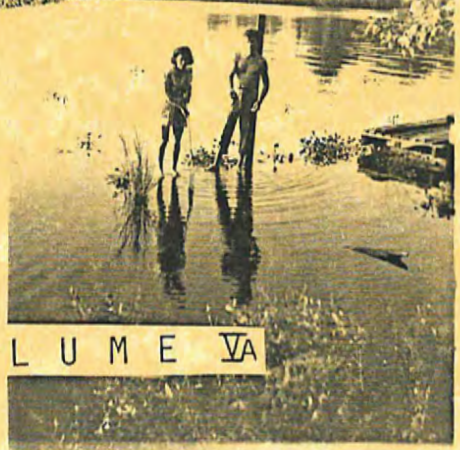
Life and Letters



VOLUME VA

Emily Dickinson once confessed, "I scarcely know where to begin, but love is always a safe place." At the closing of each semester of LIFE AND LETTERS, I, too, find myself at a loss. Where does one begin expressing the gain intimated by the loss of words? For starters, I present to you this collection of stories. Within these pages lie the lessons of the 'lives of my life history writing students. For their "writing" kind of giving I am grateful. My students have given me their hopes and heartaches and have shown me that the key to the future is sometimes a wise look at the past. From people they have met to the people they have become, these friends have become my teachers. Welcome, again, to the stories of reminiscence that teach us to laugh at the future. Enjoy them as you read on.

-- Joan Stear
April 1992

Again, LIFE AND LETTERS thanks the University of Southwestern Louisiana and Lafayette General Medical Center for their support.

Front Cover (clockwise from upper righthand corner): Nell Clark; Bea Gresham; Myrtis King; Esther and Ed Parker; Bonnie Gillis; Helen Huckabay; Eleanor Dresbach; Chris Smith; (center) Charles Bernard; (left center) Wilma and Durwood Neveu

LIFE AND LETTERS (Tuesday morning class, 4/92)

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MY HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY TEACHER

by

Wilma B. Neveu

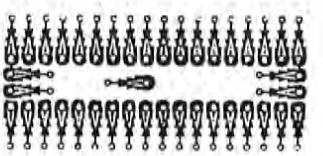
Mrs. Rose was my high school history teacher at Opelousas High. She taught me ancient history in my junior year and American history in my senior year.

Her method of teaching history made the subject very interesting to most of her students. Mrs. Rose would use our history textbooks and divide the chapters into sections, such as, "after the American Revolution to the Civil War"; the Civil War would be another section. The class would outline the section all together, discussing the different heading for each topic. After completing the outline, Mrs. Rose would have us continue to use our textbooks to write about a paragraph under each heading of the outline, or fill in the outline, as we called it. She usually gave us two class periods as well as homework to complete this assignment. The third class period we discussed our paragraphs under the different topics, after which she would assign each of us a subject that we had to make a report about from the outline. We had to use references from the school library. We were able to complete our report as we discussed the outline and wrote our paragraphs or filled in the outline.

One day in class as we were discussing the paragraphs in the outline, Mrs. Rose called on Jack Perrault to tell us what he had about Andrew Jackson. Jack answered, "He was born and he lived until he died." I don't know what grade he received on that answer, but Mrs. Rose did assign the subject of Andrew Jackson, the 7th President of the United States, to Jack to make a complete report about him. Jack's answer had the whole class laughing.

Mrs. Rose permitted us to go to the library to work on our reports. We could also research and write during our study hall period. After the reports were completed, usually by the third class period. each student would make his/her report to Mrs. Rose and the class. She encouraged us to make notes as the different students made their reports. After completing all the reports, Mrs. Rose would give us a written test on that section. Then we would take the next section and continue as before.

This method of teaching history made history very interesting to me, and I remember the subject more clearly. Mrs. Rose made quite an impression on me and on most of the Opelousas High graduates whom she taught.



A PLACE IN MEMORY

by

Nancy Moreau

The home of my paternal grandparents, Jim and Laura Ann McGill, was located in rural Anderson County, South Carolina. Dean's Station, a train station that no longer exists, was a few miles away. The house sat back from the main road. A row of hedges bordered the roadway leading to the backyard of the house. We always entered from the back porch to the kitchen and dining area. Mama, Papa, Eula Lee, James, Pete, and I seemed to visit more frequently as Lucille and Macie grew older. The kitchen always felt so warm in winter. The smell of cooking food such as roast chicken and cornbread dressing or cured ham greeted us. When leaving the house to play, I always managed to pass through the kitchen and pick a baked sweet potato from the warming oven of the wood burning cook stove.

The parlor was next to the dining kitchen area. I remember the sideboard with the mirror in back, the grandfather clock, the fireplace and mantel, and the pretty kerosene lamps. The wide hallway divided this part of the house from the bedrooms. In the hall was a pump organ, a wash stand with a white pitcher and bowl, and a hall tree. The pitcher had a wide lip, different from any other I have seen.

The front porch swing would hold at least four of us. We played hide and seek with our cousins, Alvin, Lauree and Ray Jones. Aunt Ola always called Ray (a girl) Biddy Ray. We found hiding places near the house, the hedge, and the smoke house. I learned early never to hide with Alvin, as my hiding place was detected immediately because of his uncontrollable giggles. He quickly earned the name of Snitz, a name that stuck throughout childhood.

The building in back of the house was the water well and smoke house. The salt, pepper and other seasonings were rubbed well into the shoulders and hams, then hung in the smoke house. Sausage was ground and seasoned and "cracklins" cooked in the black iron pot on the fire outside.

Grandpa had a large peach orchard on the hill above the house where he grew Elberta and other peaches. The orchard was beautiful in full bloom in the spring. The peaches were ripe and juicy in August. There were apple trees in a lower place. One of these was a "sweet apple." It was always eaten raw with a special sweet, juicy taste. I haven't seen or eaten one of these apples in many years.

The blacksmith shop was further away from the house. Here Grandpa, Papa, Uncle Julian or Uncle Blease shod the horses and mules. They sharpened the plows in the shop, too. I remember the sound and echo of the blows striking the anvil when the plows were sharpened. We were never allowed inside when any work was being done as the fire had to be very hot.

Grandma's garden I loved best. It must have been at least

one hundred feet in length and width. A wide walkway led to the main road with various shrubs along the way and two cedar shrubs at the end. There were beds of verbena, petunias, snapdragon and sweetpeas. The lilac bushes were beautiful with their lavender blooms (there is no other smell like lilacs) in spring. I cannot remember the flower of the pomegranate tree, but remember instead the thorns and fruit. The fruit had a bitter tang; even with its many seeds, I ate it anyway.

The roses Grandma loved most of all, cutting a bouquet for any guest leaving. Grandma was a gentle, soft spoken person with the philosophy "If you can't say anything good about someone, don't say anything at all." The memory of the beauty and peacefulness of the garden reminds me of Grandma and a phrase from the old hymn "I come to the garden alone while the dew is still on the roses."

