so plush. I do remember that but whether it was just from the talking or the pictures, I'm not sure.



Grace Margaret Ballenger with her brother, Bruce and her parents, Margaret and Joseph Benjamin Ewing-Chow

Mother said we stayed there a year because we couldn't get a ship. The ships just came in every so often and we couldn't get a ship to go to Guiana, which was our final destination. So we had to wait in England until a ship was available to take us all at one time.

Chapter III: Growing up in Guyana

It must have been 1944 when we went to Guyana. We went to Georgetown. That's the capital of Guyana, or British Guiana at the time. It's British, and French and Dutch on either side. It's in the north of South America. Georgetown is right on the edge, close to Venezuela. It is very tropical. Lots of fruit. That I miss. Lots of fruit and close to a lot of jungle too, because I remember my folks going into what we call the "interior" and being gone for days and coming back to Georgetown.

I don't remember our arrival. My dad is from a large family and of course all his family lived there in Guyana. They were wealthy owners of sugar cane estates. When we arrived in Guyana, his dad and mom had died. The family had divided the estates among family members and they were in the process of getting rid of everything. I think one of the brothers still had some of the plantations. Big companies were in the process of taking over the sugar industry in Guyana. My dad was in his late 30s.

We had our own house close to the seashore. If we looked out the back we could see the seashore. We were slightly below sea level. All the homes were built on stilts. There was what we call a sea wall surrounding the entire seaside. It was probably about three feet high and was designed to stop the tide. We had to climb the sea wall in order to get onto the beach. From the beaches close by we could see the ships coming in. Our house had three bedrooms with a living room, small dining room, kitchen, and one bath, very modest. We parked our car underneath the house where there were storage areas for garden tools. There wasn't anything that really could get damaged in case of water coming up.

I don't remember any actual hurricanes, but we did have a lot of storms and occasional high winds. We were at the very top on the eastern side. We had rain but I don't remember heavy tropical rain. I don't even remember high winds like there are here. Maybe we were buffered in some way by our location; on the other side we might have had them. We had a lot of rain, more in the fall than in early spring. We definitely did not have tornadoes. I had never heard of tornadoes until I came here. We had hot summer weather. Our winters were warm and rainy. We did not have winter as we know it in Southwest Missouri, and we never had ice.



Grace and Bruce in British Guiana

My brother and I both had our own rooms. I remember that we always had to make our own bed and keep our room tidy. That was a must. Sometimes I was allowed to go and observe my brother's sports activities. Most of the time when I was not in school I was involved in church activities and girl scouts. We had outings with the church--Sunday school type activities. We had a lot of church picnics. The weather was always warm.

My brother had a dog, a family pet. We used to walk the dog. His name was Teddy, a name my brother gave him. He was just a mixed variety, not a special breed. They're real good family dogs.

I liked to play the guitar. I don't remember where I picked that up, maybe at church but I would pluck away on the guitar. I used to play it at school sometimes. I really don't know how to ballroom dance but I love dancing.

I always wanted to dance. My mother hurt herself while dancing.

Therefore, she would never let me take dancing lessons. Minister's children were not allowed to take dancing lessons on those days. So this was not an option for me. Bicycles were popular so I would ride my bicycle and wait outside the studio until they got out and then go on home and play with them. Once I got older we danced a lot. We would go to a lot of dances held at the school. It's good exercise.

In our church services and in school assemblies, there was a lot of instrumental music. Some played the mandolin, some ukulele. I don't remember drums. I think the people over there were just musically inclined and that was their way of expressing their feelings. We always had instruments in church. Sometimes I worshipped at the Catholic Church; I don't remember instruments being played there. However, Mother and Dad joined the Assemblies of God church while in British Guiana and they had music with a lot of instruments. I'm charismatic now. In the Assemblies of God church they have instruments.

I don't remember watching television. Television was available and some people owned one, but we didn't have time to watch it. We were so occupied doing other things. I don't remember watching television until I came to the United States.

The holidays were always celebrated with my dad's family. He was from a family of fourteen - a large family. The oldest sister had a big house with a large dining room so she always hosted holiday celebrations. It is also a Chinese tradition to gather at the oldest sister's house. Everybody would bring a dish or we would go over there and cook. I remember the sisters all cooking. I don't remember being involved in actual cooking, of course, I was too young. But I do remember all of the sisters and the wives of the brothers would be in the kitchen preparing. It was always a big Chinese meal, really good. It was a huge event because they had many children. I think Mother and Dad probably were the only ones that had two children. Everybody else had four or five or more. So it was always a big event and gathering.

We celebrated many of the same holidays that you do here. Until I came to the United States we didn't celebrate Thanksgiving or the Fourth of July. I don't really remember celebrating Chinese New Years or any specifically Chinese holidays; but we must have because I remember us getting together and having big Chinese dinners and firecrackers. It must have been Chinese New Year, which comes during the third or fourth week in January. It probably just blended together in my memory. It was the big event, almost bigger than the Christmas celebration. It seemed to go on forever! As far as national holidays, I don't remember anything in Guyana at all. About the only holidays I really remember were Christmas and New Year's.

In Guyana, we ate all kinds of food, Chinese and native food. I didn't always care for some of the native foods, but we were taught at home to eat whatever was put in front of you. You know, because of the "starving kids in China". No. I'm kidding! We were brought up to eat anything, and so we tried to eat whatever was put in front of us. The food didn't bother me at all, and I always liked what I had because I always thought it was very tasty. I found English food to be bland. I do remember that. It's good food, but they just don't use much salt.

We had servants in Guyana. It was fairly common in Guyana. Most of the middle class had at least one servant or even a part-time person. Women didn't work but Mother was so busy with the church that we had to have one full-time servant. Women who didn't work were able to take care of their own homes. But many times they would have somebody just to do the ironing and the washing. Bruce and I had household chores that we had to do aside from having the servants. We didn't wash clothes or iron. I learned to iron by watching, because I wanted to be part of it. I remember ironing with Ada, the servant. She was a black lady and she was almost like a mother at times. Many times she would stay and take care of us while the folks went into the interior. She always fixed our meals as well. We also had a gardener.

School in Guyana

I remember a lot about school in Guyana. In the teen years, schools were located in town. I went to the Ursuline Convent, which was a private, girls' school. The public schools were not very good; so everyone who could afford it tried to send their children to the Catholic school for their education. Most of the private schools were Catholic. My brother went to the boys' school. Of course back then boys and girls went separately. I loved the Ursuline Convent. The nuns were very good to me.

I would say that Guyana was predominantly Catholic. There were some Methodists and Brethren and maybe Presbyterians. I'm not familiar with the Brethren movement here. I would say they are probably kind of like the Methodist. But they called them Brethren and they were real popular, I remember that.

My folks traveled a lot. Since they were in the ministry, they'd go into the interior and be gone for days; so I would go into the convent and stay with the nuns. Mother, in fact, was very afraid that I was going to become Catholic because I would go to mass with them. I really loved it. The school was about 10 to 12 blocks away and I rode my bike. My favorite teacher was one of the nuns. In fact, I got pretty close to several of the nuns, but one in particular. She was an elderly nun and she took me under her wing.

A fond childhood memory for me was entering a word scramble contest in the newspaper. I won a bicycle. It was a brand new, full-sized, ladies' bike, my first! I was still in grade school when this happened. I remember it was almost too big for me. I was in Guyana at that time. I could barely touch the pedals when I got out on the street; I finally grew into it. That was the bike I rode back and forth to school and to my friends.

