

PASSING THROUGH

By Jim Mauldin

DEDICATION

*To my maternal grandparents, Reuben & Mary Parrott
my dear Mother, Kate Parrott Mauldin
my siblings, Christine, Elvin & Willine
my foster parents, Wade & Georgia Bradley
my dear wife, Norma
our two sons, Philip and Greg
and their families*

*I also wish to acknowledge Charlotte Phillips, without whose guidance,
many hours of labor, and infinite patience, this document would not have
been finished.*

She is my dear friend. I am grateful.

FOREWORD

Mine is the story of a long life made possible by the care and teaching of many others to whom I feel a welcome sense of gratitude. Let no reader underestimate the influence of his kind or wise words, the sway of her heartfelt gestures of gratitude or unselfishness, or the power of their genuine interest in the well being of a stranger.

I pay homage to the following persons who have touched my life:

Reuben and Mary Parrott	Kate Parrott Mauldin
Christine Mauldin Staton Howe	Elvin Mauldin
Willine Mauldin Littlejohn	Noah Merck
Mildred Dillard Alexander	Norma Ellison Mauldin
Philip Mauldin	Gregory Mauldin
L.H. Ellison	Mrs. Charles Douglas
Wade & Georgia Bradley	Truck Driver, Chicago, IL
Police Chief, Lebanon, MO	Roy Dye
Fray Ball	Jeff and Rosa Kerr
Ralph & Agnes Dennison	James W. Wiggins
Les Odom	Charles Wall
Howard Salquist	Anna Lou Blair, Ph.D.
William E. Taylor, MD	Lee Morris
Cora Downs, Ph.D.	Gene White, DVM
Richard Cox, DD, Ph.D., MD	John Aldis, MD
Edgar Clayton, MD	Glen Turner, MD
Jack Hart, DD	Gary Strathman, DD
Robert Stevenson, DD	Stanley Burgess, Ph.D.
Dean Gibbens	James Warnhoff
Volker Wypyszyk	John E. Moore, Jr., Ed.D
Phyllis Chase, Ed.D	Charlotte Phillips
June Huff	Kay Lowder

James N. Mauldin
Springfield, MO
August, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Come laugh and cry with wonderful storyteller, Jim Mauldin. This commanding presence crossed my path during the Storytelling Project undertaken through the Older Adult Services Office of St. John's Hospital in Springfield, MO during 2000.

Come share in Jim's breadth of passion and interest in his fellow men and women born of his escape from a childhood of privation and abuse and his travels as a soldier and as a salesman. Learn from his lips the wisdom of forgiveness, the power of purpose, the triumph of perseverance.

Come. Let me introduce you to Jim.

Charlotte Phillips
Springfield, MO
August, 2000

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1	Childhood, 1920-1936	1
Chapter 2	Striking Out, 1936-1942	11
Chapter 3	The War Years, 1942-1946	18
Chapter 4	Young Adult, 1946-1965	22
Chapter 5	Overland Park Years, 1965-1982	25
Chapter 6	It Gets Better, 1982-2000	27
Chapter 7	My Siblings	30
Chapter 8	Ethnic Life Stories Project	31
Chapter 9	In Conclusion	34
 <i>WAR STORIES</i>		 <u>35</u>
Surpassing Courage		35
Scared Stiff		36
Between the Line and the Rhine		36
A Clean Getaway		37
Improving Relations with our Allies		38
On London Town		39
Holy Water		40
Christmas Resurrection		41
 <i>TRADE AT WORK</i>		 <u>41</u>
 TALES FROM THE ROAD & FARM		 42
Shotgun Marriage		43
Who's Calling, Please		43
John Vanier		44
Love Story		45
Harvey Jones		45
Princess Margaret		46
Labor/Management		46
If the Shoe Fits...		46
My Romance in Texarkana		47
As the World Turns		48
The Consultant		48
Poets Day		48
Catfish		49
How to Stump a Lawman		49
The Letter		50
Scientific Imitation		50
Fommie Taylor		50
The Krugerand		51
Bill Hackett		52
A Moment in a Rainstorm		52
 APPENDIX		 54
 MARRIAGES IN OUR FAMILY		 55



PASSING THROUGH

By James N. Mauldin

“Life is not only a merriment;
life is a desire
and determination.”

Mirrors of the Soul Kahlil Gibran

Few people in this life have been more fortunate than I. I was born on August 2-3, 1920, in the community of Six-Mile, South Carolina. According to my mother and the family Bible, I was named Norman (Reuben) after my maternal grandfather. I was born August 2, Rural Route, Pickens, SC. The collecting of vital statistics was somewhat new at that time in our area. It was gathered by someone in the community and evidently forwarded at his leisure. After securing my birth certificate several years later, I discovered that my name was James (only given name) Maulding and that I was born August 3 in Central, South Carolina, a town perhaps 15 miles from Six-Mile.

Legally, perhaps, I could claim my mother was not even in town when I was born. Fortunately for me when I registered for Social Security in 1937, I used my given name of Norman. With some legal maneuvering I later became James N. Mauldin and go by the name of James today and always sign James N. to cover all legal aspects. This caused no problems until I went to renew my Missouri driver's license in the year 2000. In that year the MO Motor Vehicle Department began checking their records against those of the Social Security Administration. On August 8, 2000, I had to go to the SSA office with my birth certificate and license and have my birth date changed to August 3.

I was ushered into this world in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. My father was a sometimes merchant, a poor farmer and later a county politician. My mother was a sweet, gentle soul with a deep abiding faith in God. She was much loved and respected in the community. I joined a sister, Christine (8/6/1914—12/17/2003), six years older. We were joined three years later by brother, Elvin (6/10/1923—10/16/2003), and six years later by sister, Willine. The usual childhood diseases were rampant at that time: measles, smallpox, chicken pox, whooping cough, pneumonia, and typhoid fever. I escaped typhoid, diphtheria and smallpox. I have been vaccinated more than 20 times in my life for smallpox without success, so I must be immune. I grew up a weak, scrub-like individual, sometimes referred to by that name.



*Samuel Edgar (Ted),
Christine and
Kate Mauldin*

My paternal grandparents were deceased before I was born. My father was of Scot-Irish ancestry from a family of nine children, seven boys and two girls. The oldest son was killed in a "roadhouse" when he was around 25 years old. It was a family of much anger, distrust, and jealousy of one another. Two or three of the brothers I saw only one time in my life and one sister I never did see. One of the brothers of my father lived twelve miles away. To this day I have never met his wife or any of his children. I recall seeing him only twice. One brother who lived 8 miles away learned of my mother's death the day after her funeral. My father did have a relationship with some of his mother's people who lived in the mountain area. Several cousins were visited during the 1920's.

My mother's people were of French Alsatian stock. My grandfather and grandmother played a decisive role in my development, important but of short duration. My grandfather was the paramount male influence in my life. Both my father and mother's ancestors were in this country at the time of the Revolutionary War and my maternal Great-grandfather Jeremiah (b. 1823), Grandfather Reuben (b. 1847), and Great-uncle Dave (b. 1849) were in the Civil War.

We lived in the house where I was born for 5+ years. I have several memories of this place. When I was almost 3 years old I had spent the night with a neighbor lady, Mrs. Holliday. The memory is distinct to this day of my being carried into my mother's bedroom and seeing my brother, Elvin, in bed with my mother. According to reports and my faint memory, I had a howling fit. There is a memory of a small toy, a platform 3" – 4" wide by 7" – 8" long with four coat-size button wheels, on which was a gray pony. My sister, Christine, was building a "corral" for that horse. She was breaking a stick over her knee and hit herself in the mouth and broke a permanent tooth.



*Sister Christine and
Jim, age 1*

Again when I was 3 or 4, I had been to visit Mrs. Holliday. On my way home I visited her pepper patch. It was probably 15' or 20' square and ablaze with red cayenne pepper pods. It was a beautiful, intriguing sight. I was dressed in shorts. Naturally, I had to gather one or two of the pepper pods and break them with my bare hands. When I subsequently decided to relieve myself, I was suddenly on fire in a most tender region. I began to cry and, rubbing my eyes, ran howling home to my mother. I remember her setting me in a dishpan and pouring milk around me.

I also remember a gift. A neighbor, who could not have been more than 20, made it for me. It was a wagon that was painted red. In that poor community, paint of any kind was a scarce commodity. The wheels were of sawed hickory, about one inch wide and five or six inches in diameter. The axle was also carved out of hickory. I recall a few instances of hauling a piece of firewood while imagining I was a logger, and hauling rocks with which to build castles.

Sometime around 1925-26 we moved 2 or 3 miles to the town of Six Mile, which boasted about twenty houses, two cotton gins, one of which was in ill repair, two blacksmith shops, a general store, and a grocery store. It had an academy, from which my sister graduated one year before it closed. It also had a hospital, almost unheard of in those mountains. It had six beds and was built and owned by Dr. Peek. We lived in Six Mile for one year.

Now, how did the community get its name? According to the Legend of Six Mile, a young Native-American woman named Issaqueena was captured by Cherokees, who lived in the northern part of the state. She overheard them talking one night about making a raid on her tribe downstate, where she had a lover. She left the area by night. As she ran across creeks she named them, Mile Creek, Six Mile Creek, Twelve Mile River, Eighteen Creek, Six and Twenty, Fifty-Six, perhaps a Sixty-Six, and Ninety-Six, which appears on many state maps and played a role during the Revolutionary War. Approximately two miles from the town of Six Mile is a mountain, which bears the same name. Six Mile has become a Mecca for retirees. Some 10 or 12 years ago I received a copy of a newspaper from my brother in South Carolina. They were holding an Issaqueena Festival. Six Mile finally got some notoriety other than peoples' question, "six miles from where?". I have a tee shirt from that festival.

At Six Mile we had a small acreage and kept a milk cow as did everyone else. In the lower part of the pasture was a ravine with steep banks. Along the banks were nests of swallows or "gully martins", as they were known locally. The swallows tunneled into the banks 8" – 12" and then built their nests. One day I decided to investigate the nests for eggs or babies. I was suddenly attacked about the head and shoulders with actual and near misses by several squadrons of bank swallows, a frightening experience indeed, especially for a child.

At that time my father worked in the general store. I was to come to the store one day to get some molasses. He filled the earthen jug and sent me home, which was about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile away. Somehow I stumbled, fell or dropped the jug and it broke and spilled all the molasses. I was whipped long and repeatedly for this. This is the first memory I have of my father.

There was one other event that happened at that house. My mother, with the help of a grown neighbor girl, was canning peaches one day. I was lying in the kitchen floor as they moved back and forth; as Ms. Thompkins paraded by, I observed the wonders of life beneath a woman's skirt. Not all education begins in the schoolroom.

We moved to a new house being built on forty acres about one mile away that was given to my mother by her parents. When we moved to the new house a different world began for me. The land was cleared of trees and crops were planted and tended and harvested. Cotton was a labor-intensive crop. It had to be hoed 3 or 4 times, plowed 3 or 4 times; and it was picked 2 or 3 times. Today it is harvested once by machine after all the bolls are open. The cultivation of tobacco is somewhat the same.

Our forty acres had a two-acre plot, which had been clear for many years. My maternal grandmother, born in 1844, told me once that when she was 8 or 10 years old, she recalled riding along in a buggy with her father and seeing a family of Indians camped at the spot. It was not unusual to unearth an arrowhead or a “chipper” when one plowed the area.

At first it was a time of joy and adventure. Then my father began to change. He had a volcanic temper, which he oft time displayed to his family only. I grew up knowing that the safest place to be around him was out of reach. He could and did explode and he lashed out with whatever happened to be in his hands or nearby, be that an ax, a shovel, a hoe, a stick, a whip, a chain or leather reins. I have been the receiver of all, except the ax.

Our dear mother looked on in dismay. She would remonstrate to no avail. Physically, I never saw my father strike my mother or sisters; but most mental cruelty has a longer-lasting effect than physical abuse. His reason? Who knows? Was it his Scot-Irish heritage, mountain clannishness, religious beliefs based on the Old Testament, an inability to control his temper, or being in the presence of people whom he could and did dominate? Outside of our community he was “Hale fellow, well met” by all. The temper of a cousin of his was a terrifying thing. He was once trying to start a Model-T Ford and he was unsuccessful. He raised the panels on both sides of the hood, gathered up a bucket full of tennis-baseball-size flint rocks, and threw them individually at the engine. That is sustained anger.

Our mother’s teaching was one of Jesus’ love of one another and of our fellow man. We had some blacks in our area, called Negroes at the time. Our mother taught us, me especially, that I had nothing to do with the color of my skin or how I looked. We were all God’s children and were to respect one another. Several times we had a black woman living with us. When my brother was a baby, Charlotte Johnson lived with us for a few months. I have very fond memories of her. She left after a few months and her cousin, Toy Johnson, took her place. Toy was not nearly the person that Charlotte was. My brother associated Toy with Christmas and called her “Christmas.” Toy (Christmas) Johnson adopted the name and died as “Christmas Johnson.”

In the 1950’s I was visiting the home country with my sister. I told her that my only regret in not returning earlier was that I did not get to see Charlotte while she was alive. I was told that she was alive and resided in a town less than 10 miles away. We left the dinner table and with my brother-in-law and my wife we drove over to find Charlotte. She was living with some people out in the country and she would not invite us into their house. She came out and sat in the back seat between my wife, Norma, and myself. After chatting a while about my mother I asked her, “Do you remember Toy Johnson?” She



Kate Parrott Mauldin

bristled and said, "Of course I remember that Toy Johnson. She stole my husband!" Then it all came back to me and I apologized profusely to Charlotte, telling her that I would not do anything in the world to hurt her. I had just forgotten; it had been so long. Charlotte, now over 95 and chewing gum, pulled that gum out of her mouth and snapped it, cocked her head at me and said, "Don't you worry about it. He spent nearly all his time up at my house anyway." When we left I wanted to give Charlotte some money. I knew she would not accept an outright gift. I took several bills, handed them to Charlotte, and said, "This is for your church." She accepted. What a delightful, delightful person!

We had another black woman later named Lily. In the old days she would have been classed as a "field hand". She liked to sing and she sang lustily. There was an old Negro spiritual that went something like this: "When the world's on fire, when the world's on fire, rock of ages cleft for me." One day I overheard Lily singing, "When the world's on fire, when the world's on fire, you'll run like hell and holler "Fire!"

Uncle Bill Brown came by occasionally and helped us plow. He was a pitiful specimen of mankind who had been despised and mistreated just because he was black. He was a great philosopher and I remember him with fond affection. One of his bits of philosophy: "I don't mind being pushed around a bit, but I don't want to be swept off my own front porch." This bit has helped me more than one time in my life.

As sparse as our circumstances were, there were worse. The roads through our area were built by convict labor. The chain gang was probably 70%-75% black, with people serving 30 days to life in prison. One prisoner, Archie White, was a lifer, guilty of killing his wife. He was the driver of a 20-mule team that pulled a subsoil plow. When I was quite young I wanted desperately to drive that 20-mule team. I spent endless hours daydreaming of how I could get on the chain gang without committing murder. I recall picking ripe peaches or apples and giving them to Archie White. Many years later I crossed the North Carolina border and spotted a convict in his striped uniform behind the wheel of a pickup truck. I yelled to the driver to stop! I jumped out, walked up to him, and told him who I was. He remembered me fondly. "You used to bring me apples and peaches!" This was the warmest welcome I received in South Carolina.

The horror of some parts of the convict's life at the time is almost indescribable. For infractions they were sometimes stripped, placed over a barrel with their ankles and neck tied together, and whipped. When they were out on the road, they lived in an iron cage, which was pulled by the 20-mule team from one area to another. The iron cage had a metal roof. With the terrific heat and humidity it is amazing that more of them did not die.

A side note of the life of a convict. He wears shackles, a ring around one ankle attached to a 30" chain that is riveted to an identical ring around the other ankle, leaving him with a stride of only that length. They bathed once a week. To remove his trousers for that purpose, he took them down to his ankles, pulled one leg through the ring to the outside removing it from his foot and then fed it back through that same ring over

to the other side to repeat the process. It took several minutes to accomplish.

