

# THROUGH THE YEARS

*By Kent Motter*

*5/27/1918-5/4/2013*

**Since I have been old enough to have a memory I have had a fascination and have always been curious about my ancestors. I often wish I could go back and talk to my father, grandfather, and great grandparents and share their experiences. This has been more so as I have grown older. I have always wondered why I was born in a place so wonderful as the U.S.A., when there are so many places in this world that are filled with tumult and unrest. Also, I've wondered why I was born in this period of time. In my lifetime, I have seen civilization come from horse and buggies to flights into space and beyond. Through this period in time, progress has been greater than at any other age of time in the history of the world. For being part of this, I thank God and my ancestors.**

**I decided for these reasons and for my own satisfaction to reminisce and write down some of the experiences that are sharpest in my memory to leave for those of you in the future who may have some of the same questions about the past as myself. This may also help me to find out who I am and why I am here.**

**The first recollection I have of my past is living in Deshler, Ohio, at the age of two. My grandmother on my father's side was born there. Her name was Almeda Tussing and I still remember her brothers, Uncle Pete was a veterinarian in Deshler and Uncle Will lived in Toledo. When I was older we used to attend the Tussing reunions which were always held in the park at Deshler. I also remember a cousin of my fathers, Perry Tussing who was cross eyed. My father always smiled when he talked about him.**

**When we lived in Deshler my father worked for the Railway Express and rode the train back and forth to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I used to go downtown and sit on the curb and wait for him to come back or until my mother came to find me or some nice accommodating person would take me home. I remember that my father raised rabbits in pens in the back yard. They were Flemish Giants. According to my father, they were the best kind. Also, while living in Deshler, I remember that some friends of ours had scarletfever and were quarantined and afterwards, how their skin peeled off. The next memory I have is living on my Grandfather Smith's farm near Malinta, Ohio. This was about twelve miles from Deshler. From my grandfather's farm you could look right across the field and see the house where I was born. It was always known to me as the Baden place. The house and all the buildings are gone now, as are all the buildings that were on my grandfather's farm.**

**I don't know if my mother was born on this farm or not because grandfather once had a farm on the other side of Malinta. Anyway, the schoolhouse that she attended all the years of her schooling was only a half a mile from where we lived and the Meyers farm where my father worked as a hired hand was only a mile and a half away from there. I never heard the story of how they met.**

**My mother was 18 years old and my father was 20 when they got married. I never knew how far my father went in school or what school he attended. I don't remember him ever talking about it. I do know that he could read and write exceptionally well and was very good in mathematics.**

**The memories of living on my grandfather's farm the first time are very vague. I do remember that my mother had a nervous breakdown and my Aunt Florence, who was my father's youngest sister and just out of high school at that time, came to help take care of my mother**

**and I heard from her in later years that my older brother Raymond and I about drove her nuts. I think my brother George Nicholas was born at that time, but I am not sure of this. I also remember that my father raised sugar beets, which they told me later that I called them Hugar Meets. I also once smoked one of my fathers cigars and got sick. When the doctor asked me where I was sick I told him, "Out behind the corn crib". Another memory I have is of my grandfather leaving in his horse and buggy to go back to his house in Malinta and I ran after him, screaming my head off for him to take me with him, but he paid me no mind and kept right on going.**

**At night the farmhouse was dimly lit with kerosene lamps and the wood cook stove in the kitchen had a warming oven to raise bread and a reservoir to keep water warm. There was also a galvanized bath tub that could be filled with water heated on the stove. There was cistern at the back of the house always filled with rainwater from the roof and a pitcher pump in the house to get water from the cistern, but our drinking water had to be carried from the barn about a hundred yards away where it was pumped by a windmill. Our drinking water was of sulphur content and just before a rain it would turn so dark you couldn't see the bottom of the water pail and it always had a very strong odor.**

**At night when nature called we would take a kerosene lantern and head for the outside toilet which was in the corner of the back yard about 75 feet away. For toilet paper, it was always an out-of-date sears & Roebuck catalog.**

**I never knew why, but my father and grandfather had a falling out and they never talked to each other for the remainder of my grandfather's life. That's when we left the farm and moved 95 miles south to Fletcher, Ohio. My grandfather Motter lived only 2 miles from there and my father drove a team of horses all the way from the farm at**

**Malinta to Fletcher in three days. They were hitched to a two seated buggy. In later years, he used to point out the two farm houses he had stayed in overnight on that trip. The one was just north of Ottawa and the other was near Wapakoneta. That was in 1923 and there were no paved roads.**

**We lived in three different houses in Fletcher. The first was right next to the cemetery and it is still there. I saw it last November when I visited my father's grave.**

**My brother George Nicholas died there in this house at the age of two in 1924. I also visited his grave and took a picture of his gravestone. I do not remember him at all, but he was named after both of my grandfathers, Nicholas Smith and George Motter. All through his life my father could never mention Georgie's name without tears coming to his eyes. My parents must have loved him very much and it had to have been a great tragedy in their lives. Georgie died of the croup. It must had been January or February 1924.**

**I went to the first and second grades in school in Fletcher and when I finished the second grade we lived in a house across the street from a grocery and cream station that was operated by my father's uncle, aunt, and cousins. The grocery is no longer there and I couldn't tell which of the houses had been our home at that time.**

**I remember once when two cousins of my mother's, whose names were Myrtle and Ethel came to visit us in Fletcher. The reason I remember is because of an incident that happened while they were there. For some reason my brother Raymond and I had snatched a tube of B.S.'s from Subers Hardware Store while we were with them shopping. After we got home they saw them and marched us back to the store and made us give them back to the clerk and apologize. I don't know why we wanted them because we didn't even have a B.S. gun.**

**At that time my father worked in Piqua at the handle factory where they made all kinds of wooden handles for files, chisels, hammer hatchets and so forth. He had a Model T Ford he drove back and forth to work and once he took a load of handles over into Indiana for the factory. When my father died in 1973, he still had a few of the handles that were made there in his collection of keepsakes.**

**One day in the summer after I had finished the second grade, my brother Raymond and I sneaked away and went fishing as we used to do once in a while and occasionally do yet. When we returned home that afternoon our grandfather was waiting for us. Our parents had packed up and moved to Toledo taking my sister Mary K and my brother Donald with them and leaving the two of us to stay with my grandmother and grandfather Motter. I don't know to this day if they had planned on leaving us from the beginning or not. If it was planned they sure kept it a secret from us.**

**Raymond and I spent the rest of the summer on the farm with our grandparents. It was like a paradise to us. We had a creek that ran through the property for a mile and we had lots of time to fish in it and explore it. There were also lots of frogs and snakes to catch. Thinking back now, I'm sure we must have gotten on Grandpa and Grandma's nerves a lot that summer.**

**When fall came and school started Raymond stayed with our grandparents and attended the Springcreek School which was halfway between Fletcher and Piqua. I went to stay with my Aunt Ruth and Uncle Merle who hadn't been married very long. They lived on a farm near Carysville, Ohio. I went to school that year in the third grade in the small town of Rosewood.**

**I got to know all of my Uncle Merle's family who lived in that area. His father, George Bailey, lived in Carysville and was a self-made evangelist preacher. We would go to church on Sundays right across**

**the street from their home and generally stay and eat dinner with them after church. Mr. Bailey would sit down at the piano and chord and sing nearly all afternoon. One song I still remember him singing was "You can't get to heaven on roller skates, you'll roll right by the pearly gates." He always reminded me of Burl Ives. I'll never forget him. He was always very special to me as was Uncle Merle and his whole family.**

**Aunt Ruth got smallpox while I stayed with them and I remember that she was very sick. We were quarantined for what seemed a long time and when the quarantine was lifted we had to leave all of our clothes in the house and go out to an old abandoned farm house that was on the same farm and take a bath in a wash tub and put on cleaned clothes. The other house was then fumigated and we weren't allowed to enter it for over 48 hours. I loved my Aunt Ruth and Uncle Merle and it was always a joy every time I got to be with them.**

**Sometime late in 1927, my mother came and picked up Raymond and me and someone took us to Quincy, Ohio, where we got on a train and went back to Malinta to stay with my grandfather and grandmother Smith. Mary K and Donald were already there and I rather think that they had been there for some time along with my mother. As far as I knew my father was still in Toledo.**

**One night there was a knock at the door and it was my. Father. My mother went out on the porch for what seemed a very long time. When she came back in she was in tears. She went upstairs and packed some of her things and got Mary K and Donald ready and said goodbye to Raymond and I. Telling us that she would come back and get us and then she left with my father to go to Toledo.**

**My brother Raymond and I both started to school that fall in the old school building at Malinta Grelton. I was now in the fourth grade.**

**My grandfather Smith was very strict with us. He was a lot different than grandfather Motter who let us do as we please. We got into trouble a few times while we were there. Once we got punished because we were out catching night crawlers at too late an hour. What he didn't understand was that night crawlers don't come out until late. We got severely punished for this. Another time Raymond and I were wrestling in the house as boys our age do once in a while and we accidently pushed the top of grandfathers heavy rocking chair through the front door glass. He made us go down to Uncle Adam's hardware store and get a new glass and then take our punishment too. He had a heavy piece of rope that we always called the hay rope and he didn't hesitate to use it on us if he thought we were doing something wrong.**

**My grandfather Smith was a tall, well-built man with a moustache. He always seemed to stand so tall and erect. At the time we stayed there he was seventy-nine years old. He was born in Germany and had come to this country when he was nineteen years old along with his brother Adam, who ran the hardware store in Malinta. I really liked him and admired him even though he was so strict. He had been married before and had three sons by his first marriage. He was past fifty years old when my mother was born.**

**Along about Christmastime my mother came and picked Raymond and I up and took us back to Toledo and our family was once more all together again after being separated for over a year and a half. We lived in the Auborndale section of Toledo and I continued the fourth grade there. My father was working for Willy's Knight in their body plant. A lot of wood was used in the car bodies at that time and that was the department he was working in. The people that owned the apartment where we lived also owned a movie theater and we were given passes every weekend to go to the movies. I also remember**

**selling extras on the street the night when Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney fought their championship fight and Dempsey lost. One day while we lived there the police were chasing some bank robbers and there was a lot of shooting going on and a bullet went right through a wall in the house next door. We lived close to the Ottawa Hills Country Club and Raymond got a job as a caddy there on the weekends. I remember a lot about living in Toledo. It seemed like it was the first time in my life that I could take part in the things the family did. Our trips to Walbridge Park, to the Zoo, and to the Amusement Park where we could get free rides by saving Taystee Bread wrappers. The long walks along the old canal and Swan Creek were exciting as well.**

