

## P R E F A C E

For some time now all of you have been asking me to write my memoirs but, because of my natural aversion to writing at any length, I have kept putting it off as a task too difficult with which to cope. Recently, however, I discovered a class in Personal History - provided for senior citizens by Valencia Community College and the Institute of Lifetime Learning. This course, in which I enrolled, has enabled me to organize my thoughts and collect notes and memorabilia. With this help I am now ready to embark on this wonderful adventure. I hope the results will prove as interesting to you, my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, as it is exciting to me.

All the characters in this story are real and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is definitely intended. I have used actual names and real places. I hope no one may feel insulted, threatened, or otherwise hurt by my writings. I have described people and places as I remember them from actuality, or from others' memories. Children may perceive and remember events differently - as may adults. At any rate, I have been as honest as possible in relating my memories - and I emphasize the word my.

In describing events or places before I was born, I have relied upon some printed material and many things described to me by others. Again, perceptions may well vary.

Personal Life History was the name of the course which got this thing started. That's what it is - my personal life history - BY ME - and I hope you enjoy reading it.

Betty Lewis Powell,  
In the year of our Lord 1979-80.

IS THIS ALL THERE IS?

ONCE UPON A TIME --- A LONG TIME AGO

An attractive young girl named Letitia ~~Iron~~ Stinger lived in a small town; in Iowa - almost a suburb of Cedar Rapids - a place called Marion. She lived with her Grandmother because her own Mother had died when Leta was but six years old. The Stinger family had lived in this part of Iowa for many years and their town house was deeded under a "land grant" from the United States Government - which, of course, means that no one else had owned the land before them. They also owned three farms under the same land situation. The town house was built in 1875 and was the first house in that vicinity to have an "inside bathroom". A beautiful two story brick fourteen room home that played a nostalgic part in the lives of several generations.

A few years before this young girl was to graduate from high school in Marion (~~1909~~<sup>1907</sup>) a new family moved to town - their name was Lewis. They built a home ~~about~~ a half block from the Stinger home. Mrs. Lewis was a self-centered, unfriendly person who thought, because of her wealth, that she could move into a new town and take over as the society leader. How wrong she was! She soon learned, *because her husband* she wasn't welcome and was more or less snubbed by the older families. Needless to say this is all building up to the old worn out story about the "boy-meets-girl and girl-meets-boy and they fall in love" story, - much to the chagrin of both families. Mrs. Lewis forbid her son, Chauncey Harold, to date Leta. It goes further without saying that this didn't stop the romance. Chauncey quit high school in his last year and left town to secure a job in Chicago.

Leta graduated with her class in 1909, and, immediately upon graduation, she and Chauncey were married in the living room of the Stinger family homestead. With the good wishes and blessings of everyone except Mrs. Lewis, everything was going fine until she walked up to the bridge at the reception and said: "You have my son now - but I'll have him back before too long." From that time on she made life miserable for Leta, and eventually, had ~~her~~ prediction come true. But, then, I'm getting ahead of my story.

(Pictures of the Homestead, my great-grandfather and great-grandmother - to whom the home belonged - on next sheet. Also pictures of Leta at graduation - Chauncey at time of marriage - and a small picture of them both with their pet dog, Rex, in Chicago shortly after their honeymoon at Niagara Falls.) The two smaller pictures of the two homes in Marion, Iowa were taken <sup>many years</sup> ~~much~~ later but still in perfect condition.)

The honeymoon was spent at Niagara Falls; then back to Chicago to take up their new life together. Their closest companion was a handsome Boston bulldog named Rex and it was only natural that they had him very spoiled. This went on until January 19, 1911 when the stork brought them a baby boy - and they named him Chauncey Harold, Jr. Later - their first big disappointment came when they realized they would have to part with Rex, as he was extremely jealous of the baby and he was showing signs of what might eventually be a tragedy - so they found him a home with a couple that had no children.

In 1911, since Chauncey, Sr. had previously had experience in railroading, he was offered a job with the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway to go West and help on the construction of the railroad to be built through the Rocky Mountains - which he accepted. First, they were to be located in Tacoma, then Chehalis and finally Maytown, Washington. While they were in Tacoma; in 1912, their daughter was born, which they named Elizabeth, although she was always called Betty.

During the transition of moving from Chicago to Tacoma, it became necessary for Leta to spend a while with her in-laws, the Lewis' who, by this time had left Iowa and were now located in St. Maries, Idaho. Grandd Lewis was also a railroad man and was transferred to Idaho. Mrs. Lewis tried her best to get Leta to do away with the coming baby because she said Leta was "saddling" her son with one child after another and was, therefore, holding him back from becoming someone important in his work. She heckled Leta for such a long time that she finally went to a doctor and told him she couldn't have the baby and that he must help her by performing an abortion. The doctor refused as he said it was much too late - and that it would kill the baby and, in all probabilities, kill Leta too.

Leta went on to Tacoma to join her husband, and because of all the aggravation, etc., she went into early labor and gave birth to a premature baby girl on November 13, 1912. This was the daughter named Betty and had she been a full term baby she would have been born on Friday the 13th, 1913!



My little friend, Nellie Shelley, lived just down the street from me. Her father, just before Christmas that year, climbed the mountain behind their home, felled a tree and used the lumber to make the doll chest which had contained my big doll's clothes. Of course he made one for his daughter too. I still have the chest and all my boys used it for storage of their Lincoln Logs.

That same Christmas I also received four beautiful French bisque dolls - small ones - the tallest being only about six inches. I still have these dolls and have never seen any like them since.

One other incident that stands out in my mind is a darling puppy my Dad brought home to us. He was a beautiful collie - and we named him Dexter. My father used to go to work in the morning and took a train at the city station to ride to the construction site. He used to let Dexter ride with him and when they reached the construction site Dexter would get off with him and walk home. Then when it was time for my Dad to return in the evening Dexter would walk to the construction site and climb aboard the train and ~~he~~ they would ride home together. A couple of years later, when we left Washington state and moved to Oklahoma, we felt we could not take the dog, <sup>as that was several days of work</sup> and found for him what we thought would be an ideal country home. However, after we had settled in the South we heard from the family that had taken him and they told us he left their home one day and was last seen waiting at the construction site loading platform waiting for Dad!

When I was four years old my mother decided it was time that she should start to teach me to play the piano. I shall never forget the day our piano was delivered - for the man sat down and played a delightful rendition of Dardenella! I was entranced and promised myself that I would work hard and some day be able to play as well. My Mother taught me for my first two years.

Our father  
always had  
us a puppy  
I wish to  
have one  
I will  
be sure  
to get  
one for  
myself  
for Christmas

Bring in  
something  
about  
remembering  
to save money  
for mother's  
birthday  
Christmas

hired  
a boy  
to look  
after  
the  
puppy

to  
the  
Rockies

One summer we spent a little time in St. Maries, Idaho, in the heart of the Rockies and we went swimming! The bathing suits in those days looked more like a long long T-shirt. We gingerly waded into the cold clear water from a mountain stream - and then my Dad wanted us to get wet all over - so we made one big splash into the deeper water - in and then out in a hurry as the water was ice cold and we soon turned blue and ~~shivered~~ shook all over. That satisfied our yen for the summer sport of swimming for a long long time.

In 1917 my father accepted a position as superintendent of the Oklahoma, New Mexico and Pacific and Santa Fe Railways under John Ringling - and we were to live in Ardmore, Oklahoma. Can you imagine how thrilled we kids were when we realized that John Ringling was the man that owned the biggest circus in the world?!

After we were settled in Ardmore there were numerous times when my father got us out of bed at four in the morning because the circus train had pulled in during the nite and they were unloading. We watched the elephants do all the heavy lifting and hauling and marveled at the display of precision and cooperation between the animals and workmen. When the huge tent was finally erected it covered nine large performing rings - one huge center one - and four on each side not quite so large.

Later that day ~~always~~ followed the circus parade down the main street of the city. The steam caliope always intrigued me - and that same caliope is now in the Ringling Museum in Sarasota. In fact many of the circus cars and cages are there. I have seen the motion picture The Greatest Show on Earth many times because it is exactly what I saw as a youngster. My grandchildren will have to be satisfied to see the picture to fully understand what a thrill I had as a youngster as to witness the loading and unloading of all the circus performers and paraphernalia.

I also had the privilege of visiting in the beautiful private railroad car of Mr. and Mrs. John Ringling - and even had dinner there one nite! Mr. Ringling had a beautiful huge German shepherd dog (straight from Germany and responded only to the German language) which was considered the smartest and largest shepherd in the world. Mrs. Ringling had the tiniest dog in the world and both dogs had ~~own~~ chairs that were pulled up to the table to eat ~~with~~ ~~others~~ ~~did~~ and the butler served them as he did everyone. They had beautiful table manners. ~~to~~.

splash into the deeper (and colder) water - in and out in a hurry as the <sup>water</sup> was ice cold (after all - it was the melting of the snow and ice of higher elevations) and we soon turned blue. This satisfied our yen for swimming in the North and decided we would wait until we moved South to indulge again.

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About ten in the morning of the day of the circus the big parade took place down the main street. The steam caliope always intrigued me - and that same caliope is now in the Ringling Museum in Sarasota, Florida. In fact, many of the circus cars and cages are there. I have seen the motion picture *The Greatest Show on Earth* many times because it is exactly what I saw as a youngster. My grandchildren will have to be satisfied to see the picture to fully understand ~~understand~~ what a thrill I had as a youngster as to witnessing the loading and unloading of all the circus performers and paraphernalia. Looking back now, when my eldest son was about nine years of age, and we lived in Peoria, Illinois, I was excited to take him to see Ringling Brothers Circus, anticipating what I had known as a youngster - but was disappointed because the circus had been reduced in size greatly and, it seemed to me, had lost a lot of its appeal - but then this could also have levelled off with time and age.

I also had the privilege of visiting in the beautiful private railroad car of Mr. and Mrs. John Ringling, as well as enjoyed having dinner with them one evening. Mr. Ringling had a beautiful huge German shepherd dog (direct from Germany and responded only to the German language). This was supposed to be the largest sherherd in the world. On the other side of the coin, Mrs. Ringling was supposed to have the smallest dog in the world. Both

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The year 1917 had a few bad times for me too as both my brother and I had the measles and had to stay in quarantine. Later in the year I became very ill again and it was diagnosed as diphtheria. I understand I ran an extremely high fever and was comatose for many days. My parents had to hire a registered nurse to be with me day and nite. The recovery period seemed long and drawn out to me - but now I know I was lucky to have to lived through it. Today the children are inoculated against this dread disease and we very seldom hear of it.

At the close of World War I in 1918 my Mother, brother and I were again in Marion, Iowa visiting. My Great Aunt happened to be the head of the Red Cross at that time and she invited my brother and me to lead the very first Armistice Day Parade! I was dressed as a Scotch Lassie and my brother as a soldier. How proud and thrilled we were! - however, before the parade was over we grew tired and hot and I wanted to remove my coat. My Mother made my brother carry it for me, explaining t his was the gentlemanly thing to do, and reluctantly he did so. At the age of 9 little boys care little about waiting on the ladies, especially sisters.

Back in the days when my father was with the railroad - the superintendents had the pleasure of receiving passes for he and his family for any train in the United States - hence the travelling we did every summer. I always got train sick - since in those days the smells of operating the train were very strong and there was no air conditioning. I usually passed the porter upon entering the train and said "please bring a pillow to compartment so-and-so" and I was passed out for the trip! Just to swing in a porch swing was agony for me.

