Excerpts from

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101 YEARS

Volume 24a—Tuesday Morning Class
Fall 1999

Of all the lessons I have gleaned from my students' stories, the most recent one is this: *Life offers us the chance to respond to it more than it demands that we define it.* The stories found in this booklet are not blueprints for living so much as they are responses to life. These stories (and their narrators) have helped me to learn that so much of what we do is relevant. When we consider experiences such as growing up, falling in love, bereavement, and parenting, we are reminded that so many of our life experiences are less the answer to a question and more the response to the people involved.

That perspective frees us to walk in conjunction with two simple rules—*Love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength* AND *Love your neighbor as yourself.* Two lessons, one story—and so much living to be done, so much that is relevant. That's my lesson. I hope it's been well learned. Enjoy these stories and learn yours.

Joan Stear
UL—Lafayette
Fall 1999

Thanks to the Horizons Department at Lafayette General Medical Center;
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and the English Department and University College at
the University of Louisiana—Lafayette for their continued support of our efforts
to write for the generations to come. Thanks, also, to each of my students,
for teaching me about their generations.

FRONT COVER: (clockwise, *beginning at top right corner*) Nell Clark with her family; Myrtle and Leo Schiller, 1987; Bea and Jim Murphy; Stanley Fox Davis, 101; John Quincy Lee; Betty Tripp (right) with siblings, Barbara (infant), Dona, and Roberta; Jim Jennings, on left, and younger brother, Eddie Jennings, with friends, circa 1933; (center) Versie Laughlin Foti, 1944

UL LAFAYETTE LIFE WRITING CLASS
Fall 1999 • Tuesday Morning Session

Seated, left to right: **Bea Murphy; Betty Tripp; Stanley Fox Davis; Myrtle Schiller; Kitty Kelley; Olympe Butcher; Betty Shoemaker ••**
Standing, left to right: **Woodson Hopkins; Jim Jennings; Johnnie Kocurek; Dottie Burleigh; Versie Foti; Nell Clark; John Townsend; Joe Glorioso; John Q. Lee; Joan Stear, *Instructor* ••**

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NO GOING BACK
by
John Townsend

I recall that my early childhood was carefree with the exception for the numerous moves we made. From my birth until I was six years of age we changed residence eleven times. Some of the moves I remember vividly while others I know from hearsay only. As with most of us growing up during the Depression Era, I recall a lot of biscuits with gravy at mealtime. Unless the situation was terribly bad, a preschooler was unlikely to be aware of any problems. In my case, Bubba, Dick, and I and our other small friends kept busy playing games, my favorites including cowboys and Indians, tree climbing, and army with my toy soldiers.

As for looking forward, I guess I first began when one of my magazine customers, Mr. Freeman, asked, "John, what do you want to be when you grow up?"

That was a challenging question for a nine-year-old. I think I told him that I would like to be a fireman or a G-man. As for the latter I have no idea why, but with the former I had first hand knowledge having watched the firemen fight a house fire a block from our house on Buckner Street in Shreveport, and then our class had visited a fire house or station and ridden on the fire truck. I also sold magazines to the guys at a station about three blocks from our house.

As I grew older I had various other heroes—a doctor, an aviator, a lawyer, an engineer, and even a wrestler. In high school I considered being a teacher, but in those years I was too hot

tempered to pursue that endeavor. When World War II came along, all the looking forward was put on hold while most of us guys began trying to decide which branch of the Armed Services, we wanted to serve in.

The War over, I began to study engineering at Louisiana Tech in Ruston, hoping to work toward a major in Electrical Engineering. The Korean War Air Force Reserve recall compounded by family problems sent this aspiration out of the window. Happenstance sent me into the field of Accounting for a second time. It was to be my field of endeavor for 41 years.

Looking back begins, I think, with adulthood, marriage, and children. A lot of "what-ifs" come to mind. A different route at some point in time, or maybe if I'd but taken this job or that one, just to name a couple. For some people looking back is a traumatic experience. My philosophy has always been, *Why worry about something you can't change? Take what you have and improve on that.* As a consequence. I have spent very little time looking back through the years. I remember the good times with pleasure. If I think of the bad at all, it is usually of the lesson learned when that event took place.

I tend to always look forward, not so much for myself but for my kids and grandchildren. In retirement now, Marilee and I look forward to having more time to enjoy the things we want to do, but for the most part, we take each day as it comes.

There is no going back, and if there was, we would probably make the same mistakes, and our choices would end up the same way.

WASH DAY
by
Versie L. Foti
September 14, 1999

Before electricity came to the farm and brought with it the electric washing machine, the family laundry was done by hand power and plenty of elbow grease. By custom, Monday became wash day. Toward the end of the week, either Friday or Saturday, it was necessary to do a lighter wash if there was a special need. However, nothing short of a catastrophe such as a storm or death in the family, prevented the Monday morning onslaught on the family's dirty clothes.

It was this custom that I was introduced to in the twenties. I became Mama's helper on washday. My younger sister, whom we call Sis, and a younger brother, Vira, also were assigned chores. Wash day was a family affair.

Pre-washday preparation began the night before the main event. A bench was placed on the south side of the house for protection from the cold north wind in the winter. A large tree shaded us from the morning sun in the summer. Three number two galvanized tin wash tubs sat on the bench. Sis and Vira drew water from a cistern nearby and filled the tubs, allowing particles of debris to settle. Water from the cistern was called "rain water" because it was caught during rains and held for special uses such as laundry and bathing. The "rain water" was softer than well water, which had minerals from the ground dissolved in it. Mama shaved a bar of homemade lye soap into one tub of water so that it could dissolve overnight.

It was my job to scrub the large black cast iron wash pot with a brick to remove rust spots and dirt that had accumulated since the previous use. Then, I thoroughly rinsed the pot before I filled it with rainwater. Mama shaved lye soap into the pot and covered it tightly with a wooden lid to prevent dirt from settling into it or animals from drinking it. Dad brought chopped firewood and arranged it around the pot with kindling underneath to assure a quick lighting of the fire the next morning.

Sis and I gathered the soiled clothing from the dirty clothes bin and piled it on the back porch. We carefully sorted the clothing into several piles dictated by colors and uses: baby clothes, table linens, white clothes, colored shirts, dresses and socks, and finally the dark pants, overalls and blue chambray work shirts. The bed linens were added on Monday morning after the beds were stripped. Dish towels and heavily soiled work clothes were put to soak overnight in separate tubs.

Early Monday morning, Dad removed the cover from the wash pot and started the fire to heat the water. Mama put the first batch of clothes to be washed into the tub with the soap shavings. As soon as the water in the pot was hot enough, she added it to the tub of clothes until the temperature was comfortably warm for her hands. Dad added more water to the pot to heat for boiling the clothes after they were scrubbed.

Washing the clothes consisted of scrubbing each piece of clothing up and down on a rub board or scrub board, adding soap if necessary. Mama performed this backbreaking chore. She wrung the excess water from the pieces of clothing and put them in the wash pot. I stirred the clothes in the pot with a wide wooden paddle, stoked the fire, and added a new pile of dirty clothes to Mama's tub as needed.

When the clothes in the wash pot came to a rolling boil, Mama used the paddle to remove them and put them in the second tub which contained clean water. I swished the clothes around to rinse them, wrung them out as thoroughly as I could, then put them in the third tub which also contained clean water to which bluing had been added. Bluing is a blue colored bleaching compound used to bleach clothes. Again, I swished the clothes in the water, wrung them out, and put them in a basket to be hung on the clothesline to dry. Each pile of clothes was processed in the same way until we had completed the entire family wash.

All fabrics were 100% cotton, as rayon and polyester had not yet been invented. Silk and linen were natural fibers sometimes used for clothing but were too expensive for farm families. Wool was also a natural fiber used for making blankets, sweaters, coats, socks and store bought suits for men. Woolen clothing was either dry cleaned or laundered by hand with mild soap.

Shirts and dresses, pillow cases, and table linens had to be starched, line dried, dampened with water, then ironed with a iron heated on the wood stove or in the fireplace. Starch was prepared by dissolving a cup of Argo starch in cold water, then adding boiling water, stirring until the liquid was thick and smooth. When the starch cooled, we dipped the white clothing into it first and carefully wrung out the excess starch, then we dipped the colored clothing. This process stiffened the clothing for ironing.