**My father got laid off at Willy's Knight and we moved over to Western Avenue and he started working in the railroad yards and after school was out I took his lunch to him every day at noon. That job didn't seem to last very long and then he started working at the Henley Cabinet Company. I think he liked working with wood better than working on the railroad. On one of our trips to Walbridge Park, my mother left her purse in the ladies rest room. It had forty dollars in it that my father had given her for the rent. She was really shook up and scared, but some honest person found it and gave it back to her.**

**My father had only been working at the cabinet company a short time when a piece of wood kicked back out of a saw and broke some of his ribs. He was laid up for a while and that's when he decided to move back south to Piqua. We moved into a house at 528 River Street and he got a job on the Western Ohio, which was a traction freight line that ran between Toledo and Cincinnati. The car barns were right behind our house so he didn't have far to go to work.**

**All through those early years where ever we lived it seems like I had a one track mind when there was a place to fish and living there on**



**River Street just a block from the Great Miami River was no exception. I learned to swim in that river and I believe I would have drowned once if my cousin Scott Motter hadn't been there to pull me out. I know I scared my mother a few times. She went down to the river one day and I left her on one side and I waded across to where there was a deeper spot and told her to watch me. I dove under and held my breath as long as I could and when I came up she was screaming her head off. She thought sure I was drowning. Part of the old Miami and Erie Canal were intact, yet along the river Raymond and I used to gather water cress from it and take it down town to a pet store and sell it to them. They used it in their fish tanks. I attended the fifth grade at Wilder in Piqua and I had a paper route that included Park Avenue Hill which at that time was the most elite part of Piqua and probably still is. Most of the people on my route paid for their paper annually and would give me an envelope with money in it at Christmas time. For awhile I used roller skates to deliver the papers, but I finally got enough money to buy a used bicycle which made it a lot easier. I still remember how good the frozen Milky Ways and the Neihi Pop used to taste at the little store on Washington Avenue.**

**It was during this period that I again got to stay with Aunt Ruth and Uncle Merle. They now lived on a farm near Piqua known as the McKnight place. It was just a short distance through the woods and across a field from the Duncan place where my grandfather lived. It was there that I have my first memory of my cousin Dorothy. I think she was about two months old. Uncle Arthur, my father's youngest brother, had married a girl from Rosewood by the name of Lucille O'Bryant. I remember where Uncle Arthur lived on the Sander's place and how nice Aunt Lucille was. They were blessed with two children, Billy and then Dorothy. Aunt Lucille had died of anemia when Dorothy was just a baby and from that time on until she got married she lived with Aunt Ruth and Uncle Merle and they raised her and loved her as**

**their own. Dorothy has always been very dear to me. Maybe it's because we both loved Aunt Ruth so much.**

**On River Street we lived right across the street from the Bayman's bakery and when they were baking at night they would generally have some of the loading dock doors open and we used to hang around outside and once in a while one of the employees would give us hot rolls or cakes. It always seemed worth waiting around for because they always tasted so good.**

**In 1929 when the big crash came, my father was out of a job and we moved to a place on the Miami Shelby County Road about seven miles from Piqua. We had a calico cat we used to call Mother Elsie for obvious reasons. When we moved she was left in Piqua and about a week later she showed up one morning at our back door. It has always been a mystery to me how she found us. She seemed to be very tired and hungry and very glad to see us. The farm where we had moved to was called the Eddie Moore place and it was right along the B & O Railroad tracks. My father would walk down the tracks about a mile in the direction of Piqua and when the train came by he would pick out a nice heaped up carload of coal and hop it and push coal off when it got along the field next to our house. Raymond and I would help gather it up in gunny sacks and help my father carry it home to use in the cook stove and for heating the house. There was hardly enough money for food at that time. We were still only a short distance from the Miami river and we made frequent trips there. Once when the river was real low we found a cave at the base of a high bank. It had a horizontal opening a few feet long but only about 15 inches high. Raymond and I crawled in it to do some exploring but it came to end at about fifteen feet. There were lots of woods in this area and we used to roam around through them. I remember there were a lot of apple trees growing wild all through the woods and**

**because Johnny Appleseed had traversed this area years before I always have wondered if he could have planted them.**

**Mary K, Donald and I started to school that year at the Orange Township School and Raymond went to Sidney to school. I was in the sixth grade and my teacher was Emerson Applegate. I am left handed and Mr. Applegate tried to get me to change and do things right handed, but he never succeeded.**

**Late that year, 1929 my Grandfather Smith died. He was seventy nine years old. My father had never once talked to him since we had lived on his farm seven years before. The depression was in full swing now and my father was still out of a job. There was no work available anywhere or no money. My mother went to my grandfather's funeral and while there she got permission from my grandmother for all of our family to come back to Malinta and move in with her. My grandparents had lost most of their savings when all the banks went under at the start of the depression but everything they had was paid for. They also had a cow and chickens and a big garden and my father excelled in gardening so we never went hungry. My father also got a job as the janitor of the United Brethern Church in Malinta. His salary was five dollars a week.**

**It was here in Malinta that I feel like I really started to grow up. I finished school at Malinta Grelton and made many lifetime friends there. I always felt that I was fortunate that we made the move back to Malinta. I have many, many memories of the years I spent there. We had been in Malinta a few months when my father got a friend of his (Floyd Cunningham) to take him back to Piqua in his Model T Ford truck to pick up our furniture that was stored at Grandfather Matters. Going south out of Sidney there used to be a terrific hill at the Miami river crossing and it was there that the Model T jumped out of gear and plunged like a rocket down that grade. My father bailed out at**

**some point, but Floyd who Was an enormous man in all directions, couldn't get out and stayed with the vehicle which finally ended up on its side in the ditch. Floyd was not injured, but my father ended up with some broken ribs and bruises. With some assistance they managed to get the truck upright and back on the road and continued on to pick up the furniture and return back to Malinta. My father was in a lot of misery by the time they got back and it was not until then that he went to a doctor and got his ribs taped up. It was a few weeks before he got back to normal.**

**Before coming back to Malinta I had lived in fifteen different houses and had attended six different schools and I have always been thankful that I got to finish the last six years at Malinta Grelton. It was a small school with about two hundred students and it didn't take long until you knew almost every one in school. Our study hall seated the entire high school which was about seventy students. My grades were never more than average except in subjects that dealt with mathematics and in those I was in the top half of my class. The other subjects didn't interest me except English literature, which I really liked because of the stories and the poetry. I memorized a lot of poems which were not required because I loved poetry so much and I can quote many of them yet today. Another reason that some of my grades were not higher was because of my bashfulness. If it was any thing oral I just couldn't get the courage to speak up. All the teachers I had were very outstanding and were patient with me and I was to realize later that they had taught me many important things that would help me live my life. Because it was a small school and competition was less, I had the chance to play on the high school baseball team. I really enjoyed that. Baseball was the only sport I took part in. I did sing in the glee club and I will never forget Hoyt Sprow who was my seventh grade teacher and also the music teacher for the high school. He taught us to really love music and the**

**rendition of, My God and I that we sang will be with me forever. It is sung annually in his memory at our Alumni banquets. I**

**remember him directing us in the operetta "Romona" and how beautiful the story and the music was. In my junior year in high school I got to play one of the lead parts in our class play. I was "Gramps" in "That Lucas Family". This is one of the many times that God smiled on me and put me in this place at this time. I know that if I would have attended a larger school somewhere, with my backwardness, I would have been left behind.**

**In the years 1929 to 1932 I really don't know how we survived. My father got a few odd jobs like unloading carloads of coal and small carpenter jobs, but he was very seldom paid in money. There just didn't seem to be any money. My grandmother's house was less than a block from the railroad tracks and there were always a lot of transits stopping by and begging for food. I remember once when a young man in his early twenties came to the back door and my father gave him some food and questioned him to find out where he was from. He then asked him if he would like to take a bath. He was very dirty from riding freight trains. He was anxious to do this so my father had Raymond and I go down to the creek with him, with some soap and clean clothes my father had gathered up. He bathed and shaved and put on the clean clothes. When we came back my mother washed and dried his dirty clothes for him. He ate supper with us that night and he looked like a different person than the one that had stopped there that morning. My father told him he could sleep in the summer kitchen that night and when I went to look for him the next morning he was gone.**

**One morning when I got up my mother was very excited. She said there had been an earthquake or something. Whatever it was it nearly shook them out of bed. My father had gotten dressed and had gone**

downtown to see if he could find out what had happened. When he came back he said there had been an explosion north of town and he asked Raymond and I if we would like to walk up that way with him to find out for sure where it was. About a half mile north of town there were a lot of people milling around and no one seemed to know for sure what had happened. There was a large hole in the ground in the ditch next to the highway. It was about twelve feet across and eight or ten feet deep and it was cone shaped. There were lots of rumors floating around. One of them was that a load of Nitro had blown up, but we searched the surrounding area and found no clues. No foreign objects of any kind. During the next few days experts came from all over the country to look at it and the decision they made was that it was a small meteor. I have never believed that to be true, because someone would surely have seen the light from it when it came down. Anyway, it caused a lot of excitement for a few days. The traces of the hole are still visible and I think about it every time I drive by it.

When President Roosevelt took office in 1932 things started to change. My father got a job on the WPA as everyone else who wanted to work did. I think he was getting pretty restless since he hadn't had a steady job for over three years. That summer he talked my grandmother into letting us move back on the farm. I think she agreed to this just to get all of us out of her house. It must have been trying for her with us there the last three years. There were some government programs available for farmers to get financial help to purchase equipment and livestock, so my father took advantage of that. My father hadn't owned a car since we left Fletcher but there were a lot of good neighbors to take him where he wanted to go and sometimes I got to go along with him. I remember that he bought a scrawny looking Jersey Cow for fifteen dollars and two pigs for five dollars each and some chickens and we were in business. That Jersey Cow was destined to produce two heifer calves before we

would leave the farm. He also purchased a team of horses complete with harness. He bought a new one furrow walking plow that cost less than seventy five dollars and a new rubber tired wagon chassis on which he built a bed and rack. It was the first rubber-tired farm wagon I had ever seen. Later, he bought a one row cultivator which I spent many hours using with the horses cultivating the corn. Other implements he needed he could always borrow from our neighbors.

It must have been quite a challenge for my father to start out with absolutely nothing when corn, oats and wheat were only a few cents a bushel, but he had always been a hard, determined worker. He plowed the fields with that one furrow plow and borrowed a harrow and a disc from our neighbor and I worked the soil and got it ready for the crops he had planned. He managed to get a contract from the Ohio Sugar Company at Ottawa to raise a few acres of sugar beets. They furnished the seed and paid so much an acre for blocking and thinning the plants. We did this ourselves instead of getting migratory workers to come in which was the normal policy. They paid for it as soon as the work was finished and this was the first money my father had seen since coming back to the farm. When the beets were ready for harvesting they were dug and hauled to the railroad and weighed and loaded on cars and we were paid so much a ton. My father also planted a field of oats and a field of corn. The oats were ready first and a neighbor cut it with his binder and Raymond and I helped shock it. We had helped do this at our Grandfather Motter's farm once before.

