





College and Service

Elder Dan Lewis

My Witness: God Provides

Individuality is a man's privilege ...

My Senior Yearbook

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Prologue

On June 1, 1960, I graduated from high school not knowing what would happen next. Well I knew that Etta was getting married in about a weeks. Also, I had been accepted at the University of Illinois for the fall semester beginning in September. But this was about it.

For more than 18 years my parents had made most of my decisions for me. It seemed to be that guidance from them was minimal at best. That is, I had little to no idea of how to make good decisions on my own: no one told me how. I was basically dependent upon my parents.

Things were obviously going to be different from this point on. With college coming in the fall, I would be away from home and responsible for my own care and finances.

With the help of my parents, I had applied for a federal student loan. I got a letter back stating how much money they would loan me for my freshman year. In addition, they had promised to provide a stated amount of money with a stipulation. I could not get access to it until the beginning of the second semester. This is because they first wanted to make sure that I remained in college that long. (This may have to do with what had happened in Etta and Webb's first term in college.)

This left me with a rather big problem. How do I get enough money to survive? \$10 a week delivering papers does not provide that much. But this is all that I knew to do. This is also why the amount of money I had in my savings account was so small.

My parents solved this problem without explaining it to me. Because of them, I spent the summer working on farms in the panhandle of Nebraska. Even so, I faced situations there that my personal habits did not have any answers for. As a

result, people did not understand my actions, and I do not blame them now. I was only muddling through.

So, I still did not have a good foundation for how I should live my life, especially how to spend four years in college. So, I continued to do what I had been doing: muddling through whatever situation that I faced. I did not even know enough to ask for help from others which I should have done.

Little did I know that God had things for me to do there, things to learn. These were important for later parts of my life. I would begin building a small part of the foundation of my life. Whether good or bad, I was not the only one who had things that they should be doing when it came to my behavior. They had to answer to God for what they did or did not do. Clearly, I do too.

What I did not realize until recently was that I had a closer relationship with God during my childhood than I thought I had. There were times of peace and joy. So, without my knowledge, I had learned how to enjoy certain activities with great pleasure.

But I managed to get through college with a major in mathematics, minor in chemistry. I also received a commission as a second lieutenant in the Air Force. It only took me four and a half years.

Now I had another four years ahead of me in the Air Force, and I still did not think I knew how to live my life... But again, God had a plan for me. I would begin these years as a single student in the Air Force. I would end it married with our first child due.

My thoughts as I returned home

Ever since, I arrived back home from Nebraska, I was somewhat restless. For the previous thirteen years (this includes Kindergarten), I had began school each year the week before Labor Day. For the first time I was not; this gave me a strange feeling...

This was not the only cause. I was looking forward to going to college. Yet, I had no idea what to expect, nothing to prepare me for what would be facing me in the near future. I was having mixed emotions.

For one thing, neither Etta nor Webb managed to remain in college for the entire first year. I thought at the time that she was in a situation that left her feeling like a "fish out of water." I know that Webb did, but I am not so sure about her. After working for a while, she returned to college. Even when he returned back home, he was still having some problems. These he solved by joining the Marines and applying himself diligently.

And then there was the anticipation of something new. What did I have to look forward to? How was being in college different from high school? What might be different?

But the time had arrived; the next week was when I began attending college. I could wait no longer. I had to get my things packed, buy my ticket for the train ride, and go...

Orientation Week

I had been on a train once before during the beginning of the summer, but that was with the George Pile family. They handled everything that needed to be done. This time, I had to do all of that myself.

So, I got everything in the car, and rode to the train station courteously of Etta and Dick (my sister and her new

husband. I suppose you could say that I was almost a bundle of nerves. I wanted to do everything right, but I was not sure that I knew how.

I got my ticket and asked several questions because I did not know where I should be with my luggage when the train came. Followed his instructions as well as possible. (Now when will the train ever come?) But I finally heard its whistle blow. Will it really stop? Did it get the signal to stop soon enough? (So many things going through my mind.) It did stop close to where I was told it would. Then I had to get my luggage on board (footlocker, typewriter, sports bag, and perhaps something else). Then I managed to get it all next to my seat.

Shortly thereafter, I heard another whistle as the engineer signaled back to the conductor; the train began to move. So, now I am wondering what is coming next...

Ever hear of "hurry up and wait? Within an hour or so, we arrived at Decatur, IL, where the train was to be split into two parts. Part of the cars were going to Detroit and points northeast from there. The rest of them were going to Columbus and points east from there. Of course, it only took 30 minutes to accomplish this (What is taking so long?), but it seemed like hours to me. As we left that station, I began to become more agitated. I was getting closer to my final designation...