Everybody rode a bike. Everybody had their own bike, and they would ride to the market, ride down to the store. There were a few cars. We did have a car. In fact when Mother came to the United States on furlough, she purchased the car and brought it back. She would go to the US sometimes for three months at a time and then come back. We probably had more modern conveniences than some of the other families did because of Mom's trips. Mother purchased a refrigerator where others had a type of ice box. We did have electricity of course. I don't ever remember not having electricity. But the refrigerator was a big thing, especially when you could fix your own ice cubes, not an ice maker now, but regular ice cubes.

My Parents in the Mission Field

Dad worked for ESSO Oil Company in Guyana. He was in the import-export side of the oil business. Mom was a housewife at that time because she had quit her dance studio. In China, my mother was hurt while she was teaching. She taught ballet and acrobats and ballroom dancing. She also taught Chinese dance. She hurt her back and was crippled for a while. That's when she got to know the Lord. A Christian gentleman, I think it was a relative of my dad's, talked to my mother and dad about Christ. My grandfathers were raised Buddhist. The relative talked to Mom about the Lord, that the Lord could heal her, etc. She did get saved and then she got her healing.

Her healing is a story in itself because she was crippled. She had gone to doctors and they had given up. She couldn't use her legs. I don't think she needed a wheelchair; she just couldn't get around. I believe this happened before I was born.

After we got to Guyana and Dad was working, they both decided to get into the mission field. They studied and joined the Assemblies of God Church. They became missionaries for the Assemblies of God and they opened up a church there in Guyana. Catholics were dominant and there were Presbyterians and Methodists. The Assemblies of God was different, so they decided to join them because God had been so real to them. My dad's brother was involved in a lot of Christian movements. I am not really sure whether the church contacted Mother when she came to the United States to visit or whether the church contacted my parents in Guyana, but Assemblies of God wanted to have a big presence in South America. Assemblies of God have been around for a long, long time. They were small, but they've really grown within the last several years.

I was between seven and nine years old when they started preaching. I don't remember it as actually such a change other than Mother and Dad getting into something new. They opened up a church and worked to contact a lot of the native people. Through that they were instrumental in changing all of our lives, which I remember as being very positive. As we got older I remember both my brother and I were involved in church all the time. We grew up in church. Everything was geared around the church. The holidays, everything was pretty much geared around it. My folks just lived at the church. Their lives were strictly devoted to mission

work.

Parts of that experience were negative for us as kids. As children we didn't celebrate birthdays. I don't ever remember having a birthday party, exchanging cards or any type of celebration like that because we were always involved in some church event. I do remember having Christmas parties, but they were church Christmas parties. And of course, my birthday was close to Christmas so we always had some church function going on. And Valentine's-- I don't ever remember celebrating Valentine's when we were young, or even talking about it. When we look back, I think Bruce and I missed that a little bit. We would wish each other happy birthday. Now, with my grandkids, I go overboard. Maybe it's because of my childhood experience. Their birthdays and other holidays are very special to me because I like to celebrate.

Friends and Teens

I have several very close friends. Jeanette was my best friend. She was the one with whom I could have taken ballet. She would go to ballet lessons and I'd ride my bike to wait for her. We would go on over to her house and hang out. She lived not too far from where the teacher lived. She was my very best friend at that time. When I moved to the United States, we corresponded for awhile; but in her early 20's she became sick and died. I don't remember what illness Jeannette encountered that took her life at such an early age. I lost track of her parents. She had one brother and I don't remember what happened to him. I lost touch after that. I didn't correspond with anybody from Guyana. There were several friends that Jeanette and I ran around with, but I guess that she and I were the closest.

When I was a teenager we weren't allowed to date. Some of the girls in my class that were a little more adult acting--you know how there are always those--would date some. I remember one gal in particular. Her dad was a physician, the chief surgeon, and, as in Europe, he was housed on the hospital grounds. Jeanette and I would ride over and spend time with her because she always had toys and other plush stuff that she got from the United States and England. I remember that she dated; she acted a lot older than the two of us. She would go out on dates. We just didn't. Most of my friends and I would go out in groups and we'd go to teenage dances.

We did listen to a lot of radio shows, stories. They were probably the same stories that you had here in the US. I liked to read books. I was a book person. I remember my brother had a lot of Hardy Boys books. I liked reading those mysteries and I loved Little Women. Those are the two series that I really remember paying attention to.

We went to see a few movies in Guyana, but not many. One of my dad's relatives, I think it was his nephew, owned a movie theater several miles away. Occasionally we would go over to his place and watch movies. My folks were very particular about what I was exposed to. If there was anything risqué at all, even a love story, we were too young and they didn't want us to have any part of that. So we watched a lot of "Laurel and Hardy." I definitely remember that. Movies were not a big part of our lives because Mom and Dad didn't believe they were a good way for us to spend our time.

I did wear makeup a little bit. I was very young then, so I didn't wear a lot of makeup. That was never an issue. We didn't have to wear long hair like some people think Assemblies of God people do.

Chapter IV: Living in the United States

As I progressed through high school, Mother wanted me to come to the United States. She wanted it for both my brother and me. She was anxious for us to get more exposure to the Assemblies of God community and to get away from the Catholic atmosphere of Guyana. The nuns were very good to me and I was swayed by that. Catholicism was becoming a part of me because I was at school so much and I loved it.

My mother and dad had very good friends here in Springfield who had helped them start their mission in Guyana. Reverend Roswell Flower was the general secretary of the Assemblies of God organization, which was headquartered here even then. He and his wife, Alice, were also the overseas contact here in the United States. This was years ago. The Flowers sponsored me so that I could come to the U.S. I lived with them and they were my guardians until I was able to live on my own.

The Flowers were quite active in both church and community affairs here in Springfield. I learned a lot from them about the United States, about Missouri, and about Springfield. Of course I read the *Shepherd of the Hills* book prior to coming, so I would be well informed.

I remember excitement, fear and anxiety when I was getting ready to depart Guyana. I was just a little girl, maybe 14 or 15. I wasn't quite prepared to leave yet. We had been waiting for my permanent resident visa and passport to arrive so I could travel with Mother. For some reason, Mother had to go ahead and leave. I don't remember if she had appointments in the United States and had to be there by a deadline, but she left. She got as far as Trinidad, which is an island probably about an hour's plane ride from Guyana. All the planes from Guyana had to stop in Trinidad. Mother was in Trinidad and I was at school. I got a call in the middle of the afternoon, probably about noon or one o'clock. It was my Dad. He called the nuns to tell them that I needed to leave right then because my papers came through and I was going to be able to take the plane that evening.

I said quick good-byes to all my friends and to the nuns and everybody and then ran home. I hadn't packed anything, none of my treasures - nothing. So I had to just throw things in. I was allowed to have two suitcases and one overnight or carry-on. I left a lot of my treasures and things with the understanding that Dad

would send them later. I remember that I was anxious and excited about going, because I wanted to go to the United States and study. That excited me. But I was also apprehensive because I had never been on a plane before and I was by myself. I remember telling Dad goodbye and sitting on the plane and just praying that I'd make it. I held my breath as we took off. That was really scary. The sudden change and the fact that everything happened so quickly were kind of devastating.

The Flowers were super, super people. They included me in everything. They made sure I had friends. I was just like a daughter to them. They were very good to me. I couldn't have asked for better people; but still it wasn't like having Mom and Dad.