My father told me of quite an unusual happening on one of his trains. There seemed to be a seige of people suing the railroad company for accidents. One typical example was where a little girl received a broken arm from a window which had unexpectedly ~~closed~~ <sup>slammed shut</sup>. After the court hearing we found that the father had slammed the window on his own daughter's arm so that he could sue the railroad for a financial settlement. Even in those days it seems child abuse was flourishing.

In 1922 or 1923 we had our first visit from my Grandmother Lewis. She preferred to stay at a local hotel even tho we had room at our home for her. She refused to let me call her Grandmother - it had to be Aunt Mame! My



mother told me later the visit was to bring expensive gifts to my father and try to get him to move back out West (without the family, of course) with promises of a much finer life. She left travelling money and a ticket to the Rose Bowl Game for that particular New Year's Day, excluding Mother. My father accepted and was gone on an extended vacation. This was the beginning again of her plan to break up my parents.

Also in 1922, the year I was about ten, on the afternoon of Christmas Eve, I learned, much to my chagrin and disbelief, that there really wasn't a Santa Claus, and that our parents gave us most of the gifts we received. A little neighbor girl told me this unsettling news and I ran home and asked if what she told me was true. My Mother had to sit down and explain it all to me - and from that time on - except for the religious aspects of the holiday, Christmas lost some of its magic - as I am sure it did for others like me.

About this time also my Mother and Father had quite a thrill, for one of their friends, who was a local doctor, had his own airplane and invited them to take a ride. This was one of the open cockpit three seaters and my Mother told me the noise was fierce and, if they wanted to communicate with one another, they had to write it on a slate. I didn't get my first airplane ride until many years later - and it certainly wasn't an open cockpit!

We had an interesting situation in the schools in Ardmore at that time since the Indians were attending. Oklahoma was the home of the five civilized tribes and there were many Indians in the locality. I was instructed to be careful about what I said to my little playmates as some of them might be Indian and I might hurt their feelings. I guess this was my first lesson in diplomacy. I particularly remember a really cute little blonde, blue eyed girl named Chiquita Mathews who searched and searched in her heredity for even a small amount of Indian blood because she and her family wanted to move to the Indian Government Reservation to live. She finally got her wish. There was also a dark skinned girl named Lucille Burris that I liked very much and cultivated her friendship. Looking back now, it seems it wasn't much different from today when our children have integrated with the black children. I have always remembered the high school

football cheer which went like this:

Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokee, Creek  
Ardmore High School can't be beat.

This, of course, was in honor of the five civilized tribes that had settled in Oklahoma - the fifth being the Seminoles.

I was quite busy with my music at this time and still practiced two or three hours per day after school; during summer vacation it was six hours per day. In my tenth year my music teacher, Professor Lowenstein, decided I was ready for my own recital. So - believe it or not - I was honored with such a happening and was presented with a cute miniature baby grand piano (which I still have) and also a \$5.00 gold piece which was beautifully wrapped in a little enameled box. I still have that too.

If I have led you to believe that I didn't have much fun in my life at this time - I will hasten to say that I was a regular tom-boy (or so my Mother thought). I climbed trees, made stilts and walked on them, roller skated incessantly, smashed empty cans to mold to my shoes and walked on them. My brother made skooters for us (they looked like the present skateboards only with roller skate wheels and a tall handle going up the front to hold on to and to help guide.) He also made some spectacular kites that I helped him fly and we had hours of fun with that. My Mother also told of the Hallowe'en nite she wouldn't let me go out with the neighborhood children because I was the only girl with nearly twenty boys. I was crushed and thought I had the meanest mother in the world. We had a huge mulberry tree in our front yard and whenever my Mother couldn't find me in the house or yard, all she had to do was look up in the tree and there I would be - sitting comfortably in the crotch of two huge branches reading a book. I ~~always~~ used 5¢ of my weekly allowance to buy a certain all day sucker because it was the largest I could get for the money and, believe it or not, it did last nearly all day - living up to its name. After dark and early in the evening, all the neighborhood kids got together and played hide and seek, or "ollie ollie outs in free" - or, if we couldn't get up enough to play games we could always find a big jar which we had punched holes in the top and would go out and catch lightning bugs and watch them light up the jar, until time to go to bed, then we would allow them to go free.

review  
of the  
piece  
1979

I have  
always  
been  
avid  
reader

Since we had passes on all trains, many of our summers were also spent on my maternal grandfather's farm which was located between Elkader and Volga, Iowa. By that time my Grandfather had remarried and he and my step-grandmother had a son and daughter (which really were my aunt and uncle altho' they were only one and two years older than my brother and me.) I always loved to ride horses and I was initiated on some huge Iowa work horses, which I rode while my grandfather plowed the field. Their backs were so broad that I must have looked like a little mosquito riding them and they probably felt I was too. Their names were Nellie and Dollie and how I loved those horses! My young aunt and uncle had their own nice ponies, but when we went to town every Saturday nite, I had to ride Nellie. Saturday nite was a really big time for us because we had 25¢ to spend any way we chose! <sup>we went to Volga town</sup> Naturally I chose the kind of candy that would last the longest and tried to make it stretch until the next Saturday nite. We also went "skinny-dipping" in the horse trough on extra hot days - not the four of us of course - but we girls took our turn and then the boys had theirs. <sup>later</sup> Its a shame the city children today are missing all the pleasures of the farm even tho we had no indoor plumbing, and our Saturday nite bath was usually in a hugh wash tub in the middle of the kitchen floor with water heated over a wood stove.

"Babe" for  
Marilyn  
recipitated

Brother  
took  
me  
out  
of - and

heard  
these  
was a  
Prepping  
Tom  
in  
the  
crowd!

When harvest time arrived, the farmers would help one another and take turns threshing the wheat, baling the hay, gathering the corn to dry, etc. The men were in the fields by four in the morning and by eight or nine the wives had congregated and cooked fried chicken, hams, sausage and all the beautiful biscuits you could imagine. This went on until each farmer in the neighborhood had their harvesting completed for the <sup>summer</sup> winter - and then a huge "Settler's Day" Bar-B-Que was planned. The man would butcher a cow and a hog and spend many days cooking them over an open spit and then the wives would bring all their home made goodies and what a feast would be enjoyed! How sad all this is now a thing of the past. Most canning is done in smaller quantities for the modern freezer has eliminated much of the hard work in preparing the meats and vegetables for the long winters. I am glad for all the modern machinery, etc., but it has eliminated much of the good camaraderie and friendship between neighbors.

One summer we decided to spend a great deal of time at Sylvan Beach just out of Galveston, Texas. It was wonderful until one weekend my father and I were swimming in the surf and didn't realize how strong the undertow was and were being swept out to sea before we knew what was happening. At the realization my father tried to get us in, but even he couldn't, and the next thing we were conscious of was that we were being towed to safety by the life guard. This left us drained of enthusiasm, and considerably more respect for that powerful ocean out there, and we cut our vacation short.

I forgot to mention that my Mother managed to keep me quite busy, what with my music lessons, I also took acrobatic, toe and ballet dancing and elocution. I loved the dancing and was fortunate enough to be chosen to appear in several local vaudeville shows. I never had any aspirations to become an actress, or professional dancer, but just liked to do it for the pure fun of it.

I guess the most exciting and thrilling experience I had while growing up in the wild country of Oklahoma before the days of much law and order was the summer I was eleven. That year my father had purchased a beautiful new Buick touring car. It was solid red - in and out - and was equipped with those ising glass "windows" that had to be put up in a hurry should a sudden rain shower develop. Needless to say, we decided to drive to Iowa that summer instead of riding the train. The first day on the road we had trouble with a tire and, after using the spare to get into a town called Drumright, we pulled into a filling station and asked the man if he would fix the tire while we went across the street to have dinner. He did - and when we returned to pick up our car he said: "Sir, are you planning to drive on further tonite?" My Dad said: "Yes" and the man continued: "I wouldn't do it if I were you as we have had a number of highway robberies lately - always on a Thursday nite (and this is Thursday). The Sheriff is trying his best to catch the robbers but so far no luck. There is a nice hotel in town and my advice is to stay there tonite and continue on in the daylight tomorrow. The roads are not too good and there is a certain bridge and an abrupt turn in the road where you have to slow down to a near stop, change gears, and continue on up a slight hill and over the bridge; this is where the robbers usually are." My Dad was listening to all this, of course, and then said: "Oh well, I am not afraid and I can pump a 45 as quick as the next fellow!" So, we got our tire and off we went into the nite.

learned  
the  
man

once  
Brings  
father  
B  
person

We hadn't gone far until my mother said: "Don't you think we should consider what the man said and make some kind of preparation should this happen to us?" So - my Dad handed my Mother the "45" gun and also a roll of travelers cheques which she "did up" in her long hair. He also exchanged watches with my brother, since my brother had an inexpensive Ingersoll pocket watch and my father had his father's railroad watch. He told Chauncey to slip the good watch behind the seat should anything take place.

My Dad was driving, my Mother on the seat beside him - my brother directly behind my father and I was behind my mother on the rear seat. When we came to the sharp bend in the road (and we were driving in heavy sand) we had to stop, shift gears, and make an effort to go up the slight incline and over the bridge. There were no paved highways in those days. As we hesitated in order to shift gears - a man jumped on the right running board and leaned in the car and pointed a gun at my father; this only lasted seconds as he saw that my mother was holding a gun on him, so he pointed his gun at her. My Dad shouted "For God's sake, don't shoot". He was afraid he would kill my mother, or should she also shoot, perhaps his reflexes might get him or one of we children in the rear seat. The robber said: "I won't shoot if you do what I say; first, give me the gun (which my mother did) and then he said, "back ~~on~~ up and drive down the road" which was beside the stream the bridge ran over, into a huge pasture or opening<sup>6</sup>. This we did - and when we arrived several hundred yards from the highway we saw that we were not the only ones that had been stopped. There were about 25 cars down there then and before it was over there must have been close to 75. The robber told us where to park and requested that Mother and Dad get out of the car and go with him. Mother did not want to leave us in the car alone but the robber said we would be alright. We were, too, altho' once during the course of the time we were there another bandit came and searched the car but didn't make us get out so the watch was safe.

There were three robbers working the highway - one hiding under the east side of the bridge to catch any cars from that direction; and one from the west side to do the same - while a third bandit kept the adults lined up in the field with their hands up. After what seemed an eternity

we heard a shot and mother said the bandit said "they got our buddie - we have to leave". This meant that they were to take someone's car to make their getaway. It came to a choice of either our new car - or a brand new Hudson that belonged to a honeymoon couple. My Mother told them "Go ahead and take the car - we thought we had bought a good car but all we got was a lemon and haven't had anything but trouble with it since we bought it". She ran the car down so much the robbers decided to take the Hudson and it caused the little bridge to become so distraught that she fainted.

My Father did his best to get out of that place as fast as he could and try to tail them. We were third or fourth car and what a race to the next town of Supulpa! As we approached the city we could see that a huge factory was burning and all the fire engines were there, plus half the residents of the city who had come to see the fire. The robbers knew they couldn't race through that blockade so they parked the Hudson and the two men took to their feet and ran, leaving their wounded buddy in the car. My Dad, of course, like many others, went straight to the sheriff and told all we had been through. This time we registered into the hotel and in the morning the Sheriff's office called for my Dad to go down and identify the dead man that they had found in the Hudson. This he did and it was quite fortunate because it happened that the dead man had my father's billfold and gun on him. Since we really didn't lose anything - it was quite an experience, and to this day I have a vivid picture in my mind of what took place that nite. There were many little human interest stories we heard later from those who also participated in the robbery - but are too numerous to mention here.

