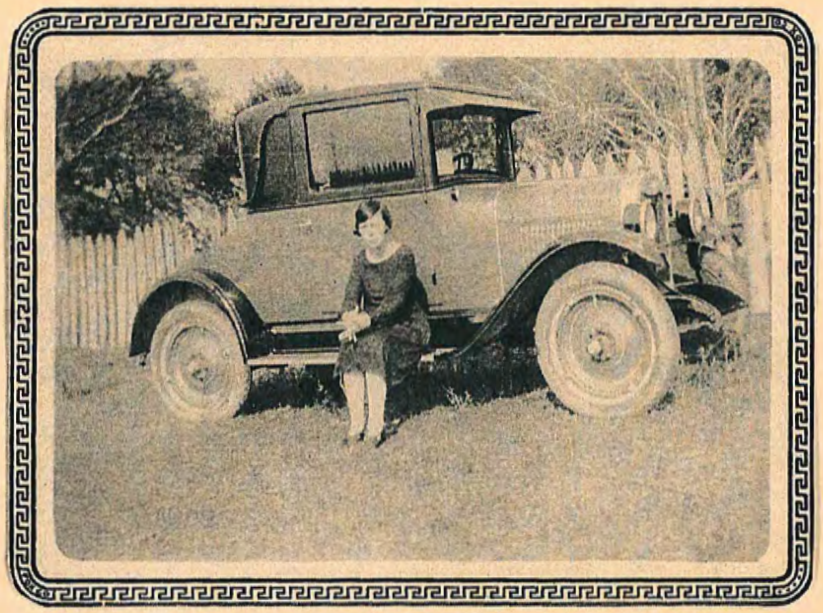

Excerpts from **Our Pages Of Life**

Volume 24b—Thursday Morning Class

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;
Life & Letters, an intergenerational company;
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*) Luella Holland, Melba Martin's mother, circa 1926; Francis Bourgeois; Melba Martin; Lucien Martin with his father, Sidney Martin; Melba Martin's aunts

UL LAFAYETTE LIFE WRITING CLASS
Fall 1999 • Thursday Morning Session

Seated, left to right: **Joan Ireland; Jane Ellen Carstens; Marge DeVillier; Mary Anne Early ••**
Standing, left to right: **Joan Stear, *Instructor*; Lois Diehl; Doris Bentley; Tom Eby; Melba Martin; Francis Bourgeois; Jake Valentine; Lucien Martin ••**

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LIFE WITH AN EARLY HOT RODDER, MY DAD
(Also known as Papa Tom)
by
Tom Eby Jr.

I could hear the tires squealing going around the corner outside our rooming house," Ruth told me. Ruth Patrick was my mother's roommate when Mother and Dad were courting. Ruth and Mother shared a second floor room on the northeast corner of 6th and Arch Streets in Little Rock. Ruth said she had even seen my Dad go around that corner on two wheels. He would have been 20 or 21 then and an old hand at driving. Dad owned his first car, a Model T, when he was 13. He worked as a mechanic while in high school. He had souped up his car with a super charger and made it fit for racing. While in high school and after graduation he worked at Schneider's Garage between Markham and Second on Arch Street in Little Rock. During that time, on weekends, he and a group of friends including John Harmon, would go out on a straightaway on the North Little Rock to Lonoke Highway and block off the highway and have races, two cars at a time down the two lanes of the highway. Their drag races there continued until Sheriff Homer Adkins told them they would be jailed the next time they blocked off the highway. Then, with police sanction, they switched to the Jacksonville Highway, an extension of 13th Street in North Little Rock.

I was in the 2nd grade and we were living on Maple Street when Dad bought an old Dodge and brought it home to rebuild. He completely disassembled all the mechanical parts and placed them on newspapers all over the backyard. I was forbidden to go in the backyard while this operation was going on since I might move some part out of place. Within a week or so he had replaced

the worn parts and completely reassembled the motor and other parts.

Many years later my son Steve was in high school and accomplished a similar feat. One weekend when Judy and I went to New Orleans for the day, we came home to find Steve had motor parts all over the patio and into the back yard. Steve had driven the old oil field pick up truck we had bought for him into the backyard and removed the head of the motor in preparation to take it to the machine shop for a valve job. I figured it would be months before he would get it back together. We took the head in Monday and got it back Tuesday and by the weekend Steve had it all put together. He rebuilt the carburetor, installed new fenders and replaced the tie-rods. Steve must have gotten his mechanical talents from his Papa Tom.

Dad and John Harmon ran the Broadway Garage. Expert mechanics, they were doing o.k. in the repair business until the depression knocked out most of their business and they had to close the shop. Dad went to work for the Arkansas Highway Department in their equipment maintenance section. Starting as a mechanic, he was promoted to shop manager, and eventually, Superintendent of Equipment Maintenance for the entire state. During World War II he was an Army technician who instructed mechanics how to repair and maintain tank engines, which were mostly Cadillac engines. He did a lot of this instruction while on maneuvers in the Mojave Desert.

When we were living on Maple Street, Dad built a chicken house and completely closed in a pen to raise chickens. We used an incubator to hatch eggs and to raise small chicks. The chickens laid enough eggs for us to supply friends and to sell. We frequently cooked eggs with double yokes. We raised chickens

until the day Dad walked into the pen and a rooster clawed Dad from his eye to his chin. We got rid of the rooster and chickens. Afterward we raised pheasants, and then turkeys, but we had no more injuries.

Grandfather Eby's (Charles Fletcher Eby) farmhouse west of Lonoke was lit by kerosene lamps. His farm was in the middle of rice farms and I often watched the harvesting of rice with the thrashers. Later, Dad bought another farm for Grandfather and Grandmother to live on. They had 10 or 12 cows to milk every morning and evening and they sold part of the milk and butter. They tried to teach me to milk cows, but I never really learned that art. When they bought a separator, I learned to operate that machine pretty well. The forty-acre farm had two old peach orchards on it. Dad and I added apple trees, plum trees, pecan trees, fig trees and mostly pear trees, probably about 10 acres in all. Each tree from Stark Nurseries was supposed to have a hole 2 ½ feet in diameter and that deep. We would place mulch and fertilizer in the bottom before placing the tree in the hole and filling in around the root ball. This was a lot of hole digging.

I learned to drive on a converted dump truck which Dad made into a tractor. It was stripped of the body, and the frame was shortened. The back wheels had metal cleats. It had 13 gears, as I recall, 4 in reverse. I will never forget being on the tractor when Dad signaled that he wanted to talk to me. I stopped the tractor and he walked over beside me and asked me to do something. I let out on the clutch while still in gear; the tractor moved forward, hit him in the leg and knocked him to the ground before I could stop it. I was afraid I had broken his leg. I had not run over him though, and fortunately, he only had a minor scratch.

I learned gun safety at an early age from Dad and Carl Tate. On weekends Dad, Carl, and I used to go out to a gravel pit to shoot targets, cans, and bottles with .22 rifles. Occasionally in the summer we went east of Duvals Bluff to Cache River where we stood on a cliff above the river and shot turtles and gars which came to the surface to sun. Turtles and gars were eating the fish eggs so we felt we were doing a community service to help increase the fish population. I became proficient enough to shoot at and frequently hit the heads of the turtles. Carl was the expert marksman. We would often throw a coin in the air and he would shoot it. Sometimes he could hit two coins tossed at the same time. Dad taught me how to shoot his .22 pistol. Some weekends we would go to a seldom traveled bridge over a swampy area and shoot water moccasins on the bank and swimming in the water.

I was eleven when I had saved enough money to buy my first .22 rifle. One Saturday night Carl, Dad, and I went to Sears' basement, to the gun department, and I showed them the gun I wanted. They approved and I purchased a .22 bolt action rifle with a clip. It cost $8.50. I still have it and it is as good as new.

When Dad was teaching me to drive he said, "Always remain a safe distance from the car in front of you. Think that its differential may lock up on it at any moment. If it does, be sure you have enough distance between cars to stop." It is too bad more people don't abide by that rule today, particularly 18-wheelers.