Three years passed. A tornado struck Six Mile on March 12, 1929, and destroyed about one-half of the town. Nine people were killed and several wounded. One of the cotton gins, being made of heavy-gauge sheet metal, crumpled like wadded paper and moved in a northeasterly direction at 80-100 mph. There was a re-growth of scrub woods near us, and the tornado mowed through it like a lawnmower through grass.

My mother died on April 12, 1929 one month after the tornado. She was found in a shallow well. A local "magistrate" declared it self-destruction. Several years later, when I was 19, one of the neighbors and three of my cousins told me they thought my father was responsible. After a few inquiries with no response I dropped the idea. It was 50 years before I told my brother about their suspicions. The awful, dreadful afternoon of my mother's death lingers in my memory and comes back daily. My older sister had taken the younger, who was six days short of her third birthday, for a walk. When they returned my baby sister was holding in her little fist a bouquet of wild violets and forget-me-nots for our mother. To this day whenever I see either of these flowers, even in a seed catalog, I re-live that scene.

Events after our mother's death became a living nightmare. In a few short months we were introduced, without prior knowledge, to our new "mother." Thus a 14-, 9-, 6- and 3-year-old began a life of living hell. I am aware that the role of a stepparent can be a wonderful thing for both parties. Then there is the other side of the coin. From that moment there seemed to be an organized plan to get rid of us children. It was a nightmare time for my older sister as she tried to assume the role of surrogate mother while trying to live her own life. She bore the brunt of the adults' anger and when she was 16, she left. I always felt that the idea was not entirely her own.

The only solace I had at this time was a fourth-grade teacher named Mildred Dillard. She was 21 years old and it was her first school. I was able to confide the horrors of my everyday existence to her. I loved her dearly. During the last 50 years we maintained a loose contact. She passed away in January of the year 2000.

One major problem: we had no one who was willing to take any action on our behalf. Oh, there were times when we could talk to a neighbor, a grandparent, or an uncle or aunt who knew well what was going on. But all we got was, "Yes, we know and we grieve. It's too bad." No interference. The attitude at the time was that the internal affairs of a family were no one else's business. I seemed to be the target. My step-mother called me "nigger lips" and she constantly played one of us children against the other. Our father listened to her implicitly.

One of our neighbors, trying to help me, gave me a female hound pup. She was someone to love and occasionally play with. When she was about one year old she had a litter of 12 pups. My father looked at the pups and told me she could not nurse all of them. He told me to kill and bury nine of them. When I demurred he stood over me with a stick as I killed each of the pups and buried them while the mother of the

pups looked on, whining and wondering what in the world was going on. She tried to lick my tears. I never forgave my father for this.

Memories of my maternal grandfather and grandmother are probably the clearest of any of my childhood. That is true even though the time I was closest to them was only a few months in length. My grandmother died six months after my mother and my grandfather 20 months after.

My grandmother was a sweet, gentle soul who believed devoutly in God as salvation and love. She bore nine children from 1870 to 1889. She lost one daughter back in the '70's as an infant and another daughter who had a complication from a childhood disease and became mentally challenged. This was in the early 1880's. She lost three grown sons to typhoid fever in an eighteen-month period from 1899 to 1901. She lost a daughter in 1906 from complications in childbirth, who left a son seventeen days old. She lost my mother in 1929. Six months later she gave up her life of grief. She was 85 years old. What a woman! One of her granddaughters once asked her, "How did you stand it?" She replied, "By degrees, child, by degrees. One does not live one's life all at once; it is by degrees."

She was a friend to the community, to the church, and to anyone who came by. She dearly loved flowers. Two of her daughters in their youth planted a Cape Jasmine, one on each side of the steps in front of her house. When I was a child these bushes were five or six feet tall and on a warm humid night the Cape Jasmine fragrance (the nursery variety is known as a gardenia) wafted throughout the community. What a devastating loss her death was to us children.

My grandparents' house is a comforting memory for me. They had a huge apple tree that bore apples somewhat like the Transparent. The modern orchardist does not have such trees in his orchard. They are uneconomical and difficult to harvest from. This tree was as tall as some oak trees. It had drooping limbs which formed a canopy around the entire tree like a tent top about 18'-20' across. Grandfather had cut one of the limbs to create an entrance into the "tent" where we cousins had a playhouse.

When I was a mere lad of 3-4 I was visiting my grandparents and was playing with my cousin, Joseph, who was 3 years older than I. A picture of Dan Patch, who was a famous trotting horse, was tacked on the wall of my grandparents' all-purpose room. Joseph had a vivid imagination. He decided we would play "horse"; he would be Dan Patch and I would be the driver. We used a cow chain, which had a snap on one end. Not to be outdone he stuck the snap into his mouth. We galloped up and down the driveway, which ran between the house and an outdoor kitchen. Near the outdoor kitchen was a chinaberry tree. The chinaberry tree has many surface roots. Galloping down the driveway a link of the chain caught in one of the chinaberry roots. This pulled the snap through Joseph's cheek. He was howling and bleeding profusely. I joined the chorus. Grandmother came out, surveyed the situation, and after much effort released his cheek from the snap. He had a ragged tear in his cheek. She squeezed it thoroughly from all sides, causing it to bleed and remove the dirt. She dabbed kero-

sene on the wound, which did nothing to lessen his screaming. Her “herb” garden had a white pine tree with a gash in it, which bled rosin. Without the benefit of stitches, she closed the wound with her fingers and covered it with a dab of rosin. A tetanus shot was unheard of in those days and there was no doctor nearby. In my mind’s eye I still marvel at my Grandmother’s presence of mind and her knowledge of wound treatment. It healed very well indeed. Joseph lived to be a ripe age and died with a small dimple in his cheek.

Grandfather Parrot was one of a kind. There is no mold nor fragment of a mold that could be unearthed which could duplicate this man. He was a man of many talents and character. He was a voracious reader, reading into the night many times by lantern light. He was a great student of the Bible. At least one grandson is a better reader because of him, also having some knowledge of the Bible acquired by following “the Word” from “the Book” as Grandfather recited from memory entire chapters from different books. At times there might be a sharp rap on the head with his walking stick for not catching a misquotation he did on purpose.

Grandfather never owned an automobile. They were “just a passing fancy, not here to stay.” I wonder how many years it will be before he is proved correct? Not having an automobile did not keep him at home. He was known far and wide throughout the community. He traveled in the area in a buggy drawn by a mule named “Pet.” The first time or two, it was a real treat for one of the small grandsons to go along and drive old Pet. The mule needed little guidance, as she knew every road and pathway in the community. Whenever he met neighbor, friend or stranger, Grandfather would stop to visit. More often than not before the visit was over, he would have given them his philosophy or preached them a sermon. Whether one wished to or not, the recipient usually got the entire monologue for that day. When Grandfather Parrot had visited one, there was no doubt in his mind afterwards, he had been VISITED!

One beautiful spring morning with a grandson along, Grandfather stopped along the road to visit with Luther Willamon, who was plowing cotton in a nearby field. He was trying to keep ahead of the invading crabgrass. Luther spoke to Grandfather and, in return, got one of his sermons. Grandfather quoted and he preached, he preached and he quoted. There was much to be done and little time and Luther needed to be about it. Grandfather caught his breath and Luther interrupted to say, “Mr. Parrot, it’s a mighty fine day for farming.” Grandfather stared at Luther for a moment or two and said, “Yes, and it’s a mighty fine day to visit, son, and don’t you ever forget it.” Old Pet probably died wondering what she had done that fine morning to receive the whip so viciously.

Quoting homilies was a favorite pastime of my grandfather. “Never pass up an opportunity to be seated or to relieve yourself.” I once overheard him giving advice to a cousin who was contemplating marriage. “Find yourself a woman who has large breasts and loves cats.” I have never understood the part about the cats. One he used to recite to almost everyone he met was, “Never worry, never hurry, and always be cheerful.” One of his grandsons, not over three at the time, repeated it with a slight

variance, "Never worry, never hurry, and always be careful." Grandfather thought that was great and repeated it many times.

Grandfather was the "saving-est" man that ever lived. There was no item that could not someday be used. The wall along the side of the house by the back porch had row after row of old square nails driven into the siding. The nails contained washers, pieces of wire, pieces of string, pieces of old singletrees (a crossbar, pivoted at the middle, to which the traces of a harness are fastened), bolts tied with a piece of string and hung up, pieces of leather, harness buckles and old plowshares. All the "priceless items" were found on his journeys through the countryside. He would have had a ball in this day of the flea market and garage sales.

There was always a shovel in the back of Grandfather's buggy. If he came upon a pile of "road apples," he would dismount, get the shovel, scoop up the manure, and throw it into the adjoining field or woodland. He was an early conservationist.

Grandfather was a great believer in bulk purchases, whether it was shotgun shells, peanut butter, or canned salmon, it was better by the case. There was a story told in the community, doubtful, that he bought a lantern in a general store in the town of Cateechee. He started home and had to go through the covered bridge that spanned the Twelve Mile River at Cateechee. The story goes that he stopped the mule inside the bridge, lit the lantern, and liked the way it burned so well he went back to the store and bought a dozen. True or not, anyone who knew him could attest to the fact that there were always plenty of lanterns around the household.

Sometime during the early 20th century my grandparents started a new house. The foundation and the framing were done. The work ceased and the house was never completed. It stood there majestically against the sky and rotted and fell down. Why? No one in the family ever knew.

In a period of twenty-one months I lost my anchorage. My mother died in April 1929. My grandmother died in October of that same year. My grandfather died in January 1931. The situation for we children at our "home" was deteriorating rapidly. Christine had left home about six months before Grandfather died. She was in a precarious position, wanting so badly to help her siblings with no way to accomplish it. She suffered tremendous mental anguish. On occasion she would come to see us and many times this just exacerbated the situation. My sister was married in 1933. Her husband was a fine fellow; but he was unable to do anything to alleviate the situation with us children. One must remember the tenor of the times, the part of the country in which we lived, and the social structure that existed then. It was also the time of the Great Depression.

At that time my father was engaged in county politics. He was also a horse and mule trader. In 1934 at age 14, I put out the majority of a crop with my brother, only 11. We did it fully in 1935 and 1936. Two real heavyweights! A conversation with my father consisted of verbal listings of what we were to do for the week and to give us hell for

what we had done during the past week. Any problem that arose we were to handle. When we came home from school we were to work the livestock we found in the stable. For those familiar with livestock, that can sometimes be very hairy.

The situation became more and more deplorable in our household. My great concern was for my brother and younger sister. I weighed many options and finally decided on one that possibly might give them a break, thinking that when it became known in the community that two of the four children were no longer there, someone would conclude there had to be a reason. I told my brother of my plans and he wished me Godspeed. The last time my siblings lived together was 1934. We were together in 1936, 1952, 1978, 1987 and 1996. There are only four pictures of the four of us together, to my knowledge, one taken in 1926, one in 1978, one in 1987, and one in 1996.

Having finished my junior year in high school in the spring, I bade my brother and sister good-bye. My childhood ended August 2, 1936.



1926



1978

My siblings and me.



1987



1996

Chapter 2

I had arrived in Greenville, SC, which was approximately thirty miles from Six Mile, in the afternoon. By previous arrangement I met my sister at her apartment in the late afternoon. I did not know what plans were in store for me. We went to a pawnshop and she pawned her wedding rings. She and I took the night train from Greenville, SC, to Washington D. C. Strange as it may seem with the many stops that were made during the night, I remember only one, Danville, VA. I do not clearly recall entering Union Station in the District of Columbia. My sister's husband was working in a textile mill in a town south of Greenville. He was to follow us sometime later. Having a paycheck was extremely important.

Upon our arrival in Washington we went immediately to a boarding house in Georgetown, on N Street just off Massachusetts Avenue. The area was beginning to resemble a slum; in later years it became a more fashionable area in the District. There was a young man there who was two years ahead of me in high school, a fact I was not aware of at the time. We became buddies and he was my guide to D.C. My sister almost immediately got a job in the bakery of the Agricultural Cafeteria and I was hired as a busboy. Considering that I had never eaten in a restaurant and had never seen such an establishment, it was quite an experience for me. With the hours of work being only 10 am to 2 pm, I was barely subsisting.

I later obtained a job with Postal Telegraph. At first I was in the office near the Treasury Building and delivered many telegrams to the Treasury Building. Later I was moved to a newly-opened office in the Senate Office Building. This was indeed an experience because I got to know, by sight, many of the senators who were in office at that time. The conduct of some of these individuals was very interesting. Once the Senate Majority Leader asked that the secretary not record the minutes; then he asked the honorable gentlemen if they would please refrain from rolling Coca-Cola bottles down the aisle, from putting their feet on the desks and from sleeping with their heads on their desks. He stated that it created an unsavory note with people who might be in the gallery.

One sidelight, each Senator had a large brass spittoon at his desk. They were cleaned each evening. Probably half or more of them were used each day. It was amazing to see how many of them chewed tobacco. There were many, many colorful individuals in the Senate at that time, the majority of them being from the South: Huey Long from Louisiana, Pitchfork Ben Tilman from Alabama, Cotton Ed Smith from South Carolina, Senator Bankhead from Alabama (father of the actress Tulula Bankhead), old Senator Glass from Virginia. The list went on and on. Many of the senators had been there for two decades or more. I was there for the first joint investigative session between the House and the Senate. It concerned a strike at a cotton mill in Pelser, SC. It was a colorful event.

Sometime during this period I had a varicotomy at Emergency Hospital in the District of Columbia. In my hospital room I had on one side a gentleman who was a member of the original staff in the Federal Bureau of Investigation; he pre-dated J. Edgar Hoover. On my other side was a gentleman of Greek heritage who had company each afternoon. The hospital had strict visiting hours. Once he told some of his visitors about my story and me and from then on until the time I left, they visited me as well, sitting on my bed and exhibiting a real interest in my welfare. They were wonderful, kind people.

The day came when I was to be discharged from the hospital. I did not know where I was going or what I was going to do, when in came Mrs. Charles Douglas, whom I had met at the Agriculture Cafeteria. She lived in a fashionable area in Friendship Heights and she took me home with her. Her generosity weighed on me heavily and I told Mrs. Douglas that I had no idea how I could ever repay her. She gave me some advice that I have relied on many times in my subsequent life, but always with the sense that I could have more often. She said, "James, if you cannot help someone when they need it, don't bother." She was a lovely, lovely person and I owe her much.

During my recuperation I would fix myself a sandwich and take a streetcar to the Smithsonian Institute. I did this for one week and stayed 5 or 6 hours each day. It was a phenomenal place, indeed, for this mountain boy. I remember a statement that appeared in one of the newspapers that year (1936) that if one looked at each item in the Smithsonian for one full minute, and looked 8 hours a day 5 days a week, it would take them 72 years to visit the museum. Think of what has been added since that time! It would take hundreds and hundreds of years!

When I was able to go back to work, I had to acknowledge I was not making enough money. Through a notice in the paper, I obtained a job in a restaurant on North Capitol Street, just north of the US Government Printing Office. The restaurant's owner was a German, Heinrich Miller, who had come with his wife to the United States in 1918. Their first U.S. home was in Pittsburgh, PA, where Heinrich was a street sweeper. There were two waitresses and myself, the dishwasher. It was an unusual set-up for a restaurant. We arose each morning about 5:30. I peeled a 50-pound bag of carrots and one of potatoes. We had breakfast while we were working. At 9:30 am we closed until 11 am, when the lunch hour started. It was open from 11 am until 2 pm. Then it closed until 5 pm and was opened again from 5 pm until 8 pm. These hours were possible because 95% of the restaurant traffic was from the Government Printing Office. Saturday and Sunday were free days because government employees worked a 5-day week and the restaurant was closed on weekends. It was a most interesting and rewarding experience.

The rigidity of the closing hours was best illustrated by the following story. One evening Mr. Miller had started toward the front door to lock it. Twenty-five feet from the door was his countryman and fast friend who ate there every evening. Heinrich locked the door in his face telling him, "You know, we close at 8 o'clock." He would not open that door.