But we finally arrived at my final train stop. Before we did, I began to worry more about when should I begin moving all of my luggage to the door from which I would exit the train. Any yes, the time continued to go slower and slower. The conductor finally came through the car to announce the next stop which was mine, so then I began moving things.

This stop was about 20 miles south of Champaign. A bus was waiting there to take me the rest of the way. So, I had to exit the train with my luggage and then get it to the bus.

By this time the train continued its journey east, and then the bus headed north for the train station where taxis were waiting for us.

Freshmen were not the only ones that had to be there this week. We had orientation to help get us acquainted with the university as well as registration for the fall semester. The others also had registration as everyone's classes would begin on Monday the next week. Because of this, many of them were coming in this day as well.

Also, the taxi companies had developed a system for getting everyone where they needed to be as efficiently as possible. (It might have been financially profitable as well.) As we got off the bus, they would herd us into taxis with as many students in a taxi as there was room for. They would collect a set fare from each student regardless of where we were to go. When a taxi filled up, off it would go.

I had already been accepted for a dormitory room in Hopkins Hall, so that is where I wanted to go. After dropping off some students at other locations, we stopped in front of this building at the point in which the two sidewalks meet in the picture below.



My dorm room was on the third floor, so I needed to do two things. First I had to get all of my luggage on the third floor. Well, I found an elevator which solved this problem. But then I needed to find my door room. Somehow, I managed to drag all of my things until I got to the door with the number I had been given.

When I went through the doorway, I saw two students who turned out to be my roommates. They were very close friends from the same small town in southern Illinois. (They may have asked to be able to share a room.) Anyway, they had been there for awhile, so they were already settled in. I got what was left: the top bunk plus the remaining closet and student desk. None of this really mattered to because I got my share of everything.

At this point, I got a certain amount of orientation from them. Much of this would be repeated during meetings held this week for new students. Somewhat important for this afternoon, the cafeteria would not be open until Monday morning. After that, it would only serve 20 meals a week: we would have to eat somewhere else on Sunday evenings. (Where am I going to get the money to eat out then?) I did manage to go without eating that night.

There were six dormitories like Hopkins Hall. There was also two cafeterias with three dormitories assigned to each one. One of my roommates made sure that I went to the correct one for breakfast.

It is always nice to know where the bathroom is. Well, it was down at the end of the hall. It was also where we could take a shower. There was a laundromat for washing clothes on another corner.

There was something different about the dorms than anything I had known before. It is known a preventative maintenance. Over a long period of time, maintenance people looked at the cost of replacing light bulbs in the

ceiling and desk lamps as well as how long each light bulb had worked.. Then they looked at the amount of time it took to replace the same amount of lights at the same time. Replacing all the bulbs this way was less expensive. So, periodically we would have a man come into our room replacing all of our bulbs. It was a much better use of the men's time.

And then there was the university radio station which was run by the students. (I'm guessing that these were majoring in Radio and Television studies.) The one thing different was that it had no antenna. Instead, it was broadcast using the wiring of the electrical system. This was an economical way to broadcast as it required much less power to transmit the radio's signal.

Ah yes, getting use to things. I was still bumbling along even as this first week was coming to an end. Unpacking was one of those things. I had never had a footlocker before. But I managed to get everything unpacked. In fact, I managed to get most things put somewhere that I could access.

Communications would be nice at times. Mom thought that I might like to have a snack once in a while, so she sent some cookies in my sports bag. Then were in a pocket at the bottom of the bag. This had a zipper along the bottom edge. (I did not know any of this though.) So, when I unpacked everything in it I thought, I felt all kinds of bumps in the bottom.

By the time I discovered what was the cause, I had no idea if the cookies were any good. So, I through them out. "Why didn't you just eat them?" Mom asked. "Why didn't you tell me you had packed them?" I asked in reply. Yes, communications can be nice at times.

Getting down to business

With the coming of Monday, I began to have meetings to attend. One was held within my dormitory in which we learned what we needed to know about dorm life. Special emphasis was made on the amount of detergent to be used when washing clothes. (Many of the students had never washed their own clothes before, so a common problem was the use of too much soap. Washing light and dark clothes together was another especial if the dark colors can fade on the lights.)

Another meeting was for students in the College of Education. Some general information was given us, and we were assigned a faculty advisor. This led to another meeting with him/her. (Mine was male.) We got additional information including a suggested list of courses we should be taking during our four years at the school. We each also got a list of the classes taught this semester and when. It also listed the times students would register. This was done alphabetically.

Now we had something to do: make out a schedule of classes that we would like to have. In my case, all of my classes would be scheduled Monday through Friday. (I actually got them scheduled, but some had to take a Saturday class.) Depending upon the subject, classes were available during the day (M-F), at night (M-F), and Saturday (at different times).