When I got to Springfield I was really impressed with the mountains. Guyana was entirely flat and below sea level. I was really impressed with the mountains and the hills and all the Ozark "hillbillies." I went down to Branson and it was quite rustic at that time. It wasn't built up like now. We visited *The Shepherd of the Hills* cabin. I was really impressed that things were basically like the book. Everything was pretty much the way I had it pictured. The scenery and even the reenactment, all the people, were pretty much quite real, like in the book.



*Roswell and Alice Flowers with their
"adopted" daughter, Grace*

Of course Springfield was very modernized or I thought it was. The Flowers were active members of the symphony, so we attended performances. They would get tickets for the Little Theater. I was not used to that sort of thing in Guyana. There were no orchestras or theaters that I remember. In fact, I didn't have a chance to play an instrument other than the guitar. We didn't have band in the school.

People seemed to accept me very well. I didn't look for problems. In Guyana we had two major class distinctions, a very poor class and a rich class. I never had an outsider's mentality because I didn't grow up with those feelings. I wasn't on guard for racial discrimination. For a time there were more blacks than the Asians in Springfield. More Asians started moving into town and soon we outnumbered the blacks. We all mingled so I never felt like I was being shunned or that someone didn't want to chum with me because of my nationality. I always felt accepted.

The teachers were very nice in Springfield. I remember a Mrs. Simmons who took me under her wing for a little while. She was a high school teacher; I had her for a homeroom teacher one year. She invited me to her home for tea because she knew I was alone. She would help me with my schoolwork when I felt like I didn't quite understand some things like American History. But I never once felt like there was any prejudice from the teachers.

When we came to the United States, my brother and I spent many Christmases alone. We did not have our parents for Christmas because they were overseas and received sabbatical leave only once every 36 months. They couldn't get away. There were two or three Christmases while I was in high school to which my parents could not come. To me it was a sad time.

A Teen in Springfield

As a teenager here in the United States we didn't date. We'd go out as a group from church or from school. There was a place on Glenstone that had a big huge gymnasium. The area is now part of Evangel University. They used to have teen dances there. All the high school kids would go. There was no liquor or anything like that. I remember going out there and spending time.

We also attended movies, church youth groups. My closest buddies are the ones from here in the United States. They all live here in Springfield. They are the ones that I play bridge with: Mary Jo, Anita, Edna, Claudette, and Jeannie. Jeannie was my ex-roommate. Anita passed away a couple of years ago. We were all pretty close. We kept in touch.

I graduated in 1957. I have attended several reunions and I always have a great time. Sometimes I don't want to go thinking I won't remember people. But once I get there I always love it. I see people that I had forgotten about; it is neat watching how people really do change. Somebody that you thought, oh, they're not going to amount to anything, did; and then the ones you think really would have amounted to something didn't.

My brother came to Springfield also. He came first, for college; then I came to finish high school. I went to Central, previously called Senior High School. They had just changed the name at the time I started. I graduated the first year that Springfield's second high school, Parkview, opened. Several of my friends went over to Parkview. I lived on the north side of town so I stayed at Central. I had my last two years of high school here in Springfield.



Grace's senior class picture, Central High School, 1957

I worked during my last two years of high school. I was in a program where you go to school and then you can leave early to work. I was trying to make money in order to put myself through college. When work was over, I didn't get to party like some of the others. Oh, I enjoyed life. I worked until 11:00 at night. If I could get off, we went to the dances; but most of the time I was just a working girl. I was geared for that. When I got out of high school I wanted to get my own apartment and make my own way. I was busy. That was good because it probably kept me out of trouble.

I worked as a switchboard operator in the evenings at Burge Hospital. Burge became Cox North, but we all knew it as Burge-Protestant Hospital back then. I lived on a bus route, so I took the city bus route or I walked. That was the cheapest way to travel. There were cabs, but they were too expensive. I don't remember if people talked very much about cabs; none of my friends or family rode in cabs.

I rode the bus. It took awhile to go anywhere. You had to plan a lot. The Flowers lived across the street from Central Bible College. The bus came right out in front of their house. I would ride into town - a good thirty minutes. Both the high school and Burge Hospital were on that bus route. The bus would drop me off right in front of the hospital. At night I would take the bus back home again. I wasn't afraid. The buses were very safe. But it would take a good 30 minutes, sometime 45, to make the trip. You had to plan around that.

I attended Evangel College for two years taking general college classes and science. At the same time I studied x-ray technology at Burge Hospital. Then I went on to the University of Missouri.

I lived with the Flowers until I graduated from high school. The summer after I graduated I got my own apartment. It was closer to Burge and I had to take call. I thought it would be easier for me to get back and forth if I lived nearby. The area around the old Burge Hospital was very nice. Now it's gone down a little bit, but back then the homes were pretty nice. We lived a couple of blocks over from the hospital and we could walk to work. I lived there until I was married.

My Parents Move to the US

My parents came to Springfield after I was married and had children. When they knew we were going to settle here, they came on up. My husband and I purchased a house for Mom and Dad so they could retire.

Everybody moved out of Guyana whenever the communists took over. My Dad's sisters have all passed on now. I believe a couple of them died in Guyana and then the others moved to Canada and California and settled there. When the communists started to take over Guyana, my mother came to the United States first. Luckily, Dad was granted his visa and departed to the United States with just a few personal belongings. Dad had to wait because he had British citizenship papers. Mother did too, but she had a permanent visa to travel to the United States for the Assemblies of God church. We were in the process of trying to get Dad a permanent visa so he could stay in the United States and not have to go back

We were separated just for a short period, maybe six months, before Dad was able to obtain his citizenship. My husband and I were living in Texas at that time. Dad got his permanent visa and then he moved in a house behind ours when we were living in Beaumont, Texas.



Mother and Dad

Chapter V: Working

I wanted to be a nurse from the time I was small. After I started my first year of college, I thought I would take several science courses to prepare my way and then go on to nursing school. At that time, you had to be single to be in nursing school and you had to live in the dorm. I was dating Glenn. I knew he would be moving on to another school somewhere. I was contemplating if I wanted to stay here in nursing school three years then go somewhere else for my fourth year to get my B.S. The other option was to transfer with him. Transferring in nursing school wasn't easy. I mean you just didn't do that. I had to make a hard decision.

I decided that I would try the x-ray school. You could live off campus and go to x-ray school. I could still be in the medical field. I could also work where I was already, at the switchboard as a telephone operator in the evenings and make money while I was going to nursing school. So, I chose that. I started in x-ray school and then after two years my husband and I got married. He was then ready to go on to University of Missouri so we transferred.

At the University of Missouri I worked in the X-ray Department. That's how I started in nuclear medicine. When I went to apply for a position as an x-ray technologist, there were a couple of other people from Springfield whose husbands were also transferring. They all wanted jobs in x-ray but only a few jobs were available. They asked us if any of us would be interested in doing isotopes, called radioisotopes at the time. They didn't call it nuclear medicine. I was always open to challenge and I thought it would be a good opportunity if they would let me. They said try it out and if you don't like it, when a job opens in x-ray, then you can have that job. There was more money in radioisotopes so I chose to go on up there. About all I learned in x-ray school was thyroid uptakes and scans. When I took the radioisotopes job, I started learning on-the-job. That was in 1960. About all they did was thyroid uptakes. We did a few very early brain scans, but they were just starting to come out with that.