(1974)

The year I was 12 I saw me in Idaho with my paternal grandparents. This was the small town of St. Maries, Kootenai County, in the heart of the Rocky Mountains. The Lewis home was located on a high peak (which had its own spiral drive, and this, of course, enhanced the beauty of the surroundings). The house overlooked the valley where the main part of the town was located. The front yard was laid in terraces, and, much to my delight, because it was our favorite skiing place in winter. If we weren't skiing we were using our school books as a sled and sliding down the steps which had frozen over. I learned ice skating that year, also, and I loved it - but my first love was really roller skating.

7 story with  
living room  
basement  
for  
car and  
food  
storage

It seems my Mother and Father had separated (temporarily I thought) and I was sent to Idaho to be with my father's parents while my Mother and brother went to Marion, Iowa to spend a little time with her relatives. This proved to be a year when I learned many things, simply because the living conditions were so different from what I was accustomed to - and perhaps I was entering the period of my life when I was much more aware of life and the things that surrounded me.

For instance: I was absolutely entranced when I first saw the beautiful piano in the living room - it was a Chickering concert grand and the dream of any young pianist and an inspiration to make them want to practice. Then I was given a beautiful Arabian pony. My Uncle Charles was, at the time, attending military school in California and my Grandmother had three of his military uniforms tailored to fit me for riding habits. I just about lived on that horse. One Sunday when I was dressed in my "Sunday best", which consisted of a brown taffeta accordion pleated dress, and long brown silk stockings, I asked if I could walk to the village to visit one of my girl friends. The answer was yes - with one provision - and that was to definitely not get on a horse. Of course I promised - and, of course, again I broke the promise. My girl friend also had her own pony and I asked her if I could ride - bare backed - and with my nice clothes! Well, I took the horse on a trip around town and tried him out to see how well he could trot and gallop. This would have been fine except that it had been raining and the streets were wet. As we turned one corner we went from a muddy road to a paved street, and the horse's hoofs were slippery and he slipped and fell, throwing me to the opposite side of the street. The horse got up and so did I, and the first thing I looked at was my left knee to see if I had torn my hose. No - no tear! How lucky can you get? However,

I neglected to look at my right knee, and just as I thought everything was fine, someone said: "Oh Betty, look at your knees". I looked and there was the entire kneecap exposed blue white, and a hole the size of a grapefruit in my hose! I was more frightened over what my Grandmother would do to me than I was concerned over the hurt, because I had disobeyed and broken my promise to her. I had to walk home and by the time I walked several blocks and climbed those steep steps up the hill to the house my knee was so swollen it was twice its natural size.

My Grandmother sat me down in the kitchen and boiled some water and made me put my foot in a dishpan and then poured the boiling water over the wound (to prevent infection) and kept pouring it over until I could stand it no longer. This treatment I had to repeat every day for several days. I was sorry and ashamed that I had disobeyed, and when I went to school I was punished even further because my knee was still so swollen I couldn't get it under the piano to work the pedal while I played the school march for the children to march into their rooms! I still have the scar on my knee. A few years later I was to suffer even more ~~from~~ complications from this fall.

School in the far West is different from the south where I had been attending. In Idaho the winters are quite severe and the basements of the schools, at that time, were outfitted as playgrounds for the children at recess. This was quite a novelty to me and I enjoyed it.

One day I went to the window ledge to sharpen my pencil when I saw a sight which to this day is <sup>7/10</sup>vivid in my mind. I stood and stared, for there before my eyes were hundreds of sheep being driven down from the mountains to the valley for protection. The teacher <sup>let</sup> me stand there and look, since it was all <sup>N<sup>E</sup>N</sup> to me. It took quite a while for the shepherds to drive their sheep past. Everywhere were white sheep, except once in a great while you would see a black one. I <sup>don't know whether</sup> ~~suppose~~ these days are over for such drives but it was a sight I'll never forget.

One Saturday afternoon I went to a city park close to the center of town with a group of children from our Sunday school for a picnic, and while we were there I heard someone yell "Run for the bandstand - the horses are coming". I followed the rest of the kids, and, after reaching the bandstand, stood and watched. Here came a thundering herd of beautiful wild horses that had come down from the mountains. They circled twice and then left for the main part



of town. They galloped down main street - one became so frightened he went through a big bay window of the city bank - but was able to extricate himself and left with his herd. It seemed these horses usually came down about twice each year, and some of the natives always tried to lasso one or more of these beautiful animals, but it wasn't always successful as they were powerful and extremely dangerous.

I was, in between all this, getting acquainted with the sights of the wild West, continuing with my piano and dancing lessons. I had the pleasure of being in several local revues to entertain and then I heard a New York stock company was coming to put on a variety show called "Purple Flashes". Everyone from the dancing school tried out for various parts. I didn't get anything outstanding until the very last day when the star of the show became ill and couldn't do her part (just like the story books). I was chosen, and to my delight, was a star once in my life with 13 changes of costumes! Oh what fun!" ~~But nothing ever came of that either - perhaps it was just me that had the fun!~~ It was a great experience -

was very  
the  
memories

Helen  
Herrick!

One more event in which I entered turned out to be quite a thrill and that was the state spelling contest. I made it to the last and won "Best Speller in the State"! So much for my thrilling accomplishments because from here on many things didn't <sup>seem to</sup> turn out to be in my favor.

However, life was very pleasant for me that year - I even went to Vancouver, Canada, with my Grandmother where she went every year to buy her furs and wolens. I had also been enrolled in the Nashville Conservatory of Music where I was to finish my schooling in addition to study advanced piano.

When summer arrived I was told that I was to go to Iowa to be with my Mother and brother. I, of course, wanted to see them, but didn't realize the full meaning of it even then. At that time the train trip was a long one which necessitated one full day, one nite and then most of the next day getting into Chicago, where I was to change trains and go into Iowa. (The couple who shared the compartment with me seemed quite nice, and when we had a four hour stopover in Kansas City I chose to stay on the train rather than take a chance of getting lost and missing my train. After I had been sitting there by myself bored to death for quite some time my compartment mates returned and ask me to accompany them on a sightseeing tour, which I readily accepted, and thoroughly enjoyed. When we arrived in Chicago I knew I had a long wait before I was to change trains and proceed into Iowa and the young

The horizon  
was broken  
with  
trees  
from  
the  
at  
times  
day

couple again invited me to go with them; <sup>station</sup> that they would take me to their home and also on a tour of Chicago, and see that I was back to the terminal in time to catch my train. I thought this was extremely thoughtful of them and readily agreed that I would go. However, when I stepped off the train a lady in a uniform walked up to me and asked if I was Betty Lewis. I said "yes" and she said "come with me". I told her that I had been invited by this couple to spend my waiting time with them and that they would see that I caught my train to Iowa on time. The uniformed lady said "I am sorry but I have instructions to keep you with me in the terminal". I <sup>later</sup> found out this lady belonged to the "Ask Mr. Foster Traveling Agency" and that my Mother had contacted them to meet me and keep me with her. I was furious but had no choice. Later, my Mother explained to me that she had saved me from a life of white slavery! This couple was recruiting young girls for this purpose and I have always been thankful my Mother had foresight enough to have me chaperoned.

I caught my train into Marion, Iowa and arrived in the early afternoon. My brother met me at the station and told me Mother was working. This was news to me as I knew my Mother had grown up in an era when most women did not work. She was in training for hairdressing in a beauty shop. My brother also told me that he was going to take me to where they lived before he took me to see our Mother. I wondered why, but he explained it later. He took me to an apartment above a bank in the downtown section of the city, which surprised me because, all the time I was living in luxury in Idaho, I supposed they were living in the family homestead. He said he wanted me to see where they lived first because he felt it would be a shock to me and he didn't want our Mother to know how I might feel as it might hurt her feelings terribly - mainly because she couldn't provide better living quarters for us.

The antiquated building was terribly depressing. We entered what was the living room; it was a huge square room with one chair, an old studio couch and a table with a lamp on it. Next was the kitchen and dining room combined. The old gas stove was run down, and the table was a card table with two chairs and a crate for a third.

We then approached the bedroom; a double bed, an old chest and a chair; beyond this was another room which served as Chauncey's bedroom and consisted of only an army cot! I was truly shocked, thinking of the home I had been

living in Idaho, but I could see the reasoning my brother had by not wanting our Mother to be hurt. It seems they had, a short while ago, learned that my Father did not intend to come back to us and my Mother's Aunt and Grandmother said they did not want us living with them indefinitely and that we would have to get out and earn our own living. My brother had a job working from 5:00 a.m. until school time, and after school from 3:00 till 10:00 p.m. in a drug store. As time went on I found I could supplement our meager income by playing the piano in the picture show - an hour and a half in the afternoon and two hours at nite. Even in those days I received \$2.00 an hour for this work. I couldn't see over the top of the upright piano so my Mother sat beside me at nite and told me what to play so that it would go along with what was being shown on the screen. In those days we also had to read all the conversation. I was happy to be able to help with the expenses at home. - insert here (over)

This new routine of living went on for a few months when one day my Father appeared and said he would like to rejoin the family, and that we could all move to Florida. This made my Mother very happy and, of course, to see our Mother happy, made my brother and me overjoyed because she had been through a very trying time.

We moved to Jacksonville, Florida, <sup>1926</sup> and, since it was during the depression, jobs were scarce and my Father had to take a job with the Florida East Coast Railway which necessitated him spending a good deal of his time in St. Augustine.

I attended John Gorrie Junior High School in Jacksonville at this time and we had a nice little home once more. <sup>1430 Myrtle St</sup> True to youth, we thought our little world was all patched up.

Since both our Mother and Father worked, and we only had one car, we would all start out in the morning for work and school. We let Mother and Dad out and then Chauncey and I would take the car and go home and wait until school time. Once in a great while I could talk my brother into teaching me how to drive. One Saturday when there was no school - I rode along to take my parents to work, and after we let them out I started to move up into the front seat opposite the driver. It was a Tudor automobile and my Brother decided he would tease me a bit and told me that "servants ride in the back" and that I couldn't ride next to him. I was furious and sat in back behind the front seat and pushed with all my strength, hoping to make it fold over.

Insert = That Fall I enrolled in the same school that 3 generations of my mother's family had attended before me. It seemed everyone knew me and it wasn't long before I had had many friends. Today the huge stone brick schoolhouse has been modernized and is now a city Utility Building. Its like having an old friend.

I taught piano lessons @ 50¢ per hr to help with finances

... the morning for work and school. ... I could take the car out to home and wait until ... I could talk my father into teaching me ... when there was no school - ... I started to move us into the ... the driver. It was a fun experience and my father ... told me that "somebody in the back" ... I was furious and ran in back to find ... with all my strength, hoping to take it fold over.

He, in turn, had moved over to the center just enough to keep the seat from folding. The madder I got, the harder I pushed, and after we got home he still wouldn't let me out of the car, so I kept pushing until I caught him unawares and pushed him hard enough to where he <sup>badly cracked</sup> ~~broke~~ the windshield. Immediately we were allies - and wondered how in the world we would tell our parents. We concocted a story to the effect that we had parked the car where some kids were playing baseball and they had hit a ball into the windshield and cracked it. We both stuck to this story when our parents came home and our Father apparently believed it. However, we both were so conscious stricken that, after a week had passed, we confessed to Dad what had really happened. He told us he knew from the beginning the accident couldn't possibly have happened the way we said, and that he was just waiting for us to confess that we had lied and to apologize. I guess this was our first big lesson in always telling the truth no matter how it hurt. We felt much better that we had confessed, and felt sure our Father was proud of us.

During my attendance at John Gorris Jr. Hi I met a young boy that I fell for quite hard. His name was Lawrence Powell, and we saw to it that we met for recess and lunch time on the playgrounds. This young boy was to play a major role in my grown up years.