It was soon threshing time and all of the farmers worked together. The threshing machine would move from farm to farm until it had made a complete circuit. I was too small to pitch sheaves up on the wagon so I generally worked shoveling the oats or wheat into the

**granary. Raymond hired out to one of the neighbors during threshing time for a dollar a day. I had never in my life seen as much food as there was at the daily threshing dinners. I was always looking forward to noon time meal. After the first year on the farm when things were slack my father would go looking for carpenter jobs to keep him busy leaving Raymond and I to do the chores and other things that came up. My father was never without his tools and a woodworking shop wherever we lived. I'm sure I inherited the love of working with wood from him. I would be lost without my tools.**

**Looking back now I can see this was a very happy time in my life. The area around Malinta at that time had the best pheasant, partridge and rabbit hunting of any place I have ever seen. I remember my first pheasant. We heard a rooster crow in a field next to the house and Raymond took his old dilapidated twelve gauge single barrel and I took my 410 that I had just bought from a friend for two dollars and out we went. We flushed the pheasant and before Raymond could get the twelve gauge to his shoulder I had the pheasant laying on the ground deader than a door nail. I had just raised the gun up and fired from the hip. When we cleaned it we found one buckshot in its head. Raymond and I still talk about this whenever the subject of hunting arises. There was always mushroom hunting in the spring, fishing in Turkey Foot Creek or the Maumee River, going out in the woods and gathering hickory nuts in the fall. Then until it all started again, there was hunting and trapping. We had a trap line that took us a couple of hours to run so we had to get up earlier in the morning to make it back in time to go to school. There were muskrats, opossum, skunk and weasels and we caught them all. The furs weren't worth much but it was an experience I'll never forget.**

**Two of the friends I spent a lot of time hunting and fishing with were in the same grade as myself in school. Julian Aderman was a neighbor**



**and Kent Glick lived in Malinta. One time Kent and I were hunting in a woods north of Malinta and we chased up a rabbit and it took off running and Kent shot it with his 22 rifle. He never lets me forget that when we meet at our annual Alumni Banquet. Another time we were squirrel hunting and we sat down beside a haystack on the edge of a woods and Kent dropped off to sleep and I woke him up abruptly when I shot a fox squirrel about ten feet in front of us. Julian and I were hunting together one time and we flushed out a flock of Hungarian partridge and I fired six times at them and got one on the last shot. It was indeed a paradise if you liked to hunt and fish.**

**The old farm house was the same as it had been when we lived there the first time. There were still the kerosene lamps and the wood cook stove in the kitchen. To heat the house in the winter there was a big hard coal burner, which my father stoked once a day and when the lights were out at night the embers glowed beautifully through the isinglass windows. I used to lay on the floor behind it in the evening and soak up the heat.**

**After school was out in 1934 my father asked me if I would like to go spend a few weeks with my grandfather during the summer and I was very anxious to do this, because I had always been very fond of him. To me he seemed to be a perfect person. In all the years that I can remember him I never once heard him raise his voice in anger to anyone. I remember how much he liked to sing. Before my Aunt Ruth got married and left home she would play the piano and grandfather would stand behind her and sing hymns. He was a Baptist and very seldom missed church on Sunday mornings and occasionally sang a solo at the services. In his younger days, my father told me that my grandfather sold patent medicines for a company in Piqua called Porter. They made a salve and another product which I always heard called Porter's Pain King. It was a liquid in a bottle that was supposed**

**to cure everything. Grandfather's territory where he sold these products was north eastern Indiana and northern Ohio. He drove a horse and buggy through the country side until all his goods were gone and then he would come back to Piqua to load up his buggy again. I am sure it was on one of these trips that he met my grandmother.**

**I don't remember how I got to grandfathers, because we still didn't have a car. I'm sure it must have been one of our relatives that furnished the transportation.**

**My grandmother had been dead for a couple of years and grandfather had left the Duncan farm and had moved in with my Uncle Arthur, who had married again and had a family. Uncle Arthur now lived on a farm at the east edge of Fetcher. It was owned by Fred and Hattie Rogers, the cousins who had owned the grocery that we formerly lived across the street from in 1925.**

**I remember getting a letter from brother Raymond while I was at grandfather Motter's farm that summer telling me that he and another friend had been catching pigeons. Almost every barn around Malinta was saturated with them and they were a nuisance to the farmers. They were easy to catch at night. All a person had to do was to climb up in the top of the barn at night and grab them while they were sleeping and throw them in a burlap bag. This was done with permission of the farmers beforehand.**

**I think Raymond had visions of getting a corner on the pigeon market and I was invited to join in on the collection part of the enterprise when I came back home.**

**On the third week end of my stay with grandfather, Uncle Arthur and his family went to a religious camp meeting in southern Ohio. When Uncle Arthur got married the second time, it was to Uncle Merle's**

**youngest sister. She was in high school in Rosewood the same time I went to the third grade there. I think it was the influence of Mr. Bailey that started them attending camp meetings. Grandfather, the hired hand Clifford, and I were left at home to do the chores. It was quite late when Clifford and I went to bed that Saturday night and grandfather was still up listening to the Grand Old Opry, waiting to hear Uncle Dave Macon sing, 'Life's, Railway to Heaven.'" This had always been a favorite of my grandfathers.**

**Sometime later I remember hearing grandfather coming upstairs and also remember hearing some strange choking noises from his bedroom. The next morning Clifford and I were up at a normal time trying to decide what we were going to have for breakfast, but there was no sign of grandfather who was always up early. Clifford said to me, "maybe you'd better go wake the old gentleman up".**

**Remembering the odd sounds from the night. before I had a scared feeling and when I walked into his bedroom my fears became reality. My grandfather had died of a heart attack probably just after he had come to bed the night before.**

**I can't remember too many of the details as to what happened after that. I think I contacted Fred Rogers and he was able to locate Uncle Arthur and they got home that Sunday afternoon and made all the necessary arrangements and contacted all the other relatives and friends. I know that my mother and father arrived the next day. A neighbor by the name of Challie Crawford brought them. It was a very sad time especially for my father who I remember always called grandfather, "Papa". Looking back now I realized how lonely my grandfather must have been after the death of my grandmother. I didn't return home with my mother and father after the funeral. I got to stay another week with Uncle Arthur. Then my Aunt Minnie**

**Hefflinger, my father's half-sister and my cousins Lester and Laverne took me back home.**

**My brother Raymond and my father never did see eye to eye. There was always a lot of friction between them. I can remember many incidents but this was the first. Raymond didn't like working on the farm too well and a short time after he graduated from high school he just took off and never told anybody where he was going. Once he had tried to talk me into going to Alaska with him but I chickened out at the last minute so he didn't go either. This time he ended up in Toledo. I don't remember exactly how my father found out where he was. It might have been because he was staying at Uncle Will Tussings. The word was that Raymond had gotten a job washing dishes in a hamburger shop or some kind of restaurant.**

**We had gotten our first car since we had lived in Fletcher only a few weeks before this happened. I had seen it in Geist's garage in Malinta and came home all excited to tell my father about it and without much persuasion he walked back into town with me to look at it. I think the time was just right and the price was only sixty five dollars so he bought it. It was a 1927 two door Chevrolet Sedan. My father asked me if I could drive it and I said "sure". After all I had been watching other people doing it for years and it had never looked very complicated to me. I did fairly well. I made it home okay. I pushed in the clutch and got it into the right gears, but for some unknown reason I didn't know that you were supposed to let up on the accelerator when you shifted. My father, with a nervous side-ward glance, informed me of this and that was the only driving lesson I ever had.**

**Getting back to Raymond. My father asked me if I would like to go along to Toledo to see if we could locate him. It was late enough at night when we got there that the stores were all closed, but I**

**remember walking on the sidewalk and looking in the brightly lit up windows, mentioning to my father that I would sure like to have one of these, as I gazed longingly at a beautiful new foreign car. I also remember stopping and getting some steamed hamburgers to eat which tasted very good and my father explained that they were a lot better than fried ones.**

**We finally came to the place where Raymond was working and plainly speaking he was a mess. He looked like he had lost fifteen pounds and his feet were sore and bleeding. He could hardly walk. The place he was working turned out to be a beer joint and the atmosphere within if it could be rated from one to ten according to my father, it surely would have been on the minus side of the scale. Anyway, it didn't take much persuading to talk Raymond into coming back home. Well, at least until his feet got better.**

**Raymond could do about anything. Once he made a musical instrument out of a square five gallon can. He put a neck and strings on it and even had a way to tune it and played it like a Hawaiian guitar. Later, he bought a new guitar at Sears and Roebuck in Toledo and he had no trouble learning to play it. He built the first radio we ever had in our house. He built it out of a rolled oats box, some wire, and a crystal. The only problem was that only one person could listen to it at a time because it used earphones. I think that's why my father decided to buy a radio. The one he bought was an Atwater Kent and it used batteries which had to be taken to town and charged up every few days. After that we got to listen to Amos and Andy, Lum and Abner and the wonderful Lowell Thomas with the news.**

**Raymond was always good in school but I don't remember him studying much at home. When I was a junior in high school my physics teacher, Max Delph, announced that we were going to have a test the next day and anyone who could solve a complicated math problem he**

**was going to give us would be excused from the test and still get an "A". I took the problem home and showed it to Raymond and he said, "That's not hard" and explained to me how to solve it. The next day there were two right answers in the class. Mine and the friend I had shared the answer with.**

**There are many memories of living in Malinta like the time when Raymond went to the county fair over at Napoleon home and got stranded there. Walked the eleven miles from the farm and I got a ride with some neighbors to the and weren't around when they left to go back.**

**Along with my cousin and another friend, we Napoleon to Malinta. It was broad day light the next morning when we got to Malinta and my cousin Bud and I were almost a mile behind Raymond and Dan Gunter. We also used to find and raid watermelon patches that farmers would hide in remote corners of their fields. We had a couple of hair raising experiences doing this. On one of these occasions a classmate of mine, Howard Overhulse, told a group of us that he knew where there was a big patch of ripe watermelons. The way he happened to know was because it was on the Reimund farm who where cousins of his. That night after it was good and dark, Howard led about eight of us cross country to the patch. Each of us picked out a nice watermelon and Howard suggested that it would be easier walking if we went right up past the house and barn and followed their lane right out to the road. It was a pretty dark night and it was kind of rough going through fields. Howard was always a pretty loud talker and that night I think he was talking louder than usual just to make sure his cousins would hear us. We barely got by the house when the door of the house opened and out on the porch stepped Chalmer Reimund with a double barrel shot gun. Needless to say all of us started running and Chalmer**