My major was education with an emphasis in mathematics. I had a good background in math, but not all freshman students with this major did. So, a test was given to determine who had a good background and who did not. The latter had to first take a non credit course in trigonometry before taking Analytical Geometry. (Out of 60 problems, I scored in the high 40's, so I began with Analytical Geometry.)

I met once again with my advisor showing him the courses I plan to take this semester which he approved. We may have even discussed a few other things as well. I was not ready for registration. But then I had to wait until the students with last names beginning with L were to register...

This was another time this week of "hurry up and wait." Only this lasted much longer, as in three hours. Yes, that is how long it took to register for six classes, get an IBM class card for each, and get the time for each. I really felt drained by the time I finished.

Why did it take so long? The simple answer was computers. Yes, this was the case during September, 1960. Programming skills had not come far enough to computerize the whole thing. My final semester was the fall of 1965. This was done completely by computer. It took less than 30 minutes to register for my classes, and that was because of a glitch in the program. Other students were preregistered during the summer.

Registration was done in the Armory building which covered two city blocks. It had classrooms along the wide sides of it, and the rest was open space with a roof above it. In this space were table after table where the selection of courses was done. Behind each table was a few people who handled the registration for specific courses. On top of the table were boxes of IBM class cards, each one for a specific course; taught at a given day, time, and place. (All of this information was contained in the punches on the IBM card.) In front of each table was a line for each person sitting behind it.

Everyone had some required courses, so naturally, the lines for these were much longer than for other courses. For example, English is required for all freshmen. Most of them took Rhetoric 101 which made lines for these much, much longer than any other courses. I elected to take an English

course that included what was taught in Rhetoric 101 plus oral communications. (Now that I think about it, its name could have been Oral Communications.) Lines for my course was far shorter than for Rhetoric 101.

So, the advice I got was to get in a line for my required courses first. Because of the number of students taking them, they are the hardest to schedule. Once this was done, fitting the rest of my classes into my schedule would be much easier.

Now that I have my class schedule, I need a book for each of my main courses: Analytical Geometry, Chemistry 102, English (Oral Communications), and History (Early European History). Air Force ROTC provided us with the books we needed as well as uniforms. PE, which also include an hour of Health a week, may or may not have had any books.

More waiting in line as everyone went to the book stores near the campus. We had a choice: pay full price for a new book or 75% of the new price for a used book. At the end of the semester, we could sell the books back and receive 50% of the price we had paid.

Smart people would hold their books and sell them to other students who needed them the next semester. If they had bought a new book, they could get as much as 75% of what they had paid for it. For a used book, they could get up to 75% for it depending upon its condition.

This was my first experience with "sticker shock!" I certainly did not expect spending more than \$100 for them. It was much more than that. But in the end, I had less money to spend for the rest of the semester and the books I needed. So, I was ready for classes, well almost ready.

The Campus layout

One of the things I learned from one of my meetings was that there were 27,000 undergraduates on campus. (That's a lot of people to me!) I grew up in a city containing a population of 8,800 or less than one third of that amount. It obviously takes several very large buildings to provide the classrooms for this many students. Well, somewhere in these buildings were the rooms in which my classes would be taught, but where? It was time to find out.

This became somewhat of an adventure to me. When I entered junior high, I went from being in one classroom with only one teacher to several classrooms located on three floors with a different teacher in each one. When I entered high school, I was then in a much larger building with four floors. Now my classes were being taught somewhere in the three story buildings along the sides of the Quad, and it was only four blocks long. That is quite a difference!

But I had a map to use for finding my way. So I took it and a list of my courses (building name and room number. So, off I went...

All of my main courses were taught around the Quad as shown in these pictures taken from the north and southern ends respectively. The buildings are along both sides of it. The only questions for me were which building, and where were the classrooms in which my courses would be taught?



The top picture was taken in front of the Student Union building with the Auditorium at the other end. The bottom one was taken in front of the Auditorium with the Student Union at the other end. In between are large sidewalks crisscrossing the Quad. Surrounding all sides of it were what I considered to be huge sidewalks lined with young trees. And along the outside of the sidewalks were the buildings.

Some would think that one of these buildings was the most important. It had no classrooms in it: it was the business office. All financial transactions were done there.

One of the buildings I would be using every semester was Altgeld Hall. This housed every math class as well as the Math Library. (This was one of several specialized libraries on campus.)



This is the front of the building and is also considered to be the entrance to the university as well. In front of it is the Alma Mater statue. On it is inscribed verses from the 32nd chapter of Proverbs in the Bible. The sidewalk leading to it is divided with each side being at least eight feet wide.

On the left side is the bell tower from which the bells ring out the time every quarter hour. At certain times someone would play tunes using them as well. This may last quite some time. Obviously very beautiful.