As a boy and a young man, Dad loved hot rodding and racing; however as a father driving the family he did not speed, not ever that I can recall, well maybe 5 mph above the speed limit. My mother, on the other hand, did not watch the speedometer too carefully and had a heavy foot. I recall one occasion when we

were cruising down a new highway at 90 mph. When I pointed it out to her she slowed down and said, "It just crept up there and I didn't realize I was going that fast."

I have previously written about my dad the caregiver who cared for my grandmother, grandfather, grandfather's caregiver, and my mother during her extended bedridden illness. For a hot rodder used to excitement, Dad demonstrated an immense amount of patience.

MY BRUSH WITH THE LAW
by
Melba Martin

It was a Tuesday morning during the winter of 1952. It was a school day, and I had overslept. Unless everything went exactly right, I would be late for the faculty meeting at the Iowa High School. I dressed quickly and rolled on some lipstick. The rest of my makeup would have to wait until recess. Breakfast was out of the question, so I hurried to my faithful navy blue Ford.

By taking a shortcut from the house where I lived on Miller Avenue in Lake Charles, I avoided several traffic lights. I was almost out of the city when I heard the wail of a siren. Its screech grew louder and louder. Then I noticed a flashing light from a police car right behind me. *What could the trouble be? Did I have a low tire? Was my trunk not closed all the way?* As I pulled over to the shoulder of the road, the police car stopped behind me, and an officer walked to my window.

"Ma'am," he began, "Are you aware that you were doing forty-five in a twenty-five mile zone?"

Quickly remembering that I had once heard someone say, "Never argue with the police," I replied, "Well, officer, if you say I was speeding, I guess I was speeding."

"You were doing more than speeding," he countered. "I'm giving you a citation for reckless driving. Let me see your license."

I could think of nothing I had done that was reckless. There had been no other cars on the road, and I had no close calls of any

kind. Nevertheless, I handed him my license and accepted the ticket. As he turned to leave, he said, "Report to traffic court on Saturday morning at 9:00 o'clock, and in the meantime, take it easy." Then he walked to his car and drove off.

Take it easy? I asked myself, as the incident began to soak in. My heart was pounding and racing, and my knees were shaking so much that I had trouble holding down the clutch on my car so I could shift to first gear. Glancing at my watch, I knew there was now no way to get to the faculty meeting on time. And there was THE TICKET. On Saturday morning I would be standing before a judge in court like a common criminal. And that officer had the nerve to tell me to take it easy!

After a slow and careful drive, I arrived at the school. There was no room for my car in the faculty parking lot—just one more reminder that I was late. I parked on the side of the road and hurried to the administration area.

Seeing several teachers walking toward their classrooms, I knew the meeting was already over. I went straight to the office to explain why I was late. Mr. Watkins, the principal, apparently sensing my fragile emotional state, let me off easy. He only looked at me and suggested I get up earlier in the future, although I thought I detected a slight hint of sarcasm in his voice.

Relating my unfortunate incident to my fellow teachers in the lounge during the lunch break brought neither sympathy nor understanding. Instead, each of them took turns to tell of their own traffic violations, or those of others they knew. I reached a low point when someone said, "The fine for reckless driving is fifty dollars." FIFTY DOLLARS! She might as well have said five hundred dollars!

Fifty dollars was more than one-fourth of my monthly salary after deductions. It was the exact amount of money I had been saving every month to attend summer school at the University of Colorado.

"Are you sure the fine is that much?" I asked.

"Fifty dollars or five days in jail," she replied, adding that her husband's cousin was fined that amount for the same offense.

After school on my way back to Lake Charles, I began to think about the alternative to paying the fifty-dollar fine. Five days in jail. If I could explain to the judge that I needed all the money I could possibly save to attend summer school, maybe he would let me do five days in jail on weekends. I could take my books and my little Royal portable typewriter with me and work on lesson plans. It might even make a good story for the newspaper. I could tell an acquaintance, who worked for the *Lake Charles American Press*, about my plight. Maybe she would send a reporter and a photographer to the jail to interview me and take my picture. I could see the possibility for some good captions: "UNDERPAID CALCASIEU PARISH TEACHER WORKS OFF FINE WITH JAIL TIME" or (my favorite) "CHORAL DIRECTOR FACES THE MUSIC." The more I thought about it, the more the idea appealed to me. By the time I reached Lake Charles I was feeling much better.

Instead of driving to the house where I lived, I went to see my uncle and aunt, Buddy and Earline Holland. After listening to my ticket story and my plan to work off the fine by going to jail on weekends, Buddy's initial response was just four monosyllabic words: "You can't do that." Earline's response was an exact echo. Then Buddy expounded his original statement with reason after

reason why I must not go to jail. The reason I remember best is that being arrested puts a permanent blot on your record that can come back to haunt you for the rest of your life. Even though he was pretty convincing, I still didn't like the idea of parting with fifty dollars. At that point I wasn't sure what I would do.

On Saturday morning I arose early. I dressed carefully for I wanted to make a good impression on the judge. My light grey suit, just back from the cleaners, and the coordinated shoes and bag in a darker shade of grey would do just fine. My pink blouse embroidered with tiny seed pearls would give just the right touch of color. I thought my pink hand-stitched gloves and matching pink felt hat might be overdoing it a bit, but at the last minute I decided to wear them, too.

The courtroom was small and drab. Folding chairs were stacked against one wall. A desk placed in a niche in the opposite wall held the ledger where the names of lawbreakers and their offenses were recorded.

An unwashed and disheveled couple occupied two of three chairs set up in the center of the room. I had just walked to the third chair and sat down when an officer came over and said to me, "Ma'am, would you please get up for just a minute?" When I got up, he moved my chair a few feet away. I wondered if perhaps the unwashed couple was dangerous.

Just a few minutes before my case was called, Buddy entered the room with a tall man who looked vaguely familiar. As soon as the judge finished the case he was hearing, the tall familiar-looking man went right up to him without even being announced. *He must be important*, I thought. Then I remembered seeing his picture in the paper. This man was the mayor of Lake Charles! He

and the judge spoke in low tones for a minute or two, then both glanced at me. They faced each other again and concluded their conversation. The judge beckoned the woman in charge of the ledger to the bench and whispered a few words to her. She returned to her desk and wrote something in the ledger.

Then it was my turn. "Melba Brown, approach the bench." I nervously got up and faced the judge. Now I wasn't at all sure I wanted to spend two-and-a-half weekends in jail if the people there looked anything like the unwashed couple.

The judge looked straight at me and said, "Miss Brown, you are charged with speeding. How do you plead?"

"Guilty, Your Honor," I replied.

"Fifteen dollars," said the judge, and he banged his gavel.

Good old Buddy. I suppose he thought that if I didn't have the good sense to make the right decision, he'd better do something to save me from myself.

LUCIEN GOES TO JAIL
by
Lucien Martin

I often think of Keesler Field in Biloxi, Mississippi, where I attended Airplane Mechanics school during WWII. The 1938 Chevrolet coupe I drove while I was there also stands out in my memory. Recently I received a letter from Sam Provost, one of my classmates from Keesler. His letter brought back a lot of memories—one of them about the time I went to jail in the small town of Pass Christian, Mississippi.

Mutt and Jeff were also students at Keesler. Jeff, the tall one, and Mutt, the short one, both hailed from Turkey Creek, Louisiana. Their real names escape my memory, but I do remember that Mutt's girlfriend's name was Leona Russell. She was also from Turkey Creek. I remember her name because one time at mail call, I didn't get any mail. Mutt felt sorry for me, and gave me Leona's address.

One night Mutt, Jeff, and I went to Biloxi to eat and then to see a movie. After the movie, we went to a cafe where we met two girls who talked us into going to a night club close to Pass Christian. The girls knew the bartender at the club. They promised us some free drinks if we took them there.

Mutt and Jeff rode in the Chevrolet's large trunk, and the two girls sat in the front seat with me. Since Jeff had won some money in a crap game at the base, he volunteered to buy some gasoline and pay some of the other expenses. Our thirty dollars-a-month salary didn't go very far.