We did thyroid function studies mostly, like the T3. *Hamolsky's* thyroid was where you use the resin uptake. That's exactly what we did. We'd have to label our own resin. Of course Missouri University being a research center as well, we did a lot of that. We did a lot of work with I-131, because of thyroid cancers. Missouri seems to have quite a bit of thyroid cancer around, so we did a lot of thyroid work. I liked it once I got up there; it was very challenging. It was a new modality, and I really, really loved it.

I grew up in nuclear medicine. I just stayed with it from then on. I went to Nuclear Medicine School at the University of Missouri. I went to school at the medical center in 1960, and then I became a registered nuclear medicine technologist in 1962. I was one of the first to take the exams offered by the ARRT. We had to go to Illinois to get registered.

My present occupation is Administrative Director for Nuclear Medicine Services here at St. John's, in Springfield. I have held this position for approximately 12 years. First I worked as a technologist here at St. John's and then became nuclear medicine chief technologist. I was the only technologist here in 1966. We finally grew and added people. I was the chief technologist and as the department grew, then I became the administrative director. Now we've got satellite facilities. Then we added brain scans, liver and bone scans. CT took over the liver/spleen, so we developed into the area of cardiology. So I have been employed at St. John's for 35 years, as of November of this year. I'm a fixture, I guess.

I enjoy being able to serve others. I think it's very rewarding. I enjoy doing it. I enjoy working with patients, especially seeing the positive results of the impact of working with them, and how they can manage their situation. I love being part of the physician's management of patients. The imaging is beautiful! I also enjoy the fact that the field is ever changing. We started with thyroid function studies, then we added brain

scans, and then liver scans. We went to bone scans and CT and cardiology. It just keeps evolving. Now we are starting PET imaging. The field has evolved over time and remained fascinating to me. I like something that is challenging.

Chapter VI: Marriage and Family

I met my husband at the Burge Hospital coffee shop. I was working at the switchboard at the time. He was going to SMS and working at Triple A Ambulance Service here in town. He would come into the emergency room and his team would take some of their breaks in the coffee shop. That's how I met him. The gentleman that owned the ambulance service knew me quite well. The crew would always stop by the switchboard in the evening to let us know they were on campus; if we needed to page them we could get them real quick. So I knew the owner quite well because he was up there all the time. He was always trying to get me to date Glenn. He was trying to fix us up.

When we first met I was probably nineteen. He's four years older than I am. I really wasn't that impressed with him at first but I thought he was pretty nice. I tried to fix him up with my roommate, who was a nurse in the emergency room. She wasn't getting along with her boyfriend, who treated her like a jerk. I said, "Marilyn, you've got to meet this guy who I think is a gentleman and would be a real good date." We planned on having Glenn come up to the apartment. We'd give him a meal and then they'd go on off on their date and do whatever they wanted. So I fixed the meal and we had him over. But, lo and behold, at the end of the meal here comes Marilyn's guy that she had been seeing, unannounced! I ended up with Glenn. We went out to play miniature golf. Here I was trying to fix Marilyn up with Glenn and I ended up with Glenn and we've been together ever since. That is literally how that happened. I had no intentions of getting Glenn. We were friends.

We started dating in 1958. We got married in 1959 due to a combination of circumstances. I was losing my roommate because she was getting married. She landed up getting married three days before I did and we were in the wedding. Glenn was leaving. He was getting ready to move to Columbia, Missouri. We decided to get married before he left. It was kind of on the spur of the moment. I didn't want to bother my parents with a big wedding. We went to Miami, Oklahoma, and got married over there. I just remember it was a real awful winter day because the guy that stood up for my husband was in law school at the University of Missouri. He had to drive down and he barely made it here. In fact we had to wait on him due to the icy road conditions.

We picked Miami, Oklahoma because it was just easier to get to. The other place was Hot Springs but the roads were really bad going down at the time. Of course they're not that great now, but at the time it was real bad. I think Miami had a better highway at the time, and that's probably why we went there. My ex-roommate, the one that got married, stood up with us and then my husband's best friend came. We had a quick little ceremony and that was it. Our honeymoon was very short, just one night in a hotel. The weather was a deterrent to going anywhere else. It was really icy; we slipped and slid over there. We've been married for 42 years.

My husband, Glenn, definitely had a profound influence on me. He has helped me reach my goals. He was always very supportive of me especially when I was going through college and learning such a lot of new things. I spent a lot of time raising the kids, and he was very supportive in helping me. He has never stood in my way of my profession. He doesn't understand it, but he has always listened. When I have challenges I can always bounce ideas off of him. He doesn't comment a whole lot, but he gives me a supportive ear. I can just pound it out on him.

Glenn is a very kind, caring and loving person. He is laid back. He doesn't get excited about anything. He's not one to flaunt his emotions out in public. In whatever he does he is sincere and that I like. He is reserved in showing his emotions, sincere and optimistic. He's the stable one in the family, and someone I can confide in.

God has been good to my family and kept my children from taking the wrong path despite having a working mother. They just didn't get into trouble. They were very active in band and sports as teenagers. We would go to work and leave work and be part of their sports. We made them our lives. We kept on the go. I can see now where it paid off because the children were kept busy. I don't feel like they suffered because I worked and Glenn worked. We discussed that with the children. We told them financially that if I worked, they would just be able to have a few more things than if I didn't. We had a choice. It didn't seem to bother them. They managed very well and they were willing to do their part, and they did. They were good children. Both children graduated from college and have good careers. Penny's a schoolteacher and Jay is in a management position with Hoffman Supply Company here in town.

Penny is our oldest. Her birthday is October 7, 1960. Penny is not married. She is much like her dad; she is reserved in showing her emotions. We are very close. We love to shop together, and we like girl talk as most daughters and mothers do. I feel like she can confide in me and I can confide in her, too. Otherwise I feel like she's real close to her dad in certain things. She loves sports, and she loves to talk to her dad about sports; I don't know anything about sports. I don't really like a lot of sports other than tennis. There is a little different bonding with her and my husband; they can talk.

My son and I are very much alike. Jay, our son, was born two years after Penny, December 28, 1962. His name is Glenn Jay, but we chose the middle name. He's a detail kind of person. My son is small framed like I am. He and his dad get along, but there has always been just something a little special about my relationship with him. He's about 5'6" so he is built kind of like me. He's very goal oriented. He sets his mind on something and accomplishes it. He also decided not to get married until he was through college and that's exactly what he did. When Jay and Jane Krahn got married, they decided to wait so long before they had children and that's exactly they did. Jay is like his dad as far as being a man of his word. If he says he's going to do something, he does it.



Children, Penny and Jay, with Mrs. and Mrs. Ewing-Chow, and Grace and Glenn

Jay has three children, two girls and a boy. Those are our three wonderful grandchildren, Megan 10, Macy 7, and Brayton 5. They live in Springfield.

Family business

Glenn worked for an ambulance service while he was going to school in Springfield. That's how he got introduced into the ambulance business.

Right after he got out of college, Glenn sold embalming supplies in the State of Texas. We lived in Beaumont, TX. I wasn't working. He worked a couple of years traveling the entire state, which was a large territory. He would leave at the beginning of the week and be gone for a week at a time, sometimes two weeks. After two years, Glenn had had enough of that. We decided to move to Springfield. He was offered an opportunity to purchase the ambulance service here in town. He decided to buy them out and go into business for himself. Back then the ambulance service was not owned by the hospitals; they were separate.

