

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF
ROBERT LYDE CHRISTENSEN

DECENDANT OF SAMUEL FULLER
OF MAYFLOWER FAME



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Preface

This book has been a long time goal. It's my prayer that my children and grandchildren will learn a few lessons in life that have been learned with much heartache, headache, anguish and pain. Somewhere within these pages is a dear lesson that I sincerely hope will not fall on a closed mind.

There is also some interesting history of your parents and grandparents and the strife in their lives. What strife, you say? Don't think the generation of your parents and grandparents was all a bed of roses and happy times. Just as our parents let us know of the trials and tribulations in their lives, this book will let you know more about ours.

The trials and tribulations we have endured, and when I say we, I mean my wife and sweetheart Veronica and I, seemed hard at the time. However, we know that each generation had entirely different problems. For instance: In my day I was grounded (denied a privilege or freedom) for driving some place I shouldn't, or coming home later than an agreed on time. In my father's time he was grounded for shooting an arrow from an Indian bow he had traded for. He shot it almost straight up. It came down pretty straight too, the problem was it stuck right in his brothers' horses back, injuring the horse. Your grandmother Laretha Croff, was grounded after an incident when she was riding in a horse drawn wagon on the way to a young women's activity. The young men were invited too. Your grandfather Ben Croff and other boys rode along side on their saddle horses. Laretha's long hair was in braids and as the horses ran, Laretha's hair was just flying out behind her. Ben thought it made a fine target, so he drew his pistol and shot the end of the braid off. Not only was she grounded, but Ben was in big trouble too. But because Ben was only recently a member of the community and had been living and traveling on his own coming up from Mexico, he was soon forgiven. These are the things kids did at the turn of the century.

The things my generation had to contend with were different again. Fast cars, beer, tobacco, immodest dress, morality and more disrespect of parents. Now we are told that you young people today live in the most dangerous of times. These are the latter days, and Satan is working overtime. He does not want you young folks to make it to the temple, or marry well in the temple and become a celestial family. He will tempt you in all the weak points, which he knows. He, as the father of all lies and fear wants to chain you in sin and have control over you.

It is therefore my prayer that somewhere within this book each of you may find answers concerning the things your progenitors have done. Some were proud, too proud to repent. Some were vain, to a point where vanity ruined their lives. Some repented to a point, then slipped back into sin, just because of weakness, so-called personal pleasure. Inactivity etc.

I further want you to know I have a strong testimony of the Gospel. I know beyond a shadow of any doubt that this is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, just as he organized in the early days of his ministry. I know the Book of Mormon is the true record of the people that the Lord sent to the America's. My experiences during my calling as a Bishop confirmed this over and over again. I was given knowledge beyond my own ability to help others, to council families and the youth. I felt that mantle as it was lifted upon my release. I missed it, I felt alone and unsure of my self as I learned to rely on my own knowledge.

Finally, beware of sin, in any form or in any degree. Repent fully!! What do I mean by that? Consider the man who wanted to repent. He wanted to fully repent. He had sinned for so long he could not remember all the people he had wronged, or hurt with little lies or dishonest dealing. He didn't know how to recall the sins and was about to just forget it. He had a dream. In the dream he approached a group of angry people. They had one poor man down and were hurting him. As he moved closer, he could see they were about to drive a nail into his hand. He hollered and screamed for them to stop. Then he could see that it was the Savior that they were doing this to. He fought and clawed his way closer, he had to stop this terrible thing. Then as he got in close enough to grab at the man that held the nail against the Savior's hand and held the mallet high ready to swing, he could see the mans face clearly. He realized then that it was him he was looking at! He awoke in agony drenched in sweat and tears.

He knew he must pray for the Lord to give him recall. To let him remember all the little sins he was about to just ignore. He did remember them one by one. They all came back to him and he was able to repent of every one. He was able to help others that lacked the knowledge also. When I think that when we sin, and ignore the sin, we are helping to drive the nails into our Savior's hands and feet, and that is a frightening thing to me.

Those of you with children who are wayward, remember this. If you have trained them in their youth, i.e., taken them to church, primary classes, family home evenings, etc. If they never come back to the Gospel, the sin is on their heads. But if you fail to teach your children, or keep them out of church and deny them the Gospel because of your own weakness and desires, then the sins rest on the heads of the parents.

Long after the desire for what ever it was that kept you from taking your children to church has passed, the agony of your problem children, children with no foundation in the Gospel, who only learn what they know from non members and on the street or in schools were denied their chance at becoming a priesthood holder or a select lady in the Gospel and you will suffer.

Thank you for taking the time to read this book. I pray that you will be the better for it. I know you will know me better.
In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Chapter 1

The Early Years

My name is Robert Lyde Christensen and I was born on March 1st. 1930, in Sacramento California. The little hospital that no longer stands was called the Alhambra Hospital; it was located at Broadway and Alhambra Boulevard and was demolished in the late thirties when the Sutter Hospital was new.

How did I get a middle name that would embarrass me all my life? It's really quite simple; my father's name was Harold Elijah Christensen. Family and friends started calling him Lije and Lyde. So when I came along I got stuck with Lyde.

My Mother's name was Sarah (Sadie) Bevan Christensen. She was a sweet lady, loved by all who knew her. While I knew her, which was only until I was 10 years old, she was always involved in homemaking, cooking, service projects, relief society work and family. My Father was a brick/stone contractor, but with the depression in full force there was no building. So my dad built a little gasoline station and next to it a feed store. There was no construction work, but everyone needed to feed a few chickens and rabbits or a cow. So my dad had the feed and fuel. It was successful and it fed us well during the depression.

When I was born we lived on the corner of 34th Street and 20th Avenue. My dad had built the home just a few years before.

My memory goes back to about age 3. We were happy in the brick home on 20th Avenue. But I seemed to remember another place. When I asked, I was reminded that my family ran a little feed store and gas station at the corner of Franklin Boulevard and Fruitridge Road. What I remembered was having access to almost empty coca-cola bottles. There was a little snack bar area at this store and the empty cases were stacked in a back room. My mom wouldn't allow me to have coke, so I sneaked back and drained the last few drops out of the almost empty bottles. That is, until I almost choked to death on a cigarette butt left in one of the bottles.

I guess I was always in the way at the new business too. I loved pumping the gas up into the pumps glass enclosure where you could see it. There was also a soda pop cooler, a metal box filled with cold water to keep the drinks cold. I was always begging for a grape soda.

Our house on 20th Avenue was not a big house. It had 2 bedrooms and a single bath in between, shared by both bedrooms. My mom and Dad slept in the front bedroom, with me in a crib in the corner.



My Great, Great, Great, Great, Great, Great, Great,
Great, Great Grand father was an Indian Chief.

My 3 sisters slept in the back bedroom, the 2 older girls, Rose and Wanda in a double bed and the younger sister, Lillian, just 10 years older than me in a single cot at the foot of the double bed. Finally when I was 8 years old, Wanda got married. I graduated to the cot at the foot of the double bed. What a great thing that was. At 8 years old, my feet were sticking through the bottom of the crib. I should also have mentioned that my older brother Harold, 20 years older than me, was already out of the house. When my Dad built the service station and feed store, he added a second story room where my brother lived.

Also worth noting is the fact that we had a gas range and oven in the kitchen, but it had a wood burning section on one end that my mom used to cook on. It saved money and warmed the kitchen up real quick. Our house had only a fireplace for heat. After all, my dad was a brick contractor.

When I was 5, my first real memorable occasion occurred. My Father felt like he should branch out in sales items for Christmas. He brought in some Christmas trees one year and they sold well. The next year he brought in a couple of bicycles as well. Remember this is 1935; the depression is in full force.

Only one of the bikes sold. Guess who got a new red 26-inch bike for Christmas. I couldn't even reach the pedals until I was 7 years old. But I loved having it and the other kids thought I was rich. I probably was, but my Dad always told us how poor we were. To prove it, I had to wear hand me down girl's sandals, which had belonged to my cousin Kay. I cried and complained, but after I wore them on the sidewalk in Oak Park and heard the leather heels make a loud noise when I walked, I loved them.

The next big thing I'll always remember was Christmas when I was 8 years old. My dad was a hunter. He was raised in Canada. I began going hunting with him when I was only 5 or 6, carrying a stick or some times an empty rifle scabbard. So 8 was the magic age for a boy to get a BB gun. Not just a BB gun, but also a Red Rider BB gun. It was a rainy Christmas day, so we couldn't go outside. But it didn't matter to my Dad. Mom was in the kitchen cooking Christmas dinner. Dad and I were on the couch shooting the ornaments off the Christmas tree. It only took two or three hitting the floor to bring my mom running in waving a dishtowel, "What in heavens name!!" Dad replied innocently, "Oh hell Sadie, they're only old ornaments!" I'm pretty sure dad bought some new ones right away. I didn't get to shoot in the house any more.

My father had purchased a little mountain cabin in the Sierras in 1935 for \$350.00 dollars. That's where I did my shooting and that's where we hunted. The cabin was for my Mother; she loved it there, even if we had to carry water from the river. After a year or so, my Dad built a little spring near the river and rocked it up.



I'm king of the mountain and my dog "Boy", is my buddy.

The next year he put a hand pump by the front door. We were really living. For several years we had only coal oil lamps at night. Then came the advent of the white gas pressure lantern. You had to light it out side as it often flamed up a foot above the lamp before it started to generate properly. It was nice and bright for reading at night. Of course the privy was up the hill across the road, so Mom used a chamber pot at night. My Mom was raised in Canada too and was no stranger to roughing it in the out doors.

When school let out for me in June we headed for the cabin. Dad built a living room on and added a beautiful rock fireplace. Mom and I stayed all summer. Dad worked and came up each Friday night, loaded with groceries. He even brought up fruit and jars, so my Mom could do her canning up there where it was cool. I kept a fire going down by the river and she had a big copper kettle she used to can with. Then I carried all the completed bottled fruit up to the cabin. Those were my favorite times. When school started I had to come home. But when hunting season started in September we went back up and I missed a little school. My dad would stop work any day to go hunting. He hunted something every weekend, even if it was rabbits. But it was most often geese, dove, quail, pheasant, or deer, whatever was in season. To some extent, he taught me to love hunting too.

Our family had a lot of fun times too. We always went out for dinner on Saturday night. It was usually at a Chinese restaurant in Oak Park, called the Shanghai Cafe. Some times it was at an Italian place down in Old Sacramento. During the colder months we would stay home and have a kind of family night. We would have hot chocolate and donuts, or some times cake or pies. In the spring when it started to warm up, we would drive down to the Borden's Ice Cream Factory where Dad would buy everyone a dish of ice cream. Sometimes we would go for fast food at Doc's Hot Dogs on Folsom Boulevard. Doc's was famous for ice-cold mugs of root beer too.

I suppose I was about 8 years old when I was told my mom was sick. She had heart trouble and had experienced a heart attack. I didn't know the seriousness of that condition. It was then that she began staying in bed most of the day. She talked to me a lot about being a good boy as I grew up. She made me promise, at least a dozen times not to smoke. My dad smoked and she hated it. As you might guess he didn't go to church much either. My dad drank a little alcohol too, but she didn't mind that as much as the smoking.

Our Saturday night outings for dinner were a little less often when Mom wasn't able to go. But we had picnics in William Land Park. We always went to the cabin. I wonder now if she should have been going to the high altitude. But this was 1938, 39, and not much was known about heart disease. There was no heart surgery, no bypass surgery, or heart disease drugs.



My Mom loved the mountains.

All the things my Mom taught me were to do with being a good Mormon boy. Of all of them, she spent more time on not smoking and paying tithing. I never smoked even when neighborhood boys tried to make me smoke. I told the boys I had made a promise to my mom, not to smoke. One day, they caught me and tied me to a tree and tried to make me smoke. They couldn't make me do it even when they tried to pry my mouth open and put a cigarette in it.

To teach me about tithing she took a piece of paper and wrote Tithing across the top. Then under that she wrote 10 cents equals 1 penny tithing, then 20 cents equals 2 pennies tithing, then 30 cents etc. up to 1 dollar equals 10 cents tithing. I could understand that and kept that paper for many years.

I remember that I wanted to earn some money so I could pay tithing. I was raising rabbits and chickens and I soon found that if I took care of the rabbit hides, stretched them on a wire frame, I could get 50 cents each for them. So I had a hide business going. Then I started selling Look and Life magazines from door to door. That went well for a while. Then June came and school was out and it was time to go to the cabin. That was the end of my magazine business.

The year 1940 was to be a great year for the family. My mom was feeling a little better and my dad had promised her he would take her to the World's Fair, which was to open in the summer of 1940. The time finally came, and I got to go too. I was so excited. We boarded the steamer in the evening. I had watched the big white steamboat going up and down the river, never realizing that one day I would actually walk up the gangplank.

This was the Delta King, and it was really crowded. We started down the Sacramento River at dusk. We had dinner in the great dining hall on the second deck. Then there was a band playing all the popular songs and couples dancing on the top deck. They put me to bed in our cabin and I didn't know anything until morning when I heard steam whistles and the ringing of ships bells. We had arrived in San Francisco.

The World's Fair was actually held on Treasure Island, a man made island in San Francisco Bay next to the island of Yerba Buena. Little did I know that 11 years later I would report to this very island when I reported for active duty in the US Navy during the Korean War.

The Fair was lots of fun. We saw many new inventions, new phones, lighting, refrigerators, cookware, etc. Huge flying boats were in the bay and on the seaplane ramps. As I recall, one of them was the largest ever built. I believe Howard Hughes built it.



I suppose that I'm just about the coolest guy on the mountain.
I hope you notice my knife, it's razor sharp.

My dad said I could have a souvenir. All I could have was a dollar. I bought a little wooden box, with a picture of the Golden Gate Bridge on it. I kept this little box for years. It was my treasure box. That's where I kept my tithing paper and special things like my favorite marbles. My marbles meant a great deal to me. I also kept a piece of crystal found in the mountains in my box. I think the box was in my dad's cabin when he sold it, after I was married, and had started my own cabin.

While most of 1940 was a good year, it ended in tragedy. On New Years day 1941, my Mother had another heart attack and died at about 9:00 A.M. I was 10 years old, and totally devastated. I ran out of the house, jumped on my bike, and just went for a long ride. I didn't want all the people hugging me. I was crying so hard I could hardly see where I was going. I made it home just in time to see the hearse pull away. I went in as my Dad and brother and sisters were getting ready for a family prayer, and I joined in. We prayed to go to the temple as soon as lives could be put in order and temple recommends secured. We all wanted the family sealed as a celestial family. My parents were never married in the temple; Dad kept putting it off. What a mistake. It would take years before all could make it to the temple. My dad, three sisters, and I made the trip to Salt Lake and were sealed in the Temple in about six months. It took my brother another twenty years.

At first, my Grandmother Christensen, Sara Rosetta Fuller Christensen, known to all as Ma, came to stay with Dad and me. Then, after a couple of months Dad and I lived as bachelors. He taught me to cook a little, like bacon and eggs, fried potatoes, fried Spam, pancakes, grilled cheese sandwiches, baked potatoes, and fried meat. He liked to cook a little roast of beef and then have sliced beef sandwiches for lunches. We would have oatmeal mush for breakfast together. Then I would come home for lunch and eat a sandwich and then make a sandwich for my dad and take it to work for him. He ran the gas station and feed store, which was right across the street from the school. After school, I would come back to the station and hang around with him so I wouldn't be alone at home. Some weekends I would stay with either my sister Rose and her family, or my sister Wanda and her family. I really liked being with Walt and Wanda. Walt was always fun. He either had a joke to play on some one, or on you. They ate out a lot and I really liked French fries and hamburgers, or hamburger steaks. Walt would always entertain with something funny. He had a thing he would do with two spoons. He placed one under the end of the other, slap down on the one, and the other would fly up into the air and somersault into his glass of water. Wanda always scolded him and every body else laughed. Sometimes Walt might hand a 50-cent piece to a waitress expecting her to take it while he was talking to the rest of us. It seemed like he was barely holding on to it, but really, he had it in a little pair of needle nose pliers, gripped really hard in his hand. When the waitress would pull and pull he was paying no attention. When she gave up, he would drop it into her hand and say, "Why didn't you take my money?"



Bob, with his new Red Rider BB gun.
OK, Black Bart, here's where you get yours.



The Christensen family still had picnics in the park after my mother died.



A perfect shot and I didn't even shoot my eye out.

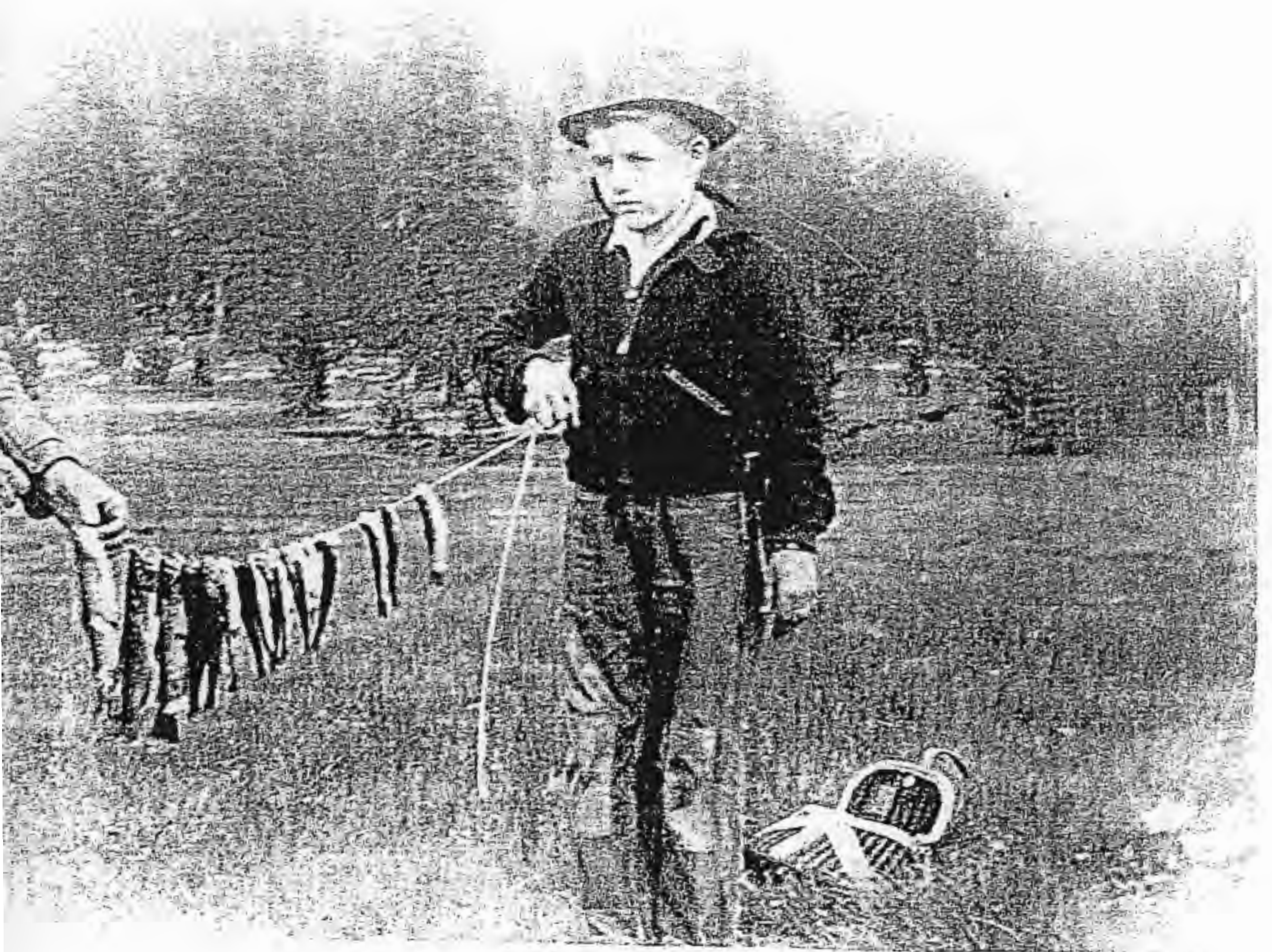


After my mom died, my Grandma came and lived with us.
She would hold whichever gun I wasn't shooting.

Sometimes, if Walt felt like playing a joke on Wanda, he would wait until we were done eating and almost out the door when he would drop several spoons, knives and forks under Wanda's feet. She was really surprised and embarrassed. Walt would laugh and say, "Wanda, I said I would buy you some silverware, you don't have to take this old stuff." Well as you might guess, sometimes they had to explain real hard that it was a joke. Life was never dull with Walt and Wanda.

I always looked forward to Saturdays. I always got to go the Saturday matinee at either the Oak Park Theater or the California Theater in the Oak Park area near 35th Street and Broadway. As I remember, the show was 15 cents and I had 10 cents for candy. That was enough candy to make a boy sick, and I usually left the theater with a bad headache. I would usually go home, scramble myself some eggs and lie down for a while. Then I was told that I had migraine headaches like my mother and my sister Wanda. From that time on I was always taking aspirin or some sort of pain killer. Movies and emotional or stressful situations brought them on. The doctor said I would eventually grow out of the headaches. I did, at about age 60. In talking to Wanda, she grew out of the headaches at about the same age.

While I was spending the weekends with Wanda and sometimes Rose and Milt, my dad was working and playing. That is, he was going to the dances at the Danish Lodge or the Odd Fellows Lodge in Oak Park. After about 6 or 8 months, it happened. I was home asleep in my bed, the double bed my sisters had each vacated, when I was rudely awakened. My dad introduced me to my new step mother, Francis. Dad moved her in and bought her all new pots and pans, bedding, towels, front room furniture, a washing machine, and carpet for the first time, for the living room floor, and anything else she wanted. I guess I was a little jealous for my mother. Francis had never been around little boys. I could tell right away; she was not happy with me. I'm not sure my dad even told her he had an 11 year old son living at home. She asked me one day if I'd like to go away to military school. I said, "No mam!" Then one day she came in from the kitchen with a piece of stove wood trying to hit me with it. She said she knew I was listening in to her phone conversations. I tried to tell her I didn't do any such thing. After a while she got tired of chasing me, or she believed me, I don't know which. I told dad and they argued over it while I went outside. We were not a happy family. I tried to make her happy, or at least not mad at me, all the time. I did all the dishes and cleaned the kitchen and my room. I was 12 years old and still not able to get her to like me. I killed, cleaned, and skinned the rabbits, and killed, and picked the chickens for the meals. But she still didn't like me. She called my teacher at school, which I really liked and got along good with and turned her against me. My teacher would say, "I know you don't behave for your mother at home, don't you dare try that here with me." My schoolwork went down hill and I failed to pass the 8th grade. I had to go to summer school all summer, downtown on Capitol Avenue. That got me out of the house every day, which made Francis happy.



Bob and his dad fishing in Hope Valley.

One night at MIA, or Mutual, or Young Men's, at the church, I broke my ankle playing leapfrog. Now I had my left ankle in a cast and was on crutches. I thought I might get out of always doing the dishes, but nope, Francis figured a way to put a little stool in back of me. She would then pull my left leg up and support the cast, and I stood on one leg to wash and dry the dishes. This went on for six weeks. Then things got even worse. At the evening meal, I noticed that she and dad had a new meal, all fresh. I had all the left overs; any thing in the fridge from past meals. Dad noticed this and asked what was going on. Francis told him that it was perfectly good food and plenty good enough for me. He told her he wouldn't put up with that. He told her that I would eat the same food as them. She went ballistic, jumped up, and grabbed a hand full of Dad's hair and pulled it right out. I told Wanda about the latest fight and that I was thinking of running away. She moved me out of Dad's house. From that time on I lived with Walt and Wanda until I got married, and she was like a mother to me. I'll always remember her and love her for that.

That year and a half with Francis affected me for life in two areas. One, I would never marry again, if I lost my wife. I could never do that to my children. Two, I cannot eat food that is very old. My poor wife has to put up with me complaining about old food. I can't stand lettuce that is turning brown, carrots and potatoes with sprouts, or any leftover over 3 days old.

Even after I moved out, Dad and I still went fishing and hunting together, when he could out smart Francis. One trip I'll always remember. I rode my bike over to Dad's and we loaded the car for a hunting trip. We were already to go, when Francis told him he couldn't go. He explained to her that we were going anyway. She then ran out and lay down behind the wheels. Dad said, "Get in Bob." I did, but said, "Dad she's behind us." He gunned the motor and took out across the lawn and we went on our trip. He knew there would be hell to pay when he got home, but we had a good time anyway. He never told me what happened. But if anything, our trips got better and more often. After Francis died of cancer, my Dad married two more times. The second stepmother, Lou was a nice woman and took good care of my dad. But she died of cancer also. The third stepmother outlived my Dad. She was a little Cherokee Indian woman named Jessie. She went to court and got power of attorney over my dad and wound up with what we, the kids felt was our inheritance. But that's another long bitter story and too painful to tell.

I forgot to mention that at the end of the first year after my mom died, World War II started. I just knew that they were going to issue all us young boy's a machine gun. We had blackout laws, no window shades up at night. We had air raid drills with all lights out. I know I had a lot of bad dreams. Then we had food rationing. You couldn't buy sugar or meat without rationing stamps. Nor could you buy tires for your car or gas for your car without gas stamps. Everyone suffered, except us, and other good members of the church. In 1938, the Prophet told the church to store up food for an emergency. My mom made my dad take his 1937-ton and a half Chevy truck to Arata Bros Grocery store in Oak Park and buy all the food he could afford.