Hanging the clothes with wooden clothespins on a wire line stretched between two poles required some expertise. We hung the white clothes where they could receive the most sun for bleaching. We hung the colored clothes in shady areas to prevent the colors from fading. A sense of decorum dictated that male and

female underwear be hung as inconspicuously as possible, preferably behind the sheets if the clothesline was visible from the road. I wondered if the passing neighbors did not know we wore underclothes.

As soon as the colored clothes were dry, we removed them from the clothesline and brought them inside the house to prevent them from fading. We allowed the white clothes to remain on the line most of the day to take advantage of the sun's bleaching power. Then, we brought them in and folded them.

The clean, soft, sweet-smelling clothes were a delight. We made the beds with the sheets right off the line. When we crawled into bed that night and smelled the freshness of the outside air as we drifted off into dreamland, the unforgettable experience etched memories into my brain that I have not forgotten.

With almost all of the clothes we owned hanging wet on the lines outside, weather was often a concern. Most of the days were sunny, but sometimes during the spring and summer, thundershowers appeared quite suddenly. Drifting clouds caused us to keep a wary eye on them, and if showers appeared on the horizon, we made a mad dash to get the clothes inside. We preferred to hang them on the line again after the shower than to let them get wet and have to rinse them again.

Cold weather made wash day very difficult. The warm water cooled rapidly and wind whipped the fire around the wash pot. As we hung the clothes on the line, they sometimes froze. Our hands were sensitive from the hot and cold water and we couldn't wear gloves to hang the clothes. Exposing our hands to the cold sometimes caused them to chap and crack to the point of bleeding.

Today, as I was doing my laundry, I began to think of the differences seventy-five years can make. I can place cotton blend, rayon, silk, polyester or wool blend clothing into an electric washing machine, program it for timed agitation, water temperature, and number of rinses I want. I can load the clothes into the dryer set for the degree of dryness desired. As I remove the clothes from the dryer, I can quickly press them with a thermostatically controlled iron with starch from a spray can.

My experience with Monday wash day lasted more than ten years, from the time I was old enough to help Mama until we purchased our first electric wringer type washing machine about 1940.

To my children, grandchildren and great-grandchild: "I do not believe you could have survived Monday wash day on the farm as we experienced it."

JUST TIDY UP
by
Johnnie Kocurek

Mildred Spencer and I were best friends the summer of 1940. Sharing a summer job, we walked together each morning over the hill to Bower Street. Turning left, we hurried up six rock steps that lead us to the door of a little cottage. The Bower Street duplex, a white structure, was barely visible, hidden by overgrown honey suckle and rose bushes. From the street, its red tile roof was all that announced its existence.

Gerald and Marie Addison, newlyweds, were the proud tenants of one side of the duplex and referred to the small apartment as their Honeymoon cottage. We had gone to work for the Addison's when our previous employers had moved. Gerald and Marie were the third couple we had cleaned for that summer.

One half of the first couple was a cute little blonde looking a bit like Veronica Lake. "I leave for work at 7:30 each morning and you can come anytime after that. Just tidy up. Make the bed and clean the kitchen. I will leave your money on the lamp table. Here is a key. Lock the door when you leave." The Veronica look-alike and her husband stayed in the duplex two months and referred us to the next couple that moved in.

Our work was almost the same, but the new couple taught us a different meaning to "tidy up." "Make the bed, clean the kitchen, mop the floor, and dust the furniture. Just tidy up," instructed the woman. "I'll leave your quarter on the lamp table. Lock up when you leave."

The second couple found a larger place and moved after only two weeks. Again we were referred to new renters. Gerald and Marie were very much like the other two couples. Again, the major difference was in their definition of "tidy up."

During our first meeting, Marie smiled as she told us, "Just tidy up, make the bed, clean the kitchen, mop the floors, dust the furniture and Bon Ami the tub and the sink. I'll leave your quarter on the lamp table."

Mildred and I were climbing the rock steps on a Monday morning when I suddenly stopped and sat down. "Mildred, I think we need to find a full time job for the rest of the summer."

"You mean tidy up all day?" she answered as she rolled her eyes and sat down beside me.

"No, of course not. I mean a full time job, something fun and different," I encouraged.

A full time job was not mentioned the rest of the morning. Our conversation turned to spending some of our tidy up money. "Let's go to the Malco and see a movie when we finish the duplex." The suggestion was agreed upon and an hour later we were on our way to the picture show. A few blocks from the Malco my attention was turned to a commotion up ahead. Mr. Castle, owner of The Igloo, the best ice cream parlor in Hot Springs, was dragging a large wooden sign to the middle of the sidewalk. The sign took up half the side walk and announced that five flavors of ice cream were available on one or two scoop cones. Under the print was a picture of a large double dip cone with chocolate ice cream piled on top.

"Ice cream or movie?" Mildred asked.

Not answering her, I stood staring and pointing to a small hand written sign in the store-front window. The sign drew us toward the door.

"Come in, girls," Mr. Castle invited as he opened the door for us. "What can I get for you?"

"Chocolate cone!" I ordered and Mildred echoed my words.

"One scoop or two?" the tempter asked, dipping the ice cream scoop in and out of a tin of water. "One scoop for me," Mildred answered, and I quickly repeated, "One for me, too."

With little or no effort, Mr. Castle scooped a huge glob of the ice cream on top of a crusty cone. He covered the bottom of the cone with a napkin, handed the treat to me, and repeated the ritual for Mildred. "Five cents each." The ice cream man held out his hand and palmed the ten cents we gave him.

"Mr. Castle?" Busy wiping the glass on the ice cream case, he looked up when I called his name.

"Mr. Castle," I repeated. "We are looking for a full time job." The fear in my voice was evident.

"Both of you looking for a job?"

"Yes, sir." Shaky words came from my throat. Mildred said nothing. I looked at her for help. She was holding her breath, too numb to lick the chocolate ice cream dripping down the sides of her cone.

"You might be what I'm looking for," he said. "Come in at nine in the morning. Try it for one half day. Can't pay you for the try out, but if I like your work and you like the work, you have a job. Monday through Friday, 9 until 6. I'll pay each of you $1.80 a day and you can eat all the ice cream that you want." We had found the perfect job!

Mildred and I half walked, half ran, giggling all the way home. We agreed to go to the stucco duplex early the next morning, hurry through our chores, and get to the Igloo early. The morning went quickly, and under Mr. Castle's supervision Mildred and I mastered the art of dipping or double dipping, making sodas, banana splits, and cherry topped sundaes. She and I took turns washing and drying the dishes. Mildred and I left the Igloo at noon hoping we would have the full time job.

The next morning, we quickly tidied up the stucco and rushed off to the Igloo. Mr. Castle unlocked the front door. "You girls did well yesterday. The job is yours if you want it."

"Oh, we do," Mildred answered him. I just nodded. Two more days on the job brought a little reconsideration.

The day before, Thursday, Mr. Castle had introduced us to the rest of our job. "Just tidy up each day and keep the place clean," he said as he pulled a large platform on wheels holding a bucket and a mop from the storeroom. Mr. Castle showed us how to wring the mop. We knew what to do with it without being told. He pointed to a bottle of ammonia and water sitting next to a stack of rags under the counter. "This is to clean the glass counters and mirrors. The Bon Ami is for the sinks."

O.K. I thought, *Clean the dishes, mop the floors, wipe the glass and Bon Ami the sink. At least, no bed to make.*

Mildred and I had a big decision to make. We weighed making a bed against eating all the ice cream we wanted. Working full time was not the fun we had planned.

Mr. Castle's definition of "Just tidy up" was more than we could handle.

We quit.

STORIES
by
Nell Clark
10-26-99

The past would be lost forever if we didn't have stories. Our own life becomes a story as we leave stories of our lives to our children, from beginning to end, telling them stories over and over, stories that someday they will tell their children.

Stories have been told for centuries. Jesus told stories, Moses and David told stories. The disciples and Roman and Jewish leaders told stories, whether good or bad. The Bible is full of stories. I recall my Aunt Leanna telling us the story of Ruth and about kings and queens. She always started with "There once was a king" and would then make each tale come alive for us. Aunt Leanna put so much action and feeling into her narration. She would describe every detail and the setting. Because of her stories, I wanted to live in a castle. That's why no home would be too large for me. I like to go from room to room and reminisce.