He owned the service for several years. It is a risk, but it was enjoyable. He liked it. I really didn't like it too well, because he was gone during all the holidays. The only way we could have a family get together was by bringing the employees over; many times they got called out from our home.

Glenn managed the business and helped to drive. Of course he had the guys under him to do that, but there would be many nights that the guys weren't there or didn't show up. Glenn had to fill in. He had to make sure business was taken care of. They did a lot of what they called "first calls" for the funeral homes; that was added income.

Jay was three or four when we moved back to Springfield. We owned the company for five or six years. While we owned the business here in Springfield, Glenn worked with Dr. Jim Cook, trying to get the hospitals to get involved with ambulance services. They didn't want any part of it. Eventually, years later, it started evolving into that. But Glenn tried and tried. California was setting the pace in the industry with paramedics. Glenn was trying to emulate that model. He was trying to get the crew--they didn't call them paramedics then--trained to provide medical care to the people they picked up. It never happened during the time that Glenn owned the company.

Chapter VII: The Role of Religion in My Life

Religion has been my whole life, because I grew up in a religious atmosphere. Giving my life to Christ was the most moving experience of my life. When I dedicated my life to Christ, I was living in Springfield, Missouri.

I got away from religion as a young person because I was around church and the church activities so much I just got tired of it in all, honesty. Even my brother felt that way. When I left home to attend college, I bet I didn't go to church for years. I just had so much of it. It wasn't that I didn't believe in God, I just had had a lot of it and it wasn't important to me, which is not right. I think I realize now that I missed a lot during those years.

It wasn't until I started having children that I felt like we needed to raise them in a church atmosphere. We started seeking out a church. Glenn was from an Episcopalian background; mine was more non-denominational, although Mother was more linked with the Assemblies of God. That was not a faith that I really wanted because I felt like it was so strict. I like to wear makeup. I don't mean that I was terribly worldly, but in the early 1960's the Assemblies did things a little differently. Certain things weren't accepted. It was really frowned on by a lot of people, a lot of the churches, to even wear any makeup. I just didn't feel that way, so I didn't choose that path.

We were trying to find a happy medium, between my husband and myself. I liked his church, because I felt sincerity when we went to the masses. My Catholic church/school background in South America made me feel comfortable with their worship service. I like the high church, the Episcopal Church. I felt like there was a lot of reverence there. We decided to raise our children in the Episcopal Church.

We found an Episcopal Church in Beaumont, Texas, where we settled after college. It was a little parish church, an off-shoot of the main diocese. It was just a little mission church; we decided to join. This church was part charismatic. It was our first experience with a charismatic church. We really liked it because you had the reverence in the mass and yet there was a lot of involvement for the kids. Before we joined that church the kids would go and sit through the ritual, but they were not that much involved. We really liked the programs for kids because we felt they needed Sunday school and other church activities. We got pretty involved in church then. That's where we really started making the turn, as you might say.

After the kids grew up and left home, Glenn and I both got involved in a network marketing business on the side. This was probably in the latter part of the '80s. We attended a weekend event at Tan-Tara where they had a non-denominational service on Sunday morning. There was a motivational speaker, who happened to be from one of the churches here in Springfield. The motivational speaker was Jess Gibson. We knew that Jess and Paula Gibson had their own church, but we weren't too sure about joining it. Jess spoke at this service and that's when we gave our hearts back to the Lord. At the end of the service we gave our lives to Christ. I would say this was probably the time that we really committed ourselves to God, if you may say. We started visiting Jess' church and I love his teaching. Paula has become my mentor.

Jess was an Episcopalian and left the Episcopal Church when he became charismatic. He would teach Sunday school classes; we thoroughly enjoyed it. The church that we were attending right before we left the Episcopal Church, St James, was a charismatic Episcopalian Church and we both enjoyed it.

Jess and Paula Gibson have been a very spiritual influence in my life, especially Paula. I just really idolize her, if you may say. I think she is a very spiritual woman and a lady. She is a really neat person and somebody you can confide in. I just can't say enough about her. She is a warm person. I have grown to love them more and more as the years have gone on. They both are wonderful leaders. Jess is a teacher and that's

what I like about his ministry. He just brings the best out of you and he's definitely a great influence on our lives, both my husband and myself. They both are wonderful people. We really didn't know them that well until we started going to their church which has been probably 10 or 12 years now. He's had the Cornerstone Church 21 or 22 years. It's out on west Sunshine.

Paula doesn't preach but she works beside him and helps him stay on track. She works beside him and helps him in regular things. For instance, Glenn and I are part of an after-service fellowship where we have tea or coffee or juice to welcome anyone new to the church. We are a host couple. If you were new you'd feel very warm and welcome at that reception.

It's a place where you feel like a part of the fellowship immediately. That was the first thing that we noticed when we started going to the church. People welcomed us on the very first day. They were glad to see us; we weren't just a body going in and sitting in a pew and coming out, not noticed. Everybody likes recognition to a certain extent and they welcomed us warmly.

Chapter VIII: Looking Back

Mission in Life

I like to help people and make a positive impact on someone everyday. I like to serve others. I was brought up that way. My folks always served. So I just had never thought of anything different. I hope, eventually, that from giving I will be blessed in return. I feel that God gave us our lives, and in turn we need to give to Him. What we become is what we're going to give to God. I feel very positively about that.

I feel like God has blessed me with a wonderful caring family and given me the knowledge that I can use. I feel very blessed to have that knowledge and to be able to work in such a rewarding profession.

Highs and lows

I don't remember a low, low time. My family has really been blessed. God has been good to us. When my dad died was a low time. He was elderly, so it's something you have to accept and move on. Now my mother, if you visit with her (*see addendum*) she may have a little different story on when we were back in China going through the concentration camp. When you're little, life goes on and you just move with the flow. I really don't remember it being that traumatic, thank goodness. I believe I remember my mother saying that she prayed that we would not have any bad effects from all we were going through. I don't think either my brother or I really have.

I think it's how people respond to things. I think it's a mindset. God has given us peace in our hearts, and I think that helps a lot. When He comes in, in the mornings when we say our prayers God puts a peace in your heart that carries you through the day. There are trials that come to you, just like anybody else, but then He helps you through those trials. Then they are not as challenging as you think that they might be.

The definite high point in my life was the birth of our three grandchildren. I enjoyed having and raising our kids immensely; but having grandkids is totally different. I never thought it could be so special! I love spending time with my children and grandchildren. They most definitely have been a fulfillment in my life.

Unexpected Turns

The number one unexpected turn in my life was the switch from a nursing career to nuclear medicine. I never dreamed that I would consider a management position, because I always wanted to do my job, to work with patients. I like to serve people. In all honesty, I guess even now, I would really like to just do patient contact more and paper shuffling less. I do miss the actual close patient contact and working with people; but there are other things which come with those responsibilities, like being on call. I really like what I'm doing because I like to tackle things that can cause us to expand and grow and better ourselves. I am grateful for the opportunity to manage.

It has been rewarding to have an opportunity to be part of health care, where I can continue to grow and make a difference. I've always enjoyed health care and I just can't imagine sitting at home and not doing anything.

Keeping involved

I could retire today, but retirement to me sounds almost boring. I just want to continue to make a difference. I just can't imagine just sitting and retiring and being that selfish and just not doing anything.

I'd like to be able to travel with my husband after I'm retired and see some other parts of the world that we haven't visited yet. Of course I'd like to stay involved in different things around town and volunteer more than I've been able to.