He came home with \$3000.00 worth of food. Hundred pound bags of sugar, cases of Spam, cases of catsup, flour, cases of all kinds of food; beans, vegetables, fruit, molasses, soups, and everything you can imagine. We had a little basement that my dad lined with shelves. After my Mom was gone and the war was over in 1945, we still had food left. That was a testimony in itself. The Prophet still tells us to store at least a year's supply. My wife's family never fared as well as mine and so we have more than a year's supply.

Now I'm 14 years old, my dad and I are still living at the cabin all summer. He had had a heart attack and was semi retired. Being retired, he wanted to hunt and fish more. He bought a boat for Lake Tahoe and we fished there a lot. Then he bought a small boat that we rebuilt and hauled into lake Audrain, a little lake above the cabin. We chained it to a tree and used it every summer. We would stand it against a tree during the winter. It finally fell apart about 1948.

At age 14, I could now get a deer-hunting license. My dad wanted to get around the mountains better with his bad heart, so he bought two saddle horses. They were 3 years old and never had a rope on them, nor a halter, never touched by anyone, just running free on a ranch. But they were standard bred Morgans and easy to break to saddle. I was glad my dad grew up as a cowboy and bronc buster in Canada. We bought saddles, but my dad made our bridles. In his older age he didn't like to hurt a horses mouth, so he made hackamores that just went around the nose of the horse and with a gentle tug, came down on the nose and cut off the air. We had a blast that summer. We would go to Nevada and buy hay and grain for the horses. We would have a good meal at a restaurant in Carson City. We had a pole corral up in the meadow above my dads cabin. I would get up around 7 AM each morning and go up the hill to get the horses while Dad cooked breakfast. The horses knew the grain was at the cabin and that they got a nosebag full every morning when they got to the cabin. Boy did I have a wild ride down the hill. I would open the gate, lead my mare (Babe) out, and jump on bareback. I'd grab a handful of mane and hold on. That helped bow my legs too. My dad's gelding (Brownie) followed my mare all the time. We arrived in a cloud of dust and a, "Woooo Babe." While they ate, we ate. I was always taught that you didn't eat till your animals got their feed. I tried to teach that to my kids and grand kids, but they just couldn't get it

Each year we would bring the horses down in the fall and put them in rented pasture, out by Franklin. By the next spring, they were almost wild again. But, by the time we got them into the mountains again, they were ready to ride. We spent most of each day riding somewhere. I carried my 30-30 Winchester saddle carbine in my saddle scabbard. My Dad carried our two fly rods in his saddle scabbard. We always carried food and a frying pan. That's where I learned to love fried Spam. By the time evening came we headed for Lake Audrain, where we could always catch a few nice brook trout for breakfast. Our refrigerator was an apple box with screen tacked on it and burlap over that. By keeping the burlap damp it worked pretty well.



Bob on his mare, Babe. In later years she became a Champion Jumper.

It was a life any boy would dream of. When hunting season came, we both carried our rifles and sleeping bags on our saddles. By now we would have food caches all over the mountains. Of course, during the early summer we spent many days on our boat in lake Tahoe trolling for lake trout. My Dad loved those big fish. I never cared for them. But since my job was running the boat, I was happy. The only bad thing was, we had no bathing facilities except the old washtub, and some times we were just too busy. We kept our saddles and saddle blankets at the foot of our beds. Since I rode bare back each day to bring the horses down, I guess I smelled like a horse. Wanda decided to pay us a visit and see how we were doing and if we had clean clothes and such. When she walked into the cabin, she let out a gasp and held her nose. Dad got a lecture on cleanliness and I got a scolding. She gave me a bar of soap and sent me down to the creek. After a bath and clean clothes, my horse didn't even know who I was. I could tell my wild years in the mountains were in danger. I was having too much fun.

But then, school started and I had to come home. I went back up when hunting season started late in September. When I came home to Wanda's and got ready for school, the 9th grade at Stanford Jr. high, I also went to church for the first time in the fall. And that was when I had the most important and wonderful experience of my life. I went to church and it was Sunday school first. My boyfriends and I were catching up on our summer's experiences. We were down stairs in the old Oak Park building, and I was facing the stairs. The teacher hadn't come down yet, so when I heard footsteps coming down I looked up. There at the bottom of the stairs stood the most beautiful girl I had ever seen. A brunette with big brown eyes and about five foot two. Well at first I was in shock, then I was sick to my stomach. I guess I managed to ask one of my friends who that new girl was? He said her name was Veronica Croff. The name Veronica got me too. By the time church was over, I was madly in love.

Now, I can't begin to tell you what a change this made in my life. I ran with not so nice boys in the South Sacramento gang. I had not participated in any illegal activities, but some of the boys had gotten into trouble joy riding in stolen cars. We were in fights with the Oak Park gang and tried to stay away from the C Street gang. They were Mexican kids and loved to fight. My dad, taking me to the cabin each summer, pretty much kept me out of touch with the kids. But when we all started Jr. high school, the normal hazing by the older kids did not happen to any of us. I wore the uniform of the gang, dirty levies and boots with a Tee shirt. After we got our horses, I started wearing cowboy boots, which were acceptable.

All of the sudden, I began bathing every day! I switched to corduroy pants, starched shirts and highly polished penny loafer shoes. I had to have the best smelling hair tonic and I was always smelling my self to make sure I smelled clean. About this time deodorant came out so it made it easier to smell nice. My boots, saddle, and spurs were left at the cabin. I was a changed boy. Oh, I still hunted and fished with my dad and older brother, but I sure became a good churchgoer. I already had an agreement with Wanda that church was mandatory if I wanted to go hunting. Veronica just made it real easy to go to church.

About this time I met a new boy friend at church too. His name was Stan Cox. I really liked him even though he kind of liked Veronica too. Stan and I became real good friends. He started liking another cute little girl in the ward named Nona Peterson. We started spending a lot of time together as a foursome. In those days, Sunday School was first on Sunday morning, then we had all day, or afternoon, until Sacrament Meeting in the evening. We would spend the afternoon time together too, with a picnic lunch at a park and ballgame with several of the other kids. Bob Hamric was a year older and could drive, so a carload of us kids would take a lunch and go to Folsom, or near there at a place called Alder Creek. We would have loads of fun, come home, and drop the girls off and clean up for church again.

The friendship between Stan and I grew as we got older. We double dated together with Veronica and Nona. Stan had lost his father a few years earlier as I had my mother. So I began taking Stan hunting with me and my dad. My dad didn't like many young men, but he liked Stan. We had many good trips together. Stan's Mom was good to me too; I ate a lot of meals at the Cox's. Stan could take the family car when it was available, which made our dates more fun. Stan and I both got a job in a service station. We worked at a Texaco service station to earn some money. I rode my bike to school or rode the bus.

When I finally got my driver's license, my dad gave me an old Model A Ford pickup he had. It burned as much oil as it did gas. But I loved that old truck. Walt taught me how to drive, at least that's what Wanda told him to do. We got in the truck in front of their house, Walt in the driver's seat. He started it up and said, "Now Bob, watch every thing I do." and he took off, going through the gears. When he was in high gear, he stopped and said, "Did you see what I did?" I said, "Yes?" He then said, "Good, now you get over here and drive." Then he got out and walked home. We weren't even at the end of the street yet. I started out, lurching and grinding gears. The next day I headed for my dad's cabin. It was a great adventure. I had to stop above Placerville, clean the spark plugs, and add a quart of oil. I soon found that I always had to have at least a two-gallon can of oil with me, as well as tools and water.

Then I finally got Walt to rebuild the engine. He put a two-inch straight exhaust pipe on the truck and Wanda and Veronica's sister Ethel, painted it a baby blue color, with a brush! That truck was a lot of fun. I hauled five girls to school every day. Walt built a little seat across the back of the truck so three girls could sit there. They were happy to pay fifty cents every few days and that kept me in fuel. Then, of course Stan and I and our girl friends had a truck to run around in. Our high school years were loads of fun. But my past reputation didn't seem to want to go away. Veronica's teachers would tell her not to have any thing to do with me.

I had some new friends now, a guy named Mickey McNally and I hit it off real well. As Stan went to a different high school, I needed a boyfriend just for protection. Nobody messed with Mickey or his friends. We went on a date or two with Mickey, but because he wasn't LDS, we didn't keep it up.

I was never very friendly with my old friends from South Sacramento any more. In fact I was glad not to be with them. I remember that they were the ones that once tied me to a tree and tried to make me smoke. I had told them that smoking was one thing I would never do. The new friends at C.K. McClatchy didn't try to get me into any trouble. I tried to behave myself, but little things got in my way. I had another girl that liked me. Her name was Rusty Cannon, she had hair the color of rust. Some times, I would go out the window for an early lunch. But, only when our Modern Literature class teacher was out of the room. The windows opened onto the plant science area, so no one there even noticed me. Rusty was a grade ahead of me, but liked to have me sit with her during her lunch period. I met her in the mountains; her folks had a cabin down the highway a little way from my dad's cabin. The local families would get together once in a while at a bonfire up at the old hotel by Phillip's Store. I met Rusty there, and we hung out together sometimes with the rest of the local kids. She drove an old jeep and I had my old pick up truck, so we had fun all summer. But, we were never very serious.

High School was lots of fun. Sometimes Veronica, Nona and I would cut school and go swimming in the warm days of May before school was out. Nona and Veronica would write each other's excuse and mine also. Stan went to Sacramento High School, so he didn't know when we were going to get the urge to cut classes.

We had some church dances and the gold and green balls with bands, formal dresses and tuxedos. I didn't dance very well and Veronica wasn't happy about that. During my senior year, I did two things to try and help me in life. One, I joined the US Navy Reserve. Two, I took dance lessons from Arthur Murray Dance Studios. I learned to dance a little and they were so pleased with me they wanted me to sign up for a full course, which cost \$350.00. During the first lessons, I had a drop dead beautiful teacher. I couldn't step on her toes on a bet. She actually bet me a coke that I couldn't step on her toes, and I couldn't. Of course, they would make me an instructor when I finished. After I signed the contract for the \$350.00, you should have seen the dog they gave me as my new instructor. I didn't have any problem stepping on her toes. But I didn't want to get that close anyway. Needless to say, I quit my dance classes. It just so happened that when they called to make all the fuss about the contract, they got Wanda. I was in the Pacific on a two-week training cruise with the Navy. When they started making threats about the contract and \$350.00, Wanda got nasty right back, real quick. She wanted to know the names of the people who talked her little brother, a minor, into signing a legal contract. They backed down real quick and said that since I was in the service and out at sea, I couldn't be expected to fulfill the contract, so they would consider it null and void.

The high school years went by fast. We were told we were special, in that we were among the first to graduate and go out into the atomic age. At graduation Veronica and I wanted to walk down the isle together. This was in the old Memorial Auditorium in downtown Sacramento. They had me walking with a black girl named Alice and Veronica was walking with a guy named Paul Bunyun. After much negotiation, we were able to walk together.

Meanwhile, I still went to the mountains a lot. But now that I was out of school I started working with my dad in the masonry business. Construction was going again and he went back to work with me as his helper. Our summers were different, much less time with the horses and most of the time doing brick jobs down the river. Most of my dad's customers were along the Sacramento River, from Courtland down to Rio Vista. Some times we didn't get the horses to the cabin until deer season in the fall.

As I said, I was laying brick with my dad, and Stan went to work for the telephone company. His mom moved to Chico, so I asked Walt and Wanda if Stan could stay with us on weekends when he was in town. Stan was right there so all they could say was yes. Stan and I slept together in a twin bed. It made it great for our dates with Nona and Veronica, but was uncomfortable. After Stan had a little money saved, he rented a room from my brother Harold.

Now that Veronica was out of school, she started working full time at Learners Dress Shop down town. She started hanging out with her sister Ethel more, and going to the Trianon Ball Room, a dance hall down town. I was working more now and my dad and I both went to work for R.G. Schmidt, a large masonry contractor here in town. This is when I became an indentured bricklayer apprentice, a four-year commitment. My boss did let my dad and I take off to do work down the river when jobs came up. I was making good money now and saving for a better car.

Then my world fell apart. Veronica told me she wanted to break up. I was devastated. Her sister Ethel wanted her to go with older guys with money. She was dancing with all these older Greek guys. One became a noted artist in the area. At first, I just got in my pickup and drove as fast as it would go out toward San Francisco. I finally stopped and ended up at the West Sacramento Speed Way, where I could watch other guys try to kill them selves driving fast. I saw Veronica at church and some times standing on the curb at a bus stop. Ethel never really liked me. Her other sister Wilma and I got along very well and she treated me great. I hated it when Veronica had to go back to Ethel's house to live.

I didn't see Rusty any more, but she was not LDS, so I forgot her. I dated other girls in the ward. I dated Harriet Robinson. She was cute, and my sisters, Rose and Wanda loved her. Nona fixed me up with a girl named Jerry Sue Keller. She was cute, but again not LDS. I finally dated a little blond girl named Jean Stienagel. She was my boyhood Bishop's daughter. I liked her a lot because she liked me so much. She was a good girl, but she loved to neck, but what the heck, so did I. We did our necking in public places. I had purchased a better car, a 1937 ford. I had it painted a metallic blue and it looked great. On Saturday mornings, Jean and I would wash my car, get some lunch and then go over to William Land Park, where we would put a blanket down, turn on my little portable radio, eat lunch and neck and talk and neck.

I took Jean to all her piano lessons. I started going to her ward. She was the pianist. They always asked me to help bless the Sacrament.

Meanwhile, Veronica's dad got a job in the gold mine again in Sutter Creek, and they took Veronica up there to live. Veronica worked at a lumber mill up there and attempted to date the local boys. She soon learned why her mom said she could not date those boys. They were too wild for her and there were no church boys up there. The only ward near there was in Ione, where they went to church on Sunday. Veronica found ways to get to Sacramento on weekends and sometimes I would see her at church dances with other church boys.

Almost a year had passed since Veronica and I had parted company. I was going pretty steady with Jean, but there was four years difference in our ages so she was still in school. People were teasing me about me being older than Jean. I took her to her junior prom, and promised to take her to her senior prom.

Then it happened. I had a date to hunt quail near Sutter Creek with Veronica's brother in law Elmer Evans. I was going up early on Saturday morning. I suppose Veronica's family heard about my hunting trip, because I received a phone call on Friday night. Veronica was in town and wanted a ride back to Sutter Creek. I said, "Sure," I looked forward to seeing Veronica again and being able to talk to her while we traveled. Saturday morning came and I picked Veronica up at her sister Ethel's house. It was about 5:00 AM and still dark. It was fun talking over what was happening in both our lives. But, she was sleepy and after a while was dozing. When we reached her parent's house, I had to wake her. She had kind of rested her head on my shoulder, and her hair had that familiar, just shampooed smell. I had to admit that I had missed that smell. She hinted that she wouldn't mind going out again. So now I had a girl in Sacramento, and one in Sutter Creek.

After my hunting trip with Elmer, I stopped back by to see Veronica's mother, known to all as Ma Croff. We had a good visit and I told Veronica that if she wanted to come to Sacramento on some weekends, I would come up on Friday night and get her and bring her down to her sister's house, then take her home on Sunday night. We started dating again. Jean was not happy about it, but I still saw her during the week. I reminded her I was still taking her to her Senior Ball.

I started to make day trips to Sutter Creek when it was raining and I couldn't lay brick. That's when I really fell in love with Ma Croff. We would sit there by her box heater and talk about her kids and her life with Ben her husband. She would sing the old songs of her youth for me and fix me delicious lunches. She reminded me of something she told me soon after I had first met her. First, she asked me what my mother looked like. I described my mom to her and she said, "That might be the one." Then she asked me if I would bring a picture of my mom the next time I came over.

I did, and when she saw the picture she said, "Why yes, that's the face I saw in my dream. Bobby, your mother came to me and told me that my daughter should marry her son."

I had almost forgotten the incident because of us breaking up. I thought with Ethel against me I was out of the picture as far as ever marrying Veronica.

Over those winter months, I learned all about the Croff family. I learned about the childhood of Ben Croff, in his polygamist family in Mexico to present day. I also learned about Ma Croff's life as a young girl, her courtship with Ben and their marriage. She told me about the struggles of her younger years, losing her babies and caring for family members. (For details see the chapter on the grandparents)

Veronica and I continued dating for several more months. Then one rainy spring night, as we were standing in the light rain kissing good night, I said, "I love you so much, will you marry me?" Then there was silence, and then she answered, "Yes." Then we kissed again and I went home, in shock. The sisters were on the phone the next morning planning a wedding. But Veronica put a stop to that. She had some fears she wanted worked out. I picked out a ring, but we took it back together and picked one out she liked. She also wanted her own house, not a rental, her own house! We all decided that the wedding could not possibly take place for at least one year.

We celebrated our engagement by going to Lake Tahoe. We stopped in at Mrs. Lyon's home, a lady I had known since I was five years old, a dear friend of my mother. She was a grand daughter of the man who homesteaded all the land known as Phillips, or Vade Station, a pony express stop. We told her we were engaged. She was thrilled and told me it was time I took advantage of something she had been saving for me since I was a boy. She told me she had been saving a lot for me in her sub division. I told her we couldn't afford a lot, but she asked if I could afford \$10 dollars down and \$10 dollars a month. We ended up with a lot for the great price of \$200.00 dollars.

I consulted with Walt on where to buy a lot to build on. It just so happened that Walt's dad had purchased three acres out in Florin. There was an old house on one acre and that's all he wanted. He offered me a lot on the far side of his property that was about three quarters of an acre, for \$350.00 dollars. He even threw in an old building for nothing. The building was 18 ft. by 32ft, and had been an old chicken brooder house. The walls were only seven feet tall. I bought the land and Walt helped me dig a foundation that just fit the building. We put the building on rollers and rolled it into place, then jacked it up and put the concrete foundation in. When we let it down, it fit the foundation fine. But we couldn't have seven-foot walls in a house, so we cut each stud and jacked the house up a foot. We braced it up good and put a new sub floor down. Then we laid out our house.

We had a bedroom, with a walk in closet, a bathroom, a kitchen, a service porch and a nice living room. I put a nice big picture window in the front of the living room.

On my job with the brick contractor, I kept my eyes out for good deals on brick. It happened that my boss was wrecking the old buffalo brewery down town and he let me buy 7000 used brick, for 2cents each, He delivered them to our lot. The crew of men I worked with all volunteered to work on Saturday for me if I would buy the beer and sandwiches.

On the day they came I had all the materials ready for them. I also had a big tub of ice and beer, with lots of bread and cold cuts. They worked hard and bricked my whole house in that one day. I built the fireplace, with a raised hearth and built in bookcases. The fireplace covered the whole wall. Then I put a new roof on the house and started to sheet rock the walls on the inside. It really looked nice. We, Veronica and I had built it up to this time out of our pockets. She bought the windows, new stove, kitchen table and chairs, a washer and dryer and living room furniture, with lamps. I put down plank flooring in the living room and bedroom. We had vinyl flooring in the kitchen and bath areas.

I had a well drilled, as there was no city water, and I put in a septic tank. We were in the country. The fireplace was our only heat. The house was almost done by the time our wedding date arrived.

It had been a hectic year. I worked hard all day and lots of evenings till dark. Yes, Veronica did let me take Jean to her senior prom. Jean was so happy, but the whole thing was kind of sad. Here I was ready to marry another girl the next summer and I take my old girl out on a date. People thought Veronica was crazy for allowing it. But she said she felt safe letting me do this. Jean's father called me a few times. He told me how much Jean cared for me and how much he would like having me in the family. But I kept assuring him that I knew this was the right thing for me. I knew Jean was very sad, but I couldn't help it. Years later when she was married, she would come to see me and give me a hug. Veronica felt sorry for her I think.

We were married on August 19th in the Sutter Ward building by Bishop Walter L. Cox. It was 106 degrees that day. The candles all melted and bent half over; Veronica's mom passed out. There was no air conditioning in any of the cars or buildings then. Veronica had a beautiful wedding gown. I wore a white dinner jacket. It was so hot that when the Bishop said, "You may now kiss the bride," We were so hot, that when I lifted her veil to kiss her, our faces were covered with droplets of sweat. It was a very wet kiss. It reminded me of the kiss the night I proposed in the rain. The men I worked with gave me money, so I ended up with almost \$100.00 for our honeymoon. We went to Carmel by the sea.

The trip is almost another story. By the time the reception was over and pictures taken, it was late. My father wanted to take us out for Chinese food, and then he was loaning his 1940 Packard for our honeymoon. He also gave us a beautiful maple bedroom set as a wedding gift. But, the thing was, we didn't get away until after 10:00 pm. Veronica's going away dress was a suit. She had a white blouse under it, but I didn't know that. It was so hot that somewhere down the road on the way, near San Jose, I think, she decided she had to unbutton the suit coat and take it off. I about ran off the road trying to stay calm as my new bride started to undress in the car. We both had a good laugh and decided we couldn't make it all the way to Carmel that night.

We decided to find a place in San Jose. After all, it was 2:00 am. We found an old hotel with one room left. I went into our first night except to say that she was shocked as she sat there on the bed with her beautiful white night gown on and I came out of the bathroom in my new white pajamas. What the heck, I was a virgin too.

We had a great time in Carmel, but Veronica wouldn't leave the motel room. I had to bring her food back to the room. She was sure every one could tell what she had been doing. But we had fun, walking on the beach. We drove to Monterey and all over the area to see the sites. She still felt funny about eating out. Our favorite meals were when we would stop at roadside stands and buy avocados and tomatoes. Then we stopped at a store and bought cheese, mayo, and sourdough bread, and ate it on the beach.

While we were gone, our sisters were putting the final coat of paint on the walls and trim in our new home. My brother finished up the septic tank work. When we came home we moved into our new home. It was like a little dollhouse. Every one loved it including us. We sat down and figured our new expenses. We still owed on the well, and roofing material. Also we each had a few bills. Veronica was paying on the stove and refrigerator, etc. We decided to borrow enough to pay everything off. I think we borrowed about \$1,800.00. The payment was \$40.00 dollars a month. Veronica didn't work and my job supported us just fine. Our married adult life had begun.

We put in a big garden and grew all kinds of vegetables. Veronica cooked many of our dinners right out of the garden. She loved to make vegetable cheese casseroles. They were full of squash, tomatoes and cheese. They were great but I got to craving meat. I was working too hard for all vegetable dinners.

To continue see Chapter 3.

Chapter two The Grand Parents

Before I continue with our married life, I feel that I should write somewhat of our fathers and grandfathers. My desire is that you know of our background and heritage, that you may better understand our desires, hobbies, fears and lessons we learned from our families.

My great grandfather was Hannibal Leopold Christensen. He joined the church in Denmark and came to America in 1870. After being in Salt Lake a few years, he realized he needed the family records from Denmark. About 1898, he decided to return to Denmark and retrieve the records. Unfortunately, he became very ill in England and died of pneumonia in 1890. His Son Harold August Christensen was my Grandfather. He was still alive when I was a little boy so I knew him. He married Sara Rosetta Fuller, a descendant of Samuel Fuller. He was one of the May Flower passengers. He is the one who ties my family to Elijah Knap Fuller, a noted pioneer.

Harold August Christensen was a bricklayer and stonemason. He and his wife lived in Brigham City, Utah. They had two sons, Harold Elijah and Irving Fuller. About 1905, the Prophet called several families in Utah to start a colony in Alberta Canada. My father's family from Brigham City and my mother's family, the Bevans' from Tooele, were among the many that answered the call. The families loaded up and started on their journey. They traveled by train up into Montana. There the tracks ended and they set out in covered wagons, trailing their stock. They crossed into Alberta and settled in and around Cardston. Both the Christensen's and the Bevan's homesteaded ranches in what was called Pincher Creek. My Grandfather, having two sons, was allowed to file on two ranches.

My father loved the outdoors, horses and hunting. His brother Irving was always in school and liked the indoor easy activities. Irving graduated from a university in Calgary while my father managed both ranches. There were no fences. You had to keep track of your cattle from the back of a horse. You counted your cattle in the fall roundup, where everybody helped. You tried to keep your cattle near the home ranch in the winter because you had to feed them hay, which you mowed and stacked in the summer.

Grandfather lived in Calgary, about sixty miles north. He naturally started a masonry business. He opened a stone quarry near Cardston and before long had as many as forty stone cutters working in it. Things went well for several years. The family prospered.

My grandfather was rather short, about 5 feet 8 inches. He had red hair and he was a very proud and vain man. He rode the streetcar to his downtown jobs. He wore a fine suit with a top hat, spats on his shoes, a diamond stickpin in his tie, and he carried a cane with a silver head. He would change his clothes on the job, work all day, then change back and ride the streetcar home again. His employees drove the wagons with materials and tools.

Whenever my dad was not busy on the ranches, he was in Calgary laying brick or stone. My Uncle Irving never had to learn the brick laying trade or work on the ranch. During world war one, Irving was called into the Canadian Air Force. They told my dad he had to stay home and raise beef and wheat. My father supplemented his income by guiding wealthy businessmen and doctors from the states on hunting trips in the mountains north of the ranch.

