



*Life and
Letters*



**Volume
VII**

We all long, as one student wrote, "to be kindly remembered." These stories, written by the students of the life history writing class, **Life & Letters**, share "kind remembrances" of parents, grandparents, friends, siblings, spouses, children, even strangers. They also share memories of ourselves. They are our lives, our stories, kind memories to share with you. Read on and enjoy.

--Joan Stear
April 1993

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Front Cover (clockwise from upper righthand corner): Charles and Nelda Bernard; Bea Gresham and sister, Malou; Bonnie Gillis's mother; Chris Smith; Kate Domingue with brothers and sisters; Barbara Hansen; Ann Lee; (center) Esther and Ed Parker



THE STUDENTS OF LIFE AND LETTERS
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The Levee

by
Elizabeth Onebane

The levee was a big part of my young life, bringing to it a mixture of joy and sadness. It was our front yard when we lived on the plantation. We children would walk across the road between our house and the levee and spend hours sliding down its side after all our preparations were made. First we had to haul empty boxes from Papa's store to the top of the levee. The cardboard boxes needed to be bent and trimmed to fit us, then the bottom greased with the scoop of shortening that Papa would give us out of his store. It was so much fun sliding down. None of us needed to be rocked to sleep at night after these afternoons on the levee.

The other exciting event that took place was when Papa would wake us up in the night and take us with him to see the barges come in with groceries for his store. The barges would be all lit up. The reflections on the water excited me. The men would help roll the barrels of apples and carry the other items to the store.

About once a year the steamboat would arrive and Papa and Mamma (if she was at home) would take us to attend the show that was going on there. I loved the dancing girls.

When I was seven years old we moved to town and there only a half block away was the levee. Papa had a new store and Mamma a house, our first home detached from Papa's business. Unless a grown up would be with us we were never allowed to go to the river; but Mamma would let me go to the levee to pick wild flowers and thistles. As I grew older I found out Joe, my oldest brother, and his friends would break the rule and go swimming in the pits, the large water holes that developed between levee and the river. I wanted to go with him, but he refused to take me and swore me to secrecy.

Not too long after we got settled in our new home the river rose to the top of the levee. I will never forget that sight as long as I live. Miles and miles of water. Great fear of the levee breaking came over everyone. Papa got friends and hired hands to help move merchandise and store equipment to the levee. After that was done they began moving Mamma's furniture; but before they could finish, the levee broke four blocks from us. In the early morning fire alarms and church bells woke us up. These were the signals for everyone to evacuate. My parents gathered us together and screamed

for us to run to the levee. Someone put my tiny baby brother in my little arms and summoned me to run. As I crossed the street I saw this huge tumbling of water roaring down our street. It was awful and we were all so afraid. Our entire family was all saved from the treacherous water. We stood on the levee and watched our little town of Melville get covered with water. In spite of the fear, I became excited when tents were pitched as shelters. Late in the day Papa gathered us once more and with tears rolling down his face he told us he was sending us to live in Baton Rouge where he had three rent houses and that he would have to stay on the levee with others to protect our things. He put us on the train giving us his love and instructions to be good and to help Mamma. The train was moving and we were hanging out the windows when we saw Papa yelling and running between the bridges and the train trying to reach Mamma to give her the bag of money he had forgotten to give her. Mamma screamed for she thought he would get crushed. Except for the pain of seeing us off, he was okay. The train took forever to go across the river since the water was as high as the bridge. We heard the next day the bridge broke right after we crossed.

I still love to go to the levee, sit on it, pick flowers and be close to the river. And I am amazed how a seven year old child could remember so much.

Growing Up

by
Peggy Tipton

Growing up in Ada was sort of like living in a fishbowl. With a population of about 8,000, nearly everyone knew everyone else. I mean, of course, everyone who was anyone. And like most small towns, everyone tended to know everyone else's business, including mine. I may have had more eyes on me than most teenagers because of Daddy's standing at East Central and because of our various activities at the Presbyterian Church. But I didn't let that bother me. I was always just what I was, a normal little girl and later a normal teenager.

My earliest close friends were the two girls, Willie Frue and Eloise Logsdon, who lived up the street in the next block. I don't know where we played the most, at their house or mine. It just depended on what we wanted to play. Our big front porch was great for playing house or building tents on rainy days. Also, I had a little playhouse in our backyard that had a dirt floor which we frequently tried to sweep clean. And there were several trees in our yard that we liked to climb. But at their house there were many more possibilities for having fun. There was a small barn at the back of their yard, and there always seemed to be a new litter of kittens for us to find and play with. In their attic there was a treasure trove of trunks filled with fabulous old dresses, hats and hightop shoes for us to play dress-up with. But I think what I liked to do best was to have plays. I would write, direct and perform in them. After several rehearsals, I would decide we were ready for an audience. The performances were held in their two car garage with sheets for a curtain. The whole neighborhood of adults was invited, since there were no other children to invite, and we nearly always had an audience of at least two -- our mothers. Their mother was a jewel to put up with me and some of my ideas.

I think I was a nice enough child, no better and no worse than the average. I was a bit headstrong, but I usually did what was expected of me - especially what my parents expected, and that was plenty. However, like most teenagers, I soon began to exercise some degree of independence and decided to try my wings with some new experiences.

When I was about fourteen, I started taking ballroom dancing lessons. This was the beginning of a new world. Dancing became one of my first lifelong loves. During the next two years, my dancing classmates and I

became good friends. And because they went to Ada High, I decided that I must go there too.

I'm sure it took a good deal of wheedling for me to persuade Daddy to let me go clear across town to school when Horace Mann was only a couple of blocks away. But somehow I succeeded. I don't remember how I got to school and back; all I know for sure is that I didn't walk -- it was way too far for that. Anyway, I soon realized that I had made one huge mistake. Ada High was much too large and impersonal for this spoiled little girl. Early in the second semester I knew that something had to be done to get me out of there. What could I do and still save face? It wasn't long before fate took charge and I had to drop out.

Mother was having some problems with her health at that time and needed to go to the City (short for Oklahoma City) for treatments. Her doctor didn't want her to drive that far, so it fell upon me to drive her there three days a week, all Spring. In spite of her being in pain much of the time, we had some good times together on those drives. Mother and I were always best friends.

I went to summer school that summer to make up for the semester I had missed. That was where I met Richard, a nice young man of sixteen who lived in the City. His father was doing some construction work in Ada, and Richard was visiting for the summer. One night soon after school began, he called and asked me to go to a movie with him. Still being a relatively obedient daughter, I asked Daddy for permission to go, but he said "no." This was not the first time he had said "no" to my dating, and I guess I thought that this had gone far enough. With my heart in my throat, I told him that he could either know where and with whom I was going or I would sneak out and he wouldn't know. He chose to know. Bless his heart! He was always so protective of me and I know this must have been difficult for him. I kept my word and there were no other traumatic experiences for me until I started college.