I read and told the story of David and Goliath to each of the grandchildren. They all liked to hear about the Giant. When Elise was about four years old, though she could not read, she liked to look at the pictures as I told her about David. One night Elise surprised me by saying, "Let me read it." She took the book, turned the pages, and gave a description of the pictures. When she came to David with his sling, Elise said, "And David went to kill the giant but first he had to stop for a little drink." All I can figure out is that Bub, my husband, her grandfather, was sitting in his chair with a drink in his hand. "Read that to me again." Elise

didn't I know it but I turned on the tape recorder and taped her version of David and Goliath—a treasure on tape.

The reason that a story is so basic to us is that life itself has a narrative shape, a beginning and end, plot and characters. Our life story is an accumulation of love, birth, and caring. We tell our friends who we are and where we came from. We talk and tell about our heritage. We discuss our feelings. My own parents told me stories of our family—who they were and how they would like to see us grow up.

Stories are the most adequate way we have of recounting our lives; a story invites other people into our lives. Each of us has a "story to tell."

MY DOG, CARAJO

by

Stanley F. Davis

February 9, 1999 and February 23, 1999

PART I

The dog I loved most came into my life when I was in Cartagena, Colombia. I stole him from under the bed of Judson Wood, the company land man to whom the pup had been given. Because Judson did not really want the pup until I told him I wanted to take the pup to our field drilling camp as a company mascot, the theft was not actually a criminal act.

After the pup was in my possession, I took him one hundred miles up the coast by boat, then thirty miles inland on horseback in a saddlebag to our field drilling camp at San Andres. I named him "Carajo," a very bad swear word in the Spanish language which has no equivalent in the English language, and for the next two years Carajo became the pet of the Chinese cook and everyone in the camp—every man, that is. Carajo learned to hate women because the men taught him to chase the washerwomen and the other young girls who often hung around the camps for sundry purposes.

At that time, automobiles had running boards and fenders over the wheels beside the hood and body of the car which were not an integral welded part of the hood or body. Carajo learned to ride between the hood and fender of the car before he was big enough to jump up on the fender. I never drove a car or truck out of the yard that he was not already in his favorite position ready to go.

After three years of drilling operations in Colombia without results, the South American Gulf Oil Co. operation was abandoned. The entire drilling crew, including my dog, was transferred to a similar operation in Panama. However, I remained in Colombia to clean up and ship the materials left over to new operations in Venezuela. Then, instead of being transferred to Panama as I had anticipated, I was transferred to Ecuador where I spent one year. Then it was on to Venezuela where I spent two years.

At my request, I was transferred back to Colombia to work with the original crew with whom I had worked. They were now drilling exploratory wells in central Colombia at Aguas Claras near Puerto Wilches on the Magdalena River. There I rejoined my dog, Carajo, still the mascot of the original drilling crew.

During the next two years, while working at Aguas Claras, I met, fell in love with and married a beautiful nineteen-year-old Colombian girl, Blanca Livia Vasquez. Carajo had a hard time accepting that I spent more time with and paid more attention to a woman than I did to him. However, when I insisted that he show her courtesy and respect, he eventually conceded that he had another master who, in time, also became his idol. Perhaps he just realized he had acquired another protector and slave. In any event, it did not change his opinion of other women; to him, they were just creatures to be despised and avoided.

Livia and I were married in August 11, 1929. In November we decided to take a vacation in the States and remain there permanently if I could find suitable employment. Early in November, Livia, Carajo, and I left Aguas Claras for my boyhood home in the States. After a short train trip to Puerto Wilches, we boarded a woodburning steam paddle wheel river boat for a five day trip down the Magdalena River.

On the trip down river, our dog's name got changed from Carajo to Boy. On the second day out, a priest traveling on the boat admired the dog and asked Livia his name. After a moment's hesitation, she replied, "His name is Boy, that is *Muchacho* in Spanish." She did not want to tell a priest that the dog's name was an ugly Spanish swear word. After that, we only called him Boy.

At one port, the boat stopped for several hours to take on passengers, freight and firewood for the boilers. When the Captain blew the whistle to inform everyone that the boat was about to leave, I noticed that Boy was missing. I immediately asked the Captain to hold the boat's departure until I could find my dog. He readily agreed and sent the entire deck crew to help me look for the dog. We found Boy about an hour later walking calmly down the main street of the town. We brought him back to the boat and were soon underway. I tipped the Captain generously for his courtesy and bought beer for the crew members who had helped me find Boy.

From Cartagena to Panama, we traveled by plane. From Panama to New Orleans, we traveled by boat. Boy made friends with every male member of the crew and most of the males passengers, but had nothing but disdain for every female on the boat except, of course, Livia. En route from Panama to New Orleans, I learned that, because Boy looked like a Shepherd or Sheepdog, he probably would be quarantined for thirty to sixty days. This rule perturbed me because my dog was not used to cold weather, and even if he survived quarantine, I would have to come back to New Orleans to pick him up when he was released.

To avoid the possibility of quarantine, I decided to smuggle him into the States rather than take him through customs. I offered our cabin steward twenty dollars to sneak Boy off the boat when

the customs guard was not looking and then bring him to me at the St. Charles Hotel. He readily agreed. The next day, about noon, the steward and his wife showed up at the hotel with Boy in tow. The two of them had worked together to get the dog off the boat and out of the Customs house without interference from the Customs officers.

Boy thus became an illegal immigrant and, during the next year, lived happily in the USA.

Part II

At the end of Part I of this story, Livia (a legal alien), my dog Boy (an illegal alien), and I were ready to leave New Orleans for my boyhood home, Fouke, Arkansas. We traveled by train to Texarkana, Arkansas/Texas, an overnight trip. Boy had to ride in the Express car, but that did not bother him because he immediately made friends with the Express clerk.

At Texarkana, we were met by my older brother, Karl. After being introduced to Livia, he mumbled some words about a brother who did not have any better sense than to bring a dog home from South America. In spite of his opinion, Karl offered me his car to travel the fifteen mile trip to Fouke.

When I started the motor, Boy immediately scrambled to his usual riding position between the hood and the fender. The car was a brand new 1930 Ford Roadster, painted black, of course, with a red pin stripe. When Boy scrambled into position, I saw Karl cringe because he knew that the paint on his new car would be scratched, but he said nothing. Neither did I. I just waved goodbye.

When I drove into the front yard of my family's home, my father, mother, sister Lucile, nine-year-old nephew Malcolm, and nine-month-old nephew, Stephen, were waiting on the front porch to welcome us. Karl had already informed them that I was on my way with a pretty, young wife and a dog.

Livia, Boy, and I spent the entire month of December at my parents' home. It was the first Christmas I had spent with my family in the past ten years, and the first Christmas Livia had ever spent away from her family. Mama even relaxed her lifetime rule that dogs belonged outdoors, not in the house, saying, "It's too cold for Boy outside, and besides, he is in a strange country and likes to be near Stanley and Livia at night." She even put an old quilt on the floor near our bed so Boy would be warm and comfortable.

On January 1, 1930, we left Texarkana by train en route to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where I had been offered a job with Gypsy Oil Company, a subsidiary of Gulf Oil Company with whom I had worked during the past ten years. At the hotel where we registered, no objection was made to keeping our dog in the room with us. The next day, I went to the Gypsy Oil Company office and was assigned to a job in the Petroleum Engineering Department. Mr. Porter, head of the department, told me to find a place to live and come to work as soon as I was settled.

There was a foot of snow on the ground, but I decided to start looking for a place to live that would be cheaper than the hotel. I knew that I had to live on or near a streetcar line because I had no car. That afternoon, I boarded a streetcar on a line which my map showed went well into the suburb of the city. I was hoping to spot a rooming or boarding house that might meet our needs. About twenty minutes from the center of the city, I saw a

sign that read *Vacancy—Room and Board.* I got off at the next stop and walked back to the house where I had seen the sign.

When I knocked, the door was opened by a lady who said, "I am Mrs. Lau, What can I do for you?"

"I saw your sign and would like to rent the room."

"I only rent to men with jobs," she answered.