When the church built the Cardston Temple, my grandfather was the supervisor of all the stone work. Then a message came that said the Prophet was coming to inspect the temple. Then one of the general authorities came to ready things for the Prophet's visit. When he met Grandfather Christensen, Grandfather was wearing a suit. Not his best, but a suit. The General Authority told Grandfather that he would have to change into work clothes. Grandfather told him, in no uncertain terms, that he wore a suit because he was the boss. The General Authority explained that it wouldn't look right for him to be dressed better than the Prophet. Grandfather didn't care what the Prophet wore, but he was wearing a suit. The General Authority told grandfather he was a very vain man and would die a poor man. By 1923, the family lost everything in Canada and had to move back to the States, locating in Sacramento. Grandfather still liked the best of everything. When I saw him in 1934 he was driving an old touring car. He died in 1935, a poor man.

All this had a great impact on my father. He never bought anything unless he had the cash. I found old records that show that my dad was paying off old bills the family owed in Canada for many years after they left. Still, my father loved his life in Canada. On our all night drives to hunt in Nevada I learned a lot about his young life. His father never gave him a wage for running the ranches so he made it in many different ways. He killed coyotes and wolves for the pelts. He broke horses for the neighboring ranches for money and, as I said, he guided hunters that came north for mountain sheep.

He had exciting experiences too. Once while out on the prairie he spotted a coyote. The coyote took off fast as they always do. He put his horse into a fast gallop for quite a ways, or till he was in range, then stopped, jumped off, and shot the coyote. Not wanting to skin it there, he tied it across the back of the saddle and started for home. After a ways the coyote came to and started scratching and yipping. The horse went crazy too, and it was all he could do to pull his belt knife and cut the coyote's throat.

It was against the law to hunt in the parks. He loved to slip into the Waterton Lakes Park and hunt. He said the game was always more abundant there. The Mounted Police patrolled the parks and if they caught you hunting there, they took your horse, your dog, and your guns. Then you either paid a big fine to get them all back or went to jail and paid the fine. As he was in the park hunting, he spotted a Mouny, and the Mouny spotted him at the same time. Dad started out of the park, the Mouny followed. The trail out was down a steep mountain trail with a long series of switchbacks. You had to walk your horse, so there was only one speed, a slow walk.

Dad said he could look up several switchbacks and see the Mouny through the trees. But the Mouny had to actually catch you to arrest you. Once out of the park, the Mouny quit the chase. Dad always figured the Mouny knew it was him.

I don't know a lot about my mom's early life. Her grandfather was James Bevan, who was also known in old Nauvoo. James Bevan joined the Mormon Battalion in Council Bluffs and marched for San Diego with the Battalion. He got sick on the way and was left beside the road. He said later that some one came along and doctored him or cared for him and he finally made it to the Mormon camp at Fort Pueblo, Colorado. He testified often that he believed that one of the Three Nephites, cared for him when he was left along the road to die.

My mother married my dad and they moved into one of the Christensen ranch houses in Pincher Creek. My mom had a brother named Joseph Bevan, or Uncle Joe to all us kids. My dad said that when he was young he always called uncle Joe, Buckskin Joe. He said that Joe had traded the Indians for a leather shirt, which he wore all the time. Dad said it didn't smell very good, but Joe wouldn't quit wearing it. Dad told me he and Joe spent a lot of time together. Uncle Joe started helping my dad with trail drives. One such drive got my dad in a lot of trouble; the most he was ever in according to him.

Mother was expecting my brother Harold to be born in the short future. Dad and Joe drove a small herd of steers up to another town. After they delivered the cattle, Dad said they were making good time and heading down the trail to Pincher Creek again when they came up on a camp where an old friend of theirs was camped. He was so glad to see Dad and Joe. He had a big jug of whiskey and swore if Dad and Joe didn't help him drink it up, he would kill himself drinking it alone. What could they do? They camped there and helped their friend get rid of the whiskey. When they got home, Baby Harold was five days old. Dad and Joe were in big trouble.

One memorable experience my dad had stays with me. As I said, my dad loved to hunt in the Waterton Lakes Park area. Once while coming out of the park, a storm hit. He got very wet and very cold. He needed shelter and hot food. He came on a cabin and hailed the occupants for permission to dismount and come in. The old man that greeted him was none other than Kootney Brown, the noted early Canadian frontiersman. Dad was invited in and allowed to warm up. Kootney had an Indian wife. She was a fairly big woman and wore a big pistol in a holster on her hip. After he warmed up, Dad was invited to sit at the table and eat. He had a big bowl of soup or stew with chunks of meat in it. It tasted good to Dad, so being a young lad of 17, he asked for more. She just motioned him to the pot on the stove. When he lifted the lid, there was a porcupine head staring up at him eyeballs and all. His appetite left him, but the fear of the big pistol she was carrying had not. So he ate another bowl.

Dad had one claim to fame. In 1970 some people came to interview him. It seems he and one other man whom he knew, one Billy White, were the last two living cowboys who ran cattle on the open range in that part of Canada. They interviewed him for several days but we never got any books other than the one, "Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass".

I don't know a lot about my mother and her younger life. Dad always said she was the prettiest girl around and he took her to all the dances. From her pictures I can tell she was very pretty. She was a hard worker and was just what my dad needed. I remember my mom telling me how hurt she was at Dad's parents. She had lost her firstborn son Joseph at three days old. No one knew the cause of death, but I'm sure having babies in the wilderness of Canada was not easy on mother or child. When Mother gave birth to the second son Harold, he was a healthy boy. He also had red hair like my grandfather. As soon as he was able to leave his mother, the grand parents took him away from my mother and kept him with them in Calgary in the comfort of their luxurious house. When my mom and dad took my sisters, Rose, Wanda, and Lillian and moved to California they didn't get Harold back till he was twelve years old. By then he didn't want to come to the family, he wanted to stay in Canada and become a Mounted Policeman. He was spoiled rotten by then and I remember my dad fighting with Harold over everything. My parents struggled through the great depression like so many others, but my dad made a living either in the masonry construction business or the gas station and feed store he built, and only paid cash for every thing he bought. I was born in 1930 and they built the little brick home on 20th Avenue and 34th street. The house is still there.

My wife's parents Ben and Laretha Croff, had an interesting beginning. Ben's father was a miner and seemed to find gold wherever he went. Ben's father did very well in southern Utah. He had three good mines that produced a lot of gold. He entered into a polygamist marriage and the families prospered. Then came the manifesto and the polygamist families had to hide a wife or give them up. Ben's dad prepared to move to old Mexico with many other early saints that found themselves in the same predicament. One wife was hidden in a mine way back in the mountains till they could get her to Mexico. So now the family was in Colonial Juarez in old Mexico. Ben's dad, Benjamin Louis Croff had to leave his gold mines in southern Utah, but he soon found more good mining prospects in Mexico. He had several rich mines producing up to \$1,000 a ton. Ben Jr. was born in Mexico so he learned to speak Spanish fluently. His father had the biggest house in Juarez. It was built of stone and had seventeen rooms. Ben Jr. had five sisters and three brothers. The family did very well until Pancho Villa came into northern Mexico. He didn't harm the Mormons, but he took what he needed to feed his troops. He butchered their cows and pigs and chickens.

The Mormon people had cellars full of canned fruit and vegetables. The men took their families to the hills to hide out. Every few days some family member would slip into town and get food out of the cellars of their homes. On one such occasion, Ben Jr. was on his dad's best horse. As he was leaving the house with a sack of food in back of the saddle, Pancho's men stopped him.

Pancho liked Ben and decided to let him go to his family, until he saw the big white stallion Ben Jr. was riding. Pancho made Ben trade horses. What could he do? He was only 16 years old and just a little bit scared. He rode into the family camp with the food and Pancho's horse. Ben's father was furious and never forgave Ben, for as he put it, stealing his best horse. In the historical documentaries on TV or in the movies they always show Pancho Villa on a big white stallion.

According to Ma Croff, Laretha, Veronica's mom, Ben Jr. put up with his dad's anger and abuse for some time. But, at age 17, he told his mother and sisters and brothers he was tired of the problem with his dad and was heading for the States, in particular Utah. He saddled up in the dark and thought he was getting away without a confrontation with his dad. By daylight he was making it over the pass on the trail out of the valley. Ben wasn't too surprised to see his father and the town marshal waiting in the trail. They threatened him with jail and were trying to scare him into coming back with them. To their surprise Ben pulled two six-guns, held one on each of the would-be captors and kept right on riding. It took Ben over a year to get up into Utah. Let's just say he did some growing up on his way. According to Laretha, he did some time in jail and was set free when Butch Cassidy's gang broke Butch out, they let every one else out too. Ben learned to drink a little and smoke a little, but he also learned to work hard. He broke horses, trailed cattle, and did ranch work. He was an expert horseman and knew good horseflesh when he saw it.

Laetha's recollection of the day Ben rode into Minersville always made us both cry as she told it. "It was early spring and I was out in our yard. I saw a young man riding down the street. He looked different than the town boys I knew, so I walked out where I could see better. He was the handsomest man I had ever seen. He was riding a beautiful black horse and dressed in beautiful clothes. He wore a big black Mexican Sombrero. His Mexican spurs jingled as he rode, and he rode so well. I made my mind up right then that I was going to marry that guy." Of course, she finally did marry Ben. But there were a few incidents that made Laretha's mother pretty upset.

One such incident happened on a MIA outing. The ward young ladies were in a wagon and the boys were on their saddle horses. Laretha said her mother had put her hair up in two long braids and as the wagon and team were bouncing along, Ben rode up along side, pulled his six-gun and shot one of her braids off. He hit the braid all right and left it hanging by a few hairs. Her mother was fit to be tied. Ben wasn't welcome around the Craw home for a while.

Ben was good with a gun. He fended for himself for some time coming up from Mexico. After they were married Ben made a living carrying a gun. He was the town Marshal and worked around the area breaking horses. He was in charge of the town water, a ditch coming in from the east. Some of it was in a wooden flume above ground. He had to patrol it regularly and keep it in good repair. When Veronica was a little girl, she would accompany her dad on the ditch patrols.

She was just a little girl and rode standing on her dad's leg and hanging on to his neck. Laretha always sent a nice lunch along in the saddlebags. When Ben was working, or repairing the ditch or the flume, Veronica sat on a bedroll in the shade. While the horse was tethered on some good grass, Veronica got into the lunch and ate it all before her dad quit for lunch. Laretha said Ben often returned from a days patrol very hungry. As town Marshal, Ben also administered the government dole, a sort of welfare program. But being proud he would never accept any for his family. The Marshals pay was a mere pittance. So Ben worked in some of the local mines too.

Ben always provided for his family. Each spring he would go out and shear sheep. Ben, Laretha and Veronica would camp at the shearing corrals with several other families and shear several thousand sheep. Then they would move to another county or even another state. They sheared sheep in Utah, Nevada and Wyoming. Laretha was the cook. The ranch owners paid Laretha to cook and furnished the grub. Laretha's skill with cast iron kettles was famous. She always had cakes, baking powder biskets, and even donuts. Finally, the Governor of Utah came out and said he had heard of her cooking and had to try some. She sent him home full and happy.

The most awesome of Ben's experiences came at a time when times were the hardest. The hardest time of the year was winter. And Christmas comes right in the middle of winter. But as I said, Ben provided for his family. I don't think many people today know what a "RAW HIDER" is, but Ben did just that. He took his saddle horse, a packhorse and grub and set out onto the summer grazing land in mid winter. He searched for dead cows and sheep and shot any coyotes or wolves he came across on the way. He skinned the dead carcasses he found for the hides. The hides and pelts were worth money and Ben would come back to town on Christmas Eve, covered in ice and snow late at night. He had to get the general store owner to open up and take his hides and pelts in trade for his families Christmas. It wasn't always a lot, just one thing for each child and some oranges for the family. The rest was for flour and lard and yeast.

Laretha and Ben always went into the winter with plenty of food. Ben would always harvest at least two deer. Laretha said they always corned one or more. She said she always put up several hundred quarts of fruit, venison, and mincemeat. They also had several big crocks of pickles and all the vegetables and squash they could cram into their root cellar. So, with the barrels of corned meat, home cured bacon and all the flour and bread making supplies they could afford, they made it through the winters. But Laretha was growing tired of this hard life and started asking Ben to move to California. They finally did move to Sutter Creek where Ben could work in the gold mines. Then they moved to Sacramento and bought a little home on 10th ave. But Ben liked the gold mines and worked in Nevada City, Jackson, and finally back at the Sutter Creek mine until he retired because of ill health. He suffered with rheumatoid arthritis. The treatment then was cortisone, which was eating his insides up.

One experience Ben had in later life is worth remembering. Laretha told the story with a certain reverence. As I have said, Ben Croff was born in the Mexican town of Colonial Juarez, where many Mormon polygamist families fled to stay together after the manifesto. Also born in that little Mexican Colony was a boy named Marion G. Romney. As you know Brother Romney became Elder Romney and finally one of the First Presidency of the Church. The two boys grew up together and were close boyhood friends. But I guess President Romney never forgot Ben. At a conference in Sacramento, President Romney was the visiting General Authority. At the end of his remarks, President Romney asked that if Ben Croff was in the congregation, would he please come up to the stand after the meeting.

Ben and Laretha were there and they did go up and meet with Ben's old friend Marion Romney. They shook hands and embraced in deep friendship. Laretha didn't remember all that was said. Old boyhood experiences were discussed and some of it brought laughter. But as serious memories returned, Ben compared their paths of life and with almost a tearful expression, remarked, "Marion, you took up the bible and I took up the six gun, and look at us now." That brought tears to them both and they enjoyed more pleasant conversation until time came for them to part. President Romney returned to Utah and Ben and Laretha went back to their lives.

CHAPTER THREE OUR ADULT YEARS

After we returned from our honeymoon, we settled down to a normal married life. I returned to my old job of laying brick. I was a journeyman now and made top wage, which was about \$34.00 a day. We enjoyed our little home. We put in a big garden, as our lot was 320 feet deep. We lived off the vegetables we grew. All we really had to buy was bread, meat, cheese, butter and a few canned goods. We had a strict budget as we wanted to have a baby and that meant a bigger home.

When we married, my dad let me buy his 1940 Packard. My old 1937 Ford was pretty worn out. Veronica didn't have a driver's license so we only needed one car. As I had to go into town to work each day, that left Veronica alone every day. She got pretty lonely. By the time I got home each night, she really needed cheering up. Each Friday was payday, and I came home with a pocket full of cash. She was usually on the couch not feeling well. To cheer her up I would sprinkle the bills down over her. She would come out of it pretty fast and we would clean up and go on our Friday night date, which consisted of a dinner and a show.

We had about a year of this life. Then Veronica's parents and sisters took her on a family trip to old Mexico where her dad was born. She was gone for over two weeks and it was sure good to have her come home.

We just got comfortable again and something happened that we were hoping would never happen. I had joined the US Navy Reserves to avoid the draft while I finished my apprenticeship program. I joined at age 17 and had gone on training cruises each year. My four years was up and I really expected a discharge. Instead, President Truman froze all enlistments because of the Korean War. In November of 1951, I was notified that I would be called to active duty in April of the following year. Things were scheduled, such as physical examinations and testing. For these things, I was required to take a train to Treasure Island, An island in San Francisco Bay, where I had received all my training.

This meant a hectic change in our simple lives. We knew we had to get to the temple before I left. We did that and it was something to remember. It was March 1952, a month before I had to report. It had snowed heavier than it had in 20 years. The trains couldn't get through the Sierras. The major highways were closed. Satan did not want us to go to the temple. We headed for Salt Lake in a storm. By going on secondary roads we made it to Reno the first day. Our radiator froze that night and we fought that all the way, adding water at every little town. It snowed hard and I put chains on 11 different times crossing Nevada. The black ice was bad all the way. At one time in Utah, we had no visibility, so we put Veronica's sister, Ethel, on the hood of the car and she guided us, left or right, to stay on the road. We made it after three days and went through the Salt Lake Temple one day, but everything happened so fast, we went through the Logan Temple the next day.

One funny thing I remember, is that we had to get a motel, but we didn't have much money. So Ethel, Veronica, and I had to sleep in one double bed. The Logan Temple was great. It was much more enlightening and educational at the slower pace. The roads were still closed to California, so we had to come home via Las Vegas. This was interesting as we got to stop in Minersville, where Veronica was born and see her relatives there. The mountain passes in southern Utah were under heavy snow also, but we made it home in only two days. I had to report for active duty on April 2, 1952. I was sent over seas within three weeks. I was gone for two years. It's a long story. See the chapter on my military service.

Veronica suffered a lot of stress after I left. She had to finish getting her driver's license, learn to drive, and get a job. She hated to drive in traffic so she devised a plan that got her to and from work, but I believe caused more stress. She would drive towards town, when she got into traffic, she would see a bus, pass it, park her car, and run to the closest bus stop and board the bus. That night, she would ride the bus back over the same route, search for the car, leave the bus and walk back to the car and drive home. What a day.

What with the stress of getting to work and back, job stress, lack of enough money and the navy not getting her allotment checks coming for almost six months, it's no wonder she lost her voice. The doctors only called it stress related. One wanted to hypnotize her but she was too smart for that. Being very beautiful brought the worst out in doctors and therapists. They all thought they had what she needed to remove her stress. She could trust none of them. Gradually, her voice became a whisper, then a little better.

After I returned home and we were able to get a medical plan, the doctors diagnosed her as having "spasmodic disphonia". Basically, it's caused from extreme stress, until one of the vocal cords went into a spasm causing the sound to be abnormal. Veronica lived with this condition for over twenty years. Then a doctor at Stanford University wanted to try a new procedure, which involved cutting the affected cord. We never had it done. Later other doctors tried botox treatments which changed her voice to a more normal sound, but the treatments were so painful, she decided to live with it.

So here I was home from two years in Japan. I went back to my bricklaying job. The work came easy for me. Soon after coming home my dad and I took time off the job to finish something we had started in 1950. We had donated each Saturday for almost a year to lay the brick on the new first ward building on 11th Avenue. Now the building was done and ready for dedication. We put over 40,000 brick on the building. Now they needed the garden walls completed. They paid us just for our time and we laid about 12,000 brick.

After being home for a couple of months a dream came true. Also blessings and prayers were answered. Veronica was with child. We looked into the GI Bill and found that we qualified for a veteran's loan and started looking for a home. We also bought a new car. It was a 1953 Chevrolet Bel-Air Coupe.

About this time, we felt like we had it made. We enjoyed being alone in our little home while Veronica began the nesting attitude, getting ready for our new baby. Then one day the doorbell rang. I couldn't believe my eyes. There stood a young man I taught and baptized in Japan during my Navy years. When Dick Goodwin got out of the Navy he returned home to tell his catholic wife how excited he was about the church. Not only was she not happy, she promptly kicked him out and divorced him. He didn't know what else to do, so he set out to find me. I let him move in for a while and tried to get him a job. We introduced him to church friends and families with single daughters. Finally Veronica's pregnancy was making her very sensitive to smells. I explained to Dick that with my wife expecting and him sleeping on the couch these last three months, it was making her morning sickness worse. He agreed and said he was planning to go to Utah where we had other Navy friends that had invited him to visit. I never heard from Dick again.

It was time to get serious about a bigger house. I approached a builder we worked for. He said I could pick out a house and do some of the work myself and bring the cost down. He also adjusted the price to include only the amount he had into the lot, which brought it down another \$2000 dollars. I put two fireplaces in the home and put used brick all across the front. I also put my own shake roof on with the help of a friend of mine named Hamer Parsons. The house turned out fine. It was at 5605 Kingston Way, just off Seamas Avenue.

However, the house wasn't ready in time and Veronica had our firstborn daughter while we still lived out on Eldercreek Road. Veronica was in labor for several hours, scared me to death. They didn't let dads in the delivery room then and I was glad. We named our first girl Rebecca Ruth. She had blond hair and was as cute as could be. Her Mother loved having a little girl. She had a perm at 9 months old and was wearing the latest clothes. When we moved into the new home, she had her own room and it was storybook perfect. We thought our ship had come in.

I was feeling sad because I couldn't spend more time at home after work. When I got home from Japan, I was suddenly called on a stake mission. Only about a year had passed and I wasn't very happy spending 2 to 3 evenings out doing missionary work. Having been gone for two years seemed enough. The mission was completed and the only success I had was teaching George Lyons, the husband of Mary Jane Shorter. He joined the church just after I finished my mission. Also on the mission at that time was Betty Brown, the future wife of Veronica's brother Ben Croff. Also interesting, is the fact that my missionary companion was Chris Christensen, a dental student that eventually married Jean Stienagel, my old girl friend.



My Beautiful Wife.

We settled down to a normal family life after my mission. Veronica and her parents decided to take another trip, this time to Utah to visit Veronica's brother Ben and his family. Veronica's sister Ethel wanted to go too. They left early one spring morning, our little girl Becky in a port-a-crib. Veronica was pregnant with our second child, Robin and off they went. The Croff's always traveled highway 50 to Utah. I guess, because that was the way to and from Minersville, Utah. On the way Ethel wanted to drive. She was driving too fast and came to a detour with out slowing down. It was gravel and the car slid sideways then rolled four times. Grandma Croff threw herself across the baby and she made it all right, except for shock. Ben wound up under the dash and had some injured ribs. They all ended up in the hospital in Ely, Nevada. Veronica was all right and Ethel and Ma Croff were both really sore for a few days. They got a ride to Logan and stayed with Ben and his first wife Ruth.

I was really upset over the wreck and my wife and baby so close to real danger. Then I thought my new car was totaled, but it wasn't. It was badly damaged and I didn't want it any more. Veronica's family had a friend in the Buick dealership in Jackson. They offered me \$ 3000.00 dollars for my wrecked car and I used that as a down payment for a new 1955 Buick Riviera. I also agreed to take a mechanic with me to Utah and drop him off in Ely, which I did. My Chevy looked terrible, but they got it running and the guy drove it back to Jackson with no windshield. Meanwhile, I drove up to Logan and got the family and brought them back to California.

About this time my dad and I decided to go into business together. We quit our jobs and started on our own and we did quite well for the first several years. There were ups and downs and recessions. Some of our customers went broke and that hurt some. We even had to take a house in payment and sell it. I put in 70 or 80 hours a week. I figured and bid on jobs after work and cleaned up finished jobs on Saturdays. But I always came home to a wonderful dinner.

By this time we had Becky and Robin and Tana was on the way. When I came home from work at night, I always came in through the garage and took off my work boots. My little girls could hear me and were all over me with hugs and kisses. After a shower and a wonderful dinner I had plans to look at. But I did it in my big chair and the girls would take turns sitting on my lap while I looked at plans. Life was good.

We started to build our cabin in the mountains. I would hurry home from work on Friday night and Veronica would be all packed. We would load up and stop for a sack of hotdogs and head for the cabin. I would work till late at night and all weekend. Then home for another week of masonry contracting. There were only about 12 or 13 weeks a year that we could get into the cabin, so we got our rest in the wintertime. It took 4 years to build the cabin.

My first church calling was Deacons Quorum advisor. Then I was called as the Young Men's President, in MIA. I had that calling for almost 7 years. Then I was called as a Counselor in the Elders Quorum Presidency. See the chapter on my church callings.

By his time we had our son Paul, named after Veronica's Uncle Paul. He was a cute little boy and just what we wanted, but he was a little rebel from the start. He later gave us much heartache. About this time Veronica's sister Ethel, having divorced her first husband, Dick Hickman, and her second husband, Bob Brown, had married a pilot named Charles Manteres. He was flying overseas a lot and wanted to live in Spain. So Ethel had to farm out her kids. We took Vicky, whose name is Veronica named after her Aunt Veronica. She was 11 years old and so now we had 4 girls in one bedroom. But with two trundle beds it worked out fine. The biggest problem was the clothes. Veronica made sure our daughters had the latest fashions. People used to wait in the foyer at church to see our girl's clothes before they went in for church.

One year we decided to take a trip to Canada with my dad and cousin Norm Bevan. We left Paul with Ma Croff at our house, and Tana with Marie and Ken Duke in Castro Valley. We rented a little 16-foot trailer and we set out for Canada. My dad wanted go straight up and visit friends in Cardston. Norm, Billie, Veronica and I wanted to go up the Oregon coast and into Washington and see the Seattle Worlds Fair. The fair was fun. We had only taken Becky and Robin with us, Norm and Billie had Scott with them. We had a great time at the fair and enjoyed the trip. We met Dad and Jessie in Cardston. We then traveled to the old homestead ranches out in Pincher Creek. We took a few pictures and picked up a few old relics we thought were souvenirs. We left Dad and Jessie at Cardston and headed for Yellowstone Park. There were bears around the camp that first night and Norm and Billie were frightened when a coyote stuck his nose in their van and panted almost in their faces.

When we returned home, Ma Croff was still upset by her experience with Paul. One day while she was out in the back yard, he had closed the sliding door and locked it. He ran around the house and just had fun. She begged and pleaded with him to unlock the door, but he wouldn't. This went on for several hours. Then the neighbor came home and helped her break in through the garage door. Paul was not sorry and liked the trick he played on Grandma. He was only 2 years old. It got worse.

Paul was a very active little boy and teased his sisters all the time. He traded his expensive Christmas and birthday gifts away for cheap little dime store things. He was always trying to get away from me and would just start running and laughing. We made several trips to the emergency room for stitches in his head or knees. When Paul was 8 years old we knew there was another little spirit up there that wanted to come to our family. How did we know that? We saw Saturdays Warriors of course. The new little girl we named Melissa Maureen. We had to put her in with Paul for a while. Four girls in a bedroom was enough.



We just bought a new 1953 Chevy Bel-Air Coupe, so Veronica bought me a new car coat and we went to the cabin.