I think how much we give to the community is very important. I think we need to be involved as elders in the community. We need to make a difference especially helping young people because they are the future. We can be so influential with some of the ideas that we may have. We can listen to them, help them and guide them. We've always been involved with the Boys' and Girls' Club. We'd like to stay involved there.

I'm also involved as a volunteer in the Messiah Project, which is a Christian fine arts group. Lindsey Robinson started the Messiah Project about five years ago. He was involved with our church when we were in the Episcopal Church, and he has always loved the fine arts. Lindsey became an assistant pastor to Jess Gibson at Cornerstone. But he had a vision for Christian fine arts, incorporating dancing, music and drama. He knew if he didn't start doing it, it would never happen. So he started having these groups from Poland and Ukraine and other places. That was the beginning of the Messiah Project.

The Board members and workers are all volunteers. It takes everyone working together to make things happen, I can't remember the name of the music director at Evangel College. She is one of the volunteers on the board of the Messiah Project. She sometimes loans the choir to sing on different programs. When we do a performance of Handel's "Messiah," First Baptist Church and Evangel and several other big churches bring their large choirs. It's just a whole community getting together. Glenn and I are getting more involved with the Messiah Project and with the church.

Glenn belonged to the Sertoma Club, which is like the Rotary. The Sertomans were big helpers, sponsors for the Boys' Club, now the Boys' and Girls' Club. Glenn was on the board of directors and he was president of the Sertoma Club. He also helped when they were organizing and when they were trying to get the boys and girls together. He has backed off a little bit and is not active. As time permits he'll probably get back and be a little more involved. Right now we're so busy and involved in different things. You just get kind of overwhelmed sometimes, you kind of have to back off and not be so involved.

I love to read. I also belong to a women's investment club, the Queen City Investment Club. We meet once a month. It's a lot of fun. I guess we've been meeting for six years now. When I started it was something completely different from anything I had ever done. I'm not an accountant and I'm not that good with numbers, but I thought it would be a challenging and another new thing to learn. This is strictly a learning tool. We started it and invited people to join, to get involved and learn how we can invest our money, how to select stock. It has been a very good learning tool.

Friendships

Knowing that there's always someone that you can rely on is what I value in a friendship. One of my best friends is a young lady who used to work here at St. John's, Judy Warren. She was in charge of the medical staff here at St. John's. We're just very much alike in thought patterns. We even sometimes choose the same colors of outfits. We'll go shopping separately and then we'll buy the same thing. It's kind of unreal. A couple of times we've appeared, or our kids when they were growing up, appeared with the same outfit because her kids grew up with mine. We'd turn up with the same outfit. It's embarrassing!

We can confide in each other. Judy just seems to understand. She's not Chinese. She's a total American from Kansas; we just think a lot alike. We hit it off right away. We met on my first day of work here at St. John's, 35 years ago. Her office was right next door to mine. She worked in the blood gas lab, and the blood gas lab was right next to the nuclear medicine lab. Judy welcomed me and showed me around. We've been friends ever since. Judy and her husband, Jim, would do anything for Glenn and me as we would for them. When we moved, they were right there to the very end. It was a horrible snowy day, but there they were helping us out. We know they would do anything for us. They still live in Springfield. She is semi-retired now.

The only thing I would do over in my life is go on to nursing school and become an RN. Even though I have really enjoyed nuclear medicine and could have still gone into it with an RN degree, there are many things I could have learned from RN training that I could use in my field. Today there are more opportunities for nurses.

I don't necessarily want to relive any of my life. I really don't feel that way.

Future Generations

My wish for future generations is that they might have a chance to reach their goals in a safe and peaceful environment and not be faced with all the violence that we are seeing and the drugs. That's what I'd wish for my grandkids. However, I know, the closer we get to the end of the world it is not going to be so peaceful. The Bible teaches us that. Good character and values are what I'd like to see. I believe we're starting to turn towards better morals.

Chapter IX: Thoughts on Springfield

While growing up here in Springfield, I was the only Chinese person in the school system. A Chinese neurosurgeon came to town a couple of years after I was here. His name was Dr. Tsang. I really don't remember if it was just prior to me being in x-ray, but he was well known here. He had a plane and he would fly to Joplin and St. Louis to do surgery. He was an excellent neurosurgeon. People would come in from all over to have him operate on them.

He didn't like or couldn't get used to the American food here, so he brought some friends of his to Springfield to cook for him. He knew them from China, the Leongs. They opened up restaurants and, as they say, the rest is history. The Leongs gave us the dish for which Springfield is famous – cashew chicken.

I think Dr. Tsang has moved on. I believe he's in Hawaii right now. For a while we were the only two Chinese in town. Gradually we started getting a few more. The Leongs started bringing their family over little by little. Then the Vietnamese came and that's when we really noticed a lot of Asians coming in. That's when all the restaurants started popping up like flies everywhere--the advent of the Vietnam War. A lot of the Catholic Churches and Presbyterian Churches, some of the Methodist Churches brought groups of Vietnamese over. I think many of them went to Joplin, but then migrated back to Springfield.

I came to Springfield to finish my education and live in an environment without the problems of the big cities, and of course my folks had friends here in Springfield. I felt very welcomed in Springfield. All my schoolmates were very helpful in showing me around on my first day of school. I never once felt I was treated any different from the others. I don't know if it was just because I wasn't looking for it maybe. I wasn't aware of it but I never felt different. In South America, we had blacks and different nationalities, so I was used to that. Springfield was and is mostly white with a very small minority population. I just never really thought any thing about it. I was the only Chinese person, but it never bothered me. Everybody just seemed to accept me and they were anxious to know where I came from and know the history behind me. If they did say anything sarcastic, I never heard it, or I wasn't paying attention to it. My English has been good because we always spoke English back in British Guyana. I really didn't have an accent. The Guyanese in Guyana do have a sing-songy little kind of an accent you may say. I probably had some of that. I don't really remember.

British English is spoken in Guyana and so some of the words were most definitely very British. I guess there were a few times I would use British slang. Of course growing up here I've gotten away from that. My mother will occasionally say something quite British. I know my dad, who really grew up in England, used a lot of British terminology. When my husband and I were going together some little things that I would refer to would be British and I didn't realize it. I was never teased. If I was I didn't wear my feelings on my shoulder very easily and I wasn't hurt because things didn't bother me. I just kind of went with the flow.

People are always interested in my background. Even in the workplace I'll meet patients coming in and they'll recognize that I'm a little bit different. A lot of them are timid about asking; that has never bothered me. I'm glad to share, really. I don't go around flaunting it, but if they ask, I do tell them. I'm glad to tell them. A lot of them think I'm Philippine. A lot of the men who come have been in the service in the Philippines; they think I look a lot like the Filipinos. I guess because I'm shorter. But when I start telling them, no, I'm English and Chinese they start asking questions.

My children went to school in Springfield. They too, didn't feel any different. You can tell there's a little Asian in them, but the American certainly comes out. Jay, my son, is dark haired and has a dark olive complexion. A lot of people think that he is Indian. They don't remember ever being teased really.

