An Autobiography Written by Dad

in the years 1992-1995

1. Hamills

I'm James Stafford Hamill. This is written is 1992. Friends call me "Jim"; my parents called me "James", which was ok, but I preferred "Jim". (I like to be "Uncle Jim" to nieces and nephews, and "Grandpa" to grandchildren.)

I was born October 4, 1926, in Sibley Hospital, Washington, D C. Until I married in 1950 I lived in a "row house" at 4617 Fifth St, Northwest. Our house was the middle one on the block. We had small front and back yards with hills in both yards, and an alley behind.

Dad and Mom were John Stafford Hamill ("Staff" or "Stafford" to friends), and Annie Elizabeth Birkbeck (called "Becky" before her marriage, and "Anne" after).

Automobiles were new when my parents were young. When I was little, cars were not unusual but airplanes were; when one flew over, people went outside to see it. When I was four a large dirigible, the German Graf Zeppelin, flew over while I was digging in our back yard. Until the 1940s our milk and bread were delivered to the house in horse-drawn wagons. (In fact, in Scotia, New York bread and milk were delivered by horse into the 1950's.) We took Thompson's Milk, and Holmes Bread (their motto: "Holmes to homes".)

In my parents' childhood, music came from record players called "Victrolas". They used no electricity; you wound up a crank to make the record spin, and sound came from a megaphone. It sounded like music coming from a barrel.

At the age of 12, I met a Victrola up close. One was kept in my bedroom. I must have walked in my sleep one night, because in the morning there was blood on my pillow, and my mouth hurt. Examination showed a tooth mark in the corner of the Victrola cabinet. That front tooth died, and is noticeable now because it is darker than the other teeth.

When I was growing up, radios were a family amusement. Weekday evenings we listened to a news broadcast at 6:45, and Amos and Andy from 7:00 to 7:15. By high school I had my own radio. On Sunday Dec 7, 1941, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, putting our country into World War II, the news interrupted the program I was listening to.

My father, John Stafford, was born October 2, 1899 in a Southeast Washington house near 4th and D streets N. W. Pop was a machinist in the Sight Shop at the Washington Navy Yard, later a supervisor. He was good at planning and at making things. Before working at the Navy Yard he had helped his father in the moving business, and was an auto mechanic for a Ford dealer. Every Saturday from April to November he went fishing; he often said "Every man needs a hobby".

Mom, Annie Elizabeth, was a shy blonde beauty. Even when she was 80 years old people remarked over her looks. She was born February 8, 1898 at Bradford-near-Leeds, England. Her family name was Birkbeck; hence the nickname "Becky". She always remembered the 1902(?) boat ride to America. I inherited my mother's great shyness, which lessened in high school.

My sister Doris Ann was born December 29, 1933. I usually don't remember her birthday on time because of the Christmas excitement. I suggested the name "Doris". It came from a girl named Doris Moss, who I thought was pretty.

My Father's parents were John Edward Hamill and Minnie Bell. John Edward owned a moving company, the Park View and Petworth Express, on Georgia Avenue just

north of New Hampshire Avenue. He had 2 vans and employed black men to do the work. Grandpa dressed well, and carried a lot of pocket money--a hundred dollars then was like $1000 in 1992. Aunt Frances says he didn't believe in banks, and kept cash in a hiding place at home.

Grandma Hamill was a "stout" woman (in those days we said "fat" and no one got upset). A memory of her is fixing Sunday dinner in the kitchen at 430 Manor Place, N.W. Daddy and I visited her on Sunday mornings, after our Mass and while Mother was at her church, the Columbia Heights Disciples of Christ Church. Grandma H was a Pennsylvania Dutch; when she married she converted from the Dunkard religion to Catholic.

Mother's grandparents came to live with us about 1933. They were Joe and Sarah Birkbeck.

Grandpop Birkbeck was a tall lanky man who could no longer work as a carpenter because he had become unsteady and might fall. Also, he was a quarrelsome man who angered the foreman he worked for. He had taught himself to play piano, and had a rich full singing voice.

Grandma Birkbeck was as short as her husband was tall--about 4 ft, 11 inches. She had a humped back called a "dowager hump" from going to work at age 8 in an English weaving mill. Joe was stubborn and had a temper; Sarah often contradicted him. Then they'd shout at each other "like cat and dog". Grandpa, though skinny, ate well. Every morning along with cooked cereal (he called it "porridge") he took a glass of warm water.

We didn't have any dogs or cats. Mom was afraid of them. She told Pop "If a dog comes into this house, I go out". I think she meant it. However over the years we had tropical fish, turtles, and a canary. ("Every man needs a hobby", my Dad said.)

2. Our Block

In our neighborhood all houses were "row houses", that is, connected to each other. They'd be called "town houses" now. Our block had plenty of kids to play with.

The block was bounded by 5th, Buchanan, 4th, and Crittenden Streets. Kids from 5th St and from Crittenden St hung out together.

Fifth Street had busy traffic, so we stayed out of it. Out front we played on the sidewalk, lawns, and front porches. There were good hiding places behind bushes and between porches. When I got bigger I learned to hide in the trees beside 5th St; nobody thought of looking up there.

Until 1932 our street lights were GAS lamps. Each evening a lamplighter turned the lamps on, and in the morning turned them off. Every few weeks a lamp cleaner with a ladder and bucket of water came to wash the glass globes.

In summer a Good Humor Man sold ice cream bars and popsicles from a small white truck. When I was 4-1/2 years old I tried to run away. I was 4 blocks from home when the Good Humor Man saw me and brought me home. I'm surprised he knew where I lived; maybe I stood out because I was very blonde.

Summer nights kids could stay up past 9 o'clock. We'd collect lightning bugs (fireflies) in jars. If you had 20 or 30 you still wouldn't have enough light to read by. Our front

porch was a good place for an evening breeze. Mom brought out home-made ice cream, frozen in ice cube trays. It had icy crystals and a strong vanilla flavor; I enjoyed it.

Behind our houses were alleys, narrow streets for trash and garages. Our alley joined another at right angles, just behind our garage. The intersection was home plate for baseball.

First base was Niedermanski's fence, second the center of the alley, and third Rattigan's fence. The field wasn't very wide, maybe 22 ft from first to third base. We often hit balls into yards; then someone had to go after the ball, being careful not to step on the flowers.

One lady, Mrs Hershowitz, who had no children, would NOT let us go in her yard. As we couldn't afford to lose a ball, someone had to go in anyway. The un-lucky person would be scared. Mrs H threatened to call the cops, and sometimes did. She had red hair, which some say is a sign of bad temper (it was with her). We called her "Reds Hershowitz".

3. Movies

Movies were popular until television came; we got our first tv set in 1948.

For kids the big deal in movies was the neighborhood Saturday matinee, at the Colony Theatre on Georgia Avenue at Farragut Street. "Matinee" means a show in the afternoon; ours began at 1 pm. I used to go with Francis Mullikin.

Admission cost 15 cents, exactly my weekly allowance. Usually I had extra money from Christmas or my birthday to buy candy from People's Drug Store. A nickel got a pack of candy; Francis spent his nickel the same way. One day we noticed that candy was "5 cents, 3 for 10 cents" so we put our nickels together for extra candy.

Necco Wafers were my favorite; they lasted through the show. They came in a pack of about 40 disks, like nickels, in assorted flavors. If sucked gently they would last thru most of the show. My favorite flavor was lemon; I hated licorice flavor. Sometimes I got Ju-ju-be's. Chocolate was nice but went too quickly; also it melted on my fingers.

Matinee films were chosen to appeal to kids. Boys hated a movie with kissing; it had to have cowboys, airplane pilots, police, or a funny show.

Movie theatres were decorated like palaces. I think this was to make people feel rich because during the depression money was scarce. Lobbies had thick carpeting, crystal chandeliers, marble staircases, and large mirrors. Theatres were air conditioned. No one had air conditioning at home. The coolness felt good in the summer.

The theatre ceiling was sky blue, lighted until the show. Then the lights would slowly dim to accustom our eyes to darkness. Rowdy kids whistled, clapped, and stomped their feet if the show was late starting; I didn't see the sense of that.

In addition to the feature movie there were "Selected Short Subjects", little movies lasting 5 to 15 minutes; they could make up for a disappointing main show.

"Short Subjects" included advertisements for coming movies, called "Previews of Coming Attractions"; a cartoon like Popeye or Mickey Mouse; a newsreel, a travelogue, or a comedy. On Saturdays there was always a short "serial" film; serials were stories

continued for 10 to 15 weeks. Lee (my wife) says in Michigan they called them "chapter plays". At the end of each, the hero would be in BAD trouble; he might be hanging from the landing gear of an airplane, or about to be killed by savages. It seemed impossible to get out of the difficulty. But next week he got out (he always did!). Serials made us come back week after week.

Newsreels were short films of "news". Without television, we never saw famous people in action except through newsreels. Sometimes it was real news, like President Roosevelt giving a speech, or woman aviator Amelia Earhart starting her round-the-world flight. Just as often, though, it was something boring, like a beauty contest, or womens' hat styles.

Movies were projected from a little room, the "projection booth", high at the back of the theatre. If we looked back we saw two little windows, one with a beam of light shining from it. The movie operator ran one projector while he loaded the other. After 15 minutes the film reel would end and he'd switch to the other projector. This was done so smoothly most watchers didn't realize anything had changed.

I learned how the operator knew when to switch. He watched the picture; when a bright spot flashed at the upper right corner of the screen, it meant 10 seconds till reel's end. The next time the bright spot came, he operated the changeover switch. I learned to look for the spots and count down (10-9-8-etc) to the switchover.

Sometimes big kids let us little kids hang around with them. When I was nine they all laughed at a mistake I made. They asked what the show at the Colony was, and I said "it's Joe-E-Brown-in-Circus-Clown" -- I said it like one long word. They laughed and asked me to say it again; I said "Joe-E-Brown-in-Circus-Clown". Then they told me the movie was "Circus Clown", and the actor was Joe E Brown; I felt stupid.

When I was 13 I saw the scariest movie of my life, "The Gorilla". I'd seen the previews, and didn't want to go, but the guys teased me. It was about a black ape in a house at night; the ape kept sneaking up on people to choke them. Usually the people didn't see the ape, but would move and the ape would go another way to get them from another direction. I was so scared I could hardly watch.

Besides neighborhood theatres Washington had downtown theatres. On F St in the 4 blocks east of 14th St were the Capitol Theatre, the Palace, the Columbia, and the Metropolitan. A block down 13th St was Warner's. At 15th and G, with a view of the U S Treasury and the White House, was RKO Keith's. The Capitol Theatre had been the Fox, until the building was remodeled after an infestation of bedbugs in the hotel above. Warners was The Earle until it was bought by Warner Brothers.

Besides the movies, the Capitol and Warners had stage shows called "vaudeville". These were live people performing. There would be an orchestra and dancing chorus girls, maybe a magician or a juggling act, maybe a ventriloquist or a comedian, followed by the movie. The early show cost 35 cents for adults, 25 cents for children.

When I was 8, Aunt Frances took me to my first movie, "Alice in Wonderland" at the Metropolitan. I didn't understand the story, so it seemed boring.

Grandma Birkbeck took me downtown on Fridays during school vacation. Her routine was 1) get downtown before the stores opened, 2) shop for bargains advertised in Thursday's Evening Star newspaper. 3) Be at the theatre for the 11:30 am show. And 4) get a quick lunch at Murphy's 5 and 10 cent store; I liked to have a grilled cheese sandwich with a Coke.

Movies were in black-and-white until about 1938. Then there began to be a few special movies in color, like "Gone With the Wind". Most movies were in black and white until the 1950s, because color pictures cost more to make.

"Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs", the first full length cartoon, was in color. I saw it in 1938, and liked it (I still do). The wicked queen scared me. It was at RKO Keith's Theatre. My religion teacher, Mrs McCarthy, took 6 or 8 of us in her car, as a treat. One of the kids was Barbara Harris, who went through Junior and Senior High school with me.

4. Grade School

Pop had a theory about Catholic School: 3 years is enough to get all the religion James would need. So I went to St Gabriel's School for grades 2-3-4, and Barnard School for the other grade school years.

Barnard School was only a block away. Of kindergarten and first grade I remember little. My kindergarten teacher was Mrs Maxon, and she lived in Falls Church, Virginia. I remember the pleasure of painting with bright tempera paints at an easel. I know we made an ash tray of clay, and fired it to make it hard. It looked clumsy, about what one expects in kindergarten. The class made butter out of milk; I think we put the milk in a jar and shook and shook and shook it. In the end we strained out a few yellowish lumps, which we were assured were butter; we tasted them on pieces of bread.

St Gabriel's School was 3 blocks away, on Grant Circle. It was a boxy 2-story building of granite. Even the front steps were granite. I know, because once I had some matches, and tried to burn the school down by setting fire to the stone steps. I must not have been very serious about it! Or very bright.

The school windows were like all school windows then: they were opened by hooking a loop at the top of the window using a long pole. You could pull the pole to pull the window top inward, giving ventilation, or push on the pole to shut the window.

Catholic sisters operated the school; all the teachers were sisters, whose gift of themselves for little salary made it possible to open the school to all without charging tuition. The sisters wore black gowns down to their shoe tops. On their heads they wore a white starched cloth called a "wimple" covering their head and ears. Wimples cut off the side view, the way blinders do on horses. You might think that sister couldn't see anything that wasn't straight ahead, but you'd be wrong. Sister could be writing on the blackboard with her back to the class and still be able so call out "Robert Murphy, is that you talking?"

We respected and feared the sisters, for they might rap your knuckles for being bad. But they were fair, they really loved the kids, and they did a great job. Nowadays teachers say there is no way they can do a good job with 30 kids in a class. Well, 80 in one class was common at St Gabriel's. I thought we all got good educations, which was regularly proven when someone transferred to public school; in public school a transfer student would be half a grade ahead.

Sisters didn't encourage nonsense. When the class walked together into church, Sister directed us with a "clapper", which was 2 pieces of wood hinged to make a noise when Sister squeezed it. In church it was "clap" (genuflect--that is go down on one knee); "clap"

(move into the pew and remain standing"); "clap" (all sit down). If it sounds like it turned Johnnie into a robot, it didn't. St Gabriel's boys were as rough as any.

When we were waiting for school to begin, or at recess, time to come in was signalled by a hand-held bell. Usually only Sister's favorites, generally girls, got the privilege of doing this. We lined up by classes and walked in when directed.

Respect was something they were big on. Boys wore white shirts with red ties, and girls wore dark blue jumpers. When Sister spoke you answered "Yes, Sister" and "No, Sister". If Father came into the room we stood up and said together "Good morning, Father Albert".

Jimmie Kummer was a 3rd grade classmate. He lived at 2nd and Varnum Streets. One day after school we walked from my house to his, through Rock Creek Cemetery. That the cemetery gate was locked was no problem. There was a little Moravian church outside the cemetery fence, and its back porch was right against the fence. We used the porch to get over the fence. Then Jimmie and I figured where we thought was the EXACT half way point between our houses, and designated an oak tree as the official marker.

The school had so many pupils that it had to improvise classrooms. One was made by cloth enclosing a corner of the auditorium. My classroom was a dressing room at the side of the stage -- an incredibly small room packed with little students. There I found my first love -- a cute little girl named Nancy Chelberg. Our desks were side by side. I believe her parents were from France. I remember while doing geography I told her that my Dad went fishing at a place called "Piscataway Creek". Then we together made up a little joke about the name. It was like calling a cat "Pssss--cat!"; and when the cat came you push it off, saying "Away".

One evening at supper I told my parents I had a girlfriend. They teased me with "Jimmy has a girlfriend, Jimmy has a girlfriend". They only meant to tease, but it hurt me; from then on any girl I was fond of would be my secret unless there was a reason for them to know.

I lost sight of Nancy when I left St Gabriel's, but we met again in high school. I didn't date her, but she signed my yearbook "To a VERY old friend".

In 4th grade we learned long division. It was hard for me. I remember doing homework, and whining to Mom that I just couldn't do this long division stuff, so I'd have to go to school without it. Well, Mom said no, she wouldn't let me do that, let's get to it. She helped me, I cried, but she was firm. After many tears I finished it; Mom, who was usually not stern, didn't let me "cop out".

St Gabriel's raised money for the school through a yearly carnival. Each summer the lawn next to the church was filled with booths, temporary electric wires, and a lighted archway with advertisements on it. Men of the parish did the grunt and groan work of taking it all out of the church basement and setting it up. Women baked and cooked things.

The carnival lasted a week. I wouldn't have had money to spend except Grandpa Hamill would give me a dollar -- his contribution to the carnival.

There were all sorts of "catch-penny" things. At one booth you could toss wooden rings at prizes on a center table, and whatever prize you ringed was yours to take. Another booth had inflated balloons on a revolving door; people threw darts to see how many balloons they could pop. The revolving door let someone behind the scenes be tacking up new balloons while dart-throwing continued. One of the stupidest, yet most remembered, booths was called "Walking Charlie". A wooden man moved round and round, driven by a

motor. One threw baseballs at "Charlie" whenever he came in front of the protective wall. I can still hear the man running this booth shouting his pitch: "Walkin' Charlie, c'mon over and hit Charlie, three for a dime, nine for a quartah". He said "quartah", not "quarter".

One of the men parishioners involved in running the carnival was a middle-aged man who chomped on a cigar. People called him "Sarge". It was less than 20 years after World War I, so I assumed he had been a non-commissioned officer in the fighting.

I never blew my dollar on junk booths. For one, you didn't get anything worth having. Also, I was shy, and would not enjoy people watching and commenting while I tried my skill at anything. There were much better booths to invest in. The fudge booth was my favorite; ladies had made fudge which was sold at 5 cents for a generous bagful. People who make fudge are usually warned against making it too grainy, but I really enjoyed fudge that was grainy from excess sugar. The other stand which sold worthwhile stuff was the soft drinks; I could be in Heaven on a hot sweaty night if I were downing a bottle of lime soda -- or orange, or Dr Pepper.

One time a man and women asked me if I'd like to finish their bag of popcorn, they were full. Does a cow eat grass? Sure, I took it. I ate the delicious salty popcorn right down. Then my stomach got upset from all the salt, and I had to go home, I wasn't feeling so good.

Some carnival things were free. Just walking around and watching was good. Then, way in the back there was an American Legion band, which would give a short concert. And movies! Not "Our Gang" comedies, but movies put out by the Bell Telephone System. They showed how Bell gave good service, or how they worked to restore service after the recent New England hurricane. Nowadays, having color tv, we wouldn't think much of seeing an advertising film in black and white. But we kids always got to the movie place with time to spare, so we could get a good seat on the grass in front of the screen.

After grade 4 at St Gabriel's School, I transferred back to Barnard, where my teachers were Mrs Williams and Miss Jett. Halfway through the school year Miss Jet married, changing her name to "Mrs Beauclair".

At Barnard I met my lifelong friend, Nathan Rosenthal; he's Dr Rosenthal now, a Doctor of Chemistry retired from the Food and Drug Administration. Nathan and I were "nerds" -- boys who'd rather not get into the playground rough-and-tumble -- so we'd lean against the fence and discuss serious things.

Robert McComb was a serious boy, too. His father was a scientist at the National Bureau of Standards. In the basement of his house on Delafield St was a home-made seismograph. Once Robert showed it to me. I remember a contraption which had a heavy weight made of buckshot in a tin can. I assume the shot was used so weight could be added or removed to make something balance exactly.

In the Sunday comics was a strip called "Smokey Stover". It was pure nonsense. The characters would say meaningless things like "Foo", and we'd think it was great humor. So some of us took to greeting each other with the word "Foo"; a secret for those of us in the know. One day in class we learned about "mestizos" -- people of mixed ancestry, part American Indian and part Spanish American. So we changed our greeting to "mestizo". When I graduated from Barnard (6th grade) I had kids sign an autograph book; Vernon Brown autographed my book "Vernon 'Foo' Brown".

One kid in my class was Billy Miller. He had some serious birth defect. He only

had two fingers on one hand, the rest were ugly stumps. His face was twisted out of shape, and hard to look at. He seemed retarded mentally, as he was the biggest boy around, and it appeared he was several years older than everyone else. Billy was a bully -- he would take things from kids, or twist their arms for the fun of it. When Billy approached, you didn't rile him.

Billy was not as dumb as we thought. He was smart enough to know what people said about him. Smart enough that when he signed my autograph book he wrote "My face may be funny, but yours is a scream!".

That autograph book had lots written in it. Teachers wrote conventional stuff like "I wish you much success in Junior High". Clever students wrote clever things, like

Two in a swing,
About to Kiss,
All of a sudden,
They went like THIS!"
(With "THIS" written upside down.)

Once I was in a school play about a man named Horace Mann. I was Horace. When time came for Horace to notice a bird outside the window, I realized that someone had forgotten to put a bird on the tree. Thinking fast, I got past it by saying "Look at that bird outside the window".

I was an ok student in grade school, doing what was asked of me and getting marks above average, but not all A's. I was liked by teachers because I was quiet and did not make trouble in class or on the playground.

5. Boy Scouts

I belonged to Troop 30 from age 12 to 16; Pop was a troop committeeman. Some of the scouts were Benny Kouzel. A Jewish kid, lived on Kenyon St near Soldiers' Home. His father was an upholsterer; he re-upholstered our 2 rocking chairs. Ben's mother was Rose; my Mom and she became friends. I saw Ben in 1990 at the wedding of Nathan Rosenthal's daughter. Ben's now retired and is a Scout leader in suburban Washington.

Bob Avery. Lived on Buchanan St, around corner. When my sister Doris was learning piano, he came over with his clarinet and they attempted to play a duet. Did not produce great music, but I have a snapshot of the event.

Harold Rosenberg. Red headed. His father owned Petworth Pharmacy on the northeast corner of Georgia Av and Upshur St; every year for Boy Scout Week our troop put an exhibit in one of the pharmacy's show windows.

Frank Rose. An older fellow, with short body, perhaps a bit of a dwarf. Senior Patrol Leader and Junior Scoutmaster. Being a few years older, he acted as though he knew everything; he didn't. Unkempt. Remembering him, I think he was a homosexual, called "queer" then and "gay" now.

We met in the gym of MacFarland Junior High. Some of the guys only came because

after meetings we played basketball. Someone discovered a ladder from the locker room to the attic of the school. For a while we enjoyed walking around above the classrooms. A janitor found us out one evening, and we gave that recreation up.

Our scoutmasters and assistants were a motley crew. Listen to some last names: Muddiman; Van Vliet (he sold check writers for a living, and showed us his sales pitch, how a clever criminal could change the amount written on a check); and Frank Lewis. Him we liked best.

There came a time when we shifted our meetings to a basement room in the Petworth Library. No basketball! We were cramped, but after our meetings might try to play Capture the Flag indoors.

I qualified for different ranks regularly. Tenderfoot to Second Class, to First Class. I had to make a 14 mile hike, for that. I hiked from home out Riggs Rd, and (I think) to New Hampshire Av and home again. I earned about 12 merit badges, including Swimming, Life Saving, Rowing, Canoeing, First Aid, Reading, and a badge that required me to know the points of interest in my own town. I ended scouting as a Star Scout.

The Boy Scout Handbook was subtitled "Handbook for Boys". It was packed with interesting information. When my own boys were in Scouts the handbook wasn't nearly as interesting. I learned to identify many trees. Once I made prints of leaves on notebook paper, using printer's ink and a roller. Even now I enjoy knowing trees and plants; on a minute's notice I'm ready to tell you the distinguishing features of the White and Black Oak families, or show you a Tulip Tree. Tulip trees are straight and tall; in the Civil War they were prized because lookouts could climb one and see a long distance.

We hiked and we camped. A favorite near-in place was the woods along the Northwest Branch (of the Anacostia River). We took a bus out Colesville Pike (Rt 29) to Four Corners, and walked less than a mile to the creek. (Then Four Corners meant just Four Corners, and a few homes.) At the creek was a water filtration plant that's still there.

On a day hike we'd walk into the woods, clear some ground, and cook. I invariably cooked what I knew how to cook: bacon; pancakes. When you're hungry it's impossible to fix food so badly you can't eat it. Afterwards I took my aluminum Scout mess kit to the creek and scrubbed everything clean with SOS pads.

Sometimes we packed pup tents and bedrolls, and stayed overnight. Then our packs were so heavy that walking was misery; but being macho boys, we'd get a hernia before we'd admit that "this pack's killing me".

Camp Wilson was on the hill above the waterworks. It had 4 or 5 permanent lean-to's; good -- no tents to carry! The lean-to's were crude wooden structures with one side open, and with bunk beds to put our bedrolls on. Camp Wilson abutted a cornfield, property of Mr Arch McDonald, the radio announcer who broadcast all the Senator's baseball games.

Once our Scoutmaster took us to a wooded place in Virginia. There was a pond there, completely shaded by trees; when we tried swimming the water was still cold from winter. We went in, we swam briefly, and we got out. That night, in our tents trying to sleep, the Scoutmaster and Assistant decided to burn the leaves off the site, so they set the leafy floor of the woods on fire, watching to keep the fire from spreading. I peeked out of the tent and all I could think of was "He's going to set the woods on fire, and we'll all be burned". Nothing of the sort happened, I'm still alive.

The Washington Council had a permanent summer camp at "Willows" on the Chesa-

peake Bay. It cost $15 a week. Camp Theodore Roosevelt was subdivided into camping areas with names like "San Juan Hill", "Guantanamo" and "Chestnut Ridge", where we stayed. (The camp names seem to be places from Teddy Roosevelt's Spanish-American War adventures.) Each area had a wash shed and toilets, and either tents with wooden floors and cots, or lean-to's with double-decker bunks. Once after playing with the campfire I hung my pants on a nail in my lean-to and went swimming. When I returned, the pants had been mostly demolished by fire; I must have gotten an ember in the cuff.

Meals were served in a mess hall. Because I was a fussy eater, I skipped eggs and some other foods; but I liked French Toast with syrup.

After breakfast we all went to the parade ground for the day's announcements. A young Scouter named "Woozie" Klunk (no kidding!) made the announcements. Every morning the scouts shouted "Weather! weather!" to get the weather report. Woozie would pretend not to hear, but after the shouting got to full loudness, he'd repent and tell us the forecast. It was always: "There WILL be weather today".

