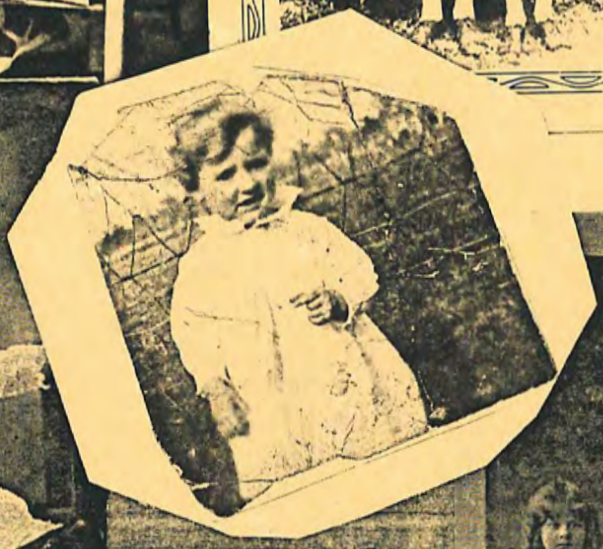
LIFE AND LETTERS



VOLUME VIA

The Fall 1992 classes of LIFE & LETTERS, a life history writing course, have continued the tradition begun in 1990 of senior adults gathering together to share their life experiences. This introduction marks on paper the struggle I encounter at the end of each semester. Two tasks lie before me: I must introduce the reader to or reacquaint him with our purpose and I must commend the students for a job well done. In other words, I must do with the English language what only the best writers prove over and over can be done: I must write life. I must write love. The reader may not experience the tears evoked by a simple flash of memory. She may not understand the depth of meaning between the lines and in unwritten words. How do I express the ideas our language seems so incapable of expressing? Either I've said it before or I don't know how to say it. Strange, isn't it? What takes a lifetime to live can never be relived by another. Or can it? These students overwhelmingly respond to the question "Why write at all?" with the phrase "for my children and grandchildren." What the generations present and future will never experience, the generation past can tell. And so, the following pages are pages of life and love retold. To my students, I say "Thank you." "Ditto" the words of years gone by and "amen" to the words of years to come. To the reader, both new and familiar, welcome to the pages of LIFE & LETTERS.

-- Joan Stear
Fall 1992

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

Front Cover(clockwise from upper righthand corner): Stanley F. Davis; E.D. Parker; Eleanor Dresbach-- left; Bea Gresham; Nell Clark-- on father's knee; Bonnie Gillis; Nancy Moreau-- and husband; Charles Bernard-- left; Aurore D. Raggio, mother of Liz Moore; (left center) Lou du Bernard; Esther Parker-- second from right

FALL 1992 CLASS OF LIFE AND LETTERS AND FRIENDS

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1930'S SUNDAYS

by

Nancy Moreau

Sundays in my growing up years in Anderson County, South Carolina, were church and family oriented. After breakfast we dressed for church, walking to Helena Methodist Church, a small white frame building, located in the farming community. It seated about one hundred people.

Reverend Watson, our pastor, was a kindly man, tall and thin, with snow white hair and unrimmed glasses. He and Mrs. Watson, a very caring self-sacrificing couple, were always plainly and neatly dressed. Rev. Watson served four churches-- Hebron, Ruhamah, Starr, and Iva. "Preaching" was every other Sunday at Hebron following Sunday school. We always lingered after to visit with friends and neighbors on the tree shaded church lawn.

Sunday School was at 10:00 a.m. Papa taught the adult group. His reading aloud and reviewing the lesson on Saturdays gave me an advantage in my youth class. Mrs. Rosa Tate was my Sunday school teacher. Because of her interest in helping the young people in the church, she planned for and provided transportation to extra activities. Our class was held sitting on the lawn, weather permitting. There were no classrooms. The scripture reading for the day was read by a student; comments, questions, and discussion followed. Mrs. Tate kept the lesson interesting, but she never tolerated any distractions, such as a comment on the flight of a bird, a falling leaf, or a passing car.

Sunday dinner of fried chicken, mashed potatoes with milk gravy, garden grown fresh vegetables, and blackberry cobbler was served first to the grown-ups when we had guests. We were always quite hungry when our turn came.

Afterwards the women washed the dishes in the kitchen where family news and any recent happenings were shared. The men usually gravitated to the barn, finding a bench or a piece of farm equipment to sit upon. Their conversation usually involved crops, cattle , farm equipment, and effects of the weather (drought or too much rain) on the crops.

The boys would pitch horseshoe or wander off into the pasture to wade in the branch (a small, fresh stream of water). We girls played "house" with our dolls, using broken or discarded dishes; pieces of lumber became dollbeds or other furniture.

Sunday was always a quiet day-- no loud or boisterous games or language. Sundown found us ready for bed.

DOWN ON THE FARM

by

Eleanor Dresbach

Having lived the first twenty-one years of my life in the city, I left my city ways on September 4, 1937, to become a farmer's wife. After a honeymoon to Niagara Falls, Max and I returned to our two hundred acre farm just east of St. Louis, a small town located in the middle of the mitten, in the lower peninsula of Michigan. Our farm was on the main highway that runs east to west across the state. The house, a typical large farmhouse, had been built in three additions with lots of room for extra people. I had grown up in a big house, so I felt right at home.

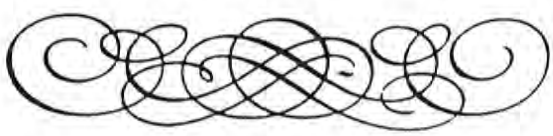
In January of 1938, after enjoying four months of becoming acquainted with my new home and family and the neighborhood families, I began my induction into the role of a farmer's wife. Max served as my tutor. We spent hours going through seed catalogues and planning the garden I would be expected to raise. I could not see why Max was making such a big deal of planting a garden. Even in the city we had a garden in which I loved to work. What's so difficult about taking care of a garden? I soon learned there was a great difference in our backyard city garden and the one I would have on the farm. I was shocked to see the size of this garden, not just one, but three. The three gardens were divided in plots; each plot was labelled as to the vegetable to be planted and their approximate time of planting. Never had we planted a garden on paper at home. What were we going to do with all of that food? My husband gave me the answer, "Can it!" No problem, I thought. We had done lots of canning at home. Of course, we had gone to the market and bought our fruits and veggies for canning. Still, I had great faith I could handle it all.

Early in the spring, Max suggested I check the basement shelves and check the canned goods remaining there, disposing of anything more than two years old. On my free day the following week, I tackled the basement. Max rolled a cart containing four large pails to the basement door. I was to empty the outdated jars of fruit and vegetables into the pails and feed the pigs with the tossed out food. In no time the troughs would be licked clean. One long shelf contained only bottles with no dates on them. I picked one up, but could not

really tell what it was. It looked like grape juice that had spoiled; there was fermentation on the top. I opened one bottle. It smelled rotten; so I dumped them all, and that, too, was fed to the pigs.

Several hours later, the last of the outdated jars had been emptied. As I neared the pig pen, I could not believe what I was seeing. The pigs were stumbling all over, falling down, getting up, only to fall again, grunting constantly. I was terrified; I had fed something to the pigs that had poisoned them! Max was working on a fence near the house. I ran to him crying, "the pigs are dying! I poisoned them!" We both ran back to the pigpen. More pigs had fallen and could not get up. Max sent me to the house to call the vet as he entered the pigpen. Before I entered the house he called me back. He was standing by the pig trough with a strange look on his face. Very calmly he asked what I had given the pigs. I told him the types of things that had been in the jars and bottles-- fruits, veggies, pickles, tomato juice, and the grape juice without the dates on the bottles. With a grin on his face, he asked, "All of it?" I told him how awful it smelled and how it had fermentation on top. He began to laugh so hard I could not understand a word he said. Finally he calmed down, put his arm around me and told me I had just fed all of his father's homemade grape wine to the pigs and they were drunk. Now, I had seen very few humans drunk, but never a pig. Do you know what, though? They both act pretty much the same.