AFTERTHOUGHTS

As my kids read and edited my book, they reminded me of some things we did that was one of their favorite outings. They all agreed that the Christmas tree outings were the best of all.

Stan Cox and I owned an old military jeep. Other than hunting trips, this was the main thing we used it for, family outings. Veronica's brother-in-law Elmer Evens owned a 1400 acre ranch up above Placerville. Since I helped Elmer get his corporation started and was the president, I could cut all the Christmas trees I wanted.

Each year, while the kids were young, we made a day of it. We invited other families. Of course the Cox family always went. We also invited the Beasley's and the Schramm's. We took our camp stove and a big pot of home made chili and garlic bread. Then we always made up a big pot of hot chocolate. There was always snow on the ground so the hot food and hot chocolate was welcome at noon.

There must have been a dozen or more kids there. The kids played in the snow and built snow men. But also, they were really excited about picking beautiful trees. We always cut at least 15 trees. We always cut one for the church. It was at least 15 feet long. Then each family chose one, and then we cut trees for Grand-ma Croff and Aunt Wilma. Then we always cut one for Uncle Ben and the widows of the ward. The long tree was tied on my pick-up truck because of the lumber rack. Then all the other cars and the jeep were loaded. The trip was a long one from 7:00AM until well after dark.

I guess the fun part was finding the right tree and then the big argument over whether it was good enough or not. It didn't matter that it was across a creek on another hillside, or up the hill above the road fifty feet, the jeep had a winch and a spool of cable 150 feet long. We cut trees every where and winched them to where we were.

One time we had a problem. It seems Elmer leased the property out for Christmas tree harvesting by a commercial tree cutter. As we were cutting trees, they tried to stop us, explaining that they had all the trees tied up. I explained that I was president of the corporation and could cut all the family trees I wanted. The men left in a huff and said, "We'll be waiting down by the highway, and stop you and count your trees, and you'll have to pay for them". As I felt they were watching us from a distance, I suggested to Stan that we strap on our six-guns, which we did. That evening as we drove by, their camp, they didn't even come out to wave.

The kids had a real blast and were completely worn out by the time we made it home. This became a tradition for all of us until Elmer sold the ranch. Then we lost Stan and Darrell to a drunk driver. A few years later the jeep was stolen. But the memories remain. The good times are never forgotten.



Paul loved camping, the dirtier the better.

When the kids were young we took many vacations to places like, the Redwoods, Yosemite and Kings Canyon. On one trip to the Redwoods, on the coast, the kids got to see a once in a lifetime site. A large whale, perhaps forty feet in length, had died and washed up on the beach in the state park. After a few days it smelled pretty bad; so the park rangers came in with an army demolition team. They planted explosive charges all along one side of the whale. They invited us to watch the next morning. When the blast went off, the entire whale became airborne over the bay. As it sailed out, it began to fall into a million pieces. The sea birds were busy all day.

At Kings Canyon, we would rent horses and ride the trails. You all know that horses poop a lot and it bothered Becky. On one occasion while I was dickering for group rates. Becky over heard and later asked me if I was able to get poop rates on the horses. We've never let her forget that one.

When our kids were little, they had perhaps the finest Christmases in the neighborhood. You know how Veronica loved Christmas. Well her kids had the very best there was. Early on, we started a Christmas club account at the bank. As we had more kids, we raised the amount. The girls got beautiful clothes, coats, shoes, robes and slippers; as well as toys and dolls. Paul got really great toys and sharp clothes, but he would try and trade them for the neighbor's cheap toys. Paul got Tonka trucks that dumped and loaders that had a scoop on the front to load the truck. One year he got an army tank that was remotely controlled by a wire. It also had a helmet that had special features. One of the best gifts for the kids was a little surrey with a fringe around the top. It was powered by pedals and four kids could ride at one time. They made me push them around the back yard a lot.

One of the strangest requests to Santa Clause as the kids were growing up was from Tana. She wanted nylons, make-up, and a pogo stick. What a strange sight she was, bouncing around the neighborhood on her pogo stick, wearing nylons and make-up. Melissa was the easiest to fool. When I lathered my face to shave. I could see she was watching so I would give out with a hearty, "Ho Ho Ho, what do you want for Christmas little girl?" She would always say, "I wanna a screamin demon." The screaming demon was a little toy motorcycle with a little demon guy on and it went really fast across the kitchen floor making a screaming noise. She asked for that same toy for several years.

As far as the greatest gifts, I suppose each of the children would have their own opinion. But as the chief Santa helper, I would say Paul's best gift was his BB gun. He went to bed early that night with his gun across his chest and sucking his thumb. The girls best gift was a Volkswagen bug parked out front with a big bow tied on top of it. That gift set mom free, as well as the girls. Christmases were always special in our family.

Our families always gathered together until the group got too big. We met in homes at first, then churches, veteran's halls and banks.



Three of our daughters and Vickie (Veronica) Hickman, Veronica's niece;
We raised her with our kids from age 11 until she married
Left to right, Robin, Tana, Vickie and Becky.

Veronica's family had about sixty in the group and mine grew to about seventy people. We had piñatas and a Santa Clause and a lot of good food. When Veronica's parents and my dad died the group started to dwindle. Now if parties are held, a home holds all who want to come.

Another thing the neighborhood kids were really jealous about was our drive in movie nights. At that time the price was \$1.00 a car load. We had a station wagon and we would bathe the kids, put them in their pajamas, and make bed in the back of the car. We would take big tubs of popcorn, kool-aid, and candy. The kids thought they were in heaven. Veronica and I could Smooch a little in the front seat.

When the girls were little, we were building the cabin. The summers were fun. Veronica took the kids to the beach at Lake Tahoe while I worked on the cabin. That always involved a picnic or a bar-b-q. But then the kids wanted to go where the other kids were going. We started renting a little camp trailer and going on trailer trips with several other families. Besides renting horses as I already said, we had shows that were put on by our kids and their friends. As soon as we were camped in a state park somewhere the kids started rehearsing. Then on the last night they put on a show around the campfire. It was really quite well done. People we didn't know from adjoining camps would hear the music and walk over and ask to join us. As the kids got older and started in galena the trips fell apart. We were lucky to get them to the cabin.

When Vickie was a teen-ager, we found she had a beautiful voice and we gave her voice lessons. She decided she really wanted to go to BYU. So she saved a little and we helped her get into the Y. She was able to use her talent and was invited into the Young Ambassadors. There she met her future husband John Foster. Vicki was like our own daughter and we missed her terribly when she left. We put on a beautiful wedding for her and John. When her children came along, we were Grandpa and Grandma.

Vicki's leaving for college let us put Missy in with her sisters and we again had 4 in the bedroom. Missy loved being in with the big girls. Missy did very well in school and always said she would be a teacher. Later she did graduate from the Y with teaching credentials.

As Paul got older he got into sports and loved Pop Warner football. Then he started going to work with me, and learning construction. He would help me with brickwork for a while and when it became boring he would disappear only to be found working with the electricians. Or, he would be helping the tile setter and he really liked nailing on the lathing for the plaster or stucco crew. He saved enough of his wages to buy an old car when he was 16. We often went hunting and fishing with my dad and that was fun. Paul's Grandpa Christensen often took Paul with him on his camper travel trips fishing with his last wife Jessie.



Don Beasley's new Ford Thunderbird Coupe.
Hey Donnie, this sunroof will let us road hunt and shoot right out of the car!!

Paul got into trouble with his car. It was an older Dodge with a big block hemi engine. He took two shop classes in high school and unfortunately learned to work on cars to well. His car couldn't shift gears with out burning rubber. He eventually ended up with a glove box full of tickets. He didn't want to live the rules of the house and so at 18, moved out and on his own. He got into drugs, drinking and smoking. He worked for a roofer for a while and then started driving large diesel trucks. His route was to Los Angeles, then Ogden, Utah, and back to Sacramento.

My father retired from our masonry business in 1969. When he did he took half of our bank account as his retirement fund. He was entitled to it but it threw the business into a depressed state. Now I lacked operating capital. I had to cut back my help and go collecting every week to meet payroll. Being in business wasn't fun any more. I only took jobs from clients I knew would pay right away.

We enjoyed our family. Our daughters were so beautiful. They were also good girls. We had such great family home evenings. Our daughters were also into dancing. They went into ballet at age 5 and, before we knew it we had the first 3 all in ballet together. I'll never forget the first recital. There we had all 3 of our girls in tutu's, on the stage in a Barbara Briggs Studio recital.

I cried as I did at all the recitals for years to come. It wasn't long till we had to run one girl to ballet, another to piano, and then another to a later ballet class. Sometimes I would swing by on my way home from work and pick up one or two. This went on for several years. Then a couple in the ward, which were musical geniuses started a singing and dancing group. It was called Galena Street East. But now we had girls driving so Veronica wasn't a taxi driver all the time. We bought the girls a little Volkswagen Bug. They all drove it as they got their licenses. As you might know, the little car got lots of use. I no longer had to drive to seminary on my way to work and Veronica could sleep in.

The girls were approaching college age. When we took Vicki back to the Y we took the girls. The object was to make them try hard in high school so they could get into the Y, and it worked.

During these years our masonry business was still not doing well. I never recovered the loss of half the operating capital my dad took when he retired. We did several LDS churches, one on Fulton and Hurley, of course the 11th Ave building, and the 24th and Gardendale building. On the churches, you didn't make much, but you always got paid. Also, two contractors skipped town with out paying me and even though I filed liens, they managed to get away without paying. I managed to get a great contract with Texaco oil to put stone work on all the stations in this area. They had a good profit margin and near the end of the year they even paid in advance to save on their taxes. This did a lot to help keep my head above water.



One of our beautiful Christmas trees.

Then we had three girls in college at the same time. Veronica had to go to work to help keep them all at the Y. Veronica worked at the sugar factory down in Clarksburg. Several ward members worked there also so they encouraged her to work there. Later we wished she had gone to work for the State.

Then my business took a turn for the worse. Another contractor went bankrupt owing me several thousand dollars. Then it rained for nearly 30 days and I couldn't work. I went to my shop every morning and watched it rain. I took back pallets for the deposit money and did little repair jobs.

I prayed every morning about what to do. I wanted to know whether to stay in the masonry business or give it up and get a job. About that time, an old friend that had worked on the church jobs as a concrete finisher came by the job one day. He worked for the state now and told me they needed people with construction experience. I had been appearing in court for them as an expert witness so I was familiar with the work. I had to do something and I felt the Lord wanted me to get out of the masonry business. Also, in the past few years, the doctors warned me to quit the heavy work. So I took the state test and did quite well and went to work for the State of California. As I closed out my business, I sold off the trucks, mixers, inventory and scaffolding. We sold our house on Kingston Way and paid off all my old business bills. We got \$38,000 for the house and I owed \$12,000 in old bills. I then applied for and was granted a CAL-VET home loan and built a new home on Cornell way.

I did my own concrete, electrical, and masonry work. The entire front was covered with Mexican drift stone. I built a stone waterfall in the back yard and a redwood gazebo. The house turned out to be a beautiful home. However, it took Veronica several years to become as happy as she was in the old home. As usual, we prayed about our endeavor, that if it wasn't right for us there would be stumbling blocks in our path and things would be blocked. We would then know it wasn't right for us, and stop and do something else. Everything fell together for us and things just sailed through. We found a lot for only \$5,500 dollars when lots were going for \$7,000 to \$10,000 in our area.

We were worried for a few days. Our money was in the bank, the plans were approved, and we were ready to start building. But the title on the property was cloudy. The seller was a Chinese gentleman in San Francisco, whose wife was ill and he wanted cash bad and fast. He signed the papers and the deal should have closed. What we didn't know was that the Chinese man bought the lot from Henry Moss's sister and when she sold it to the Chinese gentleman the title wasn't closed properly. Henry could see an opportunity for picking up the lot again and selling it for what it was really worth. One day, Veronica was having lunch with Sister Moss. She asked Veronica if we had started the house yet. Veronica saw the opportunity and let her know everything hinged on her husband letting us have our lot. So we started building at once.



The only picture of our entire family includes Robin's husband Lanny and first grandchild Brandon Walker.

Our beautiful daughters at the temple.



I became an investigator for the Contractors State License Board. It was quite a change for me. I had to wear a business suit, white shirt and tie to work. I had a state car to drive and I worked across from the State Capitol Building. I had cases to investigate in Yolo, Solano, and Sacramento Counties. At first I was designated as a trainee and I rode with my friend, Lynn Orgill. The pay was only about one third of my bricklayer wage. But the promotions came quick. Each time I took an exam for promotion, I did very well because it was based on construction. I started with the state in 1974. Just about a year after my best friend Stan Cox died in a traffic accident

Stan and I had been friends since we were boys. We hunted with my father every year and after my dad got too old to hunt, we hunted together each year. We hunted in California, Nevada, and had started hunting in Wyoming when Stan passed away. We took our families on vacation together and did most things together. To say we were close was an understatement. It should be noted that I have continued hunting each year into my old age. It's in my blood.

After about two years at the state, I became a senior investigator. Then I began taking college classes to help me in future promotions. I took a law class at University of Davis and received a certificate for paralegal. Then a class in management, one in Investigating Techniques, one in Public Administration, one in Written Communication, one in Time Management, and finally one in Typing at City College. They looked Good on my resumes and I did very well on exams. In 1979, I was offered a promotion to office supervisor in the Stockton Office. It meant a commute in my own car and my state car was parked at the office in Stockton.

After a year of the Stockton office, I put in for any supervisor positions in Sacramento that might become available. It just so happened that the Sacramento office supervisor was retiring and I took the job. My office was right on Florin Road only 19 minutes from home. Now I had 12 employees and 11 counties. All this time I had been on the Stake High Council as well.

In 1981 my father passed away at 89 years of age. The last year or so he was in a rest home with a total loss of memory. He was ready to pass on. His 4th wife Jesse lived another few years and passed away in Reno. We were not close to her at that time. Yes, I had 3 stepmothers. What an experience that was. It made me swear to myself, and my wife and children that I would never marry again if I lost my wife. I will not put more in detail, as it would require a chapter in itself.

Later in 1981 I was called to be Bishop of the Sacramento Second Ward. When I approached my boss at headquarters and told him I was now a Bishop, he was pleased. Later I was surprised to learn that his neighbor was a Bishop and he thought very highly of him. He also agreed that I would need to take time off for funerals, weddings, and other church business.

I was shown great respect in all my state business dealings. My first big assignment as Bishop was tithing settlement. The next was two divorces of couples I had known for many years. Then my son decided to get married. He married a little catholic girl and had a boy and a girl. Michael and Kayla. After six years that marriage ended in divorce. His ex wife Gina took the children and moved away, promising Paul that if he would leave her and the kids alone, she would never ask for any alimony or child support. We haven't seen Michael or Kayla for over 15 years. But later Gina came out of nowhere and demanded back child support, which you can't fight in California. That battle will be on going for some time. My son's wedding was a little weird to say the least. Can you imagine a wedding in a Catholic church where the Catholic Priest and a Mormon Bishop walk up the aisle side by side? For more see the chapter on church callings.

I served as Bishop for 5 years and was released back to the high council in 1986. During these years our girls met their husbands and we had four weddings. We felt blessed that they were all temple weddings. Vicky was first, then Robin, Tana, Becky, and Melissa. Vicky married John Foster and they live in Stansbury Park, Utah. Robin married a Mississippi boy named Lanny Walker. They live in Cedar Hills, Utah, near the Timpanogis Temple. Tana married Chris Crosby. They live in Folsom, CA. Becky married Tony Anderson, but Tony passed away. Later she married John Stone and they live in Dixon, CA. Melissa married Scott Argyle and they live in Layton, Utah. Paul married again. He married Julie Coons, they live in North Highlands, CA. So far we have 28 grandchildren. We do a lot of traveling to see all the grandchildren. We made as many as 8 trips a year to see the Utah kids.

About 1984, when I was comfortable in my supervisor's position, I was offered a promotion, which meant a transfer to headquarters. I became the Assistant Licensing Deputy. This opened the door for more opportunities as there were more management positions available. I always took all the exams that came up. Within two years, I became the Special Programs Deputy. In this job I traveled to each of our 15 district offices to train and inspect the office to make sure the law was being enforced equally throughout the State. The position made me a Deputy IV. Remember I started as a Deputy I. Then I was a Senior Deputy II. When I was promoted to supervisor, I became a Deputy III. Then as Special Programs Deputy, I became a Deputy IV, and I liked that job. Also, I thought that was as high as I could go with only a high school diploma. Then we got a new Registrar Of Contractors. He and I must have been soul mates. We got along very well. His name was Dave Phillips. He came from construction like I did and only had a high school diploma. What he did have was a lot of political knowledge and friends in the Capitol. He was from Wales and loved to sing Welch songs.

When Dave was promoted to Registrar, he was living in the Los Angeles area. He had to come up to Sacramento with out his wife and find a home and get settled. So he commuted for several months. He often had me take him to the airport on Friday night so he could fly home. His stomach was bothering him from the stress of the new job and the commute.



Our baby Girl, Melissa.

I would call my daughter Melissa who was still in high school, and have her fix Dave a bowl of fresh cut up fruit with yogurt on it. That always soothed his stomach and we had lots of long conversations in our travels. When he found out I was a descendant of the Prince of Wales he was impressed. Then when he ended up in Sacramento alone on Thanksgiving Day, I invited him to dinner with my family. We ate at Robin's house and he raved on the food and my wife and kids for weeks.

Soon another promotion opportunity opened up. I didn't want this one, it was a CEA I, (Career Executive Assignment), position right up under Dave. It was the Chief Licensing Deputy position for the entire State of California. Dave wanted me to try for it. I knew there were others who had master's degrees who wanted it badly. Dave kept at me to apply, so I did and there were those who laughed when they found out that I had applied.

Dave lobbied the Governor's appointed board members and let them know it was more important to have someone with a construction background, than someone with a master's degree in accounting as his Licensing Deputy. So in 1990, I was appointed Chief Licensing Deputy for the State of California. I now had 3 secretaries, 5 assistant licensing deputies and 114 employees. I also had a lot more pressure.

Dave promised me that I could retire in 1994 after my 20 years was in. My retirement would be better and my wife and I would be happier. So I went along doing my job as best I could. I traveled all over the state to attend meetings and fill speaking assignments for the Registrar. I racked up a lot of air miles and before long I knew all the best hotels in Southern California. At least the ones close to our district offices and the fancy ones the Board Members wanted to hold their meetings at. They liked to meet in Palm Springs in the winter and San Francisco in the summer. There were always big dinners and cocktail parties. I got so I could go for two hours nursing a glass of seven up.

Dave knew he could trust me so he sent me to lots of functions he didn't want to go to. My training in the church helped me do my job better. With 15 years on the high council, I learned to speak to large gatherings. Once he sent me to speak to a conference of state contractors registrars' in Denver, CO. Also I would speak to groups of contractors at their annual association meetings in places like Laughlin, NV, or Monterey, or San Diego. I took Veronica with me a couple of times, once to Santa Barbara and once or twice to Redding.

For some reason, people liked to talk to me. Several of the women that worked for me would come to my office and ask for counsel. Sometimes it concerned their marriages and sometimes their children. Dave would come in to work later than me, fill his coffee cup and come to my office and sit and unload his problems or his worries and ask advice, or give some, at the end of our conversation. His wife Lillie was a sweetheart, and she worshipped Dave.



My dad and I at a family party, at Wanda's house when he was 75.

They had both come from Wales in their teens. When the Board Members would give Dave a bad time, she would confront them and tell them where to go. Lillie liked me too, and on one occasion gave me a nice picture of the Castle in Wales. She said that since I was a descendant of the Prince of Wales, I ought to have a picture of his Castle. Dave and Lillie had three daughters, and they taught them all to speak Welch.

All through these years my life at home went on as usual. We spent a good deal of time at the cabin. We loved to travel to Utah and visit our kids. I still went hunting each year and did all the fishing I could at the cabin. We still did all our own yard work and that is a lot of work. A tree had fallen on the cabin and I had used the insurance money to enlarge it, adding another bedroom. As our family was growing it was badly needed.

We could hardly wait for retirement, so we could travel a little. As it was, we made at least one trip, sometimes two, to Utah each year. We bought a used Oldsmobile from some friends of ours and enjoyed it on our travels. It only had 55000 miles on it so it was in good shape and we planned to make some road trips after our retirement. I should say this was Veronica's car. I always had an older used pick up truck, and at the time I had a 1986 Nissan. Veronica retired from the sugar plant in 1990, so she was just waiting for me to retire. I was waiting for the two important things to come up. Twenty years of state service and age 64. The projected date was the spring of 1994.

The Contractors State Licensing Board was a very busy place. As Chief Licensing Deputy I was very busy. There were over 300,000 licensed contractors in California. I received about 2000 letters a month. Some I had to answer myself, but most I assigned to my secretaries or my assistant licensing deputies. We had form letters for many responses. We also had to renew all those licenses every two years, so we processed several thousand renewals each month. My staff of over one hundred program technicians worked very hard and did their jobs very well. I had six supervising program technicians that kept it all moving smoothly. The Contractors State Licensing Board also had an enforcement section that handled consumer complaints from homeowners and clients of contractors. That is where I worked for seventeen years.

The Board received about 30,000 complaints a year. Each deputy had an average of 60 to 120 cases assigned to him for investigation at one time. Easily understood was the fact that all consumers were not happy with the outcome of an investigation. Can you imagine that some of them would try and take advantage of the contractor by insisting on work not included in the contract? It happened a lot. Those unhappy people often went to their legislators, who were thrilled to take complaints against any Board or Bureau of State Government. (I'm leading up to a sad story so please bear with me.)

Eventually a few legislators that had bad feelings against the Board (CSLB), decided to hold a public hearing in the Capitol Building. Those in charge at the Board were directed to attend and represent the Board at the hearing. This included me, Dave Phillips and Mickey Matsumoto, the chief field investigator.

We were given our assigned attorney from the Department of Consumer Affairs of which we come under. The legislator in charge was J S, a female senator. Her close ally was DO, a female assemblywoman. They had several other sit-in attendees that didn't participate verbally. The legislative aids of JS and DO were in several areas of northern and southern California, with a direct phone link to the hearing room. These aids had for several weeks been finding unhappy clients or complainants of the CSLB.

As the hearing progressed, these unhappy people would tell of their unhappy experience with the CSLB. Each time one finished, JS would say, "can one of you gentlemen respond to that?" Before we could say much, the two legislators would say, "If you cant run this organization better than that you should retire." This went on for over 6 hours. They didn't let us break for lunch, or even take potty breaks. Both Dave and I finally had to run out and take a break. When we got back Mickey took his break. Of course, the legislators had their lunch sent in and ate it while they questioned and ridiculed us. They also took breaks. In the afternoon, they even had cookies and punch for themselves. We left the capitol that afternoon with our feelings and pride badly wounded.

Dave was a political kind of guy and loved government. But, he had never been so humiliated in his entire life, none of us had. I could see tears in Dave's eyes. We each had some choice wishes for those legislators. Dave's wife was furious. I guess it took Dave a day or two to get over his hurt. We found out three days later, that J S's husband was killed in a car accident near their home in the Bay Area. I think that sobered us all up and we realized that our lives would go on. Except that they didn't. Dave had taken a much-needed vacation and was in Southern California with his children and grand children. One morning he didn't wakeup. He had a massive heart attack in the night.

I was already scheduled to speak at a contractors' association meeting in Santa Barbara for Dave, so I took my wife and my own car and after the speaking assignment, we drove on to L A for Dave's funeral. It was filled to capacity and lots of legislators attended. Later in Sacramento, the Building Industry Associations held a memorial for Dave. As I walked in, the organizers called me over. It seems they were trying to write a prayer, and asked me for ideas since they knew I was a church going man. I just said that I would offer the prayer, and they were thrilled. It was a great tribute to Dave and Lillie and their family. Lillie thanked me and hugged me after the memorial. We wrote to each other for a few months and shared thoughts of good times we shared with Dave. I really loved him.

My life was in for a change. When the big boss goes, the new boss wants to bring his favorite people in to the top jobs just under him. I knew this was coming. My 20 years would be up in a few months. Also I would become 64 years of age just before then. I didn't know who the new top man would be but I decided I didn't care. I had already started taking retirement classes at CAL-PERS. I set my date for retirement to become effective May 1, 1994. Before I could retire we got a new Registrar and he wanted me to stay. But he wasn't Dave and I was eager to travel. I had a wonderful retirement party and left happy.

We immediately went to the cabin and I rebuilt my fireplace using stone from Mexico. My grandson Jesse helped me. That took me a week or two and then we scheduled our first trip. We got together with several of our friends and planned a trip to the Grand Canyon. We rented a club van to hold us all and went first to Las Vegas. The next day we went to Williams, AZ. We got nice rooms and went to see the Grand Canyon on a little train. It was loads of fun and the sites were beautiful. Bandits on horses robbed the train along the way. The bus at the railway station took us all around the rim and to the shops and the Imax movie. The return trip was wonderful too. We returned home safely and happy.

That summer I did a lot of work around the house and at the cabin that had been put off because of time. I did my usual hunting trips only more and longer. That was my first black powder hunt. I bought a Hawkins 54 caliber rifle and our group was drawn for a hunt at Horse Lake, near Susanville. I got the only deer on the trip and it was great fun hunting the old fashion way. Then we planned a big trip. People were talking to us about a mission, but we weren't ready.