For some reason, the administration allowed me to enroll in only four courses: Voice, Voice 202, Sight Singing, and Speech 402. I guess that since I was 'Pop' Molloy's daughter, they thought Daddy was advising me (or letting me do what I wanted to do), but he thought I was being advised elsewhere. It was just as well, though, because I fell madly in love the first few weeks of school and skipped two of the classes all semester to be with my love. When I took home two F's, Daddy nearly had apoplexy. He had seen us on campus, but had no idea that I had classes scheduled at those

times. Believe me there were no more skipped classes. And that love affair was soon nipped in the bud. His mama zoomed in, packed him up lock, stock and piano and took him away from my evil influence. She enrolled him in Oklahoma City University and forbade him ever to see or talk to me again. We saw one another off and on for several months until I came to my senses and kissed that mama's boy goodbye.

I continued my studies at East Central with a slightly more balanced curriculum the second and third years, but I was still allowed to do pretty much what I wanted to do. I took a course or two in English each semester, since that was my major, and one or maybe two of the required subjects. But I took as many courses in music and speech as I could fit into my schedule. One of my goals though, was to take at least one class under Daddy. I was able to talk him into letting me take Chaucer, since he was the only one who taught it. He gave me a 'B' because he said that I'd heard it all of my life and didn't have to work as hard as the others in order to do well. I did earn an 'A' in Poetics and it wasn't easy. Those were the only two courses he would let me take with him.

English was my major subject, but acting became my major interest. I loved acting and proved to be good at it. I usually had the lead in whatever play we produced, but sometimes I fit better in a character role. It didn't matter to me as long as I was acting. Newton Eades and I went to little towns around Ada and put on two character skits. We were both very serious about our acting. I even had high hopes of being on Broadway some day. My hopes were high, but apparently not high enough, because a man came along and I changed my mind.

It began in the College Shop. This was a great place to gather day or night; to dance, play bridge or just hang out. That night, Don Vincent, a really handsome guy that I dated with some regularity, came in and introduced me to his friend, John Tipton. John seemed to be a nice enough fellow, but I was not impressed. I had a huge crush on Don; besides that, Don was a good dancer and I quickly learned that John was not. Be that as it may, Don and I began double dating with John and his girl friend, Billie Loving. After a while, I dated both Don and John. A time or two when I saw John with Billie, I realized that I might be jealous. One night the four of us went to the movies and Don and I sat directly behind John and Billie. Suddenly I thought, "Why am I sitting here with Don? I am going to marry John!" Of course he hadn't asked me yet but that was a small matter. My mind was made up, and the chase was on.

That chase wasn't easy because John's work in Ada was soon over and he moved back to Tulsa. We wrote, and we talked, and he came down when he could, but that wasn't enough for me. I decided that I would go to Tulsa and get a job. But there was one formidable obstacle to overcome. My Daddy! He wouldn't even let me get a job in Ada. However, I was determined that nothing was going to stand in the way of my pursuit of John Tipton.

I had a diamond that Daddy had once given to a Miss Olive Mace, his first betrothed. I took it to Witherspoon Loan Company in Ada, borrowed sixty dollars and agreed to pay the money back over a period of time. I wrote and made arrangements for room and board in Tulsa -- I thought. And then I bought a ticket to go to Tulsa by train. With all plans made, I told Daddy what I had done (Mother knew what I was up to). Bless his heart! He took it very well. He paid off the loan, gave the ring back to me with some money to spare and sent me off with his blessings. He and Mother loved John and felt he would make a good husband. John had proposed by this time.

He met my train and after many hugs and kisses, he took me to the boarding house, only to find that they weren't expecting me and didn't have a room for me. I nearly came unglued! But John saved the day. Some members of his church had a room for rent, so I settled in with them for a few weeks. I liked it there and might have stayed longer if their other boarder hadn't been crazy -- literally. I didn't mind but John did. Being always the actress and something of a mimic, I quickly picked up some of her mannerisms and speech patterns. John thought it would be wise to get me out of there, so I moved into the Y.W.C.A.

When John and I first started dating seriously, he told me of several reasons why he wasn't quite ready to marry. But the longer we dated, the more his reasons dwindled. This was 1942, and by late in the year his last reason was that he didn't want to leave a war widow. When the draft seemed to be in the near future for him, he enlisted in the Seabees, sold his car and went to the City for induction into the Navy.

During his physical, he was declared to be 4-F due to a long standing ear infection. When he got back to Tulsa and still wasn't ready to marry, I gave up! I told him since that was the case, I was going back to Ada and finish college. Furthermore, he would have to come and get me when he made up his mind. We were married the next day.

The morning of the wedding, Mother and I made a mad rush to get everything done. She had come to Tulsa to be with me until my roommate got back from out of town, so we were able to get an early start. We made arrangements with the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church for a noon wedding. I had always hoped to be married at high noon on Friday, and this was my golden opportunity. We met John downtown to select my wedding ring. With that done, John went off to get the marriage license, while Mother and I shopped for my wedding outfit and other things. She and I went to the most exclusive shop in Tulsa where she introduced herself and told them that she needed to open a charge account -- right away. Fortunately, she knew two prominent business men in Tulsa, so her credit was approved very quickly. We were treated like royalty, with the clerks trotting in and out with things for me to try on. My selections made and charged, we raced off to meet John and drive to the preacher's home for the noon ceremony.

Many people thought our marriage wouldn't last. The one that stands out above all others was John's favorite aunt. She told him she could tell by my eyes that I just wouldn't do and gave us six months together. Some people in Ada gave like predictions. I guess they thought I was too fickle and flighty to stick with anything. Anyway, we learned a year and half after we married that we were going to have twins. When word got around in Ada, people would ask Mother, "Whatever will she do with them?" I can just see Mother bristle and tell them, "She will take care of them!" I've often wondered what they thought I would do with them. I did take care of them, and the little brother who came along a couple of years later. Finally, my life in a 'fishbowl' was over and the eyes of Ada were no longer upon me.

John and I were married for over thirty-seven years, for as long as he lived.

Easy Writers

by
Joe Glorioso

Fifty-nine years ago, as a sophomore at L.S.U., I wrote my last story without shedding a single tear or feeling a grave loss. I was content with my life until I read Horizon's newsletter announcing "Life and Letters." Deciding I needed to write my memoirs, I enrolled, as a willing freshman, in "Life and Letters." The difference between then and now is that I am fifty-nine years older than I was my sophomore year. Don't misunderstand me. As an educator, I wrote an unbelievable number of worthless lesson plans, thousands of test questions, hundreds of supervisory and administration reports and stacks of educational projects. Those were technical in nature, not story-telling. If I can wend my way from technical writing to story writing, you can enter the realm of story writing from letter writing.

When I see nouns, I recognize them as actors. Adjectives give sparkle and shine to nouns. Verbs provide the action in sentences. Adverbs dress verbs with vitality and energy. Those parts of speech are the heart and soul of the craft of writing. A sentence wraps a body around those parts of speech to express a single thought, idea or concept. Writers string related sentences together for paragraphs and relate several paragraphs for a story. What's difficult about that?