All the pigs survived. Max and I spent much of that afternoon sitting on the fence watching the antics of a bunch of intoxicated pigs. Do pigs have hangovers? I have never found out; but the next day the pigs were very subdued, grunting every time they turned their heads or moved. As for my father-in-law's wine, it was never replaced.



THE TOWER OF LONDON CAPER

by

Esther Parker

On Saturday, July 18, 1992, Ed, Dave and I went to London by train and taxi to the tour company, Gray Line of London. We had booked a tour from the States, and fortunately there was a vacancy for Dave. Our guide was a middle-aged English lady with a soft voice, so we-- or some of us-- had to strain to hear her. Our bus left the station about 9:00 a.m. in very heavy traffic, much worse than the day before when the three of us walked to sightsee. It appeared that there was a predominance of taxis going the wrong way today, perhaps because of weekend traffic. Every stop we made was crowded with tour groups; the guides' talking often interfered with hearing what was being said by any one guide. We entered many of the buildings that we had seen the day before: Westminster Abbey, the House of Parliament, museums, and churches. We got close to the Royal Palace and learned more about Trafalgar Square. Included was a tour on the Thames, lunch in an unusual restaurant which is housed in what used to be a dungeon; finally we reached the Tower of London about 1:30 that afternoon. We "grouped" in the courtyard just beyond the two walls near the gate where we entered the grounds. There were benches in the shade or sun so our guide chose this area for us to meet at 3:30 for our last stop at St. Paul's Cathedral before returning to the bus terminal.

The three of us stayed together pretty good; once in a while one of us had to look for the other two, but we were never far away. About 2:45 Ed headed left to take pictures of something; Dave wanted to go up in the White Tower to try to get a birds'-eye-view of the grounds; and I wanted to go around the tower near the meeting place to the gift shop. We reminded one another that the meeting time was 3:30 and parted.

Those forty-five minutes flew by, but at 3:30 everyone was at the appointed spot, except Edwin D., Sr. After a five or ten minute wait, our guide was getting a bit upset; so I told her to go on, that we would wait there for Ed. She did have thirty-six others to consider. Dave and I sat for a while continually on the look-out and finally decided that one should stay right

where we were while the other walked around to try to find him; his watch may have stopped was the first excuse we thought of. We switched places until about 5:00 when we started to question every uniformed person we saw-- Beefeaters, Warders. They were all very kind and assured us not to worry. We'd find him or he'd find us. I know they meant to be reassuring; but it didn't help much, especially when we were told we would have to leave shortly because they were closing the grounds for the day. We had gone out of the grounds several times with the gate-keeper's permission to see if Ed was outside. He was no where to be found.

Finally, we were told we'd have to leave. I objected. "He may have fallen between buildings or on a staircase. Someone may have hit him over the head for his wallet. He may have blacked out, fainted, or even had a stroke." You name it, I thought it between my desperate prayers. We were assured that security was very tight, and if anything like that had happened, they would know about it. (We had already checked the First Aid Station with no results). That there was "no way he could still be on the grounds" had to be repeated several times, but I still was not convinced. After all, Ed surely would not have just walked off when he knew to meet us at 3:30.

Dave had called the Vowles three or four times, but our hosts had not heard from Ed. Finally he suggested we go back to the house, but I wouldn't leave until we reported Ed lost. Sooo..., Dave, being the patient son, called the house for the last time and told Mrs. Vowles that we were going to report to the police. The chief Warder called the nearest police station on Lemon Street and asked them to check for us. By this time it was after 7:00. We had not seen Ed since 2:45!

The call was soon returned that the other two closest stations across the river had no report of anything involving anyone of Ed's description. We had to go to the station on Lemon Street to fill out a report; so we hailed a taxi as we had no idea where we were going. As soon as we walked in the door of the station, an officer said with a big smile, "Mr. Parker has been found. He just got tired so he went back home." Well,... should we kiss him or kill him? Dave said, "I'm going to fuss-- no I'm not." Then he asked the officer if there was a restaurant nearby because he was starved. There was one right down the street, so we thanked them for all the help and left, relieved but spent.

This restaurant was run by Indians, but Dave said he liked Indian food; so he had his fill. I was not in an eating mood-- I had a Scotch and water. Dave asked to use the phone to call a taxi when he finished; but the owner said he'd call one for us. He came shortly (a friend of the Indian's). The driver was

from Kuwait and spoke little English and less American and didn't now where the Charing Cross Station was. Dave tried to tell him the main streets that he remembered, but it did little good-- the poor fellow just drove quickly around. Finally we were pretty close to the station, so Dave told him that we would get out "now." We walked the rest of the way. Naturally, we missed our train so we had to wait a while since it was after busy hours. We finally got back to Petts Wood Station, and Dave said we were not going to walk anymore; he called a hire car for which we had to wait again. After 9:00 p.m. we arrived home. The Vowles met us at the door. Do you know what Ed asked? "Where have you two been?" I was-- am-- so thankful that Dave was with us. I don't know what I would have done without him. But even with my son on that awful day, I had thought of calling Scotland Yard also. I didn't care now; Ed was with me, no matter how far from home we were.

WE TAKE A LONDON TOUR
by
E.D. Parker

On Saturday, July 18, Esther, Dave, and I arose early, ate breakfast and called a taxi to take us to the Pettswood railroad station for a journey to London. At Charing Cross station in London we caught another taxi for Frames Rickards, a tour company, at 11 Herbrand Street. We had tickets for tour 29, "The London Experience," which was scheduled to depart at 8:45 a.m. When we boarded the bus, there were too many people aboard; so some of them were transferred to another bus, and our departure was delayed until 9:11. The guide was a small woman, Mrs. Daven, and the driver was Mr. Norman. The bus was number 538.

We disembarked at Westminster Abbey in the city of Westminster, that is sometimes referred to as the West End. Since we visited the Abbey on Friday, this trip was a rerun for us; but the tour was more extensive and had the advantage of a tour guide. We saw some tombs of famous people that we did

not see on Friday. For instance we saw the tomb markers of the following, in the order that we saw them: Edward I (died 1307); Queen Elizabeth I; King Henry III (died 1272); Eleanore of Castile, wife of Edward I for whom the thirteen Eleanore Crosses were erected (died 1200); Edward VI (died 1553); Henry VII (died 1507); St. Edward the Confessor (1042-1066), the original builder of the Abbey and the first person buried there. In the Poets Corner we saw memorial markers for Charles Dickens, George Frederick Handel, and Chaucer. We also passed a memorial for Mary Queen of Scots. Mrs. Daven, our tour guide, did not have a particularly strong voice, and I could not always hear what she said. The Abbey was quite crowded with guided tours; I was able, though, to keep an eye on her small black umbrella.

After completing the tour of the Abbey, our bus took us closer to Buckingham Palace and let us out again on the Mall or Buckingham Palace Road, I am not sure which. From here we watched a parade and took pictures of the marching band, the Horse Guards, and a number of horse drawn carriages occupied by ladies and gentlemen dressed in their finery. We could not get a picture of the palace from where we were, so we walked down (or up) to the end of the street and obtained a picture of Buckingham Palace and its spectators. There was a royal wedding at Windsor Castle on this day (the Duke of Kent's daughter, I think), and although Windsor is twenty miles west of Buckingham, the parade may have been related to the wedding.

After reboarding old 538, Mr. Norman drove us to Charing Cross Pier where we transferred to a cruise boat for a short trip down the Thames (ca. 2 1/4 mi.) to the Tower of London. After disembarking we went to Beefeater by the Tower Restaurant for lunch. We were convoyed down into what appeared to be a dungeon. The room was tee shaped with low arched, brick walls and ceiling, sort of like a hollow cylinder split in half lengthwise and turned open side down. It had a sign hanging from the ceiling which read "Debtors Prison." For lunch we had barbecued chicken and potatoes.