"Fine," I said. "I only arrived here yesterday, but I have a job with Gypsy Oil Company and will go to work as soon as I find a place to live."

She said, "You seem to qualify and should fit in with my other four boarders. The room is yours."

Then I told her, "I have a wife. There will be two of us."

She hesitated a few minutes and then said, "I have never had a woman boarder, but the room is large. My other boarders are gentlemen, so I don't think there will be any problem.

I then added, "My wife does not speak English."

She said, "I don't think that will be a problem. We can communicate by sign."

At that point I blurted out, "I also have a dog. He is not very big, but he is completely house trained, and makes friends with everybody."

Mrs. Lau hesitated even longer than when I had mentioned my wife. She then said that the room had a trunk closet under the eaves along one side of the room. "That would be a good place for your dog to sleep." Then taking a deep breath, she added, "Young man, you have a real problem finding a place to live, but I like your frankness and attitude, and I am going to help you out. I may be making a mistake, but let's try it. You, your wife, and your dog have a room."

I thanked her, paid her two weeks' rent in advance, and departed without even looking at the room, happy that I had found a place to live so quickly.

The next morning when Livia and I moved in, we found the room to be airy, comfortably furnished, and near the bathroom. It was also at the head of the back stairs which went down to a back room that opened into a fenced back yard. It was an ideal situation for Boy.

Two days later, when I came home from work, Livia was almost in tears. She told me that Boy had bitten Mrs. Lau. She feared that we were in big trouble, or at least that Boy was.

When I went to the kitchen to apologize to Mrs. Lau, she said, "Don't worry. Boy did not actually bite me, he just grabbed my hand in his mouth. In any event, the dog was not to blame. You had warned me not to put a hand on him or try to pet him because he has an aversion to all women, except Livia."

When I told Livia the result of my visit with Mrs. Lau, she sighed and spoke thankfully, "*Gracias a Dios. No lo puedo craer, dale mio gracias a la señora Lau. Bien*!" ("Thanks to God. I can hardly believe it, but give Mrs. Lau my thanks.")

We lived at Mrs. Lau's boarding house for three months. Boy became good friends with her husband and her other boarders, but ignored Mrs. Lau as if she did not exist.

In early Spring, I bought a new Ford Sedan and rented half of a furnished duplex on the other side of town. Mrs. Lambert, the owner, lived in the other half of the duplex. We shared a fenced common back yard.

A few days after we moved in, when I came home from work, Livia told me that Boy had bitten Mrs. Lambert while she was hanging out clothes in the back yard. When I talked to Mrs. Lambert about the matter, she said that there was no problem. "When I started to pet him, he grabbed my hand in his mouth. I put some iodine on the scratch, and it will be well in a day or so." Then she laughingly said, "Now I believe your warning about his aversion to women."

Early in September, I was offered and accepted a job with Venezuela Petroleum Company (which later became Creole Petroleum Company) at Maracaibo, Venezuela. After a very brief visit with my parents at Fouke, Arkansas, we traveled by train to New York and by boat to Maracaibo. At the hotel where we stayed in New York, the clerk insisted that I would have to put the dog in the hotel dog kennel. When I explained to the manager that my dog was a very valuable hunting dog and that he had just won first place in a national coon hunt in Arkansas, he allowed me to keep him in our room.

On the boat to Maracaibo, Boy was allowed the run of the ship and made friends with most of the men on the ship. Arriving at Maracaibo, we were assigned a furnished cottage. The prospect for an enjoyable and pleasant term of employment looked good.

A few days later, Livia came to my office to inform me that Boy had just bitten the mother-in-law (I do not remember her name) of the general manger of the company, George Knebel. I immediately I went to Mr. Knebel 's office to offer my apologies. When I walked into the room, he said, "Sit down," and then continued, "That dog did not bite my mother-in-law. He just grabbed her hand in his mouth and scared her half to death. She had no business going into the yard to pet him, even if he did look friendly. Let's forget the whole episode."

I cannot help but believe it was fortunate that Boy had bitten Mr. Knebel's mother-in-law rather than his wife or one of his children. Otherwise the incident might have been much more disagreeable.

Our next move was from Maracaibo to Carapito in eastern Venezuela. There Boy lived happily with us during our five years in Caripito. He did not bite anyone because, by this time, all the women knew of his aversion to women and stayed clear of him.

In his later years, his great joy was to ride on the car with me when I went to work in the morning and to meet me at the office at quitting time and ride back home with me.

At the age of fifteen years, Boy died peacefully in his bed on his back porch, and was buried in the corner of his back yard. It has been more than fifty years since he died, but not a day passes that I do not think of his love and devotion to Livia and me.

A NEW BABY FOR THE BEAUCAIRE FAMILY
by
Betty Tripp

On June 2, 1948, 1 became a teenager. I had a sister, Roberta (often called Bobby), a brother, Dona, Jr.—what I thought was our complete family.

A few months later I began to notice changes in Mom. She hadn't been feeling well that summer, and I thought she was in a bad mood more than she should be. Roberta and I complained to Dad, "Boy, Mom sure has been in a bad mood lately." Dad responded, "Just be patient with her and she will be better." I believe it was in September when we were all together on the day that Mom said, "I guess you are wondering why I haven't been feeling well lately. Well, you are going to have a new brother or sister in January."

I guess we were all surprised at first, but then we all responded, "Good, that is great news. We are happy to hear that is what has been your problem." Mom told us that the baby was due at the end of January and could be born on her birthday, the 29th, or could even be late and be born on February 4, Dona's birthday. Dona said, "I want a new brother!" Roberta joined in, "Me, too!" I wanted another sister because I had decided that girls are not as rough as boys are.

In November, Aunt Laura and her daughters-in-law, Lois and Gert, told Dad they would like to have a baby shower for Mom but wanted it to be a surprise. Mom had no baby things left as she had given things to our cousins who had been having babies. Dad suggested that Laura and the girls have the shower on the Sunday

after Thanksgiving since we were going to Barre for the holiday and he was sure we wouldn't arrive back home until seven o'clock on Sunday evening. Laura, Lois, and Gert decided that was a good idea, so they began to make their plans and send invitations.

The Wednesday before Thanksgiving we drove to Aunt Hazel's home in Barre, Massachusetts. By Sunday, and a bit earlier than planned, Mom was ready to go home. Dad kept making excuses as to why we couldn't leave early--we might not get back to visit for a while. He even let Roberta and me go to a movie with Eleanor in the afternoon. I had said, "Mom, we really want to see that movie and we didn't get to see it when it was in Stoughton." "Well, if your Dad said you can go, I guess you can, but I would rather go home."

It was about a two hour drive from Barre to Stoughton, so we left Aunt Hazel's home about five o'clock. When we arrived in the center of Stoughton, Dad said, "I have to stop at the drug store for cigarettes,' I'll just be a minute."

"Don, you can get those darn cigarettes tomorrow! Let's get home!" I knew he was stopping to call the house to tell Laura, Lois, and Gert we were almost there.

When we finally arrived home, Mom saw some cars she recognized and told Dad, "I am going to shoot you for doing this." She walked in the door and everyone yelled, "Surprise!" Of course Mom started crying—she used to cry for lots of reasons—but this time, she was really happy to see everyone there. Dona, Roberta, and I were excited about all the baby items she received. The big items—crib, carriage, bassinet—were going to be loaned to her by some of the cousins.

Mom was using the same doctor in Boston who had delivered Dona, Jr., Roberta, and me, and would go to the same hospital in Boston, except now it was called The Boston Lying-in Hospital.

On January 29, 1949, we celebrated Mom's 37th birthday. January 30 was a Sunday, and Dad had left after lunch to help one of his nephews move into a house. I was at home with Mom, and Dona and Roberta were playing in the house as it was very cold outside. Mom had a bag of peanuts (in the shells) and had been eating them during the afternoon. In the late afternoon I thought she was acting very "edgy" and walking around a lot. She finally said, "Betty, I think you had better get hold of your Dad. I think I may be in labor."

I was very excited and started calling places where he said he would be. Luckily, I reached him right away, and he was home in a few minutes. When Dad came in the house, Roberta and I said, "Dad, we want to go with you to the hospital!" "Well, I guess that will be okay as I don't know who I can get to stay with you tonight!" Mom said, "You will just have to get me admitted and then come back home." There was snow on the ground but the roads were clear and we made it to the hospital in about an hour. Mom was very uncomfortable by the time we got there, and I was nervous since I did not really understand this "labor" business.