**cut loose with both barrels. Although there were claims that some of the buckshot made contact, I have my doubts of that being true. I think we were all moving faster than the buckshot and if anyone would have timed us, we would have broken some speed records. The group burst like a bubble and scattered in all directions, every man for himself. Eventually we all got back to Malinta. There were a lot of weird stories the next day at school from the participants of the escapade. Art Russell had stumbled over a cow who let out some strange sound when he fell on her and she decided to get up and he rolled down the bank into Turkey Foot Creek. Another of the sprinters stepped on a pheasant, so he said, and about had a heart attack when the disturbed bird went whirring away in the night. Also the next day at school we were confronted by the shotgun handler, Chalmer Reimund, with a complete list of the raiding party. It was graciously given to him by cousin Howard, who I think was talking loud the night before to make sure we were discovered. It has always been a mystery to me why the farmers hid there melon patches. It just presented a challenge to us to find them and raid them. We never bothered the ones that were planted in the open. Malinta was a wonderful place to grow up.**

**That part of my life ended all too soon as it does for most of us. I graduated from high school in 1936 and in February 1937 we left the farm and moved back south to Piqua and another phase of my life began there.**

**My mother and father had made an advance trip to Piqua and had rented a house for us to move into. So when all our furniture and belongings were loaded into a large open stock truck, from a large area cattle farm, my parents took off with Raymond, Mary K and Donald in the 1933 four door Dodge they now had. Gone was the bumpy 1927 Chevrolet I had learned to drive in. I made the trip in the**

**truck with the furniture and it seemed to take forever to get to Piqua. I remember eating lunch that day in Columbus Grove, Ohio which was about one third of the way. I also remember going down the hill in Sidney where my father had been in the accident eight years before. Finally late that afternoon, we arrived at our new home at 1007 Park Avenue down the hill from where my paper route had been ten years before.**

**Life was very different here, I missed the farm and the open country and the friends I had left behind. It was a real treat though to have electricity and inside plumbing also there was no more cooking with wood for my mother because we had natural gas for that. It didn't take long to make new friends though. We joined the United Brethern Church and here I made many new friends who have been very dear to me for over fifty years. I give thanks to God for guiding me there, for one of the person's I was to meet at that church would change my life completely. On my frequent trips back to Piqua over the years I have always looked forward to attending church and visiting my friends there.**

**My brother Raymond got a job at a bottle cap factory a few blocks from our house where they made pasteboard caps for glass milk bottles. At that time there were no other containers in which to package milk for sale to consumers. In the spring my father got both he and myself a job at Acton Halls private residence that he called the shack. He was a rich thirty -five year old playboy and the owner of the Piqua Stone Products Company that he had inherited. In a fenced off area, which consisted of about thirty acres surrounding one of his abandoned stone quarries that was now filled with water, he had built his house.**

**It was not quite completed when we started to work there. The story goes that all of the wood used in the construction of the house came**



**from one giant redwood tree that he had shipped in from California. There was an enormous sunken living room with a full grown live tree growing right up through the roof and the floor in that part of the house was made of cross cut sections of the redwood tree. Some as large as five feet in diameter and five inches thick. It was all sanded and polished and was beautiful. The entire structure was covered with handsplit redwood shakes. Our work there consisted of building rock walls patios and numerous fancy flower gardens that had all been designed by an architect. My first job each morning was to sweep the patios and polish all the glass tables. There was no shortage of material to work with. All the rock came from his stone quarry. There were many wild parties at the Shack during that summer and many celebrities visited there. Once the Boss, as everyone who worked called him, went to Cincinnati and came back with an entire famous band who stayed there for a few days. Once we had to help repair a window that a famous piano player had either jumped through or had been thrown through. In the six months I worked there I can never remember Acton Hall speaking to me personally. We got all our orders from Bill Ashton, the care taker who lived in the gate house. I worked eight hours a day for forty cents an hour which seemed like a lot to me, because the most I had ever earned before was \$1.25 a day during threshing season back on the farm.**

**I had worked only a few weeks before I bought my first car. Today it would indeed be a classic. It was a 1928 Ford Coupe with a rumble seat, and it cost me \$75.00. From that time on I was in great demand by my friends. I was very proud of that car, It was a real beauty. I only kept it about six weeks and traded it off on a 1933 Chevrolet that cost \$375.00. This was a very fancy one that had belonged to one of the richest families in Piqua by the name of Flesch who lived on Park Avenue hill. It was a four door sedan with a trunk and luggage carrier**

**in the rear and had a spare tire on each side mounted in wells in the front fenders. The spare tires were encased with chrome wheel covers.**

**Raymond and I both played on the church softball team and we had a game at Fountain Park the same evening of the day I had gotten my new car. I was anxious to show off the new car so after the game was over with, Raymond, my sister Mary K and two neighbor girls and I started out Route 185 toward Versailles, a small town about twenty miles from Piqua. Everything went just fine until we were about two miles from Versailles and ran out of gas. The gas gauge registered almost half full but it was definitely out. It was dark by now and things didn't look too serious because we could see lights on at a house ahead of us a short distance. We did have one small problem though. Raymond and I both had not gone home to change out of our softball uniforms and we had no money with us nor did any of the girls. After a short conference, it was decided unanimously by the girls that Raymond and I should go to the lighted house and see if we could borrow some gasoline and they would wait in the car for us. We walked up the road, went through the gate up to the back door and knocked several times before the door opened by an unhappy looking man, who before we could tell him what we wanted, told us to come in and sit down. Not even telling us where to sit he made a beeline back to his chair by a radio. He was listening to the Joe Louis, Max Schmelling fight that was for the world championship and there was no talking to him until the fight ended about forty-five minutes later. When we finally got a chance to inform him of our difficulties we received a lecture from him that was unbelievable. We were told that the young people of today had no responsibilities and how they were lazy and would never amount to anything and none of them could be trusted. When we informed him of our immediate financial status the tone of the lecture became a bit stronger. We held our ground though**

and he finally told us he would let us have one gallon of gas, which we thanked him for and the only reply was some unintelligible grunts. The girls were a little bit nervous when we got back to the car and we tried to explain why it had taken us so long but it was too complicated for them to understand. We put the gasoline in the car and drove up to the house to return the can and I accidentally backed into the gate. When I turned around it was time for a new lecture. We finally got away from there and started back to Piqua, but we ran out of gas about three miles from home. Raymond caught a ride with a passing motorist who was good enough to take him home to get some money and bring some gas back for us. It was well after midnight when we finally got back home. The next day my mother insisted that we had to go explain to our neighbors why their daughters were out so late the night before. I'm not so sure that they believed our story. The next evening at an earlier hour and a full tank of gas and the same group I took off to retrace our steps of the night before. When we stopped at our grumpy samaritans house and we were told by his wife he was in Versailles. We found him there at an ice cream parlor and paid him the eighteen cents for the gallon of gas and two dollars to fix his gate and he wouldn't let us leave until we had a dish of ice cream with which he paid for. By the way, Joe Louis won the fight the night before and maybe that's why our friend was in such a bad mood.

The job at Acton Halls was just a summer one and I don't remember very much about what I did the next winter. I did spend a lot of time with my cousin Laverne Hefflinger, who was my age and lived in Kirkwood a short distance from Piqua. I always liked to go visit Aunt Minnie and Uncle Allie and go rabbit hunting with Lester and Laverne. Sometimes Uncle Allie would go with us. Lester worked at the elevator at Kirkwood and supported the family. I never knew of Uncle Allie ever having a job. Lester also played a fiddle and a guitar and I can still remember some of the songs that he used to play and sing.

**One was about a man who had a goat and another was The Methodist Pie.**

**In the spring my father got a job with a contractor named Louie Woods. It seemed like where ever he worked that I worked too. The first job we did was a dam at the Val Decker farm right on the edge of Piqua. We started it from scratch and it was built with government money. The only help we had were high school students working under a youth program funded also by the government. I think it took us about three months to complete it. The dam has been there for over fifty years and there is a nice lake above it accessible by only a path to it through private property. To this day I have never seen it since it filled up with water. The next job was up at what is now Kiser Lake near St Paris, Ohio. Kiser Lake was also a dam the same as the one we had just finished. It was also funded by government money. Two contractors had already gone bankrupt on the job and Louie had been offered the chance to finish it on a time and material contract. The main part of the dam that the highway crossed was already completed and our job was to install the spillways. It turned out to be quite a challenge. It took a couple of days to build forms for the lower footing that the spillway floor would eventually rest on. The footing was to span across eighty feet of an old creek bottom that was soggy and saturated with water. The forms were stretched out across the creek where they were supposed to go, and with hip boots, we worked in between them digging until they had settled down to the right height. We had enough help to do all this in one day. We had them all braced and lined up when we quit that afternoon and our plans were to pour concrete the next day. When we arrived the next morning, we looked at our work of the day before in dismay. The water pressure in the stream had put about a ten foot arc in our form line. We had to tear everything out and start over. Louie brought us a four inch pump which kept all the water from in front of our footing**

**area and reduced the pressure. This worked out our problem and we reset the forms and poured the concrete. The pump ran continuously for ten days and I was on the night shift keeping it gassed up. I would stay all night and when my father came in the morning, I would go home and sleep.**

**All the concrete on these projects had to be mixed on the job with a half yard mixer, because there was no ready mix at that time. It was late in the fall when we got the spillways all finished and the lake above was beginning to fill up and I got to shoot some ducks before we left there. That dam is still there and there is a good sized, well used lake above it.**

**The next year a contractor from Lima, Ohio, Green and Sawyer, were building a new wing on the Piqua Memorial Hospital and it was nearly finished when my father got a job there. He had only been working there a couple of days when he came home and asked me if I wanted a job cleaning some used brick that had been taken out of the wall where the new wing connected with the old building. I was anxious to get back to work so I jumped at the chance. The next morning I went along with my father to the job site all ready to go to work. What I had to do was use an old hatchet that my father had given to me and knock all the old mortar off the bricks and pile them up in neat piles. For this I received one half cent per brick. At the end of the day I had cleaned and stacked over two thousand bricks and had made over ten dollars. Now the rate of pay for laborers at that time was 40 cents an hour and union carpenters were getting \$1.25 an hour. The foreman, Cliff McQueen came by at quitting time and he looked at the pile of bricks I had cleaned and then he looked at me and said, "how would you like to have a steady job?" Needless to say I finished that pile of bricks working by the hour. Like I mentioned before the construction of the hospital wing was in its final stages and after cleaning up some**