After lunch we walked to the south side of the Tower of London where the entrance is located. I took a picture of the Tower Bridge and another picture or two of the outer wall of the Tower finishing roll number 14, a 24 exposure roll, before going into the castle. On the inside while our guide was dispensing valuable information, the lack of which knowledge I would later regret, I sat on a convenient bench to change the film. Not only did the film need to be changed, but also the film speed; and that is a chore with my camera. A thin metal disc needs to be raised and turned without turning the thicker plastic disk below it which controls the shutter speed. I use a knife for that chore, in

this case a large multipurpose knife with a can opener, saw, and other features that Esther gave me for Christmas. After finishing the job, I got up to join Esther and Dave, leaving my beautiful red handled knife of the bench. Was this a foreshadow of events to come?

We walked around a bit and went into the Jewel House to see the crown jewels. This was an impressive collection of baubles. I have never, and will probably never see again as much gold and jewels in one place. It would have been nice to take some pictures, but there were signs posted that read "Photography Forbidden." To emphasize that rule, there were several rolls of film, unrolled from their canisters and hanging above the entrance.

After leaving the Jewel House we walked over to the north side of the White Tower, and at this point we separated. Dave wanted to go to the top of the Tower, if possible, to take some pictures, and Esther wanted to go to the gift shop. I just wanted to wander around taking pictures, so we parted. As later events would show, this was a mistake. The other mistake was that, although I knew what time we were to meet, I didn't know where, and I didn't know that I didn't know. Anyway the pictures I took, in chronological order, were the Royal Fusiliers Museum; a signpost at the northeast corner of the White Tower (WT); two shots of a remnant of an old Roman wall (200-400 A.D.) at the southeast corner of WT; a Flemish bronze gun (1607 A.D.) on the east side of WT; the base of Coldharbor Gate (1240 A.D.) along with two ravens at the southwest corner of WT, Coldharbor Wall (1221-1238) south of the gate; a group of spectators in Water Lane (the space between the outer and inner walls on the south side); a sign showing the location of Henry III's Water Gate; and the inside of an arrow. By now I realized it was getting close to 3:30, our rendezvous time, and I began in earnest to look for Esther and Dave. I didn't see them at the exit gate on the inside, so I went outside to looks around. Still no wife and son. As the time approached I thought they may have already gone to the bus, so I took a fast walk to where the bus let us out. But there was nobody there, not even a bus. I walked back to the Tower Gate and looked around outside the Tower. I never occurred to me that they might still be inside.

When they did not show I walked over to the Tower Hotel, across St. Katherine's Way from Devlin Tower, at the southeast corner of the castle, and the north end of Tower Bridge to telephone Frames Rickards to find out if they had any news about the bus. When I explained my situation, the man who answered said the bus would not be back until 6:00 p.m., but that they should be at St. Paul's Cathedral, and if i took a taxi I should be able to catch

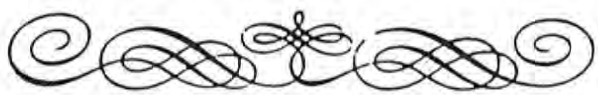
them there. So I took a taxi for St. Paul's, and we were there in short order. It was only about 0.4 mi., and London taxi drivers don't waste any time. The driver waited for me to check the buses on the parking lot, and sure enough there was old 538 waiting. I waved the taxi on and went inside. When the situation was explained to him, the Cleric who was selling and collecting tickets said that my group was there, and pointing down the aisle said, "There they are now." Indeed there they were, the thirty or so surviving tourists gathered around Madam Daven and her black umbrella. Mrs. D. explained that Esther and Dave would not leave the Tower without me and that they would surely still be there. So I picked up my camera bag and Esther's blue cap that we had left on the bus, and went out in the street to hail another cab. It didn't take long to get one and I took a fast ride back to the Tower. On arriving I walked up and down the Wharf in front of the entrance gate thinking they would be there looking for me among the crowd of pedestrians. Well, of course, they weren't; I discovered later they were still inside looking for me.

I bought an ice cream cone to appease my ulcer which by now was beginning to complain and sat on a bench to eat the cone and plan what to do next. It was clear that we had erred in not having a contingency plan for a situation just like this one. Eventually the idea came to me that, since the Charing Cross railroad station would be our last stop in London, it seemed reasonable that we should go there to regroup. As a result I caught another cab. I was getting used to the apparent idiosyncrasies of London cabbies by now-- the way they sit on the wrong side of the cab and drive on the wrong side of the street and when they see two cars on opposite sides of the street with apparently enough room for a bike to pass, instead of slowing down they speed up and go between the vehicles without as much as scratching the paint. At any rate I asked the cabby to take me to Charing Cross station, and we were there posthaste.

We arrived at about 5:30, and looking over the people in the station waiting room with no luck, I checked on the schedule to Petts Wood and found that a train left every thirty minutes, at 18 minutes and 48 minutes after the hour. The 5:48 was due to leave shortly, so I went out on the track, looked in every car, and then sat on a bench to watch the train until it pulled out-- no Esther or Dave. I waited thirty minutes and went through the same routine again, except this time I boarded the 6:18 before it pulled out. When I arrived at the Petts Wood station I looked up the Vowles phone number and called them from a public phone on the sidewalk in front of the station. Pat answered and seemed real glad to hear from me. She told me that Dave had

called three times and that they had reported me missing to the London police. She said she would call the police and inform them that the prodigal had returned; she also suggested that I sit on the nearest bench and wait for Henry to pick me up. While waiting for Henry, I took one picture more of Toby's Restaurant across the street.

I was certainly glad to see Henry drive up for I was completely exhausted, physically and mentally. When we arrived at the house, Pat said she had called the police and that Esther and Dave were due to arrive at the station shortly and would get the news. While we waited, and it seemed like an eternity, Pat made me a tuna fish sandwich, and I never tasted anything so good. Eventually Esther and Dave arrived on a later train.



THE CIRCUS-- 1907
by
Stanley F. Davis

Several months before the Circus, Barnum and Bailey's-- the Greatest Show on Earth, was scheduled to come to Texarkana, Arkansas/Texas, the advertising crew arrived. They plastered almost every barn and out-building along the main roads (highways did not exist at that time-- only roads) with posters advertising the Circus. The poster pictures portrayed in vivid color daring trapeze acts, elephants, zebras, horses ridden by beautifully dressed girls, Indians in full war regalia, and most exciting of all, clowns. These pictures were colorful and far more tantalizing, especially to boys and girls, than the usual advertisement pictures painted on the walls of barns and out-buildings advertising "Bull Durham" smoking tobacco and "Mail Pouch" chewing tobacco.

My brothers and sisters, Karl, age 13; Lucile, age 11; Henry, age 7; Pauline, age 5; and I, age 9, between Lucile and Henry, were completely fascinated, dreaming, or at least hoping, that we would get to go to the Circus. In fact, the pictures were so real to us that we almost believed we could see the performance, hear the music, and smell the wild animals.

Eventually, Papa and Mama told us children that they were taking us to the Circus. We were in a state of ecstacy and lost no time in letting our friends know of our good fortune.

At last tomorrow was Circus day. Papa arranged for a neighbor to milk our cows and feed and water the livestock, since we would be away from home all the next day. The wagon wheels were greased and the wagon bed filled with hay to make a good bed for us children and feed for the mules that would pull the wagon. We children were sent to bed early because we had to get up at two a.m. the next morning.

By two thirty a.m. next morning, Papa had hitched a team of mules to the wagon, and we were on our way to Texarkana, a four hour drive. We children, in the back of the wagon covered with a quilt, were wide awake in anticipation of our day at the Circus.

About six thirty a.m. we arrived at College Hill, a colored section of Texarkana, about one quarter of a mile from the show ground. Papa decided to leave the wagon in a vacant lot on Dudley Avenue, the main street of College Hill. He said it was safer because the mules were young and skittish and the smell of wild animals might cause them to become uncontrollable. Papa unhooked the mules, took off their harness so they would be more comfortable and tied them to the rear wheels of the wagon, one on each side, so they could feed on the hay in the wagon bed.