Dad parked in front of the hospital and told us, "You kids wait here in the lobby while I take your mother to the labor floor. Please be quiet and behave!" He soon came back and said,"The Doctor thinks the baby will be born sometime during the night. He will call me when it is born." We drove back to Stoughton, talking about the baby-to-be and guessing what sex it would be and what it would be named.

About five o'clock the next morning, January 31,1949, the doctor called and told Dad that he had a new daughter. She was pretty big, about eight pounds. Dad woke us up to tell us the news. "Well, you have a new sister!" Dona was disappointed that it wasn't a boy. Roberta and I had to go to school, and Dad went to get Grandma Hill to stay with Dona. Grandma Hill was not our "real" grandma but was an elderly lady Mom would hire to take care of us when she was working.

Dad drove into Boston to the hospital to see Mom and his new daughter. He met with the doctor who told Dad that Mom had almost died during the labor. She had vomited the peanuts she had eaten during the afternoon and aspirated them. The nurses and the doctor had to do resuscitative measures on her. She and the baby were both doing well.

Mom and Dad decided to call our new sister Barbara Ann, the name I had asked them to call the baby if it was a girl. She had a full head of black hair (just like Dad), and the nurses would put little bows in her hair.

Mom came home from the hospital after a week, and Dona, Roberta, and I were very glad to finally have her and Barbara home. Now we could hold her and help Mom give her a bath and feed her. Barbara was the last of my siblings to be born. I graduated from high school when she was four years old, and Mom and Dad moved here to Louisiana when Barbara was five years old.

THE WAY IT WAS—OUR LIFE TOGETHER
by
Myrtle Thibodeaux Schiller

I've written about our wedding and honeymoon, so perhaps I should tell you about how Leo and I met. You could say our romance started off with a bang! (But I'm getting ahead of myself, so here goes ....)

One Saturday night four boys from Lafayette came to Rayne. Leo was one of them. He had a date with a friend of mine, and I had a date with a friend of his. Two of their friends had dates with other friends of mine. Complicated, huh? Anyway, we all went to the Golden Pheasant to dance. We had met for the first time but Leo kept asking me to dance. Before the night was over, he told everyone he had met the girl he was going to marry! He asked me for a date the following weekend. I don't know what happened to the girl he had a date with that first night, but the following Saturday night, I had a date with Leo.

We triple dated, with Leo driving his brand new Oldsmobile. Helen and Lolly, Henry V. and Bev, and Leo and I made the triple couples. We rode around listening to the Hit Parade on the radio. We didn't want to go to Pop and Herb's till we heard all of the program. There had been a terrible flood and water was everywhere, still standing in the fields. Animals were running around loose. All of a sudden three mules came out of nowhere. Bang! We hit one or two of them. Fortunately no one was hurt, but Leo's car was a mess. We had to be towed into Rayne where the bent fenders were straightened out and he was able to drive the car.

We went to Pop and Herb's where everyone gathered. The first person I saw was my sister Nettie. When I told her we had been in a wreck, she said, "Oh my, did you tear my dress?" Compassionate, huh? She could see that I was o.k., and, after all, I *was* wearing one of her dresses. We were four sisters and often wore each other's clothes. The rest of the evening was great, and from then on Leo and I were a couple.

We went out practically every weekend for six months, then Leo joined the Air Force, instead of waiting to be drafted. He was stationed in California and wrote letters every night, something he did all the while he was overseas after we were married.

I will never forget Pearl Harbor. My two cousins, Laura and Belle, my sister Nettie, and I were riding. We were singing along to the radio. Suddenly the announcer came on and said, "Pearl Harbor has been bombed by the Japanese." We were dumbstruck, and together we started praying and crying. Leo was stationed in Visalia, California, but I was sure he would have to go wherever they sent him. We were not even engaged yet.

Luckily Leo's training wasn't yet complete, and he was able to get home on a furlough. On August 15, 1942, he asked me to marry him. We set the date for December 31, 1942 in Los Angeles. (Since I've written about our honeymoon in my previous story, I will write about the rest of our story).

We lived in Coronado for three months. We rented a room with kitchen privileges and shared a bath with the landlord's family. Then the squadron was transferred to Portland, Oregon. Since I couldn't go with Leo immediately, we were fortunate that Nettie and Laura had remained in Coronado and had jobs at the naval air

base. They shared an apartment, so I was able to stay with them till Leo got established in Portland and could send for me.

Our home in Portland was a bedroom and shared bath and kitchen with our landlady, Gladys Gray. Leo and I had five wonderful months together. I was already pregnant when word came that the whole squadron would be going overseas. I had to go back home, not knowing where they would be going, or if I would ever see Leo again. There were many of us in the same situation.

The train ride back to Rayne (alone) was one of the saddest, loneliest times of my life. The train was crowded, standing room only. I will never forget the conductor who took one look at me, tears streaming down my face. Pregnant (obviously so) lugging my suitcase, bewildered! He said, "You come with me young lady," and led me to the restroom compartment, where there was a couch. He told me not to give up my place to anyone, and that's where I stayed all the way to Rayne where Mom and Dad and my sister Eleanor were at the station to meet me.

Eleanor's husband, Carl, was also in the service. She already had a little boy, Woody. She and I moved into a house together after my baby (Phyllis Claire) was born. We both lived with Mom and Dad till then. Leo was still in Portland on alert for six weeks after I left. Then we heard he was on his way to Hawaii. He arrived in Hawaii on October 21, 1943, the day our daughter. Phyllis was born at Kahn's Clinic in Rayne. The Red Cross was able to get the news to him the next day. Leo would not be able to see his daughter till he was discharged after the war ended. He arrived home on October 22,1945, the day after her second birthday. The hardest thing for him to cope with was that his beloved little girl didn't want to have anything to do with him. Her

daddy was the man in the photograph, and her daddy was in Okinawa. Of course, it wasn't long till she became the apple of his eye, and he was her idol.

As time went on, our family grew over a span of 21 years to five boys and another precious little girl.

In 1964 tragedy struck. Our beautiful little three-year-old daughter, Lori Carol, was diagnosed with leukemia. At that time I was pregnant with my last child, six weeks to term. I spent the last six weeks in the hospital with Lori. She was valiantly fighting for her life. We were storming the heavens for a miracle.

On August 4, 1964 1 had to leave Lori on one side of the Lafayette Sanitarium to give birth to a beautiful baby boy, her brother, Christopher Jude. Lori was so excited to learn the news of his birth.

God did grant us a miracle. On August 9, Lori went into remission. She was able to go home and got to know her baby brother. She dearly loved him. She remained in remission for two years. She was a wonderful testimony to God's love. She never complained and was always a joy. When she was almost six years old, God took her home on October 5, 1966, at St. Jude's Hospital in Memphis.

I didn't know I was going to write about this sad time in our life. But I just had to, as it too, is part of our life, and I am writing our life story, so I couldn't leave out our precious child and her special place in our lives.

Time heals, and we were able to continue with our lives. Our children grew up. They made us proud of their achievements.

All are happily married. There are no divorces. We have eleven grandchildren—one grandchild, Sara, is married and is expecting our first great grandchild.

Leo and I had 53 ½ years (wonderful years) together. He passed away on May 22, 1996. Life will never be the same, but I thank God every day for every moment we had together.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING
RETURNING TO BARKSDALE AIRFIELD
by
Bea Murphy

In 1944 and 1945 Jim was stationed at Barksdale Airfield in Bossier City. I had an opportunity to revisit the base in July, 1999, my only visit since we left over fifty years ago. The Retired Officer's Association was having a convention. As a member of the auxiliary, I could bring a guest, so I brought my son, Larry.

The first big change I noticed was the new Interstate 49. What a beautiful route. Trees lined most of the route, and the highway was uncluttered by billboards. Jim and I had traveled to Barksdale during a flood in 1944. The narrow two lane route was flooded most of the way, so much so that we could not see the road. Abandoned cars were scattered along the route. We had packed Jim's 1940 Buick with all our worldly belongings. We arrived at Barksdale on time for Jim to check in.