At Thanksgiving Mr. Miller and his wife decided they wanted to go to Pittsburgh to visit a friend for 3 days. They left me in charge. The two waitresses had gone someplace for the holidays. There I was in the house with his large German Shepherd, Wolf. I still remember he gave me a \$10 bill to feed Wolf, who consumed the whole of 3 ten-cent cans of dog food while they were gone.

Once Mr. Miller asked me to take his 1929 Ford Roadster down to a station and have antifreeze put in. I told him I had never driven. He informed me I could do it. I drove this car down North Capitol Street, across to Connecticut Avenue with taxis and other automobiles blowing their horns, their drivers calling me all sorts of names including some I had never heard before. I arrived safely back at the restaurant without an accident. Sometimes I even acquired the high speed of 6 or 7 miles per hour!

Mr. Miller owned 3 or 4 racehorses, which were kept at the racetrack in Bowie, Maryland. Each afternoon he went to the races. One Saturday he took me out to the races and he talked to me about an apprenticeship as an exercise boy and then as a jockey. I look back on this with some amusement today.

One afternoon he had been to the racetrack and came back early as he got disgusted with one of his horses. He had placed bets on the horses for all the races. We had started the dinner hour. Over the radio we heard that his horse had won. All restaurant activity stopped immediately! He had thrown his tickets away. He could not remember which wastebasket they went in. I dumped a barrel of paper, litter, and kitchen scraps out on the floor of the kitchen. One of the waitresses went through the wastebasket by the cash register. Even one of the patron was subscribed in the effort. There was no restaurant service until the tickets were located; he thought nothing of employing everyone around in the search. It paid Mr. Miller that day, but he did not acknowledge the help he had received at all.

Foremost in my mind was to continue my education as I still lacked one year of finishing high school. I had looked into enrolling in night school but with my schedule it would not fit. I had casually mentioned to Mr. Miller one time that I was thinking about enrolling in McKinley Tech. In fact, I did enroll and tried to go to school at night. I was dismissed that very moment. He took me up to my room on the third floor, helped me put my clothes in a bag, and I was out. He was a very strict disciplinarian. He was also a dictator of the first sort.

I immediately noticed a listing in the paper for someone to assist an elderly gentleman on the Rockville-Maryland Pike with a few of his daily needs. I applied. I was there for perhaps three- five weeks, acting as a sort of companion. There was very little for me to do. He dressed himself. I helped him down the stairs to meals and so on. One event occurred during that time which made a lasting impression on me. I had gone to a little store, which today would be considered a convenience store. They had the radio on. While I was there I heard the broadcast of the report of the crash and burning of the Hindenburg (May 6, 1937).

During this time I maintained a loose relationship with my sister and her husband. I did not want to be a further burden to her. I also kept thinking of my education. I wanted very much to finish high school. It seemed impossible in Washington. I kept thinking there must be a spot where I might be able to do this. My mother had an uncle, her mother's brother, who migrated from South Carolina to Texas at the end of the Civil War. He returned to South Carolina one time, in 1930. I was with my grandfather when Uncle George was there. This great-uncle had moved, after 34 years, from Texas to a place near Reeds Spring, MO. I thought, "He is a relation; if I get out there with him, I bet I could finish high school." I informed my sister of my decision. We discussed it at some length. She knew I was determined. She offered me her prayers, which I received to this day.

I set out from Washington D. C. in the evening around the 20th of May, 1937. I rode the train from Union Station in the District to Cumberland, Maryland. I began hitchhiking. I ended up the next night in Canton, OH. I had less than \$4. I spent the night in a flophouse where one could bed down for a quarter. I remember distinctly some man telling me what to do with my personal belongings because we slept in a room with 50 cots spaced only 12" to 18" apart.

The next day I went down to a trucking firm and asked about getting a ride going toward St. Louis. The manager informed me that no one rode in any of the firm's trucks except the drivers. As I went outside there was a man unloading a semi trailer filled with clay tile. At that time they did not have pallets; you can imagine what a job that was. I had nothing to do and no place to go, so I helped him. The boss came out on the dock some time later and saw what I was doing. He stopped one young man who was going by and asked him where he was going with his next load. "Chicago" was the answer. He said, "Take the kid with you."

Soon we left for Chicago. What an experience for me! I had never been in such a truck and from its windows I savored brand-new country. To think that just one year before I had been following mules in the fields of South Carolina and now my future lay before me, a question mark. The truck was a cab-over. The heat from the engine, lacking insulation, was so hot it would burn one's feet through one's shoes. The floor of the truck had duct boards for relief from the heat. Naturally, there was no air-conditioning.

When we arrived in Chicago, we went to a terminal down on State Street. The driver remarked, "You've never been in Chicago or a city this size before, have you?" I said, "No." He said, "You should see Chicago while you are here." He parked his trailer, unhitched the tractor, and we took a tour of the loop in Chicago. I've thought of his kindness many times. He made arrangements with another truck driver for me to ride to St. Louis.

With this driver, I left Chicago in the early evening and somewhere north of Springfield, Illinois, the truck stopped. The driver diagnosed our mechanical problem, flagged down another truck, and rode into town to see about repair. At 3 am on the prairie in

central Illinois, I sat with the truck and a trailer load of caskets. He finally returned about daybreak with a tow truck. We were towed into town, the truck was repaired, and we continued on to St. Louis later that afternoon.

I started out of St. Louis going west on old Route 66. A man and his car stopped for me. "Where are you going?" he asked. I told him. He said, placing his hand on my leg, "Well, why don't you come up to my place and join me in a little libation?" I declined. At that time I thought he was after my body when the real meaning of the word was to join him in a drink, which I'm sure he didn't have in mind! However, since then, I've always had a great interest in words.

I arrived in Lebanon, MO, that evening. Someone had told me while I was traveling that occasionally a kind sheriff or chief of police might let one sleep in a cell. I approached Lebanon's Chief of Police. I was so tired. It was cold in late May. I explained my situation and asked for a bed. He told me, "Kid, you don't want to sleep in a cell. All your life that will be with you, that you once spent some time in jail. Why don't you go down to the powerhouse and tell the night watchman that I sent you." I slept on the concrete floor of the powerhouse; my bedmate that evening was a large diesel engine.

The next morning I proceeded to Springfield, MO, and waited on the corner of St. Louis and Glenstone for several hours trying to get a ride further south. All at once a rickety vehicle, which we called a 'stripdown', just two seats and a steering wheel with a makeshift bed in the back, stopped. The occupants were the driver and his wife and two small girls in the back. They asked me where I was going and I told them about my desire to contact my Great Uncle George. I rode with them to Spokane, MO. The driver, Roy Dye, said, "If you get there and find out something has happened, come back here and spend the night. We live five miles down this road the other side of Chestnut Ridge." I did not realize how prophetic those words were. When I arrived in Reed Springs, I found out my great uncle had gone back to South Carolina.

I hitchhiked back to Spokane and made my way to Chestnut Ridge. I arrived about 9 pm. They were in bed. I got them up and they gave me a glass of milk and a piece of cornbread to eat. The next morning he asked me if I had ever cut sprouts. For the uninitiated, "sprouts" are new shoots, which grow from a severed tree stump. In time they can grow to be large saplings. I cut sprouts for three days for that man. Then he told me I'd better be moving on. I had no idea where. He gave me fifty cents and got me a ride on the milk truck to Nixa, MO.

I desperately needed a haircut! I went to a barbershop and this dear man by the name of Fray Ball asked me where I was going. I told him my story. He asked me if I had done any farming. I was born and reared on a farm! He said, "Mr. Keltner and his wife are both ill and he needs his corn planted." I went out to the Keltner residence and for three days I planted corn. It was the first time I had heard of or seen a check-row planter. When I finished I went back to the barbershop, because this was a focal point. Mr. Ball and I visited a moment then he said, "Wait a minute. I want to make a call."

So he called a woman who lived west of Nixa down on the James River. I walked down there and I met Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Kerr.

Mrs. Rosa Kerr was certainly a dear soul, one of God's chosen people. The Kerrs talked to me for some time and I worked around there for a few days. A cousin of Mrs. Kerr from Carthage came up to visit that weekend. That is how I met Wade and Georgia Bradley. Mrs. Bradley, who had had a rocky childhood and had lived with Mrs. Kerr for some time, was sympathetic to my plight. I went home with them that evening. I could not believe my good fortune. When my 17th birthday came a couple of months later, I counted my blessings: clothing, a home, people who cared for me. It was unbelievable that just one year before I was leaving South Carolina with no concept of a future at all. I lived with the Bradleys through my high school senior year, and through junior college and university.

I enrolled in high school and finished in 1937-38. Strange as it may be, out of 154 students who graduated, over 50% are now deceased. At their 50th high school reunion they asked me to be the Master of Ceremonies. I declined because I felt it should be one of the officers. They said they were either deceased or ill. I was told, "You've got to, Jim, we're scraping the bottom of the barrel." On that basis I know of no one who was more qualified for the job. I held forth on the 50th, 55th, 60th, and again the first weekend of June, 2000, for the 62nd.

After graduating from high school, I worked for Safeway Grocery weekends and evenings. I've read that the price of sugar was 4 cents per pound in 1900. When I was at Safeway it was 9 ½ cents per pound and today it is approximately 30-49 cents per pound. Cigarettes were one dollar per carton. The store was located one block off the square. One of my Saturday morning jobs was to take money to the bank and then circle the square visiting the stores of competitors, McCormick's and Kroger, to see what their specials were for the week. When I returned, I reported to the manager, who then made a poster advertising those same special items for a penny less. Among we fellows working at the store, a grocery bill as high as eleven dollars brought comment from us.

I attended Joplin Junior College for two years and graduated. From there I wanted to go to Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, which was Oklahoma A & M at that time. I hitchhiked out there and went to see the Chancellor. I made arrangements for enrolling and I got a job. I hitchhiked back to Tulsa.



Wade and Georgia Bradley

Outside of Stillwater I caught a ride with a man who asked me where I was going. I gave a reference point of Joplin. He asked me if I had a driver's license. I said, "Yes," and started to take it out of my pocket. He said he didn't need to see it, he just wanted

to know that I had one. Then he asked, "Would you like to drive a car from Tulsa to Joplin for the ride?" "I'd be delighted." We arrived in Tulsa and went down in the warehouse district. We walked the length of one warehouse that was at least ¼-mile long. I asked the gentleman for a phone number so I could call him if something happened. He said, "No, you call the people at your destination." I knew where it was because I had a friend whose father had a station on the opposite corner. He told me, "Well, we have two car lots, one in Tulsa and one in Joplin. We move cars back and forth if they aren't selling." For some reason that made sense to me.

I left in a 1935 Terraplane, arrived in Joplin and drove into the station. I told the attendant, "By the way I've brought you a car from Tulsa." He grabbed a tire iron and told me to get out of there as fast as I could and not to leave any stone unturned. I immediately left; I drove around the block. Then it dawned on me: I had, in all probability, driven a hot car across the state line! How fortunate I was! Had I been stopped by the police and questioned, no one would have believed me. I had no witnesses; I could not go back to place where I had picked up the car because I did not know the directions. I circled the block, got back near the station, waited until he was on the other of the station attending to someone, and I left the car. That was the last I heard of that.

I later came to Springfield, MO, and enrolled at Southwest Teacher's College (now Missouri State University) because I got a better job there than the one I'd been offered in Stillwater, Oklahoma. I attended STC my junior year. The following year I went to the University of Arkansas, where I lived in a boarding house. In the house was a young man from downstate whose father was quite wealthy. He had an allowance of ten dollars a week. To most of us that was a fortune. He had been kicked out of school two or three times. Each time his father would come up and make a donation to the university, and his son was re-instated. He was taking freshman English for the third time; he asked me to write his theme. Anything I could do to make an honest penny was a welcome opportunity. I wrote a philosophical theme about aspects of the Constitution. A couple of days later he came to me and was very upset. He only wanted to make a C! It seems the instructor had read portions of the theme and then called on its author. My friend was busy gazing out the window or at a coed and had no idea to what the man was referring. He had not even read the theme but had merely folded the paper and signed his name on the back.

Whenever my friend wrote a check, his father required that he note what the check was for on the check stub. There was a place near Fayetteville called Schulertown. He used to cash checks at the Schulertown liquor store; the check stub said "books."

In 1940 I was asked to represent Carthage, MO, at the dedication of the Andy McDonald Gym on the STC campus by Lee Morris, Business Manager. At his invitation I quipped, "The fact that I'm the only student from Carthage probably had nothing to do with it." He looked at me sternly and said, "Young man, don't ever spoil a good thought." I have remembered that advice and repeated its lesson to others many times. I had the great privilege to encounter Mr. Morris again when he was near 90 and to thank him for his influence in my life.

Chapter 3

I was at the University of Arkansas when World War II started. I was registered in Carthage, MO, but I was living in Fayetteville, AR. Pretty soon the draft got closer and closer. In April, 1942, I was to be in the group that went from Carthage to Jefferson Barracks, but I went from Fayetteville. When I arrived I was separated from the group; I was sworn in a couple of hours before the rest. I ended up with a volunteer enlistment number; they received draftees' numbers.

I learned a great lesson from the Army that day. They asked how many of us had been to college. I stuck up my hand and a few others did likewise. We were selected to spend our nights grading the tests that each inductee takes. It was emphasized over and over that the tests would determine where we were placed. We stacked them in bundles of 50. About 3 a.m. one morning an individual came in and said, "We need 1700 men at Camp Roberts, CA, at an infantry replacement center." He went to the test stacks and picked up 100, 200, etc. until he had 1700. The scores hadn't made any difference. . At that time they needed bodies in the Pacific, just bodies.

I ended up at the infantry replacement center and went through basic training. We finished basic training and fell out one morning early in order to leave at 9 o'clock. We were still standing there that afternoon when they came out and called off the names of five people who were to remain. I was one of them.

Mrs. Bradley, with whom I lived in Carthage, was a wonderful lady. But she was very possessive, extremely so. Her husband led a miserable life. They had been so good to me, but my life had been one of successive compromises. She was constantly having hurt feelings or being upset for reasons I could not fathom. Since that time discussions with her extended family have led me to believe she may have had bi-polar disorder. She was just sure that I was a weakling and unable to do anything at all. One time she had interfered in high school telling them I was not to take physical education because of "my condition." I still do not know what "my condition" was. She decided I shouldn't be in this infantry battalion. Through some connection she had, she contacted Dewey Short, who was a representative from Southwest Missouri, and I was transferred from the infantry to a medical unit.

Miserably, I went to the station hospital at Camp Roberts. I was there for several months, constantly badgering the First Sergeant for a transfer. I wanted to prove to myself that I wasn't a weakling. Finally, I was transferred to the Eighth Ar-



mored Division in Camp Polk, Louisiana, and was assigned to an armored infantry battalion. While waiting for transportation to go there, a colonel came over and asked for Mauldin. I followed him and ended up in a medical battalion at Camp Polk with a First Sergeant whose name was Thomas Griffith. It was there that I really learned to soldier.

I had a good friend there with a French name, Jacques Bouchier, which was Anglicized by the military to "Jack Boucher." His heritage was French-Canadian. He and I became fast friends. We had the uncanny ability to read each other's minds. We were both 3-stripers, quite a rating at that time. We were constantly looking for a place to use our weekend pass that was not completely inundated by soldiers. There were always two divisions, with 15,000 men each, in North and South Camp Polk plus 2-2 ½ divisions on maneuvers in the area. Leesville, LA was a metropolis of very small size.



You say we look like trouble?

Jack had the unusual ability to drink a bottle of beer straight down. Many say it cannot be done. I would bet that my buddy could drink a beer without swallowing. We financed a lot of weekends this way. Jack and I decided to get away one weekend. We traveled down to Opelousas, Louisiana. Most people didn't want anything to do with soldiers; they had seen thousands. One Sunday morning we were walking down the street in a residential neighborhood. As we walked past a wrought-iron fence loaded with flowers, I told Jack, "I'm going to get us invited to Sunday dinner." He scoffed at the idea. I started naming off the flowers that were familiar to me, having grown up in South Carolina, and asking Jack if he knew of them. No, they did not grow in Wisconsin. I commiserated, "You poor soul! You are not able to enjoy all the marvelous southern flora." A curtain moved. Then I really kicked the conversation into high gear. Pretty soon this elderly lady came out and spoke to us. "Why don't you young men come in a visit a while?" We did and were treated to Sunday dinner.