A warning about sentences. Remember to write: A dog bit a man. Never: A man was bitten by a dog. Be direct not obtuse. A clue: Watch out for the bedeviling "was" verbs. If you find one, be damn sure you place the actor before the action.

Never fear punctuation. Capital letters and periods are not worrisome. Read your story aloud. If you have (a) to pause, you need to use a comma; (b) to catch your breath, use a semicolon; and (c) to stop dead in your tracks, definitely use a period. Novices can afford to be wrong, because not-for-pay writers don't make a living writing stories.

About spelling. When I'm rolling along in writing, to hell with the dictionary. Phonics works just as well. After finishing my roll, then I consult a dictionary. Only politicians worry about the spelling of "potato."

Do not worry about developing character for the actors in your story. They come ready-made in your memories. A first crush is either beautiful, pretty, plain or plain ugly. Nothing can be done about facts.

At this point, I feel compelled to offer a treatise, serious but not learned, on writing as a craft. Writing is nothing more or less than painting a picture of reality through the skillful use of words. Artists create an atmosphere of reality by skillfully using blends of color, shades of light and perspective. With those tools of his craft, the artist may depict the horrors of war, a frigid Arctic night, the beauty of flowers or the sanctity of love. However, using all the skills available to him, he cannot create motion, only an illusion of motion.

In plying his craft, the writer skillfully uses the written word to bring reality to life, a moving picture in book form. A writer may write thus about a man and woman: The blood gushed with each heart beat from the dagger wound to Jake's neck, soaking his shirt collar and jacket and finally oozing into dribblets that coagulated on the cold concrete. The artist can only capture that bit of reality in a fixed frame, frozen in time. The writer grips the reader's mind, forcing her to experience futility as life ebbs out of Jake, a man she has come to know and love. While a painting is artistic in the eyes of art lovers, a writer weaves a story that reveals human behavior, life's good and bad turns and sometimes overwhelming struggles in living that grip, hold and excite the reader.

In the Louvre, Mona Lisa smiles at art lovers. Is the smile coquettish? Is she smiling because she expects her lover to enter at any moment or is it because he has just left? Maybe she is luring the man across the crowded room into a fatal attraction? The art lover can never know. But a writer will tell the reader.

I think I've made my point that writing is more expressive than art. Writing is undeniably an art form. Writers are artists. I'll write along.

Was I nervous about enrolling in "Life and Letters"? You can bet your spouse I was. I envisioned writing memoirs in a class made up of English, journalism and literature students under the tutelage of a old bitty, who could wield a red pencil with the best of them! Instead, I found a group of adorable people tutored by a sympathetic editor who was more inclined to pencil encouraging notes in the margins of my story and to write notes at the end as expressions of goodwill. A princess in a writer's fantasy land.

The topic of sensing was an early assignment to students in "Life and Letters." I handled that assignment as a technical writer. I named the five senses, defined each and served up one or two illustrations for each. Almost immediately after writing the piece, a feeling slowly crept over me that I was not properly responding to the topic within the framework of a memory.

To correct this misinterpretation, I wrote "Dust and Boys," a story about sounds, sights, odors, tastes and feelings boys experience in grammar school. The following week, I found the editorial comments encouraging.

After reading a book driven by dialogue, I experimented with dialogue to carry my story, thereby, projecting humor inherent in characters. In one experimental story, I tried speeches as a vehicle to move a story to a climax. As a novice, this experiment proved difficult.

Several stories later, another dimension in writing invaded my mind. Is it possible for me to relive certain experiences through the eyes of a four-nearly-five year old girl while welding a mix-and-match story of three generations of a closely-knit family? "All About Nothing" was written for fun. The jury is still out on that one.

Juggling my own agenda with that of "Life and Letters" provided an exhilarating challenge. Nonetheless, the combination was rewarding. To me, writing is fun, relaxing and therapeutic. I think that anyone who appreciates the thrill of reading can fulfill his dream of becoming a writer.

This fall we learned to use the written word to express our joy in reliving times past. Some unashamedly shared lived memories that touched their hearts, bringing to mind those heartfelt memories others harbored but could not share. The purposes of these stories are to encourage others to shed their unfounded fear of writing and to join us next fall in "Life and Letters."

If you think I'm stacking the truth as propaganda to prove a point, read a copy of the recent publication of "Life and Letters." The proof is in that publication. Some stories are heart rendering, others funny and many mainly document bygone years. Nevertheless, all are good examples of skillful writing far above the level of novice.

Gather your writing tools, concentrate on the details of your memories, find a comfortable chair in a quiet place and craftily craft stories of the past to sow the seeds that nourish the future. BE AN EASY WRITER.

The Place of My Childhood

by

Kate Dominique

The place of my childhood was on the outskirts of Lake Charles, Louisiana. My father, a carpenter by trade, at the time, had built our home on a two acre plot in the mode of the times. It was a sort of a shot-gun type home and there were ten of us living under one roof, so according to the rules there were three bedrooms. Incidentally, this was considered to be mighty nice for these times for Me. The girls' room was next to the master bedroom on the left side of the house, and the large boys' room was the right side and housed my five brothers, Leo, Irwin, Johnny, Bobby and Clarence, who ranged at one time of ages from three to nineteen years. The living room, dining room and kitchen ran shot-gun fashion down the center of the house. This seems important to me because so many things happened in those rooms.

By the tender age of seven, many sad and happy things occurred.

First, our mother died after a long bout of cancer, after which time our dear Aunt Sophie came to live with us and tried to be a mother to us. My baby sister, Marie, was two years old, and my older sister, Irma, was nineteen; by the end of that year, she married and moved to Kentucky and my oldest brother married the following year and moved to Lafayette, leaving Aunt Sophie with six of us active youngsters. Needless to say, she found us quite a handful. She married within a year, and my Dad began a courtin'. He married a lovely lady, Emma Billeaud, who was reared on a cotton plantation near Scott, Louisiana. She even had her own Ford Touring car. She also had her hands full. She is still living at the age of ninety-three.

My brother Bobby and I had the nightly chore of doing the dishes. One evening, after a late dinner, we were way back at the kitchen sink doing dishes while the rest of the family were sitting on the wide front porch. Night fell and brother Bobby began telling scary stories. He hurriedly finished working the dishes and left me alone; so I decided to leave the dishes in the drain basket and join the family. Shortly afterward, I decided that I'd best get back and finish my chore. I tippytoed through the living room, dining room and to the swinging kitchen door. As I slowly opened the door, I saw a "big" hand scratch across the window screen over the sink. I let out a blood curdling scream. As I turned to run, I heard my brother scream, "Kate, it's

me, it's me." Well, I was so frightened that I must have run a quarter of a mile in ten seconds, as my older brother, Leo, who was in track at the time, only had time to jump to his feet and catch me as I sailed through the front door to the porch, screaming, "It's Bobby, it's Bobby."

Many happy times remain to be told about this childhood home.

Five Sense Worth of Fun

by

John A. Townsend, Jr.