The base, a permanent base, is beautiful and larger than it was in 1944. All the buildings had the same style of architecture, Mediterranean. The officer's club is large and in the same style. There are more and larger hangars. The B52 is stationed there now. The beautiful two story houses looked the same and had beautifully landscaped yards. In 1944-45 Lt. Colonels and higher ranking officers could get housing. Jim was a major then so his rank didn't qualify us. The c.o.'s of the Dental and Medical Clinic lived on the base.

We attended parties in both homes, and I remember how beautiful they were inside. I think the Army architects must have built new homes in the same style because I noticed two story duplexes where enlisted men live now. There were small children playing in the yards. In 1944 the housing situation was so bad that we lived in the Washington Yourre Hotel for a week. Later we found a room in an old section of town and kept looking for an apartment. I remember our little old landlady. She had recently remarried an old man, and it seemed to me that she bossed him around.

Jim found an apartment in a duplex in Bossier City. I walked into that apartment, and there was such filth that I told him "no way am I taking that apartment." A week later he found another one, and if I hadn't seen that first one I wouldn't have taken that one either. It was in a section of small white duplexes where officers and their wives lived. Most were flyers and were either going overseas or were back from overseas.

I went on a cleaning spree before we moved in. I found a nest of mice in a drawer under the sofa. I hauled out the mattress and aired it in the front yard. I had a habit of singing when I cleaned. Our closet was partly inside the other side of the duplex. The officer told his wife a singer has moved in. I guess my voice sounded pretty good through walls. On our return I would have liked to have seen those duplexes, but they were built flimsy and I'm sure they're gone now.

Larry and I got a room on the base. It was like a regular motel, newly built, not there in 1944. When I checked in, I met an old friend, Lt. Colonel Bob Billeaud. He belongs to the Lafayette chapter and had served in Korea.

All the meetings for the gathering were held at the Officer's Club. I was anxious to see if it was like I remembered. The outside was exactly as I remembered, but I'm not so sure about the inside. Jim and I use to have dinner there and attend a dance every Saturday night. They always had steaks on the menu and served the food cafeteria style. German prisoners of war who worked in the kitchen also helped serve. Today dinner is served by waiters. I thought the service was slow when we ate there.

We attended a memorial service for the officers who had died in the past year. I noticed Lt. Colonel Stanley Levy's name on the list. He had served under Jim at Lake Charles Air Force base.

The pledge of allegiance was recited at every function. Larry commented, "That's the most I've ever pledged in one day." They have an Air Force museum at the base now. Larry is a history buff. He has built model planes since he was a boy. The museum was interesting and they had a few old planes sitting outside.

My fondest memory of Barksdale is the collection of memories of the ceremonies on the field. They always had a band, and I loved to see the airmen in formation and marching. Those were fond memories that I relived after fifty-five years.

BIRTHDAY PRESENT
by
Dorothy Ruth Burleigh

It was a couple of days before your fourth birthday when you opened your present from Grandmommy, Caitlyn. "I wasn't looking for this!" you exclaimed when you unwrapped a book. I knew you weren't. Others were going to fulfill your wish list. I chose what I wanted you to have.

I was five years old when my Aunt Thelma chose a surprise present for me—a permanent at the beauty salon. I had thin, wispy, straight brown hair. Now I was going to have Shirley Temple curls. (Shirley Temple was a child movie star.) It sounded wonderful. But first I had to endure the torture.

The beautician placed a board across the arm rests of the salon chair to boost me to a more desirable height. A soft spray of water danced over my head. It was so carefully done that no suds burned my eyes. We were off to a good start: it wouldn't last. My hair was parted into many sections. The beautician selected a lock of hair to be pulled through a rubber wedge that would insulate my scalp. She combed a lotion in my shampooed hair. *Hey! Was there a skunk in there?* I smelled something awful. *What was it?* It was the permanent solution being combed into **my** hair! A strand of hair was wound on a roller and fastened with an elastic band. Then it was attached to a cord that dangled from the electric permanent machine. The machine would cook my hair into permanent curls. About four dozen of these cords were individually attached to curlers on my head. Curl winding took a long time. In my mind it was a lot like the preparation for an electrocution at the penitentiary. I got tired. My head was heavy

from the weight of the curlers. If I didn't keep a stiff neck, the machine yanked my hair. I was miserable. Mother tried to help by supporting my head with a hand held under my chin.

This permanent was taking forever and I was suffering from the heat. It was just naturally hot in July (there was no air conditioning then). The machine cooking my hair made me many times hotter. And then I heard the fire alarm. The truck came toward the beauty shop. Everyone except me rushed to the door to watch. I thought they were escaping from the fire. I panicked as I realized that I was going to be burned alive: there was no way I could escape while I was attached to that dreadful beauty machine! My life was spared when the engine zipped past the salon and continued down the street. Everyone came back and the perm resumed. The hair had to be neutralized and the singed ends trimmed before the final set and comb-out.

Hours later, when finished, no one mistook me for a brunette Shirley Temple. Nor was the agony over. Every day tangles and snarls were brushed out and curls formed by winding tresses around Mother's finger (Daddy took a turn when Mother broke her arm). Every Saturday I had to endure a shampoo and set with aluminum curlers pulling the hair tight to form the curls for the next week. It had to be done early in the day so that my hair would dry before bedtime. There is no way to lay a head full of curlers comfortably on a pillow!

Thanks, Aunt Thelma. Since my fifth birthday I 've *never* had straight hair.

SCARY EVENTS
by
John Q. Lee

THE B0XING MATCH

The boxing match occurred during my first year in high school. Some of the older students in school had made arrangements to hold volunteer boxing matches in a ring set up on Main Street of Nicholls, Georgia. It was to be a night time event with referees and three minute timed rounds. Local merchants were sponsoring the matches with special prizes for the winners.

It all sounded very exciting, especially since boxing was the rage back in those days. My school buddies and I made plans to attend. Immediately after supper that night I informed Aunt Sue that I was going downtown to meet the boys and watch the boxing matches. Everything was well under way when I arrived. Eddie, Sonny, Whitey, Jack, and Woodrow were cheering things along. One of the matches had just finished, and they were waiting for me to arrive. I knew right away they had some scheme in mind when Eddie said, "We've got somebody we want you to meet. Hey, Buck, come over here and meet Quincy. This is Buck Fowler. We've been talking, and we thought maybe the two of you might want to volunteer for a round or two."

"Eddie, I'm no boxer. I didn't come here to fight. How about one of you matching up with him?" I replied. I'd already looked Buck over, and he appeared tough as a boot, rather short, with a muscular body, a pudgy round face, and long arms. He appeared to be willing, but I was still skeptical. I was pretty wiry and strong, but I had no boxing experience.

The boys kept on until they got us to agree to give it a whirl. I wanted to wiggle out, but didn't want to lose face. They said we could just get up there, spar around for one round. "C'mon, it'll be fun," they insisted.

So I let Eddie hold my coat, and I climbed into the ring. The bell rang and Buck and I started shuffling around the ring, more shadow boxing than anything else. The first round ended without much contact. In the second round I began to develop a little confidence. Being taller than Buck I could swing down on him and keep him moving away. I was banging him on the ears and he kept backing away. Suddenly, he ducked under my arms and came up with a hard right that caught me square on the nose. The blood spurted and I couldn't see anything. Then he gave me more hard jolts to the side of my head. After the bell rang, I said, "That's it! No more! I don't want to get my shirt bloody." So I climbed out of the ring, got my coat from Eddie, and beat a hasty retreat.

The boys had had their fun. They should have told me what they knew about Buck falling off a moving freight train on his head. That knock didn't even hurt him. How could mine?

CLEANING OUT THE WELL

The well cleaning came about during my school days in Nicholls. I had met a boy in school who was doing some farm work for one of the local merchants, who had a few acres of gardening property adjoining his home on the edge of town. The boy, James Dunn, helped out on the farm and asked me if I would like to make some money during spring planting. We formed a neat little partnership, and I got fifty cents at different times working after school.

Then James told me Mr. Levy was looking for someone to clean out his home water well. The problem was the water did not flow in fast enough to supply the demand. In those days small towns did not have a water system. I was familiar with water wells since we had two large brick-curbed wells about a hundred feet deep on our place, and I had seen Dad and other men perform the job of cleaning them out many times.