A friend of hers came to visit. I introduced Jack by his French name. Oh, my, was the friend impressed! She let us know she was a member of the FFV. To be a member of the First Families of Virginia is to be truly upper-crust, in their opinion. She turned to me, repeating her credentials with the FFV, and said, "I have heard there ARE people in the West, where you're from, who have attained a reasonable degree of respectability. I find that most interesting when you consider the area was populated by "wagon followers." That came close to an insult! I bit my tongue a moment and then replied, "It IS interesting to note what happens in society, particularly the FFV, when you consider that the first women in Virginia were prostitutes picked up on the streets of Liverpool and Rotterdam." She was livid! We decided to beat a hasty retreat. Our hostess followed us to the front door, whispering as we left, "Thank you, thank you, thank you!

I have been waiting for the longest time for someone to put her in her place. Of course, you realize you cannot come back again, but thank you.”



I was on maneuvers two-and-a-half times at Camp Polk. There was a volunteer transfer to the infantry, for which I applied. I ended up in Centerville, MS, at Camp VanDorn. I arrived at camp, having been inactive for several weeks. They fell out that night to do a twenty-five mile hike with full equipment. My boots were in another bag, which had not yet arrived, so I secured a pair of shoes from a supply room that someone had worn before. The toes of the shoes bore the imprints of the first wearer. They were not comfortable but they got me through the hike. I was very proud of myself because many of the men did not make it through the hike. It was extremely hot and humid. There were a lot of men joining our unit from other units. Some had considerable rank. There was a First Sergeant, who was relieved of his stripes the next morning after my arrival. In

fact, my T-3, a technical staff sergeant, was made a straight staff sergeant the next day and I was assigned a squad.

We finished training at Camp Van Dorn and went to Camp Shanks, NY. We were there on Thanksgiving Day. We were to leave the next day. One of my buddies and I decided to go into New York City. About 3 am we dropped into a bar at 42nd Street near 8th Avenue. The only other patron was a flight sergeant in the RAF. We bought him a drink and started talking, learning that he was stationed in Canada. The British term for being stationed overseas is “posted”. When we asked him how he liked Canada, he told us this story. He had lived in a small village near Dover, England. Every small boat in the village had participated in the evacuation of Dunkirk, the greatest evacuation of World War II. He was not at the service at the time; he was an RAF instructor. He had to quit visiting and writing his mother, though, because the postmistress of his village would disparage his not being “posted”. He constantly badgered the appropriate office to be allowed to go overseas. Finally, his request was granted. He was posted to the middle of a forest in Ontario! His job? He was an instructor in the RAF. “How do I like Canada?” I asked. “Laddie, you can take the whole of Canada and stick it up your arse, province by province, spruce by spruce, and fir by fir.” With that he turned and majestically marched out of the bar, arms swinging.

We left on a “14-day cruise” in a convoy from New York to Marseilles, France. That’s where we entered into the fray. We went on up the Rhone Valley. While our 63rd Division was not committed to the Front as a division, certain regiments and battalions were scattered hither and yon. The 254th regiment was sent to the Colmar Pocket, which was one of the greater battles in the Alps of France in World War II. The 3rd Battalion of the 253rd regiment went to the Gros Rederching area. It was on the Alsatian border. Prior to that we were in Strassbourg. We were finally committed as a division in late January, 1945, and we had 100+ days of straight combat. While we had not been committed as a division prior to this, we had many wounded and several killed in battles. I have a purple heart, a bronze star with an oak leaf cluster, a combat

infantry badge, a Presidential unit citation, 3 battle stars and a battlefield commission. That will suffice.

With the horrors of war there are moments of comic relief and one must laugh or go crazy. One of the more stressful aspects of our experience was searching out a town after it had been "taken". This is a house-to-house, room-to-room operation. We worked in three-man teams. One man stood in a hallway or an entryway with an automatic weapon. The other two marched to the door. When one of them opened the door to a room, his vision was often obscured due to black-out coverings over the windows. Upon seeing his shadow or his reflection in a mirror, a man might shoot. More than one man has shot himself in the mirror; I know one personally.

Once we were searching the home of a family with two children of elementary school age. On top of a piano was a violin. We had finished searching the house and asked the family, "Who plays?" "Papa" was the answer. I picked up a piece of music which was a Johann Strauss Vienna Blut, (Vienna Blood); I said, "Play." He was very nervous and I could understand. He started playing and we sat and we listened until he completed one movement. We thanked him and we left. I often wondered what stories he told after the war if he survived.

As soon as the war ended in Europe, we started having training exercises to be moved to Japan via the Suez Canal. In August I had been to a base hospital to have a bit of shrapnel removed. I was offered a purple heart. Believe it or not, I turned it down. Many of the guys in my company were short of points, which I felt they deserved for actions that went unreported. I felt that I would simply be taking advantage of the system to accept such an honor. All this should be in the records of the 63rd Infantry Division Hospital, stationed in Bad Mergentheim, Germany in July-August of 1945.

I was discharged from the hospital on August 6, 1945.

Back in camp my unit was to leave the very next morning for Marseilles. I learned orders had been received to cancel our departure and that a bomb had been dropped on Japan. This was all hearsay. The word was that this bomb caused so much devastation they thought the war was over and everything was put on hold. It was true.



They also had a point system for allowing people to go home. I was only a few points short. I was transferred to an ordinance organization. In September after I had been there six weeks, I was told I could be rotated home through one of the replacement centers known as cigarette tent camps in France. These camps bore the colorful names of cigarette brands: Lucky Strike, Chesterfield, Chelsea, etc. I knew someone who had lived in a tent in one of these camps since June, so I told them, "When you find something that's going straight home, I'll go." I left Germany in late January, 1946, and went to Paris to Antwerp to the U.S. I was separated from the service at Jefferson Barracks with several weeks of leave.

After World War II I wrote down what I expected of my country and myself. The basis was the country owes me nothing but an opportunity. If I do not pursue the opportunity, that is my problem, not the government's, my relatives', nor my friends'. In the 1950's I reduced my beliefs to writing. I carry them in my wallet:

Deliver me from all evil doers that talk nothing but sickness and failure. Grant me companionship of men who think success and men who work for it. Loan me associates who cheerfully face the the problems of a day and try hard to overcome them. Relieve me of all cynics and critics. Give me good health and the strength to be of real service to the world, and I'll get all that's good for me and will what's left to those who want it.

If I had it to do over, I would add: "Grant me a strong spiritual life."

Chapter 4

I returned to Carthage, MO, and was reunited with the Bradleys. I owe so much to them. They allowed me to finish high school and helped me pay for my college education. I finally parted with Mrs. Bradley after Mr. Bradley's death. She was playing one of my sons against the other. I couldn't live with that, so I broke our relationship. In her overwhelming generosity, trying to buy people's affection, I could have ended up with most of all they had. They had no children. They had some fantastic antiques. If someone expressed a liking for one of her possessions, Mrs. Bradley might give it to them, even if she had never seen them before. I am proud to say I acquired not one item. But I have never forgotten how much I owe to them.

I began visiting universities in order to enter graduate school to pursue the study of bacteriology (known today as microbiology). I explored Iowa State, the University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin. At the latter I visited the head of the bacteriology department and made arrangements for the necessary job. The department head accompanied me to the Registrar's office. They took one look at my papers and gave them back to me. I was from out of state, not usually an issue in graduate schools. However, with the end of the war the influx of in-state veterans filled the school to capacity.

I went back to Carthage then to Springfield, MO to visit State Teacher's College. While visiting Dr. William E. Taylor in the school's Health Department, he offered me a job running the clinical laboratory. I had attended one of his classes in 1940. I could work in the lab, take one or two courses and finish my undergraduate degree. I had plenty of hours (136) but no residency.

Sometime in the early summer of 1947 I met Norma Ellison, a young lady who altered

my life completely. We had been in a physiology class together in 1939, but had no other relationship. Our first date was a picnic in August. We began a hurried relationship as I was off to Kansas University in September.

I was admitted on probation, one of the many veterans who doubled the population of that school. My GPA upon entry was about 2.5 but I left with a GPA of about 3.7. I was proud! Norma and I were married August 22, 1948. After a brief honeymoon we began our life together in Lawrence, Kansas. I was much involved at KU in the Bacteriology Department. I did my research work under Cora Downs, PhD, who worked on biological warfare during WW II. Much of her work was with organisms that had high morbidity. I worked for two years with *bacterium tularensis*. This organism is highly infective, capable of all means of infection: inhalation, broken skin, unbroken skin, digestion, and ocular. There are three types of infection caused by this organism, the bulbar form, the ocular form and the typhoidal form. I had the last. Most organisms that upon infection cause high temperature usually confer lasting immunity upon their victims i.e. typhoid fever, yellow fever, etc. This is not the case with *tularensis*. The immunity is transitory.



August 22, 1948 at 1st & Calvary Presbyterian Church, Springfield, Missouri

In addition to my bacteriology work, I worked in biochemistry and taught one class in bacteriology to pharmacy students. I was very busy. Life was difficult for Norma. I had little time for her and none for a social life. She never complained. On June 29, 1948, Norma and I were blessed with a wonderful, wonderful gift – our son Philip.

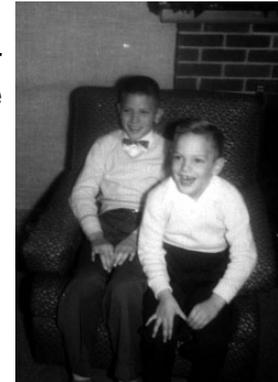
My undergraduate degree was in biology and my master's degree, conferred June 1, 1950, was in bacteriology and biochemistry. I had an offer at Rochester School of Medicine to continue my graduate work toward a doctorate in 1950. However, my wife and I discussed it at some length and decided the stipend offered to me left us without sufficient funds for winter clothing and other necessities for transferring to a colder climate! I had also received an offer from the University of Arizona to teach microbiology and work on a doctorate with a sabbatical after 10 years. The salary was a magnificent \$300/month for nine months. They dunned me with telegrams insisting that I come out. Finally I replied that I would be happy to come out at that price but what would they pay my wife and son? That was the end of that.

I finally went to work for a clinical laboratory in Ft. Scott, KS. We were there for ten months when I started with Merck and Company. My employment with Merck began by being transferred to Springfield, MO, Norma's hometown. About one year later we purchased a house and Norma became pregnant again.

In 1953, some time in the spring, I had been making a call for Merck & Co. in Spring-

field, MO, when I passed an office with a window sign advertising a new insurance policy. It covered four diseases: yellow fever, cancer, polio and an unrecalled fourth. In the early '50's poliomyelitis was a fearful, fearful disease. They had had a near epidemic in Springfield, MO. While I had great medical coverage with Merck & Co., polio was not covered. This sign stated the policy covered, among others, polio and yellow fever. I went in and purchased a policy.

In 90 days, our oldest son, who was within a month of turning 4, became ill. Phillip was an usual child. He would never cry, never complain. He was just a happy kid. He was with me in the garage one Saturday afternoon and he began to cry saying his head hurt. I took his temperature...nothing. His mother applied cold compresses to his forehead. I called a pediatrician I had met a few weeks earlier, Dr. Edgar Clayton, and told him the situation, that Philip had no temperature but was complaining about his head. Dr. Clayton told me to try again in 20 minutes and re-call him, which I did. He said, "I'll be right out." The doctor stuck his hand under Philip's head, lifted it up and said, "Let's go." Dr. Clayton is a hero in our house to this day.



Our Boys

We went to Burge Hospital, where they had a polio unit. They were using the Sister Kenney method of treatment: hot, wet blankets and exercise. Within two hours from Phillip's first complaint, he was diagnosed, in the hospital and treatment started for polio. He had quite a bit of involvement in his spine. When he came home Norma and I continued his therapy religiously for several months. To this day I think that the rapidity with which treatment was begun played a great role in Phillip's almost total recovery. For a few years one leg was $\frac{1}{4}$ inch shorter than the other, but this evened out by the time he was 10. He received an exam each year until he was 15.

The week after Philip was hospitalized, Mr. Ewing, who had sold me the polio policy, called me. He said, "I know that you are not thinking about money and bills right at this time, but sooner or later you will. I just wanted to call and tell you not to worry; that is my concern. I will take care of it." I have often thought what a wonderful, wonderful gesture this was on the part of that man. In my business where application of this idea was appropriate to people in difficult circumstances, I did so. I was and am so grateful to Mr. Ewing.

We were also concerned about Norma and her pregnancy. By God's grace all was well and on August 4, 1953, our son Gregory was born.

As Merck continued to grow and change in markets and mission, I had several different positions but never moved. In the mid 60's a new chemical compound opened up new markets in the cattle industry. We were transferred to Overland Park, KS, in the Kansas City area. We had a house built and lived in a neighborhood of people with a diversity of geographical backgrounds, Alabama, the Dakotas, Wisconsin, Michigan, Missouri, Kansas, Pennsylvania, a wonderful block of 12 families. We started a 4th of July

party and a Christmas party. Norma and I attended the party on July 4, 2000. (Epilogue: We also attended that same party in 2006.)

Chapter 5



Norma's Mother and Father

The move from Springfield to Overland Park, KS, was indeed a blessing for us. My dear Norma grew up with two older brothers, the younger of whom was killed in action in 1944. He had been a teacher and coach in Cabool, MO. Her mother, bless her heart, was a cloying woman who did not enjoy life. Her father was one of the finest men I have ever met. During the Depression years Norma and both brothers were in college at the same time. They walked home from STC each day for lunch. Norma

lived at home until she and I were married when we were both 28. She had obediently lived in the shadow of her mother even after we were married. In Overland Park she began to bloom and to be her own woman, now in her 40's. She went to work for the Shawnee Mission school system and was a treasured employee of that group. I "met" a new woman – funny, outgoing, and caring.

Our two sons have been a blessing to us. The only trouble they gave us was more anticipation than reality. They were good students and graduated from Shawnee Mission High School in Overland Park, KS.

Philip graduated from Drury College in 1971 with a degree in accounting and economics. He had a tough first year, but once he got his priorities straight Philip did well. Throughout life Philip has had few friends, but those he does have are wedded to him. He has tremendous self-discipline and excels at teaching himself. Passing the CPCU exam is usually preceded by a three-year course of study. Philip taught himself and passed the first time.



Greg

Philip

Gregory graduated from the University of Missouri School of Journalism in 1975. He was on the Dean's Honor Roll every semester. Greg is a gregarious fellow with friends among the young and the elderly. He is a fun guy, more so than his brother. Each of our boys is a work-alcoholic. This has probably caused some problems in their personal lives. Greg and I are simpatico and often discuss many subjects.

Due to the nature of my work, much of the rearing of our two sons fell on Norma's shoulders. She did a wonderful job. The boys love and respect their parents and still like to come home. They arranged a 50th anniversary recep-



Jim with Greg and Philip

tion for Norma and me, the same church (1st & Calvary Presbyterian Church in Springfield, MO), the same day and the same hour. We had over 150 people there. It was a wonderful party! We were so pleased. We are proud of our sons.

*1st & Calvary
8/22/1998*



With Merck I had 22 ½ years of wonderful experiences. At the time I left Merck I was the national accounts man, had four customers, and traveled constantly. I left to go to one of their customers and to seek relief from the constant travel. It was a family organization but one should realize that one never goes to work for a family organization. Shortly after I arrived the company was purchased by Beatrice Foods, one of the larger conglomerates at that time. Here I was the #2 man in the organization with a bit of the action but no stock. It takes very little imagination to picture me as the proverbial leaf in autumn. My total time there was 15 months.

I went to work for an international trading company out of Hamburg, Germany, which had offices throughout the world. It was a most interesting experience dealing with people from many different countries, Hungary, Poland, Germany, England and the United States. I had an office in Kansas City, but due to my background and experience, I also worked out of their offices in New York and California. I worked in the Eastern Regional office in the Empire State Building one week a month and called on the larger pharmaceutical houses, Merck, American Cyanamid, Roche, Pfizer, etc. Most of the rest of the staff was young, aggressive and knowledgeable but immature and inexperienced. They were reluctant to call on the larger companies.