We then walked to the show ground, arriving just as they started to unload the Circus train, a special train made up of numerous cars designed to accommodate the needs of the Circus as it travelled from city to city. The elephants and draft horses were unloaded first. They were needed to move tents, equipment, and animal cages to the site selected for erection of the tents. The main tent, with three center poles and covering an acre or more, was erected with assistance of the elephants, directed by handlers sitting on their heads. All the tents were firmly anchored by steel stakes; probably several hundred had to be driven into the ground by manual labor. This was accomplished by four men swinging twelve pound sledge hammers in unison to the measured count of the crew leader. To see four men slinging those heavy sledge hammers and to hear the ping of steel in perfect unison was a sight and sound to remember.

For safety reasons, trapeze and high wire artists set up and tested their own rigs.

By now the aroma of coffee was being wafted to our nostrils from the Circus kitchen, reminding us that it had been a long time since we had eaten

breakfast. No time for coffee now since we were headed for Broad Street, where the "Big Free Street Parade" would pass. We were early and got good standing room, where the parade would pass twice.

The parade was far more thrilling than seeing the animals unloaded and the tents set up: elephants lumbering along the street; camels and giraffes under the watchful eye of their handlers; open wild animal cages pulled by four horses; cowboys and cowgirls mounted on beautiful prancing horses; Indians mounted on their pinto ponies; clowns cavorting in the street; the bands blaring; flags waving; last of all the shrill whistling sound of the steam calliope.

Back to the show ground to see the death-defying act. A man was to dive into a ten foot diameter tank filled with water. We children, certain that he would be killed before our very eyes, held our breaths from the moment he left the platform until he surfaced, climbed out of the tank, bowed to the crowd, and walked nonchalantly toward his dressing tent.

This man may well have been the renowned Ben Mouton, from Lafayette, Louisiana, the famous dare-devil who performed death-defying diving and sway pole acts all over the world.

Going through the animal tent to the main entrance, the heat and smell of the animals was almost unbearable. We were early and got good seats at ground level near the center ring, or performing area.

By the time the show started the stands were full. A mixture of human odor and the smell of animals permeated the atmosphere. As adults fanned themselves with palm leaf fans, we children watched with our eyes glued on the performance, far too excited to notice the heat or the smell. There was only one real problem. We couldn't watch what was going on in all three rings at the same time. When we were watching a tumbling act in the center ring, we might be missing an animal act in another ring. The center ring had the best performances, but still we knew we were missing some of things we wanted to see. The clown acts we children liked best were first a clown trying, but failing ridiculously, to do the same stunt that had been performed by a professional, and then a dozen or more clowns getting out of a Model T Ford, which immediately exploded with a terrific boom. Of course the most thrilling, or nerve wracking, were the trapeze and tight wire acts high over the arena, the sense of danger enhanced by the ringmaster's loud and repeated request through his megaphone to the audience to remain quiet so as not to distract the actor and cause him to fall to his death; and when the animal trainer made one of his fiercest lions, protesting with a loud roar, open his mouth into which the trainer stuck his head.

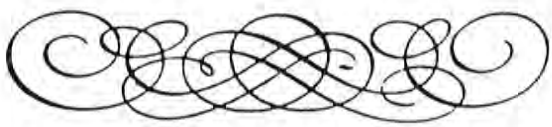
Then the grand finale, with the bands blaring, three or four Roman type chariots pulled by two horses raced at maddening speed around the entire arena.

The show was over. Side curtains all around the tent were raised and people could exit anywhere. What a glorious feeling to breathe that fresh clean smelling air.

In spite of the allure of the side show, the aroma of hot dogs, roasting peanuts, popcorn and cotton candy, that cold bubbling pink lemonade won out. Stomachs full, exhausted but happy, we headed back to the wagon.

Papa harnessed the mules, hitched them to the wagon and we were on our way home. We children slept most of the way, too tired even to talk about what we had sensed so pleasurably that day.

For us children, what we had seen, heard, smelled, and felt that day would linger in our memories for a long time, maybe forever, to be recounted over and over among ourselves and to our friends who had not seen the Circus.



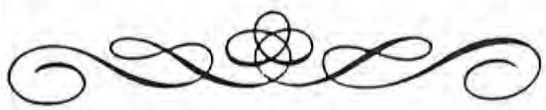
MEMORIES
by
Bonnie Gillis

While looking through my memories of years gone by, I came across what I wrote on my first trip to Africa:

At 1:45 p.m. in Houston, Texas, I walked into a 747 KLM flying machine. I felt like I was entering a theater-- four seats on each side and eight in the middle. Three hundred and fifty passengers. I glanced out a window and said, "Jay, there's a plane that is going to run into us." He said, "Mother, that's a part of this plane." He was fifteen and had flown lots of times with his dad in small planes. It was a great adventure for him. Youth has no fear. I felt like an astronaut way up above clouds. I wanted to say loud and clear, "Let me out of here," but there was no turning back.

A very nice looking man in uniform came walking down the aisle and I thought, "God, I hope he's not the captain of this plane taking leave of the controls." After a little while this same man came pushing a cocktail cart, asking what we would like to drink. Jay and I had 7up and salted nuts. It seemed like a long time to serve that many people. Of course, the stewardesses were the ones who did all the work. After that I took off my seat belt and looked for the restroom. When I came back to my seat, dinner was being served. I think it was really lunch: chicken salad, tomatoes, olives, some kind of meat with mushroom sauce cheese that tasted great, and tea or wine. After that a speaker came on saying, "It's four p.m. We are over Lake Erie." Next we flew over Cleveland and Detroit. I got brave enough to look out the window. Everything looked so neat and in place way up here. I have the feeling that God is near and is taking care of me, and my fear of flying even leaves me for awhile.

Everyone looks so happy and well-dressed, not dressy but nice; didn't see one boy with long hair. I kept my seat belt on all the time. There was a little sign that came on saying "Life Vest Under Your Seat." Then 5 o'clock came; we landed in Montreal. We left there at 7 p.m. to Amsterdam, six hours time difference. We had dinner, real good food. Next we watched a wild movie, "The Sleeper" with Woody Allen. Before it was over Jay pulled our my earphones and said, "Mother, look out the window. The sun is coming up." In six hours we saw the sun rise and set, another wonder for me. While we flew over the North Sea, we had breakfast. Next stop was Amsterdam, Holland. It was 7 a.m... at the Amsterdam airport, a beautiful place. There we had a five hour wait before our final destination in Tripoli, Libya, North Africa.



MEMORIES-- MUSIC STYLE II

by

Charles Bernard

It is customary today to ask each other, "Where were you on November 22, 1963, when Kennedy was shot?" In my day the question was a similar one, "What were you doing December 7, 1944, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor?" In like fashion, I am asking you, "What memory does this song bring back?"

I so enjoyed my last story on this subject that I continued to pry the cobwebs loose in this much cluttered mind and found many tunes that recall memorable events.

My brothers and sisters and I played "Claire de la lune" on our gramophone, the Victrola that had as its logo the dog listening to "his master's voice." The recording, locally produced, featured a neighbor, Christine Moses, who lived a few houses down the block from our house in St. Martinville, and Dak Pellerin, a Breaux Bridge native. I guess that was probably in 1925-26 because my sister was born in 1927, and we had sold the Victrola by then. We actually exchanged the hand cranked phonograph for a handmade baby bed. We children just couldn't understand this "swap" since my youngest brother was already six years old. But Mama knew.

"Every little breeze seems to whisper Louise" remained our town's favorite song for a long time in St. Martinville because it was one of Maurice Chevalier's songs. Chevalier's movies were popular in our French-speaking community's local theater, and I think some of the French versions of his films were shown.