Our neighbors and good friends in the ward were on a mission in Kirtland, Ohio. They were ready to finish up and come home. We decided to fly back and meet them, see Kirtland, and go from there on a grand road trip. But first, we had a major problem to solve. This problem turned out to be one of life's most important teaching experiences, but we didn't appreciate it until it was over.

This was the problem, our son Paul had, as you read married a little catholic girl named Gina. Their marriage had a few good years in the beginning. But their interests were as different as day and night. She was becoming a lawyer and he was a long haul truck driver. They had two children, Kayla and Michael. Veronica tended them for most of their pre school years. Paul was not a good husband. He was always on the road and eventually got into drugs and other women. In 1989, Gina called Paul when he was on a trip hauling to Los Angeles and back. She told him not to come home as she was getting a divorce. Paul was shocked and angry. He started for Sacramento on the return leg of his trip. But his mind was not on his driving. He got about eight or ten tickets on the way home and his class A license was suspended.

Gina called and told us what she was doing. She also said that we had better keep track of Paul because he had sounded suicidal on the phone. I let Paul know he could stay with us until he got his life in order. He was thankful and moved in. He couldn't work with out a license to drive. We were planning on our road trip and had to make some choices. We had to do something to help Paul in being able to support himself. I took Paul and all his tickets on a road trip to try and pay all the fines and get his license back. All our friends and our family thought we were wrong. We were able to meet with authorities in the several towns and cities and pay the fines, explaining to them that Paul was not himself and was deeply distraught on learning of his divorce. It cost me nearly \$3,000 dollars and he was able to get a regular license to drive a car.

He never had steady jobs, only a little mechanical work, like tune-ups and detail jobs. He and we were informed by Gina that she would never come after Paul for alimony or child support if we would all not try and see the kids. Paul had to agree to this, as he had no job or promise of one. We sent money, but she always returned it.

We took our trip with our friends and a great trip it was. We arrived in Kirtland with several other ward friends who wanted to see that historical site. After seeing Kirtland and all the surrounding sites like the John Johnson farm, the Morley farm, and the Newell K. Whitney Store, we were amazed at the strength and stamina of the early saints. Our testimonies were strengthened by the knowledge that the Father and the Son had appeared here in the school of the prophets and at the Johnson Farm. (I exhort you all to visit all the church historic sites.)

We then packed up our friends, the Hursts, and with our ward friends in their rental car traveled to Palmyra, the Hill Cumorah, and the Sacred Grove. We again saw things that thrilled us and brought the truths of the Gospel to our minds. Kneeling in the Sacred Grove with my wife to pray was truly a spiritual experience. You can feel the spirit so strong there.

Then, the Grandin Printing Office, where the Book of Mormon was printed, was so impressive. The Lord has to have made it happen. Then to stand on the Hill Cumorah, and visualize the boy prophet talking to Moroni about his future work with the gold plates that he was being shown right here on this hill. Now, there is a temple just up the road. We also traveled a ways south and east to Fayette where the Church was organized in the Peter Whitmer farmhouse. The senior missionaries that were assigned here were also ready to finish their mission and go home. They tried to recruit us to take their place. We stayed the night with them and our ward friends left to fly home. At this time our friends, the Hursts told us that they were inspired that we would visit our mission area on this trip. We of course, thought nothing of it. We started on our biggest leg of our trip. We now headed for the next place the early saints headed for, Jackson County, Missouri, which was Independence, the capitol of Missouri. The trip was not just to the church history sites. We headed down through Pennsylvania and stopped at Gettysburg. Again as we visited the Civil war sites you could feel the spirit that was there and realized that this country had to be a free country for the Gospel to flourish. We went on enjoying the beautiful country and small quaint towns.

We went over the Smokey Mountains and stopped in Cherokee, a small town where some Cherokee Indians that didn't go west on the trail of tears had hidden and later lived peacefully. We also stopped at Dollywood, where Dolly Parton had a theme park. Then of course, spent several days in Nashville and the theme park there. Also we attended the Grand Old Opry. Then we headed for Mississippi, where we had other ward friends on a mission. We visited with the Carters in Macomb and had a good time watching their missionary endeavors and meeting some of their contacts. They were on a proselyting mission and the work was hard.

While this far south we had to drive down to New Orleans. This was just down and back, as we wanted to visit my son-in-law's parents, the Walkers, in Jackson. The Walkers treated us great and we really enjoyed their hospitality. The next day we headed for Independence.

In Independence we visited the RLDS temple, a really strange building. But the museum in the basement was full of some great early saint artifacts. We also visited the LDS Visitor's Center and saw where the Jackson County Temple will be built in the latter days. We then visited the Truman Museum, which is a must see and quite educational. Then we went up the road to Liberty and the Liberty Jail, where the prophet was jailed in 1838. The jail had been beautifully restored. You needed a box of Kleenex at each of these sites.

Next stop was Far West, which we didn't find on this trip but visited later on another trip. We were able to find Haun's Mill. However, a strange spirit prevailed there and we felt evil so strong we left. We went on to Adam-ondi-ahman, which was a very beautiful place. The spirit was so strong there. We could see the little hill off to the east where the remains of an old stone alter had been found.

The next morning we arrived in Nauvoo. I can't describe the feelings I had here. As we drove along the Mississippi River and then turned into old Nauvoo, we all choked up and I looked at my wife and she looked at me and we knew that something strange was happening. I began asking, "Who is doing all this work on these old buildings?" and we were amazed at the beauty of the area. There were acres of grass and large mowers, being pulled by tractors, were working in several areas. We visited the sites or old, restored buildings until dark. As we looked for a place to stay, we realized that we waited too long and there was no room at the inn. All the hotels and motels were full. We had to drive 12 miles up the river to a little town by the name of Fort Madison, another historic site. We went to church the next morning in Nauvoo. It was so exciting. Everyone was wearing a missionary badge. We learned that there were over 80 senior missionary couples serving there and in Carthage, at the jail.

After the meeting, we met many of the missionaries and they asked about us. We explained that we were recently retired and had come back to escort our friends home from their mission. We excitedly asked what they all did on their mission? Some said painting, some carpenter work, some plumbing. They asked me if I had a trade? I said, "Yes, I am a third generation bricklayer." For some reason, they seemed excited to hear that. One brother said, "There is some one I would like you to meet."

He then took us to a man who he introduced as Elder Sorensen, manager of NRI. (Nauvoo Restoration Inc.) This man was in charge of all the restoration work going on in Nauvoo. He took my hand and shook it, then held it tight for a while. He kind of teared up, looked me in the eyes, and he asked, "Where have you been? I've been praying for you to show up for four months." Then of course, I began wiping the tears away. He said, "Come to my office right after you get a bite to eat." We had to choke lunch down.

Marilyn and Keith were grinning from ear to ear. Marilyn said, "How does this make you feel? Do you think they need you here? What do you think he will say?" Keith just said, "Marilyn!"

In Elder Sorensen's office, up stairs in the Visitors Center, we nervously waited while he looked at a letter. Then he said, "I'm so glad to have you two here. Let me ask you some questions." He then asked a lot of questions about our family, our callings, and our plans, as well as us for the future. We explained that this was our first trip and we had just retired last year. I explained that I had been working for the State of California and the Contractors State License Board. Then he said, "I have the authority to recruit you to fill a service mission here in Nauvoo, do you accept it?" We looked at each other through teary eyes and said, "Yes." Elder Sorensen gave us mission papers to take home with us and fill out. He wrote names and phone numbers on the papers for special routing. He then said, "Go home, get your affairs in order, submit your papers immediately and be ready to come back here by March 15th 1995. We left the office feeling a great deal of weight on our shoulders. What do we need to do first?

We saw the rest of Nauvoo, including the senior missionary show in the cultural hall that night. Then we headed for Winter Quarters, the last historical site on our trip. Also, Marilyn's daughter Susan was serving a full time mission in Omaha. So we planned to see her too. Susan showed us around the area, and we started the last leg of our trip to Utah and our families there. Then we headed for home.

Now the problem of getting someone to check our mail, pay our bills and watch over our home had to be addressed. Also, the problem was getting Paul out and on his own so we would have a house left when we came back from our mission. We decided to let a young sister in the ward who just returned from a mission live in our house while we were away. Paul was shocked to learn he wouldn't have the run of the house. He tried to find some friends to hang out with. He hoped he would be able to find friends to stay with, and he had his old car for transportation. We knew now that getting his tickets paid off was supposed to be done.

The winter went fast. I closed the cabin at Tahoe and put Lanny and Robin in charge of that. Becky agreed to check our mail and pay our bills. Our papers sailed through and we were to report on March 15th, just as Elder Sorensen had anticipated. Elder Sorensen called about 5 times over the winter just to chat, we thought. Later we learned that he was really checking up on Veronica's voice and whether or not she could work in the Lands and Records office. He decided it was fine.

We left for Nauvoo a week early so we could visit our daughter's family in Layton, Melissa and Scott. We got in behind a snowstorm and followed it to Nebraska. We arrived in Nauvoo on March 15th as scheduled. The ground was just thawing out. They had rented us an old 100-year old house with no kitchen counter top and no cupboards, just some shelves with a curtain over it. There were no closets and no air conditioner.

The good thing about it was, that it was right next door to the first counselor in the Stake Presidency. The first night, as we were making our bed and feeling alone, the doorbell rang. It was our neighbor, sister Hahl, with a loaf of hot fresh bread and a bottle of home made jam and a cube of butter. She was so sweet. She became a lifelong friend. We call each other often and always visit when we are in Nauvoo.

My first job was to bring some material home and build a closet in our bedroom. They put a brand new bed and mattress in the room and Veronica started decorating. For a kitchen counter to work on, I brought home a piece of Formica they had left when they cut a hole for a kitchen sink in one of the missionary homes owned by the church. They assured us this home was only temporary. We had the Sorensens to dinner and as they saw how we were living, he promised us a nice home as soon as one became available. We grew to love that old house.

We were so relieved when we were told that we wouldn't have to be in the plays because of Veronica's spasmodic disphonia. However, I was assigned to oversee the parking of the cars. You would be surprised to see how some folks wanted to park at the cultural hall. Veronica felt bad for the women that had to work all day showing homes or working in the visitor's office with her and then have to rush home and cook a dinner and then rush to the play. So about twice a week she cooked dinner and had a couple over to give them a rest. She enjoyed a reputation for being an excellent cook. The other missionaries just waited and hoped for an invitation.

We loved our work. Veronica loved her work at the lands and records office. I worked there with her on Sundays. We had to leave church early to open the office. It was fun waiting on the people who came to find out about their ancestors. If they had family that came through Nauvoo, we had a record of it. We gave them maps of the old city, showing where their families' property was. Some, like my ancestors, Elijah Knapp Fuller and James Bevan, also had acreage on the outskirts of Nauvoo.

My work was really exciting. NRI had a list of repairs needed on all the buildings owned in Nauvoo. I worked on Brigham Young's home, Wilford Woodruff's home, and John Taylor's home. I suppose I worked on all the homes at one time or another. Also, the Seventies Hall. The main thing was to grind out any old decaying mortar and tuck point new mortar into the joints. The two biggest jobs I did, was to tear down and rebuild the chimneys and parapets on both the tin shop and the boot shop. Just these two jobs saved the church over \$40,000.

After a few months another bricklayer came to Nauvoo. He was Italian, and his wife was French. Luigi and Antoinette Guidi, were from Calgary, Canada and they are a special couple. Luigi learned the trade in the old country and he taught me a lot. We became best of friends and worked together every day. But then Luigi had a heart attack and because they were from Canada and socialized medicine, they had to go home for treatment.

He didn't get an operation for 8 months. They finished their mission at home checking missionary apartments. We still stay in touch and hope to see them each year at the mission reunions.

Our mission was strange as far as time frames. First they said we would serve for six months, then go home for the winter, and come back again next year for another six months. So we didn't take any winter clothes with us. After we got there and I reviewed the work that needed doing, we had a meeting with Elder Sorensen. I could do any thing they needed including help with carpentry work. Elder Sorensen told me I was to stay through the winter and then extend another six months. That would mean 18 months and we agreed. It meant we had to go shopping for winter clothes. Since my wife has a black belt in shopping I was not afraid. Our P days were spent shopping in Quincy and Keokuk and we had a great time.

In September, Elder Sorensen went home and Elder, and Sister Fry took his place as manager of NRI. Sister Fry became Veronica's boss in the lands and records office. They were also great people and we spent a lot of time either eating at their house, or them eating at ours. The last thing that Elder Sorensen did was to put us in a real nice house. We got to move into the Newberry house. It was an old 150-year-old house, owned in the early days by an artist named Newberry.

We loved that house. It had been remodeled and had a working fireplace and a large 2 to 3 acre lot. The entire rear wall of the family room was windows and looked out on the open lawn and trees. At daybreak we could watch the deer and in early evening a fox or some raccoons playing on the grass. Then at dark, the fireflies would come out and give us a show. We could have stayed there forever.

The house had one drawback. The previous tenants said they couldn't use the two upstairs bedrooms because of snakes. I took Luigi over and inspected the place. There were vines growing on the east wall. There was a hole in the eaves in some old decorative wood that had originally been made by woodpeckers, but chewed out bigger by raccoons. The closets upstairs were in bad shape and the plaster was falling off the ceilings. We knew the snakes were harmless black snakes by the skins left behind. We also knew the snakes were getting into the house through the attic. We also found little holes in the basement walls where snakes and mice could get in. If you know my wife at all, you know she almost didn't move in. Luigi and I spent over a week plastering closets and filling holes in the house from the eaves to the basement. We checked everywhere and found no more holes. We moved in and Luigi had to go back to Canada.

So during the winter months I did a lot of stone repair in all the basements in Nauvoo. They were all old limestone walls that leaked and were crumbling in spots. They were 150 years old and needed help. The only trouble was, the weather. The temperature got down below 0 degrees for 3 months. The Mississippi froze and I had to keep my sand in a heated building.

I went to work in insulated clothes picked up my truck and material and went to the job. I would have to take off my warm clothes as the basements now had modern furnaces in them. Then as I worked, I heated up and when I came out at noon to go home for lunch I was sweaty even in the insulated clothing. I got pneumonia from the extreme change in temperature and had to take off a week with antibiotics. Then a month later, as I learned to bundle up better, I got a sinus infection and more antibiotics. It was decided I needed one temperature all day. So another Elder and I built a new horse and hay barn. I enjoyed the change.

Most of the other missionaries had a change of pace too. Other than just a very few to show some of the sites most of them went into the surrounding towns and helped the schoolteachers. The schools loved the free help. Veronica's boss, Sister Fry, wouldn't let Veronica go. She wanted to give Veronica a chance to better organize all the information on the early saints, building the files with family journals and other information that had become available through Veronica's good friend, Professor Milton Bachman from BYU. Brother Bachman, who had been sending information to Nauvoo from BYU, also taught winter classes in Nauvoo. While he was in Nauvoo teaching, he spent a good deal of time in the lands and records office entering the information on the pioneers into the office computers. Veronica spent the first part of the winter months upgrading each family file. She loved her work and got a real testimony concerning the early pioneers.

One night Veronica had a dream concerning the people that went through early Nauvoo. She was told that there were many who didn't get to hear the gospel and belonged to other churches and they needed their work done also. She thought of this and couldn't figure who those people were. Then as she was helping people find their ancestors she realized she had only the LDS burial records. She inquired into other cemeteries of the area and found that there was a large Catholic cemetery just out of town on the way up the river toward Fort Madison. We had no information whatsoever on all those people.

Veronica asked all the missionaries working in Carthage about the records. One Elder, Elder Guertzen, was putting his wintertime in at the county court house where the records were. She asked him to inquire after the records. He reported that the records for that old cemetery were in a shambles, with no organization what so ever. Over the years the death papers were just written out and thrown in a drawer, loose, and in no order. The Elder asked if he could borrow the records and was told absolutely not. Veronica knew these were the people she was to organize, but how to get the records? She kept praying, "Father, if I am to find out about these people I need help." One day Elder Guertzen came into her office and said, "Guess what I have for you?" When she couldn't guess, he handed her a large manila envelope with hundreds of sheets of papers in it; all colors and sizes. She now had what she needed to do the work.

Veronica spent the rest of the winter deciphering and interpreting all the old notes and records. By spring she had it all done and alphabetized.

It was almost 2 inches thick and contained the names, birth date, and place of birth, death dates, and even the cause of death of each person in the Catholic Cemetery.

When Susan Black and her husband Harvey came from BYU after school was out, she asked Veronica what she had done over the winter months. Veronica showed her the record and said, "Now Carthage has a copy and a computer disc on their Nauvoo Cemetery." Susan Black, who has written over 100 books on the early pioneers and served with Veronica in the Lands and Records Office last summer, was astounded. She took Veronica's copy back to BYU, and it was printed and sent to all church genealogical libraries. Now the temple work could be done for these people and Veronica's dream or revelation was realized. She continued to love the work and could hardly wait to get to the office each morning. We still see Susan and Harvey Black; they are dear friends and lots of fun.

One funny experience made us all laugh. We had decided to have a district meeting in the martyrdom room in the Carthage Jail. There are no lights in that room as it's normally never used during the nighttime hours. There is only a simulated candle light on the mantle shelf. That small light made only a dim glow in the room. But that was fine, because we intended on having a testimony meeting and the spirit in that room is always very strong. As the meeting progressed, we took care of the normal business. Then we opened it up for testimonies. Each missionary stood and bore his or her testimony and most of us were in tears. It was a true spiritual experience. The next day however, two of the neighbors came and reported what they called "strange goings ons". The jail missionaries asked what they saw, and they said, last night they saw ghostly figures moving around in the upper room. The missionaries told them, "We know, it happens every now and then."

As the summer went by, more family came to visit. Each of our daughters and their families had visited. Then the in-laws came. First our daughter Becky's in-laws, the Stones came and visited a day or two. Then our daughter Melissa's in-laws, the Argyles, came to visit. They each enjoyed Nauvoo and the sites immensely. We took them to the old Nauvoo Hotel for the famous buffet. The catfish is out of this world.

One of my responsibilities, besides doing the brickwork on the buildings as needed was to repair and keep in safe condition all the walkways. This included the flagstone around the Carthage Jail. About once a month I would get a call that a piece of flagstone was missing. As the tour ends the tour guide states that the Prophet, when shot fell from the martyrdom room window and ended up by the well. We discovered that people were prying pieces of the stone paving out near the well and taking it for a souvenir. So I would have to always carry some flagstone in my truck so I could cut a piece and repair the hole, which people could trip in.

After a while, I was also put in charge of the old Nauvoo Temple Stone. People kept driving into the compound and dropping off stone. It had come from the old Temple and people had kept it as a souvenir.

Now they could see we were rebuilding Nauvoo and decided we should have the stone back. Soon I had a stack that encompassed an area of about 50 feet by 30 feet and 4 feet high. After a visit from some general authorities, a memo came. It said that the old temple stone was sacred and should be covered and protected from the elements. So we had to move it all under a big shed roof structure.

My most exciting job was to help in the new fence surrounding the temple lot. I built stone columns and benches at each corner of the temple lot. Then, stone columns at the gate openings. Then we put up new signs at the two front corners. They turned out beautiful. The landscape missionaries placed big planters at each end of the benches. But guess what? When the new temple was built they tore it all out. I was heartsick.

Another exciting experience on our mission was to see the reenactments. Soon after we arrived in Nauvoo, they announced that it was time for the sesquicentennial reenactment of the saints coming to Nauvoo from Quincy. It had been 150 years ago that the prophet brought the saints here after being expelled from Missouri under an extermination order. So on April 5th 1995, a wagon train left Quincy headed for Nauvoo. There were only about 6 wagons and several walkers. They arrived in Nauvoo in the late afternoon on April 10th, 1995. The whole town greeted them. They were all in period costumes and looked trail weary. The general authority present was Elder William Bradford, an area authority. There was a party that night with music and dancing.

The summer months were full of parties, picnics, and shopping in the nearby towns. We had great zone meetings with general authorities and church dignitaries. We saw the shows put on by the senior couples often with our guests. Also, each summer there were 12 young musical missionaries that put evening shows on at the visitors center from April till the last of August. They were so great; we all got to know them so well, we missed them when they left.

When fall came, the colors changed and it got much cooler. We had big dinners for the holidays at the stake center for all the missionaries. Each time the hall was decorated beautifully for the occasion. Thanksgiving and Christmas were so much fun.

That fall, my Sunday duty was changed. I was assigned to the tin shop to serve as a tour guide with Elder Neerings. He had been a sheet metal contractor so he knew what he was talking about. I gave the introduction portion in the living room.

At Christmas time they decorated each home just the way it would have been in the 1840's. All the missionaries took turns working till 9:00 PM, showing the homes. We were able to work in the log schoolhouse, John Taylor's home and the Seventies Hall. What a special experience it was. Nauvoo was lit up at each house and along the streets. The missionaries also went caroling.

The next reenactment was a cold one. On February 6th, 1846, the first wagons left Nauvoo for Utah. They set up a big tent to prepare for this reenactment. It would hold 1000 people. It was February 6th, 1996 and it was a day just like the original date. The Mississippi was frozen and the temperature was 35 degrees below zero. There was a brisk North wind blowing. They made everyone walk from Main Street down to the end of Parley Street where the tent was set up. The trouble was, there were over 1000 people that wanted to attend. So they had to raise the sides of the tent in several places for the standing room only people. This meant the kerosene heaters that were set up around the tent were worthless.

The speakers for the affair were historians from Utah. Our friend Susan Black was also a speaker. We were dressed in insulated clothing and our heads covered with wool hats. Still we were freezing, and our breathing caused clouds of steam rising in the tent. The steam would rise and then freeze on the top of the tent and fall back down like fine snow when the wind billowed the tent. When Susan started speaking she said, "This is the only time I have ever had to speak when frozen spit was falling on me."

When we left the tent it was even colder than at the beginning. They had a huge fire going at the waters edge. It was at least 6 feet high. Across the river in Montrose Iowa, they had another fire burning. We were told that another fire was burning at Sugar Creek, the first camp in Iowa at the same time. It was the coldest Veronica and I had ever been, but it was a real spiritual experience. It felt real good to get home and build a fire in the fireplace. But we couldn't forget that in 1846, the saints were still out there heading west and having babies in that cold.

Now I understood why they had me lay brick around the base of the monument at the end of Parley Street. Parley Street is also known as the "trail of tears". This is the street the early saints walked down as they left Nauvoo. Also we built a gazebo over the monument, which is the "exodus to greatness monument". As you walk in under the roof, you will see 6000 names on the inner walls. These are the names of the 6000 saints that died on the plains, on their way to the Rocky Mountains. It was getting cold when I did that work. One day it was starting to freeze and I couldn't pick up the bricks. They were frozen together. Elder Fry came by and I was showing him how the frost had everything locked down. I asked, "What do you suggest?" He said, "Elder, this work has to go forward, build a tent over the project and we will bring you a heater. So that's what I did. The project was to be part of the reenactment above, held in February.

The next and last reenactment was in June of 1996, reenacting the main body of saints leaving for the Iowa trail. Wagons and teams were arriving every day for several days before the day of departure. There were camps set up in much of the local pasture so the horses could feed. Each camp had a nice bonfire at night. Then on June 10th, in a light rain, they began ferrying horses and wagons across the Mississippi to Montrose Iowa. It took most of the day to get them all across.

That night they were all in a large encampment near Montrose and they had a large fireside to kick off the reenactment. We were able to attend. It was raining for a while, but then it quit and warmed up while the speakers were talking about the first exodus as compared to now. After the fireside it started raining again and rained hard all the way home. The next day the wagon train left and headed west to winter quarters.

We began shipping things home that we couldn't get in our car. We ended up shipping 54 boxes home via UPS. Remember, we came with only six months of summer clothing. We had purchased winter clothes and a complete Christmas. After 18 months, we could have stayed forever. We were known at the bank and all the stores within a 50-mile radius.

Our departure date was set for September 10, 1996. As the time got close we began thinking we should re-up for another six months. But we had problems at home. During the last winter, a big windstorm went through the Sierra Nevada Mountains, where we have a summer home. The wind blew down three huge fir trees. Each one was nearly 4 feet in diameter. One hit the cabin on the north end and one hit the porch, and the other one missed us. Our son-in-laws had the tree removed and boarded up the holes in the walls and covered the roof with a tarp. It stayed that way till we got home.

I finished all my masonry projects and went over what I had accomplished on my mission with the manager of NRI. I had saved the church well over \$100,000 dollars. Veronica finished all her projects and we started to realize that we were really going to be leaving. We each had to speak at our last Zone meeting. There were others leaving during the month also. They had a moon light carriage ride for all of us who were leaving. The horses pulled us all through the streets of old Nauvoo and we all sang the songs we loved, such as, We Thank Thee Oh God for a Prophet, Come Come Ye Saints, and many more. It was a very spiritual experience.

The day before we left, we went around Nauvoo and said goodbye to all our friends and local people we came to know and love. Especially the people we home taught for the ward, the Bishop, the Stake President, and our bosses at NRI. We sold our bikes to other missionaries and our extra refrigerator to a young couple in the ward.

Our day of departure had arrived and we started loading the car. We ended up being overloaded after all, but managed to get every thing in. We went to the Visitors center and picked up our last mail, said final goodbyes, and then just sat in the car and cried. We finally got embarrassed and drove away. We headed out across Iowa on the old Mormon Trail. We made it as far as Winter Quarters by nightfall. The next night we made Fort Kearny Nebraska. The last night out was in Cheyenne and, of course, the next day we easily made it to our daughter Melissa's house in Layton, Utah, where we stayed for a few days before coming home. To tell the truth we were in no hurry to get home. We thought we wanted to live in a small town like Nauvoo. So we looked around Utah for a small town, but nothing grabbed at our heartstrings. So we drove home.