While my travel was in the 48 states and a couple of provinces in Canada, I had contact with people from Eastern Europe, Cuba, South America, Central America, and Asia. In my opinion people are primarily the same the world over. They have an interest in their family, home, work, customs, politics and culture. I always find it more interesting to look for the similarities rather than the differences.

A trading company brokers deals between concerns. Many of the Asiatic countries, Eastern Europe and Russia did not buy and sell as we do. One did not render an order to a company such as IBM or Dow Chemical. For example, when trading with Hungary, you were presented with a list of items they made, most of which were heavy

industrial chemicals. Hungary would be in dire need of fine chemicals, particularly pharmaceutical chemicals. One would contact the Minister of Trade for that facet of the business. He would say, "We are in need of 15000 kilos of "x" chemical. We have 100 metric tons of "xxx" to trade." An order might be rendered in October and would read "100 metric tons of "xxx" for delivery May 15 with duty paid." No money actually changed hands. After the trade, the received item would be sold for cash. Many of firms and countries still operate this way. Some look at it as a barter system, but it is not a true barter system. The #1 trading city in Europe was in Amsterdam, The Netherlands; #2 was in Hamburg. In a given block there might be 25-50 trading companies. Much of the work was done by Telex and telephone.

The firm with which I was associated was an interesting one in that it was a one-man show and had done \$1 billion worth of business in the year I joined them in 1975. That was a fantastic sum of money in that day and time. The owner was a highly cultured individual from East Germany. He had escaped to the West. His manners, particularly toward the secretarial staff, were impeccable. It was a true Germanic firm: he was the patriarch. He looked after each staff member. The staff was very afraid of this man. If he approached the desk of any of his managers, they immediately jumped to their feet. I did not laugh out loud around them, but, to me, this was very amusing.



One Christmas he decided he wanted to wish every office in the world Merry Christmas. There were offices in Eastern Europe, Moscow, China, the U.S., Mexico, and South America. He expected his employees to be in the office when they received their call! If you consider all the time zones, there were a lot of people getting a call in the wee hours of the morning and being wished a Merry Christmas. We received our call at midnight. He was still in the Hamburg office and so was his entire staff. Sometime later he broke his ankle and was out for a while. The doctor said he could go back to work for four hours each day, only. He chose his own hours, 4pm to 8pm. No one in management left the office until he did.

Chapter 6

In 1982 I was in my office one morning with my secretary going over the week's events. I traveled a great distance. I looked up at the clock was approaching 9 o'clock and there in the doorway was a new general manager for the company in New York. He looked at his watch and said, "As of this moment all incoming telephone calls will be rotated to New York. As of 5 pm this office is closed and you are terminated. Chicago was closed last evening. Los Angeles will be closed in a couple of hours." With no warning this can certainly destroy a coffee break! Here I was 62 years old and out

of a job again. It was devastating. My reaction was different than upon my termination 10 years earlier. The greatest effect was on my wife.

I started a new era. I was not in a position to retire. The entire time I was in Kansas City I had probably averaged one job offer a month, particularly from firms in New York City in a similar business. One firm even came to Missouri twice wanting me to go to work for them. So I thought finding a replacement job wouldn't be a big problem. What I didn't realize was that as competition I had been a problem for them. Now that I was out of business I was no longer a problem, and they had no interest in having me around, particularly at 62.

After much soul searching I thought I would try to go into business for myself. For four or five months I did not make much of a splash, that's for sure. Finally, one of my previous accounts called me. They had a product which, in fact, I had sold to them years before. The caller said that due to a very mild winter and competition in the field he had 10,000 kilos of this product that we need to rid ourselves of without alerting the industry. He said I had quite a struggle with my management before I could offer it to you, but we would like you to have it. Just one thing, it will be a cash deal. It is located in a box car on a rail siding and you can pick it up there. I looked at my assets, went to a bank, borrowed \$100,000 in the form of a cashier's check, brokered a cash sale for \$125,000, and delivered the product. That launched my career.

I had set my company up to retire at 67. However, in my 65th year, someone else had purchased one of my prime suppliers in Europe. That plus other factors convinced me that I would have a most difficult year. Through much review I decided to close my firm. My business had been good to me. I did not need to leave Kansas City, but I wanted to get away. My wife and I decided to move to what had been her hometown, Springfield, MO. We made our decision, sold our house, bought a new house and moved within 60 days. My wife was a nervous wreck.



We bought acreage in Springfield. I had always wanted to do something a little different. When we lived in Overland Park, KS, I owned a farm north of the airport where I kept cattle and sheep. The hard physical labor of farming on Saturdays was the perfect antidote to my hectic travel schedule. It was relaxing and rejuvenating. So I mulled what to do with my acreage in Springfield. I had considered llamas seven or eight years before when I bought sheep from a gentleman who had a llama he had purchased for \$1500. In 1985 the cost of a pair of llamas had jumped to \$75,000 - \$80,000! During the intervening years they had lost their genetic pool which changed the market drastically. No llamas for me!

I decided to do something really different. I had grown up on a farm and spent a lot of

time around mules. I purchased a pair of jack mules out of Tennessee and brought them to Missouri. These were not the burros that most frequently populate the imagination. Donkeys are divided into four classes: the mammoth, the large standard, the standard, and the burro. Now we also have miniatures. I had one mammoth and one large standard and I owned a 14-hand Jenny and a mare.

On April 21, 1988 I had a heart attack and had to give up my mule business. Norma routinely moves slowly and can be flustered easily. However, in a crisis her actions are something to behold. When I had my heart attack at 3:30 a.m., it was so severe that I was knocked to the floor. She calmly called an ambulance and gave them directions to our house. She did all she could to make me comfortable. I was transported to the hospital where emergency surgery was performed after a failed angiogram. I suffered about 30% heart muscle damage.

On May 12, 1991, I received an electrical shock that knocked me out. A storm had knocked out our water pump and covered the basement with about 1" of water. I ventured downstairs in my bare feet when Norma couldn't get any water pressure. Not seeing the damage to the control panel above my head, I braced myself on an iron pipe while I bent to look at the pressure gauge on the pump. The storm had blown the control panel completely out of the wall and a bare wire was lying against the pipe.

Norma heard me hit the floor and came running. She was shocked while trying to pull me away from the pipe. According to her she pried and knocked me away with the wooden handle of a shovel. Then she calmly called the ambulance and gave them directions to our home. When one has an electrical shock, the current enters one place and leaves at another. For several months I had a slow-healing sore under my left ankle. Since I evidently flopped around on the wet floor with a death grip on the pipe, there was an exit burn on my chest, right over my heart. Everyone who has had by-pass surgery has a wire inside that closes the cartilage in the chest where it was opened for the heart operation. I am so lucky to be here and to have had Norma as my partner of 52 years. I love her so much.



We have had a wonderful retirement. We have traveled – England, Wales, Scotland, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, three trips to the Caribbean plus travel in the U.S. Since life has been so good to me, I have tried to reciprocate. I feel I can never do enough. Personally, I have little time for those who complain, "There's nothing to do in retirement." Any area, any city is filled with opportunities for volunteers. I have served on the County Board of Planning and Zoning and the Board for the Developmentally Disabled. I have been a Stephen Minister, have served on The Presbytery Board for 6 years, five years as moderator of the nominating committee, and have done some

work for the Ozarks Council of Churches. Norma and I have each served as Elders in our church and participated in Meals on Wheels.

Norma and I volunteer at St. John's Hospital each week, 4 and 6 hours respectively. I work for Older Adult Services in an office called CLAIM, Concerned Laymen Aiding the Insured of Missouri. We answer questions about Medicare, Medicaid, prescription drug programs and supplemental insurance and address patients' concerns about hospital and doctor bills. Once in a while I feel I really help someone.

One of my proudest endeavors is a weekly men's ecumenical prayer breakfast. It is held each Wednesday at our church from 6:45 – 7:45 a.m. and is attended by 80-100 men from up to 30 different churches in the Springfield area. This group has been meeting weekly since 1963. The agenda includes breakfast, announcements, celebration of birthdays, a devotional, and prayer requests. The devotional speaker, like the attendees, may be a minister, priest, college professor, city official, doctor, college student, or retiree. For the past three years I have accepted the responsibility of securing the weekly speakers.

Chapter 7

In about 1955 I went to visit my sister, Willine, in South Carolina. I had not seen my father for these many years. I had never heard from him, not even during the war. We were getting ready to leave and my sister asked me if I was going by to see him. I said, "No"; then I changed my mind. I thought I might show Norma and our sons. I drove to his house. Looking through the screen door, through the living room and into the kitchen, I saw him sitting at a kitchen table. I rapped on the door. About halfway through the living room, he began to smile broadly. He opened the door, opened his arms and enfolded me. You cannot imagine the emotion that welled up in me. Then he slapped me on the back and said, "Sims, old boy, how are you?" I said, "I'm not Sims." He said, "If you're not Sims, then who are you?" Sims was my father's nephew.

Memorial Mural to my sister, Christine Mauldin Staton Howe in the library in Hisperia, CA.



My time of being “family” with siblings is best described as “erratic.” I was with Christine fourteen years, Elvin 13 years and Willine ten years. Memories, therefore, of the relationship of the four of us are sketchy. I thank God each day for my siblings. My dear sister, Christine, wonderful, caring, sacrificing to the point of obsession, took on the burden of we children that became almost a guilt complex. I often said, as long as Christine was alive, Jesus will not have to bear the cross alone! Christine never had any children of her own. She had two husbands, Preston Staton, who died in 1985, and John Howe, who died in 1998. I loved her completely. I wish she had enjoyed life more.

Elvin was 13 when I left home. He misstated his age to join the Navy in 1939-40 and went on to make it his career. He married Lola Hayes. They had three children, Richard, Ronnie and Cheryl. Cheryl had spinal meningitis and died in 1956. His relationship with our father changed after Elvin retired from the Navy. In later years Elvin would go to Dad’s house before work every day and shave him. Elvin never had the opportunity to receive the formal education that I did. Nevertheless, he was eloquent beyond comprehension in matters of faith and he never met a stranger.



Jim and Brother Elvin

Willine married Gilbert Littlejohn. They have two adopted sons, Michael and Christopher. While she and I had little time together as children, she has been my source of laughter many times. Sister Willine has had a hard life, endured, in part, through a wonderful sense of humor. I so love and enjoy her. Whenever I need a lift I call Willine.

Because of the way our father had treated our mother, Christine and me and because I had never heard from him in all the years since I left home, I hated him. I was 40 years old when it dawned on me that the only person I was hurting was myself. I let go of my hatred and learned to live with myself at that time. Life became richer and more rewarding for me and for those around me.

Chapter 8

One never knows when life’s path will take a turn which leads to brand new horizons. Mine did in the first year of the new millennium.

The coordinator of the Older Adult Services Office at St. John’s Hospital in Springfield, MO, Valerie Griffin, included me in a life story project with 11 other participants in the year 2000. Valerie secured an invitation for me, my story keeper, and herself to make a presentation about the project at the October 2000 National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, TN.

What a grand time! We presented alongside Dr. Barbara Spring of the Life's End Institute/Missoula Demonstration Project, Stephen Denning of The World Bank, and Richard Stone, author of The Healing Art of Storytelling. While at the Festival, a woman who was a member of the Board of Directors for a large US corporation described to me how the cohesion and functioning of their board was dramatically improved by the writing and exchanging of each member's life story.

I was intrigued. Perhaps this was the vehicle I had long sought for uplifting the presence and contribution of people from many different nations to my home community of Springfield, MO.

When we got home, I talked to many different people about this idea, and received enthusiastic and indispensable encouragement from Dr. John E. Moore, Jr., President of Drury University, and Dr. Phyllis Chase, Assistant Superintendent of Schools. In January 2001 we launched the Ethnic Life Stories Project (ELSP). The goal was to record the life story of 40 ethnic elders over a 3-year period and to find permanent homes for these stories throughout the community. To this end, I dedicated 20 hours/week for 3 ½ years.

Every project participant volunteered his/her time. Sixty individuals from fifty-three different countries were interviewed as potential storytellers; thirty-six completed a story. They were paired with story keepers, who listened, recorded, and transcribed the story. Story keepers received training, an interview guide/workbook created especially for the Project, and all needed recording materials. Other volunteers took the rough transcripts and edited them, inserting pictures and reviewing them with each storyteller. Printed copies of each story were given to libraries throughout the community. Each storyteller received two copies of his/her story; each story keeper received one copy.

Throughout the Project participants gathered to feast on ethnic cuisine and to share each other's stories. Storytellers learned that theirs was not an isolated journey and they grew to admire the courage of their fellows. All made new friends and created, with other project volunteers, a multi-cultural community.



The old Washington Avenue Baptist Church was converted into The Diversity Center.

This community project happily coincided with the establishment of a Diversity Center on the campus of Drury University. The Center became a focal point for the Project. In 2001 participants gathered to celebrate the dedication of the Center and to present the first 11 stories. Two-and-one-half years later a brick walkway was installed outside the Center in honor of all ELSP participants.



Walkway dedication, at The Diversity Center 4-14-,2004. Storytellers, story keepers, editors, Project publicists, the map maker, and community leaders gathered for this special commemoration of the work of the Ethnic Life Stories Project, 2001-2004. The photograph was taken from the bucket of a utility truck.

In addition to Drury University, the Project attracted many community partners, including:

St. John's Regional Medical Center hosted luncheons, dinners and provided meeting space and technical assistance.

Karen Horny, Dean of **The Meyer Library at Southwest Missouri University**, and Jim Coombs, the Maps Librarian, contributed to each story a tailor-made map showing the birthplace of each teller plus a sheet with "My Life Story" in all native languages.

Dr. Phyllis Chase, Assistant Superintendent of the **Springfield K-12 School District**, was responsible for the inclusion of a copy of each of the first 11 stories in every library of the 54 schools in the district. Dr. Chase moved to Columbia, MO in 2002.

The Southwest Missouri Office on Aging became an indispensable partner to the Project, provided hours of assistance in bringing stories to completion, organizing events, and in Project publicity. The grace with which the Project became integrated with the community is due to the unflagging support of SWMOA staff.

The Forest Institute of Professional Psychology supported the Project financially and hosted a series of dialogues in the summer of 2002 between storytellers and Forest students. Stories are housed in their library.

Ozarks Technical Community College and **Evangel University** have the stories.

The Springfield/Greene County Public Library has long had an interest in local history. They house a full set of 36 stories and have made them available online: <http://thelibrary.springfield.missouri.org/lochist/els/menu.cfm>

Many articles about the project appeared over the course of three years in the local pa-

per, **“The Springfield-News Leader.”**

As a volunteer effort, the commitment of every participant made the project a success. From several individuals, the commitment far exceeded the original request. Mention must be made, however, of three people who gave an extraordinary amount of time to one or more phases of the project: Charlotte Phillips, the keeper of my story and the scribe/editor for Phase I; Kay Lowder of Drury University, storykeeper and editor for Phase II; and June Huff of the Southwest Missouri Office on Aging, storykeeper and creative, multi-talented organizer, hand-holder, emcee, and administrator. From beginning to end, their creative ideas, their verbal artistry, their technical skill, and their honesty kept me grounded and allowed the Project to soar.

I feel endless gratitude to the Springfield community for embracing the Project. and for recognizing its contribution through honoring me with a “Gift of Time” Award from the Council of Churches of the Ozarks in May 2004 and a special citation by the Springfield City Council in June 2004.

The project cost \$15,000 and required a total of 5200 hours of volunteers’ time, but the benefit to participants and our community is PRICELESS.

Chapter 9

My story began with the statement, “Few people in this world have been more fortunate than I.” While I have had good fortune, I have also experienced several heartaches, much loneliness, disappointment, danger and despair. In this epistle are stories no one has heard before. People I have met along the way have remarked, “How did you cope?”

I have had the privilege of knowing so many wonderful people. My belief is that there is no one on earth that I am better than. I was more fortunate in some circumstances than another or took advantage of an opportunity that someone else did not seize, but I am no better. Conversely, the man does not walk who is any better than I am. Many people have more intelligence, talent or money, but they are no better than I am.