We swam in the Bay. Because there were jellyfish, also called "sea nettles", in the water, the swim area was enclosed by a net. Of course, we used the buddy system. Every time the lifeguard blew his whistle each scout grabbed his buddy's hand and held it high, until everybody was accounted for.

Let me tell you about jelly fish; they are salt-water creatures, half-transparent floating things shaped like a parachutes, with long stringy tentacles streaming down from a round canopy about 4 inches across. They don't kill you, but the tentacles do deliver a sting you'll remember for a few hours; I've heard that the sting is from formic acid, the same thing bees use. In season jellyfish are everywhere in the water, and also washed up on the beach. Wisdom of the time said you could take stinging away by putting wet sand on the red skin.

At Camp Roosevelt I learned to row, to paddle a canoe, and some life saving. We took boats down the coast a ways, below the high clay cliffs that are a feature of the West side of the Chesapeake Bay. In Handicrafts I remember braiding a whistle lanyard; oh, do boys enjoy having a whistle!

Camporees are scout get-togethers from a whole area. For one we camped beside Sligo Creek below Montgomery Blair High School. Two things I remember. A scout playing Tarzan of the Apes from a grapevine collided with the earth and broke his arm; we were then warned not to play Tarzan from grapevines. And a priest who came to say Mass forgot his book of Mass readings in English, so he translated from the Latin as he read. (That shows how handy knowing Latin can be.)

One year our troop did a traffic survey at 16th and Upshur Sts. We took turns sitting in folding chairs counting cars going both ways on both streets. This civic service was suggested by Bobby Avery's older brother who worked in the city department where they planned street improvements.

It was the beginning of World War II, and we cooperated with Civil Defense. In a preparedness drill I ran a message down Georgia Avenue to the "headquarters" at Sunshine Cleaners on Lamont St.

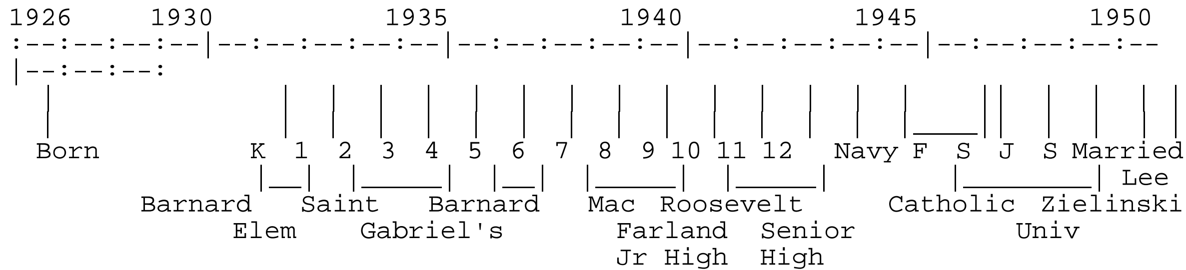
Through scouts I saw President Franklin D Roosevelt twice. For the 1941 inauguration we helped keep the crowd up on the curb and orderly, on the East Side of the Capitol, maybe 500 yards from where the swearing in took place. It was a cold day, 20 degrees, and I had long underwear beneath my uniform. We must have seen the President from the long

distance, but it didn't make much impression on me.

The second time was at a Christmas-tree lighting ceremony at the south end of the White House lawn, across the street from the Zero Milestone. We were part of an "honor guard". We were really part of a pushing crowd of honor guards. We were 15 ft from where the President's head passed, briefly seen through a confusion of other honor guards' heads. The President walked from his limo to where he pressed the button to light the tree. One thing puzzles me: Roosevelt was badly crippled and could walk very little, so how did he walk then? I know he hid his disability as much as possible.

6. Junior High

I had to make this chart to remind me of when I did what.



We kids felt grown up when we moved from Barnard School to MacFarland Junior High. Here was a big building where we could choose some of our classes, and go from class to class on our own. Among friends who made the transition in 1938 were Nathan Rosenthal and Bob Marshall.

MacFarland is on the same large city block as Theodore Roosevelt High. It's between Iowa Av and 13th St, and Upshur and Allison Streets. The six block walk to school began with me picking up Nathan around the corner on Buchanan St, then getting Bob Marshall on Illinois Av, around the corner from Nathan. Sometimes the hated Tommy Costin would join us on Kansas Avenue. Tommy had it in for Nathan, calling him "Professor", or "Pro", as many others did, but with a sneer in his voice. Nathan wore eye glasses with dark rims and had a World Book Encyclopedia at home, which, combined with being a quiet and obedient boy, earned scorn from the likes of Tommy.

I didn't wear glasses yet. That probably came in 9th grade. I dreaded the idea because boys considered them a mark of a "sissy". When I got them I had to put up with smart remarks for a few days.

To my teachers I seemed a good student, a little on the quiet side. The real me was painfully shy. I dreaded talking before people. I could speak casual words to girls in class, but didn't have enough confidence to go up to a girl in the hallway and just chat. Girls, even at that age, seemed to have great self confidence and control of things. My shyness

then colors my Junior High memories dull, not bright.

I got good grades. I was naturally bright and quick. But also I was LAZY! No body but me knew this. I could usually get my homework done in study hall and in odds and ends of time. This involved taking risks like not preparing for a class until home room that morning. The result was that though I did all right, I did far less than I could and should have done. It was living risky, often on the edge of not being able to recite in class.

My casual approach to study ran into a stone wall in 9th grade Latin. I barely learned vocabulary words well enough to remember them for the day's recitation; 3 days or a week later I'd have forgotten some words, and when translating I had to waste time leafing back through the book. This made me so miserable that when I got to high school I turned over a big new leaf, and took time to "overlearn" my subjects -- more satisfying than living life "on the edge".

Most subjects were just work, but I enjoyed studying the Middle Ages -- castles and moats, forts, knights and ladies. And the Latin, in which I was lazy, I was also in love with. It fascinated me, and still does, to use Latin to understand English words. I remember that "sincere" means "without wax" -- referring to the fact that some sculptors would use wax to hide defects in their work, but the better artists chiselled their statues without using wax (sine cera). A Roman home might have a sign in the tiles at the front entrance saying "Cave Canem" -- pronounced "Kah-vay kah-nem" and meaning "beware of the dog". When shopping I know the rule is "Caveat emptor", or "buyer beware". Information like this makes my life richer.

So many of my classes are fuzzy in memory, but some persist. Mr Steele, who taught math, was a tall young man right out of college. He couldn't keep discipline for beans -- when we got unruly he shouted and threatened. Whereas my favorite math teacher in high school, Miss Amig, was tiny, but could bring the class back with a withering look at the unruly ones; and if the class became noisy she LOWERED her voice, and calm soon returned.

One geography teacher was an older woman said to wear a wig. The story goes (I didn't see it) that once when she was pulling the chain to lift the globe of the world to the ceiling, it caught her hair and carried the wig aloft.

Mrs Doty taught us music. I enjoyed singing songs in 3 parts, and the bit of music theory she taught. Hers was a thankless job, because of "Dado" Rapp and his buddy, Johnnie Moore. They purposefully sang way off key until she told them they should keep silent, just go in the back of the room and don't sing.

We had shop. One year it was carpenter shop, Mr Hartley, from which I produced a serviceable little table called a "tabouret", and a letter holder. Then we did metal shop, which resulted in a hammered copper ash try which stayed around our home for years.

Print shop came next, Mr Wood, a strict and angry man. We set type by hand and printed "galley proofs". It was fascinating. I saved my money and bought a real printing press, a Kelsey 3" x 5" model. And I owned 3 cases (fonts) of real lead type, kept in traditional printer fashion in "California job cases".

You couldn't do much with 3 by 5 inches. I made a few labels to paste in books, saying "This book belongs to James S Hamill". I also printed little cards stating "George Hogan will pay $19.34 for 1934 pennies". (Get it?) My printing career ended in the early 1940's when I sold the outfit to buy a camera.

George Hogan was a special friend. He lived with an Aunt and Uncle, both of whom

worked during the day. He had a broad smile and liked jokes. His folks gave him music lessons, first in accordion, then in piano. He would drag me to his house to hear the latest piece he had mastered. He was good. In high school my friend Randolph enjoyed getting George in trouble in Geometry class by whispering loudly "George, be quiet, I can't hear what Mrs Dickert is saying". Mrs D would turn around from the board and ask George to please stop talking. George was a good sport; he died in World War II.

People think I always got good marks. One exception was flunking gym. We boys were running down the stairs to the field, chattering away against the strict instructions of Mr Donovan to be quiet on the way down. He identified me and a few other fellows talking, and made an example of us: "F" was my gym mark that period.

One day I was at a first aid demonstration in a classroom. The instructor, from the Red Cross, simulated wounds on a volunteer by smearing fake blood over them. While I watched avidly I suddenly felt weak in the stomach, and dizzy, and I nearly fainted from the sight. So much for being a man of iron!

Our school principal was Howard P Safford. He was a genial man with a shiny, bald head. It was said that from a WWI (World War I) injury he had sustained a constant headache ever since.

Being "big kids", we now ate lunch in a cafeteria. I was a "finicky eater" then, and if I purchased lunch it would be either a hot dog and bun, or mashed potatoes with gravy, supplemented by a chocolate milk. On Fridays we Catholics didn't eat meat, so I brought a cheese or peanut butter sandwich from home.

After lunch we'd go outdoors to loaf. Often we would talk with a man who liked to talk with kids. He was from Spain, with the odd name "Wiyo". He drove in a beat up old car, and claimed to be a very good tennis player (I think he was). He said he was a refugee from the Spanish Civil War.

Junior High exposed us to more people than grade school did. There was Charlie Sollars, who swore that he was not affected by poison ivy. To prove it he brought a bouquet to our science teacher Mrs Backus. It turned out he was wrong, and he had a rash for a while.

Mickey Harris was a plump Jewish boy who knew or claimed to know all about sex, especially dirty sex. He had a foul mouth and you'd never bring him home to mother, but he was also comical. I suspect his problem was that he needed people to listen to him.

And there was Porky Norton who was indeed "porky". Part of the reason was a doting mother who drove him to and from school, so his feet hardly touched pavement. His father owned a firm "Norton and Co" which collected waste fat from restaurants and stores; maybe that tied in with the name "Porky".

7. Roosevelt High School, Class of 1944

A song I know begins "If I could put time in a bottle ...". If <u>I</u> could, I'd return to my high school years for a while.

My memories of 1941-44 are like spring days in Washington when Norway Maples bud with a sweet smell.

In high school I lost a lot of my shyness and made many friends. I dated Mary Alice Cooper and Bonnie Nelson (not at the same time). I spent hours with Randolph Carlson, my special friend. We walked and talked -- much of the talk about girls. People respected me, seeing me do well in class and involved in many activities. I became a captain in the cadet corps, while holding a part time job at the public library.

Girls dressed neatly in sweaters and skirts, saddle shoes or loafers and bobby socks. Boys wore real pants not jeans, shirts, a sweater when needed, and maybe loafers. Frank Sinatra was a young singer then, hated by boys. When the skinny jerk performed to an audience of girls, he'd be greeted by shrieks of joy; a few girls even fainted.

The hard times of the depression were over, because the country was going to war and everybody was employed.

Though World War II began in my first year of high school, it did not affect us much. Except that, when boys graduated they went into an armed service unless they were rated "4-F physically unfit" by their draft board. Previous graduates, home on leave, visited school, impressing girls with their military look, and scaring younger boys with tales of how tough basic training was. Almost every returnee made it a point to visit "Doc" Brown (a hygiene teacher, not a real doctor). He understood service men, having been a destroyer commander in World War I.

For most of my friends the war didn't bite, because it would end soon (but we didn't know that then). Many of us, being good students, were sent to technical schools (I went to Radio Technician School for a year), or colleges. In college they probably were in an "A-12" or "V-12" program (accelerated degree programs turning out Army or Navy officers in about 2-1/2 years).

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Theodore Roosevelt Senior High School is a lovely colonial style brick building at 13th and Upshur Sts. Enrollment was about 1600. The main building had 3 floors above ground, and a basement. The basement was built around a courtyard where we might hang out after lunch, if weather was good. In bad weather there was a large basement room where students danced the "jitterbug" until the bell rang. I regretted bitterly that I didn't jitterbug, and that I was afraid to ask a girl to teach me. It looked like fun (and a way to be popular with girls). If I could re-live high school I'd swallow my shyness and learn to dance.

The main building had the classrooms. In a north wing was the auditorium, spacious, equipped to put on shows. In the south wing was the gym. From the gym one went down 30 or so steps to the large athletic field. There we cheered our team to touchdowns, and there we non-athletes held our cadet drills.

The first thing in high school was to be assigned a home room. Mine was Room 107, presided over by Miss Katherine Owen a biology teacher. She was thin and getting old, but a good person. I realize now that she took special interest in getting me into activities that would help me lose my shyness.

Each day in Washington schools began with prayer and the pledge of allegiance to the flag. There was no ducking these, no talk about a person's right to NOT pray or salute. The student body was about evenly divided between Christians and Jews.

There were no black kids, because none lived in Roosevelt's territory. Black people were called "negroes" (respectful), or "niggers". Teachers did not have to follow the standards of earlier days, when marrying, smoking, or wearing lip-stick were frowned on.

Women teachers usually dressed somberly, but we once had a substitute English teacher who was young, dressed nicely, and told us, in her Southern accent, that her mother taught her "real ladies always check their stockings for straight seams before leaving home".

By graduation we had became fond of some of our teachers. May P Bradshaw, our principal, had been a teacher at Business High School when my mother went there (about 1915). The most unusual teacher-student relationship was with Miss Hawk, an English teacher. She had a sweet face, and appeared to have some Indian blood. Genevieve Hawk had special love for the literature she taught, and it showed. Some of the girls began calling her "Sweetie Pie" behind her back; it was said with affection and respect. When we graduated she found out about it and was pleased. The name "Sweetie Pie" may have come from the Fibber McGee radio show, where hen-pecked Wallace Wimple was always asking his wife "Sweetie Pie" for permission. Or it may be from movie cartoons about a canary bird named "Tweetie Pie".

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Our class graduated at least two prominent people, Bowie Kuhn and Teddy Lerner. Bowie was "Kent" to many of us. He became an attorney, and then High Commissioner of Baseball in the 1970's. Valedictorian of our class, he "carried off most of the removable school honors" the yearbook said. Teddy Lerner is known around D C as the wealthy owner of several shopping malls. My friend Mary Alice remembers him as the editor of the school newspaper, The Roosevelt Reporter.

We had a gym teacher who became well known. For my first two years the assistant gym instructor was Arnold "Red" Auerbach, who moved on to become coach of, then owner of, the Boston Celtics basketball team. In the yearbook for my dad's 1938 graduation from George Washington University, Red is shown as a talented sophomore on the basketball team.

My best friend was Randolph Carlson; he came from a different Junior High than I did. He began life in, I think, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. His mother was raising 3 children alone; I believe his father was dead. He was one of the brightest people I've known, but he also had a streak of rebellion, which got him into trouble. I think this was because as a young boy he resented being talked down to by adults who didn't respect his keen mind.

We lived a mile apart. One of our favorite things was to phone the other and see if they had time to take a walk. If so, we'd walk around our neighborhoods. We had a common affliction -- we were smitten with two girls who themselves happened to be best friends -- Jean Casanova (Cassie) and Mary Alice Cooper. We enjoyed talking about what next date we would take our ladies on. I think what really was happening was we were 2 very quiet guys giving each other courage.

Once or twice we walked out New Hampshire Avenue to the B&O railroad tracks, where there was a street light that attracted insects. Bats flying above the light swooped down on the insects. I discovered that a small pebble tossed up sounded, to a bat, like a bug. This usually brought a bat diving down on the pebble; the pebble hit the bat's teeth with a "click", which I don't think made the bat feel good. I realize that I was cruel, but when you're sixteen the world looks different.

Randolph was a show off with a sense of humor and a keen sense of injustices. Usually he was clever enough to escape the consequences of pranks. In class he might sit behind George Hogan and, with his foot, pull off George's shoe. Then he'd whisper so everyone could hear "George, stop playing with your shoe". This got the kids hysterical

and made George look like a trouble maker, but he was too nice to get very mad.

Because it was wartime, the Army sent a Major Smith to drill high school cadets with body-building exercises. We hated his drills, partly because the Major was a fake -- a fat little red-faced man who seemed personally unacquainted with the calisthenics he peddled. Randolph was our battalion commander. The injustice of it all got to him one afternoon.

As Mary Alice remembers it:

> Randolph simply marched the battalion off the field, and Miss Bradshaw (principal) nearly had apoplexy! Jean nearly fainted, and I thought I'd die laughing.

Randolph was told he would not graduate, but was rescued after his Mother pleaded for him. As Mary Alice remembers, he did not receive his diploma with the class, but picked it up privately.

Randolph married, produced a baby girl "Cassandra", named after Jean Casanova, and died of an illness about 1959.

Many friends were special to me one way or another.

Becky Collingwood was just a casual friend, one of the pleasantest, most normal girls I've known; but knowing her changed my life. She came from a large family. Until I knew her, I thought large families produced more kids than the parents could care for properly. Visiting at the Collingwood's, I was surprised to meet intelligent, attractive brothers and sisters, obviously proud of their family. When I met Lee in college, I had already been sold on the benefits of a large family, and the possibility that Lee and I might be able to raise a number of children if that was in the works.

Phil Simpson was a chess buddy.[1] He lived at 1316 Gallatin St. He'd invite a few more guys, such as Randolph Carlson or John Umhau. We played "regular chess", "blindfold chess", and "kriegspiel" or "lightning chess". "Kriegspiel" was regular chess with a 10 second time limit on each move. Under the pressure of time it was hard not to make laughable mistakes.

"Blindfold chess" was played with 3 people and 3 boards.

The two contestants sat in the same room, each having his own board, concealed from his opponent. The 3rd person was the "middle man". He used a portable chess board to keep track of both players' moves. Only he knew when someone had captured a piece (he'd quietly remove it from the affected player's board). He knew when you tried an impossible move, like moving through an opponent's piece (he'd say "illegal move" and make you take it back). Only he knew when a check happened; he'd announce "Jim, you're in check by the knight". By deduction we could guess where some of the opponent's pieces were. This was a social game with laughs and surprises; being "middleman" was the best job.

John Rast was a bright but quiet young man, probably a true genius. He wore thick

1. Editor's note by J.J. Hamill, son of J.S. Hamill. Phil Simpson spent most of his life in Boulder, CO. Dad played matchmaker and had me, when I was a graduate student in Boulder, drop by Mr. Simpson's Boulder house, on Grape St. if memory serves, in 1979 or 1980. He and his wife treated me to dinner and regaled me with memories. I remember the cruficixes on the wall.

eyeglasses, correctly indicating that he read a lot. One day at his home I played him REAL "blindfold chess" (not the kind I just described). He lay on the sofa, facing toward the wall so he could NOT see the board I was playing on. He told me his moves and I told him mine. He beat me in 2 out of 2 games without seeing the board, and once he had to tell me I had made an unlawful move (moved into check). Because of bad eyesight, John couldn't go into the Army as an officer, so he went into the infantry as a private. I heard that he was killed overseas. Wars take some of the brightest people.

I liked Johnnie Liska. His family left Czechoslovakia ahead of Hitler's army. His father worked in the Czech legation. We just enjoyed each other. At our 40th high school reunion, we met again; he had just retired from the Safeway grocery chain.

Don Donovan was just an acquaintance. After Lee and I were married, at a dance at St Joseph's social hall in Scotia, N Y, I met Don again. He was a supervisor at General Electric's Turbine Department. During the evening I was approached by an older man, who asked wasn't I the Jim Hamill who went to Roosevelt High, and did I remember him? I was flustered and confused; I certainly didn't remember him! How did he know me? Then I saw Don in the shadows laughing. The man was his father, visiting; Don put his father up to that. His Dad was (I think) dean of the College of Mechanical Engineering at the University of New Hampshire.

8. Work and Play in High School

A time came when I shakily asked a girl on a date. She was Mary Alice Cooper, but people called her "MAC" for her initials. We had home room and some classes together. She was very smart -- when we graduated, Kent Kuhn was #1 in the class, and Mary Alice and her friend Jean Casanova were #2 and #3, in which order I don't know. Mary Alice was a pretty brunette with a smile of remarkable beauty.

Though she was soft spoken, I thought she had plenty of toughness if needed.

We went to movies, dances and plays. Typical entertainment she enjoyed was Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians (a large chorus of singers, which I never had the good fortune to take her to). I felt privileged to be escorting her.

She lived at 6404 Luzon Avenue, just off 16th St near Walter Reed Hospital. The way to her house was the Georgia Av street car North to Sheridan St, then walk downhill several blocks.

Often we double dated with Randolph and Jean. Once Randolph, who always wanted to make a big impression on Jean (and NEVER succeeded!) thought of a most novel idea. We'd cook a chicken in the woods on a spit (stick), over an open fire. I suppose Randolph read up on cooking a chicken, but he'd never really done it; the bird came out nearly raw.

If we went out with a large group it might include Kent Kuhn, Frank Johnson ("Panchito" in Spanish class), Mary Jean Lupton ("Luppie"), John Sutton, Randolph ("Randy") and Jean Casanova ("Cassie"). We all knew each other through classes taken together. After a date we'd usually end up at the Hot Shoppe at Georgia and Alaska Avenues. There we'd pile into as many booths as needed, tell stories, laugh, joke, and snack. Hot Shoppes

were clean, neat, affordable, and didn't serve alcohol (parents liked that).

I got my driver's license at 16, and Pop was happy to let me use the car when possible. I liked chauffeuring my friends. If it was a big dance I'd have our black Ford polished to perfection.

I thought Mary Alice would marry a lawyer or a doctor; she did. After William and Mary college, she married Dr Charles Kotsch. Through the years I'd thought about her, wondering how she was doing, what was her life like. Then, when the invitations for the 40th class reunion came out, I discovered her address. Finding her 40 years later, I felt like a kid receiving a great gift he hadn't the nerve to ask for. Since then we've exchanged letters and Christmas cards; in 1985 Lee and I visited her and Charles on the way to our son Tom's Cornell graduation.

About halfway thru high school I met Bonnie Nelson. I believe she introduced herself to me, as she was a year behind me, and not in my circle of friends. I don't know what attracted her to me; maybe my cadet uniform, maybe my earnest appearance behind rimless glasses. Anyway, we began to date, more her idea than mine at first.

Her full name was "Marjorie Bonnie Nelson". Bonnie was short, very blonde, very lively, quite pretty; guys envied me when I was with her. She seemed serious about me. Though I enjoyed dating her, I couldn't picture being married to her. Anyhow, I wouldn't let myself think about marriage until after the Navy, college, and getting a job.

We went to night clubs. She liked them but I didn't; they were expensive, crowded places where you had to shout to be heard. Both of us enjoyed walks and picnics in Rock Creek Park; outdoors was more MY style. We went dancing at Glen Echo amusement park, where Glen Gray and his Casa Loma Orchestra played beside a spacious dance floor.

Bonnie loved horses. As often as possible she went riding out of a rental stable at the edge of Rock Creek Park, just off Military Road. Her favorite horse was Whitesocks. She took me riding just once. From a horse it looks like you'll kill yourself if you fall. And those horses -- they know when you're not at ease; my horse played the game run-fast-under-low-hanging-trees. Fun for him, terror for me. I held its neck tight and kept my head down. I'm still alive, but I give the beast a lot of credit for trying.

On double dates, we were generally with Bonnie's best friend Cornelia Willoughby Turner ("Billie"). Billie's invariable date was a guy named Steve (Sidney Stevenson). On dates with a larger group there might be Barbara "Bobbie" Kirschner (also called "Blum", for no reason I know), Phil Simpson, Jeanne Patterson, Berkeley Wright, and Walt Tolson. Walt was the mechanically inclined boy in our class; he was on the stage crew, fixed cars and owned a sailboat. One dark night after a dance, with 6 or 8 of us squeezed into his car, he drove us across a hilly meadow in Rock Creek Park. We bumped along, not always seeing ahead clearly. I was undecided about the more likely outcome, arrest, or crash. But we came out all right. This was just Walt Tolson's way; he wasn't drunk, just having fun.

In groups I was with I never knew of drinking; nor was there sex done or bragged about, to my knowledge.

An only child, Bonnie lived in an apartment on Kansas Av, near school. Her family was interesting. Her mother could whistle beautifully; she had whistled professionally, on the stage. Bonnie's father was a quiet man who worked in the State Department. When I came to pick Bonnie up, Mr Nelson would give a short acknowledgement and put his nose back into Foreign Affairs magazine.

I never could figure out about a middle aged man called "the Colonel". If I took Bon-

nie home after school, we'd find her mother playing cards with this man; I was never given an explanation.

Bonnie and I never had a spoken commitment to "go steady", though we dated exclusively for a time. Once she broke my heart by going to the Shoreham Hotel's night club with Alan Bralowe, a schoolmate and son of the hotel's manager. It was foolish of me to feel badly about this; after all, I hate night clubs.

We drifted apart gradually. I went into the Navy, exchanged letters with her, and visited her mother's family, the Drinans, in Chicago. I dated her when I was on leave, but that was about it. I don't know where she is now.

I was into many things at Roosevelt. (Probably teachers pushed me into some of them, for my shyness.) Looking through my yearbook I see that in my Senior year I was in: Student Council; Cadet Corps; School Bank; Hi-Y; Spanish Club; and National Honor Society. In some of the activities I was an officer, but I don't remember doing much.

The "bank" was an interesting experience. Roosevelt ran a little bank to give students practice with accounting, etc. I got to stand behind the counter taking deposits and withdrawals, and selling Student Tickets for reduced fares on busses. I got to use the "posting machine", the way banks kept track of your money then. You inserted the customer's ledger sheet into the machine, as into a typewriter, then entered old balance, deposits, and withdrawals. Hit a key and, with much clunking, the new balance would be typed in the proper column (state of art, 1944).

Kate Outwater presided over the bank; she was a stern, stout lady of 60 or so. She allowed no foolishness (like laughing); to let you know you were going too far, she'd throw a withering look your way. (Her normal, un-withering look wasn't too friendly, either.)

High school cadets was a major activity. We wore uniforms, carried real rifles (fixed so they couldn't shoot), and marched. The Washington D C Cadet Corps dated from the 1900s; we probably did the same things, using the same commands, as were done in the Spanish American war, when marching was still important.