This coming home thing scared us to death. First the freeways were traumatic, with people zooming by you at 70 to 85 miles an hour. We were used to 35 to 50 miles per hour. Every one you passed either way, coming or going in Illinois, waved hello as you passed. Also, along the Mississippi, you have to watch for deer and turtles. Anyway it took some time to get used to Sacramento again.

I got home just in time for deer hunting in California. Then we spent time with the family here. It was good being home for the holidays. As soon as we got home, the Stake President called us on a mission to Deseret Industries. My sister Wanda and her husband Walt had been there on a mission for over 10 years. Walt Cannon only served for 2 years, but Wanda stayed on. Now we would be serving with Wanda and other missionaries there for 2 days a week. We had no idea that we would be there for nearly 4 years.

Our son Paul had worked as a welder while we were away and had recently lost that job. He had saved enough to buy himself an old Chevy pickup truck with a cab over camper on it and was living in it out in front of our house. That was a real welcome home. We let him have meals with us, and the use of the bathroom. Really, he had done better than I had expected in our absence. But he couldn't find a regular job, his clothes were worn out, and he was drinking and smoking. He was irritable and unhappy.

Wintertime had arrived and I was working on plans to repair the tree damage at the summer home. The insurance company had paid me off and I put the money in a CD. In the spring of 1997, I had everything ready to go. However, the tree damage repair had suddenly become a major room addition. Veronica got her way again. The insurance payoff was about \$2,500 dollars short of what my estimates came in at. But as soon as the snow was off the ground we were there with permit in hand, digging foundations.

At first, I stayed at the cabin all the time. I hired Ken Richardson, my sister Rose's son, who is a carpenter, to help me. I also had a young great nephew, Chris Hamilton helping as a laborer. I soon realized that they didn't want to work weekends, so we started coming home on weekends. With only 13 weeks of summer up at the 7000-foot elevation, you want to finish projects as soon as possible. Most of the hard work was completed by August. I ran out of money to pay Kenny and Chris, so I went to work on the interior finish work. I would work until 9 or 10 PM each night. Veronica picked out carpet and by October, we were ready to put it down. I was ready to come home, as I had stayed up there alone for several weeks trying to get it done.

Of course, I took off for deer season and hunted in Oregon with Nick and Leo Chronis. During the early spring of the year, I had built a large fireplace for them in the home they were building on Leo's ranch in Ione. Dry Creek runs through the property, so we used river rock for the fireplace. It was about 14 feet wide and 13 feet high, with a 4 - foot firebox. With nearly 300 acres of oak trees they never wanted for wood. They also furnish all my firewood.

Paul and his girlfriend Julie moved into a duplex and Paul sold his old truck and camper. He went to work for a company that took old cars that were given for charity and tried to restore them enough to sell them or junk them. I bought Paul an old Toyota pick-up truck so he could get to work. Later Paul bought an old Porsche convertible and put another engine in it and sold his pick-up. Then they moved down the river near Walnut Grove. They lived in a converted shipping container. They decided they wanted a baby and they knew they had to quit drugs, alcohol and tobacco first. They didn't let their friends know where they were and we were told not to tell. They quit it all, cold turkey. I was proud of them. Before the baby came Paul was able to get a better job at a landscape firm and they moved into a little home out by McClellan Field. They had a baby girl. They were doing OK.

Veronica and I kept working at Deseret Industries for 3 and half years. But in the spring of 1999 we took a long over due vacation. We planned a trip to Egypt, Jordan, and Israel. We ended up with a group of friends from our ward. We flew to London, then to Luxor, Egypt. We stayed there for several days and saw many wonderful sites. We visited the Valley of the Kings and went in many of the tombs. We went through the Temple of Karnack and the tomb of Ramses II. We watched the river traffic on the Nile.

One thing special about the tomb of Ramses II, as we entered the tomb, our tour guide took me over to a painting of the pharaoh. He asked what I thought of Ramses robe? Then it dawned on me that Ramses was wearing a pleated temple robe over his right shoulder. He was also wearing an apron and a hat that you would probably recognize. Then our guide gave us the scripture in Abraham that explained why Ramses thought he had the priesthood.

Then we flew to Cairo and resumed our tour. We visited the Great Pyramids and went into the tomb areas. We rode camels and went into shops where they still made papyrus scrolls and paintings. We visited the gold merchants and the perfume factories. We also visited the world famous Egyptian museum where we saw mummies and chariots and many exciting artifacts. Everything was going fine until our Egyptian guide wanted us to try Egyptian fast food. That was a big mistake. I ordered a chicken sandwich, but got beef. It only took one bite to tell me I was in trouble. I could taste the rancid fat. My stomach began to boil. Did I tell you that Veronica's sister, Ethel, was with us? Well she was, and she apparently took two bites of sandwich. It wasn't long and she became deathly ill. I was suffering from bad diarrhea, the mummy's revenge. There were others on the bus that were also sick.

The next morning, at 3:30 AM, we headed across the Sinai Desert. We stopped at Saint Catherine's Monastery where Moses camped and went up on the mountain to talk with God. We were glad to get to real rest rooms as the bus was getting full. We visited the well of Jethro, where Moses defended the water for Jethro's flocks. We were a sick bunch of puppies and as we boarded a ship to cross the Red Sea, we were glad to leave the bus behind.

The bus needed a new toilet. The toilets aboard the ship were different. They consisted of a room with a drain in the floor and a hose to wash every thing down after use.

We landed in Aqaba, on the coast of Jordan, at sundown and went right to our hotel. They served us dinner, but not many ate it. It was a fish with the head on and the eyes looking up at you. Fortunately, we had a doctor from Salt Lake City on our tour. The next morning we stopped at a Jordanian pharmacy and he was able to get us the medication we needed to kill the bug we had. He said we had Ecoli poisoning. It took several days to work, and he was worried about Ethel. He put her to bed on the rear seat. Meanwhile, we were ruining this bus too. When we arrived at Mt. Nebo, where Moses looked into the Promised Land, we were so weak we could hardly walk up to the summit.

In Petra, we rode horses in to the carved sandstone monuments. The Treasury was beautiful. You might remember it from the movie, "Search for the Holy Grail." We visited many old churches and bible history sites. We were able to visit the spot where Moses smote the rock to bring forth water. They have built a building over the rock. The water still runs from it and they have a concrete pool to contain the run off. There were Bedouin families there, filling cans and bags to haul back to their tents.

The next day we crossed the Jordan River and stopped at the checkpoint on the Israel border. We had our passports checked and stamped as we did in both Egypt and Jordan. It was so neat, when our Jewish guide Svi came on board and, YES, it was a brand new bus. The old bus and guide and armed guard returned to Jordan. The first thing Svi said was, "Welcome to the Promised Land, you can now eat or drink anything you wish. This is the land of milk and honey."

Our new driver was Isaac, and he was really good. Our first stop was Tiberius on the Sea of Galilee. Here we enjoyed fresh fruit and vegetables and were able to drink water out of the tap. The food and hotels were out of this world. We were getting well also and putting on weight we had lost through dehydration and poisoning. It was Saturday, the Shabbat, or the Sabbath. We thought the elevators were broken, because they just came when they wanted to. Then we noticed that the hotel was filling up with rabbis and their families. They explained the elevator problem was for them. They couldn't push the up or down buttons because it would be working on the Sabbath. By staying at the hotel everything was done for them.

On Sunday morning, the Sabbath for us, we boarded a boat and sailed out on to the Sea of Galilee. It was a beautiful day, no wind and the sea was like glass. We stopped and we drifted on the calm water. We had a sacrament meeting and passed the sacrament. Several of us, who were bishops, blessed and passed it. We had a couple of short spiritual thoughts and some testimonies. It was a very spiritual experience.

We landed at Capernaum and saw the house of Peter, and near it the ruins of a synagogue where Jesus taught.

We went to the hill where Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount. It was a beautiful spot. There were the remains of villages recently excavated further up the mountain. Our driver Isaac (pronounced Ipsoc) picked us up and we went to Caesarea where much excavation is under way. We saw the prison where Paul was kept. We saw beautiful mosaic floors being cleaned for the first time in 2000 years. We walked in the surf of the Mediterranean Sea and some found artifacts. We then crossed over the Golan Heights, and watched Israeli tanks on maneuvers. Then we drove on down across the Valley of Armageddon and on to Jerusalem.

Our hotel was in New Jerusalem, just a few blocks from the walled city. We were on the 14th floor and could see all over the area. This was our base for the rest of the trip. From here we traveled to Bethlehem and saw the birthplace of the Savior. We visited the mountain top fortress of Massada. We swam in the Dead Sea. We walked through the ruins of Cumron, near where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. We visited Jericho. We traveled to the Shepard's field, where the angels told of the birth of the Messiah. We visited the old Jewish Quarter and saw the tomb of King David. We were able to enter into the Dome of the Rock, a very sacred Arab spot. We followed the last week of the Savior in his footsteps. The Via Dolorosa was the toughest for us. It was all-uphill and it was warm. I had to give Veronica three nitroglycerin pills in the time it took us to walk it.

The next day we visited the olive wood shops in the old city and watched them carve olive wood. We also bought some to bring home. We went to the garden of Gethsemane; those old olive trees are still there. There were churches everywhere and they controlled the sacred spots. The busiest spot, I think, was the Wailing Wall. We put in long days. One day we were out 22 hours. No wonder it was called the Hubba Hubba tour. Our tour director was La Mar C. Barrett, a retired BYU Professor. He has made the trip 48 times. Is it any wonder he is so well known? Whether we were in Jewish or Arab lands or villages, they ran to him and hugged him. That is why we got to see so much that other tours miss. On our last and 14th day, we thought we would have a leisurely trip to Tel Aviv and catch our plane back to London. Not so, we loaded early and spent the day on a round about way to the Tel Aviv airport. We saw the Valley of Elah. This is where David slew Goliath. We picked up rocks from the same streambed that he did. We visited a large base of armored cars and tanks, captured by the Israeli army in past conflicts. We toured ancient caves that were huge. We were the first tourists to visit the Hazan Caves, which were used to produce olive oil and smuggle it into the temple of Jerusalem by night.

We finally got to Tel Aviv and flew back to London. Then we endured the long flight home. This trip was probably the best experience of our lives. About three months later we had a tour reunion at the Ogden's cabin in Midway. We shared pictures and showed our scrapbooks to each other.

You might remember my talking about giving Veronica nitro heart pills in Jerusalem. In September the Doctors were ready to operate. She had open-heart surgery on September 17 and had a 4-way bypass.

We were recuperating for several weeks. I came close to losing my sweetheart that day. She didn't seem to want to come out of the anesthetic. She said she saw her parents and she wanted to go to them, but her mother was shaking her head no! She also remembered that Melissa has given birth to a little girl that day and she would never see that baby in this life if she didn't fight to survive. She wouldn't eat her food unless I was there to feed her and beg her, by telling her she had to get strong. They even used a new method of forcing air into her lungs. She finally got stronger and wanted to come home. I brought her home and she did do better there. She wanted to see the new baby so I took her to Utah as soon as the doctor would let me.

The new baby's name was Mikelle. We considered her a miracle baby because of her birth. On the 17th day of September, the same day as Veronica's heart surgery, Melissa was still 3 weeks from delivery. When she woke up that day, she noticed the baby was not moving or kicking. She called her doctor and they were both worried. She went right in for a check up and was set up for an emergency C-section. They made it just in time. Another few hours and Mikelle would not be here.

The weird part of the birth is, that when Veronica was being wheeled into surgery, she called my daughter Tana over to her and said, "Tana, Missy is having her baby today by cesarean and I won't be able to go help her. You've got to go to Utah and do this for me. Tana just agreed with her mom on everything thinking it was the meds they gave Veronica. But when we got a call later in the day, we found out it was all just like Veronica said it would be.

The next year we made about 8 trips to Utah to see that baby and our other kids. We spent a lot of time up at the cabin too. Sometimes, we left for Utah from the cabin and returned to the cabin. I started working a little for my son-in-law Scott Argyle in his engineering firm building concrete monuments for his survey crew.

Later in the summer, when we were visiting, Scott invited me to come on an archery elk hunt with him and his father, Horace. I was to be the cameraman. We hunted in the mountains of central Utah, near the town of Salina. We had 4 wheel drive ATV's, and got into some beautiful country and lots of elk.

I had been on several deer hunts in Wyoming, where half the party had elk tags, so I knew how to get close to the elk. After watching a herd of elk move from their bedding place to their feeding area, I knew where we should set up. That evening, we went out, dressed in full camouflage, including face paint and elk urine on our boots. We made a few cow calls and got an answer. Then we hid behind a log and waited. Before long I could hear heavy breathing, like a horse climbing a hill. I warned Scott to get ready. In just a few minutes, an elk appeared on the trail just below us. Scott had already ranged the trail at 43 yards. When the elk stopped and looked up at us, Scott fired his arrow, and it was a perfect shot right through the lungs. The elk ran down hill 40 yards and dropped dead. We were two excited hunters.

When Scott's dad joined us, he couldn't believe his eyes. I gutted the elk and we left it there in the woods to cool out over night. The next day, we came back with 5 strong, young guys and our Indian friend, Frank. He cut the good meat off the elk and we put it in packs and hauled it out in one trip. I had some great footage on film, but I was so excited, I didn't get the actual kill. Scott and I cut up the meat on Melissa's kitchen counter, which we got in trouble for, and wrapped it for the freezer. It was delicious.

I got home just in time for deer hunting in California and then Oregon. We harvested several deer in Oregon. The camping out, the good food, and the campfire stories are fun, regardless of the success of the hunt. Sometimes we go back to Oregon for elk, if we're lucky enough to draw elk tags too. The elk season is later in the fall so another trip is required. If it snows in Oregon before the second trip, so much the better.

In the year 2000, I finally got around to rebuilding the back porch of the cabin. I also built another little septic tank and leech line for the gray water. It had worked well and we have had no problem with excessive filling of the septic tank. We enjoyed the cabin as much as possible.

My sister Wanda, who raised me was involved in an auto accident and began to fail. She decided she could eat anything she wanted and it wasn't long till she developed diabetes. She had a stroke and spent some time in the hospital. The doctor said she could not live alone anymore. We brought her home to our house and kept her until the schools were out and her daughter Joan and Joan's husband, Bill, came to California for the summer. Joan took Wanda up to their cabin, which is very near ours.

In the fall, Joan took Wanda back to Iowa with her to live. I was instructed to sell Wanda's house. This was possibly the hardest thing I ever had to do. I enlisted Kenny our family carpenter to help me. We had to tear out bathrooms and shower stalls, and rebuild them. Walt, Wanda's husband, was a pipe fitter by trade. However he was into all the trades a little. He had wired up a lot of things in their house and garage to be different. Unfortunately, it was all illegal and considered code violations. We worked days pulling this bad wiring out and putting things back in order. Bill, Joan's husband worked days getting the house empty. Some furniture was given to family, some went to Deseret Industries. Bill was sick by the time he was loaded up with Wanda's precious things to haul to Iowa.

I finally sold the house and got the new owners satisfied. They loved the house and had a lot of yard work done. Wanda's memory began to slip and she never forgave me for selling her house. She didn't remember that the check for the house was in her name.

We still spent a good deal of time up at the cabin that summer. We also took a trip to Utah to see our daughters, Melissa and Robin. I worked for Melissa's husband Scott for a few days building monuments for his survey crew. In payment, he agreed to take me on an elk hunt in Utah in the fall.

This time I would have a license too. The time came fast for our Utah elk hunt. We went to a little different place. It was a dry year and the elk were very quiet. We had some beautiful ATV rides that went for miles along the mountain trails. Some elk answered our calls but were way down in deep dark canyons where we couldn't go. We hunted hard for 4 days and didn't see a thing, except for the skunk that kept trying to get into our cook tent every night at dinnertime. He got in once and we didn't do a thing but sit there and watch. Then he wandered around the stove till he got tired of it and left on his own accord. We went home empty handed but happy for the good time we had had.

Again, I came home in time for the California and Oregon hunting seasons. My nephew Leo got a bear in California that year and a spike elk in Oregon. There were nine of us in camp, but only 2 elk harvested.

We could stay at the cabin later in the year now because of the new furnace donated by my son-in-law, John Stone. We had carpet throughout the cabin. We loved to watch it snow while we were snug and warm. We always have 4X4 automobiles so we are not afraid of getting snowed in. It always makes us feel sad to close up the cabin in the fall, so this year we didn't close it. We left the heat on low and on Thanksgiving the family came up for Thanksgiving dinner and games and to play in the snow. We had to bring every thing in on sleds. But every one had a great time. We had 34 people come up, 23 stayed over-night. We cooked 2 turkeys and a bunch of pies.

That next Christmas, we went to Utah and spent time with our new baby. We also spent some time at the Utah Olympics. It was so cold, I could only last about one hour down town. Then Scott would have to go get the car for me. Veronica was having a hard time too. Even so, we had fun at the Olympics. We were able to purchase the Olympic hats. We also toured the newly remodeled visitors center on Temple Square. It was better than the Olympics. The new exhibits were so real that I just stood and cried.

We had to be home by the 19th of January for my first knee operation. As every body knew, I have had really bad knees for a longtime. The cartilage was gone and it was just bone on bone. The first knee was totally replaced with a new titanium steel knee. Everything went well and I was home in 5 days. They sent a therapist to the house twice a week. They also let me bring home a machine that exercised my knee even while I was sleeping. Before I knew it they had me walking with a cane and going up and down stairs. I took it pretty easy that spring and summer. But, by fall I did go deer hunting. Nick and Leo drove to where I could walk just a short way and sit on a stump.

That summer, Paul and Julie were married in our yard and Paul was able to support his family by laying brick and block. We were so pleased at the progress he is making. They had their second child that next winter and it was a little girl that looked just like Paul and the Croff side of the family. Now they have two girls, Brianna and Courtney. They started to come to dinner as much as possible on Sunday, so we can see the kids and watch them grow. Julie is a good mother.

In August of that year, I had my second knee replaced. The operation did not go as well this time; I was in recovery for several hours. When I did get to my room I found that I had two big blisters on my lower leg. No one could or would tell me how it happened or what caused them. For a while, the blisters were much more painful than the knee surgery. But again, my doctor, who was the chief Orthopedic Surgeon, had done a good job. The good therapists and nurses came and I finished therapy at the hospital. My knees were doing fine. I couldn't kneel on them, but I think I will be able to some day. I didn't exert myself as I went hunting that fall. I just sat on a rock a little way from the truck.

We had our usual long Christmas season. We put up Christmas decorations just after Thanksgiving and didn't take it down till a week after New Years. We do it that way most of the time, unless we put it up even earlier. My wife loves Christmas.

Our Grand daughter Summer, who was living in Utah, decided to go on a mission. She came back to California and moved in with us. She was so much fun. She came home each night and we had long talks together. She lived here for almost three years and we never had a problem of any kind. What totally surprised me is that there was never anything out of place in her bathroom or her bedroom. It was so much fun when she got her mission call to Portugal. When she left for her mission, it was like another daughter leaving. We were so sad; we've missed her terribly. But she served a great mission and is happily married and living in Texas with her husband Josh, and they are very happy.

About this time our grand children started getting married. Shane was first, then Jenny. The next was Summer and then Brandon Stone. Four of my daughter's Becky's kids were married that year. Anthony and Jessica were next. Most of the weddings were in Utah or California.

Brandon Stone married a girl from Virginia, so we all went back to the Washington D C Temple for that one. While we were there we met the Hurst's, who are friends from our ward. We met them after the wedding and toured the area, as well as all the famous old homes, such as Mt. Vernon, Washington's home and Jefferson's home. We visited old Williamsburg, Jamestown, and several more historic sites. We ended up in Baltimore, Maryland.

The Washington DC trip was in the spring and the other weddings were in Utah so that meant several trips to Utah that year. The weddings were all fun. It's great to watch your family grow. We spent as much time as possible at the cabin in the summertime and enjoyed having friends up to visit. We also made a trip to Idaho to visit with Veronica's sisters. They rented a Seventh Day Adventist camp and we had a family reunion. The food was too good and we both gained weight. We saw a lot of family we haven't seen for a long time.



Veronica and Susan Easton Black, on our mission in Nauvoo

Our hunting group drew elk tags for Oregon that fall. So after we hunted deer in California in September, October found us in Oregon. We harvested two spike bulls and felt lucky. The weather did not cooperate. The thing we needed was a snowstorm, but it didn't come.

Veronica and I bought a new Explorer SUV as a Christmas gift to ourselves. We gave the old one to our daughter Robin who had moved to Utah and needed a four-wheel drive vehicle.

It seemed like every time we went to Utah in the winter months we hit a major storm. It is really a satisfying feeling to hit deep snow and just push a button and be in four-wheel drive. Other people are sliding all over the road or ending up in the ditch.

After the holidays are over we are always ready for a trip. This year we signed up for a tour with a BYU group to visit church history sites. Susan and Harvey Black, our Nauvoo mission companions were sponsoring a trip to Palmyra, NY and the Hill Cumorah Pageant. Then we went to the Susquehanna River, where Joseph Smith and Oliver Coudry were given the Aaronic Priesthood, and finally to Kirtland, Ohio.

We were able to visit the new Palmyra Temple, which had been built since our last visit. We were also able to attend the Hill Cumorah Pageant. My sister Wanda had seen it several times and told me it never rains during the pageant. Well, guess what? It rained a fine mist for a while and then came down hard and soaked us all pretty good. I really felt sorry for the actors with their skimpy buckskin breechclouts and feather headdresses. We were glad to get back to the motel and a hot shower and dry clothes. I couldn't help wonder how the early saints felt when they went through a spring storm and got soaked, but had no dry clothes to put on. Still, there were 7,000 chairs set up and they were nearly full all through the show. The next day we traveled to Kirtland and the weather was beautiful. I hope and pray my family will feel the love and respect for the early saints that I do and visit all the church history sites. Kneeling in the sacred grove with your wife is a spiritual experience you will never forget.

That summer we traveled to Utah two or three times and spent as much time at the cabin as possible. I built new railing on the back porch of the cabin to protect the little grandchildren from falling off. The family all came to the cabin for the Fourth of July. It's always a big deal for the kids and had become a family tradition. They always spend the day at the beach and then they go back at night to see the fireworks. The casinos spend many thousands of dollars each year for fireworks, and they are spectacular.

On one Utah trip, we were able to see our grandson Cody Walker in a play. This time he was performing at Tuaccon, near Saint George, Utah. He was in Joseph's Technicolor Dream Coat. It was spectacular. As you might know the stage is outdoors on the face of a red rock canyon. They had real camels and horses on stage. We stayed at the home of our mission leaders, Brother and Sister Fry, in Saint George, and they went to the show with us.

The next day they gave us a tour of the area, which was beautiful. We had our daughter Robin with us and we had a great time. We had a chance to attend a session in the Saint George Temple, where we ran into Billie and Frank Little, old, but dear friends.

Back in Layton, Utah, we spent some time with Melissa and Scott also and enjoyed their kids. Scott and I have a lot in common and we play on his ATV's as much as possible. Whenever possible, Scott and I practice with our bows. Archery is a great sport and Scott is a very accomplished archer with the finest equipment. Scott bought into the ownership of the engineering company he worked for and now he is an owner, and the principle engineer. He is very bright and very successful in his business.

Meanwhile our grandchildren keep coming and going on missions. Brandon Walker is home from Peru, Shane Walker is home from Mexico, Cody Walker is home from Kentucky, Brandon Stone is home from Nova Scotia, Andrew Stone is home from Denmark, Jesse Crosby is home from Chile, Summer Crosby is in Portugal, and Wyatt Walker is leaving for New York soon, where he will be speaking Mandarin Chinese.

That next fall I took John Stone, Becky's husband, and grandsons, Tyler and Garret turkey hunting up at Leo and Nick's ranch and we had a great time. We called in a small group of mixed birds and when John shot the first one, all the rest flew right into the two boys and Leo's two girls. It sounded like a war. When the shooting was over, we had five turkeys. We all had great time.

I went hunting that fall for deer in Oregon with Leo and Nick. There were several more friends that joined us there and we harvested several deer. The country is beautiful and cold. It was an archery hunt, so it was hard to get close enough. We came over a little rise and jumped several deer, Leo arrowed a nice buck. I came home empty handed much to my wife's liking. The temperature is always cold up there. We often start our morning in coats and gloves in 10 to 15 degree weather. By the afternoon it is usually up to 65 degrees. My new - 0 degree sleeping bag feels good on those cold nights.

However, we always have a problem. For Nick and I to enjoy some comfort, I made a box with no bottom and installed a toilet seat on it. A black garbage bag fits the inside. I think you can picture this contraption. I know that after a good dinner some of the young guys sneak out and use our privy, but they never admit it. They think Nick and I are sissies for even having it. The real problem is, that neither Nick nor I want to be the first one out there at 5:00 AM scraping the frost off that seat to use it. We need to devise a cover, which is heated.

Now it's the spring of 2004. We've started going to Utah as early in the spring as possible. However, when I say spring, I'm talking California spring. That's usually in February. When we get to Utah, it's still winter. This time I took my tools. Scott and Melissa had started to build a new home and I was asked to build the fireplaces for them. I had loads of fun doing it.