James couldn't do the job himself—too fat—but I would be the right size, and Mr. Levy would pay me $2.00. When the day came, James and I started drawing the well down. After about two hours, all the water was removed except about 2 feet at the bottom. James and Mr. Levy rigged me up with a rope halter and lowered me through the 24 inch hole. I was a little tense, but didn't dare back out. I slipped right down to the bottom with my bucket and scoop. The water was about a foot deep when I started digging out the rocks and shale from the bottom. I had sent up about a dozen buckets when I noticed the water start rising rapidly.

I yanked on the rope and hollered for help. "Pull me up! Quick!" The water was up to my neck by the time the rope got to me. I was about to panic! They lifted me fast and pulled me out like a drowned rat. The well was full to capacity by the time we got everything back in order. The Levy's were well pleased with the job. I was as cold as a cucumber! They dried me off , paid me the $2.00, and I decided I'd never bargain again to clean another well.

CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES
by
Joe Glorioso

In 1919, my family consisted of my father, mother, my brother, and, of course, me. We lived in a two story brick building on the corner of Main and Iberia Streets. Our home had two bedrooms on the upper floor, one for my brother and me and one for my parents. The bedrooms had windows facing a bayou bridge, which spanned Bayou Teche, and across the bayou several magnificent oak trees fronting the Mount Carmel School for Girls reached for the sun. Additionally, we rented upstairs offices to Mr. Robinson, an accountant, Mr. Gajan, a lawyer, and two offices to the U. S. Navy. My parents had opened a new business on the building's bottom floor.

Some of my earliest memories were shaped in that brick building on the corner of Main and Iberia Streets. I distinctly recall sitting on the arm of a large rocking chair, my feet snuggled warmly in Mame's lap, touching the toes of two-year-old brother, Cooch. On a warm summer's night we were in our skivvies, prepared for going to bed upstairs. Mame was humming, sometimes singing, an Italian lullaby, arms wrapped around us, squeezing us gently to her body. My arm was completely relaxed on Cooch's tiny arm as we encircled Mame's neck to rest our heads on her shoulders. Cooch was asleep, and I would soon be in dreamland. But the rocking chair story certainly could not be my earliest experience.

I remember even further back. On every Thursday night during certain months of the year Big Charley would drive his dray, a Model-T truck, to the railroad station to load from New Orleans

a one hundred pound barrel of headed shrimp. The barrel would be delivered to Pape's seafood-vegetable-fruit-candy store. With the help of Big Charley's mighty muscles, Pape angled the barrel into a large wash tub used to catch drip water from melting ice. The barrel's opened end gaped to the ceiling much like a baby pelican, mouth wide open, gaping for food delivered by mother pelican.

On Friday morning, it was Mame's job to weigh the shrimp on a small kitchen scale, bag the shrimp in doubled brown paper bags, tag the bags with customers' names, and place them on a table in order by streets, uptown, downtown, across the bayou, and restaurants.

My Friday morning task was to stand by Mame's side and watch the scale. If the order called for two pounds of shrimp, she would look up at me and say loudly, but sweetly, "Two." I would intently watch the scale as she placed shrimp in the scale's scoop. When the needle reached the numeral two, I would loudly cry out, "Two!" Mame would face me, smile, and fetch the next bag.

I learned to recognize numerals early in life under the tutelage of a master teacher and much loved guardian angel. Mame received help in my early math education by Mr. Eves, who taught me how to write my numbers. To my mother and Mr. Eves, I owe so very much.

I can recall events even earlier than the rocking chair story and the shrimp story. In the first story, I was four years old and four plus years in the second story.

Another story my long-ago data-base has ushered up. (Again I was four years old. Seems four years produced a whale

of a lot of childhood memories.) I had come downstairs for breakfast. After breakfast, I wandered out the front door onto Main Street to watch the early morning traffic of people going to work. The door was open to the upstairs, beckoning me to investigate a new adventure. I crawled up the stairs and walked down the hall to the open door to my bedroom. Annie, our maid, sometime cook, my watcher, and stern disciplinarian, had left the family bedrooms after straightening them up and left the bedroom door open.

Coolly and indifferently, I poked my head into the open room, glanced around the empty room, and checked to see Annie descending the stairs. I was alone. A wide-open window attracted my attention. Mischief was in the making. I tiptoed into the room, slid a chair under the window, and stood up to peer down on the dirt-street that was Iberia Street. Not satisfied with the view I climbed onto the windowsill and sat on it, dangling my feet over the Iberia Street wooden banquet. Happiness was my middle name.

Across the street, a Renoudet clerk became horrified. I waved to him. He shouted, "Ma'am Joe! Ma'am Joe! Buster is hanging out your upstairs's window! Hurry up! He might fall out!" I thought, "Why doesn't he tell the truth? I am sitting, not hanging out." Nevertheless, the rush was on.

Mame, apron flying, arms flailing, legs pumping in desperation, burst through the open door across the room in five giant steps. She noisily toppled the chair, grabbed me around the waist, and yanked me to her breast and safety. Annie charged in behind Mame, her face twisted in dread, thinking she may be held accountable. Mame on bent knee kneeled on the floor sobbing and holding me ever so close. Quieting down a wee bit, she pushed me

away. Between sobs and tears, she chastised me, loved me, and chastised me again. She smiled at Annie, "He's safe. Thank you, Jesus." Annie knelt besides Mame, tried to calm her down, kissed me on the cheek, and said, "If you ever do that again, I'm gwine beat yo butt till its like hamburger!" What could I do when a little adventure became a misadventure, expecting the significant in the seemingly insignificant?

Another memory has jerked its way out of my long-ago data bank to make its way to this story.

Customarily, Mame cooked a large Sunday dinner and invited Luka and his girlfriend, Lil, always Mr. Eves, pharmacist and bachelor, and often Mr. Guerin and Mr. Egloff, tinsmiths. On those occasions, Pape would hand me two one-quart tin buckets with covers and a big dollar bill. He'd instruct me to cross Main Street and enter Hugenot Saloon to buy two buckets of beer, give the barkeep the dollar, and wait for your change. "Look both ways before you cross the street." He sent me off to look both ways and run across the street.

I slowed to a walk and proudly pranced into the saloon and up to the bar. I couldn't reach the top with my buckets. A customer, recognizing my plight, put his hands under my armpits and hoisted the buckets and me onto a tall stool. While I placed the buckets on the bar, he gruffly challenged the barkeep, "Give the youn'un his beer." The barkeep turned and walked over before me and smiled. He knew what I wanted. The customer winked at the barkeep and guzzled his beer. The barkeep filled from the beer tap golden beer, let the head of foam settle, and filled some more. He lifted my dollar and gave me change, which I pocketed. The customer hauled me from the stool and handed me the buckets. I smiled as he patted me toward the door.

Pape waited for me in front of the store. He took the two buckets from my hand and walked into the building. I followed while taking the loose change out of my pocket. I gave Pape the change after he had filled our guests' glasses with foaming beer. With the gracious help of a not-yet-drunk saloon customer, I had admirably done my chore to make Mame's dinner a success. Now for some meatball spaghetti!

WAS I WORTH $73.65?
by
J.M. Jennings Jr.

May 14th, 1921, was an eventful day for my Mother and Father. On that, day my Mother and I were discharged from New Orleans' Hotel Dieu after she and I had been guests there for eleven days. In my opinion, "Hotel" was not quite the proper name as Hotel Dieu was a hospital and the place I was born—May 4th, 1921.

I have no way of knowing what my Father's reaction was to the going away present he received from the hospital personnel. No doubt he was happy to take his wife and first born home. I wonder if we rode home in an ambulance or if Daddy drove us home in his auto? Did he own an auto in 1921? Did he borrow one?

There is no mention of the use of an automobile for this important event in any of the records in my possession. We may have ridden home in a taxicab, a truck, or an ambulance. I'm sure dollars were in short supply. My Daddy, raised on a Missouri farm, had begun working as a piano salesman in Miller's Music Store in Jacksonville, Florida, by 1912. He then served in the U.S. Army's Seventh Division in France during WWI and had not been discharged until 1919. The pay rate for an Army private was 70 cents a day, $21 per month. Not much to save there. He and my Mother then married on July 28th, 1920. I don't think my parents had a sizeable bank account large enough to buy an automobile. Besides, Daddy could ride the street car to work in New Orleans for only seven cents.