One incident that has stood out in my mind happened when I was 14 and we were living in Jacksonville. One Sunday a girl friend of mine named Edith Schwartz and I decided we would like to take a walk and go to another friend's house. My parents said it was alright but that under no circumstances were we to meet some boys and get in their car and go for a ride with them. We went to the friend's house and stayed there a couple of hours. When we started for home two boys drove up to take our friend (and her friend) for a ride. Edith and I were invited to go along and they said they would drive us home. We declined and told them why - but we were outtalked - and we reasoned that since there were four girls and two boys it would be safe enough to risk disobeying what my Father had told us, especially since they were only going to drive us home - not for a long ride. So, we got in the car, and they drove us home.

When we arrived Edith and I got out and went into the house. My Father was waiting just inside the door and told me to go to my bedroom. I went. He followed me in and reminded me that we had been told not to get in a car with any boys. I tried to explain that we had not been out riding with them

and that they were just bringing us home, etc., but he would not listen and he told me to strip off my clothes <sup>off</sup> down to my undies and then he proceeded to whip off his belt and gave me a sound strapping that left the print of the belt on me. I was so hurt and humilitated, at the age of 14, because I didn't think I deserved this, that when he finished I didn't speak to him - and refused to speak to him for over three weeks! This was the first time I had really had a whipping and I thought it was unwarranted.

I just previously mentioned my friend Edith Schwartz. My association with her arose from the fact that her parents owned the house we rented in Jacksonville, <sup>on Myrtle St</sup> and they let us rent it with the understanding that we would let Edith live with us so that she could attend school in Jacksonville instead of where they lived, which was St. Nicholas, a suburb of South Jacksonville. We became very good friends, and as time went by I learned to know her three brothers, Albert, Dan and Harry. Albert was very talented on the piano and also played the organ in the Jewish Synagogue. I often went to hear him and marveled at the fact that he played only by ear in any tempo he wished. Although I enjoyed attending the synagogue very much - and ~~often~~ Edith attended our Sunday nite Christian Endeavor services at the Presbyterian Church - her parents broke up our close friendship because they did not wish her to attend my church. However, throughout many years Edith and her brothers were sincere friends of mine. I cherish the thought.

In about 1925 we found it necessary to move to Ocala, Florida, where my father had obtained work. This turned out to be one of the most nostalgic periods of my life. I regretted leaving Jacksonville for one reason only and that was because I had just begun to get better acquainted with the young man named Lawrence Powell that I met at John Gorrie Junior High. We planned to keep in touch by mail. However, as time went by and we tried to exchange letters (we found out later) that my Mother had intercepted his letters to me and his Mother had intercepted my letters to him (they both thought we were too young to get so serious) and therefore we each thought the other had neglected to write and eventually we both quit writing.

I started attending Ocala High School and, of course, met a lot of the young teen set and enjoyed them all very much. I made some friends that I have kept throughout my adult life and stored away many happy memories that I shall carry to my grave.

Between the new friends that my brother made and those I ~~also~~ met we had quite an active social life. Among those we met were <sup>219</sup> Doyle Smith, Billy Barnett, Dan Hunnicutt, Zimmerman Townsend, <sup>219</sup> Ruby Condon, Martha Dent, Eileen and Newton Perry, Verna McLeod and many others. Billy Barnett had a beautiful tenor voice and sang at many civic affairs. In fact, he entered the Atwater Kent Radio Contest that year (1927) and won "Best Tenor in Florida" with me at the ~~the~~ piano to accompany him. We were so proud and we went to Jacksonville to try out for a year's free tutoring at the Jacksonville School of Music. Speaking of singing: one of the most romantic and nostalgic memories I have of Ocala was of the quartet of young men that sang just for our own pleasure. There were four couples of us that went together quite regularly (walking most everywhere as none of us had cars at our disposal all the time.) We would go to the theatre and then walk all the girls home first - and many ~~times~~ <sup>times</sup> when there was a full moon the fellows would march down the middle of the street (most of them were unpaved at the time and there was not much traffic) singing to the tops of their glorious voices. I could hear most of this as I was usually the last girl they took home as I lived the furthest. Some of their favorites were (Four Leaf Clover), There's Gonna Be a Picnic in the Park Tonight, By the Light of the Silvery Moon, and Peg O' My Heart. At midnite their voices carried a long ways, but ~~none~~ <sup>not one</sup> of the neighbors complained!

We also took turns gathering at each other's homes for taffy pulls and fudge making, in between teaching each other the latest dance steps. What fun! One Hallowe'en the four couples I went with - and the four couples my brother went with (they were all seniors, we were sophomores) got together and played some pranks on the school. My group saw to it that we put a goat in the basement; - the senior group put a cow in the principal's office! Needless to say there was quite an investigation - and the seniors were finally identified and were suspended from school <sup>for two weeks</sup>. I can remember sitting in the classroom looking out the window watching two cars of the seniors riding round and round the block circling the school during school hours disrupting classes until finally they let them back in school.

Another memory stands out in my mind because the same group of sophomores would get up at daylight on Sunday mornings, in summer and winter, and ride to Silver Springs (in winter freezing to death) and go swimming. Since the Springs water is 72 degrees the year round, we dared each other to jump in and we who would "chicken" out. It was such fun - ~~and, of course, the ride home was~~

*throughout the next year I accompanied Billy in several*

*including at school*

*9/27/27*

*beautiful silver springs*

1927  
In June  
attended a  
Christianity  
conference  
at  
St. Petersburg  
Florida

with all my good  
friends from "Crum"  
Wally on  
Billy  
then my  
also attended  
at Lady Lake  
Oct 1927  
I had  
open - a  
great  
with  
Christianity  
already  
meeting

[Faint, mostly illegible printed text from the reverse side of the page, appearing as bleed-through.]



Silver Springs at that time was quite primitive and we called it "the old swimming hole" There were none of the modern buildings ~~at the time~~ - only a float out in the water toward the head of the Springs where we would always swim out ~~to~~ to rest and sun bathe. Newton Perry was the Life Guard there on Sundays and Holidays and also ~~was~~ the only person that I ever knew of that would dive into the head of the Springs, defying the danger due to the thousands of gallons of water per minute gushing out. For this reason the Pathe News company went to the Springs several times and took pictures. I was in the group once where we took underwater photos that were shown nationally on the ~~Pathe News~~ <sup>Pathe News</sup>. We were paid \$10.00 per hour and only worked five minutes out of each hour and were furnished beautiful bathing suits by the Catalina Bathing Suit Company to advertise their product - and we also could keep the suits. — <sup>at Silver Springs, I had a</sup> <sup>1927</sup> <sup>narrow escape</sup> from drowning <sup>see cont - 1.</sup>

One Sunday morning (August 1, 1927 to be exact) a girl friend and I decided we would go to the lake and go swimming. I went into the bath house to change into my suit ~~and~~ when a terrific pain hit me in my right side and I found it quite impossible to even get up from a sitting position. My friend called for help and I wound up in the Monroe Memorial Hospital that afternoon for emergency surgery. My doctor was named Dr. Eugene Peek and <sup>after much consultation</sup> he was Mayor of Ocala at the time! He informed me and my parents that this attack had been brought on by the fall I had had ~~with~~ with the horse in Idaho! The fall had torn my right ovary, which in time had infected and caused my appendix <sup>also</sup> to become infected ~~also~~ almost to the point of bursting; Hence the emergency, and both the ovary and the appendix were removed. I was told later that my brother had decided that he would watch the operation with my Dad (it was permissible in those days) and so they went into the operating room. My Mother waited outside and she said that Chauncey came out of the operating room looking positively "green". He told her that everything was going fine until the doctor started pulling out my intestines to find the appendix and all of a sudden he realized it was "Betty" and he could stand it no longer. I was blessed with <sup>places for</sup> many friends ~~to visit me~~ and numerous floral gifts. My friends the Schwartz' even drove down from Jacksonville to visit, which I appreciated very much. One day my brother smuggled our pet dog, Jingles, in to see me! Up the back stairs. Jingles was a beautiful <sup>professionally</sup> ~~beaten~~ Setter, liver and white in color, and <sup>professionally</sup> beautifully trained to hunt.

Lewellen

Over



Although everything seemed to be going well with my recuperation, I, nevertheless, found that I was not able to return to school as quickly as I thought. I had trouble climbing the stairs, and even tho' the teachers re-arranged my classes so that I could attend classes only on one floor I found that the steep stairs leading up to the school's first floor were more than I could do at that time, hence I had to stay home a little longer.

My brother and his best friend had an old 19\_\_ car which they named "opportunity - cause it <sup>knocked</sup>" and it was quite a popular item among the <sup>female</sup> seniors; <sup>they</sup> they had a <sup>ladder</sup> ladder on the rear of the car and a mailbox on the front where the girls wrote them notes, etc. It was a real fun thing and everyone took pictures of it and rallied around the boys during recess and before and after school. However, one day Chauncey had parked Opportunity in front of the 10<sup>th</sup> store on the Court House Square and while there a fire broke out somewhere and the huge new hook and ladder truck tried to turn the corner ~~there~~ and ~~it~~ demolished Opportunity! The only good thing about it was that there was a fair amount of insurance paid on it and Chauncey was able to afford a better car!

Our home life was just not all we had hoped it to be because our Mother and Dad seemed to be having trouble again. One Sunday afternoon while I was resting I heard arguing going on between them and it seemed that my Dad was talking pretty ugly to my Mother so I got up out of bed and walked into their room just in time to see my Dad raise his hand as if to strike Mother. I immediately stepped in front of her and caught the blow myself, which felled me, and caused my incision to break open and necessitated my having to go to the doctor and had to have drainage tubes inserted in my side. This, of course, set back my recuperation period even further and I couldn't attend school for ~~it~~ quite a while longer.

A short time after that my Mother seemed to have disappeared and we all wondered what had happened. On the third morning of her absence my Father called the two of us to him and told us that he thought Mother had left for good and that he didn't know what to do as he had to work and he couldn't leave us alone. He said he thought the best thing to do was to put us in a ~~school~~ boarding school where we would be cared for. We were pretty broken up over this; however, the ~~next~~ very next day Mother returned and said she couldn't stay away any longer because she was afraid Dad would put us in a school somewhere and she wouldn't know where we were and would never forgive herself for having left us. How glad we were to see her - and realized she knew just what Dad would do with us. That nite when Dad saw that Mother had returned he packed his bags and ~~left~~ <sup>left</sup> himself. <sup>at 10:00</sup> <sup>the 29<sup>th</sup> Nov 1927</sup> <sup>14<sup>th</sup> left</sup>

Dad came back ten days later & talked to Chauncey & me - then <sup>was</sup> <sup>4</sup> left again after casually saying "goodbye" -

We moved to Jax Jan. 11, 1928 -

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of March I brought us (mother & I) beads & perfume from Cuba - then left again & the next time I saw him 2 1/2 yrs had passed!

... however, one day (perhaps had marked) ...  
... in fact, the above on the (out) house ...  
... the new roof and ladder track ...  
... The only thing about it ...  
... of insurance ...  
... it to be because our father ...  
... the trouble ...  
... on between them and it was ...  
... I got us out of bed and ...  
... to write father ...  
... which ...  
... having to go to ...  
... This, of course ...  
... I could attend school for ...  
... all ...  
... of her absence my father ...  
... that he thought father had left for ...  
... he had to work and ...  
... the best thing to do was to put us in a ...  
... would be cured for ...  
... the next day father returned and said she ...  
... because she was afraid that ...  
... and would never forgive ...  
... we were to see her - and ...  
... that night when father ...  
... himself.