There was a corner fireplace on the main floor and one right below it in the basement. Both were rock or cultured stone and they turned out nice I think. At least Scott and Melissa seemed very happy. The biggest problem was that I had to carry hod for myself. On the first day, Scott's dad, Horace, helped me, and on the last day Melissa helped me. Scott had come down with a bad flu. The last few days the lifting of the heavy bags of cement got to me and I came home with a sore back. A few trips to Kaiser and some traction and I was well again. It was good for Melissa to see how hard it was to take care of my mortar and stone needs and still lay the stone. I think she appreciated it all the more. The thing I love about building with brick and stone is that it is a monument for all to see, and it's there forever, or as long as the building stands.

When we came home in April it was just thinking about turning to spring there in Utah. In fact, we hit a good snowstorm near the Nevada border. When we got home it was beautiful and every thing was in blossom and everything was green. I had to hurry and put in my garden. The winters in Utah are too long.

On Mothers day that spring, Tana's son Jesse eloped and married Devon. In case you didn't know, Jesse and Josh are building houses now. They learned the business from their dad, Chris Crosby. Jesse is planning to move to Idaho and build homes there with his brother-in-law.

We went back to Utah later that spring to see the house after Scott and Melissa moved in. It was beautiful. The fireplaces were even more pleasing after the paint Melissa chose for the walls was completed. The finish was great and the carpet and new furniture all complemented each other. The basement was semi finished and I was able to install the baseboard for them. It was rather difficult as it had round corners. But it turned out fine. They were painting the walls and ceiling themselves and all that was lacking was carpet.

We had another granddaughter get married while we were in Utah. Becky's youngest daughter Jessica and her husband Dave were married in the Timpanogas Temple. They had a beautiful reception in American Fork.

The cabin was enjoyable during the hot summer months, as it is much cooler at 7000 feet. The bear that had been bothering us seemed to have gone elsewhere. We had the big group as usual on the 4th of July, with all the good food and games. Some of the group played rummy and some played horseshoes out back, and some just curled up on a couch and read. My sister Wanda's cabin is right next door to my cabin, so some of them come over to play games at our place and some of our little grandkids go over and play with Wanda's great grandkids. We didn't know it at the time, but this was to be Wanda's last summer at her cabin, or for that matter the mountains she loved so much. She wasn't doing well when she went back to Iowa in the fall with her daughter Joan and her husband Bill Rice.

I spent a lot of time working in the yard getting it more conducive to our trips away from home. I sprayed weeds and applied pre-emergence granules and then wood chips in the planters and flower areas, and everything is on a drip irrigation system. So we can stop the paper and just go. Everything is watered and my gardener Juan takes care of the lawn.

One exciting thing happened in September, our son's wife Julie announced that she was going to be baptized. We had been waiting for that and it made us very happy. She asked me to confirm her and I did. The entire California part of the family was there. In talking to her later, she seemed happy and enjoys Relief Society. Of course that meant that Paul had to start taking them to church each Sunday and the kids enjoyed that.

Fall came fast and we were fortunate enough to draw rifle elk tags in Oregon. We watched the weather reports carefully. It was calling for early snow in the mountains. We got all ready to go and the exciting news came. The first major snowstorm of the season was going to hit on the night before we were scheduled to leave for Oregon. We were excited because every year we have hunted elk in Oregon, the weather had been too mild. The elk were still up in the high wilderness area where we couldn't go. Now, with this big storm hitting right at the season opener, the elk would have to come down and we would be there just at the right time.

We were up at Leo's ranch loading the truck and trailer. We were going to leave early in the morning. Then the weatherman said that the storm was going to hit in the middle of the night. We decided to leave as soon as we were loaded to beat the snow over the Sierras. We did just that and we were in Reno by midnight. The storm hit us just as we were leaving Alturas. We fought snow until about 4:00 AM and we reached Lakeview Oregon. We stopped there and slept for three hours in a Safeway parking lot. We woke up and found a restaurant and had breakfast. By then the sporting goods store was open and we picked up our tags.

We had snow all the way into camp. Camp was in Southeast Oregon, a few miles east of Seneca. We didn't find the right spot, as far as we were concerned, until three in the afternoon. It was starting to snow heavier as we set up camp. We put up tarps to form a roof over the cooking and eating area and just at dusk we were set. We were so excited as the snowflakes got bigger and bigger.

This was the weather we had been hoping for, and had been for several years. We just knew the big bulls would come down out of the wilderness area and come through our area. We were wet and cold, but happy hunters as we ate hotdogs and prepared to turn in. We started the propane space heaters for a while and got the temperature in the trailer up to sixty degrees, put on dry underwear and jumped into our bags.

The next morning there was eight inches of new snow. We knew that up in the higher elevation there would be two feet or more and the elk had to come down. We jumped in the four-wheel drive trucks and started out for areas we knew they would have to cross.

Almost immediately we started seeing tracks in the fresh snow. They were all going south. We drove to different roads and crossings, but every track was headed south. Leo jumped out and followed some of the freshest tracks. He saw some cows and calves, but no bulls. We followed them south for four days. Then we had to admit that they came down all right, but they crossed in the night and kept right on going. We had a good time, but came home empty handed.

We managed to wait too long to get up and close the cabin and had to do it in the snow again. Pulling all the perishable food out on sleds is no fun. It was only October but there was almost two feet of snow. Our daughter Tana helped us and we were out of the mountains before dark.

The holidays started before Thanksgiving for us, as usual. Christmas eve was out at the Stones this year and then every one came to our house on Christmas day for a big buffet and get together. It's always sad to take down Christmas and put it away. We don't know how long we'll be able to do it by ourselves. Tana comes in to help her mom with the tree decorations now.

In February we went to Utah to see the kids Christmas. It was still winter and we were pretty much due for inside activities. My son-in-law, Scott, told me to bring heavy clothing. He surprised me by having a pheasant hunt set up in a private club. I had never done that so I was very excited to go. One of his clients of his engineering firm offered the club and a new Polaris six by six ATV. Scott's father Horace went with us and we were in for a surprise. The client had also arranged for two good dogs to go hunt with us. I thought I was in hunting heaven.

We were hunting in six inches of hard packed snow up in Cash Valley, Utah. The first rooster that came up crossed right in front of me. To my surprise, I made a beautiful shot and the dog brought it to the handler. About that time birds came up everywhere and Scott and his dad got their birds. Then another young man came up with another dog, a beautiful black lab. He wanted to do some training for his dog and offered to help us. Now we had three good dogs. The black lab was awesome. His owner had paid \$2500 for him as a pup. He was now two years old and becoming famous in the area. He found birds the other dogs missed.

He found a dead bird some other hunters had lost and he even caught a live bird that didn't jump out of the snow fast enough. We were supposed to kill 15 roosters, but by noon we had 19. What an experience, I have heard about such hunts, but I didn't know I would ever be able to experience it myself. We had our picture taken with the birds and the dogs. The young man with the Lab was impressed by our ability to shoot well and wanted a picture for his web page.

When we arrived back at the clubhouse I was thinking, "Oh no, now we have to clean and butcher all these birds."

But, as we ate our lunch another young man came and got our birds and said that while we were fishing he would take care of our birds. I thought, fishing in February? Oh yes, they gave us fly rods and put a little red worm hook on it. We rode the ATV down to their stream and it was loaded with giant rainbow trout. What a blast that was. We caught several nice trout. Scott had one on that he could not land. It went off down stream with Scott following, until it broke the leader. It was all catch and release of course. Then the young man appeared with our birds. They were all breasted out and sealed up in freezer bags and in an insulated container ready for the road. We loaded up and headed for home. What a day. That night I still had smile on my face like it was my honeymoon night. After all it was the hunt of a lifetime for me. Thanks Scott.

Again, we left winter in Utah and came home to spring flowers and trees in blossom. I'm always amazed at how people can like to live in Utah with the long winters. Then something like the pheasant hunt happens and I understand. They just put warm clothes on and go on living.

In March the spring turkey season started in California and my grandson Garret killed his first turkey on Leo's ranch. We always have fun trying to out smart the turkeys. Last year was the second year Garret hunted turkeys and we showed him how not to do it. We sat in a hollow under an oak tree and Leo made some hen calls. Some toms heard us and started coming toward us fast. Leo said to freeze so they wouldn't see us scrambling for cover. We were all in camouflage and this big tom kept running right up to us and busted us. We didn't even have time to get a gun up and he took off. But Garret made up for it this time, he waited for the tom to get close and then he busted him. He got the only bird.

A few days later, Leo took me on a fishing trip down in the delta. We were fishing for striped bass and sturgeon. We didn't catch any bass, but we caught one sturgeon that was too small to keep because it was only two feet long. Then we caught one that was forty-nine inches long, a keeper. Leo has a pontoon boat that is thirty feet long and has a galley, a bathroom and sleeps eight people. It also has a portable Bar-B-Q. We always stay out all night and have a Bar-B-Q dinner of some kind. Some time it's steak or tri-tip, but it could be just hotdogs. It all tastes good on the boat.

In May, our daughter, Becky, and her husband John, went on a Mediterranean cruise. This meant grandma and I had to baby sit the three boys that still live at home, for two weeks. We enjoyed the boys and they were no trouble at all. They were in school all day so we did a little reading.

We went to Utah in June, planning to stay almost the entire month. We stayed with each daughter for several days. Then we attended our Nauvoo Mission reunion in Manti. We really enjoyed the reunion. Especially seeing our old friends, and getting reacquainted. We swapped a lot of old mission stories. When we arrived at the sign in table, they yelled, "It's the soup lady". Veronica didn't know they all loved her compassionate soup so much. Several sisters told her that they had the recipe taped up on their cupboard doors.

Others just raved over the good meals they had eaten at our house. We got to see the Manti Temple Pageant, and it was great. We also got to go through a session and enjoyed that. As you all know the Manti temple has a live session, and it was special. At our reunion meeting, we had a keynote speaker who had been both the temple president, and the stake president. He told us about the early days and the temple building problems. First, I was glad to hear that Chief Walkera, had asked Brigham Young to send saints into the San Pete Valley. This valley is so beautiful, I almost cried just thinking about the white men invading it. The Chief wanted his people to learn to grow their food. It seems that the city of Ephraim, also wanted the temple built in their town. They each built a stone tabernacle to be ready for a temple. Brigham Young sent word that he would personally come down and settle the argument. When Brigham arrived, he looked over both spots. He then retired for the night to consider the matter.

When Brigham came out the next day, he took the brethren to top of the hill in Manti. There, he stuck his cane into the soil and said, "Brethren, this is the spot that Moroni dedicated for the building of a temple in this valley. The church paid \$57.00 for 27 acres of ground, and a strong running spring above the site, which still supplies water for the temple today.

The saints arrived in Manti in November, much too late for crops or much home building. All they could do was build dugouts into the side of the hill, and gather as much dried forage for the stock as possible. They had 500 head of cattle with them and half of them died during the winter. This delighted the Indians, as they were able to gather up and eat the dead cattle.

The prophet has blessed them that their crops would be bountiful. That first spring they planted, and diverted water to their fields. The land was fertile, and the crops came in strong. Then the worst happened, the locusts came, eating everything in their path. All the saints could do was pray, and pray they did. The locusts came right to the edge of the fields, and then begin dieing, and then pulled back and disappeared. Those first bountiful harvests set them up, and took the pressure off. They started the Temple, but they had to raise at least \$200,000, to help build it. Again they prayed. This time the chickens helped. The brethren decided that all eggs laid on Sunday, should be the Lords. They sold those eggs and raised \$227,000 dollars.

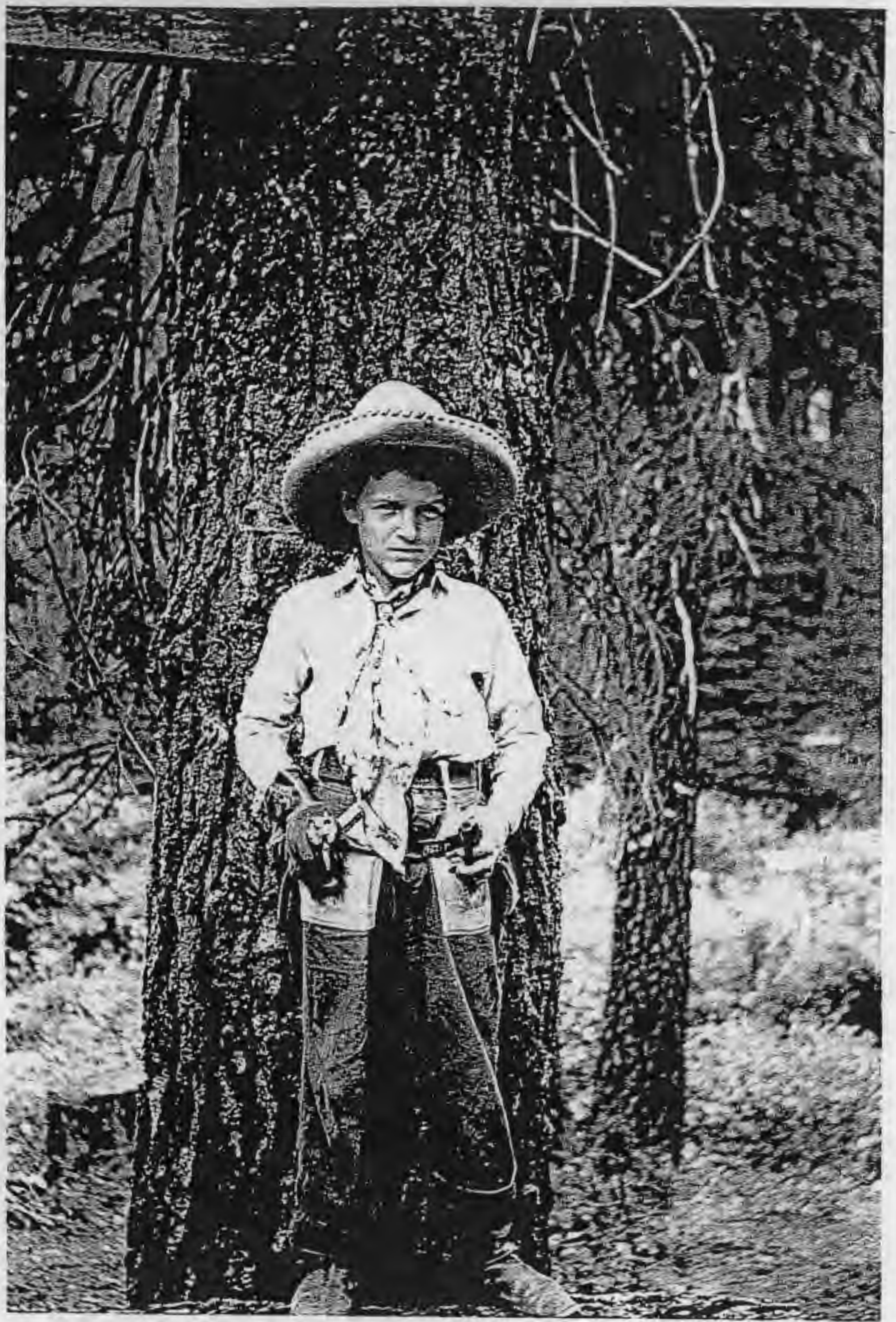
A few years ago, the prophet came down and met with this good temple president. They walked through the temple, visiting every room. The Prophet said, "President, as you know they have remodeled both the Logon and the St. George Temples. What you may not know is that they have taken most of the old pioneer workmanship out, and replaced it with new, such as doorknobs, hinges, and locks. The Manti Temple is going to be remodeled. I want you to have all these beautiful examples of our pioneer forefathers old world craftsmanship removed and put back after the remodel is completed."

He advised us to look closely, as we went from room to room, and see this beautiful workmanship. We looked very carefully at each door and hinge as we passed through. I can't describe the design in the heavy cast brass hardware. But those of you who have been to Egypt will recognize it. It was magnificent. He also said that we would be able to look into the Holy of Holies, and to realize that the beautiful blue color was untouched during the remodeling. The reason the color is so beautiful, is that it was painted with a brush, with only one bristle or hair. It is a site to behold. You couldn't put a knife blade between the strokes.

Some of the Elders we served with had some funny stories. This one I especially liked: A little boy was becoming a terrible liar. His teacher was determined to stop him, if she could. She asked the principle to help. He said, "Sure, if he tells another whopper send him to me, I'll tell him one that will make him realize how unbelievable his lies are." School started and Johnny came to class just dieing to give a report on the holiday. The teacher asked, "Well Johnny, what did you do over the holiday?" Johnny jumped up and excitedly said, "My dad and I went fishing and we caught 100 fish, and every one weighed fifty pounds." The teacher said, "Alright Johnny, you go to the principles office right now." So Johnny went to the principles office. The Principle said, "Well Johnny, you must have told a another whopper huh?" Johnny said, "Oh no sir, I just told about my fishing trip with my dad, we caught 100 fish and every one weighed 50 pounds." The principle thought a minute, and then said, "Johnny, It just so happens that I went fishing too. But just as I was approaching the creek, a giant grizzly bear jumped out, growling and snapping his teeth, and slashing with his claws. I thought I was a goner, but guess what? Just then a little black and white dog ran up, jumped up on the bear, bit his throat and killed him instantly. What do you think of that?" Johnny thought a minute, then he said, "You know, that's my little black and white dog and that's the third bear he's killed this year."

We came back home to ripe tomatoes, and peaches falling on the ground. We packed up, and went to the cabin for the 4th of July. Only a few came this year, Robin, Lanny, and Lacey came from Utah. Tana and Chris came up, with Logan. Becky stayed home, and Paul went camping with his family. Joan and Bill Rice came, and had the big 4th of July dinner with us. Paul dropped in to say hello to Robin and her family. Then we came home to rest.

So here it is, summer again; Paul opened the cabin for me. Both Robin and Melissa and their families came for a week. We had loads of fun. We then went back for Wyatt's homecoming. He gave a great talk and had a great mission. It was strange hearing my grandson speaking Chinese. The day after he spoke he left for Taiwan for two weeks to teach in a school there. We also went to Saint George and Tuaccon and saw Cody and Valorie, in Joseph's Technicolor Dream Coat. We had Tana with us, so we made a side trip to the cemetery, the Temple, the Mountain Meadow Massacre Site, and Minersville, where veronica was born. Tana had never seen these places so she was thrilled.



Bob in his comfort zone at age 10.



Bob in his comfort zone at age 75.

There is no use writing any further, the big steps in my life are over except for dieing and I don't want to write about that. I hope you all learned a lesson in watching Paul change from an irresponsible smoker and drinker to a good husband and father. He gave his bad habits away. Why? Perhaps because of love and long suffering by his family. Becky's son Anthony is happy now. He's happily married and his wife was also baptized. Never give up on your kids. I will end my life history with a chapter on my military service and my church callings. But first, I think I should clear up some old tales I left with my kids and grandkids. They are as follows:

That scar on my cheek, really wasn't caused from an Indian arrow. It was only a cyst.

That mean Indian, falling rocks, really didn't exist. I just said we would have to watch out for him, and the signs, " watch for falling rocks," just aided in my story.

The story about the deer running so fast, they rammed their heads through the cabin walls is not true. I just didn't want you to think I killed bambi's daddy.

Melissa, that little black birthmark on your foot, didn't really mean that you were a black baby, left on our doorstep, and you turned white from living with us. You are our very own baby girl.

Cody, you really weren't a little adopted Indian boy, you really are a Walker, and my grandson.

Amber, you also were not an adopted Indian baby. Even though I told you your real name was Cheyenne, it's not, but I love it.

Crystal, your name of silver eyes suited you so well, I couldn't help it. You really are a Crosby.

You kids that have traveled to Utah with us; the town of Winnemucca is really not named after a little Indian girl named Winnie who fell in the muck.

Logan, you loved the Indian name "squatting dog", at first. But I'm glad we changed it to, "lame beaver", always remember the lame beaver is the smartest of all beavers. An Indian girl named Clay Basket once told me how the lame beavers had to be the strongest and smartest to survive. Your Aunt Melissa was there you could ask her.

I must say I am proud of all my grand children. I think I've gotten to know them all in one way or the other. Becky is my oldest daughter and has the biggest family. For years, when Becky and John would travel, we would go out and stay with their kids. It was fun watching them grow up. We were often surprised when they would come home from school for lunch with four or five guests. We were so proud of Brandon for serving a great mission in the cold of Nova Scotia. I'm also proud of him for joining the Air Force.

We were so happy to be able to attend his wedding in the Washington DC temple. We fell in love with Sarah too. Then Andrew served in Denmark, another cold country. We were so thankful that he was able to bring us some genealogy on the Christensen line. He is also doing well in Utah at UVSC. He is Assistant to the President of the college and is the Elders Quorum President. Tyler is a hard worker he finished his apprenticeship in the HVAC union and is now a journeyman. Garret is a great young man. I know he will go far in the world. He plans to go on a mission. He has been the best big brother in the world. John Joseph is a basketball star and so fun to watch. Trevor is growing up fast. He is in school now and is really excited. We started a tradition with him. Every time he comes over, he gets a present, (from the dollar store). It will be interesting to see when he thinks he is too old for that. Anthony married his cute little wife Nonna In our back yard and it was beautiful. Anthony's bishop married them. Nonna was baptized about a year later. Anthony is in the insurance business and is doing well. The girls, Jenny and Jessica are both special. Jenny graduated from long beach state and married a great guy, Matt. Both Jenny and Jessica were great dancers and Jenn has a beautiful singing voice. They both performed with Galena Street East. Jessica also performed with the Sacramento Ballet. Jenn and Matt are world travelers and are investing in homes in several of the beautiful cities.

Robin is my next daughter. Robin and Lanny have five children, four boys and one girl. We've visited them often and know their kids well. Brandon served his mission in Peru. He graduated from BYU and went to work for the church. He works for the general authorities in the church office building. He recently announced that he is going back to BYU for a master's degree, and intends to teach. He also purchased a duplex in Provo, so his housing is paying him. Shane also graduated and has gone onto med school. He will become an audiologist. He married a sweet little girl, Adrienne. They are in Oklahoma where Shane attends med school. Cody served his mission in Kentucky and has graduated from BYU as well as his wife Valerie. You might know they are in theater. We saw them perform in Tuacac this summer. They were in "Joseph's Technicolor Dream Coat". They are now in New York City. They have starring roles in "42nd Street". Wyatt served his mission in china town New York City. He now speaks Mandarin and Cantonese. he was home for four days and then went to Taiwan to teach in a school there for two weeks. He is at BYU now and will go into international business. Lacy is Robin's only girl and is in high school. Look out young men! Can you tell Robin let me name her boys?

Tana is daughter number three. Tana and Chris have six children. Summer the oldest lived with us for nearly three years and I think we know her best. She was a joy to have in the house. She was neat and kept her room spotless. We never had a cross word. She served a mission in Portugal. She married a Texas boy named Josh, whom she met in the Salt Lake Temple, the day before they each reported to the MTC. He went to Chile. Tana's oldest son Josh went into the building business with his dad. The next son Jesse served his mission in Chile and also in the building business. He married Devon and they may move to Idaho. Crystal is out of high school now and is a manager in a cosmetic store.

Amber, aka Cheyenne, is also graduated from high school and is living and working in Utah. The girls sing beautifully together. Logan the youngest is often my fishing partner when he comes to the cabin. He will grow tall.

Paul, my only son has a sweet wife Julie. They have two girls. Breanna and Courtney. Breanna is in the second grade and really outgoing. Courtney is going through the terrible twos and doesn't say a lot. Paul had another family back in 1989. He married a catholic girl named Gina. They had a boy named Michael and a girl named Kayla. They divorced and we haven't seen them for many years. We miss them and love them.

That is a sad tale and I wont repeat it.

My daughter Melissa is my baby girl. She married Scott and they gave me three grand children. We stay with them often when we are in Utah and feel very close. Alexis, the oldest is so smart it's scary. She has always read at least two years ahead of her class. She also has a great sense of humor. In recent nation wide testing, she was among the top ten. Her next, Christopher, is the sweetest most loving boy you will ever meet. He is mildly autistic, but not many can tell if they aren't told. He is brilliant in school. We love to watch Sponge Bob together. The last is our miracle baby, Mikelle. She was born on the day Veronica had her open-heart surgery. She's my love bug, and dances for me. She started school this year and will teach her teacher a lot.

As I have written, we also raised Veronica's niece, Vicki, or Veronica the second. She married John and they had seven children. Natalie, who was always in theater and is now married. Nichole, married young and has three children. Nathan is grown up and has his own house. Adam is in college. April is married and has a baby. Ashley is married and wants children. Aaron is almost a professional on the piano. He composes beautiful music. He has been chosen to study at Julliard. Vicki and John have moved into their own home at Stansbury Park, Utah. These kids called us grandpa and grandma, when they were little. Vicki was like a daughter to us.

As you can see we have a great bunch of grand kids. Twenty-eight in all and I love them all.

I don't really know if this is the end...