"Oh, if I had the wings of an angel" by Jimmy Rogers was one of the recordings I'd hear at Uncle John's. My Uncle John, who lived in Parks, was a successful farmer and a very innovative man, I thought. Living in a town, we had electric lights, but Uncle John had carbide lights. These were much better than the kerosene lamps almost everybody had.

But better yet was how we used carbide to shoot off can tops. As well as I can remember, we'd take a tin can, place some of the powder with a few drops of water, replace the can cover and light a match near a hole pierced in

the can cover. The result was a loud noise as the carbide would blow up and pop the cover off the can.

More excitement came to our quiet life when I listened and watched a man sing, "I met a man the other day" in 1929, my first glimpse of a talking picture. A series of acts on film were shown at our local theater. As the actors sang and performed, the sound came from behind the screen. I remember that the voice and the picture were not synchronized, but we didn't seem to mind. I went behind the screen after the performance and saw the phonograph player. We were told by local sages that the movies of the future would all be talking pictures.

"The breeze and I" are words that bring back prohibition days. I went to court my girlfriend in Broussard when dances were held in the WOW hall on Main Street. I had met her when she and the other team members played basketball in our school gym. Music was furnished by recordings on a phonograph player.

We bought booze down by the railroad tracks in a small shotgun house owned by blacks. I seem to remember paying 20 cents for a half pint of a clear liquid that burned my throat and stomach, but gave me a buzz.

In 1935 I danced to "Don't know why there's no sun up in the sky,... 'Stormy Weather,'"
played by Alex White and his orchestra. The place was a screened pavilion near the beach in Sharenton. We paid 10 cents, danced one dance and an encore, then walked out the dance hall. The encore allowed the men who came without dates to break in for a dance. If you wanted to dance again, you paid another 10 cents and walked back in. The girls remained inside the entire time.

Alex White's orchestra featured two girl vocalists. When the girls sang, we'd stand within touching distance, staring and ogling at a woman of the world, beautifully dressed with such a look of elegance. It was rumored that the song "Stormy Weather" was banned from the radio because too many people were committing suicide while listening to the song.

"You have to give a little, take a little, " was popular in 1936 when I was a freshman at S.L.I. We were a group of young people taught by Mr. Decuir from New Iberia to dance the Acadian dances. In order to raise money for some of the expenses, we performed in neighboring towns before making the trip. I also remember being told just before the departure date that Miss Snott, a lady from the Baton Rouge Tourism Office, had run off with our hard earned money. One of the band members of Freddie Martin's orchestra was

from the town of Broussard and was a friend of Wade, a dancer in our group. We all went to the night club and heard Freddie Martin play "That's the Story of Love."

"Have you ever been lonely?," a 1937 tune, is another song I sang when my love affairs weren't running smoothly. It was fun sitting on the swing, singing and feeling sorry for myself. (A beer would have added just the right touch if could have afforded it.)

I was introduced to country music when I taught in Stephensville. I rented a room from the family, but spent much of my time with them. I don't remember the radio station, but the music was pure country. The year was 1938, and the song was "Today passed you on the street, and my heart fell at your feet." After teaching one year at the salary of $75 for ten months, I saved enough money in 1939 to finance a trip to New York City to attend the World's Fair. We were six boys, about the same age, give and take a few years. I was twenty.

I had been to New Orleans, but I longed to see the big city lights of New York. I had seventy dollars cash, no travelers checks and no checking account. George, the oldest, had just bought a Dodge, so the five others agreed to share the car expenses.

"Green eyes, those cool and limpid green eyes" was popular that year. We were walking down a street when we saw "Ten Cents-a-Dance," went up a flight of stairs, and entered a world anew! I don't remember what type men were in attendance, but every girl wore an evening dress, heels up to her calves, shoulders bare, and an inviting smile. I danced my dollar away.

Sitting in an easy chair, drinking German keg beer, looking out a peaceful Lake Waansee, Germany, and listening to an American song, "Gonna take that sentimental journey," I was wishing I was taking the journey. It was 1945, and I didn't like being in the Army, I didn't like the Germans, and I didn't like being away from home. But fortunately, I did come home sooner than expected, and all ended well.

MIMS-- PART I

by

Marjorie Smith

These stories of his early years were told to me by Mims. He was named after the doctor who delivered him. Dr. Mims Mitchell went from Crowley to Jennings by train to deliver the baby. The middle name was my favorite, so I usually called my husband Mims. His family and long time friends called him Freddie; his sons, "Pop."

Fred Mims life spanned 72 years, from August 18, 1916 to August 29, 1988. Beginning with Robert, Dunham, Webb, then Freddie, followed by the twins Morgan and Harriet and Sweeny, there were seven children. The parents were Dr. Morgan Smith and Hattie Sweeny Smith. While waiting for each "bundle from Heaven," Mrs. Smith took lessons in art, voice or piano. She thought her friends would think she was foolish, so she did it secretly.

Hers was a lively household. Everyone was encouraged to develop his talents to their fullest. Both parents were blessed with musical talent and passed this on to all the children.

When Mims was a little boy, he was only interested in playing. One game he and his brothers never tired of was running. He and his friends would start running all over town and Bugs (his little brother Morgan) would try to catch them. Poor Bugs could never do it, but oh how he tried day after day.

One day when Freddie was big enough to make a garden of his own, he and a friend went into business. They established a market for lettuce then planted some. The partnership was successful.

The family was big on football, too. One Saturday there were four Smith boys quarterbacking different teams. Dr. Smith was team physician for Jennings High, and Mother Smith was there sitting on her white hankie for luck. Mrs. Smith was a legend. Dunham was still taking her to high school football games when she was in her nineties.

The next important event in Mims' life was his five piece orchestra. He played drums and Kathryn Moore played piano. I don't know about the other players.

Every Saturday night the kids moved the furniture and rolled up the rugs for a dance. Mrs. Smith chaperoned and the gate crashers were turned away. Freddie's group furnished the music.

When Dr. Smith went fishing or hunting, he took one of the boys with him because he had a heart problem. If the fishing rods came out, Freddie hid; but when it was time for hunting duck or geese, he was first in line.

Every father dreams of his son following in his footsteps, and that was the reason Dr. Smith took Freddie on house calls. This son seemed more interested in medicine. Going on house calls was fine,but Freddie couldn't take the operating room experience. After the war, Webb, Jimmie, and two babies went to New Orleans where Webb became an M.D. at LSU Medical School. He became a country doctor, like his dad, in Colfax, north Louisiana.

Freddie went to S.L.I. and later to Tulane Law School. After he graduated from S.L.I., he was asked to manage the Student Union. It was great fun; he could stay in the band and enter all the campus activities and even live in the boys dorm. One day President Fletcher said, "Freddie, don't you think it's time you went out into the real world?" He did.

At about twelve years of age, he had a job driving a delivery truck of milk. This was an ambitious job as he had to walk a mile and a half in the predawn hours. The pay was fresh milk for the Smith household. One morning Freddie ran the truck into a ditch. He was so scared, he jumped out and ran all the way home, leaving the truck. It was a while before he went back to t he dairy. The owner never said a word about the incident.

Every day Freddie put the grocery basket over his arm and went to Peggy Wigley. This was his family job. Some years later when his driving improved, he was allowed to take the family car, filled with his friends, and drive up and down the street. If the porch light went on, that signaled that the doctor had a house call and needed the car.

Life was free and easy in the friendly little town of Jennings in the 1930's. Fred enjoyed every minute.

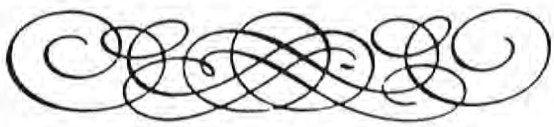
During World War II, he served, proudly, as a Nave pilot in the North African Theater. For a weekend of rest and recreation, Fred and several buddies rented a cottage on Martha's Vineyard, off the coast of Massachusetts. It was there he met Nancy Graham, whom he married after the war.