The house and farm were sold at Grandpa's death in 1943; Grandma had died in 1938. A few years ago the house burned. The area remains basically the same with the tenant houses being renovated and updated. There is now electricity and the roads have been blacktopped.

JUDY
by
Hilda Faul

"Surely I have a delightful inheritance." Psalm 16:11

The wedding march sounded, and I stood to watch the radiant bride meet her beloved at the altar. As I turned, the groom's expressions caught my eye. Love, joy, and desire for her brightened his face as he beheld her in a brilliant white gown! He saw only her perfection and beauty. Truly, he delighted in her!

This wedding made me think of Dad's and my wedding day and of the vows we had taken and lived by! That was so long ago, yet seemed like only yesterday! How quickly the years come and go! Through thick and thin, ups and downs, wars and peace, we had made it a good marriage. The fine golden threads of our faith had given us strength; during times of trouble, weariness vanished! I remembered well how sometimes Dad and the boys were helping me grow; other times I was the teacher! Together through forty years we grew from the seeds our families had planted in us, were fed, and nourished by the nutrients of our past.

I remembered a very special person who came into my life when I was a young bride, Judy Wells. Judy became a very good

friend. An older military spouse, she had been through a lot and knew it all! She taught me many valuable lessons. One of the most important lessons learned was that of giving of myself, my talents, and of some of my time. Lord knows, none of us had money in the late 40's and 50's!

Judy gave me pointers on how to become a good military spouse, on how to keep my family well fed while on a very tight budget. I learned to prepare ground meat into at least a hundred different ways! She taught me how to care for my children in sickness and in health, how to clean house the military way! She reminded me that this would make things easier for all of us if suddenly Dad were transferred to some other part of the world. Judy helped me to grow, to make a home for my family, and to start building memories of my own. My only regret is that she didn't tell me to put these memories on paper! But now I've "seized" the chance to do so!

On her first visit to our apartment, Judy brought me a delicious coffee cake baked with love, Texas style! It wasn't anything that came close to my mother's gateau (layer cake), gateau sirop (syrup cake), or torte doux (sweet dough pie), but what an unselfish gift of love! Judy taught me how one person can share with another in a special kind of way, asking for nothing in return.

I went on from that moment to value differences, to grow, and learn from all kinds of different people; to be stretched beyond the smallness of my own little world; to be of one heart and mind with eternal purposes in other people's lives as well as my own. It was scary at times, not having any family around or even nearby to depend on, never knowing how I would manage unpredictable situations! "I would have to learn," Judy said, "to turn to strangers for help in times of need!" It became a lesson well learned! I had to put this advice to use on several different occasions during our years in the military and on into civilian life! My friend Judy had eased my fears and brought joy and strength into my life that had followed me through the smallest and largest of life's crises!

As Shannon and Ian repeated their marriage vows, I prayed that Shannon would have a wonderful friend like mine to help her grow through many years of marriage. I saw these two young people rejoicing in their steadfast love, their desire to provide for each other and to protect each other from all harm until death. I know that they are still "kids under construction"; but I prayed that as children of the Lord they would help one another become what He wanted each of them to be.

Tears came to my eyes (I always cry at weddings) as I thought about the financial expenses of raising a child up to this point. This wedding must have cost Glen and Madline plenty!

I also thought about the many other young people that aren't taking these vows seriously and do not keep them. "If it doesn't work out, we'll get a divorce," they say. I pray that this marriage will last and that these two people will still feel about each other fifty years from now the same way they do today!

Judy came to mind once more. She had taught me so many things. And I learned so much as Dad and I grew in love-- growth in wisdom, grace, time in prayer and reflection, even suffering and perhaps, rejection. Costly, yes, but the rewards are worth it in a good marriage!

The bride and groom are pronounced man and wife. The wedding is over; their future lies ahead. As for right now, this moment, it is time to party! "Laissez les bon temps rouler!"

CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES

by

Liz Moore

In the course of "growing up," I experienced my share of happy moments and hard knocks as well. On some occasions, I had been my own worst enemy and had brought these not-so-happy times upon myself, usually through impatience, or "bull-headedness" as Daddy called my headstrong (gung ho) attitude towards life. Needless to say, I was Daddy's child-- the strong and fearless. Daddy had expected his first born to be a son. I tried never to let him down.

Daddy had worked as a roughneck or roustabout in the oilfields, and at some time had injured his back; nothing crippling, but the injury left him in pain. In the post depression years he worked as a carpenter and cabinet maker and, as such, used his car to transport the tools of his trade. The importance of the care given this means of transportation was, at times, a mite hard for me to value as Dad did.

In 1940 as a senior in high school, I was, on occasion, privileged to take Daddy's car for a spin around town. At that time, Lafayette extended on the east to Louisiana Avenue (by the Municipal Golf Course), south to Pinhook Road and the Vermilion River, then the western boundary to S.L.I. (U.S.L.) and Lafayette High (now Lafayette Middle School) on University, and finally to Cameron Street (U.S. 90) from Four Corners to the North and back east to Louisiana Avenue.

The weekend that will always be in my memory as one of "putting foot in mouth" or worse, taught me a lesson about choices and consequences. Dad was undergoing tests at the Veterans Hospital in Alexandria, but was home for the weekend. As Sunday afternoon approached, I ventured to ask Daddy if I could use the car for a short time before he had to return to the hospital. After a thoughtful moment he said "no"-- not what I wanted to hear. I was downright upset and spent the rest of the afternoon pouting.

When the time came for Dad to leave, I did a disappearing

act and refused to say "goodbye." I knew that my actions hurt Dad, even as I secretly watched him drive down the gravel street, dust curling behind the black 1939 Chevrolet.

As the sun set, I began to feel ashamed. I had hurt my Dad; I knew that he loved me and would have let me use the car under other circumstances. I went into the house with a sad heart to write a letter of apology to Dad. As I wrote, tears dropped on the letter. I knew Dad wouldn't hold this against me; he had to know that I was sorry for being so rash.

After school the next day, I hurried to the Post Office--then located at the corner of Jefferson and Vermilion Streets--to mail my letter. Would you believe the stamp cost three cents? Our letters must have crossed, because on Tuesday there was a letter to me from Dad. Although I knew the message would contain a reprimand, there would also be words to let me know that he wouldn't hold my thoughtless behavior against me.

As I read Dad's letter, once again tears slipped down my cheeks onto the pages; this time the tears cleansed out some of the hurt I had been feeling. I was sure Dad was having the same emotions as I, and now we could both continue with the living at hand.

Dad's words on the now yellowed fragile pages of his letter have always remained with me-- a reminder that choices have consequences. Also this episode helped me to see and know the love and concern which he had for me that he could best express in writing.

GROWING UP

by

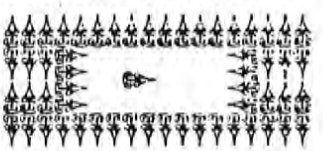
Bonnie Gillis

Our house in Electra, Texas, was the only house that I lived in until I was seventeen. School and church were the main things for Nookie and me, sometimes a movie on Saturday. We would rather be home, though, where there was always a game or something going on in our yard or on the playground. There was an area for Sylvan's poll vault equipment. He had records in Austin for his four years in high school. He won lots of medals, three little gold track shoes that his three daughters wear on a chain today. There was a baseball diamond and a place to play football. Sometimes the boys would have a touch game when Nookie and I could play. If any boy said "damn," Dub would send him home. He didn't allow any bad language in front of his little sisters.