I went inside to see where my first math course was being taught. In time I found it. Then I did some looking around, this time finding the math library. Now this was a new experience for me, so I looked around a bit. (I had never been in a specialized library before.) Then it was time to start looking again for my next class.

My English and History classes may have been taught in the same building, but I am not sure. Both courses involved a lecture and classroom work, so I was really looking for four

rooms not two. What I do not remember is if both courses used the same lecture hall for the lectures. But I do remember walking around all of the halls on the first floor looking for the room number for my class. It took some time, but I found it. In time I actually found all the rooms I would be using in this building. (For the record, this building was two or three buildings south of Altgeld Hall, and I may have went from Altgeld to this building on my search for classroom locations.)

If I followed the path I have suggested, I have one more building to go to: Chemistry. (It may have the name of someone who was famous in chemistry, but I do not know who it was.) This took me across the Quad on one of the several sidewalks crisscrossing it. I had three rooms to look for: the lecture hall, the classroom, and the laboratory where we obviously did chemical experiments. Having found these, I looked around the Quad some more.



This is one thing that amazed me. I was use to sidewalks being 3 feet wide, not wide enough for two cars to pass. But when there are as many students as use these, they needed to be this wide! What was even more amazing was the snow plows they used to remove snow which fell during the winter months. The sidewalks became their roads to clean!

Everyone did not walk to their classes, some of them rode bicycles. They even had bicycle paths throughout the campus as well as parking areas for them. And yes, where the sidewalks crossed these paths, both walkers and bikers had to make sure it was safe to cross the other's territory. (It was the bikers' responsibility to ring the bell they had to have on their bike. Then the pedestrians would know a bike was near and could harm them.)



If you look carefully at the right of the photo, you can see a white line on the white concrete. It is the center line of a bike path. The rest of the pavement is one of the larger sidewalks.

While all of the pictures is dated in 2002, they were taken in 2004 when I visited the campus nearly 40 years after I graduated. The sidewalk you see here is actually wider than it was then. But they have many more students than then.

But there was even more to be seen. On the south side of the Auditorium was another large grassy area almost as large as the Quad. But there was only one building that concerned me in that area: the main library building. It was on the northwest corner, or west and a little south of the Auditorium. Very large, perhaps larger than the other

buildings, it contained some specialized libraries and the Stacks. The latter was mainly for the use of graduate students and professors. So, it contained a variety of specialized books including very rare ones. There were also cubicals which were assigned to to the graduates and professors for study purposes.

My only use of the main library was the Educational Library. Even so, I did not use it after the first two years. Because of grades, I had to change my major. (But by now it might have been close to lunch time, so I may have returned to the cafeteria for some food.)

To give a little more of a layout, the dormitories are perhaps half a mile southwest of the Quad. So this was a nice walking distance for me. (For those who had problems walking this distance, a bus route had just been added for the first time this fall. The cost? A mere 5 ¢ !)

Further south from my dorm was where the football stadium was located. (At the time, it would hold 80,000 people. It might be larger now.) And looking further south was a huge hole in the ground with a lot of construction going on. They were building the Assembly Hall there, and the completion date was a couple of years later. When the state basketball championship was first held there, it held 16,000 screaming high school fans plus had room for all of the local radio and TV broadcasters covering this event.

My Spiritual life

When I first arrived, attending church was what I would consider to be the main part of this life. The most important part of this occurred after the morning church service.

During my junior year, I began taking German. So, I decided to get a German Bible and learn to read it. With this, I learned more about the Bible and the German language as well.

During the last couple of years, I spent time sitting out on the quad during warm spring afternoons. There God would meet me and hold me in His arms! What a joy this was.

In the previous volume, I wrote about the Walbash Association being held at New Liberty Church in Champaign. Also my Dad, Tom, and I had attended church there the first Sunday of November 1957 when Webb had been in the State Cross Country meet held in this city. So, I knew quite a bit about this church.



New Liberty Church

This church met the first and third Sundays. Originally it met in the morning, had lunch afterward, and met again in the evening. Later the evening services were changed to after the lunch.

Elder Clapp and his family lived about a mile due north from my dorm, so I walked to their house and rode back and forth to church from there. Why was I doing that much walking? It was simply because I enjoyed walking!

Besides there were challenges that I faced. There were some traffic lights on the way, and I noticed if I kept the pace up, the lights would all be green. So, I did not have to wait for any of the lights to change. Strange huh? I did not think so, nor do I even now.

So, yes challenging myself to do this was enjoyable, but I think there was more to it than that. From kindergarten to the end of junior high, I was walking half a mile each way daily. Then in high school, it was twice as far. So, walking came naturally to me. But even more so, it was what I was doing and thinking as I did this walking: my attitude.