Now my Mother was faced with trying to earn a living for us by herself again. Dad left her with a house full of furniture, two children and \$18.00 in cash! She decided we would have to leave Ocala and return to Jacksonville where she probably could find employment of some kind. So we packed what we could in our little tacky automobile and took off. We rented a big two story house at 912 Oak Street in Jacksonville and rented the upstairs rooms out for enough to pay the rent and Mother and I took the downstairs bedroom for ourselves. Chauneey returned to Ocala to stay with his friend Doyle Smith and his family so that he could finish school. As soon as he finished he joined us in Jax. and secured a job with Western Union Telegraph Co. delivering telegrams. ~~Mother was lucky enough to get a job as receptionist and helper to a dentist, Dr. A. W. Parker, who was kind enough to understand her position and was willing to train her.~~

My Mother started a little restaurant with delicious home cooking and was doing fine and we had plenty of business from working people but one day she was lighting the <sup>oven or a stove</sup> gas ~~hot water heater~~ <sup>when</sup> and it blew up and something struck her on her head! We had to take her to the doctor and she had stitches. Since my Mother was a frail, tiny person only five feet tall and (if she weighed 100 lbs. she was fat,) she naturally didn't ~~had~~ have too much strength. This accident ended her career as ~~a~~ the proprietor of a restaurant. She then secured a position with a dentist, Dr. A. W. Parker, who was willing to train her for receptionist work as well as assistant to him.

For some reason that I have ~~not~~ forgotten Mother had to spend two nites away from home, and left me in the house. There was <sup>an</sup> ~~a~~ Mr. Rogers who roomed with us and ~~was~~ she felt ~~safe~~ safe to leave me in the house while he ~~was~~ there. Since my brother and another young man worked long hard hours with ~~the~~ Western Union, she couldn't count on them staying with me nites. One nite as I was preparing for bed I foolishly left the window shades up while undressing, and I stepped into the bathroom which adjoined our bedroom and while there I heard the front door open and shut. I thought it was one of the roomers and listened for them to go up the stairs - but heard no footsteps. I was a little concerned so I opened the bathroom door a <sup>a little</sup> small amount and peeked out. I looked at the window beside my bed - and the end table in front of it, which held a lamp and a jar full of pennies that I had been saving. While I was looking I noticed the window go up and a white hand come in the window and pick up the jar of pennies. I was scared silly and felt trapped in that bathroom especially since all the window shades were up and knew that if and when I tried to leave the house I could be seen. I still remembered that I had heard the front door open and shut and I felt sure that there was someone.

became a member of  
 the Riverside  
 Presby Church  
 in 1928  
 several  
 commitments

in the house. I often think of how I must have looked - in my pajamas - crawling on my hands and knees (lower than the window sills) trying to get to the front door to run out of the house to a neighbor two doors down. I made it without mishap and was careful to close the door as I left. That seemed silly later as I knew someone was still in the house. However, the neighbor called the police and we all went back and ~~it~~ went through the house and checked it out. When we arrived the front door was standing open and it confirmed my thoughts that ~~definitely someone had been there.~~ <sup>definitely someone had been there.</sup> Anyway, a couple of blocks down the street a policeman found my pocketbook thrown in the street - and what little money I had ~~gone~~ <sup>was missing</sup>. I have often thought how lucky I was to have nothing more drastic happen to me that nite.

Christmas 1928 was a sad one for all of us - mostly for my brother and me because we saw our Mother cry most all day simply because she was unable to buy gifts for us for the <sup>very</sup> first time. I received only one gift and that was a beautiful hand made pin cushion (shaped like a heart and in pink, blue and white ribbon) given to me by my best girl's friend Grace Timrone. I treasured the gift and to this day have it wrapped carefully and placed among my souvenirs.

During the summer of 1928 I had an experience which is still quite vivid in my mind. One Sunday in the summer I had just returned from Sunday School and <sup>as</sup> arriving home I found that Mother had two ~~men~~ <sup>men</sup> guests that she I had come to know since she ~~was~~ worked with them in New Smyrna. One man was in his 40's I presume and the other was a young man in his 20's. After visiting a while they announced they had to ride to Jacksonville Beach to meet a business acquaintance of theirs - but would not be gone long - and asked if Mother and I would like to ride with them. Mother said she couldn't get away right then for some reason or other - but said it would be alright for me to go with them if I chose. Since I had little opportunity to go to the beach in those days, I quickly agreed and thought it would be quite a lark.

I understood them to say that they were to meet their friend a short distance from Jacksonville Beach proper, so when we arrived and continued on through the main part of the city I thought nothing of it until we passed the spot ~~where~~ where they said the man was to be waiting for them. I remarked that I thought possibly we should stop and wait for him because we might miss him should we continue on. They disagreed with me and continued on down the

Wagon  
to window  
at gifts

deserted lonely part of the beach. Finally, they decided to stop upon the pretense of waiting for their friend at last. They proceeded to take out a blanket they had in the car and ~~spread~~ spread it on the sand. We were to sit there and wait - however, the older man seemed to be taking a walk down the beach while the younger man stayed on the blanket with me. It wasn't long until I realized things were not going according to what I had expected and I found myself in a situation I scarcely knew how to handle. The man started some amorous approaches and I tried to stop him by reminding him that his friend was just down the beach and might return at any time. Upon that remark ~~we~~ got up and ordered me to do the same, whereas he took the blanket and instructed me to climb up the sand dunes where he went. I had no choice as he was holding my arm and then when we arrived at the spot he chose, he ordered me again to lie down and remove my underclothes. I started fighting and the next thing I knew I received a blow to my head which knocked me down and almost out. I was completely beside myself by this time and started screaming. He tried to stop me - but I continued - hoping his friend would come to my rescue (how naive can you get??). Finally, I screamed as loud as I could: "Dear God - if there is a God - help me now". The young man looked at me rather strangely and said: "Are you really a virgin?" I said "Yes". Whereas he got up, put on his clothes and told me to do the same and then we proceeded back to the car - met the friend down the beach and went back to JACKSONVILLE. All the way home I was too frightened to speak and just prayed we would make it home without further trouble.

We finally arrived and I ran into the house - whereas my Mother took one look at me and knew something was the matter. The men left. I could hardly talk coherently and she asked me what they had done to me. She saw my face where he had hit me and she suspected the worst. I was so nervous and panicked that I couldn't talk. My Mother called a doctor and I had to go through an examination which further panicked <sup>or</sup> me - but Mother said if they had harmed me she would put them in jail. Of course, I was alright physically ~~but~~ <sup>and</sup> after such a frightening experience, the doctor had to give me something for my nerves. Yes - God had saved ~~me!~~ <sup>answered my prayer & saved me!</sup>

1929 found Mother and myself in Atlanta, Georgia because Dr. Parker had asked Mother to go there and open an office for him. I was able to get a job with the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company - in training for <sup>to</sup> an operator. My first pay check was in the sum of \$12.50 and how proud I was! While in Atlanta I met a very nice young man by the name of Herbert Rasnake. We met at a music store where I was buying some sheet music. He seemed very interested in music and therefore we had a lot in common. As time went on, he <sup>was a</sup> made me "sponsor" of the 100 <sup>football players</sup> ~~boys~~ <sup>Captain</sup> he was in charge of at Georgia Tech High. I was very proud. That year he earned a beautiful "T" letter and gave it to me and also gave me a Milton Eradley pull-over sweater in gold color to wear it on. I wore it with pride and kept the letter for many years - as well as the sweater - but it finally succumbed to the silver fish that we have in Florida that destroy woolens. I liked Atlanta for the fine friends I made there, but, as far as Mother and I were concerned, nothing could beat Florida for climate and beauty.

When Dr. Parker finally realized that he could not commute between the two cities and, after a few months, closed the office, <sup>with</sup> ~~which~~, of course, necessitated Mother and I to move back to Jacksonville. We did, and settled in an apartment in the upper part of a private home at 2767 Lydia Street with some people named Roberts. We became very friendly with the Roberts and Mrs. Roberts seemed to like me enough to suggest that she would be willing to send me to college with her daughter, Sarah. I had always wanted to finish high school and be able to attend college. However, shortly after we moved there Mrs. Roberts had a stroke and Sarah had to come home from college to wait on her Mother. About a year or so after that Mr. Roberts also had a stroke and it turned out that even Sarah couldn't finish school because she had both her parents in wheel chairs. So much for my education! Sarah was a beautiful dancer and she taught me all the latest ball room steps and I was able to help her teach ballroom dancing for a while. Needless to say I enjoyed this thoroughly.



In 1929 we moved to Atlanta, Georgia where my Mother had accepted a job of opening an office for a Jacksonville dentist - his name was Dr. A. W. Parker, and he had been kind enough to train Mother as receptionist and helper. I enrolled at Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company for training to become an operator. I have the stub of my first paycheck (of which I was quite proud at the time) in the amount of \$12.50 per week!

During my time in Atlanta I met a very nice young man by the name of Herbert Rasnake. He attended Tech High there and was Captain of 100 football players. He made me sponsor for his group and I had a very nice time attending games and participating in the social life. Herbert had a very strong liking for piano playing and was forever buying sheet music for me. I still have dozens of them and I expect they are collector's items by now. I really didn't like Atlanta very well, mainly because of the weather. I made a lot of nice friends - but in the winter it would be nearly dark by four o'clock in the afternoon, and, after living in Florida as long as I had, I didn't like this at all.

Before a year was up Dr. Parker realized that it was going to be too far for him to commute between Jacksonville and Atlanta to keep his office going and he wasn't able to find a dentist to ~~replace him~~ <sup>replace him</sup>, so he decided to close the office and move back to Jacksonville. This pleased Mother and me no end; however Herbert was quite upset, and then and there proposed to me! Since I was barely 17 I certainly wasn't ready for marriage. He said his family like me a lot and would be pleased if I should marry him and that they would build us a house and give it to ~~us~~ <sup>us</sup> free! Nevertheless, I was not interested in marriage so I just told him we would have to wait a while. After I moved back to Jacksonville he came down to visit quite often but that soon wore itself thin because I was no nearer to marriage.

After returning to Jacksonville I was faced with finding work. In those days jobs were few and far between - and when you found one, it certainly didn't pay much; \$18.00 ~~per~~ <sup>per</sup> week was a fair salary and about the most common. I was lucky when I found work at the Chamber of Commerce as an office helper. I really was not trained to be a full-fledged secretary - but there was a lovely lady there named Marion L'Engle Young, who seemed to like me, and she did all she could to help me hold the job by training me. Marion had just been divorced and was the Mother of a four month <sup>old</sup> baby girl. She lived many many blocks from work - but she walked home every noon to nurse that baby.

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and I could drive Mother to her home for a visit. It was hard, but we did it and my brother built a Ford coupe from the first screw on up - getting what parts he needed from a local wrecking yard.

When the summer of 1933 rolled around I took Mother to Iowa and left her in Marion to visit - while I took a train into Chicago to visit a good friend of mine - who had promised to show me around the World's Fair which was being shown in Chicago at the time. The train I caught left Marion somewhere between midnite and two in the morning. I hadn't been on the train long when I noticed the conductor coming through checking tickets and seemingly looked at me as if he knew me. He said nothing at the time so I let it pass. Later (I should say around three or four in the morning) he came through again and asked me if I was cold. It was July, but in Iowa and Illinois the nites get cold sometimes - so I said: "Yes - I am from Florida - and I would appreciate it if you would turn the heat on". I still noticed that the Conductor looked as if he wanted to say something to me. Still later the Conductor came through and asked if I was more comfortable and I said "Yes" Then he said: "Could you by Any chance be Charlie Lewis' granddaughter?" His statement really surprised me but I quickly said "Yes, I am" He said "I thought so - from the first time you boarded the train - but wasn't sure enough to speak of it. You certainly look enough like the Lewis' that I couldn't be mistaken. Now - Charlie Lewis was a mighty fine man and everyone respected him highly - as for your Father (~~Ch~~Chauncey Lewis) I couldn't say the same - I am sorry." Then I told him that he had abandon us several years before that and we didn't know where he was. I thought this was worth mentioning as it had been many years since the Lewis' had lived in Marion - and, of course, I hadn't lived there myself for many years. My Grandfather, you will remember, was a railroad man himself - but had been working in Idaho for many years.