We arrived at the night club after nine o'clock and went in. We found a table and ordered drinks. The two girls who had hitchhiked with us didn't stay with us very long, and as promised, the drinks were on the house. Since I was driving, I ordered coffee. I recall that the waitress made fun of me for not having a beer instead.

Mutt, Jeff, and I stayed at the club until eleven o'clock. As we walked toward the car, we heard a loud crash. My '38 Chevrolet had been wrecked! Mutt and Jeff began giving the driver of the car who had hit my car a hard time. I took a pencil and paper out of the Chevrolet to record the name and address of the driver who appeared to be very drunk. He told me his name was Jack, and he appeared to be about twenty years old. A crowd soon gathered around us as Mutt and Jeff continued to argue with Jack and three of his friends. One person in the crowd shouted, "Fight! Fight!" When the motorcycle policeman arrived, the crowd quickly dispersed. The policeman was from Pass Christian, and made a report of the accident and left.

A quick check of my car showed it was drivable. I looked at my watch. With a little luck we could still make it to Keesler before midnight when the gates closed.

The Pass Christian policeman who investigated the accident at the club was apparently waiting for us when we drove through his town. With sirens screaming, he drove next to the driver's side of my car and told me to pull over. I looked on the right side of the road and saw that there was no room to park off the US highway 90. I continued until I found a place wide enough to park off the highway and stopped. The cop was furious. He immediately ordered me to turn around and follow him.

In Pass Christian, as we walked toward the police station, the policeman said to me, "You guys from New Orleans think you can come to Mississippi, raise hell, and get away with it, but not this time."

Since my car had a Louisiana license plate, the policeman assumed I was from New Orleans. Apparently he thought that was a good enough reason to arrest me. I later learned that the area was known as a speed trap.

At the station Mutt and Jeff began arguing with him. Since the policeman's complaint was only with me, he turned to Mutt and Jeff and told them to get out of town. Jeff asked him, "How can we get out of town without our driver?"

"Grease your butts and slide out of town!" the policeman shouted.

Not only was I booked on a list of charges that looked a mile long, but the policeman also confiscated my car keys. When the policeman got a call, he locked us out of the station and took off on his motorcycle.

It was a chilly night. We soon got cold as we waited for the policeman to return. Since I was familiar with the workings of cars, I knew that if I could jump start the car, we could use the heater to get warm. I found a wire long enough to reach from the battery to the ignition coil. With a pair of pliers, I bypassed the starter switch and started the car. When the cop returned, he saw us sitting in the car with the engine running and thought we were trying to escape. He immediately came over, lifted the hood of the car, and took the rotor out of the distributor.

The next time he was called away, he locked me in the jail behind the station. He gave me a blanket and a pillow, and I soon fell asleep on the floor of the cell. While I was in jail, Mutt and Jeff hitchhiked back to Keesler.

The next morning I had to face the Justice of the Peace all alone. The cop had succeeded in getting my two witnesses to leave town. The officer showed up when court started and accused me of speeding, reckless driving, drunk driving, disturbing the peace, resisting arrest, fleeing from an officer, and a lot of other charges. The judge and I listened to him until he was finished. The judge then looked towards me and asked, "How do you plead? Guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty of all the charges, Your Honor. The person who was driving drunk, disturbing the peace, and driving recklessly was..." and I reached into my pocket and gave him the name of the man who had wrecked my car in the parking lot at the night club. "Jack is the one who was driving his car while intoxicated. He was disturbing the peace and trying to start a fight with me and my two friends," I said. "Why isn't Jack here in court, instead of me, to be judged for *his* actions last night?" I inquired. I told the judge that since I was driving, I drank coffee at the night club and could prove it because the waitress, whom I mentioned by name, had made a joke about it.

"The reason I failed to stop when the policeman told me to was because there was no room on the side of the road to get the car off the U.S. Highway 90 out of traffic, so I drove a short distance until I came to a driveway where I could park." I also told the judge about jumpstarting the car in order to keep warm, then being put in jail.

The judge dismissed the policeman and took me into his chamber. He told me he was going to drop all the charges against me. He inquired about my background, my parents, my age, and then invited me to his home for a good cup of coffee anytime I went through Pass Christian.

My problems were not over yet. I still had to find Jack, the guy who had wrecked my car. I finally found the house that matched the address on the slip of paper. The house was set on high ground facing the Gulf of Mexico. It was a mansion, with large columns, reminiscent of the plantation homes found along the Mississippi River.

I rang the doorbell, and a butler answered it. I told him that I wanted to talk to Jack. He told me that Jack didn't live there, and closed the door. I rang the doorbell again. A moment later the door opened, and a lady appeared. She must have been Jack's mother. I explained to her that Jack had given me the address of his home after he wrecked my car the night before. She gave me the name of the Chevrolet garage and told me to get my car fixed there.

As the saying goes, "All's well that ends well." But wait! My ordeal wasn't over yet. I was AWOL! But that is another story.

RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME, OR
SO, YOU WANT TO SELL BINGO TICKETS

by

Francis Bourgeois

I attended elementary school at St. Peter's Catholic school in Covington, Louisiana. At that time our home was the only house on the square block that set the boundaries of the school.

One of my older sisters, Mary Rita, and an older brother, Joseph, were also in attendance at St. Peter's. As I look back, I can clearly see why my sister would get the bingo tickets and not me. However, at age five I was sorely disappointed in not getting my own tickets to sell.

You see, we Catholics used the bingo games as a means to help raise money for our school. Most of the students in my class got their tickets to sell. I was an exception and I felt left out and disappointed. No one explained to me why I didn't get any and tears began to well up in my eyes.

I started for home empty handed while my classmates clutched their tickets and left with big smiles on their faces. I began crying. Coming down the inside stairs was an older girl from one of the upper classes named Betty Huffines. "Francis, what's the matter? Why are you crying?"

Through deep sighs and sobs I blurted out, "I don't have any bingo tickets to sell." Perhaps eager to unload a few tickets, she put a screeching halt to the waterworks when she said,

"Now Francis, don't cry. Here, you can have some of my tickets. I have plenty."

My drooping lips were upturned into the biggest smile ever seen in that school. I was so happy I decided to start selling those tickets immediately—all four or five. I knew that I would be the leading salesman. leading salesman.

Without a backwards glance, and without letting anyone know or asking anyone for permission to sell those prized tickets, I set forth on my quest to sell the most bingo tickets in the entire school. I got halfway through the school yard when someone else called out to me. "Hey, Francis, where're you going?"

I turned to see this boy who must have been just two years older than me. What struck me most was his huge orange-red mop of hair atop his head. My newfound friend, Red Cortez, joined me on my journey to capture the bingo sales record. We crossed the street and walked alongside the girls high school called St. Scholastica Academy. That first block was the longest side of their irregular shaped compound.

We turned right and headed towards Jahncke Avenue, known as "Silk Stocking Street." Supposedly, only the rich folks lived there. (I believe it got its name because of all the "runs" in it. Today we call them "potholes.")

Red and I were almost to the end of our second block when a third person called my name. This time the voice was very familiar to me. It was my second oldest sister, Doris. "Francis, where are you and Red going?"

Doris attended St. Scholastica's and was helping to clean St. Peter's Catholic Church across the street from the Academy. her inquisitive face was framed by one of the back windows of the church. When she saw I only had a few tickets, she told me to be sure and go home just as soon as I finished my sales.

Whew! I thought I was going to be ambushed, but instead, I had my big sister's blessing to sell the tickets and become the top salesman.

Red and I continued on for another block and turned onto Jahncke Avenue. I don't recall knocking on anyone's door to see if they would purchase any tickets. After all, we were soon interested in the adventure of walking this mile long street and seeing all the houses, gardens, cats, dogs, cars, huge oak trees, and ditches. Why, one of those ditches was at least twice my height. I am sure I was all of almost 33 inches!

I do recall seeing one prospective customer, if I dare call her that. Red and I were nonchalantly ambling across her property when her shrill voice pierced our ears. "Get out of my yard or I'll call the cops!"

We needed nothing else to awaken us from our daydreams. We both ended our sales careers that very moment. We ran full speed until we reached a stop sign that halted us on our way home. We were only three blocks from the safety of the school yard.