Nookie had her own baseball team. One day she needed a fielder and told me, "Just stand out there." She was desperate

for eight players. While standing there, just by pure chance, I caught a fly ball. Nookie was elated. My luck was pure joy for her. Sports was not my cup of tea, so to speak. I would rather play dolls and make doll clothes. I spent a lot of time in our play house, making clothes for Nookie's dolls and mine.

After we started to school, my two school teacher aunts from East Texas would come and spend the summer. One summer they made Nookie and me a dress for each school day. My one Sunday dress was really special. My mother sent Aunt Bird Lee to the dressmaker to have yards of material hemstitched for ruffles. My ruffles were to be blue because Nookie had blonde hair and pink was her color. When my aunt returned from the dress maker she said, "Eff, she made a mistake. The pink is for Bonnie." As she said that, she winked at me, and I loved her forever. My mother wasn't dumb, but she didn't say a word; so that was the end of the pink and blue stuff. I had pink things after that, thanks to Aunt Bird Lee.



OUT OF THE PAST-- PART VI

by

Myrtis King

To close these tales of "Out of the Past," let me tell of my first trip to the panhandle of Texas and the Great Plains. My uncle, Raymond Champion, was the station agent for the Santa Fe Railroad in Brownfield, Texas. As such, the company furnished him a house, and his mother, Kate Champion, stayed with him doing the housekeeping and cooking.

Our trip started from our home in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and the first day we drove to Handley, Texas, where we spent the night at my step-brother's house. At that time Dallas and Fort Worth were thirty miles apart and there were six little towns between. I've forgotten the names of all but three-- Grand Prairie, Arlington, and Handley. Handley was the last town before you reached Fort Worth. Our visit was only overnight, and the next day, another uncle, Hervey Champion, met us in Fort Worth and went with us to Brownwood, where we visited my grandmother's brother, Print McLeod, and his family.

My Aunt Edith and her two-year-old daughter, Rhea Ferne, joined us in Brownwood, and we headed northwest towards Brownfield. Now there were seven of us in the Dodge touring car-- Mama and Daddy, Carlton and me, Hervey, Edith, and Rhea Ferne, plus our bulldog, Neff, who had been taught to ride on the running board. He made the whole trip with us riding on the running board.

One thing I recall about this trip was going up on the Cap

Rock at Post, Texas. I was always good at asking questions, and when I asked "What is the Cap Rock?" no one answered me. It was several years before I learned you go up several thousand feet on to the high plains at that point. I was told that the makers of Post Toasties were originally from Post, Texas. We had to stop once and let the car engine cool due to the steep grade. Then we traveled on to the top, and there before us were miles and miles of nothing but miles and miles! It wasn't far then to our destination, Brownfield.

Why Daddy wanted to go to Roswell, New Mexico, I never knew; but I guess being from Mississippi, and so close to New Mexico, he felt he had to go. We left Hervey in Brownfield, and the rest of us started across the plains. Never before had I seen huge flocks of sheep, other than in the movies, and I was fascinated at seeing flocks of a thousand or more moving along together, with the sheep herder and one or two dogs guiding them. When we met them, we would have to stop the car until they passed.

We spent the night sleeping under the stars, or I should say trying to sleep, because we could hear coyotes in the distance, which did not offer any comfort. Edith had given us all a good laugh, though, when we ate our supper of pork and beans with only the car headlights to see by. She suddenly yelled "I ate a moth!" The rest of us moved hurriedly away and let the moths have the lights.

Roswell was a surprise to me. Along the roadways were many artesian wells with ditches full of water flowing from them. Never again have I seen water flow like that, and I have often wondered if they still have such a bountiful supply of water.

The trip back to Brownfield must have been uneventful as I only remember one thing. We were driving merrily along when Daddy asked, "Where is Neff? He isn't on the running board." We turned around and started back, each one offering ideas. Suddenly we could see him, two or three miles away, running towards us. Apparently we had made a rest stop and failed to call him when we moved on. It is hard to say who was happier when we met, but Neff was on that running board from then on.

Back in Brownfield, my uncles decided to take Carlton and me to the picture show. To two impressionable twelve-year-olds, going to the movies with two young men was thrilling. I had a very good time until I got home and started to undress. I discovered I had worn my dress wrong side out! Talk about being laughed at. I was so humiliated!

I have been back to the plains and the panhandle many times since then, though not to Brownfield or Roswell. I've always loved those wide open spaces. I have found a prettier way to get to them. Instead of going up on the Cap Rock at Post, my husband and I liked to go to Silverton and north to Claude, passing through Palo Duro Canyon and crossing the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River. On this route the scenery is breathtaking, and you really do not realize you are climbing until you see before you those miles and miles. I do hope my visits are not all in the past.

SOME USES FOR WILLOW SAPLINGS

by

E. D. Parker

When we first moved to the farm about 1918, Mr. and Mrs. Scruggs were neighbors living about two miles west of the Ellison-Thorn ranch house, or about a mile and a half west or our farmhouse. I remember Mr. Scruggs only slightly because he died soon after we moved. Mrs. Scruggs, on the other hand, is still vivid in my memory. She had a slightly aquiline nose, brown eyes, and brown hair pulled back tightly and fastened in a bun on the back of her head. One of the most memorable things about her was her wooden leg, made something like a stilt. The upper end was fastened at the waist with a belt, below was a padded pocket for her knee, and from there the prosthesis tapered down to a diameter of an inch and a half or so at the floor-- a true peg leg. Soon afterwards she obtained an artificial leg that looked more like the real thing. Mub, as she was called by her grandchildren and friends, was a real pioneer woman.

The Scruggs farm, one section in size (a section is one square mile or six hundred and forty acres), was surrounded on three sides by the Bob Ellison ranch, and I suspect Bob must have tried to buy them out, probably more than once. In 1895 when Dad was sixteen years old, he went to work on the ranch for Ellison who had married Dad's sister Ruth. In addition to the headquarters house on the east side of the ranch, Ellison had a camp consisting of a half dugout and some corrals about a half mile or so north of the Scruggs' house. He also had another house, known as the Green House Place, about two to two and a half miles southwest of the Scruggs' house. Dad had filed on this place as a homestead. Since the Scruggs lived between the camp and the Green House, Dad and the other cowboys often rode by their house, stopping in for a visit-- and perhaps a cup of coffee and a piece of homemade pie or cake. I enjoyed listening to Mub and Dad reminisce about the "good old days," which they did at every opportunity. I have often wished that I had recorded some of Dad's tales, the true ones as well as the other ones. Although the Scruggs land bounded the Memphis road for a short distance at the southeast corner (this is where the entry gate was), their house lay a quarter mile or more to the northwest. It was west of a low ridge of hills and could not be seen from the road.