Then there were the years I rode a bicycle delivering papers. From spring to fall, I got to see the sun rise each morning. I especially got to see God's creation appearing before me! Besides, I was accomplishing things as well. So, I was alone with my God even though I did not realize it at the time. And during these walks I was also with my God even though I did not realize this either.

Ever since I moved to Knoxville in 2008, I have regularly walked outside both morning and evening. During them, I have become aware of many different senses that are present. These experiences have taken me back to the senses that I had experienced delivering papers or walking home from school. This also included my walks in college. These have given me a great deal of joy. And this included feeling that I was with my LORD.

Elder B. T. Stevens

There was another minister, Elder B. T. Stevens, living in Champaign as well. All of his churches were out of town, but

I do not know how many he served as pastor nor when they met. He also was married and had a young son, perhaps a teenager, named Johnny.

The first year, he and his family took me with them to a church in Hindsboro, about 45 miles south. We would leave on Saturday, spend the night with someone, and return after the Sunday service. So, likely they met Saturday and Sunday once a month. So thanks to him, I was attending services three week ends a month for a while.

I ran into a problem by the end of the fall semester in 1961: I was running out of money. I found a job working in the cafeteria in the basement of the Student Union. This required my working from 4:42-7 PM every day. Whether I had still been going to church with the Stevens up to this point, I don't think so. But I might have. However, my employment prevented my doing so thereafter.

Young people after lunch at church

Sunday morning services at New Liberty church were followed by lunch in the basement. Afterward, the women clean things up, the older men sat around talking, and the teenagers went upstairs to sing hymns in the sanctuary.

From the first time, I was asked to join them which I gladly did. Joyce and I were the only ones that were not members of New Liberty nor had a background of playing instruments. Even though I had a good background in singing, I did not always know the hymn being sung. I had to bone up on sight reading, and I got really good at it. What I was not aware of was the symbols indicating the loudness or softness required. But I learned.

This was something that I looked forward to during the time I attended this church. In addition to this, we sometimes were at the same association meeting. There we were known to gather together and sing as well.

This continued until Jack and Joyce graduated. He apparently took heavy course loads each semester, and she must have taken some extra ones also. In any case, they left Champaign to go to Bloomington where Jack began his graduate studies in 1963.

I did not notice this at the time, but when I returned for a visit in 2004, I spent some time in the area where we had sung 40 plus years earlier. I could feel the presents of my Father so very strongly. This was so comforting to me! It was the only time that this happened to me while in that church.

This time spent singing while learning new hymns was the firm foundation I needed for my life in the south after I graduated from the U of I. By the time I left, I knew all of the songs in the Old School Hymnal #9 by heart.

While living in Mississippi, this same hymnal was being used, so I was right at home. It was not long until the #10 came out. That is when I did what I had done in college: learn the songs that others wanted to sing. I was also asked to help lead the singing. With the confidence I got singing with the young people, I found doing this easy as well. So, singing school as a high school junior and singing in Champaign combined to form the foundation I needed. This was what God expected me to learn to do.

Personal

During the first few years I wrote some religious articles which were published by Elder Gross in the Gospel Witness. I remember one of the men asked me something about one of them, but no one seemed that interested in any of the other ones. I don't remember Elder Clapp ever saying anything about any of them one way or another.

This was a time when I could have used some guidance. I wanted to become a minister, and the ministers there knew this. But this did not happen as far as what I wrote was

concerned. Did I make some good points? Was there a problem in something that I had written? Things that I wanted to hear but didn't.

Elder William did take time to try to help me. At the time, he was a licentiate and not yet an ordained minister. He did all that he could to guide me in the right direction. My problem was that I did not understand what he was trying to do. Putting it bluntly: I did not realize that my behavior was bad and needed to be changed. (I was doing things the way my parents had taught me by word or action.) I honestly think that no one else knew how to give the reason why I should be different.

What would have been the best way to do it? Let me see. I wanted to become a minister, so I should learn how to live worthy of this calling. (Makes sense to me.) But how can this be done? Help me to learn from the Bible what was required of me. After all, this is what Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Actually, the previous verse speaks of this as well.

Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship

I attended some of its meetings possibly during my freshman and sophomore years. (I am certain of the latter.) Why did I do so? Well, to begin with, I did not ask for any advice from anyone about it. Besides, I was thinking that it had the name Christian in it, it must be something about Christ. Maybe I wanted to have some friends, and they were nice people.

Over time, I realized that they did not believe the way I did. I was still able to fellowship with them on other things.

On the other hand, the church members had a good idea of what this organization was about, so they did not approve of me attending their meetings at all. Another sore point that I did not appreciate. (I was not thinking about becoming one of them.)

I also noticed a meeting of a "church" in the Student Union (Universalism), so I went just to see what it was a bout. When I learned tht they considered Christ to be just another important teacher, I decided this was not something that I would have anything to do with.