- Hear the quiet ripple of water from the bayou nearby.
- See above in the dark night sky the bright twinkle of uncountable stars.
- Feel beneath the ground sheet at your back, the soft warmth of nature's beauty rest.
- Smell as you come awake, the rich aroma of boiling coffee, with that of bacon, and flapjacks; a royal breakfast.
- Taste it. No better can be found, when cooked outdoors with friends around.

I recall my early childhood camping trips with brothers Bubba and Dick, Uncle Red, Daddy, and Granddaddy Allen. Mama and Granny Allen rarely spent the night at the camp but often came during the day. Julian (Pete) who was born in 1936 missed most of the trips as they were rare in the 1940's. The trip from Sibley (Louisiana) to the camp was only two and one-half miles.

Preparations for the event were always exciting. We boys were put in charge of digging for earthworms, bait to fish with, while the men went to seine a bar pit for shiners (minnows) and crayfish, the former for crappie (sac-a-lait), the latter to bait trot lines for catfish.

Everything would be loaded in or atop the Ford coupe to be hauled to the bayou. It was quite a load. There were canvas tarpaulins for use as ground sheets, and cover from rain and sun; iron skillets, pots, and a dutch oven for cooking over an open fire; old quilts for bedding; cutting tools, an axe, hatchet, and saw; a shovel, water can, lanterns, food staples, and eating utensils. Last, but not the least, were fishing poles, trot lines, and boat paddles.

Mama usually drove the car to the camp ground. It was a trip west, on gravel, for just under two miles using the Doyline road across the bridge at Dorcheat Bayou. We then went south on a woodland dirt track alongside the water beneath the Illinois Central railroad bridge to an abandoned campsite, a distance of about three quarters of a mile.

As a general rule we would pause at Mr. Frank Sparks fish camp beside the bridge and we boys would get into our fifteen foot, flat-bottom cypress row-boat kept there and paddle it to the camp area. That was always a big event.

By the time we reached the camp, the men would have the gear unloaded. While we boys gathered fallen twigs and branches for firewood, the men dug a privy away from the area and a fire pit. Lanterns would be hung about the perimeter and shallow pits for 'smoke' fires on the windward side were readied. These provided a way to keep swarming mosquitoes at bay during late evening and early night.

Once everything was set up, the men normally took the boat and went down the bayou to set out the trotlines. We, along with Mama, and Granny, would take fishing poles and bank fish for bream and sun perch using the worms we had dug. The two women normally left to get out of the woods before dark.

Daddy and the others would return just after dark, the carbide lamps attached to their hats glowing like over sized fire flies as the boat moved across the water to the camp.

It was not unusual for them to return with a mess of fish, bass from Daddy's fly rod, crappie on shiners, and an occasional catfish off the first line they had set out. They were so plentiful in those days that fishing was easy.

Some of the fish were prepared for supper, the remainder placed in a live well. With the fish we had homemade light bread or hush puppies, fried potatoes, and tomatoes. Our drinks were tea, coffee, fresh lemonade or cool spring water. It was gourmet eating poor man style.

It was often 9:30 or 10:00 P.M. by the time we finished eating and we boys went quickly to sleep to the soft voices of the men as they smoked and sipped on the home brew. They were joined by the singing crickets, tree frogs, and katydids, along with the occasional bass of a large bull frog.

There was no alarm clock to wake us. The rich aroma of coffee brewing, mingled with that of hardwood smoke from the cooking fire, and the further odor of bacon and flapjacks was more than enough to arouse three hungry boys.

Granddaddy was most often the cook at breakfast. Daddy and Uncle Red could be found out running the lines. It was a treat when my brothers and myself could take the boat out and fish from it. I have often thought about those times in later years. For the first three or four years of these trips, not one of us actually knew how to swim. Only I had learned the dead man's float and could dog paddle by the second or third year. We had no life vest or cushions. A syrup bucket attached to a cord served as a float if one was needed.

These were magical days, the beauty of the early morning sun shining through tall cypress and hardwood trees and across the waters of the bayou where one might see the quick flash of a jumping fish, the bright plumage of a red-headed woodpecker, his beak hammering a tree limb in search of a worm, or a duck drifting, unconcerned, head bobbing as it feeds. Hear in the late evening and night the hoot of an owl, the cry of a bobcat or cougar (swamp cat) and the bark of a fox or coyote. In the early morning hear the bark of a squirrel, the call of a dove or bob white quail and a duck.

On the early morning breeze smell the aroma from the bloom of wild plum, mayhaw, swamp lily, wild honeysuckle and grape mingled with that of pine and wood smoke. Feel the coolness of spring fed water while bathing to remove dirt and the odor of wood smoke from body and hair. Taste the freshness of the pure spring water bubbling from the ground.

All this, a truly magical time.

A Happy Easter

by
Bonnie Gillis

Always my family was there to help me. We were a big family, six girls and four boys, all loved by a very wise and loving Mother and Father. My Mother made each one of us seem special. My Dad said, "Bad language shows a lack of intelligence." I never heard him or Mom say one ugly word. Dad always said a wonderful Blessing before mealtime with our whole family gathered. My two older brothers were home from college for the Easter holidays. Dad said to Dub, "Son, you may say the Blessing." Dub said, "Good bread, good meat, good God let's eat." Dad said, "Son, you may leave the table." I was so afraid for my beloved Dub, wondering what Dad would do to him. When we all finished eating, Dad called him to come eat his dinner. He asked him, "Is that what they teach you in college?" Dub was laughing and said, "Dad, the football players eat at the training table and say things like that." Dad let him know he didn't approve of such but said, "Don't ever say anything like that again at this table in front of these children." My hero was saved. Easter was great. Dub and Sylvan had brought Nookie and me a present, two little hat boxes with a candy egg inside. We had never seen anything like these little hat boxes before. Always we had new hats, dresses and shoes, and this day we had our two big brothers. Now I often think of things my Dad would say like, "To err is human to forgive divine."

Flowers, Frogs, and Songs

by

Barbara Hansen

One day our grade school teacher brought in some bulbs that look like onions. She also had some low, wide glass bowls and some stones. She arranged the bulbs in the bowls using the stones to keep them in place. After adding water she placed them in the dark closet for ten days. I think, "Surely those bulbs will not grow. There's no dirt and flowers need sunshine." I forgot about the project until our teacher brought the bulbs out and put them on the window sill. They had white sprouts which turned green and grew tall. Then the flower stems grew and there were buds which later opened into purple crocus and white and yellow narcissus. Watching these bulbs develop before our eyes was a fascination for me and the bright spot of the room while it was still cold outside.

The big aquarium in our classroom had been filled with water and many gray fish were swimming about in it, one day when we came in. Only they were not fish, but polliwogs. I kept close watch on them as they grew and changed. Their tails got shorter as their head grew bigger. Then the front and back legs started growing. They swam to the top to breathe air. I am not sure what we fed them -- perhaps fish food. The biggest ones were ready to start hopping. They were all gone one day when we returned to school. We were told that they were taken back to the lake, where they came from, so they could grow up naturally on the shore. Whenever I saw a frog hopping around the lake that summer I wondered if it was one of ours.