Near the house on the east side was a half dugout which they apparently lived in before they built their house. The storm cellar or dugout was quite common in those parts. A half dugout was laid out in much the same way as the dugout, but the hole was dug only about four feet deep instead of seven or eight as with the full fledged dugout. A wall about four feet high was then built around the perimeter and a roof was built over this. Small windows were included in the walls for light and ventilation. Many of the early settlers lived in these before they built a

full fledged house. Between the Scruggs' house and dugout was a large mulberry tree. We liked to go over during mulberry season and feast on the juicy purple fruit.

The barns and corrals were west of the house on the edge of a shallow canyon with gently sloping sides. In the bottom of the canyon was a thick stand of willow seedlings. These saplings were tall and thin and varied in thickness from a quarter of an inch to one inch or more at the base. They were very useful for a number of things. It was simple to make bows and arrows from them. My brothers and I would cut a section of proper length and diameter and cut notches at the ends for the bow string. Arrows could be fashioned from the smaller diameter sticks. Whistles could also be made from the green willow wood. Selecting a five or six inch piece, one half to three quarters of an inch in diameter, we beveled one end. Starting about three fourths of an inch from one end a flat cut was made to within a quarter inch of the opposite side. The stick was cut with a V notch cross grain on the side opposite the bevel and about an inch from the end. The bark was then rubbed thoroughly with the handle of a knife or another smooth tool. This loosens the bark so it may be slipped off the core in one intact cylinder. The bark may also be removed and replaced before the two cuts are made. A thin slice of wood is removed from the core between the notch an beveled end. Additional wood must be removed behind the notch (toward the long end) to provide a resonating chamber. The core was then replaced in the bark cylinder, and presto! we had a whistle. I have recently discovered that this kind of whistle can be made from Louisiana chicken trees, pecan, and probably others.

On one trip to Mub's that I well remember, Mamma, Joe, and I drove over in the buggy with Old Choc between the shaves. While there, Joe and I collected a goodly supply of willow saplings. Some of these would have made good fishing poles, but we had not done any fishing up to that point. One of these switches also made a good substitute for a buggy whip. On the return home we had to go through a gate about halfway between the house and the Memphis road. Mamma got out to open the gate and it was my job to drive through and stop while Mamma closed the gate. Well, I popped Old Choc on the rear with a willow switch. He flinched, started up, went through the gate, and stopped when I pulled back on the reins and said, "whoa!" I didn't let it go at that, however. I popped him again, pulled back on the reins, said "whoa," and he stopped again before he got started. I repeated this procedure several times, watching Choc's reaction with interest, but he tired of the game before I did. He started to run, and although I pulled back on the reins as hard as I could and yelled "whoa!" many times, I could not stop that stubborn horse until we reached the other gate. Mamma was running behind the buggy, and probably saying some pretty harsh things about our poor horse. Joe, standing in the seat, was looking back and cheering for Mamma. When she caught up with the buggy, at the gate, her Davis temper had reached the boiling point, and she still had some harsh things to say to Old Choc. Perhaps I should

have confessed my part in the runaway, but I decided not to rock the boat-- or buggy, that is. To tell the truth, I was afraid she would wear out one of those willow switches on me.

Now some people might think I was a sadistic little monster for treating a horse that way, but I prefer to think that was the beginning of my scientific career. I was simply studying an animal's reaction to an external stimulus.

HEALING WITH HERBS
by
Bea Gresham

In the early 1900's there were only eight physicians in the City of Lafayette and surrounding areas; also in the area were midwives who delivered babies and cared for the mothers. For those who believed in magic, there were traiteurs, healers who used prayer and herbs to heal the sick.

Some of the early pharmacies in Lafayette Parish were Gerac Drug Store, Owl Drug Store, and Hopkins Drugs. The pharmacy had a soda fountain, cosmetics and packaged medications on hand; the prescription medicine was prepared in the rear of the store. Over the counter drugs were Tichenor's antiseptic, Doans's kidney pills, cough syrups, Lydia Pinkham's Compound, castor oil, and Ex-Lax. The prescription drug consisted of calomel, used as a purgative; syrup of ipecac, which induces vomiting; Quinine, used for treatment of malaria; and ammonium chloride, used as a disinfectant. The doctors carried quinine, paregoric, ipecac, epsom salts, and camphor in their little black bags on visits.

Before the opening of the Lafayette Sanitarium in 1911, patients who needed surgery or special treatments were sent on a stretcher by train to New Orleans Charity Hospital for further treatment.

I was told that I had spinal meningitis when I was about a year old, and since there were no known medicines to cure my illness, Mamma took over, determined to make me well. She massaged my body day and night with a hot mixture of cocoa butter and goose grease. When I finally began to move, the doctor called it a miracle. Mamma knew that it was the folk medicine, the massage, and prayer that did not leave me dead or my limbs paralyzed.

My sister Alice was subject to pneumonia every winter, so there was always cheesecloth, flax see, and mustard on hand for poultices. These were made by boiling the ingredients together

and then spreading the mixture on the cheesecloth. The cheese cloth was cut so that it would cover the chest over the lungs. A poultice was also made for the back so that the treatment could be effective. The poultices continued day and night until the fever broke.

I remember the many diseases I caught while at Southside school. When Mamma found lice on my scalp, she rubbed coal oil on my head and covered it with a towel. The next morning after a medicated shampoo, she cleaned my hair with a fine tooth comb. I was rubbed with carbolated vaseline and sulphur when I had the seven year itch, a breaking out of small blisters on the skin. For croup, Mamma added a drop of camphor to a pot of boiling water, using a sheet to make a tent to control the vapor. We took sugar and a drop or two of turpentine for croup, coughs, and worms. For hoarseness, we drank a mixture of honey, egg, and whiskey. Octagon soap, used with sugar, made a poultice to draw out poison; it was also used on the skin as a lotion for poison ivy. Carbolated vaseline rubbed on chicken pox scabs helped stop the itching and helped to prevent pock marks. A skin lotion made up of glycerin, rose water, and carbolic acid helped to smooth the complexion and beautify the hands. Bay leaves and mamou seeds made a tea for treatment of colds, fever, and upset stomach. The most disliked healing herbs was castor oil, made from crushed seeds of the castor oil plant and given as a purgative for constipation and colic.