Fred and Nancy had two fine sons, Graham and Clay. During this marriage, Fred attended law school, two years at Boston University and the last year at Tulane. It was several years before Freddie could practice law. His

father had planned to back him in private practice; but sadly, the doctor died when Freddie was in his last year of school.

For several years Fred worked in the world of business as a duck plant manager on Long Island. The day did come that he practiced law in Lafayette.

The marriage to Nancy ended. Pop and the boys set up housekeeping on their own. Being teenage boys, they had plans of their own each weekend. Freddie went to Harriet's house in Jennings where she always had activity. His mother also lived with his sister. Johnny Adams, Harriet's husband, was a great companion. Mims kept this Jennings routine going for eight years. Then Marjorie entered his life.



MY YEARS ON THE STAGE
by
Bea Gresham

Mount Carmel and Cathedral were Catholic schools that my children, Sandra, Ronnie, and Michael, attended during their elementary and high school years. In order to obtain badly needed funds for the school, the Parent-Teacher Club participated in various benefits. One of these activities was a covered dish supper, which required long hours of dish washing on the part of the volunteer workers.

It was at one of the PTC meetings that the mothers decided a play would be a fun activity with no kitchen work. "The Little Red School House," a one-act play, was chosen. Practice was called for the following week, and twenty-one mothers were present. That was the beginning of the Mount Carmel Mothers Plays. Practice was much harder than washing dishes, but when mothers over the age of forty were making jackasses of themselves, they were enjoying the joie de vivre. After the one-act play was worked over, added to, and subtracted from, the revision was a three act play with two intermissions. During that time the children came on stage to dance and sing. Most of the plays at night had standing room only, as the parents invited the relatives.

There was a matinee in the afternoon for the students and two performances at night. From the three days the proceeds averaged two thousand dollars and was used for the debt fund on construction.

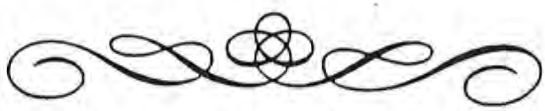
I was invited to join the mothers' plays in the early fifties. I had been in a few high school plays, but I was now over forty and hesitated to join the group. The more I thought of being on the stage, the more exciting it seemed. I then attended a practice, was asked to read a few lines from the play in Cajun French, and I was on my way to becoming a stage star. I was soon the "Macaque," monkey, because I was always doing something unexpected. In the play "Ole Maids Convention," one of the fathers had dressed like and old maid. I had brought my sister Alice's cat and put him on the stage, and all during the play the cat kept rubbing the father's leg. Another time when we did "The Little Red School House," I brought my nephew Bill's bantam rooster in a cage, and all of a sudden the rooster flew over the audience. There was much to do that night as some of the audience tried to catch that bantam rooster while others shooed him away. When we played "Anything Can Happen at the Ole Depot," while waiting for the train to come in, the manager of a pizza parlor across the street from the Depot was short of help to make the pizzas, so we went over to get the job done. Each of us had her own pizza to make and all of a sudden there was pizza dough flying through the air. The audience couldn't make up their minds if it was part of the act. They soon found out as the dough fell and wrapped around a lady's head sitting in the audience.

No one directed these plays. If you didn't know the lines, you ad libbed; you could do anything for a laugh. I remember I was the little girl in the ole Depot play and my ma gave me a pill to take. When I drank the water, instead of swallowing, I gargled. My ma hit me on the back, and I let the water go. Even now when I think of that incident, I laugh. You see, that was not in the play. I remember when we did the hula, a hawaiian dance with grass skirts. The mothers were tall, fat, skinny, short, all wearing hula skirts and leis, dancing to very graceful and romantic music. Wow! did that get a laugh from the audience.

The Mount Carmel Play Mothers had a common goal, to do the best that we could do to help our schools financially and to entertain the public with Cajun humor. Each year the Cajun plays were bringing larger crowds. Because of the joy and laughter that was shared and the camaraderie that existed between the mothers, the decision to end the plays was a difficult one. For more than twenty years other mothers had taken the place of those

members who had dropped out. The original members of the cast were now older and had other obligations.

In 1964 the play mothers presented "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." I remember that I was a fat and short Snow White, but I felt so beautiful waiting for my prince to awaken me. That performance ended my make believe world; but as I look back, I cherish the memories of being a volunteer mother. Sometime when I am shopping or browsing around I hear "Hello, Snow White." It is a now grown man or woman who was in elementary school remembering the plays, someone I cannot recall by name.



ON THE SUBJECT OF "PETIT NOMS"

by

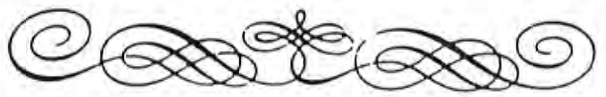
Lou duBernard

The subject of "petit noms," or nicknames, was triggered by a telephone conversation I had with a friend this past week. "Lou," she asked, "why do I keep hearing Alice calling Bea 'Goatie' all the time?" She did find it a bit strange and at least, different, she said. So I proceeded to explain: Mother had purchased a new coat for Bea when she was in high school, a lovely kind of wool with a goat's fur collar which she proudly displayed among her friends. However, this goat fur also caused a bit of humor since we found it kind of "tacky," so Alice began to call Bea "Goatie." Needless to say, the rest of us took up the "nickname," and she has retained it to this day. When I have trouble finding Bea in a store while we are shopping, I just yell "Goatie," and believe me, this brings her out from the clothes racks in a hurry!

All of this reminiscing brought to mind all the other various petit noms I have heard from my early and ensuing years. Floating around in family group conversations besides our favorite "Goatie" were "Malou" and "Balou" for Marie Louise and "Lass" for Alice (when the children were small, they couldn't roll their little tongues to form Alice). Others included yours truly, "Luc'l," "L.J.," "Lou," "Toot," and "pauvre petit Lucille"; "Tee-Noc" for our favorite

uncle; "Mamou" for Mother; "Tee-Chou" for Alice's friend Hazel; "Tic-Toc" for Sandy which was her father's very special one for her. When Mike left part of his little toe on a diving board in Germany, he was forever after called "short toe" by his father. Bill became "Crookshank" thirty years ago when he developed a crick in his neck and he constantly held his head to the side for weeks! And I must not and cannot leave out "Saucisse" which befell my dear sister Bea during her high school years when our father had the first meat market in Lafayette!

I called my friend when I had this nearly completed to thank her for "providing my lesson" for Tuesday's "Life and Letters" class!



MEMORY ALIVE

by

Joe Glorioso

A journey through life is a continuum of experiences. Although each experience may appear to be the same, each will be minutely different from those that precede or follow it. What, where, when and how a person encounters and copes with an experience is dependent to a large degree on the sources of influence brought early by parents to bear consciously and felt sensibly by their children and later by others to bear unconsciously and felt insensibly by young children and adults.

I am inclined to believe that influences are either positive or negative. Many positive influences are seldom consciously transmitted and sensibly received, but nearly always unconsciously transmitted and insensibly accepted.

The act of influence is a two-way street. There are at least two actors, possibly more. In a two-way street, using the case of parent and child, the parent is one actor (call him the influencer); and the second actor is the child (call him the influencee). Inherently, parents have almost total influence over their children in their formative years. They are the chief influencers. Their most important responsibility is to influence their children to be aware of the

many forms and sources of negative influences and to advise that they summarily reject them. Parents have the absolute right to influence their children to recognize the forms and sources of positive influences and to urge their acceptance.

As children grow older, they are readily subjected to influences by their peers and adults. Generally, they respond positively to forces of good character, strength of high intellect, degree of superior accomplishment and high status in society. When children grow older and wiser through maturity, the effectiveness of parents as influencers lessens while outside sources gain as influencers. If parents fail through stubborn neglect or gross carelessness to arm their children with the knowledge to recognize the shape and sources of negative influences, then their offspring will fall prey to unpleasant, even dangerous, experiences in their personal journeys through life. On the other hand, parents who enlighten their children on the benefits of positive influences strengthen their character and embellish their lives.