Freshman year 1960-1961

The year had begun in earnest on the first day of classes. Now this was not that much different from from high school. I had to get up early enough to shower, get dressed, get my breakfast in the cafeteria, take the proper books, also take the IBM class card to give to the instructor, have something to take notes with, and be at my first class by 8 AM. OK, so I fixed my own breakfast at home, and the distance between classes were longer. I had time between classes instead of study hall. I only had to decide where I would spend that time and what I would be doing during it. (One of the libraries might be a good idea.)

Analytical Geometry

My 8 o'clock class was in Altgeld Hall at the northwest corner of the Quad. Several other students were there when I arrived. Then a lady walked in as sat down at the desk in front of the room: she would be our instructor. (Our class met Monday through Friday.)

The first thing she did was to collect the class cards which she would be turning into someone else. She also got some information from each one of us. Then came our first lesson. Finally, we got our first assignment for Tuesday.

The things she taught us this first day was very similar to what Miss Helm had taught me the second semester of my senior year. So, I felt very much at ease with this class. I knew what she was saying from the very first!

I found this class to be quite interesting, most likely because I had a strong foundation in this subject from the very beginning. So, I only had part of each lesson to learn: the rest of it was things that I already knew. This made it easier to see the connection of what I already knew and what I needed to learn. (Final grade: A)

Over the semester, I managed to become friendly with some of the other students in the class. Some of the time, I would listen to others near me talk together about any number of topics. How much I contributed to any of the conversations, I'm not sure.

The Champaign/Urbana area is rather flat meaning that there was not much that would slow the wind down very much. In fact, as the wind blew through the spaces between the campus buildings, the wind actually increased in speed.

This happened to be a winter in which the temperature was well below normal much of the time. So, The combination of low temps and higher than normal winds makes for a very cold day as in very low wind chill factors. In fact, one day the wind chill factor was -40! Now that feels very cold.

One day like this one, I was on the Quad looking at the buses stop in front of Altgeld Hall (about 5 PM) to pick up students wanting to go back to their dorms. I watched the first three buses drive right past the bus stop because they were packed like sardines. The fourth bus picked up some of those waiting until it too was completely packed. The fifth bus was nearly packed as it pulled away from the bus stop. I think this tells just how cold it was. (On warmer days, only a few buses were needed to pick up everyone to transport them where they needed to go.)

The ladies had a bigger problem with the weather. Over the past few years the skirt hem lines had gradually risen to mid knee length. As the weather really got cold, I thought that the shorter hem lines caused the women to be colder than

when they were longer. (Was I right? Probably not.) Besides slacks was not something the everyone wore that much. So, they were subjected to a much colder environment than the men were. They definitely complained a lot about it, that was for sure.

Then a personal item of one student came up in a discussion before class that I overheard. This was in December near Christmas vacation. One of her friends had finished her class before the break and flown back to New York City. About the same time, a plane had crashed in that area. She did not know if her friend was on it or not, but she thought so. This was a sad time for her.

I have mentioned that my behavior was not always acceptable to members of the local church. Well, the cold weather brought out one of them: my comments about how others followed fashion trends when this did not make any sense.

During my early high school years, skirt lengths were mid calf. Between then and 1960, these decreased until they were mid knee. This was fine until the cold weather hit. That was when women were complaining about how cold it was.

That is when I began wondering why they did not do something about it. To me, the shorter hem lines in dresses and skirts were the reason for them being as cold as they were. I even said so. The biggest problem was how I said it. Basically I stated that following the fashion trends was wrong.

I had the same problem as everyone else, perhaps more so. I did something about it: I wore more clothing as in adding another layer. This included insulated "long johns" under my pants, a sweater under my coat, and obviously gloves.

But then again, I had had the paper routes in high school in the mornings. I had to dress warm to be comfortable during the winters. In other words, I did what I had to do. And that was what I was doing in college as well.

So, it seemed to me that others had the same choice as I did. But did the women have this? Oh, they could wear a sweater under a warm coat. What about covering their legs? I don't remember slacks being that popular then. Nylon stocking did not help that much either as far as I know. Insulated underwear was not available then either that I know of. So just may be fashion trends did not provide women with what they really needed during the winters in the Champaign area.

Chemistry 102

This was another subject that I had a firm foundation upon which to learn what was taught. Mr. Powell had taught us much, but there was so much more to learn. Even so, the rest of it made so much sense because of the foundation he had laid that an A was easily obtained.

The first lecture I attended made an impression on me. First of all, the university was ranked in the top 5 in the subject of Chemistry. Secondly, the purpose of Chemistry was to search for the TRUTH. He even wrote this word down exactly as I have spelled. It was a point that he wanted to emphasize very strongly, burn it into our brains.