I think I was in the first grade when our class walked in a long line downstairs to the kitchen. Our teacher had a bag of cranberries, an orange, and some sugar. We all took a turn turning the handle on the meat grinder as the cranberries were put in. They popped before they came out. The orange was cut in pieces and put in, peel and all. Then the sugar went in the bowl. The mixture was well stirred until the sugar was dissolved. I told Mother about our cranberry relish when I went home.

In one corner of the room stood a sand table. We were probably studying about Arabs and the desert when we made an oasis in the sand. It was complete with trees, tents made of sticks and scrapes of material, and clay camels. We were very proud of this desert scene and invited other classes to come in and see it.

In one grade we had a grocery store which was stocked with empty boxes and cans from home. We took turns being the storekeeper. We added up the purchases by the "customers" and gave change when they paid the bill.

About a week before Valentine's Day some of the imaginative girls in the room decorated a big box with red and white crepe paper. They made ruffles, cut hearts and glued them on. We put our homemade creations in the slit at the top. When the big day came the box was opened and the cards with our name on them were delivered to our desks. It was fun to open them up. The teacher would have a big pile of cards and she had a special candy treat for us. On the way home I wondered who was "Guess who?" Did I have a secret admirer?

I think it was Friday after lunch when the singing teacher came to our class. She was a plump, smiling lady with lots of enthusiasm. First she passed out the books and told us which page to start on. We all stood up at our desks so our voices would sound better. We used the do, re, mi method which was different for me as I already knew the letter names of the notes. With the sound from her pitchpipe we started in -- "fa," "sol," "la," "ti," "do." After we learned the melody we could sing the words to the songs. I probably sang louder than anyone else as I loved to sing. These songs were always performed in the privacy of our room until the end of the sixth grade. A program was planned for our graduation ceremony. Some of the stronger-voiced students were selected from each sixth grade class to memorize some songs in three-part harmony. I am sure we sang beautifully and I was so proud to take part in the program.

Flood of 1927

by
Charles Bernard, Jr.

Last week's flood brought back memories of the 1927 flood and its effect on my young life. I was nine years old and had led a quiet, uninteresting life in a small Louisiana town. A hum-drum life in a rural surrounding provided me with only dull, uninteresting activities.

Then came the talk about a flood, perhaps not on the grand level of Noah's flood, but a flood that would rise from the banks of Bayou Teche and run over the surrounding land. I heard that the water would come over the streets, run over the front yard and even over the school grounds.

How exciting! Here was something that would break the monotony of the life of hum-drum; this would change my every-day life. I remember hearing my parents discussing the coming waters with my aunts, uncles and grandparents. They discussed the rising Bayou Teche waters and how we would have to escape the flood. I relished in the possibility of an exciting experience.

I wasn't worried about the danger, I didn't think about inconveniences; I wasn't concerned about the loss. Schools would close before June; we would leave St. Martinville; we would be living in another town with a house full of more people.

Now finally something exciting would happen in my life of nine years, something besides the ordinary. Perhaps this was not as exciting as a life with the circus but it was an improvement over what I was experiencing.

I had always thought that the life of circus people (or street fair) was about as interesting as I could dream of. I would have been happy feeding the animals or even cooking hamburgers. Till this day when I smell hamburgers cooking I'm reminded of the circus.

Anyhow, schools did close a few weeks before due date; we did leave town; I did live with my aunts, uncles and grandparents. We saw the water flow over the bank of the bayou one afternoon when we came home from school. Two days later the schools closed and the family began talking about leaving our house.

I remember we piled up the furniture on tables and boxes, disconnected all lamps and packed all perishable food in containers to take with us. Papa, a school bus driver, owned his own bus, so everything and

everybody was packed in the bus. It was raining as we left and as we crossed the bridge in St. Martinville, we saw the flood water was just beginning to run over the bridge.

We were six children at home, so we had eight in our family and my grandparents and three of their children all left for a little house in Cade. We knew the Boudreaux's who had a plantation tenant house they let us have for the duration.

We six boys slept in the bus, all others in the house. The house consisted of two bedrooms, a kitchen and another room. In the yard was an outhouse and a water well. There was no running water, but the water well looms large in my memory.

The well, about 15" square, with wooden walls extending about three feet above ground, offered us water when a quart bucket was lowered to the water. This was an open well about twenty feet from the house and at the opposite end of the yard from the outhouse. Getting water was a slow tedious process and supplying the family with a water supply kept someone at the well all day.

A path from the graveled road led the way to the back yard, where the bus was parked. The small house, set back over 100 feet from the road, had no front porch and no back porch. We always used the kitchen entrance, so I remember the kitchen best. As I entered the kitchen, on the right was the kitchen table where we ate in two shifts. There was a wood stove for cooking in the middle of the room with plenty of dry wood under the stove. Up against the far wall was the food safe where the leftovers were kept. I know many meals were prepared and served but I only remember trays and trays of biscuits baked in the wood stove.

I knew it was wrong to feel excitement at a time when my parents were worried about a safe place for us. I remember hearing the adults discussing what was happening to our house, the animals and the fields of crops. But here, every day was a day of new events, new happenings.

In fact, the day after we moved in the little house, two of my older brothers and I walked to the coulee back of the house.

Zerven said, "Look how much the water rose since yesterday. I wonder how much it'll rise tomorrow."

When we were back at the house, Papa said, "We'll check the water tomorrow." The next day, he staked the water level at several places and sure enough, when he checked a few hours later, he announced, "We'll have to find another place, another town."

The next day the men took me with them to visit our place in St. Martinville. We rode the bus to the outskirts of the town, then went by boat, across the field, down the bayou to check on the house and the farm. I remember seeing the bloated dead animals floating down the current. We also saw crates of food, rotting, wasting away. I grabbed chocolate silver bells from the water only to find them full of worms.

Our house was still on dry land and everything seemed to be in good shape but the water was still rising. Three days after we had gone to Cade, we bundled all our possessions and the thirteen of us left for Kaplan. There we stayed a few weeks until we were able to go back home. That's another story.

Facing the Cold Cruel World in 1935

by
Esther W. Parker

With mixed feelings of confidence, courage and apprehension, I started the process of 'finding a job' after graduating from a business high school, Joseph Kohn. Equipped with knowledge of shorthand, typing, accounting, business machines and office procedures, it didn't occur to me that I was not prepared to work. After something like 6 to 10 interviews with discouraging words of rejection such as, "Scholastically you're qualified but we want someone with experience, sorry," I took some pretty big blows to my 17 year old hopeful dreams; but I knew that I had to get "experience."

The Schaffer Multigraph Co. offered the experience I was looking for for the sum total of 14¢ a day; carfare was just 7¢ then in New Orleans. The work was interesting, setting type and then unsetting (don't remember the correct term used). Getting all the letters in the correct grooves for the next job seemed pretty important to me. Mrs. Schaffer was a good boss and the only other employee was a lady called "Tex" who was a wizard with the multigraph machines. She was about ten years older than I. We all took our lunch from home and Mrs. Schaffer closed the office for our 1/2 to 1 hour break. Listening to them talk shop, discussing different problems and people taught me a lot about business. I also became the public steno for the few clients who came in for that purpose.