The DuBarry Grocery delivery truck (yes, in the good old days, the stores actually delivered groceries to our homes) was at the stop sign and for the fourth time that fateful day I was addressed. The truck driver called out, "Hey, Bourgeois! You'd better get home. Your mama and daddy are looking for you."

The two young would-be salesmen galloped toward school as fast as we could. When we reached the school yard, Red continued on to his home, his legs hardly touching the ground.

On my way to the house I met my oldest sister, Ethel Eve, whose name I still mispronounce as Ethelee, met me at the seesaws. She was always smiling, but this time she warned me, "Francis, you'd better watch out. Mama is so mad at you. You'd better get in the house right away."

Gulp! I tried to swallow my leaping heart. I timidly entered the house, walking directly to the kitchen. I was going to take my medicine like a man.

Instead of scolding me, Mama picked me up and hugged me. We had a long chat about what happened that afternoon. Mama was mostly concerned with my safety. I did not yet know about the parable of the prodigal son and the joy of parents when their wayward child returns.

Mama brought home the moral of this episode by telling me, "Suppose you had gotten hurt in that deep ditch and couldn't get out? How would anyone have known where to go to help you?"

Mama continued, cautioning me that whenever I would go somewhere in the future always to let her or Papa know my destination so they could help me if I needed them. I gave her a big hug and promised I would always let her know.

When I became a parent, I told each of my four children this story and ended it with the same lesson my mother gave me: *Be sure to let your parents know where you are in case you need help.*

As my children reached their 20s and 30s, they recalled the umpteen times I told them the bedtime story about when their daddy ran away from home.

I did not ask them if they ALWAYS followed my request. In fact, I don't really want to know. The fact that it made a lasting impression on them was enough assurance for me.

MY TV IS DRIVING ME CRAZY
by
Marge DeVillier

Webster defines television as transmission onto a screen with images and sound. There is no one person credited with discovering or inventing television, but many people have contributed to this amazing and important phenomenon which has been unleashed upon us. Some of these early contributors were from England, Russia, and the United States.

TV's history nor its purpose is not what drive me crazy. What really drives me crazy are mostly commercials that I classify as those that drive me crazy and those that really drive me crazy, and then there are those that really, really drive me crazy, and finally those that almost drive me insane. An example in the last category is the one advertising U C Lending with people screaming from rooftops and swimming pools about the fantastic help they received from U C Lending. Those people screaming from roof tops and those suddenly popping up in a swimming pool really scare me. Then there are the psychic commercials with their predictions about the future—phony and ridiculous to me.

I think one of the worst commercials is the 10-10 phone number. Another one that really annoys me is when a diabetic woman comes into view declaring, "My name is Marjorie and I have diabetes and I should be at the drug store right now picking up my supplies, but I'm not." Or "I should be filling out Medicare papers, but I'm not,"and then she answers the door bell and receives a package from Liberty Medical Supplies who delivers her

medical supplies to her door. I wish she would be putting a gag in her mouth, but she's not.

But there are a few commercials that I like, for instance, the little Goldberg girl who does those humorous Pepsi commercials with the Marlon Brando Godfather voice. I also enjoy the Aretha Franklin musical and the other Pepsi Cola musicals, especially that bouncy one that starts with people tapping their feet and then proceeds to other things like the Pepsi Truck that bounces to the time of the music.

And there are others I like, TV commercials as well as TV shows. If it weren't for TV, I would go crazy, too, because TV fills up a lot of time since I had a stroke that has affected my eyes and has paralyzed my left leg and arm. TV, in one sense, has become my newspaper and source of knowledge because it's hard for me to handle the newspaper and books with only one hand.

Talking books are also a godsend for me. I receive books recorded on tapes which come from the Library of Congress through the State Library in Baton Rouge. The library also sends me equipment for playing them, including free postage for sending and returning the books. A lot of authors also record the books they write on tape, too.

Some other things that drive me crazy about TV are the attachments and other equipment used to control it: The ever flashing light to set the time in order to have the VCR work and all the different remote controls, often referred to as the clicker, the channel changer, the thing-a-ma-jig, the whatcha-ma-call-it or the thing or thingy which is always lost and no one knows who had it last even if they have it in their hand right then.

Then there are so many remote controls, the one for the cable, the one for the satellite, the one for the VCR plus the one for the TV. And when I go to someone's house, I have to learn another whole system.

I have what's called interactive television, which means I talk back to my television. One day Joan overheard me say, "Give me a break." When she asked, "Who are you talking to?" I said, "Bob Dole. I'm talking to Bob Dole about his Viagra problem." Joan laughed and said, "Your TV really is driving you crazy, isn't it?"

GRAMMIES COME IN TWO SIZES
by
Joan Ireland

Grammies come in all sizes, so why not give your special Grammies names to indicate their personality and size? In the Pierce family, our immediate Grammies came in two sizes—big and little. I don't remember who named our Grammies, but since Weston was the oldest grandchild, we'll pin the blame on him.

Big Grammy, my dad's mother, was big, so her name was Big Grammy. My other Grammy, Mom's mother, was Little Grammy. Little Grammy did not live near us during our early childhood. She and my step-grandfather lived in Seboeis, Maine, in a small white, shotgun house. I remember the first time I heard their home referred to as a shotgun house. When we visited them, I used to look around to see if a shotgun was hidden somewhere. Grampy looked harmless, but could he have been hiding a shotgun in the house?

We didn't visit Little Grammy often since she lived too far away from our home on Hovey Road in Milo. (I talked with my Brother Walter this week and was shocked when he told me that Seboeis was only fifteen miles from Milo.) Even though we didn't own a car when I was real young, we never traveled as we do today. On the few occasions we did visit Grampy and Little Grammy, we always went to Seboeis Lake which was within walking distance of their home.

A couple of loons made their home on this lake. My only clear memory of the lake is hearing the loons call to each other.

We very seldom saw the loons although we could hear their lonesome cry cut through the stillness of the early morning. Thanks to the advent of TV and Charles Osgood, I have heard the cry of those birds again.

Years later, after I was married and Patti was just learning to walk, we revisited Seboeis Lake and rented a cottage from one of Mom's aunts. We took the rowboat out on the lake and finally were able to see the loons (or maybe their offspring?). Little Grammy, who had passed away the year before, seemed so close to me that day in 1965. For a few moments I was transported back to my childhood, once again visiting my favorite Little Grammy and Grampy in their little shotgun house.

Later in the fifties, Little Grammy and Grampy lived near Boston, Massachusetts, as caretakers at the home of Mr. Grossman, the owner of a chain of Grossman Lumber Stores. Little Grammy cooked and did light housekeeping in the house while Grampy was the gardener. One year when we visited them, Little Grammy took us through the Grossman home. As she touched each piece of furniture, we knew that it was indeed her home. There was one difference that indicated the house wasn't a Brown/Pierce home. Little Grammy served bacon and eggs for breakfast, all cooked in the same frying pan. The Grossmans, who were Jewish, wouldn't dream of eating pork, and even if they did, wouldn't allow the foods to be prepared in the same container.

Grampy and Little Grammy retired and moved back to Milo, Maine, in 1960, a year before Grampy's sister, Gladys McPhail, retired from teaching in Braintree, Massachusetts. Along with my grandparents, Aunt Gladys had purchased a large, two-family house on Main Street in Milo early in 1960. In 1961, Aunt Gladys retired and moved there with Grampy and Little Grammy. They

shared the kitchen and cooked their meals together with Aunt Gladys living on the first floor and Grampy and Little Grammy occupying the second floor.

Because Little Grammy and Aunt Gladys always got along together and had planned for years to retire to Milo, Maine, they purchased the large house where they planned to spend their retirement years. However, it is a well known fact that two women cannot occupy the same kitchen, especially two elderly ladies. It wasn't long before Grampy rented a home nearby and moved there with Little Grammy. Now, however, they all enjoyed the same camaraderie that they had enjoyed while living in adjourning cities in Massachusetts.