I enjoyed drilling. When walking alone, I'd practice giving and executing commands: "Column left, MARCH!", "Right diagonal, MARCH!"; "To the rear, MARCH!". We did "manual of arms" with our 1903 Springfield rifles: "Order ARMS"; "Right shoulder ARMS!"; "Port ARMS!"; "Inspect ARMS!" (snap open the rifle bolt for inspection).

Cadet uniforms were navy blue with brass buttons, and a military hat with a visor. We bought them second-hand from a "store" in the school basement. Helen White was the teacher who presided over the cadet store, helping boys find pants and coat that fit.

When I became an officer my uniform was upgraded by addition of a leather belt to hold a sheathed saber at my left side. We practiced saber movements: "present saber!" is done by whipping the saber out of the scabbard and holding it vertically, with the handle in front of the mouth. Using the saber was fun; I don't know why sabers don't put out people's eyes -- they come very close. I do know that I put a neat slash in the toe of one black shoe.

We shined our brass buttons with "Kiwi cloth", flannel impregnated with a chemical; if we wanted an impressive shine we fine-polished with jeweler's rouge. We wore old-fashioned type white shirts with starched, detachable collars; they fastened to the shirt with "collar buttons" at the back. We held our socks up with garters that went around the calves of our legs. We did look "spiffy", but the price of "spiffy" was discomfort. The collars chafed our necks, the garters felt un-natural, and the uniform coat was a real steamer in

heated places.

Some of the guys thought marching was foolish, but it was a joy for me, like performing a ballet. Parading down the field in perfect step, with the band playing a Sousa march, I felt a thrill (an "electric thrill", as the Music Man said).

In my senior year I was one of the 2 lieutenants of Company G. Then our captain, Paul Steiner, violated a school regulation "thou shalt not belong to a fraternity". He was removed and I was promoted. I got to brandish the saber and shout "Eyes right" to 45 "men".

Each year Washington D C cadets held a city-wide competition at Central High School. Out of 26 companies, Company G placed 14th; not remarkable, but we were the BEST of the three companies from Roosevelt, beating EVEN Kent Kuhn's Company E. Some of us chanted "Company G is better than E, Parley vous" for a while. I never expected to exceed Kent Kuhn in anything.

In my 2 last high school years I worked as a Library Page at the Mt Pleasant Public Library, 16th and Lamont Sts, N W. I sorted books, shelved them, and charged them out.

Bill McMillian from Roosevelt was a page, too. For a while there was a younger boy, Ray Lasky, with us. Ray was gullible, seeming to want to be fooled. One evening at supper break Bill and I obliged him. We told him things about the sky he'd never heard: that the stars were suspended in a transparent, viscous substance, sort of a Kayro syrup in space. Ray listened with his eyes wide and his mouth open; he wasn't sure we were telling the truth, but he wasn't sure we weren't. (We were mean, but at 17 years old, you can be a skunk occasionally.)

Mt Pleasant library had its customers and its customs. Several old men came every day, probably from Soldiers' Home, to sit reading from a set of books called "Annals of the Civil War". I'd like to think those men were veterans of the Civil War, but the arithmetic doesn't quite add up; they would have had to be over 94 years old in 1943.

One of the Library Clerks was Mrs Dell; her husband, a little, beat-down man, came at 9 pm to pick her up. It turns out he was Floyd Dell, a moderately famous writer of the 1920's. He wrote of "flapper" times, when women were being liberated by wearing short skirts and carrying hip flasks with whiskey in them, just like men. Mr Dell didn't look like a flaunter of social conventions -- more like a husband who said "yes, dear" quite often.

We library pages had a colorful ritual for closing time. Customers had to be warned that they had just five minutes before closing. At 5 of nine, one of us would operate the 5 light switches for the west reading room, and the other would do the same in the east room's. On count of three, we flicked all the lights off and on in unison, to the beat of "shave and a hair cut, two bits". Nobody could say they weren't warned.

I worked 2 evenings a week, and Saturdays. Pay was 41-2/3 cents an hour. It was a challenge to arrive home at 9:30 pm with homework still to do. To make every study minute count, I scheduled each thing I would do, like this:

9:30 - 10:10 Spanish
10:10 - 10:15 break
10:15 - 10:40 algebra . . . . . . etc.

This worked well, I got barely enough sleep, and my marks remained good.

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Popular songs on the radio were popular with me. Songs like "Sentimental Journey", "I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire (I Just Want to Start a Flame in Your Heart)", and hundreds more. Hearing them 50 years later brings back faces, places, and times; singing along with them makes me pleasantly wistful.

The 1930's - 1940's were the golden age of popular music. Composers were people like Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, and Harold Arlen. The music was sweet, the words told of love's sadness, longing, and joy. The words rhymed, too: "moon", "tune", "June". Some of the songs were silly, like "Mairzy Doats" (and "Dozey Doats, and Little Lambs Eat Ivy").

It was "The Big Band Era". Some well-remembered band leaders were Glen Miller, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Harry James, and Artie Shaw. Say "Frenesi" (the name of a song, rhymes with "Tennessee") and even now I hear Artie Shaw's shrill clarinet snaking around the melody. Fondly remembered singers include Jo Stafford, Dinah Shore, and a lovely-sounding black lady, Ella Fitzgerald. Whenever I hear the Ink Spots singing "Street of Dreams" 50 years later, it IS a Sentimental Journey.

They say "you can't go home again". I know that; but it would be nice, for a while.

9. Bike Rides and Busses

Until I was 13, Pop wouldn't let me have a bike; too dangerous, kids aren't mature enough, etc. Finally I threw a tantrum, using my best arguments: "ALL the kids have them" and "I am TOO old enough". So I was taken to Sears, where we bought an Elgin 26-inch bicycle. It was unusual in that the top tubing (from handlebars to the back wheels) was TWO pipes side-by-side. Like most bikes then, it was a one speed, braked by back-pedalling. It was black; a few years later I repainted it grey. Until I married in 1950 it was my good friend.

Biking was transportation (to the swimming pool) and fun (doing figure 8's in a parking lot, jumping curbs). On hot days nothing satisfied me like long downhill coasts. Of course I paid for those coasts by hard climbs uphill first. Even exhaustion was satisfying after I was home relaxing.

I proved my manliness by taking long, steep climbs without getting off the bike. Two special hills were Taylor St and Morrow Dr. The Taylor St Hill rose from the B&O railroad bridge to Harewood Rd; when visiting Washington recently I went up it by car, and it didn't look as hard as I remembered. Morrow Drive was "Snake Hill" to all kids, for its sharp turns in rising 150 ft out of Rock Creek Park. I thought I was great, going up hills my friends couldn't; that is, until I saw bikers taking the mountains in Colorado.

A favorite ride was 7 miles north. I took Seminary Rd in Maryland, past Forest Glen, where there was a medical facility for soldiers, and on to Kensington. There I turned onto a graveled road leading down to Rock Creek, ending near the site of the present Latter Day Saints Temple. The recently completed Naval Medical Center was visible to the west.

Following the creek homeward, I passed Rock Creek Recreation Center (called "Meadowbrook" then) where in 1943 I took Bonnie to a Cadet picnic. Alongside Beach Drive there was a flowing spring where I put my face down and drank cool water from a

pipe. My ride continued into the District of Columbia, past the Joachin Miller cabin ("The poet of the Sierras", anybody know anything about him?), to "Snake Hill", where I biked out of the park and home.

In 1948 I was taking my sweetheart, now my wife, on this ride when my bike broke down; Lee stayed with it while I rode home to fetch the car.

A wonderful summer ride was a coast down Rock Creek Park's Ross Drive. I began by climbing Military Rd, turning onto Ridge Rd and passing the Equitation Field (for horse jumping, it's since been moved), then onto Ross Drive. It was a mile coast, not too steep, to the creek on quiet, curving blacktop road, thru woods. The air was moist, fragrant with forest smells; I went slowly to prolong the coasting.

Washington had heavy traffic even then, but I could find safe streets for bike rides. For example, going to Takoma swimming pool I took 4th St, which was quiet and residential, in place of 5th St, which was busy even at noon.

For several summers Pop made it easy to swim by buying me a pass to the pool. $3 was a lot of money in 1937, but he said I'd only become a good swimmer by practice; a wise father! To Takoma Pool at Van Buren St was 2 miles. Leaving home after lunch, I'd park my bike with 50 others under a tree. At the pool I'd be there in time to line up with a hundred other sweaty kids, all waiting for the 1 o'clock opening. In the locker room we put our clothing in canvas bags, which we gave to the attendant in exchange for an ankle tag.

The way to the pool was through a shower designed to give EVERYbody a shower; it was a passageway with pipes shooting narrow streams of water from all sides. Though it was annoying to have water smack me in the eyes, I never understood why so many boys, who came to "swim", worked hard to avoid the shower by climbing over and around the pipes.

The pool was 25 yds wide by 50 yds long. Both ends were shallow; the center sloped down to 11 ft deep. I was no water wonder, but I could do everything, in some fashion or other. I could swim different strokes, swim underwater between people's legs. Tread water, go off high and low boards, do cannon ball dives, and even do back dives from the 10 ft board (scary, but I was proud of myself). I could dive to the 11-ft level to fetch a stone, despite the pressure on my ears.

Because I was skinny, I had to paddle hard just to stay afloat. In deep water I worked like a demon to keep my head above water. In shallow water I was active every second, because that's what boys did, and I liked the water. I'd stay in the pool until my lips turned purple, then warm up by lying in the sun.

I wouldn't leave until 3:30 or 4:00. By then the pool chlorine had reddened my eyes and made everything I looked at have a halo. Back home my skin still smelled of chlorine, even though I'd had a shower. Water often stayed in my ears; to get it out and start hearing normally, I'd jump up and down. If that didn't work, I got Mom to pour hydrogen peroxide into the ear. Sometimes it helped; if it didn't, the foaming in my ear felt good.

I'm going to tell you something I've never told. In almost every grade there was a girl I worshipped from afar (different girls in different grades). I didn't have the nerve to talk to her, and she hardly knew who I was. I'd ride my bike past her house, hoping to "accidentally" see her. As much as I wanted to "accidentally" make contact, I was also terrified that she might think I was a fool. These goddesses had names like Georgia Tremblas, Jean Lohr, Barbara Harris and Shirley Newman. I admit I was nutty and impractical, but I'm not the only boy who ever behaved this way. You'll find it in the comic strip Peanuts, where

Charlie Brown falls all over himself with unreturned affection for a Little Red-Headed Girl.

Washingtonians could live well without a car. The Capitol Transit Company's excellent bus and street car service took me all over. In the 1930's the fare was a dime, with free transfer slips for change to other lines.

The busses were always modern. Front and rear exit doors operated by air, making a "swoosh" when they opened or closed. The rear door operated automatically when someone was standing on the step and the bus was stopped. Alongside the driver was a glassed-in fare box into which your coins clinked; if they sounded all right and looked all right, he pushed a lever to drop them into a lower compartment of the box.

A remarkable thing about Capitol Transit was how often the busses ran. I'd catch a bus by walking a block and a half to Illinois Av and Buchanan St. Within 10 minutes a bus would come. Transportation ran until late at night, which was handy for getting home after a date.

You could save money by buying tokens, little coins with a letter "W" cut out of the center. When the fare was still 10 cents, tokens cost 12 for a dollar. If you were going to change to another line you said "transfer, please", and were handed a colored paper with an expiration time on it -- about an hour hence. In the late 1930's the bus company began to sell unlimited "weekly passes" for a dollar. This was a good deal; Mom or Dad used the pass to go to work and back 5 days, and also a family member could take it nights and weekends.

Street cars were electric vehicles on tracks. Certain lines had them instead of busses; for instance, the Georgia Avenue, 14th St, and Pennsylvania Av. lines The operator was a "motorman". Grandma Birkbeck's Uncle, Alfred Barrow, an old man with droopy mustache when I was a boy, had been a Washington street car driver at the beginning of the century, when the cars were horse drawn.

Street cars accelerated and braked powerfully but smoothly. In place of a horn they had a bell, "Clang, clang, clang!" meaning "get out of my way". Automobiles avoided street cars -- in case of an accident it would not do to argue that "the street car swerved in front of me". Washington drivers learned to drive on tracks cautiously; if driven across at too shallow an angle, the car's wheels would be pulled to follow the tracks.

I played street car in the basement, where I put a "throttle" on our coal bin, making noises of speeding up ("grrr-rrr") and braking ("eee-ooow-shhhhh"). With the addition of an overhead whistle cord the setup became a railroad locomotive (I was the B&O's crack train, "The Capitol Limited). Later I made the bin a boat by adding a steering wheel. I was the smoothest captain afloat, making great sweeping turns in the ocean, or slowly maneuvering to the pier.

It was fun to watch the streetcars switch from overhead to underground power. In most of the city they took power from overhead wires; but entering downtown, they changed to UNDERground power. The street car stopped over a pit between the tracks where a man below connected the car to underground power; when the street car pulled away it was receiving power through a 3/4 inch slot between the tracks.

The slot was a problem when it snowed; automobile tire chains got jammed in the slot. It really messed up traffic. Streetcars backed up for miles. Finally a law was passed: no driving with chains where there were street car tracks.

The Georgia Avenue line switched to underground power at Griffith Stadium, where

the Senators (baseball) and the Redskins (football) played. (The stadium, near U St, is now gone.) Near the switchover pit was a Negro church with a sign proclaiming "Keep your lamps trimmed and burning". Sometimes I'd hear their services on radio. The pastor was "Elder Michaux" (pronounced "mee-shaw") who never spoke, he shouted. A friend told me that he couldn't read, but that might just be rumor. Anyhow, at preaching time he dramatically shouted "Read!", and a man read the Bible passage to be preached. Their radio hymn was "Happy am I, I'm always happy".

When I was little and taken downtown by bus, we went via 16th St, stopping wherever someone wanted to get on or off. There was much to see on 16th St. At Columbia Rd there was the Latter Day Saints (Mormon) Temple, with a high spire. We passed Meridian Hill Park (named that because an earth's meridian passes through it). There were many foreign embassies flying their flags. It was a wealthy street, featuring mansions built before 1900; one, "Henderson's Castle", had a spooky look. We passed the Jewish Community Center and the (former) National Geographic Building. The bus turned onto K St, several blocks before the White House, thence down 13th St to turn around at the Post Office Dept in the Federal Triangle.

That trip downtown took 35 minutes. About 1935 Capitol Transit improved service by routing busses from Petworth (our part of Washington) more directly, and making our busses "express" (no getting on or off from Georgia and New Hampshire Avenues to downtown). That shortened the trip to 15 minutes.

We caught the bus home at 12th and G Sts, where there was a fur coat store, "Zlotnick the Furrier". His startling advertisement was a stuffed polar bear, standing up, in front of his door. (I think there is or was a shop in Orlando belonging to a Mr Bill Baer, who also had a large stuffed bear in his doorway.) All of us who took the Petworth or Chillum busses were familiar with the bear.

I gave the bus system a lot of business. We used the Petworth line for going downtown to shop, to movies, or to the Mall. Sometimes on a Sunday afternoon I took my little sister Doris to a museum or to the Washington Monument.

To go to Kann's Dept Store, where my boyhood shoes were bought, we transferred to the Georgia Av streetcar line. The shoe saleslady we always asked for was Mrs Childers. She was instructed to give me a shoe size "to grow on", meaning so they wouldn't be too small next month. To prove that the shoes were a good fit, I'd be taken to the fluoroscope machine, a kind of X-ray where you could see through your foot. I'd wiggle my toes to prove the shoes were ok. In the 1940's shoe store fluoroscopes were banned for giving too large a dose of X-rays.

The Georgia Av line also took us to the 7th St Wharves, where one could take day excursions to Mt Vernon, or moonlight cruises with dancing.

Going to Glen Echo amusement park we transferred to street car at Pennsylvania Avenue, and rode along the Potomac on a track near the C&O Canal. The city ride was tame enough, but in the country it got exciting. The motorman sped the street car, making it sway. If one were taking a girl to Glen Echo, and had an arm draped over the seat back behind her, it became a very pleasant ride.

When I was in the Navy my route to Union Station and the trains was via a transfer to street car at Pennsylvania Av. To get to college at Catholic University I took the bus to Irving St and transferred to the Crosstown Line. That was my bad weather transportation; in nice weather I could walk the 1-1/2 miles almost as quick as I could ride it.

10. Tidbits

Kidnappers! In the 1930's everybody knew of the kidnapping and killing of Charles Lindberg's baby. Small boys thought they'd be next. Often when I went to bed, I noticed shadows on the porch curtain outside my window; it seemed some one was lurking. And if he wasn't there, he was probably under my bed; I'd lie still, afraid to breathe. Sometimes I was comforted by putting my head under the covers. Once a large car driven by a black man drove down our alley. HE must be a kidnapper! I ran into the house.

Street vendors. Lots of people came into the neighborhood selling things. The man who sold vegetables and fruits was a "huckster". When he blew his truck horn, women came to buy the fresh produce.

An "egg man", Mr Cowan, came weekly. In the war, when sugar and butter were rationed, he gladly gave Mom his ration stamps, because he didn't have a "sweet tooth" like Mrs Hamill's son in the Navy. Mom converted the stamps into cookies, which she mailed to me. Because she was the world's WORST packer of things, Mom's cookies always came broken; that didn't prevent enjoying them.

Thompson's Dairy delivered milk before breakfast 4 days a week. Until 1938 they came by horse-drawn wagon. Glass bottles of milk were left on front porches in insulated milk boxes. Before there was homogenized milk, cream in milk separated and rose to the top; in winter, frozen cream pushed the bottle lid up to show an inch or two of frozen cream outside the bottle.

Until we bought our first electric refrigerator we had an ice box that needed ice added regularly. The ice man's truck came through alleys; he looked on your porch for a sign indicating how much ice you wanted. He carried the ice to your house with "ice tongs", tools made to grab ice chunks of 10 to 50 lb. The homemaker broke the big cube into pieces with an "ice pick", a pointed rod with a wooden handle. Kids liked ice trucks because the ice man's cuttings left slivers of ice to suck.

Some street vendors only came occasionally. A scissors grinder walked the alleys with a grindstone on his back; he sharpened scissors and knives "in a jiffy". An umbrella man fixed umbrellas. In summer a black man came down the alley with a cart of watermelons, singing loudly but sweetly "Sweet watermelon, sweet off the vine; sweet watermelon, sweet to the rind."

On summer days a snowball truck brought ice shaved into snow and heaped in a paper cup; liquid flavoring, lime, orange, lemon, grape, or root beer, was poured over.

If that didn't keep mother reaching for change, there was the Good Humor Man selling: "Chow Kow"s" (ice cream on a stick, covered with chocolate); popsicles (water ices on a stick); creamsicles; ice cream cups; and quarts of ice cream. It was hard to miss him; he parked his white truck on your block, jingling bells until kids with nickels and dimes came from all directions.

The Handy Shoppe was a small toy store at Georgia Av and Delafield Pl. From "Miz Duffy" I bought Tootsie Toy cars, bubble gum, model airplanes, kites, and penny candies. Once for a birthday I was given the amazing sum of $5. Early the next day I arrived at the Handy Shoppe, money in hand. Miz Duffy, not accustomed to customers with five dollar bills, phoned Mom to be sure the money wasn't stolen.

Dogs were mostly friendly. I enjoyed petting them, if they wanted to be petted.

Down the block was a small snarling dog "Buddy" of an East Indian breed. He defended his yard furiously, charging the fence like he'd go through it if he couldn't go over; he made 5 times the noise a dog that size ought to make. He scared me so that even in high school I wouldn't pass his yard.

At the other end of the block was Ritchie Perry's dog "Depression". Things were slow in the country's economic depression, and that dog was sure slow. He showed no emotion; if you petted him or if you didn't, it was the same to him. Depression was calm or stupid, depending on how you looked at it; on hot days he'd sleep in the middle of the intersection of 5th and Buchanan Sts; at rush hour, car horns honking didn't bother him a bit. He slept through the noise, forcing autos to pass slowly, and tangling traffic back to Grant Circle. Depression died of old age.

Our basement held interesting things. For one, Pop's workbench. Pop believed that as soon as I was old enough to handle tools safely, it would be ok to use them (he wanted me to be like he was, handy with tools.) At 8 years old I sawed, cut, and nailed wood scraps.

Years later I got an idea for an invention, a battery-powered cigarette lighter; I soldered a tin case to hold 2 batteries, and soldered a coil of wire to the batteries. I wanted the wire to get hot and glow, the way car cigarette lighters did, but all it did was run the batteries down in the first minute.

Pop had a small publishing outfit in our basement. It happened this way: he was an avid fisherman. About 1938 the Asian water chestnut began clogging the Potomac River, ruining fishing, and making boat passage difficult. Pop belonged to the Izaak Walton League, a fisherman's and hunter's conservation organization. A committee was formed to get the government to clear the weed from the Potomac. Pop was (get this): "Secretary of the Potomac River Water Chestnut Eradication Committee".

He sent bulletins to a long list of people, including congressmen and senators. Mom typed a Mimeograph stencil from Pop's draft. We put the stencil around the drum of a Mimeograph machine, poured goopy black ink into the drum, and cranked out a few hundred copies. Then we addressed envelopes, using an Addressograph machine, into which we fed small metal plates each embossed with a name and address. After this we retired to the dining room table where 3 of us stuffed bulletins into pre-stamped envelopes.

Thru the Izaak Walton League, Pop knew some important people: Senator Karl Mundt (North Dakota), Congressman Sasser (Tennessee), and airplane builder Glenn Martin. Mom and Pop were friends of Fred Orsinger, who managed the "National Aquarium" in the basement of the Commerce Department; this has been superseded by the much larger National Aquarium in Baltimore.

Pop was a dedicated fisherman. From April until November he fished each Saturday. He used rented rowboats, to which he added his outboard motor. Other fisherman recognized him by his home-made tackle box; they read the word HAMILL in 3-inch yellow letters on the side of the box.

The box sat on 2-inch legs, so that water in the boat wouldn't wet it. It was made of varnished redwood (resists rotting) and had plenty of drawers and compartments for spare lines, hooks, sinkers, lures, also tools and shear pins for fixing the outboard motor.

Our home laundry was in the basement. Pop, who controlled major purchases, didn't believe Mom needed a washing machine. Until 1948 Mom washed clothes on a "scrubbing board", squeezed water out with a hand wringer, and dried her wash on clothes lines

stretched between the back porch and fence posts.

Mom's first employment after Business High School was secretary to Senator "Fighting Bob" LaFollette. About 1916 the Wisconsin Senator who had organized the Progressive Party in the early 1900's, came to Mom's home on Rosedale St N E, to interview her. He drove up in a large limousine, with a chauffeur. Mom worked for a year or so as the lowest rated of his several secretaries, doing clerical work in the Capitol basement.

Pop was a civic minded man. He was active in our local citizens' group, The Petworth Citizens Association. Besides sponsoring neighborhood activities, the group's work was convincing white homeowners not to sell their homes to negroes. White people said one black family would ruin a neighborhood. Black people could only buy run down, old housing around the center of Washington. Some had the money to buy newer homes but could find none. The black people developed a strategy called "block busting"; negroes bought a home on an all-white street, even if it was overpriced. After this, the rest of the white people soon sold their houses to blacks and moved to the suburbs.

I don't know what I would have done about selling to black people, had I been a home owner. My parents' generation believed blacks were inferior and untrustworthy. The only black person I knew was our mailman (a friendly, clean, cultured college graduate). As I grew up I came to believe that everybody should be judged for who they were, not by their color. Yet, I don't know whether I'd have had the courage to be first on my block to sell their house to a negro.

My electric train set was a Lionel O-gauge outfit with 5 switches and a crossover. The black steam engine had number "259 E" on it. I owned 3 passenger cars and 4 freight cars. A transformer provided voltage adjustment for controlling speed. A "semaphore signal" beside the track went UP while the train was passing. For several years I kept the layout bolted to a 4 x 8 ft plywood board in the basement. Real trains excited me; I could capture some of the excitement by putting my head on the floor and watching my train come 'round the bend. I kept the train while my children were growing up. Some of them remember using Playschool blocks to make tunnels and bridges for the train in Endwell, N Y.

I owned a lantern that I thought the world of. It was a 2-cell bright red flashlight, built like a box, not like a tube. Its brand name was "Niagara"; I bought it from a ten-cent store at Piedmont, West Virginia. I liked the label, which said "Bores a 200-ft hole in the night". Who wouldn't feel special, lighting darkness with that? In Boy Scouts, the lantern went on all my camping trips.

Rock Creek Cemetery was fun for kids. Just 2 blocks from home, it was known for its church and graves dating to the late 1700s. People also visted to see a famous bronze statue called "Grief", hidden in a grove of trees; it took insiders (like boys) to find it for strangers. The sculptor was Augustus St Gaudens; the gravesite was that of Henry Adams, grandson of President John Adams. He had been a political writer who knew statesmen from Lincoln's to Woodrow Wilson's time. The Hay-Adams House, a hotel near the White House, was named for Henry Adams and his best friend, John Hay, Lincoln's secretary.

Boys liked the cemetery's winding roads; we walked them in summer and sledded down them in winter. When Frances Mullikin and I were nine, we found a construction site with piles of lumber, just outside the cemetery. We lugged a long 2x4 home, only later realizing that it belonged to someone. By then it was cut up and not fit to return.

I remember some of the tombs. One said "LANSBURG" on it, underneath it said

"Julius", and then "Call me Henry". I think he was the founder of the Lansburg Department Store downtown. Near the North Capitol St entrance, there is a mausoleum (marble monument like a tiny house), with the family name on it "Sheetz". Within was the grave of Ellie Sheetz, founder of Martha Washington Candies, a Washington specialty. I'd been told that Mr Sheetz came often to play violin inside. When you're ten, this seems spooky.

Fort Totten was one of the Civil War forts circling Washington. It is near the cemetery, on a hill, surrounded by woods. We ran up and down the "earthworks", shallow trenches encircling the hill's peak. Inside the circle of earthworks was a level space where the soldiers encamped.

Terra Cotta, across the railroad tracks east of Ft Totten, was a factory where clay products were made. We liked to stop on the wooden bridge over the tracks to watch trains (steam trains then). We also went to the police pistol range nearby, a former clay quarry in the side of Ft Totten hill, where police practiced shooting. We picked up shell casings, and dug lead bullets out of the sandy cliff. Empty casings make an ear-piercing whistle when you blow across them.