Below is a list of healing herbs we used when I was a young girl growing up in Lafayette:

Thyme-- antiseptic digestive aid, cooking
Parsley-- diuretic, contains chlorophyll, cooking
Basil-- treating acne, cooking
Cocoa-- stimulant, digestive aid, cooking
Wild Cherry-- expectorant, mild sedative
Witch Hazel-- astringent
Sasparilla-- blood purifier
Sage-- preservative
Mint-- anesthetic, decongestant, digestive aid
Licorice-- cough formulas
Cascara-- laxative
Aloe-- heals wounds, burns, used in lotion
Bay-- colds, coughs, respiratory illness
Sassafras Roots-- fever, colds
Sesame Seeds-- cooking
Clove-- mouthwash, pain relief
Caraway-- indigestion, gas, infant colic
Ginger-- prevents sea sickness, nausea
Garlic-- lowers blood pressure,also used as a treatment for strokes, heart disease, bladder infections, and as an antibiotic

MEDICAL EXPERIENCES IN THE ARMY

by

Durwood Neveu

During Basic Training with Company D, 349th Medical Battalion, 89th Infantry Division at Camp Carson, Colorado, we were taught first aid. I was quite proficient at these skills as I had for many years been a member of the Lafayette Hobo Voluntary Fire Department and had many hours of training in First Aid. After Basic was over, one of the dental officers took me aside and asked if I would be interested in working in the Dental Clinic as an Assistant. After looking around at all the snow I was training in, I gave a quick "yes!" I quickly learned my job of chairside assistant and stayed nice and warm in spite of having to walk a mile or two through the snow each day. This job led to being selected to Cadre as Dental Technician with two stripes and a T under them.

We were sent to Camp Blanding, Florida, to form the 66th Infantry Division in Company D, 366th Medical Battalion. After a number of other location changes, I realized that my Army life was like a duck in reverse, north in the winter and south in the summer. Anyhow, during the spring and half the summer of '43 in Florida, I was in a nice air conditioned dental clinic. In August we moved to Camp Robinson, Arkansas, where I continued as a chairside assistant, and after a few months, I was assigned a dental chair and told to clean teeth. I didn't know too much about cleaning teeth; but I had observed Captain Katz, my Dental Officer, cleaning teeth, and with a few tips from him, I didn't do too much damage. Some of the guys had pyorrhea so bad that I had to put my finger on top the tooth while scaling to keep from doing an extraction, which I was not allowed to do. While at Robinson I was sent to X-Ray school at Indianapolis, Indiana. The only reason I was sent there was that I had listed under hobbies "photography." I didn't argue because I was interested in X-Ray work, and I thoroughly enjoyed the course.

After completing X-Ray school, I rejoined my unit which had now moved to Camp Rucker, Alabama. While at Rucker I was sent to the Station Hospital for Surgical Tech training. There I discovered something strange, working in an operating room made me terribly hungry. There were three surgical suites with a prep room between two of them. We would operate in one room and, without taking off gloves and gowns, we would wash our hands, grab a sandwich and coke in the prep room, go to the next operation room, strip off gloves and gown, put on sterile ones and go on to the next patient. The operations we performed were mostly hernias, hemorrhoids, pilonidal cysts, circumcisions, and appendectomies. Sometimes we'd do a hemorrhoid and a circumcision on the same guy, poor fellow.

The Division was sent overseas in November of '44. We were in England for three weeks and crossed the Channel to France right after New Year's of '45. One of our troop ships was sunk

in the Channel, and the rest of us were sent to the West Coast of France. The first casualty we received was a German soldier. He had a hole the size of my fist in the calf of his right leg. The leg was in a Thomas splint, and the end was propped up about five inches. He appeared to be bleeding mostly plasma which had been infused on his trip back to us. His vital signs were all low, and he was in shock. We worked on him for about an hour, and he improved to the point where it was safe to move him. We evacuated him to the field hospital, and we later learned that he died.

Even though I was in charge of the medical wards, if there were a lot of casualties, I would help out in surgery. I remember one poor GI who had been near a concussion grenade when it went off. A concussion grenade is thin shell made to stun and wound, not to kill. From his waist down he was peppered with holes of varying size about one fourth to one half of an inch deep. I used every size bandage from bandaids to 6" x 6" Carlyle bandages on him. When I was finished I had blood to my elbows, and I could have eaten a horse.

One night a casualty was brought in strapped to a litter with six heavy webbing straps. He had battle fatigue. The tag said that He had been injected with seven and a half grains of Amytal, which should have knocked him out. It didn't slow him a bit. The docs tried to communicate with him, but he only spoke Spanish. We unstrapped him, and five or six of us carried him into an examination room. After trying to quiet him down we gave him another shot of Amytal. Two of us sat on his legs, another two on his shoulders and torso while a big guy, about 180 pounds, pulled his arm straight. Just as the doc was about to stick him, he flexed his arm and pulled the big guy off the adjourning bed. We finally gave him the shot, strapped him down with the six straps and sent him back. He couldn't have been more than 5 feet 6 inches tall. I've never seen that kind of strength.

The medical wards were rather dull-- pneumonia, flu, hepatitis cases, mostly. I also acted as dietician for the medical wards. Imagine trying to give a hepatitis patient a fat free, appetizing meal with army chow.

After the war in Europe was over, we went first to Germany for three weeks, then down to Arles, France, where George Reynolds and I took over 5,000 X-Ray films in a fifty day period. After the war in the Pacific was over, some of the rest of the guys in the outfit and I were sent to a general hospital unit in Salzburg, Austria. George and I were assigned to the X-Ray Department and continued to work there, taking films of broken legs and one or two broken backs incurred on the ski slopes of Austria. I was rotated home at the end of February 1946.

EARLIEST REMEMBERED EXPERIENCE

by

Chris Smith

I was six years old when the sixth child, John was born while we lived in the old house which belonged to great grandfather Placide and his wife Catherine (Ton Ton) LeBlanc. It stood on high pillars on the west bank of the Vermilion Bayou in Lafayette Parish. It was surrounded by many different kinds of trees: peaches, figs, pecans, oranges, and chinaberry, which furnished us shade in the summer. We played games under the house; since it was so high up, we did not bump our heads when we stood upright. I remember the day my brother John was born, March 8, 1920. I was three and a half years old and I recall how happy we were over the new baby. Life was very simple, even without all the modern conveniences of today.

On the day the baby was born, we went to the neighbors' to spend the night, and Papa went to get the midwife, Ma Mere Irene. She arrived before we left the house. She wore and apron that had a large pocket. We were told she placed the new baby in the pocket when the stork dropped it in the yard as it was sent from God to us.

The next day when I arrived home, I was admiring the baby as he lay in Mama's arms. She made the sign of the cross while touching his forehead, chest, and left and right shoulders and saying, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen." She was teaching me to pray, so she asked me to make the sign of the cross on myself. I tried to do so, but I used my left hand. She corrected me by having me use my right hand. She explained the difference between my right and left limbs by having me touch them as we named my right hand, eye, foot, and ear. Then I pointed to the left ones as I named them. In order to help me identify my right hand, Mama tied a ribbon around my right arm saying, "This is your right arm."

She taught catechism in our community, so we learned to pray as soon as we were able to speak. There were always prayers being said or catechism being taught in our home, both in French and in English.

Baby John was placed in the cradle in Mama's room near her bed. when she was up and around, we had to rock the cradle when he cried so she could do her housework. Mama breastfed all her babies until they were able to eat soft foods.

Mama had inherited the gift of healing from her grandmother Catherine, so the neighbors came to our house to be healed as Mama laid her hand on them while praying. When they were too ill to come to her, she went to them. When she had no means of transportation, she walked to their houses to help them.