Little Grammy visited us in Bristol, Connecticut, in 1963 just before Ray and I got married. I was so happy that Little Grammy was with us and could help Mom make my wedding dress. One of my favorite wedding pictures is one when I am modeling the gown and Mom, with a few common pins in her mouth, is adjusting my gown while Little Grammy is holding a sleeve ready to be pinned onto the gown.

On another occasion, Ray, who owned a motorcycle before we got married, had taken me for a ride around the mountain. When we got back, he invited my mother to go for a ride. Mom absolutely refused, "Ride on that thing? Never! I'm not going to risk my neck on that thing!"

Then here comes Little Grammy, running out to the bike, crying, "Where's the helmet? I'll go with you." Ray and I got married that weekend, and Little Grammy went back to Milo. That visit was the last time I saw my Little Grammy. Little Grammy's health failed during the following winter. Her heart was

bad and every cold or sickness found her growing weaker and weaker. As I was very near the end of my pregnancy, I was unable to make the long trip to see her and Grampy.

I was admitted to Bristol Hospital during the evening of June 2, 1963. When I arrived at the hospital, I called my mother who lived right across the road from us. My mother, who was waiting anxiously by the phone, received another phone call late that night, not from Ray, but from Grampy, "Little Grammy had just passed away."

My brothers and sister left immediately for Milo, Maine, to be with Grampy and to attend Little Grammy's funeral, but Mom waited until Patti was born shortly after 9:00 a.m. the next morning. I vaguely remember Mom and Dad congratulating me on my beautiful, blond baby girl. I was still pretty groggy, as I had been in labor all night.

Mom told me that Little Grammy had passed away during the night. She comforted me when she said, "God took Little Grammy, but He gave us a life, a beautiful 5 pound, seven ounces blond baby girl"—my daughter and Mom's granddaughter, Patricia Dawn.

IT'S OKAY TO CRY
by
Maryann Early

I grew up in a family not prone to expressing emotions. Fear and sorrow were considered signs of weakness. I had always heard, "Don't cry, be a big girl." Hugging and kissing were things done in the privacy of the home and then only by immediate family members. I recall my Dad, on a visit to see my Mother's family in Illinois, kidding her about all the hugging and kissing among all the friends and family—suggesting attention to my attractive mother. I remember remarking, "I've never been hugged and kissed by so many people I just met."

On the other hand, laughter was an integral part of our family life. Dad was a great storyteller—he called his stories "yarns" (a little stretch of the truth). These stories reflected his keen sense of humor, and we often encouraged him to do his interpretation of his favorite prosecuting attorney, which always resulted in bursts of laughter. My parents could laugh at themselves and incidences in their lives.

It was not until I was a student nurse that I can say I truly cried. Admitted to 1200 Men's Ward, a surgical unit of Barnes Hospital, a young man came in for removal of a parotid tumor. Marilyn Shaw and I were on duty getting him ready for surgery. He was young, just a little older than us. Most of the men on the ward were older, but we could joke and kid with this young man.

The following day, Marilyn and I were on the 3-11 PM tour and things seemed to be going well post-operatively for the young fellow. Suddenly, about 10 PM, he went into cardiac arrest.

Immediately, Marilyn, who was small, climbed on the bed and began CPR. The resident surgeon was in the post-operative unit and rushed to assist Marilyn. They were unable to save him—remember, in the early 40's, there were no emergency teams, respirators, or life support systems.

Tears began to flow down our cheeks, and we welcomed our relief. We went directly to our dormitory room sobbing buckets of tears all the way. Between sobs we asked why—what could have been done differently, but we found no answers. It took a couple of hours for us to calm down. Exhausted, we finally fell asleep.

Time tends to heal, and memories of tragic events seem to fade. But on that night I learned an important lesson that has remained—it is okay to express emotion by crying. Thanks to the Acadians, I have also learned to be comfortable receiving and giving hugs and a peck on the cheek.

SEPTEMBER MEMORIES
by
Lois Diehl

For many years September marked the beginning of a new school year. I remember the anticipation of a new teacher and possibly some new classmates. The hours of daylight shortened. The pickup softball games we played in the alley by the church became fewer and fewer as our time after school was taken up with homework. Math, reading, and spelling replaced hitting the ball and running the bases.

A huge buckeye tree stood in the front yard of the house at the very end of our street—Chestnut Street. After school, grabbing the largest brown paper bag I could find, I raced my friends Patsy and Carol Ann to this tree. Scattered over the ground beneath the tree, we found countless little brown shiny treasures—buckeyes.** After gathering our buckeyes, we took the bulging bags back to my front porch to count, compare, and trade—much like Mardi Gras beads. I don't remember doing anything else with them.

Two large maple trees towered over both ends of my front porch. In the summertime they provided shade, but now we eagerly awaited the change of their green leaves into gold and bright orange. For several weeks in the fall, Dad raked and raked these leaves into one or two large piles in the street next to the curb. My friends and I loved to jump into these piles, cover ourselves with the leaves, and toss them into the air with a burst of color as the sunlight caught them. They drifted down over us as we sank lower in the leaves until we were almost covered with the cascade of color. As the leaves dried, their brilliant jewel-like fall colors faded to a rusty brown. Dad lit a match and set fire to the

leaves. We watched as the flames shimmered in our bonfire warming the fall air. As the flames died down, the earthy smell of the leaves was replaced by smoke as the leaves smouldered. Soon only a small pile of dark ashes replaced the huge pile of color.

Our childhood romp in the leaves marked the end of summer. September was a month of change—summer into fall. Year after year I welcomed the changes, most of them simple childhood pleasures. Years later, September 15, 1961, marked another change in my life. It was the day I became a Mother—the day Kevin was born.

**Note: The buckeye is a nonedible relative of the chestnut.

SANDY HO, A STUDENT FROM TAIWAN

by

Doris B. Bentley

Several students from Taiwan attended USL during the late 1970s and early 1980s and enrolled in the Department of Office Administration. I enjoyed knowing all of them. They were very intelligent, good students, and most appreciative of whatever we had to offer.

One of the students was named Sandy Ho. She bounced into my office at the beginning of the school year and told me that she was transferring from a business school for girls in Taipei, Taiwan. USL had accepted her credits, and she was very emphatic that she wanted to get her degree in two years. I had great difficulty understanding her because she had such a pronounced foreign accent. She spoke very fast, ran words into one another, and could not pronounce some English sounds. Even still, she was a very intelligent girl who could take dictation in English, transcribe it, spell, punctuate, and format better than most of the American students, though the process was much more difficult for a Chinese than an American.

Because of her speech and her difficulty understanding some of the things I said, I did not think she would be able to complete the requirements for the degree in two years. I thought about her parents who had sent her halfway around the world to a strange school. They must be wondering about her matriculation. So I wrote Mr. and Mrs. Ho and told them that Sandy had registered in our department, that she had been assigned an advisor, Mrs. Auld, and that she was enrolled in those subjects which would lead to her acquiring the degree. I told them that we would take special

interest in Sandy and help her to adjust here. I did not tell them that I thought the degree would take more than two years. Shortly I received a letter from Mr. Ho written in Chinese which Sandy had to translate for me. (I wish I could find it.)

One day, Sandy asked me if she and some friends could come to my house to cook a meal for me. I didn't know what to expect, nor what to say. As I hesitated, she explained that the students wanted to do something special for me. They had been told that it would be nice for them to cook a Chinese meal for us. I agreed, and four of the Taiwanese students arrived at my house with bags of food. They bantered as they fixed a soup made with fresh tomatoes, a stirfried dish with celery and meat, a salad, and several other dishes. (I wish I had taken notes, as I cannot remember them now.) Each student brought their hostess a gift from Taiwan—a pair of slippers, some coasters, a small wall hanging. They were extremely polite and grateful.