11. U. S. Navy

Here's my service record:

Mustered into U S Naval Reserve, Washington DC 9/14/44
Boot camp, Great Lakes Illinois ....12 weeks
Pre Radio School, Wright Jr College, Chicago..4 weeks
Primary school, Gulfport Mississippi...12 weeks
Secondary School, Naval Research Lab, Washington DC.......................28 weeks
Destroyer Escort, DE 166, USS Baron, Green Cove Springs, Florida. Helped prepare that ship and others for storage.
Mustered out, Bainbridge, Maryland... 6/30/46

All that in less than 2 years! I was lucky; I didn't see combat. The European War ended May 7, 1945, V-E Day (Victory-in-Europe). Sept 2, 1945 was V-J Day (Victory-in-Japan). My only sea voyage was from Brooklyn N Y to Green Cove Springs, Florida.

After high school I had 3 months until my 18th birthday and the draft. If drafted I would probably go to the infantry and almost anything seemed better than that. The Navy had a program for training radio technicians that looked good. I boned up on math and physics and took the Navy's "Eddy test" (named for Commander Eddy, originator of the program).

I passed and was accepted. It was a good deal: I'd learn a skill, and would enter as Seaman First Class, two grades above the bottom rung.

The Navy recruiting office sent me by train to Great Lakes Training Center, north of Chicago; I travelled in high style, in a Pullman sleeper car that I would not take if I were paying my own way. When I came home on leave I travelled by coach, sitting up all night.

The Naval Training Center was several square miles of barracks, drill fields and classrooms. When I arrived with other new men, we just milled around, having no uniform, wondering if there would be more to it than this. That afternoon a sailor in charge made some of us clean toilets; more like the Navy we'd heard of!

Next morning went slowly until they gave us physicals and uniforms. We stripped naked and put our civilian clothes in boxes to be shipped home. Then we walked down a line where clerks measured us and threw supplies at us: 3 sets of underwear, dungarees (jeans), shoes, socks, summer and winter uniforms, a pea coat, black neckerchief, hankies, and much more - all thrown into a canvas "sea bag" for carrying our possessions while we were in the Navy. We also got a "ditty bag" (small canvas bag) for toilet articles, etc. Then we were given the "flying five", a pay advance of $5, put in our hands at one place and grabbed away at the next. It bought a set of toilet articles the Navy wanted us to have: a cheap razor with double-edged steel blades, a tube of the worst shaving cream made, tooth paste, clothes and shoeshine brushes, etc. Somewhere in those lines we got "butch" haircuts, making us look military. Now we were really in the Navy!

Navy recruits were called "boots" because we wore tan canvas legging; therefore Great Lakes was a "boot camp". We radio technicians-to-be went to our training unit, Company 1818, in a section of Great Lakes called Camp McDonough. Our two leaders were a brutal nearly illiterate hillbilly "boot pusher" and a sadistic reject from a Navy flight program; neither had love for privileged people who were already First Class Seamen, and who would go to school for a year before going to "the real war".

We lived on the 2nd floor of a wooden barracks, 110 men in double decker bunks. We soon got our required inoculations. Trainees a few weeks ahead of us saw us going for shots and shouted "watch out for the square needle in the left nut". A person afraid of needles got lots of practice overcoming fear. The worst shot was for typhoid. After it a few fainted on the parade ground; back in the barracks many of us had fever and chills, huddling under covers, shaking violently. Next day everybody was ok.

We learned about dirty jobs. The Navy was always cleaning. We cleaned the "head" (bathroom) for inspection; then it was "secured" (closed) until after inspection, maybe an hour later. We made our beds as neatly as we could. And we learned "the Great Lakes shuffle".

The "Great Lakes shuffle" was cleaning the wood floors with steel wool. It could be done by standing on two pads of steel wool and shuffling one's feet. It was a dumb thing but it taught us to do what they said, no questions. We made the floor as clean as possible, but there was a week when we could never satisfy the inspecting officer. After each failure, our "boot pusher" announced in his hoarse voice "All right, tomorrow we'll get up a half hour earlier to clean the place". We had so many half hours earlier that we were rising at 3:30 am to make things sparkle.

We practiced drilling with and without rifles. We exercised, and anybody who said he just couldn't do another pushup was punished. I learned to do what I thought I couldn't. There was one set of exercises I actually enjoyed, slow, graceful exercises with a rifle, to music.

Our training was a little of this, a little of that. There was nothing we had enough time to get good at. One day on a rifle range I fired 5 or 10 shots at a target; that was my rifle training! Another day we got into a whaleboat on Lake Michigan, rowed in unison for a while, and that was small boat training.

The most interesting exercise, and I still can't figure how they did it, was shooting at simulated airplanes in an indoor domed structure. Each of us took a turn, trying to hit moving airplane pictures on a movie screen. There would be darts of light on the screen (tracer bullets), going where we aimed, dropping in a proper trajectory; sometimes one of us hit the "airplane". That was it for anti aircraft training - 1 minute firing the gun, 2 hours watching.

All kind of guys were in our company. Most like me, were just out of high school, knowing little of the world. There were a few men over 30. One guy my age was Patrick "Hap" Hazard, nicknamed because his showing off was hazardous to himself and others. At night he'd go under his blankets and sing in a deep voice like band leader Vaughn Monroe: "Racing with the moon, High up in the midnight blue ....". Sometimes this got camp leadership checking the reason for noise after lights out. 6 weeks later in Pre-Radio School, "Hap" Hazard got what was coming to him. We each built a radio; a short circuit in his caused his headphones to shock him through the ears. A faster jumping, louder hollering man you'll seldom see.

At Sunday Mass the chaplain encouraged us to attend weekday Mass, mornings before breakfast; his persuasive argument was "you don't know what will happen after you leave training, you might be killed". He said enough for me; I began getting up early.

About this time I formed a vague intention to offer mass for. After outlasting the war I wanted to find the right woman to marry; not any girl, but a Catholic one who didn't smoke or drink, enjoyed walks in the woods, and would think I was special. Tall order!

I was homesick many times in the Navy; there was nothing for it but to swallow hard, and get interested in something. After boot camp I was allowed a week at home. There I noticed something; I was lean and rock hard, probably the best con-dition I'd ever be in.

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Pre-radio school was at Wright Jr College, in Chicago. It was a large building on a whole city block in a residential area. It was converted to Navy use. For 1 month we all slept in bunk beds in the former gym, and ate food dished out in a former student cafeteria line by motherly ladies who encouraged us to take more of what we liked. "You like the chocolate milk, son? Take two."

Downtown Chicago, "the loop", was only a bus ride away. Chicago was noted for hospitality to service men. Bus rides were free, and there were free serviceman's centers downtown. In them there might be dancing, a sing-along to organ accompaniment, or coffee and pie.

One serviceman's center was run by Christian businessmen. No sooner was I in the door, but a businessman struck up a conversation. Was I saved? Did I read the Bible? What did I think about such-and-so in the Bible? Nothing would satisfy him but that I get on my knees and accept Jesus as my Savior, which I thought being a Catholic I had already done. I got out fast, and for the rest of the war never darkened any doors that had the words "Christian businessmen" over them.

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Next stop, Gulfport Mississippi. I'd never been in the South. Our train had special cars for the many servicemen being transported. We called them "cattle cars"; they were packed with double-decker bunks. I woke up at night to see where we were: the station sign said Paducah, Kentucky. I knew this was the home of humorist, Irving S Cobb, "The

Duke of Paducah".

At the Gulfport Naval Training Center I found sunshine, pine trees, and sandy soil. We lived and studied in Quonset huts, metal buildings with a front view like a half circle. Winter was a few nights at freezing temperature, with lovely days. At the base I got used to eating chocolate sundaes from the Post Exchange. When a man's far from home there's consolation in sweets.

I walked nigh time guard duty a couple times; a lonely vigil marching back and forth with a rifle, along a fence at the rear of the base. There was a guard each 1000 feet; we'd meet and say "hi" but that was all, we were not supposed to talk. I did garbage detail once. That involved going on the back of a garbage truck to dump garbage cans full of disagreeable stuff into the truck back (which was where we stood). It was a character building experience.

One fellow in our Company was a sissy, a mother's boy (whose father happened to be a psychiatrist). It offended tough guys just to see his soft face. One day they put him in a seabag (up to his waist) and hoisted him up a tree for a while. No damage done, except to feelings.

Calhoun Jackson was from mountain territory; he wasn't quite into a daily shower and shave routine. Shaving suddenly became necessary when we were marched to a surprise inspection. Mountain men don't worry about stuff like that; he shaved dry while marching, making an eerie "scritch, scritch, scritch" sound.

The song heard everywhere in 1945 was "Drinking Rum and Coca-Cola", which ends "Working for the Yankee ... dollar". If I hear it now it I think of Gulfport.

B-29 "superfortress" planes were just being deployed from Kessler Field in Biloxi, 10 miles away. About sunrise any morning we could look up see the type of plane that would soon release an atom bomb over Hiroshima, Japan.

My best liberty from Gulfport was a 2-day trip to New Orleans. I visited the French Quarter, seeing St Louis Cathedral, Antoine's Restaurant, and Jackson Square; from the bus I saw lovely contemporary Southern homes; and I slept at a Servicemen's center in Charity Hospital. When Lee and I visited New Orleans with Marriage Encounter friends in 1976 nothing looked different.

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Next stop, 28 weeks training at the Naval Research Lab, Bellview, Washington D C. My home city! I got home many weekends, and it was great.

Though to us it was a school, NRL was principally a research lab for electronic equipment. Radar was discovered here when a scientist noticed radio wave reflection from a passing ship on the Potomac. The base is between Bolling Field and the Blue Plains sewage plant. When we weren't smelling sewage we were likely waiting for a noisy B-25 bomber to pass over.

Classes were about specific classes of equipment: theory and servicing of radio, radar, sonar, IFF ("identification-friend-or-foe") and loran. To teach us trouble shooting, the instructor plugged in a dead vacuum tube, or put Scotch tape on relay contacts.

Colorful personalities were noted. The man who taught antenna theory had a severe stutter, which was too bad, because every time he said "antenna" it came out "an-ten-ten-ten-a"; we called him "Antenna Joe". An instructor with the last name "Rura" was "Toora Loora Rura", like a song from the movie "The Bells of St Mary's". Mess hall was in an office building, where we had to be quiet while lined up in the hallway. A very southern

petty officer patrolled the line ordering "no tokin in the corrida".

Head of the school was Commander Nelson M Cooke, known for writing the Navy's electrical theory book "Mathematics for Radiomen and Electricians"; everybody called it "the cook book". He seemed a stern man. One Saturday, lining up for inspection, our Marine sergeant got an idea. To get our ranks perfectly aligned he stretched a long string, against which each sailor placed his toes. Then he took away the string and we stood as still as possible until Commander Cooke inspected us. "Hmmm", he said, "your ranks are really straight this morning. You must have used a string".

Once or twice I drew night guard duty at the end of the pier in the Potomac. It was a lovely sight. Across the river were the busy lights of Washington National Airport; looking north I saw the Washington Monument and the Capitol. Sailors who disliked Washington called the Washington Monument "the biggest shaft in the world". For me, going home was just a matter of taking the A2 bus to the P4.

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When I finished training in October 1945 I went to my assigned ship: destroyer-escort DE166, USS Barron, at the Brooklyn N Y Navy Yard. I remember being transported across New York with other sailors, in the back of an open truck. Passing through the part of New York called "the Bowery", I noticed a man in ragged clothing urinating on the side-walk. I made a mental note: don't walk through the Bowery.

We were taken to the Brooklyn Receiving Station to stay overnight until we could go to our destinations. That was a strange night; we were led into a large darkened room where there were many double-decker bunks, most of which had sleeping sailors. I found an empty bunk, more by feel than sight. It was impossible to get blankets or clothes from my seabag, so I stayed dressed, covering myself as best I could with my "pea coat", and lay down on bunk springs. That was an UNrestful night. Next day I went to the Brooklyn Navy Yard and my ship.

The USS Baron was about 200 ft long. Living arrangements were different than any-thing I'd seen. We slept above three 18" tall lockers set side by side, which held the posses-sions of 3 sailors. Above it were 3 bunk beds, hung by chains and hinged to the "bulkhead" (wall) so the bunks could be swung up in the daytime. In the "sack" (bed), there was only 2 ft above each man, so sitting up in bed was risky; I bumped my head a lot.

The toilets were long troughs through which sea water continually flowed; you sat on seats above the trough. You drank water from "scuttlebutts" (drinking fountains) and in the "mess" (eating room) ate "chow" (food). You went up and down "ladders" (stairs), and when you "secured the hatch" you closed the door.

I was a Radio Technician 3rd class; about then the Navy acknowledged that we worked on more than just radios, so my rank was changed to Electronic Technician's Mate 3rd class. The places where I worked were the Radio Shack (containing radio transmitters and receivers) and the "CIC" (Combat Information Center), where radars, loran, and like equipment stayed. I practiced turning the equipments on and off to see them work.

My month in Brooklyn allowed several visits to New York City. I liked the subways, especially being in the front car watching the track ahead. I ate at Horn and Hardart's "Automat" cafeterias. The food was behind glass doors; to open the doors and get food you put coins into slots. I saw Radio City Music Hall and the "Rockette" dancing girls. I saw the musical "Oklahoma" at the St James Theatre, from about the next to last row. And I visited Aunt Frances, Uncle Walter, and their kids, in Scarsdale.

Our ship's mission was to sail down the Atlantic coast to Green Cove Springs, Florida, to prepare the vessel for storage. I was one of several ETM's on board. Our sea voyage was stormy, much of it spent in miserable sea sickness. Lying in my bunk I ached less, but the moment I put feet on the "deck" (floor) I felt awful. Experienced sailors laughed at me, sitting with legs around a trash can into which I tried to throw up. All bad things come to an end. I remember happily the USS Barron turning into the calm waters of the St Johns River near Jacksonville. 30 miles south, at Green Cove Springs, we anchored and tied up to 4 sister ships. The weather was delightful!

The commonest activity aboard ship was chipping rust off steel "bulkheads" (walls) and decks, and repainting. First coat was bright yellow zinc chromate primer; finish coat was grey. We enlisted men did a lot of this.

I also painted other places. For one, at the top of the mast on which were radio and radar antennae. To my surprise I didn't mind too much being way up there chipping and painting.

Also I worked in the bottom of the ship in a cramped storeroom containing metal chests of spare parts. With only a trouble light to see by, I inventoried parts. Afterwards I scraped and painted the compartment. No one suggested that I should have a fan to move fresh air in, so I just painted. From the vapors in that close space I got sort of drunk. When I came up for chow I felt light headed; climbing stairs I felt like Super Man, feeling that I could leap tall buildings at a single step. I know I talked funny. Soon I got the worst headache I've known. So, though I seldom drink alcohol and then only in tiny amounts, I know what it's like to get drunk; and I don't ever want that feeling again.

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Almost everybody took turns standing "quarterdeck watch". The "quarterdeck" was next to the ladder hung over the side for getting into or returning from the motorboat to go ashore. Watch shifts were 4 hours long, which sometimes meant being up from midnight to 4 am. The fact that a person missed 4 hours of sleep was not relevant, we were expected to be up and around all next day.

Standing watch, one's badge of authority was a woven belt to which were fastened a real shooting pistol in a holster. Each hour the watch person left his post to search the ship for fire, leaks, or I don't know what, maybe Santa Claus. We were to make an entry in the ship's log each hour, recording the weather, writing something smart like "cumulo nimbus clouds". The best time of night watch was waking up the person who was to relieve you. However, lots of men, awakened and reminded of their watch, mumbled "ok", and went back to sleep. Then one had to wake the sleeper again, this time more vigorously.

Liberty in Florida was good. You started by climbing down the ladder to the whaleboat or to a rectangular shaped landing craft (LCVP). The boat operator was a "coxswain" (pronounced "coxun") who was always instructed by the quarterdeck watch to "cast off for Pier Charlie". ("Charlie" is the letter "C"; I never heard of Piers Able and Baker.) Pier Charlie was at the foot of the main street in Green Cove Springs.

Ashore in Green Cove Springs you could find a place to eat and a small movie theatre. Or you could take a bus to Jacksonville or St Augustine. One night coming back on the bus I had to stand; I was quite tired, and am sure I slept 20 minutes standing up with one hand on a grab bar. Jacksonville was nice, a Southern city with Northern mentality. There I saw movies (Jeanne Crain and Dick Haymes in Rodgers and Hammerstein's "State Fair" was one), and would buy a bag of sweet rolls to eat while strolling.

St Augustine was much the same then as now. I saw the Castle of San Marcos, the Fountain of Youth, and the Bridge of Lions. I went to Christmas Midnight Mass in the Cathedral; I slept through much of it because I'd had watch the previous night. (God makes allowances, the Navy doesn't). The Knights of Columbus provided a place for servicemen to stay overnight.

In April I went to Jacksonville Beach with 2 friends. We rented bikes, bought hot dogs and marshmallows, and cooked on the beach. Sunbathing made me drowsy; then it was time for a refreshing dip in the chilly ocean, not yet warmed for summer. I repeated that several times, returning to the boat with a case of sunburn.

One weekend I hitchhiked to Ocala, where I swam in the cool, clear water of Silver Springs (they've since closed the spring to bathing). Another time while hitchhiking I met a young soldier, Buddy Bourlay, who took me to his home on Lake Griffin, near Orlando. His folks owned an orange grove.

The coldest the 1945-46 winter in Florida got was a few mornings of light frost. When I went home on liberty that winter, I enjoyed Washington's colder weather; Florida's seemed bland by comparison.

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Though I had been in the Navy less than 2 years, I was happy when I was mustered out. I believed there was one rank better than "admiral", and that was "civilian". The Navy released people by a system of points, so that those who had served longest and in war zones got out before short-timers like me. My turn finally came. I received my Honorable Discharge in June, 1946, in time to begin college in September.

Happy peacetime!

12. College, Freshman & Sophomore Years

In 1946 millions of war veterans entered college. About 6 years worth of people who would have begun college but for the war were there; also older men who had not been able to afford college now had the "G I Bill of Rights" to make school possible.

America was turning a corner. Before the war, the Depression limited the country's pace. The war gave new technology suitable for peacetime uses. Our generation would see big changes. In 1946 television was not in many homes. But within 2 years the Hamills would have an 8" x 10" black and white set, and homework would be harder because of the sounds of shows drifting upstairs from the living room.

The first electronic computer was announced that year; it would be 12 years until my bank statements were done by computer. Engineers used slide rules for calculations; results were accurate to about 0.3 percent. Engineering students carried their "slipsticks" in leather cases on their belts.

The first transistor would be announced in 1948; it would be 1960 before I used one.

Photo copiers ("Xeroxes") were not thought of. I reproduced my senior thesis by typing on 4 sheets with carbon paper between. Instructors could reproduce class material using a typed mimeograph stencil, which produced about 200 clear copies.

Smoking was still "in". It wasn't the middle 1960's that smoking's dangers began to

be widely accepted. Until then movies and television performers were likely to have a cigarette limply in hand, proving sophistication. Brilliant radio/tv news reporter Ed Murrow carried his cigarette like a trade mark, and died early.

Part of this chapter will tell about meeting my future wife, Lee; more details will come in another chapter.

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The summer I left the Navy, I knew I wanted to be an electrical engineer. Had there been no GI Bill, Dad would have pushed me to study Library Science, which was his, not my, desire. I knew since I was 12 that I wanted to be an electrical engineer, whatever that was. Mom and Pop could not have afforded to send me to college.

I applied for admission to George Washington University; they had an E E department and a good reputation. When I visited their campus, in the heart of Washington, I was disappointed. The campus was crowded, and there was little green grass. Then I drove to Catholic University; what a pretty GREEN campus! On such considerations are great decisions made! I enrolled at C. U.

It was a good choice. I was serious about my religion, and Catholic U would be good for that. Catholic U was close, in a straight line about 1-1/2 miles away. I could walk or bus it in 45 minutes, or drive it in 12 minutes (when Pop would let me have the car).

Catholic U was facing its largest enrollment. The university tried hard to be ready for it. Extra instructors were hired, and some classes were scheduled in the evening for lack of classrooms. Freshman courses were modified to give older students chance to catch up. For example, chemistry was taught to give lots of experience with simple ratio and proportion.

September registration days saw long lines in the gym, but lines were not hard for people who had spent their recent years waiting in lines for chow, physicals, and everything else. Tuition was $200 a semester; we on the G I Bill of rights just billed it to the government. The book store, a size designed for small enrollments, had enormous lines for several days, but when we finally received our books we just signed a slip and Uncle Sam paid.

CU's WAS a pretty campus. Around the grassy center were granite buildings dating from the 1900's: McMahon Hall (its basement hallways lined with steam pipes WERE the student union); Gibbons Hall dorm (named for James Cardinal Gibbons, who confirmed my father about 1911); and Albert Hall dorm. A modern white marble library was East of the grassy area, and the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception was West. The Shrine was intended to be the mother church of Catholics in the U.S. Then it was only built up to basement level, as it had been since I was a small boy; it would be about 1960 before it was completed.

Other buildings were scattered around the campus. Some were: Speech and Drama (where we had English class); Electrical Engineering (an ugly 2-story box overlooking the stadium); Chemistry; Nursing Arts; Caldwell Hall; the Power Plant; and others. I liked them all, the old, the lovely, and the ugly, from the first day.

People who roomed on campus had a special college spirit; we who lived off campus didn't get into the fun as much, but there was enough spirit to go around. Before our class came, it had been traditional that freshmen wore skull caps ("dinks") to show their low status. But in 1946 half the students were freshmen, some of us 5 to 20 years older than the "upper classes"; no dinks in 1946.

That fall our football team played a traditional rival, the "great" Mt St Mary's team from Emmitsburg, Md. Rivalry was high, and we chanted "Beat the Mount, beat the Mount" at pep rallies. A day before the game several men from the Mount raided our campus to paint slogans on walls. They were captured, given shaved heads, and publicly made to wash the steps of McMahon Hall with toothbrushes.

Some "star" students in my freshman classes washed out soon. John Furst, for instance, thought he knew all about drafting, having studied it in high school. He spent his class time "helping" us poor uneducated slobs. He had enough spare time to spend evenings at the beer joint on 12 St. After February he was gone.

Frank O'Toole was a good friend, a nice guy, and a great singer around campfires. He began college life as an Aero Engineering major. Next year he came back as an Architectural major, thirsting for something "more creative". The third year he changed his major again. I don't know what finally became of him, but someone saw him working on the loading dock of the Washington Star newspaper.

Engineers took most classes with other engineers (i.e, mostly men). A bright spot was Freshman English where we were mixed with nurses. One, named Marian, took a fancy to me, chatting with me before classes. However, there was no "chemistry" attracting me to her, it was one sided, I never went out with her.

In that wonderful class I noted a few women's names. There was a tall blonde, last name of "Siwinski" whom I couldn't help noticing. There was a "Miss Personality" nurse named Jo Paul, who enjoyed talking with all the men. Also, not known to me until Spring semester, there was Lee Zielinski, Jo Paul's roommate.

Freshman English also held one John Watson, who had read Thomas Wolfe's books, entitling him to disrupt classes for private literature appreciation discussions with instructor Ralph Baldwin. Mr Baldwin was a delightful teacher who taught me much: that using big words is a sure way to write a dull paper; that Kilmer's poem "Trees" is full of imprecise metaphors, like implying a tree had a mouth to drink with; and that the Prodigal Son was not "prodigal" because he was a drunkard but because he was WASTEFUL (I really hadn't known what "prodigal" meant). Mr Baldwin was a young instructor struggling to feed his young family, and that's how he dressed, "struggling"; typically he'd wear an outfit of a brown tweed sport jacket with Navy-blue pin-striped pants (horrible match!). We liked him, called him "a good Joe", an Army/Navy expression for someone in authority that you liked.

It had been in my mind to meet girls in college, hopefully THE girl. For a few years I'd been asking God to put me in touch with Miss Right, as no girls I'd known meet my mental specifications.

I dated a couple of girls that year. One was Betty Dunlay, a stocky, pixie-ish nurse from Kansas. She was pretty and she was Catholic. Briefly I thought I "loved" her, and tried to compose a sonnet for her (I never let her know that!). Ah, youth! But she wasn't "right" for me (not the right "chemistry"), and after a couple dates I didn't call her any more.

On a double date Phil Simpson fixed me up with a girl from Dunbarton College, a Catholic girls' school on Connecticut Avenue. Phyllis was a freshman with the maturity of a 14-year old, and there was no "chemistry" between us.

That Spring I finally met Lee Zielinski from English class. My memory is hazy on details, so read her story on the subject. On entering college I had done a daring (for me)

thing, bought a bright red sweater. Jo Paul and Lee had noticed it in English class. One evening I got a mysterious phone call from a girl who teased me and wanted to fix me up with a date with her roommate. It was Josephine Paul, I soon learned. She embarrassed me, but the idea of a date with her friend sounded good.

This Lee Zielinski was a bit older than me. She was going to be a career nurse, maybe in Hawaii. She was already a Registered Nurse, which was impressive to me; she already had her career, while it would be 3 more years before I would be employable. She was on a partial scholarship from a foundation in Grand Rapids. She was earning needed money by working a couple nights a week at Emergency Hospital. She came from a Bay City, Michigan family of 10 children, remarkable to me.

She was Polish; should an English-Irish boy get mixed up with a Polish nurse? I knew my Grandma Birkbeck thought of Polish and "Eye-talian" people as "furriners" (though when she came to America about 1902 she could hardly be understood for HER thick Yorkshire dialect).

Dating Lee was pleasant, even exciting. She was rooming with 2 other nurses at Mrs Palagia Michalowicz' home (Mrs Mike) at 2240 13th St, NE. Lee always liked what I proposed to do, even when it involved mostly walking and talking. Hiking and picnicking in Rock Creek Park was pleasant for us both. We could walk Washington streets at night never getting bored with the our conversations.