My first 'customer' was a Britisher, Albert W. Murray, Esq., who was a ship surveyor for Lloyd's of London. He was quite a character and I enjoyed his dictation -- he serviced ships for Standard Fruit Co. and other companies and knew people I knew through my family. My brother also was a radio operator on ships Mr. Murray surveyed and would see in the future. He came in pretty often and told us his daughter who used to do his work had left town.

After about two months Mrs. Murray called me at home and asked me if I'd work just for Lloyd's for all of \$5.00 a week. The office was at their home on the 4900 block of Canal Street. I told her I'd have to think about it; I didn't like the idea of the home office. Mama said it would be alright if Mrs. Murray was always at home when I had to work. The hours were something like two hours one day, three hours the next. The longest I had to stay was 5 hours because Mr. Murray was delayed and so I waited for him

to return; some days I didn't have to go at all but still got paid. There were times when I didn't know what to do with all that \$ - I did give Mama \$1.00 for her expenses; but any time I stayed through the lunch hour, Mrs. Murray prepared a very appetizing lunch for me. I remember vividly my first day there - I had to call Mama as soon as I arrived and every hour afterwards. The Murray's laughed good naturedly about it.

Mr. Murray, as I said, was quite a character. He often came back from a survey a bit under the influence. Our desks faced one another and on these occasions he would start singing in the middle of dictation, "Little Sir Echo, I'm calling you," and I'd have to answer him, "Yoo-hoo, yoo-hoo!" Mrs. Murray often came in and told him to be quiet so I could finish my typing. It was the easiest job I ever had.

Our First Automobile

by
E. D. Parker

In the early 1920's our only means of transportation were a horse and buggy and a wagon drawn by a team of mules. We lived on a farm about midway between Memphis and Wellington, Texas, which towns were about twenty-five miles apart. This meant that a trip to either town required several hours, and was not a trip that we took frequently. A trip to more distant places was out of the question. A trip by wagon to town, which was necessary occasionally, was not the most comfortable way to travel. It would have been highly desirable at this stage in our lives to own an automobile.

In the early 1920's Dad was able to buy our first car, a second hand model T Ford touring car of uncertain vintage. This was a five passenger, two seater with three doors (there was no front door on the driver's side, probably because the hand brake was located where the door should have been). The top was made of cloth and theoretically could be folded back, although ours never was. We got enough of old Sol's radiation without going topless in an automobile. There were no windows of course. In lieu of windows there were four fabric curtains, each with a small clear but amber colored window of some semi-flexible material, that could be snapped into place during inclement weather. The model T had a steering wheel in the usual place and two levers mounted on opposite sides of the steering post just below the wheel. These were called the gas (on the right) and spark (on the left) levers. The gas lever was the throttle or accelerator and the spark lever served to advance or retard the ignition sparks. To start the car, there was a crank, permanently mounted in front of and just below the radiator. When cranking a model T, it was advisable to keep the spark lever at the top - otherwise the car was more likely to backfire, and a backfire resulted in the crank kicking back. Quite a few Ford owners got broken arms in those days from those kick-backs. Instead of the usual two pedals as on the floor of standard shift cars, the model T had three pedals and no gear shift. The left pedal had a dual function. Pushed half way down it served as a clutch: pushed all the way down it shifted the car into low gear. With all pedals up and the hand brake down the car was in high gear. Pulling the hand brake back (even half way) put the car in neutral. The middle pedal when

depressed put the car in reverse. There was no middle or "second" gear. The right hand pedal was the foot brake.

On the day Dad bought his model T, he got a ride to Wellington with Jim Griffis, one of our neighbors who owned a ranch across the road from our farm. Fortunately, he asked Jim to follow him home in his bigger car, probably a Dodge. After crossing the Buck Creek bridge something went wrong with the steering on Dad's car. On investigating, they found that the radius rod had broken. The radius rod was a vee shaped rod (looked something like a wishbone). The point of the vee was attached to a central brace located approximately at the transmission housing and each of the ends was attached to one end of the front axle to maintain the axle in a fixed position perpendicular to the chassis. Jim scrounged a piece of barbed wire from a nearby fence and with the wire they did a temporary repair job on the broken rod. Dad drove on home, but when he got to the front gate he forgot how to stop the monster and just plowed right through the gate. He said later that he said "whoa" and pulled back on the wheel, but the crazy thing just wouldn't stop. Fortunately, it was a barbed wire gate and was easily repaired.

Dad probably told Mama that he was bringing home a car, but he didn't tell us boys. The first we knew of it was when we saw him run through the gate. Needless to say, we ran down to the gate to see what was happening and were ecstatic to learn that the tin lizzie that had just demolished our front gate was our very own.

What I Know About the Cajuns

by
Christina Smith

The day Papa died, September 28, 1945, Mr. Coco showed more grief than the family. He related how Papa saved his marriage by helping him to overcome his alcohol addiction which he acquired during World War I. As a disabled veteran, he squandered his paycheck when he received it, which was destroying his home.

Like a father would do, Papa assumed the responsibility to pick up his check and open a bank account which enabled him to purchase a home and transportation. This caused Mr. Coco to love Papa.

The community where I lived at 805 Morgan Street, Lafayette, Louisiana, was developed by Cajuns around a small grocery store and a cotton gin. There were some black people among them. Alta Roy operated the store and extended credit to senior citizens by the month.

On the day I graduated from S.L.I., Mrs. Roy could not believe it. She said her children could not go there. It was for the "Big Shots." They were just "Old Cajuns," she said.

Each time the Cajun, Edwin Edwards, won the election as governor of Louisiana, he won with the help of the black people's vote because we figure Cajuns are good Christian people, or at least they have known suffering and rejection.

Our first Cajun Bishop, Jules B. Jeanmard made education available to us blacks when it was against the law of farmer slaveholders to do so.

Another Cajun who stands out in my mind is Alexander Clause. He once rode the headlands in our neighborhood peddling groceries when I lived there. Later on, Alexon opened his own store near his home on Highway 726 where he extended credit to farmers during growing season. To some people he even loaned cash when it was needed. When the crops failed, Alexon never complained about not being paid. And he charged no interest on money owed him. Two of his sons became officers at Guaranty Bank here in Lafayette. We recognize each other when I visit the bank.

Others who had black people's mobility at heart were, Louis Picard and James (Red) Dumesneil who offered to teach us the banking business when we began the loan company, "People Enterprise" through the Southern Consumers' Cooperation. Dr. James Olivier is a member of the scholarship foundation of the Southern Development Cooperative Fund. These are all Cajuns who helped us.