I think the only time that I remember Jay, my son, talking about being teased was when he used to collect money for the papers. We had a paper route in our own neighborhood. The guy that threw the papers would have different kids in the neighborhood run the paper route for him and collect the money for him. So Jay did this when he was real tiny in order to make some extra money. He barely knew how to count change and he was going from house to house collecting payment for the newspaper. He had to go into a little different section of town. The owner of one house was German. Jay went up to the door to get the money. The guy said "*danke schön*" and Jay thought he said "*Cock-a-Chink*". He was just little, he came home and he was so upset. So evidently some of the kids must have called him *Cock-a-Chink*, because he knew what that was and it was very demeaning to him. I remember he was just devastated. That's the only incident that I can remember.

Message to Springfield

We are all from different backgrounds and we are all people. We have the same feelings. We all share love and expressions and sometimes have language barriers but if we communicate in a positive manner, I feel like we can show our actions. It doesn't matter what language we speak if you have a kind smile. That is always positive and is not dependent on language. We have helped and been involved with people from overseas and brought people into our home who didn't speak the same language, but we still could communicate by smiling and showing them we cared. Smiles break down the language barrier. I guess that is what we were doing. It is up to us as a society to change. Our efforts will make our community a better place, no matter what nationality or cultural background we come from. A life should always have a chance to grow and express itself.

Addendum

Interview with Margaret Hsia Ewing-Chow: Mrs. Ballenger's Mother

A Descendant of the Hsia Dynasty

My name is Margaret Ewing-Chow. Margaret Hsia Ewing-Chow. Hsia is my maiden name. I was born in Shanghai, China February 17th, 1915. My father's name was We Ching Hsia. My mother was Hester Turner. She was British. She was born in Lincolnshire, England. That is in the middle of England.

My father left China when he was a young man. He finished his training in China, and he wanted to go to England to study. In those days they wore a cue. He was a young Chinese prince, from the Hsia dynasty. That was the first dynasty in China, which goes back to 2205 B.C. to 117 B.C. So our genealogy goes back more than four thousand years. It's unusual that anybody can trace their genealogy back that far.

My father told us that he was a direct descendant of the Prince Hsia of that dynasty. We didn't know as kids what that meant. We just let it go by. All through our lives he wanted us to live a normal life. That didn't all come to us until recently. About a year ago my sister called me and said she had been looking up the genealogy for her granddaughter. She is looking into Chinese art and of course that brought in the dynasty. She said she found something about the dynasties and the Hsia dynasty. She said it is all real, and it's all documented and so she had been reading about it. That documented what Dad told us. In January I was talking to a missionary. She said, "I've been reading about China and the dynasties and I saw Hsia dynasty in the encyclopedia." She didn't know about it. So I said, "where did you find it?" She said in the encyclopedia and then I looked it up and sure enough it's documented.

I have been asked to write my life's story and about the dynasty. My father's family was a Buddhist family. I found Christ and came to Christ and became a missionary from China after going through the Japanese War and many other things. It would take a long time to tell. Then God called my husband and me to go back to Guyana, South America, as missionaries. We were the first pioneers of the full gospel message in Guyana and the work still stands.

My father met my mother in Leeds University, England. He studied there and he became a civil engineer. That's why he was on the railroad. He designed the railroad from Shanghai to Nanking. Around the time of my birth my father had TB and had to leave his position with the railroad. That changed things a little bit. He went into manufacturing. He had one of the largest hosiery factories and he also had silk factories. His products, including real silk stockings, went all over the world.

As a young person, I used to go to visit and play in the factory. We'd see the silk worms and how the workers took the thread off the cocoon. I think if I tell it all, I'd have three books.

My husband's story

My husband was born in Guyana. He was born into a very prominent Chinese Guyanese family, the wealthiest Chinese family there in Guyana as a matter of fact. The house that they dwelt in, the Ewing-Chow family home, was the parade ground. It is now the Catholic Hospital.

This family was one of the most prominent Chinese and wealthiest families in Guyana and the story is tremendous. The family left China. My husband's grandfather was born in the province of Canton, in the city of Tai Pei, Tsang Yak San's birthplace. The rebels were coming into South China so he told his wife to go get her bundle of jewelry and anything and everything. They had no suitcases in those days, so they took those big Chinese scarves and put everything in. He said take your 12-year-old son and go and find a hiding place. So this boy went with her and they went to find a hiding place as the rebels were coming in. They were coming

from all sides. She didn't know where to go. So she found a place on the docks and saw a boat that was battened down. It was quiet and battened down so she got on. She went down in the hold. By the time she got out, the boat had left shore. She never saw her husband again.

When she left on the boat she didn't know where it was going to go. The Chinese population started in Guyana as indentured labor for rice plantations, and the boat that they were on was taking rice workers to train the Guyanese to grow rice. This is different from slave labor. This was indentured labor. They lived their own lives. She had just her bundle, but in those days they had big jade combs, jewelry. That's how she paid her passage from the jewels that she had.

My husband's father was this 12-year-old boy. One of the sugar estate owners from England, the Crumm-Ewings of Scotland, took a fancy to him because he was a good little worker and he was energetic and a bright boy. The English had a lot of people that would go out and have these great big sugar estates. When the Ewings were leaving, after he grew up, they gave him the name Ewing-Chow. That was how we got Ewing-hyphen-Chow. It was a great honor. They were prominent people in Scotland.

My father-in-law grew up and got his own sugar estates. He had a couple of estates there. The family became the most wealthy Chinese family there in import/export and influential too in the government. He had a lot in the interior.



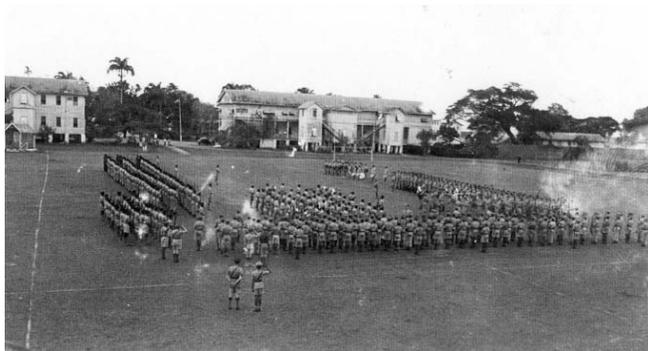
The family residence of the Ewing-Chows in Georgetown, British Guiana. It was called the "Colonel Home." It is now a hospital in Guyana.

My husband's father was Southern Baptist. He was also a Baptist circuit rider in those days, an evangelist. He'd go and take the gospel to the different villages and so forth and then he opened up grocery stores in the different villages, so this is how he got his wealth. In Guyana, they had had the gospel, but they hadn't had the preaching of the full gospel yet. That's what we pioneered. In other words, the power of the resurrection, the resurrected Christ. That's the difference.

My husband left South America, went to England, graduated from Cambridge, and studied medicine in Edinburgh University, one of the best medical schools in the world.

During the First World War the price of sugar slumped. They lost a lot of their wealth. My husband's father said the other boys have got to go and study and they have to go have their turn in college; we can't support you anymore. My husband decided then to go to China to find his grandpa because he had promised his grandma that he would do that.

Guyana is a mixed nation, mainly Indians from India and Africans. It's like the West Indies. If you've been out there you know. The Chinese went out from the rice laborers. Then of course, where the Chinese go they just somehow prosper.



*Parade grounds
across from
the Colonel Home
in Georgetown,
British Guiana.*

The Japanese War

I met my husband in Shanghai. We went through the Japanese War. It ended in '42. We lost. I think there were no reporters in those days in China to report things and the things we saw. We left China in '44.