PEDIGREE FROM ADAM TO ELIJAH KNAPP FULLER

1--Adam	52--Helenus	101--St. Arnulph (Bishop)
2--Seth	53--Plaserio	102--Anchisus (Duke)
3--Enos	54--Diluglio	103--Pepin of Heristel
4--Cainan	55--Marcomir	104--Charles Martel
5--Mahalalel	56--Priam	105--Papin III "The Short" Born 714, md. Bertha
6--Jared	57--Helenus	106--Charles "The Great" or Charlemagne b. 747
7--Enoch	58--Antenor King of Cimmerians	107--Louis II "The Pious" King of Germany md. Judith
8--Methuselah	59--Marcomir King of Secambie	108--Charles II "The Bald" King of France
9--Lamech	60--Antenor	109--Ethewalf md. Judith dau. of Charles I
10--Noah	61--Priam	110--Baldwin II "The Bald" (Count) md. Ethelinda
11--Shem	62--Helenus	111--Arnulf I
12--Arpahzad	63--Diocles	112--Baldwin III
13--Salah	64--Bassranus Magnus (King)	113--Arnulf II
14--Eber	65--Clodomir	114--Baldwin IV
15--Peleg	66--Niacanor	115--Baldwin V De Lick b. abt. 1030, md. Adela
16--Reu	67--Marcomir	116--Matilda md. William "The Conqueror" King of Eng.
17--Serug	68--Clodius	117--Henry I King of Eng. Born 1085, md. Mathilda
18--Nahor	69--Antenor	118--Matilda born abt 1100 Married Geoffry IV
19--Terah	70--Clodimir (or Clodomir)	119--Henry II King of Eng. b. abt. 1133, md. Eleanor
20--Abraham	71--Merodochus	120--John Lacklord King of England, md. Isabella
21--Isaac	72--Cassander	121--Henry III King of Eng. b. abt. 1206, md. Eleanor
22--Jacob	73--Antharius	122--Edward I King of Eng.
23--Judah	74--Francus King of West Fransonions	123--Edward II King of Eng.
24--Zerah	75--Clodius 80 A.D.	124--Edward III King of Eng.
25--Darda (or Dardanus)	76--Marcomir III	125--John Beaufort b. 1340
26--Erichtonios	77--Clodomir	126--Henry Beaufort
27--Tros	78--Anenox (or Antener)	127--Jane or Joan Beaufort
28--Ilus	79--Ratherius	128--Sir Henry Stradling
29--Laomedon	80--Richemer I	129--Sir Thomas Stradling
30--Priam (or Priamas) King of Troy	81--Odomir	130--Jane Stradling
31--Helenus	82--Marcomir IV Married Athildis-149 A.D.	131--John Griffith
32--Genger	83--Clodomir IV	132--Ellen Griffith
33--Franco	84--Farabert	133--Richard Bowen
34--Esdron	85--Sunno	134--Sarah Bowen
35--Gello	86--Hilderic	135--Benjamin Fuller
36--Basabliano	87--Bartheruo	136--Benjamin Fuller
37--Plaserio	88--Clodius III	137--Nathaniel Fuller
38--Plesron	89--Walter	138--Dorcas Fuller
39--Eliacor	90--Dagobert	139--(Maj.) Cornelius Fuller
40--Gaberiano	91--Genebald	140--Elijah Knapp Fuller
41--Plaserio	92--Dagobert	
42--Antenor	93--Clodius I	
43--Priam	94--Markomir	
44--Helenus	95--Pharamond	
45--Plasron	96--Clodius	
46--Basabiliano (or Basabilius)	97--Sigimerus (or Adelbert)	
47--Alexandre	98--Fereolus (or Wambert)	
48--Priam	99--Ausbert	
49--Getmalor	100--Arnoaldus	
50--Almadion		
51--Dilnglie		

Bob's genealogy on the Fuller line, from Adam
to Elijah Knapp Fuller.

No. 1 on this chart is the same as no. _____ on chart no. _____

AFN=Ancestral File Number

1 Robert Lyde CHRISTENSEN-----
 AFN: 47DT-LD
 BORN: LIVING
 MAR.:
 DIED:
 SPOUSE
 LIVING
 AFN: CKWL-9C
 BORN: LIVING
 DIED:

2 Harold Elijah CHRISTENSEN-----
 AFN: 1K9G-CX
 BORN: 28 Feb 1892
 Brigham City, B, Utah
 MAR.: 10 Aug 1911
 Cardston, A, Canada
 DIED: 7 Mar 1981
 Sacramento, S, CA

3 Sarah "Sadie" BEVAN-----
 AFN: 4J41-QK
 BORN: 2 Jun 1894
 Tooele, Tooele Co, UT
 DIED: 1 Jan 1941
 Sacramento, S, CA

4 Harold August CHRISTENSEN-----
 AFN: 1K9G-F9
 BORN: 1 Mar 1871
 Copenhagen, C, Denmark
 MAR.: 15 Apr 1891
 Logan, Cache, UT
 DIED: 29 Apr 1935
 Boise, Ada, ID

5 Sarah Rosetta FULLER-----
 AFN: 2NW7-PS
 BORN: 30 Jun 1873
 Granite, Salt Lake, UT
 DIED: 28 Sep 1948
 Kaysville, Davis, UT

6 Joseph Shields BEVAN-----
 AFN: 1F04-FP
 BORN: 15 Feb 1862
 Tooele, Tooele, UT
 MAR.: 12 Mar 1881
 Salt Lake City, Sl, UT
 DIED: 19 Nov 1925
 Tooele, Tooele, UT

7 Emma Jane ELKINGTON-----
 AFN: 1K9G-HM
 BORN: 7 Jun 1861
 Oedbury, W., England
 DIED: 17 Oct 1941
 Tooele, Tooele, UT

8 Hannibal Leopold CHRISTENSEN-----
 AFN: 1K9G-JS
 BORN: 5 Apr 1846
 Copenhagen, C, Denmark
 MAR.: 19 May 1881
 DIED: 24 Aug 1900
 Liverpool, England

9 Emma Frederikka SCHMIDT-----
 AFN: 1K9G-K0
 BORN: 4 Sep 1845
 DIED: 19 Jul 1932
 Brigham City, B, UT

10 Elijah Knapp FULLER JR.-----
 AFN: 1K9G-L5
 BORN: 4 Feb 1847
 Council Bluffs, P, Iowa
 MAR.: 28 Jun 1869
 S., Ut E. House
 DIED: 8 Oct 1885
 Farmington, Davis, Utah

11 Sarah Elizabeth GLOVER-----
 AFN: 1K9G-MB
 BORN: 17 Nov 1848
 San Francisco, S, CA
 DIED: 29 Jan 1921
 Tremonton, B-Eldr, UT

12 James BEVAN-----
 AFN: 1BND-90
 BORN: 19 Oct 1821
 Kings Chapel, H, England
 MAR.: 9 May 1850
 Allred's Camp, C., IA
 DIED: 26 Oct 1894
 Tooele, Tooele, UT

13 Mary SHIELDS-----
 AFN: 1F04-7N
 BORN: 29 Oct 1827
 Renfrew, G., England
 DIED: 7 Aug 1874
 Tooele, Tooele, UT

14 Isaac Jones ELKINGTON-----
 AFN: 1K9G-PN
 BORN: 24 Dec 1834
 Fenmore, S., England
 MAR.: 24 Dec 1855
 West Bromswich,, England
 DIED: 21 Aug 1924
 Tooele, Tooele Co., UT

15 Sarah Elizabeth FRENCH-----
 AFN: 1K9G-QT
 BORN: 1 Dec 1837
 Sheldon, W, England
 DIED: 23 Apr 1902
 Tooele, Tooele Co., UT

16 Anders C CHRISTENSEN-->
 AFN: 2MJS-7J
 BORN: 16 Dec 1817

17 Petrine Cecilia HOLST-->
 AFN: 2MJS-8P
 BORN: 18 Nov 1819

18 Frederik B SCHMIDT----->
 AFN: BC3G-HW
 BORN: 27 Mar 1818

19 Caroline M ANDERSON-----
 AFN: BC3G-J3
 BORN: Abt 1819

20 Elijah Knapp FULLER----->
 AFN: 1C7P-3W
 BORN: 13 Jun 1811

21 Catherine WALKER----->
 AFN: 1CB1-M7
 BORN: 20 May 1824

22 William GLOVER----->
 AFN: 1QK4-6V
 BORN: 19 Aug 1813

23 Jane COWAN----->
 AFN: 1DTV-77
 BORN: 31 Dec 1816

24 John BEVAN----->
 AFN: 1N77-8G
 BORN: 14 May 1790

25 Ann BURFORD (BAREFOOT)-
 AFN: 1N77-9M
 BORN: 1792

26 John SHIELDS----->
 AFN: 1N77-BS
 BORN: 3 Apr 1805

27 Primrose CUNNINGHAM--->
 AFN: 1N77-C0
 BORN: 17 Aug 1805

28 Isaac JONES-----
 AFN: B2PX-B7
 BORN: <1807>

29 Sarah Ann ELKINGTON--->
 AFN: B2PW-TN
 BORN: 1 Dec 1809

30 John FRENCH----->
 AFN: 1XR6-05
 BORN: 30 May 1813

31 Elizabeth E WALL----->
 AFN: 1XR6-1B
 BORN: 20 Sep 1809

=====

HUSBAND: Harold Elijah CHRISTENSEN (AFN:1K9G-CX)

BORN: 28 Feb 1892	PLACE: Brigham City, Box Elder, Utah	LDS ORDINANCE DATA
CHR.: 5 May 1892	PLACE: Brigham City, Box Elder, UT	B: 5 Jun 1900
DIED: 7 Mar 1981	PLACE: Sacramento, Sacramento, CA	E: 2 May 1941
BUR.: 10 Mar 1981	PLACE: Sacramento, , CA	SP: BIC
MAR.: 10 Aug 1911	PLACE: Cardston, Alberta, Canada	SS: 5 May 1941

FATHER: Harold August CHRISTENSEN (AFN:1K9G-F9)
MOTHER: Sarah Rosetta FULLER (AFN:2NW7-PS)
OTHER WIVES: Francis SCHULTZ (AFN:BC3G-B2) and 1 Others

=====

WIFE: Sarah "Sadie" BEVAN (AFN:4J41-QK)

BORN: 2 Jun 1894	PLACE: Tooele, Tooele Co, UT	
CHR.:	PLACE: Tooele, Tooele Co., UT	B: 2 Jun 1902
DIED: 1 Jan 1941	PLACE: Sacramento, Sacramento County, CA	E: 12 Jun 1934
BUR.: Jan 1941	PLACE: Sacramento, CA	SP: BIC

FATHER: Joseph Shields BEVAN (AFN:1F04-FP)
MOTHER: Emma Jane ELKINGTON (AFN:1K9G-HM)
OTHER HUSBANDS:

=====

Sex CHILDREN

=====

1. NAME: Harold Bevan CHRISTENSEN (AFN:47DT-GP)

----	BORN: 15 May 1912	PLACE: Calgary, Alberta, Canada	B: 25 Jun 1922 19 Feb
M	CHR.:	PLACE:	E: 15 Dec 1977
	DIED: 10 Apr 1981	PLACE: Sacramento, Sacramento, CA	SP: 28 Feb 1978
	BUR.:	PLACE:	
	SPOUSE: LIVING (AFN:CKWL-86)		
	MAR.:	PLACE:	SS:

2. NAME: Rose Emma CHRISTENSEN (AFN:7K1L-RX)

----	BORN: LIVING	PLACE:	B:
F	CHR.:	PLACE:	E:
	DIED:	PLACE:	SP:
	BUR.:	PLACE:	
	SPOUSE: Milton E RICHARDSON (AFN:4J3Z-GX)		
	MAR.:	PLACE:	SS:

3. NAME: Joseph Bevan CHRISTENSEN (AFN:47DT-HV)

----	BORN: 23 Jan 1915	PLACE: Twin Butte, Alberta, Canada	B: CHILD
M	CHR.:	PLACE:	E:
	DIED: 27 Jan 1915	PLACE:	SP:
	BUR.:	PLACE:	
	SPOUSE:		
	MAR.:	PLACE:	SS:

4. NAME: Wanda Mable CHRISTENSEN (AFN:7K1N-X3)

----	BORN: LIVING	PLACE:	B:
F	CHR.:	PLACE:	E:
	DIED:	PLACE:	SP:
	BUR.:	PLACE:	
	SPOUSE: Walter Lee CANNON (AFN:5RN1-VF)		
	MAR.:	PLACE:	SS:

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Codes: AFN=Ancestral File Number B=Baptized E=Endowed SS=Sealed to Spouse SP=Sealed to Parents

MY MILITARY SERVICE

My Military service was kind of different. I actually joined the Navy Reserves right after I graduated from high school. The reason being that I intended to become an indentured apprentice bricklayer. The Union told me that if being forced into military service interrupted my apprenticeship, I would have to repeat it over again. One way to protect myself was to join the navel reserve, as they would not call me up until my apprenticeship was completed. I joined up almost as soon as I registered for the draft.

It was fun at first. I was single and our weekly training meetings were held on board a Destroyer Escort that they brought up the river and moored by the tower bridge. We had our entire uniform issued and had to wear them to all weekly training meetings. Also, once a year we had to go on a two week cruise on a ship in the Pacific. Early on, I decided I wanted to become a gunner's mate.

After veronica and I were married the training meetings were not so fun. I decided that I would much rather be at home with my bride. Besides, I could tell that Veronica was a little bit jealous of me putting on my uniform and going to a meeting. Moreover, it took money for gas and we were on a strict budget paying off furniture. Never the less we did it. I would bring her into her sister Ethel's house and drop her off so she wouldn't be alone out in the country.

About the time that I was getting my mason's journeyman's card, I got the feared letter. It started, "Greetings and ended with Yours Truly, Commander Hooper, USNR. I had to report on April 2, 1952, to the Navel Base on Treasure Island. This gave us about 90 says to get things in order. We went to the Temple in Salt Lake and were sealed. That was an ordeal by it self. The roads were closed, but we found a way and persevered until we made it. Veronica had to find a job, learn to drive and get a license.

All during this time my brother-in-law, Walt Cannon, Kept telling me I wouldn't have to go overseas because I was married. He about had me believing it, but I sure didn't plan on him being right. After I reported and had more training, I had a few weekend liberties. Then we went on board a ship, with our sea-bags and were issued quarters and duty stations. The next morning we got under way. I'll always remember sailing under the Golden Gate Bridge, thinking, Yea Walt, I wont be sent overseas. Our destination was Tokyo, Japan.

When we got to Japan I had orders to report to the US Navel Base in Sasebo. It was an ammunition depot. When I arrived and was standing on the tarmac outside the base headquarters, I heard my name called over the PA system. I told the chief that was processing us. He told me to go in to the office and report that I was wanted for something. I did that and was shown into and office and soon an officer came in with my service record folder. I think his name was Robinson. He was reading my file and then inquired, " Your record indicates that you belong to the LDS church, that true?" I said, "yes."



Bob after being in Japan for over a year. Can you see the blond mustache?



This was me. Hopefully we'll look like this in the hereafter.

Then he asked, "By any chance do you hold the Melchizedek Priesthood?"

I said, "yes." Then he asked, "Do you by any chance have a temple recommend?" I said, "yes." I showed him my temple recommend. He was so happy he almost cried, and he grabbed me and hugged me. Then he said, "I have been authorized to call you to be the new Service Men's Group Leader in this part of Japan." I didn't know what to say. I think I was in shock. I asked what the job entailed and he simply said, it's kind of like being a branch president. I asked him if he would be around awhile to train me. Then he hit me with another bombshell. He told me he was leaving the next day, and I was on my own.

The Lieutenant called another Officer on an Army Base somewhere near where we were and asked him to come over ASAP. Then he took me to the base chapel and after unlocking the door gave me the key. He gave me another key after he unlocked the cabinet where the sacrament trays and cups were stored. I was petrified and scared to death. About that time a Lieutenant Nishimoto arrived and they set me apart. They could see I was very concerned, so they explained the routine for a normal Sunday.

Each ship that arrived got a bulletin to post showing all the church times and locations. All I had to do was take some bread in a napkin from noon chow and take it to church. I would prepare the sacrament and wait at the door to welcome any members. If there were big battles in Korea most ships would not come in. But if not, I could have ten to sixty for the meeting. I must always have a talk ready and ask any who come in to help with prayers and the sacrament. I could count on some to say a few words. Some times there would be someone who could play the piano.

They both left me at the church to lockup and walk back to my group, who were now gone. I finally got a bunk in a quonset hut. I didn't sleep well that night and luckily I still had a few days until Sunday. I did have the sense to bring a Book of Mormon with me, so I prepared a talk for Sunday and waited. I also wrote home for as many articles in the Era by good speakers they could send me. I especially liked the little sermons by Richard L. Evens. Every one at home was thrilled with my calling.

That first Sunday was hectic. Fortunately not too many came and it was more like a cottage meeting or a Sunday school class. I had to give one of the prayers, and I had to speak, but there was help for the sacrament. I learned you just had to make a program up at the door and ask for help. They were good to respond. Soon a few local Japanese people came on base for church, all young ladies except one who was older.

After a few months another sailor arrived on the base who was LDS. I contacted Lt. Nishimoto and had him set apart as my counselor. Then a young nonmember started coming to church and we taught him the gospel and baptized him. He was an "M" boat skipper, and his job was delivering mail to all incoming ships. He made sure meeting times were posted on the ships bulletin boards and attendance picked up. This calling went on for the entire two years I was in Japan.

After teaching him the gospel, we baptized Dick Goodwin, and we made him our roving home teacher. When he took mail out to a ship, he would visit any members on board.

Church missionaries came down from Tokyo a few times and the lady that was attending was baptized. It turned out that her brother owned a large hot springs resort up near Tokyo, called Niko. We got a group of sailors and local soldiers and took a week's leave and went to Tokyo. We saw the sites, and visited the church mission home. Then we took a train up into the mountains to Niko. It was like Lake Tahoe, with huge fir trees and high mountains with snow capped peaks. Our dear little sister had written her brother and he gave us the red carpet treatment.

While beautiful Japanese girls were preparing our food in our rooms, we were told to enjoy the hot baths the area was noted for. We were clad in our kimonos and wooden sandals and when we entered the baths we were a little surprised to find two different families in bathing. We knew this was a very polite cultural event and had to go along with it. While we were going through the soaping down and rinsing before our bath, the other families got out and donned their kimonos and left. We eased in very slowly, as the water is very very hot and we were warned not to stay in too long or we could pass out. Our newly baptized sailor was acting loud and splashing around so I encouraged him to go back to the room and check on dinner. I stayed in till all my people were out, then just as I started to get out a beautiful young lady came in and disrobed and started to bathe.

I was too embarrassed to move. I waited hoping she would hurry and leave, but she didn't. I knew I had been in the hot water too long and I was seeing little black spots swim away in my vision. I knew I had to make a move, so I lunged out of the water and ran for my kimono. I remember reaching for it, and then everything went blank. When I awoke I found myself surrounded by strange Japanese people, looking down at this American kid that didn't have sense enough to get out of the water when he should have. The worst thing was, not the embarrassment, but I bit my tongue when I passed out and I couldn't even eat dinner. We had a good trip except for the bath experience, and of course it was the topic for laughter for some time to come.

My first military job was overseeing Japanese dockworkers take ammunition out of caves and load it on barges and send it out to the ships that came in from patrol along the Korean coast. At first we were occupation forces, and we had our own marines guarding us and we wore side arms when there were no marines around. Then the US signed a treaty with Japan and we were now guests in the country. They got their police force back and now we had to hire Japanese guards for our protection. We no longer went armed and it was very different. We were not allowed to let the Japanese see us do any work. We had to hire a hut boy to swab our decks and shine our shoes. We had Japanese cooks in the chow hall. The Idea was that we had to hire everything out to the Japanese people.

After about a year, I took an exam, passed, and was advanced in rank to gunners mate third class. My job also changed. For a while I was in charge of picking up all the coded orders for ammunition that went to ships from each office and see that they were destroyed.

Then I was offered a job that was a little tougher, and took it. I was given command of 85 Japanese stevedores and a tugboat and four barges. I also had a Japanese honcho to give directions to the workers, an interpreter and a radioman. I would pick up orders to meet a ship in the harbor and go aboard and make an off load plan. Me and another sailor would stay on the ship for as long as it took to off load. Some times it took 20 days, sometimes 25. We worked around the clock, 24 hours a day. Then we were able to take that many days off. Having a councilor enabled me to do this, as I might miss some Sundays.

When the Navy first hired the Japanese cooks our food became so bad that I couldn't eat it. I noticed that many other sailors were just like me. We would take our chow, smell it and toss it in the trashcan. I got so thin my uniform was baggy. I would spend what little money I received for grilled cheese sandwiches at the base snack bar. Finally they had a person taking names when you dumped your food. They investigated and found that the chief of commissary was taking the money and buying cheap Japanese food and stealing the excess. We were getting things like baked sea pie, a casserole of fish, rice and seaweed with bamboo shoots. Yuk! After they found the crook, the base commander apologized and promised new American cooks and good food. And that's what we got. All of the sudden, we had two new Italian style cooks. We had spaghetti, pizza, lasagna, and lots of French bread and salads with halves of avocado for topping. It was all-great. I gained twenty pounds before I came home

While I was working on the offload crew we ate on the ships and it was good too. We were assigned a rack on the ships but never slept in them much. We would lay down anywhere and nap for an hour or two. When you've been working around the clock for a few days you can sleep anywhere. The trick is not to get stepped on or crushed by a cargo net. You have to be alert and see to it that the Japanese workers keep the ship on an even keel. If the Captain's coffee mug is not pretty level, he calls you in and lets you know it. By taking too many bombs off one side and not on the other, you can have the ship listing from one side or the other. It had to come off evenly.

After several months of being on all the ammunition ships we got one in with a new skipper. He was spit and polish all the way. I had been buying clothing from other ships, even British. So, I guess I forgot what I looked like. One morning we pulled up along side the USS Mt. Lassen. (All ammunition ships are named after volcano's.) I started up the gangway and heard a voice holler, "Halt! Advance and identify your self". I went on up and said, "Gunner's mate third class Christensen, reporting to off load your ship Sir." Then I handed him the orders and the offload plan. He just looked at me, and then said, "what navy are you with sailor?" I kind of grinned and said, "The US Navy, Sir." Then he lowered the pistol and said, "How long have you been over here son?"



This is the picture Veronica sent to me when I had been in Japan for 18 months.



When photographed, they always wanted to show Veronica's hands, they were so beautiful.



My beautiful wife, Veronica used to model for dress shops.

Then I told him, "Going on two years sir." Then he said, "Come to my ward room and meet my load officer." I went with him. In the wardroom he asked me to stand in front of his full-length mirror. What I saw surprised even me. First, he said, "Where did you get the hat?" I had on a jungle green marine pith helmet with a marine insignia on it. I didn't remember where or how long ago I got the helmet. He said, "Your shirt looks like US Navy issue, except for the Japanese writing on it." I explained that all my Japanese workers had to know who I was, so my name in Japanese was on my shirt." Then he asked about my belt. I told him it was a British navy belt. It was 2 inches wide with a big silver buckle and I had a 10-inch bowie knife in a sheath hanging on my left hip. He just shook his head and asked, "Where did you get those pants?" I was kind of enjoying this by now and I told him I bought them on a British Frigate. They were patch pocket dungarees with huge bells on the bottom, with large belt loops to accommodate the wide belt. Then he said, "How about those boots?" Now I had to laugh. The boots were fur lined Japanese pilots boots. I said, "Sir, I'm sorry but I never took the time to look at my self out here. I go on all ships and dress like a little bit of every navy I guess." I further explained that when colors are called in the morning and evening, you hear all the national anthems at once depending on where you are. You hear our national anthem and the Japanese anthem and the British anthem, God save the King. Also, if there happens to be a Thailand ship here you hear that one too. He asked me to come next time in US Navy attire and I promised I would. Then I thought, what a great lesson or topic for a talk, you might look like someone you are not. Outward appearances are important as well as first impressions.

A few months later I got ready to come home. The Japanese workers wished me well and gave me a nice set of Norataki China, which got broken in shipping. When I started for home, I went aboard the Carrier USS Boxer and went as far ad Yokosuka. I had to pull shore patrol duty for a few days before I caught a plane out of Ashiah air base. It took thirty hours to fly home. We had to make a fuel stop on Wake Island, another in Hawaii, then finally Travis Air Force Base.

I testify that I was supposed to go to that base in Sasebo Japan and be there on that day to become the servicemen's group leader as if it was a mission. The calling kept me safe from the tempting of Satan.

The benefits of being a veteran are too numerous to mention. I had access to the GI bill. I could now borrow money for a home, or go to college. I could also get veterans preference points in civil service jobs. It was very tough being away from each other, and my wife probably wouldn't have lost her voice. I missed her terribly and agonized daily wanting to see her and be with her. But I had to fulfill my duty, and my calling. I was so thankful for her parents that helped keep me sane.

See the picture of her she sent to me in Japan. I'm glad I was almost ready to come home. I thought she was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. Also, see my picture. Hopefully, we will look this good after the resurrection.

Some asked if I ever came close to danger or death? Yes I did, but I usually don't talk about it because the Holy Ghost protected me. The first time one of our ships blew up in the harbor. I was assigned to another ship because I asked for a one-day delay in my orders to conduct church services. So I was on another ship, and safe. The second time I was really scared. I knew if I was sent on this assignment, I probably wouldn't make it. As you might remember, the French were trying desperately to hold on to what was then French Indo China, which they were losing fast. Their biggest problem was ammunition. The US agreed to set up some small mobile ammunition depots for them in remote areas. My name was on the list to go. We packed our sea bags and fell in on the tarmac. We waited there several hours. Then they sent us back to our quarters to wait. This went on for several days. Finally, we were told that every day, the French were losing the positions that we were supposed to occupy. Finally we were relieved when orders came to stand down, unpack and resume our old duties. The French had lost control of the entire country. Had we been there, we would have been lost too.