Mama was our first teacher of academics, She taught all of us to read in her spare time since we did not have a school available to us. Nevertheless, we were a happy family held together, taught, and loved by our Mama and our Papa.

PERE BERNARD, MY GRANDFATHER

by

Charles A. Bernard, Jr.

My grandfather, Dumas Bernard, was sixth generation Bernard, descendant of Andre Bernard, a stone cutter from Poitou, Beauvoir on the sea coast of France. Andre Bernard came to Beaubassin, Nova Scotia, in 1645 and began this Bernard clan. Pere was born in 1849, married my grandmother, Laura Dugas in 1872, and they had eleven children. I remember the old homestead on a graveled road eight miles out from St. Martinville in a settlement called Isle Labbe.

The house built by Pere and his friends in 1892 was unpainted and had five rooms with two additions and a large loft upstairs. The house and furnishings don't bring back memories, but the back porch looms large in my mind. The cistern was the plantation watering hole and held all the rain water from the roof. A common drinking cup hung close by. The first cup I remember was a scooped out gourd, later replaced with a tin cup. The rough tissue center of the gourd was used for scrubbing, sometimes in the bathroom.

The chairs on the front porch were Acadian style with cow hide seats. We children always sat on the steps or on the porch floor, legs hanging.

There was a large persimmon tree in the front yard. When Papa brought persimmons home from Pere's, Mama placed them in the rice sack, probably to hasten the ripening.

A large plantation bell on the wooden structure stood a little to the left of the house, about midway between the front and back yards. The bell was attached to an A frame, fully twelve feet high. We were allowed to touch the bell, but never to pull the rope. The bell would have been a signal to the farm workers at work time to knock off work, twelve noon, or for an emergency call. Of course, I never heard the bell ring, but these were the stories we were told. I wish I knew where the bell is now.

Laura Dugas, my grandmother, married Pere when she was seventeen years old. When she visited us in St. Martinville, usually on Sundays, she was dressed in her black taffeta dress, with a tortillon (hair in a roll) neatly combed. She was a very religious woman, and read her Mass and other prayers in French. She carried her rosary and missal in her purse at all times.

Pere said he was only twelve years old when the Civil War broke out so he was told he could not volunteer for service. He did, however, act as a mounted postman along Bayou Teche for the Confederate Army. Mere told me stories of how her parents had buried valuables under the front porch. She remembered Union soldiers had searched their house for anything worthwhile to steal.

The second story floor of the homestead was a large dormitory room. The stairs, Acadian style, leading to the second floor

were on the front porch, right side. All the boys lived upstairs in the la chambre des garcons. I remember very little furniture, only beds and mattresses on the floor. We often sat on the stairs when visiting Pere and Mere.

Mere said the number of children she raised was over twenty-five but not over thirty. When my Aunt Elena (Tante Na) Papa's sister's husband died, she had four small children. With no place to go, she came back home to her parents. Two years later Aunt Emelia (Tante Soeur) moved in also with her ten children when her husband died. There was a small tenant house in the yard close by which provided her with shelter for her and her daughters. She told Pere, "If Na can come live here, so can I."

There were many more boys to live with Pere and Mere. I remember Uncle Eude, who was Pere's half brother. Eude's mother was my great grandfather's fifth wife. She committed suicide by drinking lye. Their little boy, Olivier, two years of age, had accidentally drunk a mixture of lye and water and died. Mama told me Francis, Uncle Eude's mother , died a horrible death. Her throat, eaten out by the lye, caused her much suffering, and she died in agony and pain.

I knew of some of the other children who had come to live at Pere's. They were gone by the time I was ten years old. Most of them were boys, left homeless, or orphans, or unhappy living with step-parents. There was always room at Pere's for anyone who wanted to join the clan. As they reached the age to marry, they left the farm, and someone else moved in.

My Aunt Bernadette, her husband, and their three children continued to live at Pere's until Pere died; then Aunt Bernadette and her family moved to New Orleans. Aunt Bernadette had married Claude Carter who knew no French. Since Pere and Mere never spoke English, I guess Aunt Bernadette was the interpreter. Aunt Bernadette died at the age of 95, the last of the Bernard children.

Pere claimed he seldom had trouble raising all those boys. He said that when he found them fighting, there was one rule in the house. "When two of you are fighting, there will be three, and I will be the third. They understood and I never had to spank any of them," he said. Mere said he was too tenderhearted to lay a hand on a child.

When Pere attended Sunday mass, he sat at the end of his pew. "His pew" meant his name was written on the pew door with the mass time designated. He paid annually to sit at this place at that time mass. I remember seeing him with his left arm resting on the pew with his left hand cuffed behind his ear for better hearing.

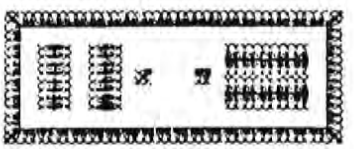
I always liked to hear the story of how he went out on horseback at the age of 62 to hunt a wildcat. The wildcat had been coming around the house, killing young calves. sheep and goats. Pere must have known the tell tale signs, for he went out one day on his favorite horse, Channel, and took his dogs to bring back the chatigre. Pere said the chatigre was eating food that was meant for the children, and so he had to kill it.

At the age of 88 Pere would still catch, saddle, and bridle Channel (French for cinnamon). He rode his horse erect in the saddle and proud.

Pere, a gambling man, would bet on everything from the weather to the color of the eyes of the next Bernard child to be born. He attended horse races, rooster fights, and baseball games. He threatened to quit attending football games at S.L.I. because he couldn't find anybody to bet on the game. His leather dice carrier was tubular and had three dice, but I never knew how he used it.

When I last visited France with a Codofil tour in 1989, one town to receive us royally was Poitou. The reception was held at a restored old Acadian farmhouse. The house, of stone and bousilles, was the former home of Mrs. Maurice Bernard. Bousillis is a mortar of clay and moss and perhaps shells, if you lived near the water. A popular mortar in the Acadian villages, it was used to build the Grotto in the St. Martinville Church.

What I didn't know when I visited Poitou was that Pere Bernard's ancestors had come from Poitou, had settled in Beaubassin, Nova Scotia, and whose great grandson came to settle here in Louisiana. I will be in France in October to visit Poitou and look into the family tree of Bernards.



OUR FAMILY GROWS
by
Esther Parker

What a thrill when we found out for sure that we were to be parents. We tried to be calm and reserved with our news but could not keep it to ourselves. After waiting with us our five married years, our families and friends were also happy for us.

Ed wanted me to go to the Ochsner Medical Group (this was before they built their own hospital). I knew of Dr. John Weed, O.B., through Audrey Silbernagel, a friend at the lab. She recommended him highly; so I made an appointment to meet him. I, too, was impressed. there was a confident, pleasant attitude about him that instilled my trust. He seemed just as pleased about my pregnancy as our longtime friends. I was in good shape, and he anticipated no problems.