Things To Do and Places to Go

by
Ann Lee

Who could ever forget the way we played when we were young? With the neighborhood kids we ran around whooping and hollerin' as we played cops and robbers and cowboys and Indians. Then there were also the quieter games -- like hopscotch. One day I yelled to the kids next door, "Let's play hopscotch" as I was drawing off the squares with a piece of chalk on my cement front porch. Oops, there at the door was Mother with a frown on her face as she stretched out her hand for the chalk. Didn't I know to play hopscotch on the sidewalk? The cement walk in front of the house was also used for riding my bicycle, but I just couldn't ride it on those two cement runners of the driveway -they were only a foot wide. Through the years my bicycle and I were always there for each other -- my most prized possession! Mother would say, "There she goes with her coattail just 'a'flappin'!" Such a carefree feeling with the wind blowing through my hair! But occasionally the bike did require attention, so I'd have to stop by the bicycle shop for necessary repairs. As soon as it was fixed, I'd take off for the "Hollow" where all the kids on our side of town played ball or any games which involved a lot of running -- sometimes to be caught was to be kissed! I was a fast runner! 'Twas a great place to meet after school -- a time we all looked forward to.

Another place to go was to spend the day at my friend Betty's house. Looked like I might be planning to stay a week with my big suitcase which was really chock-full of my collection of "samples." In order to get these samples it was very important to have friends in the drug store, grocery store, or any other stores who would have samples of perfume, soap, cosmetics, patent medicines, cough drops, notebooks -- anything that was small! After Betty and I would have "show and tell" with each new sample we had gotten, it was time to get down to the business of trading. This required quite a bit of haggling as she often accused me of trying to trade my worst sample for one of her very best. And "Katy-bar-the-door" if by chance we got 'em mixed up at the end of the day when it came time to go home!

During the day if we got tired of our samples we might want to play movie stars. So tucked in my magazine I had brought were gorgeous pictures of the most popular actresses and actors which I had cut out. Trading had already gotten into our blood, so many times the question came

up -- would I trade one of my Clark Gables for one of hers, or could we switch a Clark for a Tyron Power. This was simply mind-boggling! We could imitate them to a perfection -- even in our telephone conversations when Betty would try to disguise her voice -- "This is Janet Gaynor, is Charles Farrell there?" We could talk for hours -- just pretending!

Since we were at the picture show at least three times a week, or every time the feature changed, it was such fun to relive the star's experiences on the screen. Truly the Ritz Theater, which was owned by our next door neighbors, was the greatest place to be on a hot summer afternoon since it was the only place in town with air conditioning. You could feel the rush of cool air right away when you went up to the window to buy your ticket. I always kept my money tied up in the corner of my handkerchief -- we never thought about purses for our young crowd. Inside was the plush carpeting in the back of the theater and down the aisles. A separate compartment -- the loge -- was on either side and in the middle with upholstered velour seats. I never did figure out why they were there 'cause you didn't have to pay extra to sit there. The rest of the seats were hardwood that squeaked when folded up or down. In the upstairs before entering the balcony was the rest room where some 14 or 15 year old girls learned to smoke so they could be like the movie stars on screen.

Our imaginations could really make the movies come alive as we screamed with laughter at the things that terrified us. We would sit on the edge of our seats when the weekly serial got started, but first the preview had to show how the serial had ended the week before. And heaven forbid if the film were to break in the projection room as the exciting part was being shown! I liked the "Perils of Pauline" best when the bad men had tied her to the railroad track and about that time you could hear the train whistle blowing. I thought I had quit biting my nails after Mother had put "Bitter Apple" on 'em, but that suspense thriller got me started all over again.

When I was about 14, Mother and I didn't miss a single Tuesday night show 'cause every person there got a free dish. One week they'd give plates, the next cups and saucers, the next bowls, and finally after a year if you'd attended every time, you'd have a complete set of dishes. As I remember they were really pretty!

Not only did they give away dishes, but one time the furniture store had a drawing to give away a bedroom suite. I was chosen from the front row of kids to come up on stage to pick the winning name out of the box. Would you believe that name was my Mother's? All the people started yelling -- "frame-up, frame-up." But it was all on the "up and up," so the bedroom furniture was delivered to our house the next day. In later years when asked if I'd ever won anything -- I liked to tell about my lucky ticket!

Kim's Miracle

by
Betty Shoemaker

Fall was here in all of her glorious splendor, and my daughter, Debbie, had just begun her sophomore year at Nicholls State University. We had recently purchase Kim Hodi, a purebred Arabian yearling colt from a breeding farm nearby. He had a chocolate brown coat flecked with white, white stockings and highlighted with a gorgeous grey tail and mane. His conformation was outstanding for a yearling. And, needless to say, we fell in love with him at first sight.

Kim, a very playful colt, loved to amuse himself by racing around the pasture with his head and tail held high in the air, urging the other horses to play follow the leader. Most yearlings are very rambunctious and as the old saying goes, "they have an appetite like a horse." Although we had purchased Kim for a breeder, we also planned to show him in the horse shows in the surrounding area.

One weekend Debbie trailered Kim back to school with her and stabled him in the pasture of some of our friends. Debbie was in the Animal Science Department, (pre-Vet) and I shared her dreams of a career in Veterinary Medicine, in spite of her grandmother's encouragement to pursue what she considered a more dignified career for a woman such as secretary training and teaching. Debbie had a part-time job at the school's barn caring for their show horses.

Debbie was a born horse-woman. It was in her blood, and horses were all she thought about. In high school if she dated a boy and discovered he didn't like horses, she usually dropped him after several dates. She was delighted at having Kim so near, and worked with him every afternoon preparing him for that big event when we would show him for the first time. Of all the horses we have had, I believe Debbie loved Kim most of all. She spent many hours grooming him and keeping him in tip top shape.

My daughter was a loner, spending hours with her horses. She usually preferred to ride alone when she took them out for exercise. There was a deep and beautiful relationship of love and understanding between them that was very stimulating to see.

Shortly after arriving in Shriver, Kim began showing signs of a cold; so as a precautionary measure Debbie called a veterinarian. The vet really messed up when he misdiagnosed Kim and gave him an injection for colic.

How stupid! I am not a vet and I knew better. Debbie then called Dr. Walters from Houma. He administered antibiotics and assured her that Kim would be fine. Our horses are very dear to us and when one of them becomes ill, we spare no expense. After several days of antibiotics, Kim's listlessness and failing appetite convinced us that he was really ill. The following evening about 7:30 P.M., Debbie called to say that Kim was critical; she was so deeply troubled by the intense fear of him dying that I began making preparations to leave at once. I stopped at a drug store on the way and purchased several vaporizers and other needed supplies.

When I arrived Debbie and some of her friends had already moved the furniture and game tables near the walls and bedded Kim down on some hay in the basement under the house.

As I walked through the door, I caught a glimpse of Debbie sitting in the hay with Kim's head cradled in her lap. She just sat there motionless staring at me with tears streaming down her face, her eyes pleading with me. "Mom, please don't let my little horse die." I was so overwhelmed by her fear of losing Kim that I began perspiring and experienced waves of nausea. Love is the strongest and greatest force there is and my main goal in life was to insure my daughter's love, security and ultimate happiness; until now I thought I had almost succeeded.