My greatest accomplishment is that I got married!

I have a strong faith in God, faith in myself and in my family, I love mankind, and I believe in working hard, playing hard, maintaining a positive attitude in all circumstances, and in persevering against all odds. Don’t ever give up!

WAR STORIES

Surpassing Courage

When I joined K Co., 3rd Battalion, 253rd Regiment, 63rd Division in late July 1944, one of the individuals I met was a big strapping 19-year-old from the back woods of upstate Louisiana. He was a high school dropout; prior to service he was a pulp wood hauler.

In September he married a young lady from his hometown. In November we sailed for Europe and exactly six months from his wedding day, he was injured. We were engaged with the enemy in this town; he picked up a German "potato masher" grenade, which had been lobbed in our direction. It exploded in his hands. It was March 2, 1945. He was evacuated and the war continued.

Some time in the mid-1970's I was in Louisiana. I went to his hometown of around five thousand people and inquired about him at the Courthouse. I was directed to his office. No one was there. I inquired again and was told "check the Post Office." As I walked up the street I met a man with a long white cane tapping his way down the sidewalk. I got closer and noticed he had two flexible hands. I called out and he immediately recognized my voice. What a moment! Here was my friend, my comrade, legally blind and without hands. He was the county attorney in Winfield, LA.

His wife joined us and we went to lunch. He had been in innumerable Army hospitals. At Walter Reid he was contemplating suicide, when a missionary visited him from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. He said, "I slowly began to believe in God and began to think about continuing my life. Sometime later I decided I wanted to study law. Here I was a high school dropout, blind and thinking about law school! I had a most difficult time convincing the Army that I was serious. Finally, they relented and my wife read me through my entrance exam and all through law school."

What a story! During the Korean War he was recruited by the Army to visit some of the Army hospitals where they had amputees and other debilitated soldiers. He said he would enter a room along and say, "I understand there are some guys in here that think they are handicapped."

I saw the couple again in 1978 at the 63rd Infantry Division reunion. From time to time I would call or write. We finally lost touch. Today I ran across a scrap of paper that had their telephone number. I immediately called and talked to his wife. He passed away in 1997.

Blind and no hands! James and Geraldine Womack are to me the greatest couple I have ever known. My heart knows moments of joy and moments of extreme sadness when I think of them. This is the stuff of heroism.

Scared Stiff

When we moved out from Marseilles toward the Rhone Valley, the Germans were retreating and we were following them. One night we dug in on the edge of a cemetery. The enemy was to our forefront and the cemetery was behind. We had a young lad, short in stature, who said he was 18. We thought he was at best 16 with the thought processes of a 12-year-old. We all looked after him. He was from the western part of Arkansas near the Oklahoma line, a densely forested area ripe with cemetery ghost stories.

About midnight I crawled around the inside of the perimeter checking on the guys. No lights. I crawled right into the muzzle of a Browning Automatic Rifle whose young bearer had his finger on the trigger. What saved me was that he was frozen with fear. This lad was more concerned about the grave six feet behind him than he was the "enemy" a quarter of a mile away!

Between the Line and the Rhine

This story involves a 72-hour period I spent in a small village near Fontainebleau, France in late February, 1945 after the breakthrough of the Siegfried line by the 7th army. Our division was first through the Siegfried line in our area. There was a myriad of German soldiers trapped between the Siegfried line and the Rhine River. Whole divisions of German soldiers were surrendering.

During this lull someone thought it would be a great idea to gather a group of "battlefield commissioned" officers together. 201 of us attended, one captain, two first lieutenants and the remainder second lieutenants. The Army had flown over 5 Lt. Col.'s. from Ft. Benning, GA, none of who had ever been in combat. They were to instruct this group on how to fight a war by the "book". Each man there was aware of the importance of the "book," but with awards ranging from the Congressional Medal of Honor to Purple Hearts, each of the men in attendance had come from the front and knew he was going back to the front. The Lieutenant Colonels, however, wore only ETO ribbons indicating they had entered the war zone. The first speaker at the first session treated the group like a room full of recruits. It went downhill from there.

We were out on a combat exercise demonstration, called a "problem." We were to observe. The "players" were re-classed soldiers from a nearby Replacement Depot. In command of the "players" was a 1st Lt. from the 4th Armored Division, who had been re-classed. (While the Air Force had a policy that after a man had flown so many missions he was rotated to a Zone of Interior, the Army had no such policy. Instead what

several outfits did, outside official sanction, was to Z.I. any man who had 4 Purple Hearts by giving him a Section 8 [emotionally unstable], thus saving him from the law of averages.)

When the problem was finished and we, the onlookers, returned to barracks for evening chow at 5:30 p.m. The "player" group had not arrived; their truck failed to pick them up for whatever reason. They arrived at the mess hall and the Mess Sgt. refused to feed them as it was "too late." The 1st Lt. asked to see the Mess Officer and he refused as well. So, the 1st Lt. requested to talk to their C.O. The conversation went something like this: "Colonel, my name is 1st Lt. _____." I have had my group on a field problem and due to transportation errors we were late for the evening meal. The Mess Sgt. refused to feed them. The Mess Officer refused. I have decked the Mess Officer and if you come down here with a negative reply I will deck you and there is not a damn thing you can do about it. You see, I am psycho and I can prove it." They were fed.

While we were out in the field, we had a 10-minute break. A half-dozen guys hunkered down along with the captain in the group. He had gone in at North Africa as a PFC BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) man and was still alive. I was very interested in hearing what he had to say.

Nearby was an aqueduct that some said supplied water to Paris. There was a pass-through close by, which allowed traffic to move under the aqueduct. One of the Lt. Col.'s strolled over to the group with a swagger stick, tapped the Captain on the shoulder and said, "Captain, suppose that small village in front of us was your company's objective. Where would you have your C.P. (Command Post)? Over his shoulder the Captain said, "Right over there under the aqueduct." "Oh, no, Captain," "The hell I wouldn't! That's where I had it when we took this village." Then the Captain said, "Colonel, why don't you relax. Let us go into the village. I am sure they will welcome us and supply us with drink when they recognize my division patch." We did and they did!

When the group dispersed to go back to the front, Lt. General Ben Lear addressed us. He said, "According to the Annals of the U.S. Army, this is the first time such a group was gathered together and, by God, if I have anything to do with it, this will be the last time!!"

A Clean Getaway

On May 8, 1945, with the cessation of hostilities, we were faced with many unknown factors. How many of the civilians wanted to die for "Der Fuehrer"? We were stationed in a town that had a half-dozen rail cars full of live ammunition. About 10 kilometers away there was another group with the same situation. We decided to put our groups together so we could get a bit of rest. Due to the placement of our 6 boxcars in four different locations we were on duty around the clock, 4 hours on and 4 hours off. We were billeted in the post office. About 600 feet away was the Tauber River.

Someone in the U.S., with infinite wisdom, came up with a policy of “non-fraternization.” We could talk only to civilian authorities to get cooperation or other business. The penalty, if caught, was court martial, and, if convicted, 20 years. Knowing the American GI, his friendliness with children and people in general, it was not going to work.

Across the street and 300 feet behind a building on the street was the Tauber River. It was May. The sun was shining. The birds were singing. The bees were buzzing. The young freuleins would come to the river, change from street dress to swimsuits....No fraternization!?!

We had an assistant Battalion Commander who was sort of passed around from battalion to battalion. He was tolerated. He was also on the Court Marshall Board. He came by our unit one day to inspect. He and I started our rounds, eventually working our way to the river. There in the river, with half-a-dozen girls, was one of my guys. I almost died inside. He had gotten through the war uninjured and would be nailed for fraternization. The Major was known for his consistent verdicts of 20 years regardless of the circumstances; let someone above him review the case and change it. He looked at my guy and said, “Come here.” The guy looked blank. The Major repeated, “Come here!” The guy said, “Nicht verstehe.” Then the Major said, “Kommen Sie hier!” The guy began to stand up and I thought, “Oh, my dear god. We will see khaki shorts.” He was wearing bathing trunks! To this day I don’t know where he got them and to everything the major asked, “Ich verstehe nicht.”

A company commander of mine, who was wounded the same day I was, once remarked to me about GIs “There are three things one can do with the American GI Look at them, laugh at them, and cry.”

Improving Relations with our Allies

(The Argyll Campbells were neighbors of the Glencoe MacDonalds from the 14th to the 17th centuries. Competition for territory and livestock kept them in minor disputes until they found themselves on opposite sides during the Scottish Wars of the Covenant. The MacDonalds enjoyed the carefree and somewhat lawless life of highlanders while the Campbells became increasingly involved with a central government.

The final chapter of this tragedy began on August 27, 1691, when King William III in London offered a pardon to all Highland clans who had fought against him or raided their neighbors on the condition that they take an oath of allegiance before January 1, 1692. Failure to comply meant death. MacDonald clan chief, Maclain of Glencoe, reluctantly agreed to take the oath, but mistakenly went to Inverlochty in Fort Williams instead of Inveraray near Oban. He reached Inveraray on January 6th, well after the deadline.

MacDonald naively believed that, despite this delay in taking the oath, he and his clan were now safe. But unknown to him, a force had already been assembled at Inveraray and given orders to exterminate the whole clan. The force left for Glencoe on February 1st, led by Captain Robert Campbell of Glen Lyon, a man with a grudge against the MacDonalds. Campbell asked for quarters for his 130 soldiers. The MacDonalds entertained them for 10 days.

On the night of February 12, 1692, Campbell received orders to kill all MacDonalds under seventy years of age at 5 a.m. the next morning. His soldiers arose at that early hour and massacred their hosts. It was this act of treachery in response to hospitality that makes this massacre such a heinous crime. Although only forty were killed, many more escaped to the hills only to die of hunger and exposure.)

The Army had an exchange program for officers among various units and between allies. Our unit drew a Scottish Major, who was moving from his infantry unit to our ordinance company. He was a ruddy-complexioned individual with reddish hair the texture of steel wool. He wore a kilt, which exposed his surfeit of body hair.

Our unit had a small club with a 3- or 4-piece German band. I thought it would be great if the band played a Scottish tune upon his entry into the club. I rehearsed them for over half an hour, holding my nose, hitting my voice box and humming my chosen tune. When he entered the band began playing "The Campbells are Coming." The Major was livid! His name was MacDonald! He was finally placated when I pleaded with him that I had acted in complete ignorance of the aforementioned historical abomination.

We gave the Major a drink and went to a table. Around the table were kitchen-like chairs, which had been painted just a day or two before. He took one swallow of his drink, moved a bit, started to stand and found himself stuck fast to the tacky paint of the chair. I think we set Scottish-American relations back 150 years that day.

On London Town

After the war I was transferred from the infantry to an ordinance outfit. One morning in December 1945, there was a TWX sent to every outfit to be on the lookout for PFC so and so, who was AWOL. If apprehended he was to be brought back to London under two armed guards. This young man was in my company. I talked with him, heard his story and took the TWX to the group commander.

It seems that this young man had participated in D-Day and was wounded. He was taken to a hospital in London and after several days was to be discharged back to his unit. He decided to go into London for the evening, was caught and was severely beaten by his Sgt. or on the Sgt.'s orders. After his imprisonment, he was returned to his outfit, which I had inherited, and had been a model soldier.

After the war there was a trial of the Sgt., who had beaten and severely injured several

soldiers under his command. My young man reported to the judge advocate's office in London in May of 1945 be a witness at the trial. He was shipped from London to Liverpool. His transportation was Priority 1. His orders were TDY (Temporary Duty); he was to return to his outfit when finished. After several days of inactivity in Liverpool, he left. He caught a plane back to Germany. The trial was finally ready to begin in December. When the JAG office looked for the young soldier in Liverpool he was gone. They assumed he was AWOL.

My Colonel told me to take him to London. We flew to London and reported to the JAG. They wanted to know where the armed guards were! I protested that the PFC had been a model soldier and that we could not figure out where he was AWOL. He was on the morning report in Liverpool one day and he was on the morning report at his outfit in Germany the next day. The Colonel thought a moment and asked me when I had last been in London. I had never been there. He looked at his calendar, told me to report back in 4 days and not to worry about my man.

The outer office gave me orders for billeting. I checked into the hotel and began walking. Near Marble Arch there was a photography shop with a young lady inside. I walked in, told her who I was, that I had three nights and I would like to take her to dinner – fast! I was fluffed off. A little later I was near the underground entry when she came by. I repeated my invitation. She told me she would have to go home and change. She lived out past Kew Gardens.

We went to her home. I met her parents and her younger brother. Her father insisted we must go to the pub, The Prince's Head, and have a pint. Then Barbara Hersey and I left to return to the city. Her family was "middle class," a term I dislike. Since I was an officer and in uniform, I could get into any place that was not a private club. I had been on the continent for many months without leave. I had money to spend. We went to some of the finest restaurants in London, places where Miss Hersey could never get in and I could not today. My leave was extended two days, so Miss Hersey and I developed a routine. She would bring her evening clothes with her in the morning. We ate in some of London's most posh restaurants for 5 evenings with my delightful dinner companion. I'd walk her to the underground entrance before returning to my hotel. I spent a wad and never regretted a penny.

Holy Water

I returned from London to Esslingen, Germany shortly before Christmas. Per Army routine, a friend and I had commandeered a house belonging to a German husband and wife. They were having a party. Several of the guests cried, "Here comes 'Chames' (James)! You must have a drink with us; it is Christmas!" So I was given a drink of Kirschwasser. Now I knew the German word for "church" was "die Kirche" so, in my foggy mind, I thought, "Kirche Wasser," that must be some sort of church water. It was Christmas. I was trying to answer all their questions and I desperately wanted a drink. Finally, I tossed it down. Whoa! I actually, truly peeled all the mucous mem-

brane off of the inside of my mouth. Kirche Wasser might be Holy Water (Weihwasser) but Kirschwasser is cherry brandy, over 100 proof!

Christmas Resurrection

My job in the ordinance outfit was supply officer. I made an early start in looking for Christmas tree lights. I was unsuccessful.

The house my friend and I lived in was on a steep hill. From the patio one could look down on the whole city of Esslingen. At the edge of the patio was a fir tree, probably 25 to 30 feet tall. Some of the guys at the ordinance turn-in point, where we dismantled vehicles, took the bulbs from headlights, dipped them in thin yellow, green and red paint and wired them together in series of 40 bulbs. We strung several series on the fir tree and hooked them up to 240 current. Old men, 75 to 80-years-old, and entire families climbed the hill to view the tree up close. They had not seen lighted Christmas trees since 1938. We had a Christmas party for all the kids in the neighborhood. It was a wonderful day for the Germans in the area and for at least two Americans.

TRADE AT WORK

In the 1960's and 1970's many firms that had been manufacturing certain chemicals gave up the process for several reasons. They wanted to spare the expense of retooling or they had lost market position or they could be more profitable using their facilities for other items. So the production of these chemicals went to other countries, particularly China and countries in Eastern Europe. Poland was one of those countries. At the time the U.S. did not do business with Communist countries, particularly Russia and Red China.

For one particular product the annual U.S. manufacturing need was about 600 metric tons while our domestic supply was only 200 metric tons. We never ran out. China and Russia manufactured the product; it was "baptized" in Poland and then shipped to the U.S. This happened with many products! The lesson learned is that trade surpasses all barriers, political, ethnic, religious and economic. If there is need and cash and if there is product, the two will get together.

I worked with a man who told me this story. J McC was a graduate of the Wharton School of Business. In 1980 he wanted to do business in Kuwait. He had a Lebanese friend who acted as go-between. They traveled to Kuwait. Mr. McC was introduced to a sheik who offered both gentleman a drink. Now J said it can really rock you when 15 half-brothers fall on their knees and start praying for your soul which is damned because you've taken a drink! It seems the sheik was absolutely, filthy rich, wealth ac-

quired because he owned a lot of “sand”. For years he had been a nomadic “camelteer,” one who buys goods in one region and transports them to another region to sell. Early in his career he needed money to expand his business. He went to the Lebanese man’s father, a moneylender, and offered to split any profit with him in exchange for the loan. The Kuwaitee asked about collateral to secure the loan. The Lebanese replied, “Give me a hair from your mustache.” After the sheik made his first payment, the moneylender wrote his name down on the right-hand page of a book with the following: “This man and this man’s sons and his son’s and his son’s unto the fifth generation shall be friends of this family.” If a name appeared on the left-hand side, the bearer was damned for 5 generations. The moneylender had given the book to his son who, in turn, gave it to the sheik.