Early on we went to a Sadie Hawkins Day dance at school. That's where girls invite boys; it's named for a tradition in the comic strip Lil' Abner where one day a year women could propose to men. We went to dances at St Martin's Church Hall on North Capitol Street, with Roland Ford and Rita Sebastian; the hall had a chandelier of small mirrors which in the dark made pretty reflections on the walls. Rita and Roland were both tall people; when I danced with Rita I couldn't see over her shoulder, I had to look around her. Lee and I went to college boxing matches (3 rounds to a match in college boxing). We saw movies and musical shows. Sometimes we were out in blustery cold weather, and we linked arms to get as close as a shy young man dared get, for warmth, physical AND emotional.

After a few dates, I began to understand something. This pretty and capable woman almost exactly met the specifications in my head!

(Only one other time did this kind of discovery happen to me -- when I was house hunting before moving to the Binghamton area, and was shown a house in Endwell. The realtor lady and I came out of the house, and I thought I wasn't interested, then I stopped. "Mary Jane", I said, "didn't that house have SIX bedrooms?" That was our home at 3601 Scribner Drive, Endwell, New York, bought in 1962.)

I enjoyed Lee's landlady Mrs Mike, and roommates Josephine and Marie. Marie was Marie Przewozniak "(Pre-woz-niak") from Bay City. Mrs Mike was widowed, and enjoyed the kidding and pranks from the girls. She was also observant. Lee says it wasn't long before she was saying "Lee, Jim is SERIOUS about you". Lee didn't believe her!

It would be a year before I would give Lee a good night kiss, and just a peck at that. I wasn't bold; anyway, I believed being pushy might scare off Lee, and by then I knew I wanted to marry her (but for then that would be my secret). I didn't want to spoil my chance with her! When I did get up nerve to kiss her she wasn't alarmed, maybe kind of liked it, and I upheld the tradition afterward.

After being in the Navy, I liked living at home. (Besides, the price was right; the

folks provided room and board).

My bedroom barely had enough space for study. For a desk I adapted Mom's vanity table, which had a kneehole across which I put a sheet of thick glass. It WAS a nice flat study surface. However, it was COLD on the forearms; the bevelled edge wore sweater and shirt sleeves frazzled; and it gave a lot of glare from the desk light.

The walk to school in good weather was pretty. In Soldiers Home there was a place where I would look across green fields and across the city at the Capitol Building. The walk was good exercise -- so good that I'd get drowsy at home in the late afternoon; then I'd try to study lying down. The usual result was a fight to stay awake, with nap winning over studying.

Some teachers and classes were memorable. Mr ("Fatty") Arbuckle taught algebra and trig in evening class; he peered over his eyeglasses to call down anybody talking in class. Our 2nd year calculus teacher was Admiral Donohue, formerly of the U S Coast Guard. He spoke a in Brooklyn N Y accent, commenting that some students on campus were wearing "dese funny little hats" (the "dinks"). He taught us to visualize what was happening in calculus. My friend Ralph Queen had math under a Mr Boyle; when his class would get disruptive he would say, "Well, if you don't get it THIS year, you'll get it NEXT year".

Mr Baltrukonis "Bal" taught Mechanical Engineering. He was not much older than us' and friendly with the students (in the services we called it being "buddy, buddy"). The story went around that when he handed back test papers one had the scribbled note "Sorry, you flunked. Your pal, Bal".

Fr Mariner Smith taught Religion. Discussing moral questions could have been interesting, but Father was dry and monotonous. He was a Canon Lawyer (i.e. Church Law), very legalistic minded; once he answered a student's question saying "Canon 1417 explicitly states that ...."

The black man who tended the university lawns and grounds was Charlie Gilmartin. He had been with the university since about 1910. Students called him "the Dean of Agriculture".

One of Catholic U's outstanding departments was Speech and Drama. Walter Kerr, later a noted New York drama critic, was one of the staff; Fr Gilbert V Hartke ran the department. The students produced light shows (George M Cohan's "Yankee Doodle Dandy") and heavy stuff ("The Ascent of F6").

University finances were controlled by the "bursar", Father James Magner, a priest of dignity (pompous?). Len Roy called him "Dollar Signs Magner" (but not to his face).

13. College, Junior & Senior Years

In my last 2 college years I got to take courses in electrical engineering. Electronics was my special interest, as it was for most of the guys who got their engineering interest during the war. To get to the juicy electronics courses we had to take courses in motors, generators, and the like. It was good for us, but I wasn't sure of it then.

I had one unforgettable day in electronics class. The professor (Mrs Mike's son, Joe)

had been stressing that we should memorize an important number, the charge-to-mass ratio of an electron. I sensed that he didn't know it himself. Thirsting for justice I asked "Mr Michalowicz, are you saying we HAVE to remember that for the test?". "Absolutely!", he insisted. "Well then", asked I "what IS it?"

This struck him dumb, as he didn't know the number without his notes. He blushed and said "If your intention was to embarrass me, you've succeeded. See me after class". I don't remember any hard words after class, but a dozen friends pounded me on the back, thanking me. That was MY crusade against pompousness. (That question was not on the test.)

I did well in all subjects. I enjoyed religion, math, physics, and the EE courses. Economics, philosophy and public speaking were courses I could have done without.

Economics talked tediously of ideas like "marginal return". They could have said it more simply. Like: marginal return is when spending an extra dollar only results in $0.99 return. Engineers immediately understood it as the peak on a graph. Besides thinking economists were belaboring the obvious, I scorned an inexact science which could never be proven right or wrong, where your wild opinions were as valid as mine.

In Public Speaking I was plain scared. Each of us had to speak before the group 3 times. I sweated and stammered through my talks.

A nurse named Nancy Large gave her talk about electric shock treatment for mental disorders. Part of it went like this: You put all these electrodes on the patient, reassure him that this won't hurt a bit, and throw the switch, which turns the electricity on and sends him into convulsions. I thought to myself "That's not hurting a bit?"

Our Senior religion course in Marriage and Family Living was one of the best. I was engaged to marry Lee, so I paid good attention. The course covered loving, sexuality, family finances, children, and the realities of married living.

Father John O'Sullivan, a red-faced young priest, taught us; red was the natural color of his face, it was not from blushing. He was doing pioneering work; there were no text books, so he copied magazine articles and book extracts. We called him "Marrying Sam" because he promoted marriage. ("Marrying Sam" was the clergyman in the L'il Abner comic strip.) In the first class Father announced "I do not intend to leave you 'single minded'".

"Father O", as we also called him, left me with messages which have stuck. One is "A child does not grow OUT of a bad habit, he is TRAINED out of it."

I had some good friends. I was dating Lee, and on dates we might go with Lenny Roy and Frank O'Toole, and their dates. Around a picnic campfire, Frank's tenor voice was lovely.

Lenny Roy, from Rumford, Maine, said "the way to handle someone you don't like is to pray for him". On dates he would bring Fritzie Lanier, a woman 10 years older; Fritzie said she was collecting pancakes, and already had a trunk full.

Ralph Queen and I drove to school together. His dad had been a machinist for inventor Emil Berliner, who had significant patents connected with phonographs and telephones. Ralph loved riding his horse "Jitterbug" (real name: "Pimajetti").

In 1947 Ralph bought a new white Packard, with an automatic electric clutch; you just shifted gears, the automatic part did the rest. (This was before automatic transmissions, first called "fluid drive".) Ralph's brother Warren owned a small Ercoupe airplane, kept at the Erco factory in Riverdale, Md where he gave me my first small-plane ride.

On a Sunday in 1950 Ralph and I drove to Alexandria to a glider meet at Hybla Valley Airport. The location is near to where our daughter Doris later lived, just South of Alexandria.

There was a special glider called "The Thermal Sniffer". It was a modified Piper Cub, powered with a tiny engine to get it in the air; then the engine was shut off and soaring commenced.

One of the distinguished people on the Catholic U campus was Monsignior Fulton J Sheen. He was then the best know priest in the U S, giving radio talks each Sunday, and in the 1950's having a half-hour national tv show "Life is Worth Living". He gave the address at Lee's commencement in 1949.

Our Physics Department had a noted Physicist named Dr Karl Herzfeld. He didn't teach me any courses.

In Lee's graduating class was an Edward McMahon, who later became a "Masters of Ceremonies" on television. For many years Ed McMahon was the introducer of Johnny Carson's Tonight show.

Our class had Fred J Maroon, who graduated with a degree in architecture. He did the (excellent) black-and-white photography for our yearbook, and has recently published a book of photography.

Bill Heil and John Giorgis were in EE classes with me. Bill's father worked for McCormick Spices and Teas, in Baltimore. Bill and John went to daily Mass as often as they could. When I married, John was my best man; later he was godfather (by proxy) to our first child, Lee Ann. John helped me get my job with General Electric in Schenectady, where I worked in the same office with Bill.

C U had a student chapter of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers (AIEE). I was its secretary. I wrote the minutes and mailed copies to professors at a few other schools.

I was only able to get a summer job twice. Once was at the U S Navy's David Taylor Model Test Basin at Carderock, Md. (it's along the old C&O Canal, just north of the DC Beltway. There was no Beltway then.) Here scale model ship hulls were tested by being pulled through the water in a long building (about 0.6 miles?). I worked with strain gages and electronics.

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During my other working summer I tested airport radio receivers for Schuttig and Co at 7th and Kearney Sts, N E. They had a contract to recondition FAA (or CAA) equipment; I measured the sensitivity of radios after their re-work, to see that they met specs. There I learned how upset your manager can become when what you test fails to meet specifications by a small amount; they'd prefer you do a little constructive data fudging, but I wasn't into that.

In that job we broke for lunch to a corner restaurant named "Spag's" at 7th and Monroe Sts. There the Armenian(?) owner who took our orders shouted them to the counter: one tuna fish sandwich came out of his mouth as "wan tuney feesh".

Sometimes Pop let me drive the family car (black 1941 Ford) to school. One day I was driving home through Soldiers' Home, at the spot where you can see the Capitol building so beautifully. In the rear view mirror I saw Leonard Rotter behind me in his father's LaSalle auto; he was gawking at the view, too, not paying too much attention to driving. I thought I'd scare him, teach him a lesson. I stopped my car suddenly, waiting to

see the surprise in Len's eyes. He looked ahead just in time, there was a screech of brakes, and his sturdy bumper slid under my left fender, leaving a 2 inch deep dent.

I said nothing to Pop, who didn't notice until a few weeks later. Then he wondered out loud how the fender got dented like that. I kept quiet, I didn't see any sense in volunteering the information. I learned something from that close call, it could have been worse.

About 1949 I bought my first car, a blue 1940 Plymouth. I paid a young man named Nick Hamady $500 for the car. Immediately it gave engine trouble. Pop, and our gas station man, Joe Roades, looked the car over and said it needed an engine overhaul. I had it done, for a couple hundred dollars, then the car served me until 1951. It took me to Michigan a few times.

We had to do a thesis for our Electrical Engineering degree. I chose "Magnetic Amplifiers"; during the war the Germans had made some remarkable rugged servomechanisms using them. I remember making trips to the Library of Congress; and I remember typing the thesis with 3 carbon copies. I did the sketches and graphs in India ink. My interest in "mag amps" helped me get my job with General Electric Co 3 years later.

When I graduated, Lee was there. I don't remember much about it, just that at the baccalaureate service I was terribly hot and sweaty under my black gown, while a speaker droned on more than an hour about the influence of history on something or other. My degree was awarded "Magna cum Laude", meaning I had a pretty good 4-year average grade.

I have one regret about college: though I did all I was asked to do, I didn't do any independent reading. Occasional studies from other books and from magazines would have put things into perspective, and given me more lively interest in my subjects. Oh well, in the next life.....

14. Mom

Annie Elizabeth Hamill kept her blonde good looks into old age.

Her photo album shows lots of boy friends, whom she called "beaus". When asked who they were, she'd say "oh just a fellow", and tell me his name.

In the earliest photos, the young men wore World War I military uniforms, usually with leggings and boots. Later pictures show guys wearing suits and a hat.

Mom fondly remembered a young man who rented a canoe (from Fletcher's Boat House on the Potomac, near Key Bridge). She liked going to "Analostan Island" to pick violets. (The island is across from the Watergate. My picture book <u>Above Washington</u> calls the it Theodore Roosevelt Island, and says it was once Mason's Island).

Mom loved wild flowers. In later life, driving in the country she'd call to my father "Staff, stop!"; she'd spotted flowers beside the road. It could be watercress in the ditch, which she'd bring home to eat. She liked bluets. Her boy friends must have found her an easy girl to please; they could make her happy simply taking her where wild flowers were. On her wedding day a disappointed suitor sent her a shoe box full of VIOLETS.

From high school until marriage, photos show her wearing "middy blouses", patterned after sailor shirts.

Many of her photo album pictures came from summer vacations. A picture at Braddock Heights (near Frederick, Md) shows Grandma and Aunt Ada coming down a wide sliding board, wearing large grins.

Sometimes 2 families (Mom's, and Grandma's sister Ada's) would go by steamer to Colonial Beach, Va. They shipped large trunks ahead, then went by streetcar to the Seventh Street Wharves to board the boat. The men, Grandpop Birkbeck and Uncle Earl, probably came when they could (weekends). At Colonial Beach they stayed at "Nynd's cottage". The beach water was brackish (partly salty), and had jellyfish ("sea nettles") which stung. Mom was no swimmer; splashing was her limit.

After Mom was earning money she'd vacation at Holiday House, a church-run place for young women, near the water on Long Island. There she made a lifelong friend, Marian Triebswetter, who lived on Long Island and worked in New York City. It seems to me that those days were her happiest. She tells of eating fresh-picked corn dripping with butter. The place was run with strict chaperonage. Women called "deaconesses" lurked and watched to be sure there were no (dare I say the word) men about.

Mom graduated from old Business High School about 1915. My high school (Theodore Roosevelt) inherited Business High's curriculum and some of its teachers. Our principal, Miss May Bradshaw, had taught at Business High.

Mom held several secretarial jobs before marriage in 1925.

Her first job interview was in her home at 1619 Rosedale St N E, Washington, DC. She had answered an ad for a secretary for Senator Robert LaFollette of Wisconsin. Imagine the neighborhood surprise when a fine automobile (chauffeur driven, I think) pulled up and the senator himself rang the doorbell. In her parlor he interviewed Mom and hired her.

"Fighting Bob" LaFollette is remembered in national politics. He founded the Progressive Party which competed with Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose Party. Mom's job wasn't exactly as the Senator's top secretary. She worked in a basement office of the Capitol Building. She said that there were five job levels of clerks, and she was the lowest. She didn't stay long, the job paid poorly.

Another job I know about was working for a patent attorney firm, "Bryant and Larry", across from the Patent Office at 9th and F Sts N W (now National Portrait Gallery). There, in the days before photocopying, she'd transcribe patents, probably copying text in shorthand at the Patent Office and typing it back at the attorney's office.

She grew up living on Rosedale St. She went to Henry Blow elementary school. Her best friend there was Barbara Siebert, a Catholic. Mom, a Protestant, accompanied Barbara to confession Saturday afternoons.

A block behind their home was a wooden ice house, where ice was manufactured. Mom remembered to her death the night the ice house caught fire and burned dramatically.

She may have been baptized Baptist or Methodist, I'm not certain. While young she "took the pledge" never to drink alcohol, which she strictly honored.

She attended adult Sunday School at the Columbia Heights Disciples of Christ Church, on Park Road, on the back side of the block where her family then lived at 1416 Monroe St, N W.

She belonged to the Gleaner's Class, a group that stuck together from young adulthood to old age. Uncle Earl and Aunt Ada belonged, too. Names of some of her church friends still come to mind: the Bagbys, George and Fannie Warren, Eda Mader, Russell and Eva Deerson. At that time those names were very familiar to me, but now they sound

strange.

In my time Mom didn't attend the church service, only the sunday school that preceded it. I can only guess why she didn't stay for church. Perhaps she was afraid she would be called out by name, and be noticed by the whole congregation (she was painfully shy). Or maybe it was because then Grandma and Grandpop lived with us, and she didn't want to be away from home too long on Sunday mornings.

Driving her to church was a Sunday ritual for Pop and me. We'd attend 8 am Mass at St Gabriel's Church. Then we'd hustle to eat breakfast and get Mom to Sunday School by ten. We had an hour and a quarter wait before picking her up; there was enough time to visit the zoo (not far away), go to Grandma Hamill's on Manor Place (I liked hiding in her closets and playing with the sliding door between the living and dining rooms), or maybe watch steam-driven trains at the Eckington Yards.

Mom's religion taught her not to gamble, but she made an exception for Bingo. "That's not gambling, James", she said; however, playing cards for money was evil.

I was surprised when Mom told me her beliefs about herself and God, a month before she died. She didn't think she was good enough for Heaven. She had no idea of God's mercy. I thought Protestants were raised on the idea that accepting God as a personal savior practically assured salvation. In my own life as a Catholic I've only recently begun to understand that no one earns the gift of salvation, but it's a free gift, almost for the believing. Mom had no idea of that. I feel sorry for her. But God can handle it; she may be with God now -- a different Annie, no longer shy and withdrawn, now confident and outgoing.

One of Mom's principles was to pay back what anyone did for you. If Gladys treats you to a movie, you must treat Gladys back, with equal value. Mom was uneasy when given something, because she had to plan to return the favor. After Pop died, neighbors did favors, which she resisted. I doubt that she ever tossed a quarter into a beggar's hat.

She often saw her glass as half empty. Once she said "James, we're poor". Life had been grim when she was a girl; Grandpop Birkbeck sometimes returned from his carpenter job announcing he'd been dismissed for arguing with the boss. We had lean times when I was little -- but we had a salary through the worst of the Depression when many people had nothing.

Mom and Grandma knew how to "make do"; when I was little and would dig in back yard dirt, Mom would give me a clean old rag to blow my nose on.

Mom didn't drive a car. Once she asked Pop to teach her, but while she was learning, a bee came into the car. Mom panicked, and nearly crashed; she retired from driving right then.

All her life she was considered a "nervous" person. Maybe "sensitive is another way of saying it. As a girl she had some kind of "nervous" problem in school, for which the doctor prescribed that she eat a raw egg every day. As a married woman she took an afternoon nap each day -- on doctor's advice. About 2 pm she'd lie across her bed on top of the covers, reading Good Housekeeping or Family Circle magazine, maybe dozing off. Afterward she'd take her bath to be fresh for Pop's homecoming at 5 pm.

People liked Mom. She was sweet and quiet, and no threat. There was one person that she couldn't stand, though, "Aunt" Rebecca. The wife of Pop's high school friend John Rogers, Rebecca was an assertive woman who always knew what was best for you, and didn't mind telling you. Mom cringed when she came.

In 1962 Mom and Pop sold the house on Fifth St and moved to 1271 Magnolia Drive, Clearwater, Florida.

Mom had hoped to stay in Washington, but Pop felt he had a right to enjoy retirement, and Mom went along with him. Actually, it wasn't a bad move for her, as some of her Sunday school friends moved to the same area. Had she stayed in Washington, the neighborhood would have changed anyhow, and friends would have moved away to the suburbs or Florida.

Grandma Birkbeck was ill when they moved, and was put into a nursing home until she would be well enough to move. She died shortly after the move, never seeing Florida.

Florida was undoubtedly an adventure. Mom and Pop had a house built by a contractor named Frank Ferraco, with whom they became personal friends; everyone who saw the little house remarked on its quality. In the back yard they planted citrus trees and flowering things that Florida raised well. They found the local merchants good to deal with. Clearwater had a small city feel the first 10 years; later it became uncomfortably "metropolitan".

At first Pop "had a ball". He went fishing in the Gulf while his health lasted. But he was becoming sick, having epileptic-like "spells", and sometimes he gave boat skippers unwanted advice about where to look for fish; the advice got him warned off some boats.

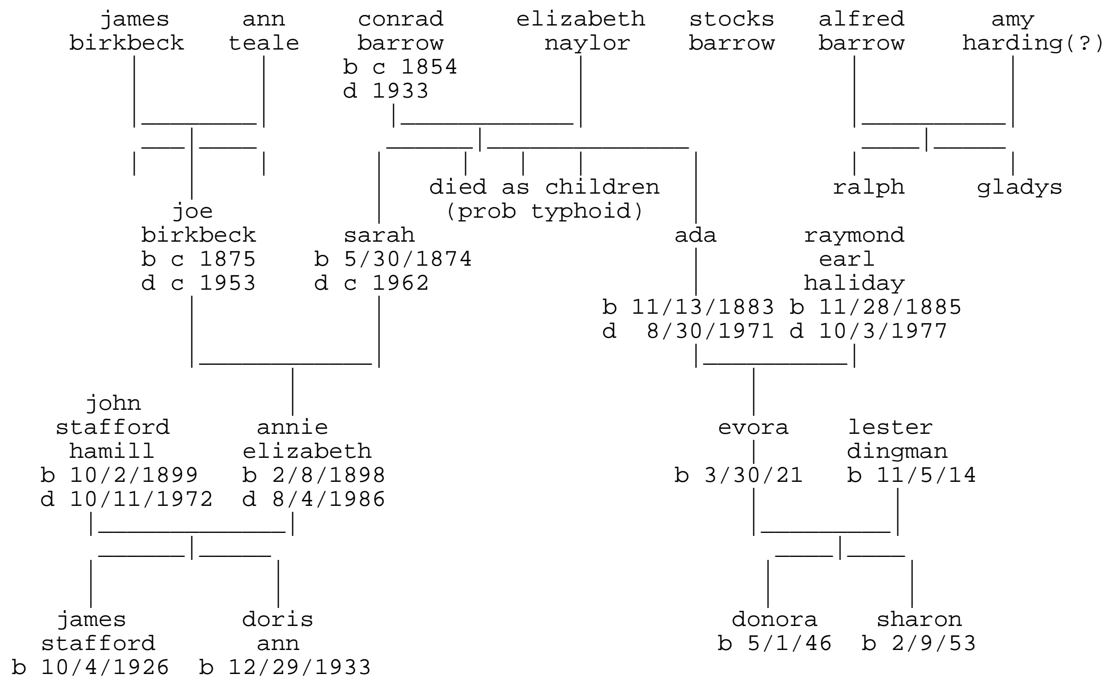
When Pop died in 1972, Mom stayed in the house alone and did pretty well. She could walk to stores and take a bus to the bank. Friends and neighbors increasingly helped her, visited her, took her out for dinner (she of course hated that!). She paid a young man, David, to cut the lawn and trim the bushes. In 1972 I moved to Ormond Beach, "just across the state" 160 miles, and we saw Mom a couple of times a year. Sometimes we'd drive there, sometimes she'd take the train to us. Despite herself, in her widowhood years she "grew" in some ways; she was forced into unfamiliar situations, and survived them.

Mom had liver cancer. In her last year she had surgery at Morton Plant Hospital, but the doctor said the cancer had spread, and was hopeless. We visited her more often, and toward the end brought her to our home. The move was against her will, but she couldn't handle life alone any more. She died August 4, 1986, in our front bedroom in Ormond Beach, between 3 am and 6 am, at 88 years of age.

God rest you, Mom!

15. Barrow/Birkbeck

These are the ancestors of Annie Elizabeth Birkbeck.



Grandma Birkbeck.

Sarah Birkbeck was just under 5 ft tall, with a "dowager's hump" on her back. This may have come from poor nutrition and working in a mill as a girl in England.

As a girl she took care of the other children of her family after her mother died. An epidemic claimed all her siblings except her younger sister Ada. The deaths were probably from poor sanitation.

Grandma's birth certificate shows her born on May 30, 1874 at Beggarington, Northowram, in the district of Halifax. Her residence at birth was "Low Fold, Queensbury". After marriage she lived at 26 Thornton Rd, Queensbury. Her sister Ada lived with them. Aunt Ada's autobiography includes a 1974 photograph of that house.

Ada's autobiography tells that Sarah and Joe Birkbeck, Annie, and Ada came to the United States together about 1902, on the steamship Lucania. (Grandma's father Conrad Barrow had been in the U S a while.) They sailed from Liverpool, arriving at Ellis Island, New York, on December 7. They went by train directly to Washington, where they arrived at Uncle Alfred's about 9 am. Uncle Alfred may have lived at 826 H St, NW then. They probably stayed with Alfred and Amy until they found a place to live.

In 1932 while Grandma was visiting at our house on 5th St, she broke a hip while untangling me from the scrollwork back of a dining room chair. She had to use a cane for several years after, and complained of arthritis. The following year she and Grandpop

moved in with us, staying the rest of their lives. They rented their Monroe St home out, giving them a small income.

Grandma was sickly. She may have been harmed by dampness and coal fumes from her childhood in England. When she visited her sister Ada, Grandma always mentioned her complaints: constipation, asthma, or arthritis. Each day she took psillium seed in water for colitis.

I was Grandma's pet. She cared a lot about me; maybe I was the little boy she never had. That had benefits and drawbacks. She fussed over me and made me uncomfortable. If I were being a finicky eater and was told to eat or else, Grandma would speak up for me and see that I got something else to eat (sometimes settling for "milk sops", bread and milk with sugar on it. And people wonder at my sweet tooth).

Grandma taught me to hang my clothes neatly on the back of my bedroom door (I didn't have a closet).

Every Friday Grandma went downtown to buy bargains advertised in the Thursday Evening Star. She'd be at a department store when it opened. Her territory included Kanns', Lansburg's, Woodward and Lothrop's, Hecht's, sometimes Goldenberg's, a lower class store.

She knew value, and found worthwhile things on sale. When I was in high school she bought me a suede leather jacket, which lasted 10 years. I had a love-hate affair with that jacket; part of me was proud of it, part of me didn't like the leathery smell, and I didn't see other kids wearing similar jackets.

When I returned from the Navy in 1946 Grandma took me downtown to buy a sweater -- a most wonderful bright red one. I was beginning college life, and for once dared to wear something bold. That was the sweater that made me stand out in Mr Baldwin's freshman English class, where Josephine Paul noticed me, which led to my first date with Lee Zielinski.

Grandma would sometimes bring home chunks of Hershey Chocolate, sold by the pound at Murphy's ten cent store on F Street. If I have an outrageous sweet tooth, Grandma can take some credit.

She'd finish shopping in time to attend a "matinee", movie which started at 11:30 or noon. She'd choose a theatre with "stage shows" ("vaudeville") before the movie.

Grandma resented some things about my Dad, and sometimes said things that hurt him. If he had been out at night, the next day at supper she might remark "I heard Stafford come in at 11:15" (said in a tone of reproach.) Pop tried to solve that by fixing the chime on our Seth Thomas mantel clock so it wouldn't work; but still the Soldiers' Home clock a mile away loudly chimed hours and quarter hours.