This was also a five hour course which meant that I was in a lecture or classroom for four hours and two hours in the laboratory (two hours of this was equivalent to one hour of class time).

The class and lab time were much like high school: we were given exams and discussed the lectures given. (I do not remember how many lectures there were a week. Perhaps 2?) Anyway, I did quite well in both areas.

The lecture hall was like an amphitheater. Going from the front row, each row was higher than the one before it. And for some reason I took a seat in the back of the room which was perhaps 20 feet above the front if not higher. (I had not yet heard how the smartest people sat closest to the front.) Well, at least we could all clearly see and hear him speak and do things.

The desk at the front was a standard Chemistry "table" as found in most chem labs. This allowed the lecturer to conduct experiments as he spoke. These were informative to say the least.

There is one lecture that has always stood out in my mind. The subject was Hydrogen gas and its properties. (The hidden topic was the love life of a lecturer.)

On the desk was a large test tube perhaps 1.5" in diameter and at least 6" long. It was contained in a sealed metal tube with a purple glass held along side the metal tube. This became the center of attention as the lecture reached what happens when quantities of hydrogen comes in contact with quantities of oxygen.

As he moved this apparatus into the position he wanted, he began telling a story about it. Some years earlier, a young professor was lecturing on this very topic. The test tube had been carefully filled with a mixture of these two gases with a cork securely placed into the opening. He to had moved the the apparatus to where he wanted it to be. Then he removed the blue glass causing the two gases to combine violently. The cork flew up to the back of the room hitting a young lady in the head. The story goes that she wound up in the hospital because of this. Well, the young professor felt so bad that he visited her while she was there. Then the visits continued, and continued... They later married. (I wonder who took advantage of her short hospitalization? him, her, or both?)

Then he went back to discussing the power that is generated when a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen is exposed to a certain wave length of ultraviolet light. And this then explained the reason for the blue glass: it blocked this wave length of light from passing through it. But when the glass was removed, the ultraviolet light could pass through the hole in the apparatus and into the test tube. After saying this, he removed the glass. The two gases reacted with each other almost instantaneously sending the cork bouncing against the ceiling near the back of the room.

What happened when he removed the blue glass? The atoms combined forming water and a huge amount of heat. (When welding with these two gases, temperatures of 4,000°F are produced. When using acetylene for welding produce a temp of only 2,500°F.) Because of the high heat, the water in the tube became steam under approximately 250 times normal air pressure. All of this pressure pushed the cork out with amazing velocity.

This was an amazingly enjoyable course for me. I was learning things way beyond my senior year, and this was good. However, the same could not be said the same for Joyce. She was majoring in home economics which required a chemistry course. So she had chosen a simpler one, Chem 103.

Her high school did not offer chemistry at all, so she was beginning from scratch. So by the first of January, she was not doing as well as she thought she should be. I was asked to tutor her for her final exam which was coming at the end of the month. In reality, it was more of a review than tutoring. Many of the things she was uncertain about were ones that she had a good grasp of the topic. She just was not sure of herself. In the end, she did quite well on the final exam. (We only had two or three sessions.)

History

There is not much to say about this course but dry, dry, dry... The lectures were basically this happened, and that happened, etc. We were expected to repeat it back to him. I don't remember any of it ever being made relevant to anything. I do remember one of the questions involved the 35 year war in what is now Germany. This was actually several wars between different groups living in that area. He wanted to know what general headed up each group, who they fought with, when they fought, and who were the ones they fought.

It is said that he who does not learn history is doomed to repeat the same mistakes. (Or something like that.) But I would argue knowing the names of all of the generals does not prevent anyone from having to fight similar battles. A more relevant question might relate to the reasons for all of these battles. But this would get into religious beliefs and how these affect what a person is willing to do.

PE: Flickerball

Now there was nothing dry or boring about this course! It was fun from the very beginning. The health class that went with it was also as well as being very informative.

Sleeping habits were one of the topics that I remember. Recommendation: sleep on your side, as this was the best way to do this. Strange thing that I learned later: this is the fetal position. (I think that this article was putting down the sleeping on one's side.) Yet, recently I have begun to be plagued with a dry mouth and the possible dental problems that can come from it. Sleeping on my side once again is recommended as I can keep my mouth closed better this way. Would someone please make up their mind???

During my 35 years of marriage, we both slept on our sides in what is known as the spoon position. I know for a fact that sleeping this way with our arms wrapped around the other is

far more enjoyable than sleeping on my back or front!
Enough said!