**of the form lumber, removing the nails and piling it up and other clean up jobs around the site, I was expecting to get laid off. One afternoon Cliff came by and said to me. "We are starting a new project in Sidney at the Monarch Tool and Lathe Company. You drive up there tomorrow and see Murray who is the foreman on the job and he will put you to work." Cliff told me that he had already called Murray and he was expecting me. If a person ever felt elated, I surely did.**

**Cliff McQueen had been a neighbor of ours since we had moved back to Piqua. His wife had been over to our house a few times as had his daughter Eunice, who was a year older than me, but I had very seldom seen Cliff until I started to work for him. According to most of the construction workers on the job, he was a S.B. to work for. They all seemed to be scared to death of him, especially the carpenters. I found him to be just the opposite. I never worked for anyone who treated me any nicer and I worked on three different jobs where he was the foreman. He never got excited and never raised his voice, not to me anyway. He would explain what he wanted done and expect you to do it. I really got to love the**

**guy and looked forward to working for him and he was indeed a good friend. His trademark that I remember so well was the big chew of Mail Pouch he nearly always had in his cheek.**

**The job at the Monarch was just starting when I got there. My first day consisted of handling the rod for Jerry Sawyer, who was half owner of the company, while he laid out lines and elevations for the new addition to be built. When the hospital in Piqua was completed, my father came up to Sidney and we both worked on this project for its entirety. It was a large two story addition of concrete, steel and brick construction and it took more than a year to complete it. when we were pouring concrete, my job was at the cement mixer, emptying three sacks of cement into each batch. Green and Sawyer had four**

**relay trucks on the job every time we had a large pour. Each truck box was partitioned off with hinged dividers and enough gravel was in each compartment for a batch of concrete. The trucks would dump a batch in the skiff of the mixer and I would empty cement on top of it and the operator would raise the skiff and let it slide in the mixer. Two of the pours we made lasted over twelve hours. On one of them I emptied 939 sacks in the mixer and the other one 966 sacks. Murray would come around occasionally and ask me if I wanted to be relieved, but each time I declined. The cement was in cloth bags at that time that were returnable for credit and part of my job was to tie them up in bundles of fifty which I did while we were mixing the concrete. I only weighed 135 pounds then and once in a while just to show off I would pick up two of the 94 pound sacks of cement at a time.**

**It was quite a sight to walk into the part of the Monarch that was operating. They were manufacturing lathes there up to sixty feet long, which were being sold to Japan. They must have been used to turn out guns that they used against us later during the war.**

**The next year we worked with Cliff at a paper mill in Excello, Ohio near Middletown. It was fifty five miles from Piqua and we rode back and forth with Cliff every day. It made for long days. Later we worked about a month in Lima, Ohio where Green and Sawyer were doing a small addition at the Westinghouse Plant.**

**I had started singing in the choir at the United Brethern Church when we first came back to Piqua and I made many wonderful lifetime friends there. We had choir practice every Thursday night and I always looked forward to going to it and singing on Sundays at church. Adelphus Smith was our choir leader and his wife, Hazel, played the piano and later when they got one, the organ. They made the perfect team. Their daughter, Naomi, was still in high school and**

**was the youngest member of the choir and would later take over as choir leader. There was Lloyd Smith, Adelphus' brother and Virginia Remy, who got married and I got to be best man at their wedding. Not to forget Myrtle Hole, Betty Crotinger, Ray Fridley, Faith Huffman and many more. They were wonderful people and I loved them all.**

**We had moved four times since coming back to Piqua and we now lived in a house at 1139 Roosevelt. My parents had been married for twenty four years and this is the first house they had ever owned. I think they bought it for \$2800 dollars. In 1940, my cousin, Laverne died of spinal meningitis and my Aunt Minnie had a heart attack and was unable to talk for the remainder of her life. This was very sad for me, because Laverne and I were very close and I had always loved Aunt Minnie.**

**In November 1940, my sister Mary K married Lloyd Nishwitz, a boy she had been going with for some time, and for a wedding present I took them on a memorable trip to Renfro Valley, Kentucky. We had been there once before with Warren Gerkey who had grown up in that area and had stayed overnight at Warren's grandmothers house which was not far from Renfro Valley. I remember that she fed us fried chicken, biscuits and gravy for breakfast.**

**In March 1941, I was still working for Green and Sawyer. We were now back in Piqua building a grease trap at the Val Decker Meat Packing Plant and again, cliff McQueen was the foreman on the job.**

**On the thirteenth of March, there was a very abrupt change in my life. I was now on the way to Fort Thomas, Kentucky, to be inducted in the Army to serve a year in the armed forces. I had been picked in the first draft call from Miami County. This indeed had to be the saddest day in my life up to this point. I am not ashamed to say that on the first night I laid in my bunk and sobbed like a baby. I was being forced to leave my home and all of the people I loved. Most of the four days I**



spent at Fort Thomas is like a foggy dream in my memory. I do remember getting sworn in, which was about the first thing they did to us after we had our physical. They also issued us one uniform so we could change from our civilian clothes. My mother and father came to see me on Sunday my third day and I'm sure my father was feeling as bad or maybe worse than I was. On Monday morning all the new recruits that had been inducted with me were loaded on a troop train heading west and not told what our destination would be. The train pulled off on a siding at Springfield, Missouri, and we were told to get out and stretch our legs. Finally, the next afternoon, we arrived at Camp Wolters, Texas, near Mineral Wells where we would take our basic training. This was a new camp and we would be the first recruits to be trained here. I was assigned to the 63rd Training Battalion. I was not accustomed to the obscene language heard in an Army barracks and I tried not to let it bother me and soon I learned to ignore it. I was very lonely and I missed all my family and friends back home, but I soon made some new friends and I worked hard and paid attention and I got along fine. On Memorial Day there was a parade in Mineral Wells and I got picked in a group of fifty out of three thousand soldiers to march in the parade. It made me feel real proud. My father and mother, along with Raymond and his wife, Thelma, drove down to see me while I was at Camp Wolters. It was at Camp Wolters that I realized how much I had learned in school I took an aptitude test and was second highest in the scoring in our group.

The basic training was over in thirteen weeks and the barracks where I slept started thinning out. It seemed like everyone was getting assigned to units except me. It was nearly three weeks after basic was over when most of us remaining were loaded on a convoy of trucks early on a Sunday morning and headed south at about 8:00 P.M. After what seemed like a long ride, we arrived at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. It seemed like a complete change of

atmosphere when we got off the trucks. Gone was the barrenness of the new camp and replaced by green grass and mature trees and the quietness was different too. The barracks were nearly deserted, of course, it was Sunday evening and most of the occupants were still in town. I was assigned to Company A, 23rd Infantry, one of the three infantry regiments of the Second Infantry Division. I was the only one that came from Camp Wolters to be assigned to this company. I was only there a few days when our entire company was put on post guard duty. This detail was about a six month occurrence. I was put on supernuman, which when explained to me meant that I was extra and wouldn't have to pull guard duty. To keep me busy my platoon sergeant told me to report: to the mess sergeant at the kitchen and he would put me to work. There is always something to do in the kitchen I was told. The mess sergeant pointed out some mormite cans to me and told me to clean them up. Mormite cans are five gallon thermos containers with lock on lids that are used to keep the food warm when the kitchen was operating in the field or on maneuvers. They didn't look like they had been cleaned since the last field trip. I was supplied with steel wool and soap and I sat outside the kitchen on the back step and went to work. I rubbed and scoured and polished them and they kept getting brighter and brighter. I'm sure they looked as good or even better than when they were new. I was still working diligently when the mess sergeant checked on me about three hours later. He looked at the cans and then he turned and looked at me and asked me the same question that Cliff McQueen had two and a half years before. The words were, "how would you like to have a steady job in the kitchen?" I think that's another time God smiled on me because I took the job and I can't think of any place I would have rather served my time while in the army than the kitchen. I made new friends again at Fort Sam, but I still had the longing for

**home and the people there and looked forward to when my year would be over.**

**During the sixteen months I spent at Fort Sam, we pulled two Louisiana maneuvers. It was during this time, because I was so lonely that I started to write poetry. Almost every letter I wrote home had a new poem in it. Two of them were printed in the church bulletins and one I wrote in memory of my good friend, Cliff McQueen, who had died since I came into the service.**

**My rate of pay while I was in basic was \$21 dollars a month and the fourth month it was raised to \$30 dollars. A month after I joined the 2nd Division, I made P.F.C. and it was raised to \$36 dollars. Three months later I was promoted to Technician 4th Class, which is the same rank as Sergeant and then my base pay was \$78 dollars a month.**

**A great blow came to us on December the 7th when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Charles Crawford, a friend of mine from home who was stationed at Dodd Field had stopped in and he and I went into San Antonio to spend our Sunday. Whenever we went into town together we would always stop at our favorite malt shop as soon as we got off the bus and then we would go to a movie. When we came out of the Majestic Theater that day, everyone seemed very excited. Two M.P.'s came up to us and told us what had happened and suggested that we return to our units right away and change from our civilian clothes to our uniforms. It took a little while for the reality of what had happened to sink in but when it finally did, I knew that the year that would have been over in March would be surely extended. It left me as it did everyone with a very sad feeling. Once during 1942, President Roosevelt came and reviewed our troops on the parade grounds at Fort Sam. The bands played and we all had to stand at attention as he was driven by in a limousine.**

**Late in November, 1942, our division packed up and we moved by train to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, where we would get some ski training and pull winter maneuvers in the Ottawa National Park in northern Michigan. There we would live out doors in temperatures as low as 42 degrees below zero, testing new winter clothes and sleeping bags and eating mountain rations which were also new. While at Camp McCoy, I was close enough to Ohio that I could go home on a three day pass which I did a number of times. I would get on a Milwaukee road train at camp, ride to Chicago, and transfer to the Pennsylvania station. There was a train leaving every hour going east on the main line to New York and I would get off in Lima, where my father would pick me up or I would hitchhike home. Once I stood up all the way to Chicago from Camp McCoy because the trains were always crowded. Once going back to Chicago, I rode the famous Trailblazer which had stopped in Lima unexpectedly. The conductor said the train was full, but he let me ride in the observation car.**

**Because I was a cook and sort of had an in with our first sergeant who was from Bellefontaine, Ohio, I believed I received more than my share of passes. Once he gave me a one day pass and a weekend pass when there were no three day passes available.**

**After nine months of intensive training at Camp McCoy we were on the move again. This time we were told we were going overseas. Before we left Camp McCoy, everyone in our regiment had to make a forced march of twenty five miles carrying a full field pack and our rifle. This included even the cooks who never had to fall out for drill. We started this march in the evening and it continued all through the night. Every hour there was a ten minute break when you could sit down on the side of the road and rest. Our mess sergeant, Homer Rhodes from Tyrone, Pennsylvania, made the march in a jeep as he brought us coffee twice through the night. On the last two breaks I**