Grandma didn't like it that Pop spent money on Saturday fishing trips. I think Pop felt pressure from sharing his home with his in-laws, and used fishing as a release. He sometimes said things about Grandma like, about her keen sense of smell, that she had a "dog's nose".

When the family car (a used Nash) gave up, and we had no money for another, Grandma dipped into her small savings to help buy another used car (a Hupmobile). This was on condition that Stafford (Pop) take her for Sunday afternoon rides.

Grandma loved those rides. Sometimes Pop took her; sometime Uncle Earl. Like Mom, Grandma enjoyed flowering things. It could be front yard gardens, dogwood in the Kenwood suburb, Japanese cherry blossoms at the Tidal Basin, forsythia, or meadows and

fields in bloom. I went on many of those rides. Sometimes we'd stop at the Electric Maid bakery in Takoma Park -- across the street from the Seventh Day Adventist "sanitorium". We might buy a half-dozen fresh baked rolls, and I'd eat 2 of them right in the car (ummm).

Grandma was our main gardener. Out back she raised plants whose names are still familiar: woolflower, dahlia, cosmos, snapdragon, larkspur, Easter lily, chrysanthemum, and gladiolus. Also in the back yard, coming up untended year after year, were hollyhocks (which attracted big bumblebees), daffodil, and iris. Growing wild in our tiny back lawn were violets, buttercups, and mint used for sauce with lamb, or for garnishing iced tea for summer suppers on the back porch. There was a small planter in the stone wall beside the front sidewalk, in which Grandma planted something she called "English moss", a name I don't find in flower books.

Mom planted petunias in the 4 cement flower boxes on the front porch, using seeds from last summer's crop. For a while we had an indoor planter box with ferns; sometimes we'd raise Wandering Jew or English Ivy in jars of water. When I was introduced to gardening I planted nasturtiums, a good plant for small fingers because the seeds are large.

Grandma wasn't much for technology. When we got our dial telephone she wanted someone to dial for her. And when we got our first television, about 1948, she'd sit alongside it looking sidewise at the screen (that may have been because she had cataracts, which made side viewing better than straight on).

Joe Birkbeck

Grandpop Birkbeck was a tall man (about 6 ft) for his time. He was lanky, having an Abe Lincoln build but no beard. When I knew him he was grey and balding. He spent his days in a rocking chair beside our radio (a cabinet 3 ft tall). He only listened when the family turned it on in the evening. He liked news and the Amos and Andy show.

He was a carpenter who never worked while I knew him. Aunt Ada, in her biography, characterized him as "trifling" -- I guess she meant he couldn't keep a job.

When I knew him, he had disabilities -- a stammer when excited, and a loose, rolling walk that made him wobble and sometimes fall.

Each weekday after lunch Grandpop would walk to the D C library, 4 miles away; he'd read for a couple of hours, buy a cup of coffee, and take the streetcar home. One day towards the end of his life he had a fall. A policeman who helped him thought he was drunk, and told him never to walk the streets in that condition again. His heart was broken! Grandpa drunk! it wasn't possible; he always avoided alcohol and tobacco.

He could eat! Each morning he'd pitch into a bowl of hot cereal (he called it "porridge"), after he drank a large glass of warm water -- I think to help his bowels. He ate his meals heartily -- and never got fat.

He had no education in particular, that I knew of. Despite this he read a lot. His treasure was a bookcase with glass doors which contained, among other titles, Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, and Tom Brown's School Days. None of us knew enough to talk books with him, but when Hamill Kenny visited they talked books, and Grandpop would be in his glory, and appreciative.

Grandpop Birkbeck was a self-taught musician. He played piano -- his piano was in our living room; he seldom played after he moved in with us. And he could sing. He had a

clear, soaring voice. When he lived on Monroe St, he was active in music at St Stephen's Episcopal Church at 16th and Newton Sts.

He and Grandma were on permanent "outs". Sharing the same bed, each slept on their back, ramrod straight, so they wouldn't touch the other. If Grandpop made a statement, Grandma would contradict it, which made him furious, and he'd stammer and get red faced. Before she died, Mom told me that Grandpop once brought home a venereal disease (syphilis?), which he transmitted to Grandma. I guess that would account for some stand-offishness.

Ada, Earl and Evora Haliday.

(Evora Dingman contributed considerably to the following about the Halidays and the Barrows.)

Aunt Ada, Grandma's sister was married to Uncle Earl. Their daughter Evora is 5 years older than me. It was Evora who re-copied Aunt Ada's handwritten biography. Her story begins before 1900; Theodore Roosevelt's relatives have bit parts in it.

My mother called Aunt Ada "Tay". Ada was short like her sister Sarah. She came to the United States with respiratory problems, probably from dampness and coal fumes in England; later she was diagnosed as having emphysema.

Grandma Birkbeck and Ada shared a love of rides in the county and fondness for flowers. Before I was born they used to take turns having Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners at each other's homes.

The Halidays lived in a detached home a mile from us. Uncle Earl used part of the first floor for his dental practice. He was a jovial man, full of "Well, well, well, how are you?"s. I always smelled pipe tobacco on his breath; it was a sweet, pleasant smell. I didn't detect stale smoke in the house.

Earl and Ada lived modestly. Their principle was "do it for yourself if possible". Earl kept his 1933(?) Plymouth auto for 20 years. I remember him telling me that he had a mechanic on Georgia Avenue who did his tune-ups for 2 dollars! When Evora began high school, Earl built a pine-paneled recreation room in the basement. Each winter he put up a vestibule outside the front door to keep cold wind out and heat in.

Ada was a talented seamstress, who made clothing for her daughter. Before marriage she was a professional dressmaker, one of her customers being Alice Longworth, of Theodore Roosevelt's family.

Earl was skilled with his hands. He cast gold and silver for Harris Jewelers, and later made castings for his dental practice. He enjoyed painting and building things.

He crafted 17 violins, beautifully finished. He played sweetly; I remember him playing romantic tunes by Sigmund Romberg. He had a close friend named Scott Herman, who sold things used to make violins.

Earl was a fisherman. He was glad to be invited to fish with Pop. Once when Pop was casting he caught Uncle Earl in the eyebrow, and had to cut the barb off the hook to remove it. Pop and Uncle Earl differed in their approach to fishing. For Pop the joy was the sport; for Earl sport was fine, but the fresh fish were a delicious meal.

He belonged to the masonic order. In 1927 he was "worshipful master of Federal Lodge No. 1, FAAM", and was a 32nd degree Mason.

I liked Uncle Earl. He seemed to be a romantic person. He took a cheerful view of

life in situations that would dishearten others.

Uncle Earl once had a patient from the Spanish Embassy named "Evorita". It was from her that his daughter's name "Evora" came. Evora was a red-haired girl whom Pop once teased by calling her "Reds"; this made her cry. Pop didn't mean to hurt, this was friendly kidding the way machinists at the Navy Yard would do to each other; Pop couldn't see a difference.

Though Evora is my Mother's cousin, she is nearer my age than Mom's. I remember our families being at Colonial Beach when I was six; I cried because everybody was playing cards but me. They humored me by changing the game to Go Fish and letting me in. Another time I was with Evora on a vacation with Grandma and Aunt Ada, at a quiet resort called "Jordan Springs", near Winchester, Va. There was a swimming pool at a quiet hotel in the woods. We had the pool pretty much to ourselves, and did a lot of splashing together.

Evora has inborn artistic ability, shown in crafts and flower arranging. Her first job was for a store called "Copenhaver's" on Connecticut Avenue. She later became a craftsperson working at and teaching kiln crafts, pottery, glass and metal enamelling. She married Les Dingman from Palmer, Massachusetts. In retirement she and Les keep busy at physically demanding activities.

Conrad Barrow

Great Grand-dad Barrow, father of Grandma Birkbeck and Aunt Ada, died when I was seven. I slightly remember a grey-mustached man in a rumpled tweed suit, sitting on our sofa. It was said that he called me "Young Smiler". When I'm in Washington I visit his grave, marked "BARROW", which is also where Aunt Ada and Uncle Earl are buried.

I'm told that Great Grand-Dad Barrow had an interesting, varied life. He was a stone mason who worked on the the Washington Cathedral. When still in England he kept bees; when they swarmed, Grandma would find him and announce "the bees are swarming".

Conrad Barrow came to America before Grandma and Grandpa Birkbeck; in England it was said that in America "the streets were paved with gold". Great Grand-Dad lived with Uncle Alfred and Aunt Amy, where, without warning, he would come downstairs with his suitcase and announce "Well, Missus, I'm off to England". It was said he'd flown in a dirigible. In retirement he would visit the Botanical Gardens near the Capitol Building, often returning with a plant cutting from a friendly gardener.

Evora has a log book of a trip Conrad Barrow took beginning April 7, 1910. Some places enroute were Atlanta, New Orleans, San Antonio, Pecos River, El Paso, Deming N M, Los Angeles, San Gabriel Mission, Pasadena, and San Francisco. He saw the effects of the San Francisco fire and its rebuilding. On to Mt Shasta, Portland, the Columbia River, and Seattle. Victoria B C to Skagway, Alaska; Juneau, Calgary, Medicine Hat. Toronto and Niagara Falls. Then he visited his brother Stocks in Skowhegan. At Boston he boarded the SS Cymrie for Liverpool, England. Evora comments that his logs are filled with details that are hard to read because the pencilled writing is pale in spots.

Grandma's frugal ways must have come from him. He collected "tinfoil" from street gutters, the thin foil used in cigarette and chewing gum wrappers then. He melted it down to a small flower pot full of lead. Mom said that he'd bring home bits of horse manure for the garden (there must have been a lot of it in the streets then).

Amy and Alfred Barrow

Of Aunt Amy and Uncle Alfred I know little. He was Conrad Barrow's brother.

They lived 2 blocks from us -- about 3rd house West of 4th St on Decatur St. Mom told me he drove Washington trolley cars when horses still pulled them. My memory of him is a man with a grey moustache wearing a dark suit. I know he drank alcoholic beverages, smoked, and played the horses at the Benning Race Track; and he lived to a good old age (disproving what they say about people who do those things).

I never knew their children. Ralph was an attorney for a rubber company in Akron; in Mom's memory he had a "big swell job". And he was divorced. Of Gladys I know nothing.

16. Chronology and Marriage

This chapter begins with important family information, and goes on to tell about our engagement and marriage.

• • •

June 21, 1950. Married Leona Marie (Lee) Zielinski at St Stanislaus Church, Bay City, MIchigan. Lived at 1121 S Van Buren St, Bay City, Michigan (her parents' home).

- 6/5/51 Born: Lee Ann Hamill, Mercy Hospital.
- 2/19/53Born: Doris Lynn Hamill, Mercy Hospital.
- June 1953. I drove to Schenectady N Y in advance of my family; in July, Lee and the children came. 1352 Parkwood Blvd.
- 1/55 Moved across the river to our first home at 123 North Holmes St, Scotia, N Y.
- 2/9/55Born: James John Hamill, St Clare's Hospital, Schenectady.
- 1/23/56Born: Michael Joseph Hamill, St Clare's.
- 2/1/57Born: Mark Daniel Hamill, St Clare's.
- 9/15/58Born: Mary Grace Hamill, St Clare's.
- 4/8/62Born: Teresa Anne Hamill, St Clare's.
- January 1963. We moved to Endwell N Y (near Binghamton). 3601 Scribner Drive.
- 5/13/64Born: Thomas More Hamill, Wilson Memorial Hospital, Johnson City.
- December 1972. We moved to Ormond Beach FL (near Daytona Beach).
- 94 Capri Dr South. In the next 17 years our children finished growing up and left home.
- August 1989. The two of us moved to 5912 Swede Rd (now Swede Avenue).

Engagement

In February 1949 I realized that my girlfriend Lee would graduate in June; if I didn't do something about it, she'd go home, and I could lose her.

I loved her too much for that. It was "put up or shut up" time.

• • •

I had made my first trip to Michigan at Christmas 1947. Lee and I flew to Bay City together, where we were met by her sister Esther (Essie) Batcke, Essie's husband, Charlie, and their kids Chuckie and Sue. The evening we arrived, snow was on the ground and it was biting cold. Later we drove to Bay City to meet Lee's parents and her sister Betty (Penny).

I wondered if Lee's family would like me. They were Polish and I was not, so they might think I was a not a match for their daughter.

The visit came out well. I was a serious friend of Lee, the darling of her family, and they accepted me right away.

In Bay City I found that Penny was a kidder, which I liked. Lee's dad was warm and cordial, very ordinary, a man who wore slippers around the house and did not try to impress. (Looking back I see him as an EXTRAordinary man. He lived close to God and was not messed up by alcohol as many Bay City men were.) Lee's mother had a warm smile for me; I noticed the scar on her throat where a goiter had been removed the year before.

Michigan cold weather was as I expected, but I could handle it. Winter driving meant fogged windows, with drivers struggling to see through a peephole where the defroster blew air on the windshield. Michigan people didn't stop driving because of snow and ice.

I made 2 or 3 more trips to Michigan before we married. Her family made me feel one of them. Every important thing was right.

So, in February 1949 I didn't doubt that Lee was the woman I wanted to marry, but I was worried about some things.

I was untried. Lee already had a career, but I hadn't begun mine. Even before college she was a Registered Nurse who could work in any hospital and have good prospects for advancement. But I was stuck in school another year, and I had never proven myself as an engineer and a wage earner. That bothered me.

Another worry was, WOULD Lee marry me? I wasn't sure. It's like the old joke: "I don't know if I could respect anybody dumb enough to like me". She was heading for a nursing career, and had never shown that she thought of marrying.

My love (and God's grace) were so strong that I somehow found the courage to propose to Lee.

• • •

Her birthday would be March 10; if she accepted, an engagement ring would be a fine present. A week before her birthday I found courage to bring up the subject while we were walking. We were on the MIchigan Avenue railroad bridge; Lee says my words were "Would you accept an engagement ring for your birthday?" I was surprised and relieved that she didn't say "no" out of hand.

A big obstacle was care for Lee's parents: neither was well, and they needed HER. She had a medical background and was unmarried. None of her brothers or sisters wanted the burden. She would have to live with her parents for an indefinite time.

We talked of that need. I swallowed hard and said I'd go along with that; Lee was so precious, I couldn't imagine a difficulty I wouldn't put up with --- for her. Not only did I "feel" love for her, but she was a such a "right" person that my brain said "look, she matches your check list perfectly!". So, my heart and my head pushed me toward a marriage that would begin differently than the romantic marriages I thought everybody started

with.

After Lee said "yes", we set our wedding date for after my graduation the next year (June 1950). I bought an engagement ring from R Harris and Company at 11th and F Sts, N W; it cost about $200 for a small quality diamond in a gold band. I could afford it, as I had $1500 in savings.

I did something old fashioned: I asked Lee's parents for "permission" to marry their daughter. Her Mom and Dad needed assurance that I was not taking her away. They said "yes". I don't know what I'd have done if they said "no" --- run off and got married?

Lee graduated with a flourish! Essie and Penny came from Michigan. The Baccalaureate service was in the huge basement church of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, on the Catholic University campus. (Only the basement was complete then). The day was hot, and everybody sweated. The speaker was world-famous preacher, Monsignor Fulton J Sheen. Whatever wisdom he left with the graduates I don't remember; I only remember he was deep ... and boring.

Senior year without Lee went slowly. I wrote a lot of letters, and lived to get Lee's. In the summer of 1949 I couldn't find a job, so I hung around home and took lots of bike rides. My last year of college was tedious hard work. I researched and wrote my bachelors' thesis on the subject "magnetic amplifiers". And I took Fr John O'Sullivan's course "Marriage and Family Life", looking forward to using, within the year, what I had learned.

I spent Christmas of 1949 in Bay City, driving there with my sister Doris in my second-hand 1940 Plymouth car. We carried a classmate, Jim Shoup, to Detroit. I remember stopping overnight in Canton, Ohio on the return journey. There Doris and I saw a Danny Kaye movie The Secret Life of Walter Mitty, a show that I still see on television.

Wedding

Lee did all the wedding planning. She had a lovely dress made to order for just $35; it was of white material with lots of eyelets. She arranged the Mass details and ordered a banquet room and served lunch at the White Birch Hills Country Club in Auburn. Ess and Charlie contributed their home for a reception afterward. Lee's cousin Helen Janowicz was happy to be maid of honor.

My parish priest at St Gabriel's Church in Washington waived giving me marriage instruction because I'd had a good marriage course in college. I went to my doctor for the required blood test; looking at the huge syringe to be used, I dreaded it so much I almost felt like calling off the wedding. I lined up a best man. My first choice was Nathan Rosenthal, but church rules didn't allow a Jew, so I asked a college friend who was a serious Catholic, John Giorgis.

John came to Bay City the day before the wedding, having sat up all night on a bus. Lee, Penny and I took John on a picnic beside the Saginaw River. There I snapped a picture of Penny in overalls trying to bat a baseball. Penny treated John to a bed specially made up with Corn Flakes in it. We sort of hoped Penny and John would like each other enough to get married some day, but that was asking too much.

Mom, Pop and my sister Doris came for the wedding. They stayed at the Wenona Hotel in downtown Bay City. They politely met Lee's family; they were probably surprised at her parents' being older and looking unwell; my folks had met Essie at Lee's graduation. At the wedding Pop made a big attempt to remember everyone's name, but he

messed up a couple of times, calling people by wrong names.

At St Stanislaus Church, 11 am Wednesday, June 21, 1950, we were married. Lee and Helen walked down the main aisle, and John and I down the side aisle, meeting at right angles in front of the altar. I was nervous, but not paralyzed. It did flit through my mind "This is IT! Am I SURE I want to go through with this?" Kneeling before Fr Sigmund J Haremski, I was impressed by the solemnity. I remember his blessing that we might live to see our children's children, and wondering "would that really happen?" The organist played Schubert's Ave Maria and a soloist sang it beautifully.

Leaving church, I was overwhelmed with happiness, and Lee was too. So many friends and family, all there for us. Some of the guests were: Marie Przewozniak, Leona Retlewski and Dot DeLoof; Lee's brothers and sisters and their families: Gee, Dick, Ernie, Albert, Edith, Essie, Penny; Helen's parents Uncle John and Aunt Martha. Aunt Agnes Jakubczak and Uncle Sam.

After mass we drove to White Birch Hills for the luncheon. I remarked that having the wedding on a weekday kept away those who didn't REALLY want to be there. We didn't serve alcoholic drinks; that wasn't our style, and besides an uncle or two were alcoholics who didn't need temptation.

• • •

After lunch we went to Essie and Charlie's in Midland where our wedding cake was waiting on the dining room table. People relaxed, removing sweaty coats and jackets. Aunt Martha did a Polish dance with Ernie.

Essie had four children then. Jack was old enough to walk, and Pete was a cute baby whom people wanted to hold.

At four in the afternoon the party wound down. My bride and I were headed for our honeymoon and wanted to go 60 miles by dark; John Giorgis had his bus to catch, back to Washington. We bundled John into our car and returned to Bay City.

Besides the awe-inspiring change the day had brought, I had the feeling that never before had I been so pleasantly the center of attention and good wishes. Maybe the reason some people get married over and over is to enjoy those feelings again.

• • •

Our honeymoon was a week's drive through Michigan's Upper Peninsula. We got to Tawas City the first night. Next day in Cheboygan we bought a car blanket to use on any beaches we came to. (That blanket remained our family car blanket, which our kids may remember. It lasted into the 1960's.)

We crossed the Straits of Mackinac on the car ferry. In the Upper Peninsula we visited a large clear-water spring, Kitchi-ti-ki-pi, where we saw fish 30 feet below. I remember the city of Marquette and our cabin there: "Raikos' Cozy Cabins" the sign had said. Raikos had mosquitoes so fierce that we had to sleep with our heads under blankets to avoid them.

The farthest north we went was Copper Harbor on Keweenaw Peninsula (you can't go any further north in Michigan). It was unspoiled country where we saw deer along the road. Though it was late June, I had to build a fire in the wood stove to keep us warm in our overnight cabin; I got up 3 times to re-stoke that little stove. We returned to Bay City, stopping at Traverse City to visit an aunt of Lee's. Then we returned to the "real world" where I had to find a job.

17. Jim And Lee: A Romance

by Ken Bruce[1]

(Ken wrote this in 1980 after a myriad of interviews I had with Aunt Lee -- Aunt Lee -- I remember you were SO patient with me. It was fun taking down notes while you were busy cooking up the latest meal.)

Let's turn back the clock to the Fall of 1946. Mr. Baldwin, an average man of 5'10" with sandy hair, stood up at his desk and looked over the classroom.

This was the start of the English course at the Catholic University in Washington DC and maybe, just maybe, the start of something quite different.

Jim Hamill, a thin, shy man of 20, sat in his seat alone and a bit apprehensive. He'd just received an honorable discharge from the Navy where he had been stationed in Green Cove Springs, Florida. He had happily arrived back home that summer, immediately beginning his four years in college with high hopes for an electrical engineering degree.

Leona Zielinski, an alluring and friendly young woman, sat on the other side of the room. She wasn't looking at Jim, though. Mr. Baldwin, his every last tassel of clothes mismatched and his tie befitting a clown, was demanding every last bit of her attention. She wanted to look away but couldn't.

This behavior would become more the rule than the exception. During the first few months of class Leona didn't know Jim from beans, the two sitting through the lectures with nary a glance between them. Leona did her best to pay attention to her studies through Mr. Baldwin's fashion faux pas and Jim quietly kept to himself, most of his energies revolving around absorbing the textbook.

It wasn't until early into the school year of 1947 when Jo Paul, Leona's vivacious fun-loving roommate at Mrs. Mike's house nearby, began mentioning the, "wonderful young man in the bright red sweater"; the same man Miss Paul loved to tease. It wasn't but a few days later that Leona actually made it a point to glance at the handsome man in the classroom but was often distracted by John Watson, the rude literature nerd who was striking fire with Mr. Baldwin every chance he got and demanding everyone's attention. Sadly enough, the situation at hand precluded love at first sight.

Days later the much anticipated Sadie Hawkin's Dance uplifted every soul on campus as the University brimmed with excitement. Jo Paul, full of

1. When I asked Dad in Jan, 1998 if I had the order of his biography right, he asked me to include this text — ed.

the spirit of adventure, egged Leona on to date this mysterious man. With all the daring college spirit she could muster, Leona soon gave in and asked Jim out on a date. Jim was delighted and began planning their first rendezvous. All Jo Paul could do was snicker, figuring the joke was on them. It would soon become fodder for her rumor mill.

The dance soon came and Lee decided that this was a nice guy after all; an adequate dancer and a wonderful person. She also realized that he was younger and so decided not to take him too seriously.

The first trial of their relationship was now behind them. At least now they knew each other existed and could pursue their blooming relationship. In the years to follow they would invest much more time getting to know each other.

Their dates were casual and often, consisting of intimate group picnics, movies and bike rides down country roads, around Rock Creek Park and to the nearby tidal basin.

Sometimes a school prom would come along and Jim would eagerly borrow his father's car so that the two could spend an evening together in the school gym. At the conclusion of each outing Jim would drop Lee off at Mrs. Mike's house and warmly shake hands.

The romance of the century was cut short when Lee quit college early in 1948 to help her ailing parents in Bay City, Michigan. Her mother was going into surgery and she felt obligated to be there.

Alone and friendless, Jim continued the arduous task of college study. He wrote letters to Lee but wasn't prepared to express any commitment to her quite yet. His epistles were merely friendly exchanges of news with an occasional suggestion of affection thrown in for good measure.

Fortunately Lee saw her mother through the operation and went back to Mercy Hospital to fill the position of Evening Supervisor, a job she made a practice of every summer in Michigan.

Then good news struck. In September of 1948 Lee went back to the Catholic University to continue working towards her B.S. in Nursing Education. Her quiet dates with Jim could continue. There wasn't much time to spare, though. This was the senior year for Miss Zielinski and with her college years coming to an end her schedule was more than a little crowded.

Jim, in his junior year, was likewise as busy and so the both only had a small part of each Saturday to date.

Early in March during the winter of 1949 the two were shuffling over the Michigan Ave. railroad bridge in Washington DC when a large bus, filled to the brim with noisy passengers, sped by them. Jim figured this was as good enough a time as any and, with a strong heart, he decided to make his move.

Jim figured, "Will you marry me" was overused and lacked a certain spice so he decided to change the format. While thick diesel fumes still flowed around them he uttered romantically, "Would you accept an engagement ring?"

Lee looked up at him, smiled quietly and replied, "Yes, I would." The

two walked on.

It wasn't until the 10th of that month that the diamond ring was delivered to Miss Zielinski at her residence. The date was also significant because it was her birthday.

• • •

Marriage wasn't going to happen immediately. Jim had a full year of college left before he'd hear the chime of church bells in Michigan and Lee had a year of teaching obligation owed to the Grand Rapid's Mercy Central School of Nursing nearby. Three years earlier Lee had received a generous scholarship from the Grand Rapids Foundation, and this was her repayment. She graduatedthat year from the Catholic University relieved that the grueling years of college were over and happy to have finally earned her B.S. in Nursing

Education. Almost immediately after graduation Lee went to 220 Cherry Street in Grand Rapids to do her duty for St. Mary's Hospital. There, for a full year, she put her many years of nursing expertise on the line as she assumed the roles of Health Supervisor, Teacher and Freshman Class Advisor. Although she was quite lonely, she had plenty to keep her busy and her mind full. As she later recollected, "No, I didn't go mad."

Jim also had plenty to keep his mind from rest. That summer of '49 he resumed work at Schuttig and Co. in Northeast Washington. There he earned his stay by testing radio receivers for the FAA.

Finally the two were re-united that Christmas in Michigan for a short time and briefly replenished their ever-brewing love. Glancing into each other's loving eyes and sipping eggnog under the glowing branches of the Christmas tree there was no doubt they'd come a far cry from the gentle handshakes at the door of Mrs. Mike's after the school prom years ago.

Jim's senior year at Catholic University was a long, lonely and difficult one. He was busy slaving over small lettered textbooks, hard-core electrical engineering classes and missing his truly beloved. As he later recollected, "I couldn't wait to get married!"