Time passed quickly. I went on leave on April 1, 1949. The little one was due on July 25, but we were surprised when July 4 was the date he chose. When Dr. Weed told me he would have to

perform a C-section, I said I'd be like the actresses, and I'd have it on July 4th! He laughed and said, "Sorry, it's not the 4th anymore. It's the 5th." Thomas Warren weighed 7 lbs. 3 oz. with all parts intact. What happiness Ed and I felt. We tried hard not to spoil him.

Then, 22 months later, on May 16, 1951, Edwin Davis, Jr., arrived, 9 lbs. 10 oz. Davey was a real sleeper; ate and slept, even slept all night on our first night home. He was probably lulled by a hundred quail, just hatched, which Ed had stashed in out bedroom with a warming light blinking, which brought a hundred peeps at regular intervals all night.

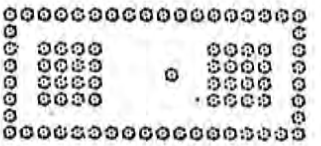
We moved to Corpus Christi in November 1952. Ed had already started to work for Celanese, but the boys and I stayed behind to sell our house. We took off from New Orleans on November 11. Airports were still crowded that month with military personnel. My brother-in-law, Rene Pertuit, carried Davey on the plane. Our two seats were on the three seat side of the plane; we hoped that the third seat would stay vacant, but it didn't work that way. Fortunately we were at the window for distraction. The boys were enthralled for a while after we took off. A man with a briefcase came and took his aisle seat and started to read his papers. When Tommy and Davey became restless, I started to read one of the books Aunt Helen had given them when we left: "The little train said, 'I think I can, I think I can...'" (you remember). The man got up, briefcase in hand. I don't know where he went, but we had three seats all the way to Houston. (That's a good trick for parents with small children.) Then Tommy made a discovery, "Look, Mama! The wing's coming apart." Heads popped up and turned towards the windows. "No, Tommy, It's just built in sections like that." After a short time, boredom expressed itself again. "Mama, when are we gonna crash?" Talk about glares-- WOW! There were also understanding smiles.

Finally we reached Houston where we had to change planes. This airport was worse than New Orleans-- standing room only. We had to move sideward through people to get to the restroom. Holding onto two hands, three coats, one diaper bag, and my purse, we made it. After finding a vacancy and hanging all the paraphernalia on the inside of the cubicle, Davey scooted under the door. I had to send Tommy after him. I got out in a frenzy and finally found them. How I didn't lose a coat or something, I don't know. A very nice lady came up to where we were standing against a wall, "Honey, can I help you with the children? Do you want to get something from the concession counter?" I thanked her, "No." She then questioned in what branch of the service was my husband. When I told her he wasn't, that we had a job change, she curtly said, "Oh," turned on her heels and looked for some other mother to help, I guess. Fortunately our layover wasn't too long. We made it to Corpus without further embarrassment, and there was Daddy waiting for us. Ahhh!

On February 24, 1954, our number three son arrived; Robert Shane weighed in at 7 lbs. 6 oz. I received a dozen red roses from "The four men in your life." (Incidently, I haven't

received any since; but then, Ed received no more sons.) Bobby was a reddish-blond, very fair, and a sleepyhead.

When Ed went home to tell Tommy and Davey that they had a new brother, a man pulled in front of him on Highway 9, a four lane, just as Ed was going to pass him. Fortunately Ed was not hurt; the man wasn't either, although he later faked it. Ed didn't mention it for several days. He had to rent a car to come see us at the hospital. We were on the ground floor at Memorial Hospital, so Ed brought the boys at "feeding" time so we could see one another. That is the way our family grew-- in numbers.



STILL GROWING
by
Eleanor Dresbach

Through my teenage years I had my dreams of a perfect mate. My prince charming would be tall, dark, and handsome. We would marry, live in a little white house with a white picket fence. He would have a nine to five job, and, like all fairy tales, we would live happily ever after. What a surprise when I met Max in 1935! He was just the opposite of my dream Prince Charming. He was medium height, fair, nice looking, charming, had a beautiful smile, but rather shy, and a farmer.

At first we became friends, then gradually our friendship grew into love, and in September of 1937 we were married. Following a short honeymoon to Niagara Falls, we returned to our home on the farm.

Since I had always lived in the city, had never so much as visited a farm, there were many surprises in store for me. The first year was quite an adjustment, but being a very stubborn person, I vowed to learn everything there was to know, confident that I could overcome all obstacles. I thought, "After all, how much knowledge did one need to plant a few seeds in the ground and watch them grow, or milk a cow, feed the stock and gather eggs?" I soon learned it was not that easy, farming was a business.

My first project was to learn to milk the cows. That certainly would not be a difficult task. It looked so easy. With milk pail in hand, Max, with a grin on his face, took me to the barn, showed me how to clean the cows' udders, gave me a stool, and left me on my own. I just knew I could do this. However, the cows refused to cooperate; no amount of coaxing,

sweet talking and even threatening would bring any milk. As I gave up and burst into tears of frustration, the cows swished their tails and looked at me with smirks on their faces. I had failed. But a few months later I had my revenge when we got the milking machine. I delighted in seeing the discomfort of their faces when they were hooked up to the machine.

Well, so much for the cows; at least I could feed the chickens and gather the eggs. How could I fail at that? It wasn't an easy task; the chickens fought me for every egg. They showed their animosity by refusing to get off their little thrones, pecking at my hands and arms when I reached under them to get the eggs. I was determined to win this one, but the only way I could do it was to fight them for every egg. From "bossy" cows to chickens, I somehow got the idea the animals resented me. Even the horses snorted every time I came near. The pigs ignored me, except for their grunts, and the sheep scattered any time I was around.

Except for the cats and dog, the only animal on the farm that tolerated me was a little lamb that had been born during an early spring blizzard and Max had brought her to me for care. Her mother had died in the blizzard. The little lamb was half frozen, we did not think she would live. We wrapped her in a blanket and put her in a box by the old Home Comfort range. We tried feeding her warm milk from a bottle, but she was too weak to suck the nipple. We then used an eyedropper. We stayed up all night, feeding her every hour, drop by drop. She survived, and we named her "Snow White," as she had been born during a snow storm. She became my shadow. I felt like Mary with her little lamb. At last I had one animal friend, even though I felt it was only because Snow White was always hungry, and I was her source of food. That winter was a mixture of laughter and tears; laughter when I accomplished something, tears when I failed.

Through all of this my wonderful husband was patient, supportive, and comforting, my teacher. No, I did not marry my teenage image of the perfect mate, but I did marry "Prince Charming." Our marriage lasted more than forty years; "until death did we part."

The years of marriage to Max were a continued growing experience from beginning to end. We both grew physically, mentally, and spiritually, and we did it together.