Every now and then, Sandy would pop into my office with a gift—a large wall hanging which her father made for me, a jade brooch, and cloisonne bracelets and earrings, for example. Sandy was anxious for me to understand the Chinese culture. She invited me to a meeting of the Chinese Students Association where they showed a movie of the Japanese invading China. When the International Students Day occurred, the Chinese students dressed in native dress and served Chinese food. The girls wore gorgeous silk dresses made in the traditional straight fit with slit skirts. Sandy made sure that I attended. When the Chinese New Year occurred, She invited me to celebrate with them at the Peking Garden restaurant where we were served food that is not on the usual menu. I was informed that the Chinese food usually served was an American version. This, however, was *real* Chinese food. I was glad that Sandy gave me a glimpse into the Chinese culture.

Sandy progressed in her studies remarkably well. I was impressed with her intelligence, her almost gregarious personality, and her enthusiasm for everything she did.

One day in the spring of 1982, she bounced into my office (by now I was accustomed to her running in with some request or to give me a gift.) On this occasion, she announced that she was going home for the summer and that her parents wanted me to visit them for a week or so. She would make all the arrangements. After recovering from the shock, and giving it some thought, I agreed to go with her.

Sandy indeed made all of the travel arrangements. Apparently, the Taiwanese students worked closely with the Taiwan Embassy in Houston, who took care of them while in this country. We flew from Houston to Los Angeles, to Tokyo, Japan. There we toured Tokyo and Kyoto. Then we flew to Hong Kong, where Sandy contacted a friend of her father. He took us to a Chinese restaurant where again we had REAL Chinese food—not the American version.

We toured Hong Kong and did some shopping. Aunt Flora (George's sister) had asked me to get her some silk material for a dress. I found a beautiful green piece with a bamboo design and bought enough to make a dress for $5 a yard. Imagine!

Then we flew to Taipei, a beautiful, very modern city. The Ho family met us at the airport, and we drove to their apartment. The apartment was on the sixth floor of a building not far from the center of the city. A business was on the first floor, offices were on the next two or three floors, and family apartments were on the floors above. Individual houses like ours are rare because land is so scarce on this well-populated island. The first evening, we ate

a typical Chinese meal—soup, cucumber salad, stir-fried pork and celery, a fish dish, rice as a side dish, and tea.

I was seated in the place of honor in front of the family shrine. The Ho parents did not speak English, but the young brother, who was a student at the university in Taipei did speak English. Sandy and her brother did a very good job of translating for me. Students are taught English all through their schooling. They can read and write quite fluently, but their speech is halting because they do not practice in the home. The parents could not speak English, although the mother had taken classes at the YWCA so that she would be able to converse with me. It was with difficulty that we had a chat. We talked about Sandy's progress in school and she told me about the YMCA.

Mr. Ho had been a soldier with Chiang Ka-shek's Nationalist party in China and had retreated with him to Taiwan in 1949. Mrs. Ho is a native of Taiwan. The population is 84% Taiwanese and 14% from mainland China. These people were still loyal Chinese, but were not sympathetic with the communist government of China.

Taiwan is one large island and several smaller islands located about 100 miles off the SE coast of China. The total area is about 13,900 square miles, slightly smaller than Maryland, with a population of 22 million people. The island was formerly called "Formosa," which I think means beautiful island. When we arrived the azaleas were all in bloom, and I felt that I was in Lafayette in March when our azaleas are blooming. We visited the National Museum, a Buddhist Temple and a Shinto Temple, and we toured and shopped in the city.

Sandy arranged through someone and the Department of Education for me to visit several schools in Taipei. One was a vocational school, one was the private high school for girls which Sandy had attended, and the third was the university which her brother attended.

Education in Taiwan is free for children only through the eighth grade. High school, thereafter, is no longer free. Tuition is then charged, so most students drop out and go to work. However, at the vocational school that we visited, classes are offered after five in the evening and on weekends. The official who hosted us told me that there were four programs offered which those who work could attend and complete high school. Emphasis is placed on the English classes and the international trade classes for all students in Taiwan.

At every school we were greeted warmly; we toured the facilities; we were taken to lunch; and we were presented with gifts. I felt like a VIP!!!

Another highlight of my visit was a meeting with a chapter of the International Secretaries Association in Taipei. I discovered that secretaries in Taiwan had similar problems. They also have a strong sense of dedication to their jobs and pride in the work that they do. It was a wonderful experience.

After we had seen all of the sights of Taipei, Sandy and I took a train along the eastern coast to another University, where the President entertained us, no less. Every school wanted to know if they could get English teachers from USL to come there. They wanted an exchange program. Some of the instructors had been educated in America. Of course, those who escorted us all spoke English very well because of their American education.

After visiting the University we took a bus over the mountains to the western side of the island and then a train back to Taipei. This trip was absolutely electrifying. The mountains and the gorges were exquisite. I had never seen such gorges! Not only was the scenery fascinating, but the people who rode the bus, the hotel in which we stayed, and the restaurants in which we ate are difficult to describe.

Taiwan is indeed a beautiful island, and I am grateful to Sandy and her family for this wonderful experience. At the end of my visit, the Ho family took me to the airport and sent me on my way back to the US. Sandy stayed in Taiwan for the rest of the summer and returned to USL in the fall.

Sandy Ho completed her studies for a degree in Office Administration (it did take more than two years) and she graduated from the University of Southwestern Louisiana. She now lives in Dallas. At one time she was in real estate, but presently she owns her own business, a very successful used automobile dealership. She is married and has a son, Joseph, who is thirteen years old and attends a public school in Dallas. Joseph is very smart and does well in school, but he doesn't like sports, which seemed to concern Sandy at one time. She calls me periodically, and we visit when I travel to Dallas for a SCORE meeting.

I hope our relationship continues.

GREAT AUNT EMMA
by
Jane Ellen Carstens

I remember going to visit my Great Aunt Emma Duperier in her home on St. Peter Street in New Iberia during my childhood and into my early teens. Although I saw some of her children from time to time at family gatherings at Grandma Blanchet's house, Taunte Emma, as she was known, was blind and not as active as she had been for so many years. I thought she was a fascinating person, and enjoyed going to visit her. She was remarkably spry and could still climb stairs unassisted.

I learned from a biographical sketch of Taunte Emma (author unknown) that she was an accomplished pianist, fond of jazz, and composed music. One of her tunes, "The Beaumont Rag," was intended for her great grandchildren who lived in Beaumont. (1) It was not until long after her death at 98 in 1936 that I learned some things about her that were even more fascinating than what I knew.

Emma Mille was born in 1927 near Plaquemine, Louisiana. Her father, Thomas Mille, a wealthy merchant from France, owned a summer home on what was called Isle Derniere (Last Island). Although it was one continuous island in the early 1800's, today it is a composite of several barrier islands lying off the coast of Terrebonne Parish in Southeast Louisiana. These islands form the last segment of land between the mainland and the Gulf of Mexico. There are no inhabitants on Last Island today, but during ante-bellum times it was a favorite summer resort for the families of

wealthy sugar cane growers, cotton planters, merchants, bankers and others. (2)

There were numerous summer cottages and a large boarding establishment to accommodate the visitors. Just behind the village, there was a boat landing on the bay side of the island which was used to unload passengers and cargo from steamboats and sailing vessels of all sizes. (3)

"The summer of 1856 saw the annual return of the regular visitors to Last Island, including Emma Mille's family, as well as new faces, many of whom were from the New Orleans area." (4) On Saturday morning , the ninth of August, the wind was strong and the Gulf was covered with angry waves. (5) The wind continued all day, and many people/visitors contented themselves with admiring the disturbed Gulf at a distance. At night there was a ball in the hotel, which all attended. The party broke up about midnight, and the gay crowd sought their couches, fortunately ignorant of the fate which awaited so many of them. (6) By afternoon the wind was howling, roofs were being blown away. In minutes, the entire island was inundated. (7)

The steamboat Star was due in on its regular passenger run on Saturday night, and when she failed to arrive, fears began to mount. (8) She finally arrived at mid-morning Sunday, but she was driven aground. Now there was no escape. (9)

New Orleans' Monday newspapers gave full reports of the storm and its effects, as did those of other towns. Of the approximate 400-500 inhabitants on the island when the storm struck, slightly more than half survived. (10) Emma Mille's father, mother, sister and child were all victims of the disaster. Emma was

severely injured when a piece of timber fell on her head and blood gushed forth. She remained conscious and felt herself washed out into the waves. She drifted all night long, clinging to a piece of timber. By morning she had been washed up onto the beach and by then was exhausted. A family servant happened to come along and carried her to the wrecked Star. (11)