The three of us went home to a rented house at 1938 General Pershing Street in New Orleans. Once again I'm only assuming because no one ever told me so. However, I believe this is probable because of a letter I have addressed to my Mother from:

Marine Bank and Trust Company
New Orleans
February 3, 1921

Mrs. Jos. M. Jennings,
#1938 Gen'L. Pershing St.
New Orleans, La.

Dear Madam:

We are very much pleased to note that you have this day made your first deposit in our Savings Department.

It is a great pleasure to number you among our Depositors. We assure you, and we trust that this will be but the beginning, and that your deposits will grow steadily until you have a substantial account with us.

We are interested in your account, and want you to feel that we stand ready at all times to serve you.

Very truly yours,
(signed A.M. Yuire)
Manager New Business Dept.

Curious about Daddy's going away present from Hotel Dieu? Why, of course, it was the bill for our stay of eleven days at the hospital. I found the receipt tucked away in a packet of letters

Daddy wrote while in the Army. The charges for obstetrical services have changed dramatically in three quarters of a century, you will note.

New Orleans, La., 5/14/21

Mrs. J.M. Jennings

To Hotel Dieu Dr.

Payable weekly in advance.

To Board and Nursing from 5/3 to 5/14		
at $5.00 per day		*55*
Laboratory Fee		*5*
Operating Room		*5*
Anaesthesia		
Special Nurses		
X-Ray		
Medicine		
Surgical Supplies		*1.50*
Care of child		*7.15*
	$73.65	

Hotel Dieu
PAID
5/14/21 (signed) E. Lynch
New Orleans

Is it possible my Mother paid this bill from her Marine Bank savings account? Or is it more likely that my Mother and Father had a joint account to accumulate the resources to finance joint projects like babies? I have searched diligently but I haven't been able to find a bank deposit book or any other records that would give me an insight into how my parents planned for expenses of this nature.

I gave a copy of the Hotel Dieu bill to my long time friend, now a retired obstetrician—Dr. Wilfrid Dolan.

"Wil, what do you think of this? Any comments?"

"Well," he said, "Today the hospital would present the responsible parent with a two inch thick pack of computer paper detailing every aspirin or bandage used. Maybe even each use of a bedpan."

Wilfrid continued, "By the way, did you feel insignificant to learn your parents only paid $73.65 to bring you into the world?"

I didn't and I don't now.

This report of my Hotel Dieu experience is, unfortunately, not one of my earliest memories, but, at the very least, the paid receipt is the earliest evidence I have that I exist.

FUN ON THE FARM
by
Kitty Kelley

Sugar, the little black pony, stood calmly while Dave tried to harness her to the little red buckboard. Things were going smoothly until, Pup, the big collie, ran up barking and nipping at Sugar who pranced about, stepping on Dave's foot and causing him to jump and scream some invectives at the dog and more at Sugar as she bolted and ran down the hill dragging the reins and Dave with her.

At just that time, Grandpa, coming from the barn saw what happened and stepped into the path and made a stab at the trailing reins as Sugar galloped by. He missed, but he called for her to stop and she began to slow to a walk. Grandpa, for a little man, had a big voice and used language that Grandma said belonged in the barn, not out where the kids could hear him.

"Now, Dave, hang onto this here pony. You gotta be the boss. Make her know that you mean business," Grandpa said. Ellen and Steve were laughing fit to kill when they ran up to help with the harnessing. Dave and Ellen were nine years old and Steve was six that day that they decided to ride away from the farm.

They planned to ride over the hill beyond the Pryor farm. It was early in the morning and the fog was thick. The threesome were soon out of sight. Not until they reached the top of the hill did they decide a little food would be a good idea. Steve, the youngest, was *volunteered* to hike back to the farm. In the kitchen, all he could find were two pieces of fudge and a cold boiled potato.

Much later when they returned, I asked them how they divided the food. "Well," Steve said, "I ate the potato."

That was the day Grandma asked Grandpa to kill a few chickens. As simple a request as that was, it brought up one of the funniest stories of Jersey Hill. As Grandpa picked up a pail and headed for the yard, Donald, his seven-year-old grandson just happened to walk up. "Come along, Donald, you can help me get some chickens for super. Here, take the pail and stand back. We will fill the pail. Tell me when it's full."

Grandpa quickly caught a chicken, and with the flick of his wrist, broke its neck and flung it over his shoulder. He caught another, and *flip*, over his shoulder it went. Donald was a quiet child, so Grandpa kept up a running chatter of this and that, with little response from Donald. After a while, Grandpa realized he was killing a lot of chickens for just one meal. Chickens with broken necks were dancing and dying around the yard. I wished I had had film in my camera that afternoon. "Hey, Donald, is the pail full yet?" Grandpa asked.

"Nope," Donald said, "None of the chickens landed in the pail."

Every summer, activities on the farm kept us all busy. Often there were guests for the afternoon and supper. The kids were happy with the horses and the pony. One day, the twelve-year-olds, Joanne and Sheilah, decided it was time for their cousin, Mike, to learn to ride a horse. Mike was two years older than the girls and a lot bigger, but they were determined, so Mike got his first and last lesson in horseback riding. "Come on, Mike, put your foot in the stirrup and swing your rump over," Joanne instructed

him. "I can't," Mike said. "Yes, you can! Now, come on and try," Joanne coached him again.

"Mike, you're gonna ride this horse or else," Sheilah threatened. "Joanne, we can push him up if he will just get that foot in the stirrup. O.k., Mike, once more."

I watched them struggle and wondered if Mike knew he was outnumbered and outwitted. Sheilah picked up his foot and put it in the stirrup. When they told Mike to give himself a little jump, he made a weak effort to get that rump up, but he wasn't getting very far up. So both girls put their hands on his fat rear and together gave a healthy push. Mike went up all right, up and over. He landed on the other side of the horse. Such a howling you wouldn't believe! I did empathize because they were in a hay field which had just been cut. The stubble was sharp and scratchy.

The girls told Mike he was going to ride even if they had to tie him on that horse. After a few more tries, they did get him on and were calmly leading the horse as Mike hung on for dear life. That is when Uncle Doc showed up and gave the horse a swat on its rear and off Mike went. Uncle Doc was a local baseball hero whom the kids all loved. Doc loved to tease the kids and took special pleasure in stirring up things for the older children. When Mike finally managed to get the horse down to a slow walk, the girls ran up and caught the reins and helped Mike down. That was the last time Mike ever rode a horse.

No story of the farm would be complete without a story of the club which met in the abandoned chicken coop. Seven-year-old Margaret came in crying one day because she couldn't torture a butterfly. As recreation chairman, I saw it as my duty to find out why that was necessary. "They won't let me be in the club unless

I do," Margaret said. Well, in the way of adults dealing with kids, I changed the rule, so Margaret did get in. I turned to go back into the house and looked back one more time. There was Leo stuck in the doorway of the coop. He was too big to get in, so he got stuck. I decided if the group couldn't push him out, I'd send Grandpa. There are more club stories to be told, each one reminding us of the fun we had on the farm at Jersey Hill.

OUR BROWN-HAIRED BLUE-EYED BABY
by
Betty Shoemaker

On May 19, 1998, Darien Alisa Boudreaux made her entrance into the world. She was born at Thibodeaux General Hospital in Thibodeaux, Louisiana.

Darien looked just like her father, with a shock of dark brown hair about an inch long and with big brown eyes. She is the first born and only child of Richie and my granddaughter Cherie.

When you see a baby everyday you don't always notice changes immediately. One day Richie came running through the house yelling, "Cherie, where did we get a red-haired, blue-eyed baby?! The Boudreauxs don't have red-haired, blue-eyed babies."

"I don't know, Richie," Cherie answered.

"I can answer that question, Richie," I told him. "I realize you're full blooded French and that Cherie's father is French. My great-grandfather migrated to this country from England. He had red hair and blue eyes. My grandfather had red hair and blue eyes. One of my grandfather's daughters had red hair and blue eyes, and so did several of her children. The genes may skip several generations and appear again. Relax, Richie, Darien's yours."

"Thank God," Richie said with a twinkle in his eye as he cradled his little baby tightly to his chest.