**didn't set down, because I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to get up again. There were a few that fell out of the column and had to be picked up by trucks, but I was determined to make it. Another one of the cooks was having a lot of trouble because of sore feet and was tempted, but I talked him out of it and ended up carrying his rifle for him the last hour. The march lasted ten hours and when we got back just to prove to the moaners and groaners that I was still in good shape, I asked for a pass and went to La Crosse. Truthfully, I was really hurting but I wouldn't admit it.**

**When we left Camp McCoy our train headed east to Chicago. There was lots of switching and changing tracks in the railroad yards there, and soon after- we started on east, I realized we were in northern Ohio. I looked longingly out the window of the train when we crossed State Route 109 just thirteen miles south of Malinta. Two days later after traveling through some beautiful country in upper New York, the train arrived at our destination, Camp Shanks, which was about an hour from New York City. There we were checked to make sure we had all our equipment and our shot records were up to date. When everything was done we were able to get a twelve hour pass into New York City. Six of us from the kitchen crew rode**

**the train to where we got the Weehawken Ferry across to the end of 42nd Street. That was the widest street I had ever seen. We walked a few blocks and got on a subway and rode to 126th Avenue and got off and ate spaghetti at an Italian restaurant. I went into a drugstore and bought some stationery and wrote a note home to my parents telling them they would be surprised when they heard from me the next time and nothing else. We then rode the subway back and ended up at Times Square and walked around there until midnight. As I remember, the wide streets were nearly deserted and New York at that time was**

**under dim out regulations. We got back to Camp Shanks at 2:00 A.M. on my first and only trip to New York City.**

**The next night we boarded trucks along with our packs and barracks bags and were taken to the Brooklyn Navy Yards where we walked up the gang plank of the Thomas H. Barry. It was dark when we boarded the ship and I don't remember where I slept, but when I woke up we were out to sea and in all directions there was nothing but ships.**

**They told us later that this was the largest convoy ever to cross at one time. There were 102 ships including an aircraft carrier and some destroyers. There were nearly 7000 soldiers on our ship and our company was split up. Half on "A" deck and the other half seven tiers down in "G" deck. Every twenty four hours we were supposed to switch positions. I went down to "G" deck on the second day and everybody in the compartment was sea sick and it was a stinking mess. I knew if I would stay there I would get sick too, so I sneaked back up on "A" deck and stayed there for the rest of the trip. I went down to the dining room which was on "D" deck only one time. After you went through a line and picked up your tray of food you had to stand up to eat at bar height tables and the trays had the tendency to slide back and forth as the ship rocked. I made the rest of the trip living on, candy bars purchased at the ship's store.**

**At the end of the tenth day the ships around us had all disappeared and on the eleventh day we landed in Belfast, Northern Ireland. It was September 1943. We were bivouacked in quonset huts right on the Irish free state border near the village of Armagh.**

**My brother Donald had gone in the Army a year and a half after I did and had beat me overseas by three months. He was stationed in England and somehow managed to find out where I was. He got a five day pass and came to Northern Ireland. I got a call to report to the orderly room one day and there he stood. It was really a pleasant**

**surprise. As yet there had been no passes given since we had arrived, but the 1st Sergeant talked to the Captain and I was issued a three day pass so I could go back to Belfast with Donald. I will never forget walking down a street in Belfast and meeting one of Donald's classmates he had gone to school with back in Ohio. Neither knew the other was in the Army.**

**Six months later we were on the move again and I got to go on the advance detail to our new quarters. We crossed from Belfast by ferry to northern Scotland with a small convoy of vehicles and I drove a jeep down through Scotland to Pembroke Dock Wales. The rest of the troops didn't arrive until three days later. It was now the first part of May and my stay here proved to be a short one. During my Army career, it seemed to me like I got a lot of good breaks and for a long time I thought it was because the 1st Sergeant was a draftee and was from Ohio, but they kept happening even after he left.**

**Another one of these came the last of May when I left the company again along with our kitchen truck and field kitchen and went to Bournemouth England to await the invasion. Bournemouth was a beautiful resort city on the coast with lot of sandy beaches that were all fenced off and mined. They were patrolled by guards day and night. There were many new hotels there but I stayed on the fifth floor of one of the older ones. My only duties there were to check the kitchen truck daily. The rest of the time I spent wandering around the area sightseeing. Every night we would have air raid alerts and we had been given orders to head for an air raid shelter whenever the sirens began to blow. One night somebody came into my room and shook me and I could hear the sirens. I got up and looked down the hall which was empty and I decided to stay in my room. In a few minutes, I heard some close rumblings and got a little nervous and was glad when the all clear sounded. After that I always headed for the shelter.**

**On the sixth of June, all the kitchen trucks along with all the personnel were moved to South Hampton and loaded on liberty ships in the harbor. The invasion was in full swing then and although we heard no news, we knew it was going on because of all the masses of air craft that was moving overhead. Five days later we crossed the channel and our vehicles were unloaded by the ships cranes onto L.S.T's. I drove a jeep from one of them down a ramp with the water over the floor boards, up on to beach and then up the big hill to the top of Omaha Beach. When I caught up with the company two days later, they were dug in at St. George De Elle at the bottom of the famous hill 192. I could write hundreds of pages about my experiences in combat, but I am going to skip over a lot of them and maybe at some future date I will write about them. My friends back home had always been faithful about writing letters to me and more so since I had been overseas. Every time we had mail call I would get several letters and sometimes I would feel guilty and sorry for those who didn't get any. All the spare time that I could find I spent answering the letters and I tried to write to my parents every day although sometimes I mailed them two and three at a time. While I was in Ireland I had received a round robin letter from my friends at the church and I answered all of them. One person in the group I had only seen once and that's when I was home on furlough and had sang with the choir as I always did. She was a nurse at the Piqua Hospital and her name was Sarah Richards. I had written to her since her name had been on the round robin letter and I got a letter from her in return. I answered that letter and soon I was writing to her nearly every day and she the same to me. Now when it came to girls I was still just as bashful as I had always been, but it seemed like I could write down my feelings without any difficulty. I just got tongue tied when I tried to express them verbally. I think one reason Sarah became interested in me was because of the poems I had written,**



**because one of her loves was poetry and another was music. Anyway her letters gave me great hope and I dreamed of the day when the war would end and I could go home to be with her. Our division battled its way through the hedge rows of Normandy at a very costly price in casualties. Our Battalion Commander, Colonel William Humphries was killed, our Company Commander Captain Kay K Cowan was wounded and Sergeant Ivory our first sergeant was also wounded. The entire 3rd Platoon of our company had been captured before I got to the company with the kitchen. With new replacements coming in almost daily, the 2nd Division moved on steadily through the treacherous hedge rows country and finally, on August the 12th, the last German resistance in Normandy was crushed.**

**Patton had cut off and isolated the city of Brest in his race across France with his tanks and the 2nd Division, along with the 29th Division, was sent there to capture the city. The attack started on the 21st of August and I don't think I shall ever forget that day. Sometime I'll write down the account of it as I remember it. After much hard fighting and many casualties, the Germans finally came out of their rock mountain and surrendered on the 18th of September.**

**Ever since I had brought the kitchen in and we started cooking the meals it was always my job to take the food up to the company in the marmite cans and feed them while we were in battle. We would load everything in a trailer behind a jeep and it was up to the driver and. I to get the food to them. Homer Rhodes, our mess sergeant, had a fear of doing this and told me if I would take the chow up he would always see that it was prepared and ready to go. There was always pots and pans to wash and I never did that, but Homer did. I still worked hard back at the kitchen. Once I went for forty eight hours with no sleep. I really didn't mind taking the food up to the front. I got to know the officers and men a lot better. One two occasions I got stranded all**

**night, because it wasn't safe to go through open country with a jeep in day light. We had a few frightening things happen on some of the trips.**

**When Brest fell it seemed like the war was over because we were a long way from the front lines and the fighting. It didn't take long for us to get back to reality. On the 29th of September as we headed back to the war our rain stopped in Paris and civilians ran alongside handing fresh baked bread through the windows to us. By October the 4th we were dug in along the Siegfried line. There we sat kind of dormant for over a month, with only a few probing patrols seeing any action. On the 12th of December, we were relieved by the 99th Division who had never been in combat and they took over all our positions. We were moved to an area in the rear and the rumor was that our regiment was in corps reserve. If this was true, it meant that some part of the 1st Army was in attack. All day on the 15th of December we watched the V-1 self propelled German buzz bombs go over our heads making their way towards the coast. There had to be about one every fifteen minutes. Sometimes, before one was out of sight, you could hear another one coming and they were just above the tree tops. One actually did hit the tree tops about a half mile from us and bared a large area on the hillside.**

**It was turning cold and we had no shelter or sleeping bags, so four of us shared our blankets and bedded down on the ground together that night to try to keep warm. The next morning our blankets were covered with snow and we had pulled the blankets off of Steve Kachut, who was one of the cooks on my shift and he was covered with snow too. The next afternoon we were told to load up our kitchen truck and get ready to move out. It was the 16th of December and little did we know what was in store for us during the next few hours. It was still snowing and after dark when our convoy finally**

**started moving. We would move a little ways and then stop. This went on all night and we were huddled in the kitchen truck wrapped in our blankets trying to keep warm. For some reason, we hadn't been issued any winter clothing yet. We had been sitting in one spot for what seemed a long time and nobody seemed to know what was going on. Just before daylight on the morning of the 17th, all hell broke loose. Shells started landing all around us. One hit the road a few feet behind our truck and Steve Kachut, who was sitting next to the tailgate, doubled up moaning. The rest of us bailed out of the truck and got Steve out on the side of the road and we were sure he was dying. There was an ambulance in the convoy a few vehicles behind us, so we carried Steve back and put him in it and that's the last we saw or heard of him until after the war ended. When it began to break daylight, we could see that we were on the edge of a small town and our battalion S-4 Officer, Lt. Ball finally got the drivers to move the convoy off the road and scatter the vehicles around the town. All this time shells were still falling around us. I don't remember cooking breakfast that morning, but at noon I cooked hot dogs but I could only find a few people to feed them to. The whole day was like a nightmare. The town we were in was in kind of a bowl and German tanks were on the hills around us firing point blank at anything that moved. If it hadn't been for the P47's coming in right over us and releasing their bombs so they fell only a few hundred yards outside of our perimeter, we could have never kept the tanks from getting to us. In the afternoon we found a house that had a basement that was built like a pill box even to a concrete ceiling. We unloaded our field ranges from the kitchen truck into the main floor of the house. We had to do this in quick moves because there was a tank on the hill above us. We had to be under observation from it, because every time we would dash outside to carry something in we would see a muzzle flash and hear a shell coming. There was a collie dog there at the house and**

every time he would take off for the basement we were right behind him, because it was a sure thing there was a shell on the way. I had given up hope of ever getting out of this mess and I think most of the others felt the same way. After dark things quieted down a little. There was still rifle and machine gun fire around our perimeter but the shells had stopped coming. About 2:00 A.M. Lt. Ball came by and told us to load up that we were getting out of there. We reloaded our equipment in the truck using no lights because we didn't know if our unfriendly tank was still up there or not. We had to leave our kitchen trailer because all the tires were flat from the shelling. All my personal belongings were in it, but at that particular time that didn't seem very important. As soon as we were loaded we were guided to where the convoy was lining up. It was very dark and I couldn't tell where we were in regards to the length of the convoy, but it seemed to me that our vehicles would be heading in the direction of the tank that had been harassing us. The convoy didn't move. More trucks lined up behind us and we just sat there. All I could think of was when daylight came we would be sitting ducks for those tanks.