My father, mother and their adult friends wielded positive influences during my young, impressionable preschool years. Three adults, through forces of good character and strength of intellect, unconsciously molded my behavior to my own insensibility. To my good fortune and my everlasting gratitude, each uniquely, but somehow complementary, shaped my understanding of small parts of my world.

Three or four times each week (always on Friday's band night) the three cronies, Mr. Eves, Mr Luca and Mr. Guerin, would gather in our store to talk with my parents, sometimes buying apples, ice cream, watermelons and, on Fridays, tuna fish sandwiches. Because they were unrelenting bachelors, my mother would sometimes invite them to Sunday dinner, always when she prepared meatball spaghetti and home-baked Italian bread. It was during those unforgettable times that I fell under their spell.

Mr. Eves, a chemist by training and a practicing pharmacist, told me some things about our physical and chemical world. Mr. Luca, a printer by trade, introduced me to letters and numbers. Mr. Guerin, a tinsmith, showed me how he used letters and numbers to measure, pattern, bend, cut, shape and build tin gutters, stove pipes and sinks.

To avoid stretching your willingness to listen to more pages than your attention can tolerate, you will be subjected only to Mr. Guerin's role as my influencer. His tinsmith shop was located within six feet of the Missouri Pacific Railroad tracks at the bayou end of and facing Iberia Street in New Iberia. It was well within the distance I was permitted to wander away from

home. He lived and worked in a shotgun, unpainted clapboard building with a small front porch and a galvanized tin roof (as one might expect). The foundation was only as stable as a few brick piers, which held the building just high enough to clear the ground, would allow. The front of the workshop and tops of the workbenches were cluttered with scrap tin, tools of his trade, lead droppings, lead melting pots, and lead bricks. The tin bending machine, nearly hidden behind a jungle of litter that made it almost inaccessible, stood alone to one side. Sheets of tin covered the floor. When he needed a sheet, he moved the clutter aside and outside, moved the sheet of tin out of the building for measuring, patterning and cutting, returned the unused tin to the floor and brought back the outside clutter. (As you should suspect, this is a classic example of negative influence.)

Mr. Guerin used the back room of the shop as living quarters, which consisted of a small bedroom, an even smaller kitchen and a tiny bathroom. He made the icebox, stove, oven and sink with cabinets for the kitchen. In the bathroom, except for a window and small exhaust fan, he made the only copper bathtub I know about, a lavatory with cabinets and a completely enclose water closet, which was really an inside outhouse. His living quarters were conspicuous by its cleanliness and orderliness. (This is a classic example of positive influence.)

Mr. Guerin was a small, thin man, sporting and Adolphe Menjou mustache. When working, he wore a white shirt, sleeves rolled to his elbows, a celluloid collar attached to the shirt's neckband, a black ready-knotted bow tie and highly shined black hightop laced shoes over black cotton socks. This attire was covered by a bibbed apron made of heavy brown canvas. When wrapped around him and tied up front, the apron covered him from his knees to his bow tie. He was never hurried, and I cannot recall that he perspired, certainly not sweated. When he left his shop, he wore the usual shirt, collar and tie; but, to be sartorially correct, he put on a blue serge suit and shiny hightop black button-down shoes over black silk socks.

New Iberia's resident tinsmith, Mr. Guerin, was an expert in retining the rusted ice shelves of wood-framed family iceboxes. In addition to relining the ice shelves, sometimes the entire icebox had to be relined. A dray would haul a repairable icebox to the tinsmith's shop for repair. If the drayman had not been instructed to tell Mr. Guerin to use his best judgement and repair the icebox, the man of the house would show up after work in his work clothes to ask Mr. Guerin's advice on what needed to be done but seldom would he ask the cost of the repairs.

In one instance, a woman drove to the shop in a sporty car. Dressed in her fineries, she dismounted the car, taking unmistakable care that nothing above the ankles was displayed. She gingerly approached the shop, but stopped at the edge of the front porch, and called out to Mr. Guerin with a curt, "Sir." (I suspect the woman sensed that his living accommodations were as untidy as his workshop.)

"As soon as I finish soldering this joint, I'll be with you." Leaving me to watch the burner under the lead pot, he walked to the porch's front edge. He was always the gentleman and spoke in a pleasant voice, "How can I help you?"

Keeping a safe distance between the person of Mr. Guerin and her own person. (I think she thought of him as "untouchable.") and pointing with her umbrella, "How much will you charge me to repair MY icebox? Why is it still on this porch?"

Always the gentleman. "I have two boxes in the shop. One will be finished within the hour. The drayman will deliver it this afternoon. While he is here he will help me move your box where your own drayman left it from my porch into the shop. For the business at hand, I'll have to examine your box before I can give you the cost of repairs."

After painstaking scrutiny, taking of careful measurements and making brief calculations, he gave her the cost of repairs.

"That's entirely too much. Must you fix the whole box? How much will you charge to fix the ice shelf and nothing else?"

"Just the ice shelf? Your icebox needs a complete relining. There is a leak around the drain tube. The opening is rusted out. I cannot just fix the ice shelf. Maybe you should buy a new icebox." Honey dripped with each word.

"I see I must send my husband to deal with you."

"That will be my pleasure." A pleasant smile betrayed the sarcasm.

After the woman left, he entered the shop to finish his soldering job. "Women," directing his remarks not to me, rather to himself, "think fixing a box is the same as boiling eggs." I understood the meaning of bachelorhood. Despite the unkindly offhand remark about women, the tinsmith, to my complete innocence, unconsciously brought to bear upon my young mind the virtues of gentlemanly ways.

The dapper tinsmith, meticulous in his dress as well as his work, measured his work first from the right to the left and again from his left to the right. I learned later the carpenters' adage: Measure twice, cut once. Today I use Guerin's method because I get two views of one measure and not one view of two measures. Vive la difference.

Watching a skilled craftsman use a rule to measure and pattern a sheet of metal obviously fascinated me. Guerin slyly watched me as I watched him. "Wanta learn to read a rule?"

Within a millisecond. "Yes."

"Can you count?"

My first test. "I can count, read and write numbers."

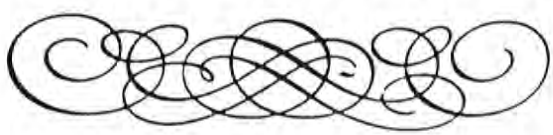
"Good. Read the numbers on the 24-inch rule. Read the numbers on this 36-inch rule. Now, this 12-inch rule."

Having passed those test, I was ready for more. Mr. Guerin used a 12-inch rule to teach the meaning of the 1/2-inch markings, explaining there were 2 half inches in each inch, 24 in 12 inches. Every time we met, he would question me. "How many 1/2 inches in an inch? How many in 12 inches?" After a week, he taught the quarter inches, then the eighth inches. Soon I had a repertoire of measurements that my mind could regurgitate upon command. Next to reciting the rosary, I knew the rules best.

In short order, I was permitted to check his measurements. On occasion, he would deliberately make a slight error to test my ability. When I detected the error, he invariably asked, "Are you sure?" I would double check, "Yes."

Mr. Guerin was the first person to introduce me to the power of numbers and the challenge of mathematics. He believed that meticulous attention to details, complete dedication to accuracy, learning to the point of mastery and on-the-job-training constituted the elements of learning and the keys to success. His credo placed Mr. Guerin at the head of my master teacher list of outstanding teachers.

I am ready to pronounce openly that, in a general way, career choices are made during the formative years of young lives. My interest in mathematics and science goes back to three cronies who took the time to consciously and/or unconsciously cast a positive influence on my life. The teaching regimen unconsciously used by Mr. Guerin was my valued blueprint during a teaching career. Mr. Guerin never failed me. In return, I keep his memory alive.