My great uncle Dr. Alfred Duperier was a widower from New Iberia and was spending his vacation at Isle Derniere when the fatal hurricane and tidal waves struck. In spite of tying himself to a heavy armoire, he was washed out into the Gulf, but finally drifted ashore in the morning. Although weak, as a doctor, he was called upon to help those more seriously hurt than he. (12)

One of those persons was nineteen-year-old Emma Mille. When Dr. Duperier learned that she was now an orphan, he offered to take her to his mother's house in New Iberia to recover from her wounds and sadness. Emma's uncle found out that she had been saved and sent her brother-in law to take her back to her family's plantation near Plaquemine. Fortunately she still had two living sisters, one married and the other a nun. (13)

Dr. Duperier had given Emma a small book of religious poems before she left his mother's house. When she opened it she found this message: *As Divine Providence saved us miraculously, it must be that we were destined for each other.* Dr. Duperier went to visit her in Plaquemine two weeks after she returned home. He told her that he would never forget her and that he wished to marry her. In her account of his proposal, Great Aunt Emma says: "What could I do but accept?" (14)

They were married on December 8, 1856, scarcely four months after they met on that storm-swept beach. Emma's two sisters, Mrs. Odillion LeBauve and Eugenia Mille, were the sole members of her family in attendance at the wedding. (15)

Footnotes:

1. Typewritten article on Aunt Emma and the Duperiers. Author and source unknown.
2. Another article on Aunt Emma and the Duperiers. Author and source unknown.
3. Sothern, James L. Last Island. Introduction, p. 7.
4. Ibid. p.31
5. Ibid. pp. 35-6
6. Ibid. p. 36.
7. Ibid. p 37
8. Ibid. p. 37
9. Ibid. p. 38
10. Ibid. p. 50
11. Ibid. p. 52
12. Ibid. p. 2 and Anonymous account, p. 3
13. Ibid. p. 53
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.

WISCONSIN WHERE THEY ROW
by
Jacob M. Valentine, Jr.

Wisconsin began rowing in 1865. Since then, Wisconsin has rowed eight-oared shells against Ivy League schools and Washington and California universities in the West. Compared to college football and basketball, rowing is inexpensive, but it does not bring in revenue. Some measure of national prestige is brought to the school. After all, out East, the University has long been known as "Wisconsin, where they row." With winning seasons, old "sweeps" and alumni contribute to the Wisconsin Crew Foundation. Wherever we rowed, wealthy alumni would show up to lead the crew in Wisconsin fight songs and "I had a girl named Hannah from Butte Montana" and "High above Cayuga's waters, there's an awful smell. There ten thousand sons of bitches call themselves Cornell."

My career as an oarsman began at the end of the beer counter in the Rathskeller in the basement of university memorial Union. For many years, the UW was the only college in the United States where beer was served. Wisconsin: "Braumeister to the World." Wisconsin's progressive attitudes date back to the revolutions in Europe when hundreds of intellectuals escaped from Germany and settled in Wisconsin.

That September day in 1945 when I stood drinking a beer, Crew Coach Allen "Skip" Walz came over and asked if I had ever considered going out for the crew. Skip had just returned from a stint in the Navy and was recruiting potential oarsmen. I hadn't thought of rowing, but I had always been intrigued by the sight of shells skimming over the water. After spending four and a half

years in the Army, at twenty-eight, I would be the oldest freshman to row for Wisconsin (I may still have that distinction).

When I arrived at the Boat House oarsmen that had rowed as sophomores or freshmen in 1941 formed the nucleus for the Varsity. We novices began rowing The Barge, a great unwieldy scow with eight riggers (oars) on each side, so steady we didn't have to worry about balancing the vessel. on each side, the barge had sliding seats, foot straps, oar locks, and single oars as in a shell. We learned how to correctly dip the oar into the water and pull it through, lift it out, and feather the blade above the water as the scow moved forward.

In an eight-oared shell, the crew face the stern with only the "coxun" looking forward. The oarsman sits in a seat that moves on a track with his feet fastened in leather straps used to pull his body forward when recovering his forward position. In the starting position his body is drawn up into hunched position, his arms stretched forward with the oar blade "feathered," that is, flat, parallel with the water. in a race, the started shouts: "Ready on the left, ready on the right, ready all, ...go!" At that moment all oars dip into the water with the top edge even with the top of the water, and the stroke begins. The oars catch the water, pulling the shell forward.

If everyone is pulling together, the shell surges forward with the bow rising slightly. The coxswain keeps the boat straight and may call for increased pace, but the stroke sets the rhythm. Those behind follow the person in front of them. it's a great feeling when everyone is working smoothly, the boat is balanced, all oars enter and leave the water at the same time, and the boat leaps forward.

After the barge training, we graduated to four-man shells where we practiced the techniques of rowing and got in shape. Finally, the big day came when Coach Skip Walz assigned seats in the several eight-oared shells. Roy Rom, a coxun before World War II who had came back for graduate work, was Skip's assistant. Guys who had rowed before World War II were given their old seats in the Varsity boat. Carl Holtz, who became All American, was Stroke. Chester Knight was Bow man. Carlyle "Bud" Faye competed for the position of Cox, but his position was secure. Bud was smart, an engineering student.

Despite his reputation, Skip Walz wasn't the best coach in the world, but most of the crew idolized him, though we laughed behind his face. Once, he invited us to his home. There we found him in a big leather chair wearing a heavy wool sweater, the very picture of an Ivy league or British coach. He relied mostly on his veteran crew. He once said to me before race, "I'm afraid...I'm afraid (his very words), I'm going to have to put you in 'cause Falconer has an engineering test coming up." That's not the way you inspire confidence in a novice. In those days, coaching was not the science or art it is today, but some coaches, such as Al Ulbrickson, University of Washington, through their skill and personalities, were able to consistently bring off winners. A winning tradition can play a strong part. Among the eleven crews at the 1947 Poughkeepsie Regatta, six coaches had rowed at University of Washington.

There was competition among the guys vying for a place on the Varsity heavyweight crew (in those days there were only two crews: heavy weight Varsity and Junior Varsity). Coach Walz had a nucleus for his first selection. They were juniors Carl Holtz, Dick Mueller, Paul Klein, and senior Chester Knight. Three freshmen, Dick Tipple, Gordy Grimstad, and Fred Suchow, who

rowed in high school, were early selections. When not on the Varsity, I was an alternate. Joe Binder and I were among the also-rans. In 1947, LeRoy Jensen, Don Petersen, Charles Stearns, Frank Harris, Paul Honzik, Otto Uher, and Bill Sachse rounded out the competition for the Varsity or Junior Varsity. At the end of season, the Varsity consisted of Carlyle Faye, coxswain, Carl Holtz, stroke, Don Petersen, Dick Mueller, Leroy Jensen, Gordon Grimstad, Fred Suchow, Dick Tipple, and Ralph Falconer, bow. I went to meets either on the Varsity crew or as a substitute.

In 1946 and 1947, Wisconsin had the heaviest university crew, averaging 188 pounds, while ten other crews averaged 181 (range 174 to 185). Later, crews became taller and heavier. In 1979 Yale's Varsity averaged 6 feet and 200 pounds. By moving people to various seats in the shell the coach can tell how the boat runs. The shell sits up correctly with no wobbling. The swirls or eddies left by the oars are deep and circular and persist far behind the shell. The oars come out of the water together with a little splash. The oars are feathered slightly above the water. There was great disparity in abilities between our Junior Varsity and the Varsity. I never enjoyed rowing in the Junior Varsity. It never ran as smoothly as the Varsity.