I had a wonderful visit with my Chicago friend, Marietta Brown, and seeing the highlights of the <sup>1933</sup> World's Fair. It was quite something for a small town girl like myself.

Soon it was time to return to Marion, pick up Mother, and make the trip back to Florida. My great-grandmother, Great Aunt and other relatives, agreed that my Mother was ill - mentally. We all realized that she had been grieving over my Father and ~~that~~ <sup>the</sup> fact that she was handicapped in wanting to educate her two children as she had planned - and seemingly didn't care to live any longer.

That was ~~a~~ <sup>a</sup> really trying trip for me and when we finally made it home - I got out of the car, took in some luggage, ~~saw~~ <sup>saw</sup> that Mother had gotten in the house safely - and promptly fainted in the middle of the living room floor! I was dead tired and my nerves were taut as a high flying ~~the~~ <sup>Rite</sup> string.

For several months after that we kept careful watch on Mother - however, several times I would return from work - or church and she wouldn't be home. I found her ~~standing~~ <sup>standing</sup> ~~times~~ <sup>times</sup> out on a busy highway just standing and when I asked her what she was doing she told me she was waiting for my Father! We realized something had to be done - and took her to several doctors. She was in her middle forties and the doctors said she was going through ~~her~~ <sup>her</sup> menopause period. Had it been more modern times ~~she~~ <sup>she</sup> there would have been ways to help her - but the doctors finally told ~~me~~ <sup>us</sup> she would have to be hospitalized in a mental institution! We were also told the only hospital <sup>in this part of the country at that time</sup> she could be sent to would be the Florida State Hospital at Chattahoochee - but that it was quite crowded and we would have to wait for an opening. We had no money for a private hospital.

No one will ever know the nerve strain and agony we went through those months waiting for that opening. At that time my brother and I had several young couples that we went around with - and ~~that~~ <sup>we</sup> took turns entertaining in our homes to dance, etc. Well, as Fate would have it, the nite it was our turn to entertain we had a call from the Hospital saying they would send a car for Mother <sup>at 7:00 the</sup> ~~the~~ next morning!?!? Now the question came up - should we cancel the party - ~~or~~ <sup>or</sup> would it be too obvious to Mother that something was going on? We decided it would be best to go on with the party so she would <sup>not</sup> become suspicious and that is what we did. My brother paid extra special attention to her that nite - and danced nearly every dance with her - she was delighted and seemed quite happy that she was receiving so much attention.

The next morning <sup>Jan 17, 1934</sup> at promptly seven o'clock a knock came on the door and we had to explain as best we could to Mother that she was going to the hospital to have tests made but that she wouldn't be gone long and would soon be back feeling her old self again. She couldn't take much of anything with her - and I had been advised to take any of her good jewelry away, which I did. She went - like a little child - doing what she had been told to do. That morning <sup>after my mother left</sup> was the first time I ever saw a man cry - for my brother sat down with his head in his hands - and cried for over <sup>2</sup> hours.

About two hours after the car left the 'phone rang and when I answered it - it was my Mother's voice at the other end of the line. She said: We had to stop and wait for some gas so I ~~am~~ using the phone to call you - just because I wanted to hear your voice once more" You can imagine what this did to me!

Now we had lost both our Father and Mother!

We really didn't know what we would do - but we vowed we would stick together as long as we could. The next nite a knock came on the door and ~~what~~ was standing there but our faithful friends - the Schwartz' - Albert and Edith. <sup>their first words were "What can we do to help?"</sup> They were so wonderful to us - and offered ~~their~~ help of any type that we might need! How they found out so quickly that our Mother had gone I don't know to this day - but we were so grateful they were there in our time of sorrow.

As it turned out - we had to give up the house - and we <sup>had</sup> wanted to find a small apartment for the two of us - but no one would rent to us because no landlord would believe that we were brother and sister! So, we had to store the furniture and each of us rented just a room with friends. I was lucky enough to find a room with a friend from Ocala. Her name was Alma Townsend and <sup>she shortly before her marriage had</sup> just spent a year as the reigning queen as Miss Florida - a beautiful girl. She was ~~not~~ married to a prosperous man named Roy Hoffmann and I stayed with her for over a year.

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The doctors told us that Mother could possibly be home in less than six months - that is, if her tests turned out alright. It hurts me to say here that the six months turned into twenty-six years, four months and fifteen days! An illness such as hers - causes her loved ones to <sup>experience</sup> a "living death" as long as she could not ~~be~~ return home -

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Life must go on - so I continued to work at my job with the Cypress Company and had the usual number of dates that most young girls have, I suppose. Dr. Fuller and I were still going more ~~or~~ less "steady". However, one afternoon I ran into a young man I mentioned earlier in this story - named Lawrence Powell. It had been about six years since I had seen him - which was before I moved to Ocala. It didn't take ~~me~~ but a very few minutes to make me realize that the "old black magic" was still alive, there I think it was the same with him also because we started dating again and this time our parents couldn't stop us. I soon forgot Dr. Fuller as a "steady", and all the other young men I was then dating. In fact, on October 19, 1935 we were married in the Riverside Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville, Florida. My brother was the only family member I had attending and he was

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After a stay of six months which included lots of tests, we found that Mother would not be able to come home at any near date, so we tried to make arrangements to visit her as often as possible, take her whatever she could use and wanted, However, Chattahoochee is \_\_\_\_\_ miles from Jacksonville and, since we both were working, it was hard for us to get away very often. Nevertheless, the thought of her spending Christmas alone in a big institution was so distasteful to us that we planned to take the long ~~trip~~ drive on Christmas Eve in order to be with her Christmas Day.

We gathered the presents we had planned for her, a little bottle of wine, fruitcake, candy and food for a "pinnix" dinner for all of us. We made arrangements to take her away from the hospital for a few hours and drove a short distance away to a spot beside the highway we thought might be suitable. A picnic in winter in North Florida isn't the most cozy, but the three of us were together and this is what counted. Mother was radiant with happiness to be with her two children and it did our hearts good just to see the smile on her face. In spite of all the inconveniences, we found a measure of Christmas cheer beside a busy highway! Never in the wildest stretch of our imaginations did we think we would ever be doing such as this! The heart rendering part came when we had to take her back to the hospital and say our good-byes for however long we did not know. She clung to us and cried. This ~~xxx~~ scene was repeated many times in the years she spent away from us. The doctors consoled us with the thought that we were the ones doing the most suffering because she readily adjusted after we left.

As we all know - life must go on - so I continued my work with the Cypress Company. I thought things were going quite well when one day I fainted in the office. One of my bosses was Mr. L. E. Mitchell, who was the father of one of my best friends, and he took me to his home for a recuperation period. It turned out I was there six weeks before my strength returned enough for me to go back to work. <sup>For</sup> that time on I looked upon the Mitchells as my second Mother and Father, and to this day, Louise, the daughter, and I are very close friends although she lives in Bristol, Tennessee. ~~Mr. and Mrs.~~ <sup>my memories of them</sup> Mitchell are gone now but ~~their memories~~ <sup>my memories of them</sup> will stay with me forever.

I had quite a few dates in those days, and finally settled mainly on one, Dr. Joseph W. Fuller, a child dentist for the City of Jacksonville. We attended the same church and went "steady" for at least five years. Joe had a scholarship to Forsythe Infirmary in Boston and wanted very badly to take advantage of it. However, at that time his Father was out of work and he felt

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he should stay and continue supporting his Mother, Father, sister and brother. I talked and talked ~~to~~ to him to convince him that he ~~should~~ go ahead ~~of~~ and take advantage of the opportunity to specialize in his ~~special~~ field - so, finally, he went. I was so glad for him - although it meant in the final outcome that he fell in love with a dental hygienist while gone and ultimately married her! Oh well - what is to be will be.

In the meantime, one afternoon quite unexpectedly, I ran into a young man I mentioned earlier in this story - named Lawrence Powell. It had been about six years since I had seen him - which was before I moved to Ocala. I didn't take very long to ~~make~~ <sup>make</sup> me realize that the "old black magic" was still there. I think he felt the same because we started dating again and this time our parents couldn't stop us. \*The upshot of all this dating was our marriage on October 19, 1935 in the Riverside Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville, Florida. My brother was the only family member I had to attend and he was most unhappy that I had chosen Lawrence because he told me "a leopard cannot change his spots" - meaning, of course, that Lawrence was quite a wild young man and he didn't think he was good husband material. How right he was! But - at such a time as this "smoke gets in your eyes".

\* Not too long after we started dating again Lawrence had a dreadful accident one nite while on duty at the big Gulf Filling Station at the corner of Third and Main Streets in Jacksonville, where he worked. He was teaching one of the employees to ride their Service motorcycle - three wheeler - and was riding on the tool-box in back. While riding in and out of the station into the street, although it was three in the morning there was still a lot of traffic, ~~and~~ a car appeared out of nowhere and ~~the~~ the student driver stomped on the gas instead of the brake and threw Lawrence ~~and his~~ ~~and~~ up in the air where he landed on the rear bumper of the car they were trying to avoid. ~~It~~ After ~~the~~ Lawrence got to the hospital they found he had a five inch fracture of the skull, which necessitated his staying in the hospital for three weeks. From that time on he suffered from severe headaches several times a year and we always felt they were a result of this accident.

We spent our honeymoon in Daytona and Ormond Beach  $\frac{1}{2}$  we felt blessed that we had a whole week! After we returned we found a house to rent and I was able to take my Mother's furniture out of storage and use it. ~~But~~ had a robbery shortly after moving in, but were lucky and found the robber and recovered clothing and jewelry he had taken.

35-B

go back

most unhappy that I had chosen Lawrence because he told me "a leopard <sup>cannot</sup> ~~can~~ change his spots" - meaning, of course, that Lawrence was quite a wild young man and he didn't think he was good husband material. How right he was! But, at such a time as this "smoke gets in your eyes!"

We spent our honeymoon in Daytona and Ormond Beach - we had a whole week! After we returned we found a house to rent - and I was able to take my Mother's furniture out of storage and use it. Lawrence was working for a filling station on the busiest corner in Jacksonville - on thereabouts - at third and Main streets. He was, more or less, in charge of the nite crew and early one morning (about three o'clock) he was teaching a young man how to ride a three wheeled motorcycle when they were circling the station in and out into the street - Lawrence sitting on the top of the tool box in the rear - the young man driving - when the man saw a car approaching out in the street and instead of hitting the brake - his foot hit the gas and out he shot into the street and threw Lawrence over his head and onto the bumper of the passing car. It turned out that Lawrence had a five inch fracture of the skull and was hospitalized for three weeks in intensive care. It was a very serious, traumatic accident, but youth and good medical care, saved him. However, for many years after, he suffered terrific headaches that we all thought perhaps had been caused by this affair.