VIVIAN HIGH SCHOOL REUNION-- March 20, 1992
by
Helen Huckabay

About January 15, 1992, the graduates of Vivian High School who now live in South Louisiana began receiving news of an "All Classes Reunion" to be held in Vivian on March 20, 1992. Not being a graduate of Vivian, I watched (with interest) my husband, brothers-in-law, and friends who were. We made reservations in Shreveport early so we could have a pleasant stay, and early on Saturday morning, we were all excited and were on our way. There were some friends that we recognized right away. One of Huck's boyhood friends took the wind our of Huck's sails right away, though. When he found out that his old friend Huck was a 1932 graduate, he said, "My God! You are lucky to be here!" When Huck pointed out the guy to me later, he was a little shrimpy person, and I told Huck the years had been kinder to him than to his friend.

Ed Waters from Lafayette had come to the affair in his wife's Lincoln and was excited about that until he backed it up and had a wheel suspended in mid-air. He almost had a coronary over that! Mary Nell Teel looked very pretty until she was attacked by the Huckabay boys. Huck went up to her, hugged her from behind, making her spill her coffee. About five minutes later, Glenn Huckabay hugged her from behind and made her spill her coffee! I am sure she ran from them the next time she saw them. It was fun to watch different people walk cautiously to an individual, look him over, and then zero the old bifocals on the name tag. We do change looks through the years.

Vivian was celebrating a Red Bud Festival, and there was a big parade. The weather was unpleasant, so we were glad to see it end. Saturday night we had a buffet dinner followed by singing and cheering. The past cheerleaders went on stage-- a little plumper, a little grayer, but still full of fun. The Song Fest ended with the crowd tearfully singirg "Auld Lang Syne." It was a well planned, well executed affair.

LET ME TELL YOU A TRUE STORY

by

Nell Clark

In April 1973 I travelled to my birthplace, Mexico, with Mother, Bertha, and Jesse to meet Christina in San Luis Potosi. Christina would return with us to begin work helping mother keep house. After we had driven one hundred miles beyond the border, we saw a lot of people walking on the side of the road. Jesse told us they did this every year during Holy Week as a penance. It takes some two to five days to get to a nearby town. A pickup truck rides back and forth to care for the ones that either become ill or need assistance. We came to the town Delores Hildalgo. It has a church for everyday in the year, some very small and poor, but well kept; others are very large.

We finally arrived in San Luis Potosi and checked into the Hotel Del Gante, an old and beautiful hotel across from the Plaza. On Thursday we visited Dr. and Mrs. Arturo Gonzales. He got in touch with Christina who came over to his home. We talked to her, liking her immediately. She liked us. We agreed to leave Easter Sunday afternoon. We wanted to see the Procession Del Silencio, the Procession of the Silent, that would take place on Good Friday. On Palm Sunday we attended church. People had palm leaves to be blessed. Women, men and children were outside the church making and selling little crosses made of palm leaves. We went in and sat down. When mass started, a young man came and sat next to me. His clothes were soiled. He wore a leather apron; it, too, was badly soiled. I couldn't keep from looking and staring at him. His face reminded me of Jesus. I thought to myself, "It could be Jesus, for we do not know when or where He will appear." The thought stayed on my mind. During the service, the priest announced to greet and shake hands with the people around us. I shook hands with the young man. I said in Spanish, "God loves you, and I do, too." My sister Bertha turned her head. She wouldn't touch him or say anything to him. I said, "Bertha, God is going to punish you." She replied, "He already has. I couldn't stand the sour smell on that man." I often wonder about the young man and how much he resembled Jesus.

After church we purchased some crosses and walked around the Plaza; then we went to the hotel so Mother could rest.Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday we spent getting Christina ready for her stay with Mother in San Antonio. On Holy Thursday we went to church. The priest had selected twelve men from the church who were known to be good and honest. During the service, the priest washed their feet. After he had dried the feet, he prayed, took a loaf of bread, broke and gave each a piece. The priest then asked the people in the congregation to bring the bread to the altar, and he blessed it. We didn't have any; but after the service, Jesse went to the priest and told him we were from the States visiting and would like to have some bread to take home. The priest asked us to wait. He had a large basket of bread by

the altar. He gave us a loaf and told us to share it with our host and take the rest home. On Good Friday, we were invited to eat lunch with Dr. and Mrs. Gonzales. We took the bread and Dr. Gonzales returned thanks, passing the bread around the table.

Dr. and Mrs. Gonzales invited us to go to the poor section of San Luis where they reenact the Passion of Christ. The church was old with dirt floors that were swept so clean it looked like cement. The chairs and pews were handmade. It was lovely and peaceful. Outside vendors had booths where they sold Baspas (snowcones), tamalas, corn on the cob, tacos, and Buniuellas (fried pastries). All at once it got quiet.

We heard the sound of drums in the distance. The pageant began. Soldiers dressed in brightly covered costumes. The shields were made of cardboard and covered with foil. The man that played the part of Jesus wore a white robe. On his head was a crown of thorns that was pushed down on his forehead. Blood trickled down his forehead and cheeks. The soldiers took Jesus to Pilate. Pilate asked what crime he had committed. When he couldn't find anything wrong, Pilate washed his hands and said he wouldn't have anything to do with sentencing Jesus. The crowd started yelling, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" The soldiers put a cross on the shoulders of Jesus. When he would stumble, they beat him. Jesus, the two thieves, and soldiers started up the hill to where they were to crucify him. When they arrived to the top of the hill, Jesus was weak from loss of blood and flogging.

The soldiers put the cross in the ground, then nailed him to it. You could hear the sound of hammering. The muscles and veins in the actor's arms and legs looked as if they would burst. The spikes were large. A tree was behind the hill. Judas walked to it and said, "I have condemned an innocent man," put the rope around his neck, threw the other end in the tree, and hanged himself. The crowd exclaimed for it looked so real; his feet dangled about three feet above the ground.

When the soldiers finished crucifying Jesus and the thieves, Jesus asked for water. Someone took a sponge with vinegar and put it to his lips. At 3 p.m. Jesus uttered his last words, "It is finished." At the same time about one hundred birds came out from the church steeple and flew across where the crosses stood. We went back to the hotel. Mother and Christina watched the rest of the play from the balcony. Bertha, Jesse, and I went on the street to be near the action.

When the procession was starting you could hear a pin drop. There were thousands of people on the streets. No one spoke or even whispered. First came the little drummer boy. Then men from all walks of life and parishes walked, dressed in hoods. Some wore shackles on their ankles dragging a steel ball. You could hear the rustling. Each parish wore a different color robe. The reason they are hooded is that if you see someone you think should not have the honor to be in the procession, there wouldn't be any finger pointing or remarks made. Twelve men carry a statue of Jesus on a platform on their shoulders. You can see it is a heavy burden. After all the churches have been

represented, more hooded men walk behind-- doctors, lawyers, business men. Then a little girl is carried on a platform. She represents innocence. Ladies dressed in black carrying candles follow. The Indians from different regions dance their native dances, wearing their costumes. The last is a statue of the Virgin Mary. You can see the tears on her cheeks. Following her are people from all walks of life-- rich, middleclass, and the poor. The Procession Del Silencio is one of the most memorable experiences I have ever had. The beauty is that it is history being reenacted year after year. But the message of Easter would not be valid without the events of Jesus's suffering and crucifixion. We think of that sorrow, knowing that Easter and resurrection come next.