The sheik’s fabulous wealth came from a deal with American oil. J and his friend went into dinner at a huge, huge tent. J said they did not take off their shoes because it was the thing to do but because it made it easier to walk. There were carpets worth a fortune stacked 7 or 8 deep. About 40 people sat down to dinner. The service was 20-carat gold. Outside J counted 17 Mercedes. Now, think of the hair of the mustache and we’ve been trying to deal with them through someone who’s been reading out of a book.

The sheik told J his wealth had just suddenly descended on him. He said his greatest joy was to take a camel or two, a tent, and some companions, and to go out into the desert night and camp. He would sit in the door of the tent, watch the sun rise and drink a bowl of camel’s milk.

I have my own opinion about the key to the problem between the United States and Cuba. I question our stating we don’t want to deal with Castro because he is Communist. We dealt with the Soviet Union, with China, with Yugoslavia and other countries. I wonder if the key might be Cuba’s ability in an open market to supply the United States in its entirety with sugar. I read recently that due to government subsidy the price of sugar in the US is approximately 2 ½ times that of the world market. Our sugar growers would stand to lose with competition! The sugar lobby in the US ranks with that of the petroleum industry. One should always want ask what our political motive is for our trade policies.

TALES FROM THE ROAD

I have had such good fortune in my life with people in all stations of life. I can truly say that I love people. I enjoyed my work, especially the wide association allowed me by working with the international trading company. I found that all people are primarily the same. They are interested in their home, their work, and their daily life, whether they are pink, blue, green, brown or black. All my life I have enjoyed a story, any type of

story, human interest, funny, or ridiculous. Each story happened to me or was reported to me by a person involved.

Shotgun Marriage

In the early days of my travel, I stayed in a hotel that boasted two porters. Over the period of a few years I got to know Rex and Henry quite well. One evening I chanced upon them, laughing and kidding one another with a group of friends. Finally someone said, "Rex, tell them about your quail hunting experience."

Henry and Rex were going quail hunting one Sunday morning much to the consternation of Henry's wife, who thought they should go to church with her. A violent argument began and she picked up a shotgun. Henry bolted from the house and raced across the yard. He was doing just fine, but he turned his head to check on his wife whereabouts and, at that moment, she fired, knocking Henry to the ground. Rex was pulling into the yard and witnessed the shooting. He ran to Henry, who was prostrate and bleeding profusely about the head and face. Henry looked up at Rex through a truly bloodshot eye and declared, "Rex, if that woman does that just one more time, I going to quit her!"

Who's Calling Please?

When I worked for Merck & Co., one of my customers was Gooch. Gooch was owned by John Vanier and had both a food division and a feed division. Their headquarters was in Salina, KS. There was a branch office in Lincoln, NB.

In the 1950's and 1960's anyone in Sales and Marketing was a frequent user of the telephone. Long distance calls were placed through an operator. The efficient person, with many calls to make, listed them all for the operator at the outset. As soon as he was finished with one call, she rang the next one on the list for him.

Gooch had a regional manager by the name of Bill Polkinhorn. One day he called an operator and told her, "My name is Bill Polkinhorn, I am with Gooch, I wish to speak with our dealer Melvin Petersly (pronounced "Petersilly") in Ness City." She hung up on him!

Once I was making a series of calls. I had given the operator my list of names and numbers. One was a gentleman by the name of Ford Buckner. The operator repeated the name as the call came up. She did a perfect spoonerism with the "Ford Buckner!" Then to herself she said, "Oh, no, that couldn't be right." Since I had several more calls to make I said nothing.

John Vanier

John Vanier owned or had controlling interest in fifty-plus corporations. Not one of them had his name on it. One of his properties was the CK Ranch (Central Kansas) near Brookville, KS. Every year this ranch registered the largest number of horned Herefords of any ranch in the world.

August was the month for the annual "Gooch Auction." Mr. Vanier donated 10 yearling steers, 10 head of young swine, 10 lambs and 10 sewing machines. People from Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Colorado attended the auction. Children ages 12 to 18 could bid on one of the animals or on a sewing machine. The budding "currency" was "trade mark" bits from feed sacks or food packets, Martha Gooch flour and pasta products. The youngsters collected the bits from their extended families and from friends.

A professional auctioneer conducted the auction. If a youngster was bidding on a steer, for example, and the bid went beyond the number of bits he had, he could keep bidding if he received approval from his parent or guardian. The bidding continued until he bought the steer or dropped out of the bidding. If the ultimate price exceeded his means, the youngster could "borrow" for the deficit from Gooch, paying regular interest. The debt was to be repaid within one year.

Two scholarships were awarded each year to Kansas State University. The competition rules were interesting. The owner of the animal or machine was to:

A. write a letter each month to Mr. Vanier, explaining how their project was proceeding and outlining what the owner was doing in their community. The letters received were judged and became part of the grand prize competition;

B. if an animal owner, they were to bring to the auction the following year three pictures of their animal: front, rear and right-side view. The sewing machine owners were to bring a dress or other article they had made. All of the entries were judged.

I believed in the project so much that I took two days of my vacation each year to work at the auction. The last year I was very honored and flattered to be asked to judge the letters. One of the participants and his mother complained vociferously because he did not win the scholarship. His steer had won a blue ribbon at two or three community fairs. However, he had not written one single letter. A year or so after I judged the letters, the entire organization was sold and the new owners discontinued the program.

What a wonderful project! The youngsters who complied learned fiscal responsibility, responsibility for his/her animal or machine, and accountability to his/her com-

munity. John Vanier did more for young people through his companies than anyone I know of or have heard of. His like will not come this way again. John Vanier was and is one of my heroes of the 20th century.

Love Story

About 40 years ago, I was visiting in central Kansas and was talking to woman who showed me some pictures she had taken the week before. Her father and mother had celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary. Each parent had led a hard life. Her father had been born in the Crimea and her mother was born aboard a ship in the Black Sea. They came to this country, met and married. At the anniversary party Papa danced with every female in attendance, from 9 to 90. Someone came to her mother and said, "Look, Sophia, at August. He's going to kill himself!" She replied, "Let him die. He has never been happier."

Harvey Jones

A story from a manager of Jones Truck: In the early 1960's the largest independently owned truck firm in the U.S. was Jones Truck Line whose sole owner was Harvey Jones. Mr. Jones was about 5'5" tall and wore bib overalls with an "Hawaiian" shirt. He delighted in playing the role of a lackey to the hilt. His credo was "Service to the Customer." I am proud to have known him.

Early one morning a vice-president of one of the major tire manufacturers called on the office of JTL in the small town where it was located. He told the people "up front" who he was and said he wanted to see the man who bought their tires. He was referred to the back docks. He disappeared for a few minutes, came back and announced, "The only one back there is a little guy in overalls bucking freight." "That's him," was the reply. So back this self-important man goes, followed at a discreet distance by the office staff.

Thinking perhaps that JTL was a family firm and that they let the little guy buy their tires, he informed Mr. Jones that *he* was a vice-president. He then tapped Harvey Jones on the shoulder and said, "Hey, Jonesy, the next time they have a board meeting, why don't you tell them you want to use my tires?" According to the Office Manager, Harvey looked up and said, "The Board just met and they don't want any."

Princess Margaret

As today is the 100th birthday of the Queen Mother, I am reminded of a bit of royal trivia. Many years ago, Princess Margaret, sister to Queen Elizabeth II, was enamored with Captain Peter Townsend. Alas, Peter Townsend was a commoner. Royalty being what it was in those days, marriage between the two was out of the question. The forced breakup made news headlines all over the world.

I had stopped mid-morning at a hash house, picked up a paper and was drinking my coffee when a secretary from next door came in and sat down. In my line of vision was a woman in the back bent over a sink full of dishes. The proprietress got a cup of coffee, marched over the secretary and said, loudly, "Betty, what do you think about Princess Margaret giving up that Peter?" From the back came the clatter of plates being dropped.

Labor/Management

I was in Minneapolis once at a convention and an older man stopped at my booth. We started talking and got so engrossed we finally sat down. He was raised on a large ranch in ND very close to the Canadian border. His Pap was 62 when he was born and his mother died shortly after his birth. The Pap and an Indian housekeeper raised him. Pap rode the range each day with his 2-year-old sitting in front of him on the saddle. When he was 4 he had his own pony that he rode each day with the Pap.

The Pap never had any labor/management problems with the crew. There was always a cow that was milked for cream. If there was one job cowboys detested, it was milking. Each morning after the Pap had awakened the cook, he went to the bunkhouse and slapped the door; the last one out of the bunkhouse had to milk the cow. The same true of going to town –the men were free to stay in town as long as they wished but the last one home had to milk the cow. He said, "I no longer live on the ranch. I have a small bank in town. I still own the ranch. Nearly every day one of my so-called friends comes in and says, 'I was by your place and one of your cowboys was sitting idle.' I don't have cowboys, I have cow watchers. With our cold I begin supplemental feeding in August so they put on their fur coats before they put on their hair coats. When we feed there are 3 men in the truck. One drives, one throws hay, and one watches. If we see a cow in trouble she is immediately taken to barn for diagnosis and treatment."

We could all learn a lesson in trust and direction from that old rancher.

If the Shoe Fits...

It has always been my style to walk quickly, even if I don't know where I'm going. I

have been stopped and been asked for directions in department stores in several major cities. I have concluded that I must have the bored look of a floorwalker.

With one of my customer friends I had the habit of seeing him for dinner and too much refreshment. One evening when I arrived in his city weary and tired from traveling, I decided not to telephone him. I would be calling his home at 6 a.m. the next morning for breakfast.

When I telephoned at sunrise his wife answered the phone, hysterical. It seems my friend had been in a terrible accident the night before and was in the hospital. In yesteryear doctors and hospitals were prone to keep a lot of information about a patient's condition to themselves, causing family members much stress. I promised my friend's wife I would secure what information I could and report back to her.

I arrived at the hospital and marched down the corridor to the isolation ward. I inquired about my friend. The guardian nurse asked, "Are you a minister?" All I could think of as a response was to place my hand on her shoulder and say, "Bless you." She escorted me to the room herself.

My Romance in Texarkana

One hot summer day after driving many hours in East Texas, I stopped at a motel. Outside the car the air was like a blast furnace. I was tired and thirsty. The thought of a cold beer was so appealing.

In Texas the sale of alcohol is decided on a county by county basis. Texarkana, Texas is in a dry county. Across the border in Texarkana, Arkansas, just ten blocks away, was a restaurant that served beer. I drove over and sat down on a counter stool. I ordered and was served my cold beer.

In an adjoining room there was a violent argument in progress. The slurred speech and insolent tone of an inebriated female patron countered the appeasing voice of the manager. He was urging her to leave; she insisted on having one more beer. He relented. "Go on into the other room and we'll serve you."

She entered the room, a step to the left, one to the right, two back and one forward, all the while discussing her life in the carnival and swearing to warn her co-workers away from this establishment. She was about 5'4" tall, had drug store red hair, and was indeed an ax handle wide across the beam, which had been squeezed into bright purple pants. She sat on a stool, held onto the counter, took a great swallow of beer and turned toward me. I thought, "Uh oh! Here it comes!" With a loud belch she directed her whiskey tenor words right into my face. "Honey, ain't this a shitty town?!?"

As the World Turns

During the latter part of the hippie era, I was coming out of an office building in Chicago. If I let the door go, it would close in the face of a young woman entering the building. She was dressed in sandals and a fringed leather jacket and would have been quite cute if her dirty, stringy hair were washed. I gallantly stepped aside and said, "If it won't upset your lib, I will hold the door." She replied, "If it had, I would have kicked you in the balls!"

The Consultant

One of my customers, Mr. Smith, was a very independent guy. He became a good friend. He was approached by a consulting firm out of Chicago which wanted to "revamp and revitalize" his company. Mr. Smith turned them down, but they insisted on making a pitch for his business. The presentation took place in a hotel room before Mr. Smith, Ike, the firm's accountant, and Paul, the operations manager.

The consultant began by turning to Paul and asking, "How much does it cost you to produce one unit?" The reply was, "Oh, about x cents." The consultant asked two or three more questions and got the same response. The presenter then turned to Mr. Smith. "You see, he doesn't even know." He then asked Ike the same series of questions, concluding in the same manner, "You see, he doesn't know either."

Mr. Smith stood up and walked to the door. The consultant jumped up, ran over to Mr. Smith, and blurted out, "Mr. Smith, I've got to have an answer and I've got to have it right now!" As Mr. Smith opened and then closed the door he replied, "Oh, I'm sure you will get an answer. You see, Paul and Ike make all the decisions."

Poets Day

I was making an appointment call at a firm that had two receptionists. I approached the desk and this Anna-Pauker type growled, "What do you want?" I told her I had an appointment and I added, "Isn't it a lovely day?" "Yea, it's poet's day." I remarked that I was not aware of that, but on my drive in I was listening to a man quote, "I do not come from Goshen or Centertown. In my mind I come from Athens, Carthage and Rome." She gave me a look that froze the words on my lips.

In a few moments my appointment arrived. We walked away and the voice called

out, "Hey! You know what poet's day is, don't you?" I had to answer, "No." Back comes, "Piss On Everything! Tomorrow's Saturday." I dropped my briefcase! In one city I visited there was a Hilton Hotel with a rooftop lounge, where I took several customers/clients to lunch. I told the waiters about Poet's Day. They set up a Poet's Corner, which was available on Fridays.

Catfish

From one of my work colleagues several years ago: Our company had several technical men who were available as support for sales and marketing. Most were veterinarians. One of the large accounts asked my colleague to contact the DVM and take him to one of their customers, who raised trout and was having trouble. The two made the trip and found that the customer was trying to raise catfish, as well, in cold mountain water. They died. The veterinarian looked at the fish and said, "No wonder, they are not acclimated to this cold water." Then he got back into the car. The customer ran up and asked, "How long will it take them to get acclimated?" Without blinking the vet replied, "As I recall, the last time it took about 3 million years."

How to Stump a Lawman

When I worked for the international trading company I was in their Kansas City office. We got a new General Manager in New York City, a personable and knowledgeable young German man. He was relatively new to the U.S. He called and asked if I could take him on a tour of the broiler industry in the South since I was familiar with that region of the country.

I suggested we meet on a Sunday evening in Jackson, Mississippi. I flew into Jackson, made several appointments, and rented a car that happened to have a Nevada license plate. The G.M. arrived and we worked our way across Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia. We were in the mountains of northern Georgia on our way to see an important man 75 miles away over torturous mountain roads. We were late. I telephoned our appointee and he said he would wait for us.

Many of the Germans I have met like to drive and act, at times, as though they are in the Grand Prix and are one lap behind. I have also found they are fearful of any police. The G.M. was driving on this mountain road with many switchbacks. We went through a small tunnel and there was a policeman. He stopped us and swaggered up to the car chewing tobacco and wearing a long barreled gun called a "hog leg." He held up his hand, spit, and said, "Let me see your license." He took a look at the license, glanced at the front of the car, rubbed the side of his head several times, gave the license back and waved us on our way.

I began to laugh. My friend got upset, “ What’s so funny?” I replied, “You made his head hurt. A car with Nevada plates, a New York license and the name on the license, Volker Wypyszyk!”

The Letter

Since I had a farm north of the KC airport where I was a weekender, I had a hankering to own a windmill. Once I was traveling in Nebraska and saw a homestead that had two inoperable windmills on it. I stopped to ask about them. No, the owner did not wish to sell them because the frames made excellent iron for welding repairs to farm machinery. They asked me in for coffee and then brought out a letter. The letter had come to them through Senator H Ruska, who had acquired it from the Interior Department. It seems that on the adjoining farm the wife of this man’s great-grandfather had acquired the farm through a land grant. This ancestor had come from Ohio and had worked for four years before sending for his wife and children. The neighboring farmer had written a letter to the Interior Department attesting to the character of this man. “He has built a fine 12’ x 12’ home for his wife and children and I feel sure he will do well by the farm.”