This accident occurred before marriage

at <sup>Father's Hope</sup> ~~insert~~ about <sup>promise</sup> ~~promise~~ to god  
our first son was born on December 11, 1936 and we named him Lawrence

Our first son was born on December 11, 1936 and we named him Lawrence ~~Wallace Powell, III~~. Lawrence had by that time accepted a position with the National Cash Register Company and we were living in Live Oak, Florida. However, Lawrence had started drinking quite heavily by this time and just a week before the birth of the baby he lost his job and we found that we would have to live with his parents in Jacksonville until after the baby's arrival and <sup>until</sup> after both of us had secured jobs again. This was my first inkling into just how serious a problem my husband had with alcohol (which is what my brother had tried to tell me).

I was in the hospital for two weeks (this was normal in those days) and went home with my new son in an ambulance. At that time I think even my Mother-in-law resented my presence and it was anything but a happy experience. In fact, Lawrence was dating other girls nearly every nite and I was left alone with my new baby - other than being in the house with his parents, from whom I didn't seem to be able to get much sympathy. I had contacted a lawyer to try for a divorce but he advised me to get situated into a job, etc. before I filed papers. One nite, however, Lawrence came home very early in the morning - bringing his "date" and another couple with him - and they acted as



*It was then that I was told*  
if I didn't exist. This was the last straw with me, and I waited quietly until I thought everyone was gone <sup>or asleep</sup> (my bedroom was upstairs) and I packed some clothes for myself and baby and tip-toed downstairs and made it out to the yard where the car was. Everything seemed to be going fine until I started the motor and then I found myself looking to the left into Lawrence's eyes and to the right into my Mother-in-law's face! Lawrence held my arms while Grandma Powell ~~and~~ took the baby ~~for~~ from me. There was nothing for me to do but let them keep the child while I ~~took~~ took a taxi and left. I went to my friend's home, Marion Young, and from there I filed for divorce and for the return and custody of my child.

At the hearing in the Court, the Judge informed me that since I didn't have a family to care for my child while I worked, and since his father did - I only had one alternative if I wanted to keep my child: - It was - for me to live in a <sup>Children's</sup> ~~orphan's~~ home with the child until such time as I could earn <sup>enough</sup> enough money to supply a home and all the other necessities for ~~me~~ <sup>both of us</sup>. This I did, and I stayed in that Home for about eight months. Then, through a friend, I learned of an elderly lady that lived alone and that she would rent me a room and care for my child while I worked. Her name was Mrs. Jefferson <sup>Ray</sup> and I stayed with her for over a year - working days - going home nites and washing and ironing baby ~~the~~ clothes and buying baby food. Lawrence, by this time, had ~~skip~~ skipped the country and went to Illinois where he was out of the jurisdiction of the Florida courts and therefore didn't ~~and~~ pay me anything for <sup>the</sup> the upkeep of the child. They had "no runaway fathers" law in <sup>that</sup> ~~that~~ day.

I would like to bring out something that has never left my mind - which occurred while I was living in the Children's Home. I went home from work one day and the lady in charge was quite upset because during the day my baby had gotten his ~~di~~ little head through the iron bars of the baby bed where he slept and, had he not been found when he was, could have hung himself! I did not have a baby bed and no money to buy one - but all the little children in the Home, by that time, were quite concerned about the baby and they donated their nickels, dimes and pennies toward the purchase of a crib. ~~At~~ During those days buying anything on the installment plan was unheard of; however, the very next day, I went to a store, and fortified with the small amount of money that I had, I talked the manager into letting me buy a baby bed on the installment plan! I went, faithfully, every week, for nearly fifty weeks, and ~~pay~~ paid \$1.00 <sup>per</sup> week to get the bed paid for. Later in life - all my other sons also used that crib. I was forever grateful for the children of that Home for helping me as they did.

Another pleasant thing happened to me while in the Home. Dr. Kissling, who ~~was~~ was pastor of the Riverside Presbyterian Church where we were married, and his wife, went to the Home several Sundays and took me and my baby for a ride. He told me "Betty - I am a minister - but I am also a man!" and I cannot go along with a husband leaving his wife and ~~while~~ on the mercy of ~~the~~ the world as Law ~~rece~~ had done." He also made arrangements for me to have my son baptised at Eastertime when he was about seventeen months old. At that time I had decided I didn't want <sup>my</sup> baby to carry his father's name and I had him christened Chauncey Lewis Powell. I felt very self-conscious at the altar ~~with my child~~ - being the only ~~the~~ one-parent baptism in the crowd. However, Dr. Kissling, ~~put~~ patted me on my shoulder and said in an undertone "keep your chin up - everything will be alright". Dr. Kissling also had made arrangements with the best pediatrician in town to have me make monthly trips the first year to tell me how to properly feed and care for my infant - all free to me!

When my son was two years old I decided to move into an apartment with a friend of mine, Grace Nash, and we rented an upstairs apartment from a lady named Margaret Haugdahl at ~~330~~ <sup>330</sup> 16th Street in Jacksonville. It was a fine move for me ~~and~~ both Grace and Margaret turned out to be real friends. Grace died many years later from multiple sclerosis, but Margaret and I are still the best of friends and she is still living at the same address in Jax.

When my son was about three years old I was surprised to hear from my ex-husband - who, supposedly by this time had reformed and had quit drinking and wanted me to re-marry him and start all over again. I had had very few dates in those three years, and, secretly, I still loved the guy, - so - you have already ~~probably~~ guessed - we were re-married on October 12, 1940! Then I moved to Decatur, Illinois, which is where Lawrence had been living all this time and was employed by Firestone Tire and Rubber Company. He had made arrangements for us to have an apartment <sup>with</sup> of a lady named Mrs. Schar. We lived there several months and it was during this time that I had a miscarriage at 5 months. After that we moved to an apt above a store on Fairview Ave (?) on the west side not far from our aunt & uncle - my son Larry (oh yes, his name had been changed!) was at that time about 3 1/2 yrs old - He contracted measles & was very ill - she Dr. took many tests & found he was a victim of rheumatoid fever & put him to bed immediately - then on his back - with phenobarbital to keep him half-asleep for four months - In all - he was

38.

in bed 18 months - After that  
year or half of nursing my son  
I was physically exhausted & the  
the M.C.R. Co transferred us to Peoria  
all we liked it there and had a  
lovely home # 39 so Eleanor place -  
however because WW was then in  
publishing M.C.R. Co. was limited  
factory to making war material  
what meant that many salesmen  
went out of job including HWP  
we returned to Decatur and  
Lawrence accepted a job as guard  
at one of the war plants in Decatur -  
I worked for Caterpillar military  
Engine Co. as a steam until I became  
pregnant again - we lived at  
"Gretting" from the farm to report  
for duty with the Navy - He was  
granted a "stay" because of his family  
and returned but he never did have  
to serve had we been in the where  
the number of men to each was smaller,  
rather than the Chicago area, he probably  
would have been sent to war -

Our 2nd son, Frederick Harold  
was born August 12, 1942 (?) - 22 months  
later our 3rd son, Michael Lewis, was  
born - At this time I was working for  
Leas Roebuck & Co. managing their farm  
store in Decatur and liking it - However,  
our eldest son, Larry, had nine bad colds from  
Nov till Feb. that year - The Dr said due to  
not at all healthy we had to get him out of  
the climate

So, we made plans to return to Florida to live. Sears offered Lawrence the choice of a job, either in Miami, Clearwater or Orlando. We made a trip down to decide where we wanted to locate and chose Orlando, as we thought it was a delightful town of about 59,000 (the same as Decatur, Ill.). In June of 1946 we moved to Orlando. This was right at the end of World War II also.

We had some dear friends that moved to Florida at the same time we did - John and Evelyn Clark and their two sons, Dick and Jack. Rental housing was so scarce that it was necessary for them to rent an apt at Q Plymouth, Fla. and commute for work, a distance of about \_\_\_\_\_ miles. We were fortunate enough to have money to purchase a house, and this we did at 1432 W. Princeton Ave.

Lawrence worked for Sears here until he decided he would be happier selling real estate - and went to school, procured his license, and went right to work for Sol Wittenstein. The first month he was in the business he sold three houses! ~~With this kind of luck he chose to go out on his own and establish his own office.~~ He also decided to build a house for us and to eventually sell it for a profit - ~~hopefully~~ <sup>hoped</sup> We built a lovely new home at 1422 ~~Fairway~~ <sup>Westminster</sup> Ave., Winter Park, Fla. It was a beautiful home - large rooms and everything we had always wanted. We lived in the home quite a while and while there met our neighbors the Mirabos. Kay Mirabo had been married before and had two daughters - one of which was ~~the~~ a delightful little midget named Patty Maloney. We just adored her - and still do - and her courage for going out into the world and making such a name for herself. She is <sup>now</sup> in Hollywood making movies and TV specials. A picture of her will be shown on a separate page. Patty used to baby sit with my sons, Frederick and Michael, when they were three and four years old; and they were as large in height as Patty.

While we lived in this house we also became acquainted with some delightful people from Miami named ~~Wichgel~~ Wychgel, - Alice and Ed. They stayed in our home for several months while on a campaign in Orlando to raise funds for the Orange Memorial Hospital. Although Ed Wychgel has since passed on - we still are in close contact with Alice. So many happy memories we have ~~more~~ stored away that we shared with this couple. They adored all our children - especially Michael - and, of course, this always endears friends to <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ parents.

We finally sold the big home and located a smaller one in the Lake Ivahoe Section of Orlando, 118 E. Yale Avenue. This was a new three bedroom home, although <sup>much</sup> smaller than the one we just vacated. Lawrence, at this time, had decided to open an office in his own name and this he did - in our home. I worked as his secretary and he was very successful selling real estate. Mr. Powell was a natural born salesman and everyone recognized his ability as such. However, he was continuing to drink heavily and it was becoming a real problem on his off hours. He became extremely beligerent and abusive to me and the children after a certain number of drinks and it worried me all the time.

When I was 37 years old I ~~realized~~ was faced with the surprise ~~xt~~ that I was expecting another child. The doctor told me I should not try to have this child as my health was not good enough. However, I said, I will not do anything to keep from having this child as it may be the little daughter I have wanted for so long - and if I have to spend the entire nine months flat on my back - so be it! As it turned out, I was quite miserable through the long drawn out affair, and when I was just past the half-way mark ~~t~~ he doctor told me it would be another boy and that I would have a difficult time. I told him to do the very best he could to guide me through it - and try to see to it that I would have a healthy little boy - and be restored to good health for myself. As it turned out, the baby was born on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1949, and to save my life I needed 8 blood transfusions and many extra days in the hospital. Little Steven weighed in at 9 lbs 4 ozs, and after a ~~kittke~~ bout with ~~the~~ oxygen to get him breathing correctly, he has been fine and healthy ever since, a joy and pleasure to my Mother.

Our real estate business had grown ~~now~~ sufficiently so that we were able to purchase a beautiful building located at 2100 N. Orange Avenue. Upstairs ~~was~~ an attractive penthouse - downstairs ~~was~~ all offices panelled in ~~walnut~~ walnut and most attractive. The building had been built and decorated by Dr. Charles Basehoar (who later changed the spelling of his name to Bayshore - and was the leading eye doctor in Orlando for contact lenses for many years before his retirement.

As I said before, Lawrence was no ordinary salesman and made money every time he set out to work. His failing was alcohol and the family suffered many times through his abuse. This was becoming more and more of a vital problem and I was taking measures (outside the home) to try and learn to deal with it.

It was about 1951, when I was 39 or 40 years old, <sup>that</sup> I fulfilled an ambition ~~that~~ my whole family had planned on for twenty-two and a half years. As I have written before, on November 19, 1927 My father chose to drive off and leave us in Ocala, Florida. For the following 22 years we had searched through every source to try and locate his whereabouts. Every now and then we would have a suggestion as to where to investigate, but, after following up every lead, we had reached a deadend.