In a short time, everyone was out of the trucks milling around trying to find out what the holdup was. Our truck driver, Red Delano, and our supply sergeant and former cook took off walking up the column to get the answer. A little while later someone came running back yelling for anyone who could drive to jump in and get these trucks moving. Red and Gilbert had gone ahead and found out that we were pinned down by small arms fire. They continued on and discovered that our own 38th Infantry was firing at us thinking it was a German column. It was still touchy getting out of there. The sides of the roads were heavily mined and the drivers were warned to stay in the middle of the road. The tail end of the convoy did get captured by the Germans that night. We had been completely surrounded for twenty

**four hours and for me this was the most frightening time I had during the war.**

**There is much more I could write about that happened the following days. In fact almost every day was a story in itself and if anyone is interested someday I will sit down and tell some of them.**

**Early in the morning of March 12th, in fact it was 1:30 in the morning we pulled into the town of Zinzig on the Rhine River. All during the day, we had met hundreds of German soldiers walking towards us with no weapons and no guards. When we would get close to them they would raise their hands above their head and just keep walking. We had moved almost thirty miles since the morning before and we were tired and we decided to find a house to sleep in. In the first place we tried, there was a woman and a young girl and they were really scared and crying so we left to find another one. We finally found one right on the river that was empty and the rest of the night we got to sleep on soft feather ticks. The next morning we moved our field kitchen inside the house where it would be more comfortable than cooking on the truck. A short time later, a very angry German civilian came storming in through the back door screaming at us to vacate the place. We couldn't understand the German language, but we knew what he meant. It seems as if we had moved into the Rurghermelster's house and he was very unhappy about this. My good departed friend Jesse Weatherholt, was a little excitable too. He pulled out a pistol and waved it in the angry mans face and uttered some loud words that aren't printable, but the Burgermeister seemed to know what they meant and took his departure and we never saw him again. That morning we watched the engineers lay a pontoon bridge across the Rhine River under the protection of a smoke screen. We only stayed in Zinzig one day and then we were moved a few miles up the highway where our entire company was billeted in a hotel.**

**From there we had a clear view of the famous Remagen Bridge that our engineers had captured before the Germans were able to blow it up. We had a ring side seat watching German planes coming in at low altitude trying to bomb it, but none of their bombs found their target. I saw two of our P38 fighter planes collide in mid air over the bridge. Both of the pilots parachuted to safety.**

**It was there that another good thing happened to me. I was given a seven day furlough to London. The furlough was anywhere to the British Isles, but I went to London. As far as I know, it was the only furlough given to anyone in our company while we were in combat. The seven days didn't start until I got off the ship in England. With the slow travel time back and forth and the stop at a French coastal village for a haircut, clean clothes and to exchange my money to pounds, I was gone from the company for thirty days. I spent all seven days in London sightseeing.**

**When I caught back up with the company, they were already past Leipzig. On May the 7th we met the Russians in Czechoslovakia. We had made contact with them once before in April, but this time the war was over. We had traveled 1660 miles coming across Europe and had paid dearly for it. Nearly 3000 men had filtered through our company since Normandy and many of my friends were killed in action, some were captured and many more wounded. When the war ended we were near Pilzen, Czechoslovakia, and there were only nine of us left out of the original company. I felt I was very lucky to be one of the nine. We stayed in Czechoslovakia about seven weeks and part of that time was in Pilzen where we lived in a hotel and had movies to go to. We moved back to Reims, France, in July by train. It took us nearly five days. There was a big traffic jam at the Rhine River where all the bridges had been destroyed and our train crossed on a pontoon bridge.**

**At Reims I was detached from my company for the first time since I was assigned to it over four years before. I had turned down three promotions and a chance to go to officers training school just so I could stay with my friends, but now they were all gone and I had enough points to go home whenever the transportation was available. The time finally came in September when I boarded a liberty ship in Antwerp, Belgium, with seventy other homeward bound soldiers for our seventeen day voyage home. We ate K rations for the entire trip, because there was no kitchen on the ship and we had all the free Coca Cola we wanted to drink and music to listen to. I had a daily diary I had kept all through combat and in my excitement to come home I had left it on a shelf above my bunk in Antwerp. I have always been sorry about that, because the records would have been very valuable and special to me. The Josiah Bartlett, the ship I was on, arrived in Boston Harbor on the 2nd of October and after staying over night there I was on a train to Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, where I was given a five day furlough to go home until my papers caught up with me. I absolutely remember nothing about those five days.**

**I do remember being back at Indiantown. Gap on the 8th of October in a monstrous warehouse looking for my barracks bag in a pile that looked like there was a million others in it. I wasn't alone. There were a lot of other guys just like me looking for their bags. Each one of us would call out our own name, and as soon as somebody would spot the bag, he would sound off. It seemed ages before mine turned up. We then had to go turn everything in that was issued to us, except the uniform of the season which we were given to wear home. I still have mine. We were also given a chance to join the reserves which I refused. After serving four years, seven months and six days on October the 9th, 1945 I was given my discharge. I had five campaign ribbons, the Good Conduct Medal, the American Defense Service Medal and the European African Middle Eastern Service Medal with**

**five Bronze Stars and also the Combat Infantry Badge and many memories. I was given my back pay and \$100 dollars of the \$300 dollars mustering out pay that was due to me and \$26.45 travel pay. I was once again a civilian and it was a good feeling. I stopped off in Tyrone, Pennsylvania, and visited a few hours on my way home with Homer Rhodes, who had gotten home about two weeks ahead of me.**

**I was really disoriented when I got back home. It seemed like the whole world had changed while I was away. Wages and prices had almost tripled and it was impossible to get a lot of things. I had changed too, probably more so than the things I came back to. Except for my old habit of bashfulness, which seemed to be forever with me, I was altogether a different person. I was also very much in love and it seemed like the person I loved the most was that hardest person to tell about it. It was a very trying time for me.**

**I didn't know what kind of a job I wanted to look for and my father suggested that I go to Troy and put an application in at Hobart's where he was now working. I filled out an application, but I was told there were no jobs available at that time. I was still wearing my uniform when I went to get a haircut from my good friend Bill Campbell, whom I had known for years. The customer in the barber chair he was working on noticed my 2nd Division insignia on my Eisenhower jacket and started asking me questions. He then told me that his uncle had served with the 2nd in World War One and after it was over, he had spent a summer with him at an Army post. He then asked me what I was planning to do now that I was home. I told him I really didn't know because I had not found a job yet. Then he said to me, "why don't you go down and see my personnel manager and tell him I said to put you to work." I had no idea who the man was and when he left I asked Bill. He looked at me as if I should know and told me it was W.W. Woods who owned the Wood Shovel and Tool**



**Company in Piqua just two blocks from where I lived. Then I remembered he was one of the richest men in Piqua and I had delivered his papers many years before.**

**The personnel manager did put me on the payroll, but I really didn't feel like I had a job. The classification I was getting paid for was Apprentice Pattern Maker. There was no pattern maker to tell me what I was supposed to do, but they did have a pattern shop that didn't look like it had been used for a long time. I spent a few days cleaning and straightening up and admiring all the professional woodworking machinery in it. When I would go home at night, I would describe to my father what the machinery looked like and he would tell me what it was and what it was for. After I got the shop all straightened up, I did odd carpenter jobs around the plant. I never really had a boss to tell me what to do. If anyone in the office could think of something, I would go do it. I built my first stairway there. I built an enclosure around a sprinkler valve that was in an unheated part of the plant and insulated it so it wouldn't freeze. Sometimes I would just walk around through the plant with a hammer in my pocket and a rule in my hand which made the time go by very slowly. Six weeks after I started working there, the plant went out on a strike. I didn't belong to the union, but it wasn't safe for me to work, because it turned out to be a very violent affair. I was called back to put plywood on some of the doors that the glass had been broken out, but that's all I did until the strike was over. W.W. Woods took off and went to Florida and left word that when they were ready to go back to work he would return. That didn't help matters a bit. They even hung him in effigy in front of the office. The strike lasted 108 days and there were hundreds of the small 8 x 10 shop windows broken out and for the remaining time I worked there, I knew what I was doing. It took me almost six weeks to replace all the glass and after that was done I decided to quit and go into business for myself.**

**I had fallen in love with the machinery in the pattern shop and I decided that getting some for myself and starting a little cabinet shop was just what I wanted. With the help of the Purchasing Agent from Wood Shovel, Ed Nipher, who had become a good friend, I was able to locate some surplus government woodworking tools and I set up a complete shop in a building in the rear of the house on Roosevelt Avenue. I left it all there for my father a year later. All this time my courtship with Sarah had been going no place. I know it was all my fault. I would pick her up on Thursday nights and take her to choir practice and go to church with her on Sundays and think about her all the time, but I could not force myself to tell her how I felt when I was with her. To make things worse she had a girl friend she worked with, who tried her best to keep us apart. Just before Christmas in 1946, I was really depressed. I was twenty eight years old and it seemed like my whole world was falling apart. I had thought about doing many things. One of them was to just take off and go to Alaska where I had always wanted to go, but I just couldn't make up my mind. Two days before Christmas, I was home alone and I prayed to God to help me get my life straightened out. Once again, He smiled on me and answered my prayer. The phone rang and it was Sarah. She asked me if I would like to go home to West Manchester with her for Christmas. That day changed the rest of my life. From then on, I was able to tell her how I felt and once again I had hope for the future. We were engaged just before Easter and in May I got a G.I. loan and started building a new house on a lot we had bought in Eaton, Ohio, where her father had his real estate office and only twelve miles from West Manchester. All of this made my father very unhappy and for many years he blamed Sarah for this and that made all of us a lot of unhappiness. When I first started working on our house in Eaton I met Wilbur Cook, who was in light excavating and gravel hauling business. Through the years he and his wife, Mildred would become the closet**

friends Sarah and I ever had outside of our own family. Wilbur helped me a lot while I was working on the house. For about two months I drove the fifty miles from Piqua to Eaton and back every day except on Sundays when we either went to church in Piqua or West Manchester. During that time, Sarah and I sang a couple of duets at church. She also showed me a book where she had copied down every poem I had written while I was in the Army. By July the house was coming along on schedule, but I had lost over thirty pounds since I had started working on it and Sarah talked me into staying at her parents home in West Manchester for the remainder of the time it took to finish it. That caused more friction between my father and me.