When the Japanese came into China I worked with the Red Cross. They'd have the Chinese soldiers just lying on the cement and not only that, the Japanese were really cruel. They would sit in a rickshaw and tell the rickshaw coolie to just pull them. They were really rough. When the rickshaw coolie took him to the place, they'd slap him down, push his face downwards, tie his hands behind his back and push the coolie down into the river. Many people were put face down into the river to drown like that.

I could tell you a lot of atrocities, but it would take too much time. We saw the Japanese were dropping bombs in the center of Shanghai, a busy city and oh, the great big craters right in the middle of the city. My husband went to a Chinese restaurant and the roof caved in - the whole thing. It was a good thing the bomb was further way but the glass roof fell because of the concussion. God spoke to my husband and said, "Get under the table" before the thing fell. He went under the table and he had two guests with him and they wondered what he was going under the table for. God spoke to him and they didn't hear and you know they went under the table too. One got a cut on the ear, but my husband because he knew, went down first and they got saved from that. Oh, there's a lot more too.

They took our home away from us. I remember leaving Grace up in the bedroom. Across the road was a Japanese lady. It was just a small compound. The Bible tells you make your enemies serve you. And so she came over and she knocked on my door. There were barbed wire barriers in every corner of the city so if you went out you got trapped in a block somewhere. My husband and my son had gone out. I didn't know which block they would be trapped in.

This Japanese lady evidently had noticed that they had gone out. She knocked on my door and she said "Come with me. Come with me." She couldn't speak too much English so she said "Come with me." I didn't know her too well and I said, "Lord, Grace is upstairs, the baby's upstairs." She was a baby and she was up in the crib asleep. I thought if I went with her and anything happened I would never know what happened. She wanted me to go around the corner where the barriers were and she was going to speak for me that my son and

husband were out there and try to plead with the gendarme.

Japanese soldiers were there. They had captured Shanghai. A Japanese cannot just speak to a soldier like that because he is the son of the emperor so she said, "Come with me. Come with me. You do what I do." Because she had to do certain things, bow. So in a quick moment I was thinking what shall I do. Shall I shut the baby in and nobody will know the baby's there if anything happens to me? So I left the front door open. Somebody would go up those stairs and find the baby if anything happened to me. Then I went round corner with her. "Follow," she says. "Go behind, follow me." She bowed to the Japanese soldier and she bowed and walked forward. She didn't dare walk forward until he said that she could. He didn't say anything. He just kind of went like that. (A gesture). So she went forward and she bowed again and then she was going to go forward a third time and he said "HALT! Stop!" Then she bowed and spoke to him. I want to just tell you that this lady behind me has her husband and child. If you see them will you please let them pass through? They are my neighbors."

You see when God's with you, the scripture says so, He will make it happen. I've had a scripture walk with God and in many instances I can give you where it was absolutely scripture fulfilled. And so when she bowed, I was supposed to bow, but I knew this was not right. I don't want to bow to any false Gods and to bow to man, so I said no. I didn't say anything, but I said to myself I am not going to bow. So I just stood there with my head up. I could have gotten killed for it. But God tests us. Will we lay down our life for Him or not? He wants to prove us and so many people don't realize it. They don't understand God. You say you love God and God puts you to the test. Let me see that I am really first.

So that's also one of the reasons why we left China, because things were changing up there and it wasn't only just your calling. That was part of it, but things were changing, the government or whatever was changing there too. The communists were far from Shanghai at that time. As a matter of fact the American government told the Japanese to keep peace for a week till we can get to Shanghai. They had already subdued the Japanese.

You never tell your enemy; forewarned is forearmed. We saw what they did with our own eyes. At night the Japanese had stacked ammunition underneath in these big skyscrapers and apartments. They put the people on top. In the rules of Geneva you are not allowed to do that. The enemy won't keep the rules. During that week of keeping peace waiting for the Americans to come in, they rolled out in the night all the ammunition and all the tanks and people wondered how did communism rise so fast. Communism was just a band of rebels at that time. The communists were really just farmers and just rebels at that time. They were not strong and then the people wondered and nobody ever knew why. We saw tanks, ammunition, everything that the Japanese had handed over to the communists. They didn't have that armor. They didn't have the guns. They had arms but they didn't have the stuff to fight with like they would. Every bit of that ammunition they had they rolled it out in the night. The Japanese were mad at the Chinese because they said we're going to pay you back.

Shanghai was the main city then. We were the ones captured. Chiang Kai-shek's soldiers were pushed back at that time into the interior.

Because my husband was with the Shell Oil we got out with the British. In those days, because I was married to a British subject, I had to become a British subject. My husband had British citizenship because Guiana was British Guiana then, not Guyana.

We got out. We were probably the only Chinese on the British repatriation ship. But we went through and suffered along with the British. When the Japanese came in they made us wear a "B" for British and we were British-Chinese, both enemies. Therefore they didn't put us in the camps. Those that

went into the camps got a bowl a rice and bowl of whatever they got, though it was meager. But for us, it was like being in the camp yard and not in the camp. So here we had to go around the city with "B" British and we couldn't contact our neighbors. The Japanese had people following you, watching you. They took my husband and me one time and took us downtown into their headquarters. They put my husband in one room and me in another room and interrogated us. They asked us questions and things like that and when we came out, I tell you it was God, we had answered the questions identically. And so they knew we were telling the truth so they didn't hold us. Otherwise, there's no telling what they wanted.

Later they told us that we were to give up our house and leave and just take clothing and nothing else, just our clothes and what we needed. We couldn't rent a place, we couldn't buy a place, so the only thing I could do was go to my father's house. My father was a prominent Chinese in the city and they didn't want to aggravate the Chinese because there were more Chinese than there were them, the soldiers. So they sanctioned that. We stayed in my father's house. And we lost every bit of our things. I was not supposed to but I managed to take a baby's table, a child's table and her crib, two chairs, and our suitcases on wheelbarrows.

Going to Guyana

We left China because God had called us. God called me as a matter of fact. I got a call from God, and I said, "Lord, how could I go? You'd have to talk to my husband." So He spoke to my husband and my husband wanted to stay in Shanghai. So I said you better pray about it. So we prayed and the Lord began to show us and I had a vision of the people that I was going to. I saw the people and I never knew what the people were like in South America. I didn't know if they were English. I never thought of what they were. And then I saw these colored dark skinned people. I never saw any Chinese. I saw dark skinned people like Indians and Africans and I said "Oh Lord are you sending me to India or Africa?" My husband didn't know and here God had spoken to me and I didn't want to say anything to him because I didn't want to influence him. I said "Lord, you tell him," because I don't want him to go for my sake. He had been praying for Guyana, that God would send somebody with this wonderful message of the resurrected gospel that would heal and miracles and all that kind of thing. And he said Oh, he was praying for that. So he'd said "Lord send someone." And when you say that don't ever say that too often. He'll send you. So God called me, because I believe He knew his heart. He wanted to stay and be a businessman. He worked with the Shell Oil Company in China.

There is stuff I can tell you about my life. I tell you Assemblies of God are asking me to write my life's story. They're asking me to tell about how we became Assemblies and how I finally joined and the work I did. It was by faith. We did not belong to the Assemblies at that time. We had no organization. No Chinese church could send us and there were no organizations at that time, so we went by faith. We just prayed and prayed. I had \$100.00 in my pocket and I went all over England. God managed to take us and we spoke in churches and different things and we left England headed for Guyana with the original \$100.00 dollars to put down on the rent of a house.



Springfield, MO
2001