SPECIAL DAY AT LA FINCA

by

Nell Clark

It was always good to go to "La Finca." Karen our daughter; her husband Glenn; their children, Jay, Kevin, Jeffery and Miss Elise; Bub's sister and husband, Aunt Flo and Uncle Hoot all took food, some already cooked. Those days were never a chore; sometines we had a fish fry or barbeque. The fellows fished and the children did a little of everything, including fishing, hunting or practicing target shooting. They sat either on the deck or took chairs and sat around "Pop's" (Bub's) office under the oak tree. At night they built a bonfire and roasted marshmallows. But today was special, no one had ever helped to give cattle shots. The cattle needed worming. Instead of having the veterinarian do it, Bub decided we could save money by doing it ourselves.

The pens are built so we can give the cattle shots or brand them. We had about forty cows that needed shots. Everyone had a job to do-- Glenn; Karen; Jay, 15; Kevin, 12; Jeffery, 9; Miss Elise, 4; and myself are some of the workers. Bub's sister Flo is watching from the deck. Hoot checks to see if the cows are in the right position. John Watts and Mary, his wife, live on the farm. John is to help Bub give the shots. Karen, Jay, Kevin, Jeff, and I are trying to get the cows in the pen, but the cows won't cooperate. When we thought we had them going in the pen, the cows started running toward us. We are scared, so we run to the house where Flo is watching the action. Go back and try again. Once we have them in the pen, Glenn is to see that the cows get in the chute so Bub and John can give the shots. Again, the cows won't budge. Glenn climbs up on the fence and jumps on the cows to make them move. A cow runs and Glenn's legs are running on top of the cow. Hoot is to see the cow is in the right position. Kevin is to close the gate; Kevin closes it too soon and hits Uncle Hoot with the gate. Hoot could have been hurt, but he escapes with minor injuries. Bub and John, the unlicensed vets, finally give the cows the shots, run the cows through the bath, and let them out into the pasture.

After the big event, we all went in to bathe and eat. After supper we got down to serious card playing, Canasta-- Flo, Karen, Glenn, and myself. Sometimes Hoot or Jay would fill in. We have taught all the children to play canasta and dominoes. Bub was a master at dominoes; after one play he could tell you what dominoes each one held. The Clarks are card sharks. They really know how to play. While our canasta game was going on, we washed and dried clothes, so we got up to clean clothes in the morning. Our games lasted until 1 or 2 a.m. No one seemed ready to go to bed. Bub went to bed early and read. He also got up early so he could go to the Pine Cone Restaurant for coffee and to shoot the bull with his friends.

Bub planted tomatoes, cucumbers, string bean, and watermelon. We weren't there to water, and John didn't like to. So unless we had rain, we didn't have a garden. Everyone said John was lazy, especially Luther. He wanted Bub to get rid of John.

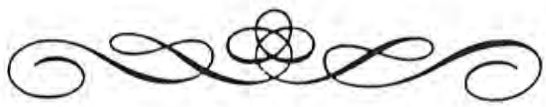
In 1985 Bub got sick. We never knew at the time what was wrong. After four months and five doctors in Lafayette, in September 1985, we went to Houston to the Diagnostic Center. Dr. Forth diagnosed Bub as having cancer of the vocal chords and lungs. We stayed for his chem treatments. Dr. Forth told us to get our business in order, that Bub had six months to one year. We didn't give up. After a lengthy stay at Hamilton Hospital, 72 days, and 4 months at home, Bub sold his business. He did consulting work for friends and wouldn't charge them. Bub said everyone was so good to him he wanted to give something back.

When Bub went to the farm, he bushhogged (that's riding a tractor and cutting grass or hay). John said he wasn't able to feed the cattle, that it was too hard for him to get in the barn loft and throw the hay down (again we all said John was lazy). We couldn't be there all the time, so we sold the cattle. Mary, John's wife, sold her chickens, ducks and rabbits. Mary was out of the poultry business and we were out of the cattle business. There went our write off.

Three years ago the Government was encouraging farmers to plant trees. We have forty acres of pine trees. Last year someone set fire to nine farms from Chicot to Oakdale. The State Police have never found out who did it. We lost about twenty acres of pine trees. We had trees replanted. Some are growing. The Co-op extension services are going to check on the trees this month.

Bub and I have been farmers, ranchers, and now tree farmers. You must see Bub's hideaway. Our daughter Karen gave her dad a swing when we first fixed the place up. Bub could then sit under the oak tree in the swing. We called it his office. Bub would go out and sit and read for hours. We still call it his office.

This summer in August 1992, we all took turns sitting in his office and had our pictures taken. In July our granddaughter Miss Elise said she saw Pops sitting in the swing. She ran in the house, took the camera and snapped pictures of him. She told us the swing was still moving and he was there. His vision and memories were there for her, and always will be.



SUNDAYS WERE SPECIAL
by
Liz Moore

When my brother Earl, sisters Virginia and Lois and I were youngsters in the late thirties and early forties, our special day of the week was Sunday. Mom could be home with us all day because Boustany's Department Store, where she worked as a seamstress handling alterations, was closed on Sundays.

On Saturday afternoons, we would wash our hair squeaky clean, bathe and check our church clothes, the outfit we would be wearing to Mass at St. John Cathedral. Shoes were polished, covering the wear and tear received during the week. We looked like shiny pennies as we climbed into our Chevy automobile for the ride to church on Sunday mornings. Mom wore hat and gloves, as was the norm in those days. I did not like to wear a hat; however, as decreed by the Church, females were to cover their heads-- we did.

After Mass, Mom bought the Sunday Times Picayune newspaper from the paper boy outside the church. Then we hurried home and while Mom heated her cup of coffee, the rest of us replaced our "church clothes" with play clothes. This done, we would all race back to the living room couch, where Mom awaited with the "funny papers." We looked forward to this Sunday morning ritual.

Mom had a way of making the characters come alive in each comic. "The Katzenjammer Kids" had sort of a Dutch or German accent, so Mom punctuated their mischievous doings with as near proper accent as possible.

Popeye and Olive Oil always ended up in situations that called for Popeye's downing a can of spinach to the animated tune of "Popeye the Sailor Man." The eating of spinach by this hero was supposed to encourage us to eat more of this rather "blah" looking vegetable.

Little Orphan Annie and her dog were always one of our favorite comics. We listened quietly to her latest travails and wondered how she would get out of this latest situation. No matter what, she always overcame obstacles. Dagwood and Blondie were on the lighter side and always drew some good reading and "acting-out by Mom. This made us laugh, I think more at Mom's antics than the comic strip.

All I remember about Mutt and Jeff is that one was tall and the other was short. "Dixie Doogan and Friends" was sort of like the TV comedy series "Designing Women." I was never interested in "Buck Rogers," the "into-the-future" space cartoon. What seemed so far-out with a large stretch of imagination by the writer is now coming to pass in our lifetime.

It seemed that time went by so quickly, and as Mom finished reading the last page of the comic section, we would plead "Aw, Mom, start over again." Now it was time for Mom to begin preparing Sunday Dinner.

This was our best meal of the week and consisted of either a plump, juicy baked hen or a roast which had bee "stuffed" with garlic/onions and browned in a wonderful smelling gravy. The accompanying dishes were rice, potato salad, corn, string beans or perhaps creamed potatoes, petit pois, green salad, and fruit. Sometimes we had bread pudding or lemon cake for dessert, with milk or lemonade.

On Sunday afternoons, we might pile into the car again for what seemed like a long ride to Grandpa and Grandma Doucet's. You must remember that roads were dusty gravel or mud if it rained. We lived near the Evangeline Maid Bakery and had to travel way out into the country by way of the Old Maurice Road (Johnston Street now) to what is now Doucet Road at Superstore. Doucet Road was a little rutted lane between hefty size ditches lined with trees and brambles. Although I was pretty tough, my mind was active with thoughts of animals and snakes lurking out there. I was always relieved when we reached our destination at either end.

After our wonderful visit at Grandma's and Grandpa's, we would head back to town to bathe and prepare for the night's rest before heading to school on Monday mornings. Our special time was over.