By the 20th of August in 1947, our wedding day, the house was completed. Also I had built a 24 x 40 shop and that was all done too. We were married in the United Brethern Church in Piqua and Sarah's Uncle Herbert, a Church of the Brethern minister from Manchester, Indiana conducted the services. My brother Donald was my best man and Sarah's sister, Edna Mae Thompson, was the matron of honor. My mother came to the wedding, but my father refused to come claiming he was sick. I felt bad about that for a long time. It took many years before things really got back to normal between us.

We spent the first night of our honeymoon in Jackson, Michigan. It was late in the afternoon when we had left Piqua and we drove through a bad storm and it was 11:00 P.M. when we got to Jackson. I will never forget the place where we stayed. It was a small cabin in back of a store and it had an outside toilet. For our dinner that night, we bought a loaf of bread and some ham, and made sandwiches and drank a bottle of pop. I had wanted Sarah to see the Cascades at Jackson which I thought were so beautiful. The next day we drove to Lakeside, near Port Clinton, Ohio, on Lake Erie. Sarah had been there before on vacation and had made reservations for us to stay for five

**days. Sarah's mother and father came to visit us one day during the time we were there and they brought my fishing pole along so I could fish off the long pier at Lakeside. We left there and drove to Niagara Falls and spent three days sightseeing in that area. It was a beautiful, memorable honeymoon.**

**Our new home in Eaton was ready to move into when we returned. Sarah got a job at Reed Memorial Hospital in Richmond, Indiana, which was fifteen miles away and I had my cabinet shop at home. I found plenty of work to keep me busy.**

**The next year July 1st, 1948, our first son, Richard Kent, was born and Sarah quit working until after Thomas Laverne was born in August 1950. Daniel waited until May 1953 to show up and Carol, our first daughter was born in June 1954. Our house only had two bedrooms and I had to hurry and put on an addition to make room for everyone.**

**We had gone back to Lakeside each year in August since we had been married always trying to be there on our wedding anniversary. In September 1951, I made a fishing trip to northern Minnesota with a friend of mine and fell in love with its lakes and forests. In 1952, we took our first vacation to Grand Rapids, Minnesota. As usual, it was in August. It was in our plans to make it an annual occurrence.**

**In 1954, my father bought a lot right next to us and built a new home on it. I helped him build his house and get moved and he wanted to work with me. I tried my best to make things work out, but it proved to be impossible. Sarah's father was hearing stories from some of his friends that my father was telling everyone he talked to that we were doing all sorts of negative things and it caused a lot of friction between both of our families. We both liked Minnesota and we talked about it for a long time before we wrote a letter to the Chamber of Commerce in Grand Rapids. We received a nice letter back telling us**

**that as a nurse she would have no problem getting a job at the hospital and there was an unlimited amount of cabinet work and carpenter work available. They invited us to come and tour the area. So in April 1955, leaving all four of the children with Sarah's mother and telling no one where or why we were going, we drove to Grand Rapids. We had gotten a letter from a real estate dealer telling us about a forty acre plot for sale on the corner of Route 169 and the Mishawaka Road. We turned the corner and like a magnet was drawing us, drove down the gravel road to Pokegama Lake. There we saw a for sale sign on a house. The same real estate dealer that had written about the acreage had the listing so we contacted him and looked at the house, but mostly the lake, and made a down payment on the property. The selling price was \$7500.00. We were both very excited and happy about the decision we had made. When my father found out what we had done he was very unhappy and never spoke to us for the remainder of the time that we lived in Eaton.**

**It took us three months to get everything in order and find a buyer for our property in Eaton and get ready to move. I had a new 1955 1-1/2 ton Dodge stake truck and we loaded that and our boat full. Wilbur and Mildred and their daughter, Mary Ella, went with us. Wilbur and I alternated driving the truck and the car. It was a memorable trip. It was the last week in July and after we got the furniture unloaded we spent three days relaxing and fishing. We then took both the truck and the car back to Ohio for our final load.**

**Sarah's sister-in-law came along on the last trip to help her drive and take care of the kids. Sarah's mother had babysat them when we made the first trip. Bessie and Sarah drove the car and I drove the truck. We arrived on Tom's birthday, the 29th of August, 1955. I have always been happy that we made this move. I know of no better place we could have raised a family and I think everyone in the family**

**agrees with me on this point. On December the 4th, Roger was born and this was a real surprise to Sarah's parents, who had no idea that she was pregnant. While Sarah was in the hospital to have the baby, the director of nurses asked her if she would consider coming to work in the future. She was all excited about this because there was nothing she liked better. Wilbur, Mildred and Mary Ella came to Duluth on the train and spent Christmas with us that year and Wilbur always talked about breaking icicles off the roof to use in our drinks and listening to the radio announcer come in the morning and say, "good morning, it's 32 degrees below zero."**

**Sarah did go to work in the spring and I started to build my shop. Before it was finished I had a job that lasted all summer and from then on it was continuous. It was like a beautiful dream living on the lake and seeing the sunsets and know it was going to still be there when you looked the next morning.**

**In the summer of 1956, Sarah's parents were on their way to Minnesota to spend a few days with us and her mother had a heart attack in Baraboo, Wisconsin, and died there. That was a terrible blow to Sarah because she loved her mother very much and they always had been so close. I don't think Sarah ever got over the death of her mother.**

**On the 30th of December, 1957, our daughter, Nancy, was born and that completed our family. Sarah went back to work after that and worked until she retired in October 1982.**

**All through the years while the children were growing up we never missed our annual trips back to Ohio. Our home away from home there was at Nick and Edna Mae's, Sarah's sister and brother-in-law. We always managed to get together with Wilbur and Mildred until they moved to Florida. On one of these trips in the early 60's, we stopped to see my parents and smoothed things out with them and after that**

**our trips were always planned so we could be there on December the 6th, my mother's birthday. Sarah's father died in 1970. He was suffering with Alzheimers disease and had been in a nursing home. On the trip home for the funeral, we stopped to see my parents and I offered to buy them airplane tickets to Duluth if they wanted to come visit us. They had never been in a plane before, but they took me up on it and came in 1971 and again in 1973. I was riding a motorcycle in the Shrine Cycle Patrol at that time and my father watched me ride in a couple of parades and I knew he was proud of me. He always would go with me in the truck to pick up and deliver material and helped me on some repair work on some of the properties we owned. He helped me put the forms in for the footing for the Elizabeth Lake House in 1973 before he went back home and wrote me a letter later and said he wanted to come back up and help me build the house. In September, he had a heart attack and died on the 18th, the same day our first grandson, Patrick was born. He was the oldest of his family and watched them all die before him. My Uncle Arthur and Aunt Florence had both died on the same day. My father had made all his own funeral arrangements even to picking the songs that were sung at his funeral.**

**In 1972, a customer and friend asked me if I would like to go fishing in Canada for lake trout with him. Fay Loveland picked me up early one morning and took me to Happy Landing Lodge on Pipestone Lake and that started a trend that has gone on for nearly nineteen years. Pay and I have been on many fishing trips together through those years. One of them in 1973 was a fly in trip from Nestor Falls to the Northwest Territories. would go back there two years later with another group. The relationship that my family has had with Larry, Jo Ann, Greg and Shari, operators of Happy Landing, and the time we spent with them have been some of the happiest days of our lives.**

**The cabinet shop I had started in 1956 had grown into a full fledged lumber yard with the help of all the children as they were growing up. Roger was driving the forklift by the time he was thirteen years old. In 1976, when they were all out of high school and four of them already married, we sold the lumberyard to Tom and built our new house on the twenty acres we had purchased previously on the Airport road. All through the years we had never missed going somewhere on a vacation. While the children were growing up it was always Ohio and after that it was to Florida to visit other friends and relatives who lived there. I went to visit my friends Julian Aderman and his wife, Isabel, both from my graduating class. We even made two trips to Key West. We also made a few trips west to Arizona, Texas and California. In 1979, we took a Caribbean cruise that took us as far as South America. The day after Christmas in 1983, we went to Minneapolis and got on a flight that took us to Hawaii on**

**a fourteen day guided tour all planned and paid for by our children. Since Sarah had retired in 1982, I could see the changes taking place as the terrible disease of Alzheimers was slowly beginning to take her away from us. We did get to make two or three trips together after Hawaii, but she didn't remember them and for that reason they were not the same for me. In 1986, Dan and Ruth took care of Sarah and I was able to do something that I had wanted to do all my life. I finally got the chance to go to Alaska.**

**I know that no persons see themselves as others see them but in the preceding pages I have written down a few of experiences of happiness and sorrows as I remember them. I hope that someday one of my offsprings will go back and fill in the blanks of the many things I have left out, since they have been old enough to have a memory. Following are some of the philosophies I have tried to build my life around and live by:**



**To treat people around me the way I like to be treated. Whatever you set out to do, do it the best you know how and you will never have to be ashamed and can step back and look and be proud of what you see.**

**Save for tomorrow, but live for today because some day you will have no tomorrow.**

**Always be punctual. Time is as valuable to others as it is to you and once it is gone it is gone forever.**

**Train yourself to have patience and work hard at what you do and eventually good things will come to you.**

**Have faith and trust other people until they give you cause not to trust them.**

**Always pull your share of the load and pay your share of the way.**

**Don't hesitate to let the people you love know about it now for tomorrow may be too late. This is something I feel I learned too late in life.**

**In summing up my life after writing this and renewing a lot of memories, I can say that it has been a full and happy one. I have gotten to do many things and go many places that were far beyond my wildest fantasies. Through the years I made hundreds of very special friends, many who are gone now. Like my Army buddies whose number grows less and less every year. Wilbur and Mildred are both gone and Jo Ann from Happy Landing who we loved so much.**

**Then there is Sarah, my beloved. Of all the times that God smiled on me this was the greatest. He gave me the privilege of sharing over forty one years of my life with her. The most wonderful and caring person I have ever or will ever know. She was dedicated to her life's work as a nurse and yet she never once neglected her own family. I**

**cannot put into words how much I miss her and I will forever treasure the memories she left for me. They are so precious.**

**I keep trying to make new friends, but they can in no way fill the gaps left by the departed ones. I hope that I will have left something in this world that is good for people to remember me by. One thing sure, I don't want to be the last leaf upon the tree. It would just be too lonely.**