Lee's year at St. Mary's Hospital was equally lonely. She had lesson plans to formulate, classes to teach and student's health to supervise. Although she had much to do, she still longed for her husband to be.

Finally the classes of '50 came to a conclusion in June. Lee quickly bussed herself to Detroit to hop on the next plane for Washington. There she caught Jim's graduation exercises as he gladly ended his four year college extravaganza. This would signal a brand new beginning for both of them. They were finally getting married.

The graduation ceremony itself Jim remembers as a frightfully boring and uncomfortable one. It was a hot muggy day and the proceedings were so boring that Jim dozed through portions of the graduation speeches, all the while covered in sweat.

Soon enough the ceremony was over and the two finally hit the dance floor after the graduation dinner, an evening that would set them free to be together and clear the road for their imminent marriage. The date was set

for the 21st of that very month.

• • •

What followed after that evening were many days of utter confusion and consternation. Lee went back to Grand Rapids for a final week of teaching, Jim had a frightening blood test in Washington and both sets of parental units and their relations began their predictable skirmishes and fussing over the wedding plans.

After the blood test Jim took his old second hand car up to Bay City, rented a tuxedo and got his marriage license. Lee was busy getting her dress read, sending out wedding invitations and finishing up on her final days of work.

Looking back she remembers that, despite all the hardships, "it all worked out. I had a large family and they all helped. We Polish stick together!"

Nearly 45 years and eight kids later it's clear that their wedding engagement wasn't the only thing that worked out.

And that is all......

18. Jobs (Part 1)

Work has been a large part of my life. It was a backdrop to our family life, and it provided enough salary to raise our family with a full time mother at home. I liked being an electrical engineer. This chapter and the next will help my children, now grown up, know what I did for a living when they were little.

Consumers' Power Company. After marriage we lived in Bay City because Lee's parents needed us. I couldn't find work as an electrical engineer, so I took a job as electricians' helper for Consumer's Power Company. It paid just $1.09 an hour; Lee was making a lot more as a nurse at Mercy Hospital.

I worked at the J C Weadock Steam Plant, 6 miles away in Essexville (the site is now called Dan Karn Steam Plant). The plant had 6 generators, rated from 35 to 60 Megawatts. Whatever unskilled help the electricians needed, I did. My first job was crawling through the 100 ft long frame of a disassembled generator, wiping off oil with a rag and carbon tetrachloride (now considered dangerous to breathe or get on skin).

I didn't resent the work. I was excited seeing a lot of things I'd studied about. There was such a variety of work. One day I'd be 12 ft above the ground in the high voltage switchyard, cleaning bushings on a huge circuit breaker. Another day, in the traveling crane above the coal pile. Or maintaining lamp fixtures in the 5-story boiler room, where it's so noisy that to speak to someone you put your mouth to his ear and shouted. Or listening to my supervisor, crusty old Ed Trombley, the soul of caution.

Ed's caution extended more to us than to himself.

One day we had been working in the switchyard; red tapes were strung at the tops of the circuit breakers, to warn everybody that "above here is dangerous voltage". Time to go

home came, so old Ed climbed up to remove the tapes. One was knotted, so he pushed himself a little above it to free it.

The next thing we on the ground knew, there was a loud "BANG!" (a circuit breaker tripping) and Ed came cartwheeling down, his clothing slightly on fire. He was conscious but dazed. We got an ambulance and he was off to the hospital, where he spent a week. No permanent damage, the crusty old coot couldn't be killed. One interesting thing: he later found a small puncture mark on one heel, where the electricity passed through a nail in his shoe. The voltage he had brushed was 14,000 volts!

The guys at the power plant were blue-collar workers, many of them "characters". The coolest, calmest worker was Art Sebald, senior electrician though only 35 years old. He worked where there was danger, or where a slip would damage important equipment. For instance, he regularly changed the electrical "brushes" on 600-volt pilot generators WHILE THEY WERE RUNNING. Not much danger, IF you kept yourself insulated, and used your head.

Francis DePrekel was a scatterbrained, accident prone electrician. Once, after he spent the day "lubricating" the rails of one of the elevators, Ed Trombley asked to see what grease Francis had been using. Lord-a-mercy! it was "lapping compound", an abrasive used by machinists to grind metal to a smooth finish. Francis often got stuff all wrong; once he told us all about the main government building in Moscow which he called "the Gremlin" (Kremlin). Or "morgan-difes", people who were half man and half woman (hermaphrodites).

Bill Probst suffered from over-exuberance. Once, in the machine shop at the end of the day, he was clowning around, singing a popular song called "Clancy Lowered the Boom". When it came to the part that goes "boom, boom, boom", Bill dropped a 200 lb anvil on the floor, for effect. He turned around and right behind him was the Plant Superintendent, Louie Oberholtzer, who asked, stiffly, "Bill, what ARE you doing?"

Mr Oberholtzer, the superintendent, had come up through the ranks. He was not so mighty that the men wouldn't play tricks on him. He owned an Olds 88 car, one of the most powerful cars in town then, and was proud of it. Because he was boss, he kept his car in the plant garage. One day the men jacked his car up on blocks, with the wheels barely off the ground. When Mr O got into his car to go home, the engine worked ok, it roared, but the car wouldn't move. He called a wrecking truck from Essexville to come out and get the cussed car working. He was, well, upset, when the real problem was discovered.

Austin Engineers, Inc, Midland, Michigan. I left Consumers' after 9 months, for a better job. The work was closer to engineering. It was electrical drafting for the contractors who designed Dow Chemical's buildings. I did electrical layouts showing placement of lights and electrical power conduits.

I learned about the Electrical Code, and the wisdom of codes and standards. Until then I thought every designer should be allowed full creative freedom; now I saw how standardizing parts and methods saved money.

I did neat drawings, and took pride in them. Engineering drawings were done on paper which had a linen base, for durability (nowadays a plastic is used). The material could stand the abuse of erasures from many revisions, years later. When a drawing had to be scrapped I brought it home, where Lee washed it to get the linen inside, maybe 2 by 3 ft; we used the linen pieces for crib or bassinet sheets. When our office released drawings for construction, copies were made on "B&W" or "black & white", machines, an improve-

ment over the earlier system of "blue prints".

General Electric Company, Schenectady, New York. After Lee's Mom died, Lee, knowing I felt stifled, encouraged me to look for better work. In 1953 my college friend John Giorgis got me an interview with his boss Vic Louden at General Electric in Schenectady. We stopped at G E on the way home from a trip to Washington D C. The position involved magnetic amplifiers, the subject on which I had written my college Bachelor's degree thesis. I was hired. They paid me $5200 a year.

The "Aeronautic and Ordinance Systems Department" of G E was called "A&OS" for short. Over the years the name was changed and changed, and changed, reflecting different products worked on, or merging with another GE Department. For example, for a while we were part of LMEED "Light Military Electronic Equipment Dept", out of Utica, N Y. Later that name was shortened by removing the "D" on the end.

Bldg 28, A&OS, was a 6-story white concrete building. It was just a small part of General Electric's Schenectady Works. About 30,000 people worked at the Schenectady plant then, but over the years the number was reduced because G E liked to put its businesses in many communities, rather than concentrate heavily in one.

Our older children might remember the large lighted G E sign over the plant at night. It would fade in an out each 10 seconds.

The Schenectady Works had a proud heritage. There Thomas Edison had his first major factory. Some old red brick buildings dated to the 1890's. There were dozens of departments, with names like LST&G ("Large Steam Turbines and Generator"), MAC ("Medium A-C Motors"), and Power Tube Department.

An old electrician in our building, Willie, claimed to have been working in the beams and rafters, making dust fall down, when Dr Charles Proteus Steinmetz himself, working below, got upset over the dust, and shook his fist at the electrician. That MAY be true ... it may not be.

Steinmetz was a world renowned "genius", whose ties to Schenectady were still remembered. An old gent I went on retreats with, Henry Butler, when he was a young engineer was personally driven home from electrical society meetings by Dr Steinmetz, in his electric car. Professor Tom Hoffman, my friend and later in Florida my "boss", taught electrical engineering at Union College, and had been department head for a few years, the same position Dr Steinmetz held years earlier.

I was proud to work in that environment.

My first work was designing magnetic amplifiers, which were then the electronics world's "white hope"; "mag-amps" did not burn out like vacuum tubes did.

I designed magnetic amplifiers which drove small "servo" motors for positioning aircraft instrument dials. The job included breadboarding the little motors and gear trains, so that when it was all working, you could turn a little wheel "here", and the little wheel "over there" would follow snappily and accurately.

Soon our unit became involved in electronic controls for a nuclear reactor. The first 2 atomic submarines were the Nautilus (powered by a Westinghouse nuclear reactor), and the Sea Wolf (by G E). The two projects were deliberately different to test competing reactor-cooling concepts. Westinghouse's used "boiling water" as the coolant; G E's used sodium. The G E concept was never as good as the boiling water, because the sodium "coolant" destroyed the metal pipes ("stress corrosion") it flowed through.

G E's "Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory" ("KAPL") designed the entire power plant,

reactors and all. Our department was subcontractor for 2 important parts of the work: the nuclear ROD CONTROLS, and the ROD SAFETY shutdown system.

I took over the safety shutdown design from another man, Dr Dick Owen, after he left. That system had the colorful nickname "SCRAM System", because it was there to avert nuclear disaster in case the control system failed. (If it failed, I guess you'd "scram" out of there). Magnetic amplifiers were used because they were tens of times more reliable that vacuum tubes, the usual electronic technology then.

The SCRAM system HAD to work, no matter what. So it was made of three separate systems all identical, arranged so that any part could fail but not mess up the whole operation. This principle is called "triple redundancy"; 10 years later I did a similar thing with transistors for the F-111 fighter airplane. I didn't invent triple redundancy, but I was proud to be part of something so significant.

After my designs were manufactured and installed in the actual submarine, I made 2 trips to New London to work on my equipment on the ship. The Safety System was very prominent -- adjacent to the reactor itself -- almost touching it.

We in what was called "Advanced Engineering" were supposed to be in the forefront of technology. Our jobs included trying new ideas to see if they had promise for our products, and developing those ideas so that product designers could design them into equipment. For a while I worked with black ceramic magnetic materials called ferrites, in the hope that clever shapes and placements of windings could do some control things we wanted to do. It was a fad that captured the electronics business' fancy for 2 years, and then was heard from no more.

Transistors were invented about 1948. It was 10 years later that I first used them in circuits; 10 yrs was the time to get from an "interesting effect" at Bell Labs, to a semiconductor industry which had the techniques to provide transistors good enough to put into important products like aircraft systems.

My first transistor circuit design was a power supply regulator. Its simple job was to provide accurate dc voltage for electronic systems, despite large changes of supply voltage on an airplane. With help from John Giorgis I made a successful design; it was satisfying to change the input voltage between 80 and 140 volts and observe the output voltage holding steady as a rock.

At A&OS I got my first experiences watching passing parades of managements. Each few years upper management would be shaken up, getting new blood (mostly from outside). The new blood always brought something fresh to the job. But after 2-4 years, they were just another part of the passing parade.

One imported engineering manager, Don Garr, decided that what our customer the military was looking for was "breakthroughs" -- earth shaking new inventions. If you showed your military customers how innovative you were, you'd get lots of work.

He commanded that each week we had to submit a list of the week's "breakthroughs" -- and you'd better have a breakthrough to report. So, my breakthrough might be "determining a circuit configuration suitable to control electronic power with a high degree of precision". Translate that as "after 2 weeks of struggle I finally found the problem that was keeping my circuit from working".

Another hotshot was named Bob Wooley. He was going to makes us the best producer on earth, etc, etc, etc. One of his significant innovations (no kidding) was getting the dark brown toilet seats replaced by white ones.

In all my work years the management parade continued, and I've seen a dozen "new brooms" that were going to sweep clean. The steps in the pattern hardly varied, only the names: great hopes, great promises, hiring one's former associates (buddies), striking terror into existing workers, then meeting reality and participating in realistic solutions to real-world problems. After 3 to 5 years in their position, these "wonderful" people moved to be new brooms somewhere else.

The management circus was interesting; after observing the cycle a few times one could predict which phase of the cycle would be next. Part of the reason for cyclical foolishness was the military procurement system, which distorted rewards and incentives, making an unreal business environment.

In late 1961 I moved to G E's Johnson City Plant. That's another chapter.

19. G. E. Company, Johnson City, N Y

In 1961 I transferred to a sister department at Johnson City, N Y. They needed people for an expected job, the flight control system for a plane known as "TFX".

I interviewed there in mid September. Fall was turning leaves gorgeous in the hilly community that called itself "The Valley of Opportunity". How could I resist? Also, it would be a chance to buy a bigger house. We moved in December.

The "Westover Plant" was a government-owned building, mostly on one floor, under one roof. In World War II it manufactured airplane propellers. Management liked leased facilities for the small capital investment, like renting, not buying, a home. But employees worried that the company, having little financial stake, could disband the business quickly in hard times.

Tunnel Diodes. In 1961 the "white hope" for electronics was a semiconductor device called a "tunnel diode". It looked like a transistor but behaved differently.

I investigated tunnel diodes for my new department, and learned that they were nothing useful to us. I did some good technical things, for example made voltage-current graphs. That success was heartening; many investigators failed because they couldn't squelch the tunnel diode's "negative resistance" that caused oscillation. I also evaluated a tunnel diode logic scheme reported by G E's Electronics Lab in Syracuse.

One of the "E-Lab" logic circuits didn't work for me, and I figured out why; it only worked for special signal combinations (like 1 0 1 0 ...). The researcher, Dr Woo Fung Chow (real name), said it worked for him (his exact words were "no ploblem"). John Giorgis was working on tunnel diodes at the Semiconductor Products Dept in Syracuse. I shared ideas with him and his friends. When G E published its Tunnel Diode Manual in 1961, I was one of several people acknowledged as being helpful.

Tunnel diodes began a sunset at a national conference, when a researcher had noticed erratic changes of device characteristics. Other researchers had seen it, but hadn't mentioned it. From then tunnel diode work declined; they are seldom used now.

Flight Controls. I joined the "TFX Flight Control System" project. "TFX" stood for "Tri-service Fighter, eXperimental". The airplane was being designed by McDonnell in St

Louis; G E was to furnish the flight control system, which had special requirements. When the plane entered production it became the "F-111".

The aircraft had a "swept wing" design --- its wings were hinged to be adjustable in flight; they could stick out straight or be folded back, depending on flight conditions. New to flight control requirements was that, for some flight conditions, THIS plane could NOT be controlled without a flight control system; lacking stabilization the aircraft would go into oscillation. Further, the mission of the plane was "terrain following", i. e. it would travel very fast just a few hundred feet above the ground, which could be hilly.

Therefore failure of the flight control was not allowable.

I designed the Triple-Redundant Servoamplifier. "Redundant" meant there was more than one channel of electronics doing the same job; almost any part could fail yet the flight control would still work. A principal circuit was a low-drift "operational amplifier" which I designed from scratch. 5 years later integrated-circuit "op-amps" became available, but then I had to make my own. It took some doing, but was a full success.

I also designed the "majority voter"circuit, which took outputs from 3 op-amps, and delivered whichever output signal was between the most positive and most negative (the "middle" signal). That made output correct even when one amplifier failed.

While other military suppliers were putting their parts on printed circuit boards, we used a different system, "3-D cubes". Parts were molded into a block of plastic the size of 2 lumps of sugar. 16 connection "pins" stuck out the bottom of a cube. The cubes had advantages in compactness, ruggedness, and ease of replacement.

Our department was beginning to develop automatic test equipment, controlled by punched tape. For those times it was a fairly advanced concept. The engineers build a programmable "cube" tester, and demonstrated it to our General Manager, Bill Kuehl. Mr Kuehl was impressed. "Clunk"; the first test was done. "Clunk"; the next. The engineers told the General Manager how good this testing was; they said "It will find ANY bad part". "O K", said Mr Kuehl, "cut THAT pin off the cube and test again". Guess what: the cube still passed test with colors flying. Lesson: never brag to a general manager; he's smarter than you are.

The F-111 job was my first experience with "standard parts". I'd always had freedom to select any part I wanted, but I began to understand the advantages of choosing from a preferred parts list. I became a believer in standard components, like the MIL-types used in aerospace work. Standard parts mean cheaper, more reliable designs.

Our standards engineer was John Mailhot. He pronounced his last name "my-ott", and got angry at people who called him "male-hot". Which some did, for fun.

The servo amplifier drove a "servo valve", which drove a high force hydraulic piston. The servo valve worked from a high pressure oil supply, converting a low power electrical signal into high force for pushing an aircraft control surface.

The servo valves were supplied by the Moog Corporation of East Aurora, New York. For some reason we were asked to copy their design by taking Moog servo valves apart and "reverse engineering" them. Our management probably knew why we went into competition with Moog, but I wasn't told. The Moog people knew we were copying their design, but were not upset. Perhaps this was the Air Force's way of getting a second supplier for servo valves.

I was on the reverse-engineering team, representing G E's "electro-MAGNETIC competence" (if I was really competent; I guess I was, I could spell "magnetic"). After

many months we made a few servo valves that worked like Moog's; they performed as my calculations predicted, making my day.

The VYRO. Aircraft gyroscopes contain high speed motors which limit gyroscope life. Dr Steve Tehon, a researcher at G E Electronics Lab in Syracuse, invented a concept to replace some aircraft gyroscopes with a "tuning fork" instrument sensitive to rate of aircraft turning. The principle was that if something like a guitar string vibrates in one direction, rotating the string causes a little vibration to be transferred into the direction at right angles.

The heart of the concept was a 2-inch long metal bar (or "beam"), with piezo-electric "transducers" cemented to the 4 sides. A pair of transducers vibrated the bar at its resonance; the second pair gave out a tiny ac signal proportional to how fast the bar was turning.

I was the electronics designer. Believing that compactness and reliability were important, I simplified the circuitry. The quantity of parts was reduced from 130 to 70, and adjustments from 4 to 1. Noticing the crude electronics used when "fine tuning" the beams, I made a test box that measured "in-phase" and "quadrature" output signals.

There was a contest to name the new product. Reasoning from "vibrating beam gyroscope" to "VYRO", my entry won. For this Lee and I got a nice dinner on the company. When I transferred to Florida, the guys in the lab presented me with a hand-crafted memento; it was a VYRO assembly mounted on a small piece of mahogany, along with a stick man of bent flooring nails; the brass legend said "Jim Hamill the VYRO Whip".[1]

No VYROs were ever sold, despite considerable engineering and marketing effort.

• • •

At the Westover Plant I first used computers. Engineering had an IBM 1620 machine, programmed by punched cards. A fascinating thing was the speed of the line printer. "Ca-chang!" and a line was printed; "ca-chang!" and another was done. In 1968 we didn't take such speed for granted; I was impressed.

I learned Fortran programming from a book. When I was stumped with a Fortran question, and asked our "expert", Claudia, she usually said "why don't you try it". And I thought experts knew all that stuff!

BASIC programming was something else I taught myself, running my programs at G E computers in other cities, by phone line. G E had developed a business department that sold computer time in an innovative mode they called "time-sharing".

I learned to simulate circuit operation with an early circuit-analysis program named ECAP.

Between 1960 and 1970 integrated circuits became available.

In 1960, while I was still in Schenectady, a friend, Bill Barber, had been at a conference where all the latest stuff was shown off. A Mr E Keonjian held up for admiration an integrated circuit built by his company. He was very proud of it, said it was one-of-a kind. Then it accidentally fell to the floor; Bill said that you never saw such chagrin on a face.

By 1965 one could buy integrated logic circuits. We used some "SUHL" logic circuits (standing for "Sylvania Ultra High Speed Logic", I think). A ceramic part half the

1. Dad's children, mostly teenagers and older, and all of them arguably old enough to know better, played with the "vyro whip" memento on his dresser top until it broke. He missed his trophy.--ed.

size of a postage stamp held two "flip-flop" circuits. The integrated circuit reduced the quantity of parts from 25 to 1, and circuit-board space by 20 to 1.

Operational amplifiers were more in my line of work. G E Semiconductor Products Dept produced one early in the game, but it never caught on. The first popular one was Fairchild's uA709 type, developed by their resident genius (no exaggeration), a man named R J Widlar. Anyone who used analog circuits in those years will recognize the type number and the inventor's name.

In the late 1960s I taught an in-plant class about transformers. We often used them in our amplifiers. I was bursting with insights, especially about deciphering catalog specifications. It took 15 hours to prepare for each class, an object lesson in the hard work to develop a new course.

Class members said I was brilliant and did a great job. But I later noticed they hadn't remembered much. Nobody did homework; everybody wanted to "audit", to pick up what they could, without effort.

G E had a company course called "Effective Presentation" that I'd dodged for years. One year my manager cornered me and said "enroll". The course taught speaking persuasively to a group. It said every effective presentation should have 4 parts:

1. "Ho-hum crasher". Get their attention.
2. "Why bring that up?". Why spend time listening to you?
3. "For example". The meat of the presentation, with examples.
4. "So what?" Where do we go from here?

The "final exam" was at a Holiday Inn. We each gave 2 talks: a prepared one and an impromptu one. I won the award for best pre-prepared talk.

Tight money times came to the Johnson City department. I did odds and ends jobs and felt frustrated. That paved the way for my transfer to Daytona Beach.

20. G. E. Company, Daytona Beach, Florida

In summer 1971 I got permission to look for another position in G E. I wanted to be out of military-oriented work. My children may remember that while on vacation with the Schmidts at Otsego Lake, Michigan, Lee and I flew to Danville, Illinois, to interview with a branch of G E's Lighting Division working on semiconductor lamp ballasting. We toured Danville in a half day; Lee disliked the city, and the Lighting Dept didn't invite me to join them.

Then John Giorgis met a mutual friend at a conference. Dr John Shinn was manager of Advance Engineering at Apollo Systems Dept in Daytona Beach. He wanted to add analog-circuit competence to his unit, and we scheduled an interview.

My September 1971 interview at Apollo Systems Dept went well. I saw old friends. When I told John Shinn I wanted to get out of aerospace work he pointed out that the department was also trying to leave that mold, and one of the jobs I'd be working on was equipment to process Landsat satellite images for environmental studies. After the interview John took me up in his airplane.

Lee always said "I'll go anywhere your work takes you, except Florida"; but she

knew my work frustration and agreed to move.

There was an advantage to being closer to my parents in Clearwater. Pop was in a nursing home, failing fast; I visited Mom after my interview and we visited the nursing home in St Petersburg. I was shocked! Out of a room full of men, I couldn't identify my own father! His face was an blank mask; I didn't go to him, I wasn't sure which one he was. I was broken inside, though Mom had warned me.

We would live 3 hour's ride from Mom. Lee saw God's hand in this. It put us near Mom and made it possible to have her with us when she died 14 years later.

Apollo Systems Department had been a major space contractor, building test equipment and wiring harnesses for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) at Cape Canaveral, Florida. When that work faded, G E sought new business capabilities.

Three new products were being developed. 1) Computer and television display equipment showing the view from the cockpit of a simulated aircraft. 2) Processors for Landsat satellite images, extracting color signatures of the earth below, to show, for example, what was marsh, corn, and sand. And 3) shipboard equipment for controlling power plants of naval vessels.

Other interesting jobs came into the department, work that I knew of but didn't work on. For a year the department had a contract to build a telephone system to link a whole country (Iran!). We did system studies and were proceeding to hardware when the political climate shifted, and we suddenly dropped the work. A few years later Iran became an enemy of the United States.

Simulator Displays. The largest cathode ray tube in the world then was part of a system the department was testing before shipping. It was a one-color (green) tube with a 40-inch diameter face plate; the tubes cost $100,000 (I think) apiece. Upon any failure to sweep the electron beam, a tiny dark spot would burn in the phosphor coating of the expensive tube; this seemed to bother people in charge. My solution was to place a small tv camera watching the CRT face, which, when it viewed any excessive brightness, shut down the CRT. That eliminated burnt-phosphor failures.

The department was doing precise things with 3-color cathode ray tubes. Accurate positioning of electron beams was a challenge. To squeeze more lines into a picture, we deflected the beam across the screen and back in half the time used by commercial television. This was done with a carefully shaped sweep waveform to make an accurate picture. We used magnetic deflection, driving a coil on the neck of the tube.

My first horizontal deflection amplifier design drove +/-7 amperes from +150 volts and -500 volts. Two banks of 6 power transistors were used. The transistors operated close to their ratings, meaning there was little tolerance for circuit "glitches"; sudden amplifier burnout was frequent, especially during tests of the "breadboard". A big part of the problem was that circuit failures happened suddenly and unpredictably, so I could not study those problems while they were happening. After each failure we replaced burned out parts, thought hard, and tried to fix the likely cause.

I became the center of unwanted attention because of time "wasted" on unforseen problems. Life was hard on me, but Lee knew it and supported me by her prayers.

A few years later I developed another horizontal amplifier. It operated at +/- 30 amperes. It used only 4 power transistors, but they were large, about 1 inch across and 1 inch high. During the breadoarding I got smart and built electronic circuit breakers which

removed power quickly when there was excessive current. Sudden-death failures became rarer.

That design was difficult too, but in system test the amplifier was rugged and effective. Unfortunately, that display system never went into production.

Phil Marr. I have mentioned the passing parade of managers, who hire friends from their previous employment. Once this happened while we were bidding on an important tank simulator contract.

Management believed we needed someone with a "track record" to help us break into the business. So we hired a project engineer from our successful competitor, Singer-Link. Soon he brought in 2 young engineers from his last job, having them direct our work.

His attitude the first 6 months was "you're a bunch of incompetents whom I will shape up". He brought some valuable things to our business, one of which was the "track record". But he had an arrogant manner, probably not intentional.

We were NOT a bunch of incompetents, though our department had never landed the kind of display job we wanted. Our technical leader was Jim Page, a generalist engineer who knew all elements of displays: system design, optical design, electrical design, and mechanical design. Jim was a good mix of administrator and engineer. In early phases of a job he got the right people and directed them well; toward the end he lived with the job through the painful moments when separate parts were first connected together, when incompatibilities first showed up.

Jim was, like President Jimmy Carter, a man of high integrity; he was a religious person whose decency was deep but not showy. He was as calm a person as you'd ever see. John Shinn said that if you shouted "fire", Jim would quietly look around to find the fire and do something constructive.