With a deep feeling of inadequacy I went to work improvising a croup tent with two large bed sheets stretched over rope tied to two supports and two vaporizers inclosed. Kim had apparently developed pneumonia and by moving him out of the damp night air would enhance his chances of recovery. My knowledge of veterinary medicine was very limited, but my years of experience in pediatric nursing would certainly come in handy.

Kim's temperature was 106 degrees rectally and his respiration was so labored one could hear him breathing out in the yard. We got him up on his feet with his head in the croup tent and he rebelled as much as his weak body would permit. The aroma of vicks and mentholatum was pretty strong and he didn't understand what all the commotion was about. However, he was more cooperative than I expected him to be. I folded a sheet blanket six or seven times and ran it under his stomach and with one on each side and two holding his neck and head up we were able to support his weight. By keeping him on his feet, his breathing improved. Believe me, supporting a six hundred pound horse is no easy task.

I gave Kim some medication to reduce his fever and we took turns sponging him down with alcohol.

About 12:30 A.M. Dr. Walters was consulted by phone and he assured me that every thing humanly possible had been done and that Kim could not last until morning.

I stumbled out into the cold night air, grateful for its chilling effect. About eight months ago Debbie and I had suffered a very traumatic experience. We had witnessed the accident in which my teenage son was killed. Although Debbie and I are closer now, she is so withdrawn at times that even I can't seem to reach her. I prayed and asked God to give me strength to get through this horrible nightmare. I didn't want to see Debbie lose someone else she loved.

I entered the room and poured myself a cup of coffee. We had let Kim lie down for awhile because he was so weak and exhausted. Debbie sat in the hay with Kim's head in her lap fondly brushing his neck with long sweeping strokes. With some reservations I related the doctor's prognosis and watched the shock and disbelief spread over every one's face. I wanted to take Debbie in my arms and kiss away her tears as I had done many times when she was small, but I was struggling to maintain my own composure.

I poured myself another cup of coffee and made an effort to shake off the mounting fatigue. As I prepared Kim's injections I glanced around the room at the young people. Some high school and some college students. They just sat there staring at each other in mute silence. I thought, "I come from a long line of fighters and I'll be damned if I am going to let this little horse die." This time I doubled the medication dosage.

Debbie had fallen asleep beside Kim in the hay, and for this I was grateful. If Kim died I wanted to spare her from seeing that final defeat.

We got Kim up on his feet and worked in fours relieving each other for coffee breaks and short rest periods. I was so exhausted I could hardly remain on my feet; but empowered to perform a miracle which two seasoned vets had failed to accomplish, I continued the battle against unsurmountable odds.

About 3:00 A.M. Kim's temperature began to drop. By 4:30 A.M. it had dropped from 106 to 102 degrees. Kim's nostrils began to drain a thick yellowish green mucous. We had succeeded to break up the congestion in his chest with the croup tent. By 5:00 A.M. Kim was standing alone busily eating his breakfast of sweet feed, wheat bran and glucose water.

For the next five days and nights Kim remained in the play room under the house with a constant attendant. The young people took turns caring for him and one would sleep on the sofa at night to administer his medications and check on him periodically. I signed a lot of excuse slips that week for classes my daughter cut to stay with Kim. He would eventually recover and soon be frolicking in the sun. Thanks to the unselfish help of those boys and girls. We could have never lasted through the long battle without their help, and the paragon of love and tenderness shown for this precious animal

which most of them had never even seen cannot be forgotten. They, too, had suffered the pain and joy of growing up. And by mutual need my daughter and I had formed a more endearing relationship.

When at last I was certain that victory would be ours, I knelt to pray -- to thank God for Kim's miracle, and I wept unashamedly.

Cajun Cuisine

by
Bea Gresham

The Acadian way of preparing foods began centuries ago. When the Acadians landed in Southwest Louisiana, their supply of food was almost gone. They found Indians, Afro Americans and Italians already here; they also found many bayous and an abundance of seafood and wild game. The soil was rich and the climate mild for proper cultivation. The settlers soon became friends, and each culture in turn contributed to the Cajun Cuisine that is so popular today. The Indians gave us gumbo by crushing sassafras leaves to make file, the Afro Americans gave us jumbalya, and the Acadians gave us roux, a mixture of hog lard and flour used to make a brown paste for gravy's.

My Papa, Louis du Bernard, opened a Boucherie in 1910; it was located in downtown Lafayette on the corner of East Main and Jefferson Streets.

Every week a hog was butchered at the slaughter house and brought to the Boucherie to be cut and refrigerated. Mamma would prepare all the food made from the meat of the hog, which is today called Cajun food.

To make boudin, Mamma used an equal portion of hog liver and pork, which was boiled until very tender; the meat was ground and returned to the stock. The mixture was then poured over cooked rice to make a dressing. A small iron container, called a stuffer, its crank turned by hand was used to fill the casings. As the casing was stuffed, Mamma would twist the casing to make a link. She then coiled the boudin into a large pot of water to be boiled. Red boudin was made by using a sterile container to catch the blood from the hog as his throat was cut. Red boudin cannot be sold today as the Government has banned it from market.

Platines are made by using the veil of the hog stuffed with a dressing made from ground pork and seasoning. The veil is a part of the hog that separates the spleen from the liver. Platines can be grilled or cooked in a gravy.

Hog head cheese is made from the hogs head which has been seasoned and boiled until the meat is tender. After the meat and bones are separated, the meat is returned to the stock, green onions and parsley are added, and the mixture is poured into loaf pans to gel.

Another boucherie food is les griailles, slices of stringy tough meat, soaked in vinegar to be tenderized, and then put in a crock and covered with coarse salt.

Cracklins are made from the skin and fat of the hog. The skin is cut into small pieces and cooked in deep fat until brown. A little water is slowly added to the hot grease to make it sizzle, causing the cracklins to form small blisters.

Andouille is used in gumbo's and is another popular Cajun food. Andouille is a sausage made of seasoned ground pork meat and stuffed into a casing.

Debris is another Cajun dish that is in demand. Debris is made by cutting up the pig's heart, liver, mariguts and kidneys. It is usually cooked in a stew and makes a delicious gravy to be served over rice.

Tripe and brain are also favorite Cajun dishes. Tripe is the stomach of the cow and when thoroughly cleaned is snowy white. Brain can be boiled or fried and can be bought at any boucherie in Lafayette.

The old method of cooking cajun foods has never changed. With the herbs and spices made available by the Indians and help from their neighbors, the Acadians gave us the Cajun Cuisine that exists today. A good Cajun cook always uses the old black iron pot to make a roux, as it retains the heat and does not burn the mixture. The Acadians made stock by boiling bones from fish, game and meat. The method of making stock by the early settlers has never changed. A Cajun kitchen always has an ample supply of stock on hand for cooking.

A good Cajun cook never measures, she either adds or takes away from the food so that the herb or spice compliments the other. The cooked food is ready to be served when that special flavor and aroma is pleasing to the taste and smell.