It must have been one nite in August of 1951, when I was in the kitchen preparing dinner for my family. By this time I had a husband and four sons, the youngest being only two years of age. Lawrence, my husband, came into the kitchen and told me there was someone on the telephone who wished to speak to me. I took up the phone and said "Hello". A man's voice said "Hello". I didn't recognize the voice and said "What is it that you want?" There was no reply and, as I glanced over at my husband he was trying to silently tell me "It is your Father". I couldn't believe what he was saying - but the conversation went something like this:

"Is that you Dad?" - no answer. I repeated my question - still no answer. So I went a little further and said: Are you Chauncey Lewis? No answer. I then said, & if you are Chauncey Lewis, do you have a son that carries your name as a Junior. Answer: "No". Well, do you, by chance, have a daughter by the name of Betty? "No." By this time I had begun to catch on what was happening and so I said: "I think I know the reason you are not answering me and it is because you are surrounded by your second family and, since they do not know about your first family, you cannot answer." Still no word from the other end of the line. So I said: "Well, there is no use trying to continue this ~~convex~~ conversation when I can get no answers." Then I heard him say: "Are you still living in Ocala?" Since I, knew that he knew he was talking to Orlando, Florida, he made reference to Ocala since that is the town where he left us, & he felt I would realize what he was trying to say.

Then, I told him it was nice to know that he was still alive, that we had searched for many years for him, and that, if it were at all possible, I should like to see him one more time before it was too late - as we were not getting any younger. He said that he would be going to Chicago soon and that he would meet me there if I could arrange to be there on a certain date - in fact it turned out to be August 12th - my second son's birthday. I told him I would certainly make the effort to be there, if he meant what he said, but that I had a large family and I couldn't go to all the <sup>expense of</sup> trouble ~~it~~ it would take, if he didn't intend to keep the date. I would certainly be bitterly disappointed if he failed to show. He promised me he would and so we made a date to meet at a certain hotel in downtown Chicago on

August 12th at noon.

Since it was about the first of August then - we made our plans to drive to Decatur, Illinois, where we had relatives and had lived there for seven years ourselves, and from Decatur I would take a train into Chicago at the appointed time, leaving the rest of the family in Decatur with relatives -

You can imagine what a nerve strain I was under - just what to say and do after so many years. I had always thought of myself as my Dad's "pet" when growing up and never did get over the fact that he could just get into his car and wave "good-bye" and be gone for such a long time. So when I arrived at the appointed hotel at noon on August 12th, I went ~~up~~ to the desk and asked if a C. H. Lewis was registered. The Clerk said "No" and I said that he had planned to meet me there. So the clerk asked me to sit and wait - that possibly he would be along soon. I sat and waited what seemed an eon, and then asked the desk clerk again if he had heard from Mr. Lewis ~~at all yet~~ - and he said: "No, Mrs. Lewis, I haven't heard a word". I explained that I wasn't Mrs. Lewis; that I was his daughter and that I hadn't seen him in over twenty-two years and felt all along that he would possibly avoid meeting me. The clerk immediately became caught up in the excitement of the moment and tried to explain to me that there were three different time zones in downtown Chicago and that he was sure he would be along soon ~~approximately~~.

Since I wasn't so sure that he would show up at all - but also I knew I had to wait until much later that evening to catch my train back to Decatur regardless of what happened - I agreed to go into the dining room and have lunch, hoping that by the time I had finished Mr. Lewis would have arrived. The Clerk said - "Oh, how thrilling - to think that you have chosen our hotel to meet after all these years!" At that point - I wasn't so sure it would happen - but, nevertheless I went into the dining room, with the promise from the clerk that, should he arrive, he would come in and tell me immediately. I could scarcely get my food down because, by that time, I was reasonably sure that Dad had given me the slip one more time. Finally I finished the lunch and was about to have a piece of pie when the clerk came in - all excited and said "He's here - he's here" Hurry". I said: "Wait - I want you to show me which man is Mr. Lewis." He said: "You don't think you will recognize him"? I said: "No, I am certain I will not" The clerk then said: "Well, I am sorry, but you will <sup>he is</sup> have to go to the lobby and look for yourself and see if you knew which one ~~is he~~." The pie stayed on the plate while I headed for the lobby. As I approached the huge room I immediately started looking at every man in the room. No one looked even slightly familiar. I went to the desk again and said: "Please, sir, tell me which man it ~~is~~ is" He said: "No - just look again". I really felt strange and awkward, walking I found out later the Clerk & my father had decided among themselves to make me look!

through that lobby again - and so slowly as to allow me to peer in every man's face without making myself look ridiculous. I still failed to recognize anyone that I thought might be my Father. I ~~KNOW~~ he was not in that lobby somehow - so then I saw a large hall that lead from the lobby to the cocktail lounge and I saw three men standing ~~in~~ in that room - two of the men were close together and talking - and the third man was standing alone. I walked toward him and when I was close enough to be touched - this stranger reached out, hugged and kissed me - and I had to assume that he was my long lost father!

We then went to a davenport in the lobby to sit down and have a talk. I had made up my mind long ago that I would ask him nothing about his whereabouts all those years - and neither would I ask him about his present family - if he didn't want to tell me. So - the conversation was quite stilted with such things as: "You are looking good - have you been well all along?" I told him I was married and had four sons. Since ~~we~~ just couldn't seem to get on common ground about anything to say - I just told him that I had to catch a train back to Decatur between six and seven o'clock and that, since it was my second son's birthday, that I thought I would walk to Marshall Field's Dept. Store and buy a gift for him and have it mailed. I told him to go to his room and that when I returned I would come back and say "good'bye" before we parted again. He insisted on going with me to the store and so we started up the street. He had told me that he had had one or two heart attacks previously, and I was anxious about his health and walking ~~too~~ far. He started out bravely - ~~but~~ <sup>and</sup> we hadn't gone but three or four blocks when ~~he~~ he finally stopped and said he ~~guess~~ <sup>guess</sup> he would have to go back to the hotel - that he just couldn't make it. So - he did - and I went on to make my purchase.

When I returned to the hotel I went to the telephone and called his room and asked if he would meet me in the lounge for a farewell drink - and he said "No - I want you to come up to the room as I have something I wish to talk to you about". So I did. As soon as I was seated he said! "I am sure there are many questions you have in your mind as to why I did what I did". I said nothing. Then he said: "If there is anything you wish to know - please ask ~~me~~." I said - "Well, I had always imagined that ~~he~~ <sup>you</sup> had married a girl that was not much older than myself" And it turned out that she was just five years older. Then I asked him why it was that he threw my brother and myself out on the world to do the best we could - when ~~it~~ <sup>he</sup> was so soliticious of his second son and daughter that he wouldn't even tell them that he had a first family. His answer was!



Linda

"I never thought of it that way. My wife knows about you - but Linda and Fred do not - I'll pick up the "phone and drop the bomb shell right now" I said "No - not for me you won't. Too many years have gone by and it really doesn't matter to me that much any longer." He said: ~~When~~ When I found out where your Mother was (she had been in a hospital nearly all the 20 years) my first thought was to go to her - but then I decided that it would upset her too much and decided against it." I didn't tell him - but my brother and I had decided long ago that, should he ever ~~turn up~~ <sup>return</sup>, the hospital had instructions not to let him see her because we knew <sup>what</sup> it would do to her. Then he told me that he had spent hundreds of nites crying and thinking over what he had done and was so sorry to have treated us as he did. I took this with a grain of salt.

He showed me pictures of his new son and daughter (my half-brother and sister) and I showed him pictures of his four grandsons. He said, well the three older children were alright - but I should have never had the younger one and I surmised from that that he had decided that forty years of age was too old to start a new family as he had done. It seemed strange that his new son was named Frederick - and ~~the~~ <sup>my</sup> birthday boy was also named Frederick - each of us naming them without the other knowing about it!

He said his wife, Mary, was Catholic and that was the reason ~~he~~ <sup>they</sup> had not told his second son and daughter about us, because, in her church, they were not supposed to marry a divorced person, <sup>and still receive the sacraments of the Church as she has done -</sup>

We said a tearful goodbye because each of us knew we would never see the other again. I even had to catch a three in the morning "snell train" <sup>back to Decatur instead of the earlier one -</sup>

I found out later how my husband knew where to find my Dad. It seems that Mary (my step-mother) had written the Catholic church in Marion, Iowa, <sup>after all those years</sup> to find out if my Mother had ever been baptised. Had she not been baptised, then ~~her~~ <sup>(Mary's)</sup> children would have been legitimate in the eyes of the Catholic Church. Little did Mary realize that, since my Mother and her family had been in Marion, Iowa for several generations, that the priest would immediately call my Mother's family and tell them about the call, <sup>and were eager to locate him.</sup> since everyone knew that My dad had left my Mother years before that. I realized later that Mary knew my Father's health was not the best and she would like to ~~legitimize~~ <sup>legitimize</sup> her children before he died. She never had her wish - and ~~for~~ <sup>(after 30 years separation)</sup> even more frustrating to Mary. My Mother and Father died the same day (May 26, 1962)! She did, however, have my Father buried in a Catholic cemetery in Detroit, Michigan - and had a priest preside <sup>at</sup> ~~over~~ the funeral - and granted his wish that he be buried <sup>wearing</sup> ~~with~~ his Masonic apron ~~on~~! Since his death, Mary has written to me many times - and even came to Florida and visited in my home - but - to this date - she has never told her children about their half-brother and sister!

## A CRABBY OLD WOMAN WROTE THIS

It appeared when the old lady died in the geriatric ward of Ashludie Hospital that she left nothing of any value. Then the nurse going through her possessions found a poem. The quality of this so impressed the staff that copies were duplicated and distributed throughout the hospital.

What do you see, nurses, what do you see? Are you thinking when you are looking at me -  
A crabby old woman, not very wise, Uncertain of habit, with far-away eyes,  
Who dribbles her food and makes no reply when you say in a loud voice - "I do wish  
you'd try"

Who seems not to notice the things that you do, and forever is losing a stocking or shoe.  
Who, unresisting or not, lets you do as you will, with bathing and feeding, the long  
day to fill.

Is that what you are thinking, is that what you see? Then open your eyes, nurse.  
You're not looking at me.

I'll tell you who I am as I sit here so still; as I walk at your bidding, as I eat  
at your will.

I'm a small child of ten with a father and mother. Brothers and sisters who love  
one another. A young girl of sixteen with wings on her feet, dreaming that soon  
now a lover she'll meet. A bride soon at twenty - my heart gives a leap;  
Remembering the vows that I promised to keep.

At twenty-five now I have young of my own, who need me to build a secure, happy home.  
A woman of thirty, my young now grow fast, bound to each other with ties that  
should last.

At forty, my young sons have grown and are gone, but my man's beside me to see I don't  
mourn; At fifty once more babies play round my knee, again we know children,  
my loved one and me.

Dark days are upon me, my husband is dead, I look at the future, I shudder with dread,  
For my young are all rearing young of their own and I think of the years and the love  
that I've known.

I'm an old woman now and nature is cruel - 'Tis her jest to make old age look like a  
fool. The body it crumbles, grace and vigour depart. There is now a stone where  
once had a heart; ~~to~~ But inside this old carcass a young girl still dwells, and  
now and again my battered heart swells, I remember the joys, I remember the pain,  
and I'm loving and living life over again.

I think of the years all too few - gone too fast, and accept the stark fact that  
nothing can last.

So open your eyes, nurses, open and see - not a crabby old woman. Look closer, see ME!