Jim accepted Phil Marr as a necessity. However, when told that he would report directly to Phil, he quietly stated that he would quit GE rather than report directly. Jim's wish was honored, and the job was set up so Jim did not report to Phil. Phil and his friends were grudgingly accepted, and later on somewhat respected. They proved as human as the rest of us, neither geniuses nor dumbbells; but they were better at making themselves appear good than the home team was. Phil left quietly after several years.

Ship Propulsion Controls. The department became THE major supplier of electronics for controlling U S Navy ship power plants. We had an "in" for this business, because the propulsion engines were jet engine turbines made by G E at Lynn, Massachusetts.

I'm proud of bringing the Shaft Vibration Analyzer electronics to production. The product had been developed at another G E location, but there was still detail work to do. At Johnson City I had worked with "pulse width modulation" circuits for analog multiplication and square-rooting; I was the only person at Daytona Beach who understood those techniques.

The Vibration Analyzer subsystem was for warning that a propulsion turbine had become unbalanced (as from a blade becoming loose). The electronics was spread over three 4" x 12" printed circuit cards. Its job was to measure a small electrical signal in a noisy environment, measuring ONLY the part of the vibration at the turbine's speed, which could be any speed.

The job became mine when another engineer gave up on understanding the circuits. I

made them friendlier by publishing block diagrams. Then I developed test methods for each board ALONE. (Until then the boards were tested as a set of three; but tests weren't reproducible, because they measured performance of something using other somethings that might not be working right.)

Knowledge of circuit fundamentals was useful when I developed a special reset circuit for propulsion control computers. In case of a dip or loss of power it was necessary to detect the condition and reset the computer. The difficulty was detecting this when the 5-volts supply voltage might be temporarily only 2 or 3 volts, less than what most circuits needed. My circuit, developed hurriedly, did it with 10 parts.

A most unusual job was controlling a huge dc motor powering an unmanned test ship. It ran from a storage battery bank of several hundred volts. I adapted a commercial power amplifier to control the dc motor field. I also designed a set of high power starting resistors to ease the motor into running condition. The resistors carried thousands(!) of amperes for a second or two, and were rated in the "jolt" of energy absorbed, as they were only used for short times.

I'm proud of my versatility. Sometimes I worked with thousands of amperes and huge machinery, and sometimes with millionths of amperes in tiny circuits.

Circuit Packaging and Testing. Before I retired I worked with a team of young engineers who were designing a new, powerful, "image generator". Image generators are special-purpose computers that calculate all the lines and colors to be shown on displays. The department anticipated a large improvement over past designs.

We would use custom-designed integrated circuits of high complexity. In the semiconductor business, this level of integrated circuits was called AVLSI, or Advanced Very Large Scale Integration. AVLSI technology packed capability that previously took a whole circuit board into a 1-1/4 inch square integrated circuit with 100 to 200 input/output leads.

Three of us older engineers were peripheral to the work of the digital designers. Hoot Huhta looked over the computer assisted design ("CAD") process for laying out circuit boards; it was getting worrisome because there were more parts and interconnections than we had ever done. Lou Meitin was concerned with testability of both the custom chips and the circuit boards; there was beginning to be uneasiness about the ability to completely test a board with so many circuits. I was liaison with the G E Company's program demonstrating a packaging approach for integrated circuits with 200 or more lead wires; I also looked into testing machines for custom chips.

We 3 "old guys" were in an uncomfortable position. The young engineers had already decided things like: size of circuit boards would be 15 by 15 inches; each board would be jam-packed with parts (200+); circuit speed would be 25 nanoseconds; and testing and finding faults ought not be a problem. These decisions, already sold to management, would bring better and cheaper image generators, giving us leadership in the image generator market. Engineers who worried whether all this was possible would be viewed as people with hardened arteries, unwilling to take challenges.

As we got into the details, the 3 of us sensed that the digital engineers' plans contained challenges on many fronts. Each challenge was being worked on somewhere in industry, but had not been solved; and no organization was trying to do ALL those things in one program.

Hoot and I saw us having to use printed circuit boards with the thinnest connection lines then in use, and with more board layers laminated together than anyone was doing in

a LARGE board. We saw that with the congestion of parts, circuit boards could not be laid out by either man or machine to keep critical connections SHORT and far enough from other connections. Lou Meitin showed from first principles that using the best technology, testing could only assure that 95% of the functions on a board were working. And I learned that equipment to test the AVLSI circuits would have to be state-of-the art stuff, costing $300,000 or more, a cost too great for our management.

Morale was low for the three of us. Being bearers of bad news, and having no cheap and quick solutions to offer, was an uncomfortable position.

In December 1988 I told my manager that if the department offered an early retirement opportunity with incentives (a cash bonus, called a "golden handshake") I wanted to be considered. In January an offer was made to a hundred older professionals. Guess what: all 3 of us "old guys" took the offer. Work was no longer fun, it had become a situation we couldn't feel good about.

On April 1, 1989 about 50 people retired. The employee-relations manager who supervised our signing out commented that this was the only time he had ever seen an early-retirement group in which NO ONE was sad about leaving.

Post script: About General Electric Company, Daytona Beach. Two years later the division was sold to Martin Marietta Corp. Some people were kept, some let go. 5 years after I retired the plant closed. The root problem was the decline of the aerospace-defense business, influenced by the end of the Cold War with Russia in 1990.

I've never wanted to go back.

21. Hamill Relatives

My father (John Stafford Hamill) was the first child in his family (1899). After him came Thomas Edwin (1901), Frances Virginia (1904), and Harold Louis (1908).

<u>Thomas Edwin</u> was "Uncle Eddie" to me, "Eddie" to my parents, and "Tom" to his wife. He loved golf, was a bachelor until age 38, worked at the Washington Navy Yard as a metallurgist, and married Aunt Lib, a genuine Southern belle.

When he visited he'd ask "And how's little James?" "Little James" hated being called "little".

His life as a middle aged bachelor ended after he returned from a trip to Louisville and announced that he would be married to Elizabeth Musterman. Aunt Lib is a pretty blonde woman with soft Southern speech. Most of their married lives they lived at 510 Ashford Road, Silver Spring, Md. Their house was on a wooded hill, amid trees, on a winding street. Our family said the house was impractical, being so shady that dampness would never dry out. I liked their home; it was my secret hope to have as nice a place.

Their children were Jeanne (Mrs Alex Atzert) and Betty (Mrs Jay Francies). I have a snapshot of Jeanne at 2 years old, on the bottom stair in our living room, clutching a stuffed Bunny. I remember when I was about 17, visiting and playing <u>Uncle Wiggly</u> with the girls.

<u>Frances Virginia</u> is "Aunt Frances". I call her my "favorite aunt" because she's easy to be with; in psychological terms she has lots of "acceptance". She's been writing a biog-

raphy of her growing years, which I'll add to my story so readers can know how it was when my father grew up.

When I was 6 or 8, Grandpop Hamill rented a cottage at Dare's Beach (on the Chesapeake Bay). It was near the water, but to swim we had to descend a wooden stairs down a cliff. I remember Aunt Frances there with her friend Dottie Diller. My aunt worked in the DC Public Library. When I was in high school looking for part time work, Aunt Frances helped me get a job as a page at the Mt Pleasant library branch.

Frances married Walter O'Brien ("Uncle Walter"), a patent attorney. Uncle Walter was born Nov 12, 1903 in Brookline, Mass. I remember their wedding (June 26, 1934) -- me being hot and sweaty at their reception, in the garden behind Mrs K's Toll House Tavern on Colesville Road, Silver Spring.

Uncle Walter had a strong Boston accent. He and Aunt Frances were good conversationalists because they were well informed and had opinions. When Uncle Walter had an opinion he was forward about it; Aunt Frances had opinions too, but usually deferred to her husband rather than argue.

Their children are Walter Pierce and Carolyn Marie. Walter intended to become a Jesuit Brother, and spent time at the Jesuit house in Wernersville, Pa. He left when he decided he didn't have a religious vocation. In 1991, past the age 50, he married Kim Tran, a Vietnamese woman.

Carol lives in California, where she and my sister Doris are friends.

The O'Briens lived many places. In 1937 they were in an apartment at 5404 First Pl NW, near Kennedy St. In 1945, when I was in the Navy, I visited them on Carmen Rd in Scarsdale, NY; the evening I came the kids had just gotten chickenpox. Sometime in the 1940's or 50's they were in an apartment on Ft Totten Drive, east of Rock Creek Cemetery. In 1949, after Grandpop Hamill died, they moved in with Grandma at 4312 New Hampshire Av, NW. Since the 1950's they resided at 8838 Camfield Ct, Alexandria, about a mile from Mt Vernon.

Harold Louis was "Uncle Harold", my godfather. Family legend says that when I was baptized, he fainted (the importance of the event no doubt!). Harold was tall and thin. When we drove past the Lincoln Memorial and looked up at Abe Lincoln's statue, Mom said Harold's face resembled Lincoln's (I agree).

Harold was a golfing nut and a librarian. He got his degree in Library Science from Columbia University.

He was ambitious in his profession. To advance he cultivated "right" friends, socializing and playing golf with them. My father never liked this. Harold and family moved several times on his climb up the librarian ladder. In Baltimore he was an assistant librarian. In Kansas City he was the chief librarian; but he was fired by the Pendergast political machine for being too independent. In Los Angeles he was head librarian, until he was dismissed by Mayor Sam Yorty in a dispute over book censorship (Harold was against it). Harold taught Library Science at the University of Southern California, where one of his students was Fernando Penalosa working on his first doctorate degree. By coincidence, Fernando later met and married my sister Doris.

Harold was married to Frances Collins of Washington, D C. In Los Angeles they lived at 3600 Mound View Av, Studio City . They produced daughters Joan and Mary Louise. In Los Angeles Harold golfed with famous people such as Bing Crosby.

Their daughter Joan married an airline pilot, Tony Traficante. Tony resigned from the

airline to help poor people in Los Angeles. He organized Justice Bakery, where unskilled people learned the baking trade. Joan and Tony adopted several children. My parents thought they were throwing their lives away, but I admire them.

Piedmont, Virginia figures in Hamill chronicles. That's where my Godmother, Virginia Kenny ("Aunt Jenny") lived, at 39 Childs Av, at the top of a steep cobblestone street. She lived with her son Hamill Kenny and her sister Laura Hamill. Laura was a red-haired piano teacher who never married. Both women were Grandpop Hamill's (John Edward's) sisters. Before my time the family had operated a small hotel, The Kenny House, near the railroad station.

Hamill Kenny was younger than Pop. As a boy Pop spent summers in Piedmont with Hamill. It was a wonderful place for boys, at the bottom of a mountain, by the Potomac River, and on the Baltimore and Ohio main line.

When I was 10 or 12 I rode the Ambassador Limited B&O train to Piedmont, where I had a wonderful week exploring, rambling with Hamill, and being impressed with the dusty house and its contents. I was shown a rifle that had been in the family during the Civil War, and a toy pistol that shot real but small bullets. Hamill had injured a finger with that gun, but it was just a small injury. Hamill gave me a small perfume jar filled with mercury. Now mercury is considered toxic and dangerous, but for years I enjoyed feeling its heaviness on the palm of my hand.

Piedmont means "foot of the hill"; it was where the B & O railroad put extra locomotives on trains to get over the mountain. Aunt Jenny's husband, who died before I was born, had been an engineer. His death came from sticking his head too far out the locomotive window, where it presumably hit something.

Hamill Kenny and Pop were opposites. My dad was outgoing and practical, while Hamill was quiet and scholarly. He was a "mother's boy", and a "professional student". His Master's thesis was about the origins of the names of places in West Virginia. I have a copy of his published book, *West Virginia Place Names*. It captured information from old residents about how their town or creek was named. Since his research, sources of information have dried up, and places have been renamed or disappeared from maps.

Hamill did his doctorate work at the University of Maryland on the subject Indian place names of Maryland. His studies required learning the Algonquin Indian language in personal classes from an old missionary priest at The Catholic University in Washington.

Our family thought Hamill a "queer duck", but when he visited us, he and Grandpop Birkbeck enjoyed discussing English literature, especially writings of Thomas McCauley.

In 1947 Hamill took me on a drive to New York City where we saw the university he had attended (Columbia), and stayed at the Algonquin Hotel. In the 1920's the Algonquin was where American writers like Dorothy Parker and Robert Benchley hung out in a "Round Table". When we were there the hotel was run down, and Hamill said it had "chinch bugs".

Not relatives, but good friends were the Rogers. John Rogers was a neighbor of Pop's boyhood at 430 Manor Place, NW; John lived behind him, on Park Road. "Uncle John", "Aunt Rebecca", and their kids often visited. Their children were Jackie, Tommy, Billy, and Mary; they had a little dog Spot that I liked. Their home was at 910 Decatur St, a half mile from ours. Their Christmas tradition was an electric train layout which the boys enjoyed, and so did I.

One evening when the Rogers boys were in our basement, I showed them my BB

gun (a kid's air rifle). We enjoyed shooting at indoor targets until one of them got a better idea: from the basement outside door there was a good view of the alley street light. Jack took aim and broke the bulb, darkening the alley, and nicking some white enamel off the lamp's shade. We quickly put the gun away and lay low.

Next day Pop was wondering out loud how that alley light got broken, and what did the mark on the reflector mean? He theorized that there had been a rock from somewhere, and it looked like from our back yard. I kept very quiet!"

Aunt Rebecca" was assertive, bossy, and outspoken, things my Mother was not. Rebecca made Mom very uncomfortable when she gave unsought advice on child raising and other subjects.

The Rogers had a cottage at Chesapeake or North Beach, on the

Chesapeake Bay. I spent a couple of glorious days there once, bumming around in their rowboat, swimming, catching crabs, and enjoying the dog. I ate my first French toast there.

22. Notes by Frances O'Brien

To give an idea of the family and times my father grew up in, here is his sister's account of her childhood. Frances Virginia Hamill O'Brien is the daughter of John Edward and Minnie Bell Hamill. She married Walter O'Brien. Their children are Walter Pierce and Carolyn Marie. Aunt Frances wrote this in May 1992. Notice that she calls my father "Staff".

James Stafford Hamill
August 28, 1992

Chapter I of Frances O'Brien's Story (transcribed)

I was born July 8, 1904 and at that time we lived in a rented house in S.E. Washington (728 9th St S E) near the Marine Barracks. [Note: we later learned that when John S Hamill's was born, the family lived at 157 F St, N.E.] (I think the Marine Barracks is still there, but our (9th St) house is not. However, I have a picture of Staff, Ed & myself in front of the house. Maybe you remember seeing it. It would take too long to find it right now.) My dad worked at the Navy Yard just a few blocks away -- he had something to do with building torpedoes.

When I was two my parents bought the house at 430 Manor Place N.W. -- far from my dad's work. I was asking myself today "Why did my father buy so far from his work?" He had to take a street car on Georgia Ave & ride to Fla. Ave. where he changed to another & rode a long way to the S.E. where the Navy Yard was and still is. The only reason I remember was that they loved the Soldiers Home -- the entrance to which was just a block away. In those days on Sundays people could read a book or take a walk. We took a walk very often thru the Soldiers Home (which I don't

believe has changed much. There were small man-made lakes & real ducks etc -- all of which made it very pleasant. And when I got to be a teenager we would go over there when the lakes were sufficiently frozen over & go ice skating.)

The house was a row house with 6 rooms -- 3 bedrooms. There was a basement, first floor & second floor and a front porch. You entered a narrow hall which went directly back to the kitchen, & the stairs to the second floor went directly up from the hall. To the left was a living room in the front of the house & behind it the dining room which was as big as the living room. There was one bathroom.

I always hated October because there was an unwritten rule in our house that the furnace was not to be started until Nov 1 -- not even if the temperature went to 30°. That was to save money. What did we do to keep warm? Well, there was a heavy sliding door between the living and dining rooms & we closed that & opened the door to the kitchen so it would heat the dining room. We ate in the dining room, did our lessons there & when we went up to our cold bedrooms we took a warmed old fashioned iron covered with a thick towel & put it at our feet & piled the warm wool blankets on.

When we first moved there we had gas lights to light at night (we never had kerosene lamps as we did later "in the country"). After only a few years however we got electricity in the house & that was a great thing. The kitchen stove however was always gas & surprisingly very much like those today with 4 burners and an oven, but with pilot lights.

On the street at the corners & sometimes in between them were lights about 10 ft tall. They were gas & for many years after we got electricity in our houses they were still fueled with gas. There was a man called the "lamplighter" who came every night at dusk & with his stick which had a hook on it he'd reach up & light the lamp. He came back at dawn & turned it off. I believe they were all white men.

Our houses were heated with coal. The coal furnace was huge & took up a large section of the basement. You ordered your coal 1/4 or 1/2 ton or whatever -- some of it was fairly large size (i.e. about the size of a baseball) and some was pea size. The truck with the coal & a horse drawing it would come down the street, stop at your house & dump out whatever you ordered in the street, & then a negro (in those days we wouldn't call him a black man. I bet he would have been insulted.) He had a small tub in which he shoveled the coal from the street, put it on his shoulder & took it down the area way to put in our bin in the cellar. The bin was simply enclosed by a wood fence like.

When the person taking care of the furnace would notice the coals were very red, he or she would shovel in more coal. The pea size coal was used to start the furnace in the fall. How did we keep from being asphyxiated? Well, there were kind of vents open or closed as might be. And of course our houses were not that tight. But I probably consumed a lot of gases, as well as all that lard we used to fry things in those days.

So why am I almost 88 years old? Those doctors don't know everything. There's one here on radio (Dr Mirkin) who just throws up his hands when he meets a person like me & says "Thank your parents"; which really means "I have no idea -- you should have had a heart attack & died when you were 60."

We did not have refrigerators -- we had ice boxes. You bought ice from the ice man who even in the heat of July came down the street with a wagon containing large pieces of ice from which he cut off whatever you asked for (probably 10 cents worth) and took it in and put it in your ice box. The ice was in a compartment on the top & the food was in the compartment just below -- so that situation couldn't keep milk for long. (I remember the ice was always dripping water.)

So, there was a milkman -- who came during the night -- with his wagon drawn by a horse. He'd bring whatever amount of milk you wanted, a quart or pint or 1/2 pint of cream. (We couldn't afford cream often -- we usually got a qt for six of us for breakfast which consisted usually of hot oatmeal & if we were having apple pie for dessert for dinner we'd get an extra pint because we Pennsylvania Dutch inheritors had to put milk on our apple pie.) No one knew what a gallon of milk looked like in those days. The milkman put the milk in a container we had on the porch. There was no homogenized milk in those days. The skim milk was on the bottom & the cream was on top. The milk bottles were all glass & there was a stopper which was like cardboard keeping it shut. Except, when the weather was around freezing, the milk would freeze and expand as milk does (between the time the milkman put it there at 5 am & you picked it up at 7) so that when you picked it up the cream had pushed the stopper up about a quarter of an inch above the bottle. There was the bottle, the 1/4 or 1/3 inch of cream in the open on top of that & over that the stopper.

I think I better stop here Jimmy & start next with when we "moved to the country" which was like going back in time. There we did have kerosene lamps and cold bedrooms the year around.

The Evening Star in those days when I was in second grade was running an article every evening on life in the country. And every evening we'd gather around Dad while he read it to all of us. Dad was slowly getting "country fever".

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In those early years on Manor Place (prior to the time my father decided to rent our house for 3 years while we spent those 3 years "in the country") some important and interesting things happened.

Number 1 -- On March 23, 1908 Harold was born. In those days children were born at home. However they must have shipped me off somewhere because I don't remember one thing about it (I was almost 4). I don't even remember waking up to the fact that there was a baby in the house.

However, I very clearly remember something that happened not long after that. That was the summer Staff, Ed and myself came down with scarlet fever. Scarlet fever was much more prevalent then than it seems to

be now.

The Health Dept sent someone out to place a sign on our door "Quarantined -- Scarlet Fever" or whatever way they worded it. As I understand it now, with scarlet fever you have a rash, a sore throat & a high fever and it takes about 3 weeks to get over. I don't remember the sore throat.

My poor mother -- I often wonder how she did it -- i.e. take care of us and Harold at the same time. I know the neighbors were good to her but they couldn't come into the house.

I still feel angry at my father because in the middle of it all he decided he was in the way and went to Atlantic City. There were no phones so he could not call & check on us, so I suppose my mother (with all she had to do) probably had to write him letters. I never heard my mother complain about my father going away & leaving her with everything, but who knows maybe she said "Goody, goody -- that's one less I have to take care of".

Staff, Ed & myself were put to bed in one room -- the 2 of them in the double bed & I on a cot. We couldn't leave that room -- not even to go to the bathroom which was just next door. You know what that meant to my mother.

I don't know how my mother could manage Staff without my father because he was always the rambunctious one, but I guess his fever was so high that did it. Ed was always more quiet. All his growing up years I figured that if Ed got in trouble, Staff led him there.

Whenever there was a disaster or some compelling news an "Extra" paper was put out (remember we had no phones) and on those days we could hear the newsboy way off in the distance calling "Extra, extra, read all about it ". We knew something terrible had happened & people would come out of their houses into the street to be there when the boy arrived on our street & one family would buy the Extra while everyone else would be saying "What is it? What is it?" Some people would be leaning out of the upstairs windows saying "What is it?" That's the way I first learned about the sinking of theTitanic in April, 1912. I was almost 8 at that time.

Chapter II of Frances O'Brien's Story (transcribed)

"THE COUNTRY"

It wasn't really the country because it was in the limits of D. C. (across the Anacostia River and up Naylor Rd). It was probably one of the few places like it in D C, but it surely had all the elements of "the country". That was 1913.

Actually the property was large. It must have been about 1-1/2 acres -- much of it woods. The house was a regular farm house. It had one big room heated by a coal stove which was our kitchen, dining and living room -- all in one. Next to it was a small unheated room which was like a big pantry. And in front was a parlor which was rarely used. It had a wood stove in it which was only lit the few times we had company. Upstairs were

3 unheated bedrooms.

We got our drinking water by going down hill about 1/2 block to a spring. The other water was rain water which came from a cistern. We had a pump to pump it up.

There were no bathrooms. There was an outhouse, so in the house we used chamber pots at night, and we had to go to the cold outhouse in the daytime no matter how cold the weather. Every now and then some truck would come to clean it out. I am not sure that any one wants me to explain about it in detail.

You could not see our house from Naylor Rd because there was a big embankment. I am not sure we had a street number. We had a mail box out on the road.

We had a big vegetable garden -- pole string beans, carrots, radishes, lettuce, corn, most everything.

We also had chickens -- maybe 25 -- and a little dog named "Jeff" who never came in the house. He had his warm box -- i.e. warmed with blankets etc. Just now that seems cruel. I can't even remember seeing him in the house. But remember, we slept in cold rooms.

At times we did have in the house (i.e. in our one warm room) incubators where the little chicks were put right after being born (or maybe they were even hatched there -- I can't remember) but were they noisy! Peep, peep, peep, peep!!! continuously.

My father decided at one time he was going to have turkeys (or were they ducks?) However he bought some eggs "guaranteed to hatch" -- about 6 I think. It seems to me he paid a dollar for them. He put them in a closed building & put a chicken in there to sit on them so they would be kept warm. She did just that & every now and then he'd take her out of the building & feed her. However one day he locked her out, the eggs got cold, & were ruined -- that was a tragedy.

One Sunday my family was giving a party. Some relative was in town & she and other relatives were coming. We had about 5 card tables set up out in the yard, covered with tablecloths and set with knives, forks, dishes, etc. Everything went ok until we started putting food on the tables -- then the chickens which were roaming around started flying up onto the tables. It was so hard to keep them off -- it was hard for everyone to get anything to eat.

We had lots of cherry trees -- well, a few, and they were big cherries -- the boys would get up in the trees and pick them & put them in galvanized tubs & I and others had to seed them. My hands were red! Then my mother would "can" them -- i.e. put them in Mason jars (after of course doing other things to them). When we moved back to D C our lawn was covered with boxes filled with "canned" items. I can see them now.

School in the Country. The school was called Stanton School. The building was practically new but there were 3 grades in one room with this one teacher for all 3 grades. Her name was Miss Farrington. I thought she was very old. I know she wasn't much of a teacher. I spent the 4th, 5th &

6th grades with her. I know I missed out on geography. Today if you'd give me a map of the world & tell me to put in the names of the countries I'd fail miserably.

I'm confused about when Staff first went to high school because he was 4 yrs older than I and he must have graduated from Stanton School, but I can't remember where he went to high school the first years. I know he eventually graduated from Tech H S at 7th and Rhode Island Ave, N W but I can't remember him going from our country place all the way into town every day to Tech H S, but he must have.

We had neighbors named the Bairstows. I didn't go to their house often but Staff did because that's where he first met Anne and after he met her he used to walk over to her house in N E. He was about 15 or 16. He married her when he was 25 or 26.

While I was at Stanton School there was a girl there who was very dark skinned. I think she must have been from the Islands (Caribbean). She was not negro because the schools were segregated at that time. Well one day I took her stocking cap home by mistake & I got lice in my hair. I remember one thing my mother did was put kerosene on my hair & she used to crack the nits (eggs) between her fingers. That was my first and last contact with lice. Nobody else in the family got them.

It was while we lived on Naylor Rd that we got our first automobile -- a Model T Ford touring car. My father did not have the money to buy it but his sister Jenny who lived in Piedmont West Va and had more money than we did (because she had married someone who owned the only hotel in Piedmont, and he had died by this time) wanted a car but didn't feel equal to driving it so she said she'd send Dad the money to buy it provided she could come every summer & enjoy being driven around. I don't believe she ever came while we were in the country.

The touring cars in those days had "isinglass" curtains which you buckled on when it rained. Isinglass was a material you could see through but just barely. It was a poor substitute for glass.

We took trips on Sundays but not too far. Every now & then we'd go to Annapolis (50 miles). The roads were mostly dirt. Tires in those days had inner tubes (a tire within a tire) and the sand on the roads would work its way into the tire a cause it to flatten or we'd run over a nail which would flatten the tire. Then Staff & my dad would take out a vulcanizing kit and put a patch on the hole in the inner tube. Believe me going to Annapolis & back took all day. (My father did not drive to work. He walked a mile and a half to work.)

At last my Dad was tired of the country and we moved back to Manor Place, i.e. back to civilization! I believe that was 1916.