During Spring Break, we rowed twice a day. First to Picnic Point, then to Maple Bluff on the other side of the lake, and then back, miles and miles. After the morning session and lunch, Joe Binder and I would go to Bill Horvath's apartment and listen to Beethoven's Seventh or another classic record until we dozed off. What a joy! Thoroughly tired, the three of us would fall asleep on a couch or chair for a couple hours until we had to row the afternoon session. During my first two years at the UW, I lived two lives—one, as a student, interested in the intellectual life, I spent a lot of time in the Rathskeller, where I did most of my

studying and goofing off; the other, the life of the athlete. The crew and most other jocks seldom came to the Rathskeller, except to get ice cream. Through the Sports Department, I worked in the dishwashing room at Liz Waters, a girl's dorm, where Bob LaFollette, The Third, threw "fits of agoo," as he called it, running around like a crazy man. We had good times down there in the steamy room. As a reward, we ate and sometimes dated the girls waitresses. I also worked at the Primate Lab doing experiments with rhesus monkeys for Dr. Harry Harlow. Aside from the "A" grade, we got all the peanut butter and peanuts we could eat.

In winter, the eastern schools practiced on rowing machines with flowing water that simulated the forward movement of the shell. At Wisconsin we rowed on ancient rowing machines on the top floor of the Armory. Eastern lakes and rivers opened up at least two weeks sooner than Lake Mendota at Wisconsin. At Washington and California, crews rowed outside all year. In winter we sometimes rowed in four-oared shells on the Yahara River that flowed between Mendota and Monona lakes and rarely froze.

The Eastern Sprint championship, the first major race after World War II held on the Severn River at Annapolis on May 11, 1946, was won by Wisconsin over nine eastern schools. The next week I rowed my first race at the Henley Regatta on the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia against University of Pennsylvania, coached by "Rusty" Callow. A barge anchored on one side of the course compressed the course and we locked oars with Penn's Junior Varsity. But we came from behind and managed to win over Penn's Varsity. It was rumored that John Kelly, a contractor and rabid Penn fan, knowing that Wisconsin's shell would be cramped against the other boat, had anchored at the barge. In his youth, John Kelly Sr., the best sculler in the United States, was denied

competing in singles at the Diamond Henley Regatta at Oxford, England. Kelly, as a laborer, had "worked with his hands," and was therefore not a "Gentleman." When he returned to Philadelphia, John Kelly mailed the Queen of England a brick that his company made. John Kelly, Sr., was the father of the future Princess Grace of Monaco, and his son, John "Jack" Kelly, Jr., was assistant coach at Penn. Earlier, John Kelly, Sr., molded Jack, Jr., into a single scull champion who later won the Henley and an Olympic gold medal—sweet revenge.

I did not feather my oar well and had trouble keeping up, particularly when Carl Holtz got excited during a race and brought the beat up to forty or more strokes per minute. After we extricated ourselves in the barge incident, I was inwardly pleased when Carl "caught a crab." An oarsman catches a crab when, in pulling, the oar slips in his hand and the blade dives downward. In a severe case, the shell comes to a stop—which it did at the Penn race. Vital seconds were lost as Carl recovered his oar and got the boat moving again. We did catch up to Penn and won—we wouldn't let Carl down.

On June 1st, I rowed in the Varsity boat in the two mile race on Lake Cayuga at Cornell, Ithaca, New York, against Cornell, Penn, and Princeton. Rain and wind conditions were too rough on the lake, so the race was held on a sheltered inlet lying alongside the lake. Because the inlet was too narrow for four boats at one time, heats had to be held. Wisconsin won its heat against Penn and went on to win the final one mile race against Cornell. I traveled to races at Cornell, Poughkeepsie, Philadelphia, Berkeley, Seattle, Cincinatti, and Detroit but didn't row at the historic Poughkeepsie Regatta. Because of the sporadic behavior of currents and winds on the river, this was the last Regatta.

In a letter to girlfriend Orpha, I wrote, "I strained a back muscle, so I'm out of the running. It's both irritating and a relief not to row; it is the best race to row but probably the most exhausting. (The boys are laughing—(1) because I couldn't spell *exhausting*, and (2), why I should be writing the word, having done nothing but eat and sleep since we arrived)." I wrote that five crews were sleeping in three boat houses on the banks of the Hudson River and that I had visited Roosevelt's home, three miles downriver. The day before, Curt Drews, our rigger and boat builder, the crew manager, a couple other side-liners, and I had painted a large *W* (red on white background) on the Palisades across the river. It was traditional that crews repaint their school's initials on the rocks.

On the trip to Seattle on an unpressurized airplane, everyone got sick except me and a girl who sat across the aisle. She and I held hands and laughed at the guys in their misery. The races at the University of Washington, on Lake Washington, were the last and biggest of the season. While awaiting race day, a girl's sorority invited us to lunch, held in the mansion home of the inventor and maker of the famous Kaywoodie pipe. For me it was a fiasco. I had always been shy talking to girls. maybe the frat boys in the crew could giggle with the kiddies. What does a thirty-year-old man say to a twenty-year-old sorority girl? I could do it now, maybe.

I went along as a replacement but I didn't row. On race day, the wind on Lake Washington was blowing hard from the landward side that caused a chop on the inside of the course and waves on the outside. The race should have been called off or postponed, but officials let it go on. Ten shells lined up, and the started gave the order, "Ready on the right, ready on the left?—Go!" Within the quarter mile, six shells in the outside lanes, including

Wisconsin's, were filled with water and had to be rescued by motorboats. The crews in the calm waters closest to shore got first, second, and third places.

It wasn't the first time that a Wisconsin shell sank in rough water. To catch up with the eastern crews in Spring, it was imperative to get out on the lake as soon as possible. lake Mendota finally opened up in late March, so despite a wind coming from the north, out we went. As we rowed along the shore, the waves splashed into our shell until it filled with so much water that we had to abandon ship and swim to shore. Some guys couldn't swim. With the temperature just above freezing, hypothermia can set in quickly. Fortunately, the water was shallow and we were close to shore so everyone got out safely.

With more than one hundred eighty years of tradition, Henley Royal Regatta on the Thames River is the greatest outdoor social event in England, bigger than Wimbledon, bigger than the Derby. With little or no publicity, more than one hundred thousand people attend. In America, one tradition takes place after the shell is taken out of the water. The crew throws the cox'n off the landing dock into the water. Another American tradition (I don't know if it has traveled to England) is that losing crews give their rowing shirts to the winning crew. For example, after the boats are in, Seat Five loser takes off his T-shirt, and with some grace (I told you it's a gentleman's sport) hands it to Seat Five of the winning shell. I once had a whole drawer devoted to losers' shirts, and I still have mine.

After a couple years, I gave up rowing. I wasn't getting any better. Before a race I suffered nerves. I wanted to quit earlier, but Skip convinced me to stay on. He said everyone had nerves. Younger fellows coming out of three or four years of high school

rowing replaced our crew mates as they graduated. Skip Walz, with a good offer from Yale University, took Carl Holtz and Roy Rom with him as assistants. I rowed for a season under Norm Sonju, who in the thirties had rowed at University of Washington. He had been "Stork" Sandford's assistant at Cornell. When I was introduced to Sonju at Wisconsin, he asked me if I ever learned to feather my oar. He had seen me row at Cornell. I just sadly shook my head.

There have been a number of famous men who once rowed. Dr. Benjamin Spock was an Olympic gold medal oarsman in 1924. At University of California's boathouse I saw a picture of Gregory Peck, an oarsman in the '30's. The old boathouse back of the Armory was abandoned and a new one was built farther out along Lake Mendota with modern equipment, including a rowing tank, fancy portable rowing machines, ergometers to measure energy expended by an individual, a weight room (muscle building, which I advocated years ago, is now part of training), and a large storage shed for the shells. Boatbuilder Kurt Drews retired, but showed up for many years to cook steaks at the annual Crew Get Together.

In keeping with family traditions, son Jake III and girlfriend Carrie, now his wife, also rowed at Wisconsin. In 1997-1998, granddaughter Ashley rowed at Wisconsin in the girls lightweight crew. The crew has rowed in the "On The Rock" (Rock River) at Rockford, Illinois. Other races were held in Virginia and included a two-week training session for the girls. Her interest is also music, and in 1999 she will spend a year at a French university in Provence near Arles. Grandson Jake III rows at Purdue.