Scientific Imitation

I had a flock of sheep on my Kansas farm that I wished to sell. I was contacted by a woman who lived on one of three large farms in another state for which her husband was the business manager. We agreed on a price and she came to pick up the sheep. She told me the following story.

She had a daughter 5 or 6 years old. The manager and the foreman of one farm each had sons about the same age as her daughter. One day the manager had been artificially inseminating some beef cows. The semen is drawn into pipettes, which are placed in canisters of hydrogen and are frozen. The pipettes are called “straws” and are inserted into animals in heat.

The three children had been down at the barn that morning. She went to town and bought lunch for the crew at McDonald’s. She came home, dispensed food to the three children under a large tree in the yard and went into the house. In a moment she heard a very loud screech from the cat and a terrifying scream from her daughter. She ran out of the house. It seems the kids had been trying to A.I. the cat!

Fonnie Taylor

Having been in the mule business, I’ll give you a science lesson: A donkey Jack mates with a mare (horse) to produce a mule. The mule, being a hybrid, is 99.99% sterile. Mules are intelligent, tough, hardy, sure-footed and can withstand heat and

deprivation much better than horses. The opposite cross, a jenny donkey with a stallion, produces a "hinnie," a much less hardy animal.

Mules played a significant role in the settling of this country and, even today, play a great role in India, Central and South America. During World War II the 10th Mountain Infantry Division used mules in Italy. In World War I the British bought over 100,000 mules out of Lathrop, MO, about 30-40 miles north of Kansas City.

A couple of the last "Jack men", mule breeders and handlers, in this country were a Mr. Whitesell of South Tennessee and Fannie Taylor of Fair Grove, MO. Mr. Whitesell was a wonderful, quiet gentleman. Fannie Taylor was a gold-plated character. I so enjoyed knowing him.

Jacks are peculiar creatures and very individual. If a jack has bred several jennies, in all probability, he will not breed a mare. Most, but not all, jacks, if they have bred several mares, will not breed a jenny. They have become conditioned to one or the other. There are also combination jacks, which breed both jennies and mares.

Fannie Taylor told me this story. A man once came to see him and looked at several of his jacks. He decided on one to which he wished to breed several mares. Fannie said, "That is a jenny jack; he will not breed your mares." "I want him anyway! How much?" Fannie told me he set the price at about twice what he would have normally in an effort to discourage the buyer. It didn't work. Fannie stopped the man at the gate and repeated that he was buying a jenny jack.

About two months later Fannie was in town and who should be approaching him but that same buyer. Fannie tried to avoid him but the man hailed him and cried, "Fannie, I got all my mares bred!" Tommie was amazed. "How'd you do it?" The man replied, "I got the big door mirror and put it up over the mares."

The Krugerand

One wintry day I was leaving Des Moines, Iowa, and along the highway was a Mexican national who was hitchhiking. My wife was constantly after me not to pick up hitchhikers. But I went back to the time when I was helped as I stood along the road that I've always had an affinity for them.

This man was cold and wet. I suggested that he take off his jacket and put it near the heater. As we rode down the highway he began to warm up and his teeth quit chattering. I was very busy with my driving as there was a bit of ice on the highway. Soon he took from his pocket a round object and held it before my eyes and asked if I knew what it was. I glanced and saw it was a Krugerand, the coin of South Africa, which contains 1 oz. of gold. That very day I had read in the morning paper about a given number of counterfeit Krugerands circulating in the United States. I assumed

this was one. On the side of this coin was a shiny spot like it had been rubbed in something abrasive. I asked where he had found it. He said along the side of the road where he was standing. He asked if I wanted it. I had already made up my mind that later I would give this man \$10 to help him on his way; however, I made no move as the only money I had with me was a \$50 bill and I had no wish to display a bill of that size at that time. Several miles later we came to a Stucky's. We stopped and went in for a cup of coffee. I got the bill changed. I gave him \$10 and he gave me the coin. I dropped it in my shirt pocket. When we got through Kansas City and to Overland Park, I let him out alongside I-35 so he could continue his journey to Ft. Worth, TX. I had not learned his name.

When I arrived home my son, Philip, and his wife and two children were there from St. Louis for Norma's birthday, February 25. I chatted a while with my daughter-in-law and my grandchildren. I told Philip that I had to go to the store to pick up a birthday gift for my wife and asked him to accompany me. On the way I told Philip the story of the coin. While I was waiting for the package to be wrapped, Philip took the coin to a coin store one floor below. It turned out to be real!

I felt so very bad about that because here was a man who had found a great deal of money by the roadside that might help him. But I did not know his name. So I gave the coin to my wife for her birthday and she still has it.

Bill Hackett

One of my favorite people, the late Bill Hackett, was a missionary to Burma. He was born in China to missionary parents and graduated from Drury College during the Depression with a liberal arts degree. He applied to the Baptist Missionary Board and was turned down. He worked his way to China on a ship, applied again and was accepted. He spent many years in areas of Burma where missionaries had never been seen or heard of before. He attended different schools studying spiritualism, the belief of the Burmese people, in order to understand them. When he left Burma thirty-five Christian churches had been established because of Bill's teaching.

A Moment in a Rain Storm

During the late fifties I traveled in one of the mid-south states where the mountains meet the lowlands. One of the trips involved a sixty-mile stretch through a seemingly tortuous meandering-to-nowhere. It was common to drive this route and encounter not one single vehicle. The journey through the hills and curves, with preci-

pices as numerous as traffic lights in the city, was a battle of terror and fatigue. Haphazardly vacant fields occurred in the forest. Occasionally one's vision would be graced with a weathered cabin, defiantly thrusting its sublime image against a sky of loneliness.

Once during a morning trip southward I passed a woman; she was hurriedly walking in the opposite direction. Two days later in the mid-afternoon my travel took me northward over the same road. The weather was brutally hot and humid. Giant, dark thunderheads, with fringes of yellow denoting hail, roiled overhead. Daylight was fading rapidly when the wind suddenly began to buffet the car.

I was alert, looking for a place to pull off the road and ride out the storm. Driving at a greatly reduced speed down one hill then up another, I rounded a sharp curve. Without warning a figure running northward appeared on the roadside. Suddenly the rain became a deluge. From the time I was a few feet from the figure until I reached her, she was soaked. I stopped, lowered the window, gave her my name and said, "Lady, let me give you a lift. You are soaking wet. "

She entered the car, quickly closing the door. I noted she was the person I had seen walking in this same direction two days before. She was a tall, gaunt mountain woman of indeterminate age wearing a very plain frock. Over her dress she wore a Mother Hubbard apron. She was returning from a twice-daily visit to her parents, both of who were bedfast. The distance from her house to her parents' home was four miles one way, eight miles round trip, twice a day. Why didn't she stay with her parents? She had small children to care for and a husband who was ill.

Suddenly she said, "STOP!" Faintly I noted a path and the dark outline of a house. I started to turn in, but she said, "No, it is too muddy and you will get stuck." She had one hand in the pocket of the Mother Hubbard apron. She seemed somewhat shy and reluctant to speak. Finally, she handed me two small, knotty apples and said, "I would be obliged if you would take them." She got out, closed the door softly and struggled up the muddy path to the door.

In my life I have received a few accolades, awards and prizes, but none was given with greater dignity and heartfelt sincerity than the two knotty little apples with "I'd be obliged if you would take them."

APPENDIX

Criteria for Awarding Medals

Purple Heart: awarded by the President for receiving a wound from weapon fire which required treatment by a medical officer or for having been killed in combat. It was also awarded for meritorious service from 12/7/41 – 9/22/43, when the Legion of Merit was established.

Created by General George Washington in August, 1782, it was awarded to only three men and then fell into disuse until February, 1932.

Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster: Awarded retroactively to soldiers who had received the Combat Infantryman Badge or the Combat Medical Badge during WW II. Awarded for heroic or meritorious achievement or service, not involving participation in aerial flight, while engaged in military operations against an opposing armed force.

Recommended by General George C. Marshall in February, 1944, due to the hardships borne by ground troops and the impact on their morale.

Presidential Unit Citation: Awarded to units of the Armed Forces for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy. "The unit must display such gallantry, determination, and esprit de corps in accomplishing its mission under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions as to set it apart and above other units participating in the same campaign. The degree of heroism required is the same as that which would warrant award of a Distinguished Service Cross to an individual."

Established by executive order on 2/26/42 and was originally called The Distinguished Unit Citation.

From www.usarotc.com/medals/ph.htm

MARRIAGES IN OUR FAMILY

Philip married Paula Johnson in 1973.
Divorced 1984.

Melissa (b. 3/25/78) m. (9/25/04) William Reynolds (b.9/13/79)

Jade Avery (b. 11/7/06)

Ryan (b. 7/21/80)

m. (10/12/02) Michelle Castruita
(b. 6/19/79)

LaVonne (b. 2/19/84)

m. (1/20/07) Jeffrey Moore

Married Shelly Moore in 1984. No children. Divorced 1999.

Shelly had one daughter, Jennifer Cain.

Married Molly Seides, October 20, 2000.

Molly has one daughter, Meredith.

Harrison Fowler Mauldin
(b. 8/28/03)

Gregory married Susan Carl in 1993.
No children. Divorced 1995.

Married Sue Tritle 1998.

Sue has two sons,

Andrew (b.7/25/85)

William (b.9/15/89)



LaVonne, Ryan, Philip and Melissa

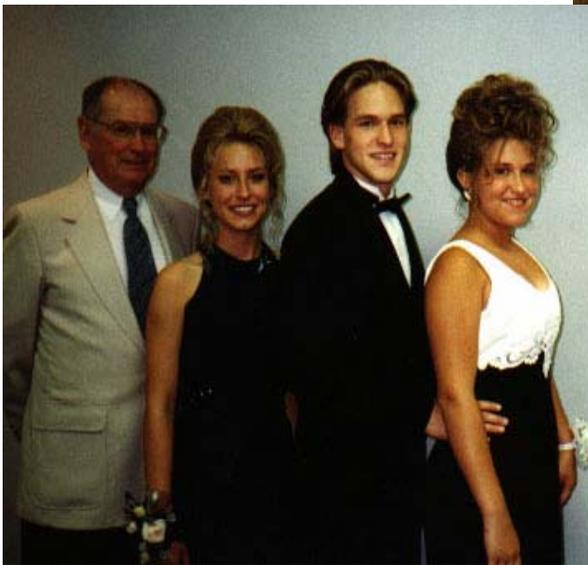


Greg, Sue, William and Andrew



*Norma and
granddaughter, Melissa*

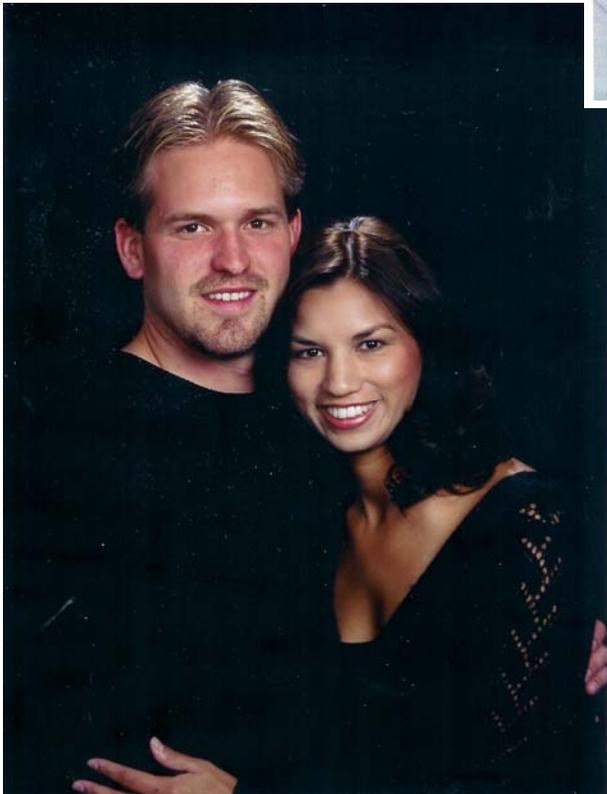
*A proud moment in
young Ryan's life!*



*Granddad Jim with
Melissa, Ryan and
LaVonne*



*Melissa and husband,
Bill Reynolds. They are
now the proud parents of
Jade Avery Reynolds.*

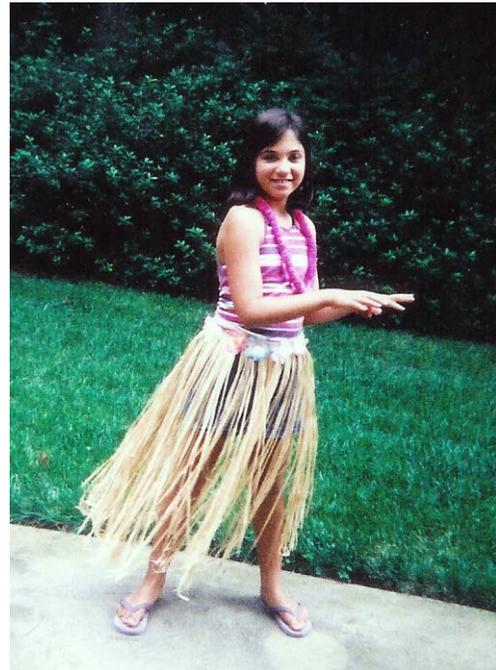


Ryan and his Michelle



*Beautiful LaVonne
in the year 2000*

Meridith Swides in 1997.

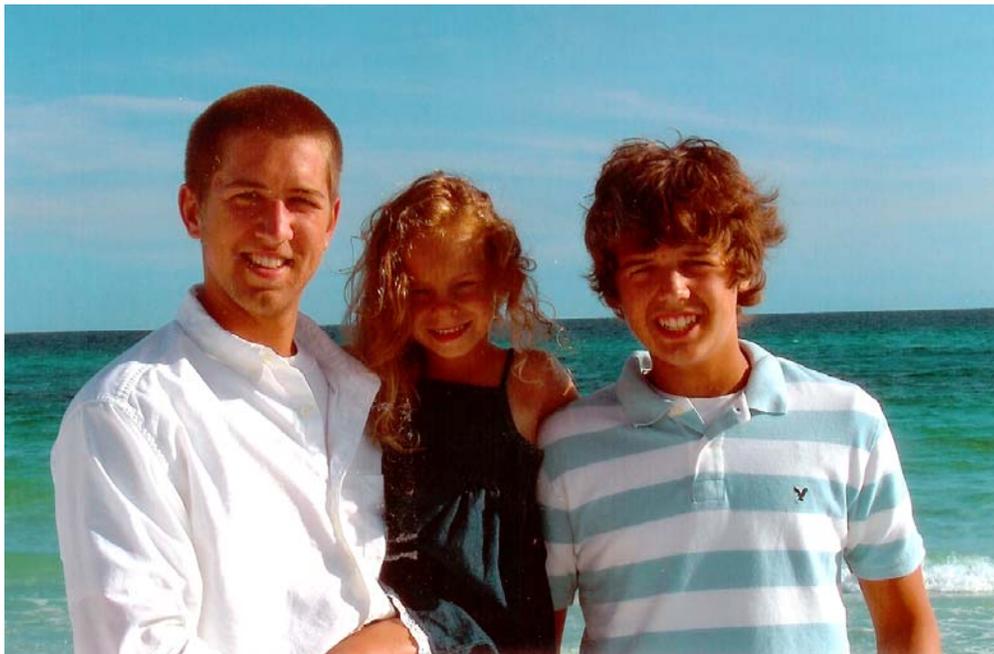


Harrison Mauldin, age 3.



*Alexandra (Sasha) Lakteeva
Mauldin, (b. Ukhta, Russia
3/9/99) Adopted Syktykar,
Russia 9/15/01) Arrived in USA
9/16/01.*

*Alexandra (Sasha)
Lakteeva Mauldin
and her brothers,
Andrew and William
Trittle*





*Surprising Jim on his 85th,
August 3, 2005. Organized by the
participants in the Ethnic Life
Stories Project. Held at Mr. Yen's
in Springfield, MO.*