Now back to flickerball. This was a combination of basketball and football in many different ways. The purpose was to teach students skills used in each of these sports. The court layout was originally on a football field with the dimensions of 20 yards wide and 27.5 yards long. So six of them would fit from the back of one end zone to the back end at the other end. The length was half the width of the football field. So a football field could be divided into 12 courts; well it was something very similar to this anyway (It's been a long time since I took this course.)

Fundamentals: A football was used. (Sorry, no dribbling required.) There were front and back courts with a goal at each end as shown below. (Strange looking backboard and hoop isn't it?) The football was taken out at the opponent's end line and must be passed to someone in the back court. He could run laterally or backward, but not forward. To move the football toward the goal at the other end of the court, it had to be passed. (Such was the case for anyone receiving the ball.)



The goal was the same height as a basketball backboard. It was on two poles (one on each side). The orange portion is a piece of painted metal with a rounded rectangle cut in the middle of it. The purpose was to throw the football through the hole in the middle. A team that did this scored 3 points. If it bounced off of the orange metal, only one point was awarded.

What I would try to do is to sneak into our front court close to the goal. Usually, no one from the other team noticed. So, a pass into the back court followed by a pass to me in the front court resulted in a quick score. I really enjoyed doing this. Once in a while I would be thrown a pass by the person taking the ball out of bounds. I usually "accidentally" drop these passes as they were illegal.

This was always a lot of fun regardless of the conditions of the field. There were times when we played this on ice from snowfalls we had had earlier. This was really fun! We were slipping and sliding around, but I guess I was pretending that I had ice skates on even if we were wearing tennis shoes. (I had done something similar when I was an Explorer in high school so this really brought back some joys of the past.)

As the semester progressed, I got sick. So I went to the college health unit. The doctor gave me a prescription that I did not believe at first. He told me to begin taking a multivitamin! With all of the fancy equipment to provide food in the cafeterias, many of the vitamins I needed were systematically being removed from the food. To me, this means that I was deliberately being fed substandard food. I got just a little bit angry over this one. I also felt very helpless in doing anything about it.

English

What can I say about this class? It has never been my best subject. Well, this is not quite true. An A⁻ average my freshman year in high school puts that as one of my best grades that year. But this year, it was back to one of the lesser loved subjects (poorer grade also).

During one of the lectures, we were expected to take notes and then reconstruct its outline. All this did was to prove that I did not know how to take notes properly. Most likely,

my outline of it was no where close to what it should have been.

Others had learned at some point in their education to do this very well. As a result, their outlines were very close to the outline used by the one used by the lecturer. In fact, a few were actually a better outline for the topic at hand than his!

So, what was the purpose for this hour's lecture? Just to grade how well students take notes? OK, so my technique is very poor. After this exercise, I learned that. Now what? So, I learned that others can do this very well. Again, so what?

Obviously, I needed help in this area. Perhaps others did as well. But I don't think anything was said about where this could be gotten. Or, something might have been said, but I did not hear it. I don't know, but the university might have had some program that would have taught me how to take good notes. I did not take the time to find out. I didn't even ask the graduate assistant handling the classwork about this possibility.

Now that I am much older, I can see the importance of seeking advice when I am in doubt. I can also give advice in areas in which I have been successful. I still make mistakes, but I listen much more often. I can tell the difference too!

One of the topics in this class was that of propaganda which proved to be very enlightening. This also included advertizing as well. In both cases, the purpose of the speakers or writers are to get us to think like they do by making changes in what they say. Partial truths are spoken deliberately ignoring the parts of the truth that they do not like. Quotations are taken out of context. Things that are wrong are used as if they are true.

One of the examples in my textbook for this course was writings by the Communist Party in the USSR. It was

surprising how they could twist the facts into what does not really accurately describe the subject matter!

From this lesson, I learned to start paying closer attention to what I hear and read. What is the person saying? How is he saying it? What is the context of his quotes? Are they accurate? Do they teach what he says they do? Does he use emotional language? What are his sources? Does he act like an expert in a subject when he is not? (There are so many questions that should be asked to verify what is said or written. This is called "fact checking" today.)

And then there was one of the themes that I had to write. I wrote it describing something, but I don't remember what. As I did so, I replaced some of the words with their homonyms (to or too for two for example). My teacher said that this made it rather difficult to read. Somehow he managed to do this rather thoroughly. He even noticed a couple additional words that could have been changed as well.

As a senior in high school, I spent the second semester writing a research paper. Well, this year I had to do the same thing as well. This time, it was much easier and took a lot less time as well. My topic? Court cases that concerned Freedom of Speech.

I'm not sure why I found this topic so fascinating, but I did. In fact, I remembered quite a lot about the research that I conducted at least a year later. The topic centered around what a person can say and the conditions around when he says it. I got to read what very intelligent judges wrote as well as how they could disagree on different points based upon what is written in the Constitution. I really got into this topic emotionally.

Remembering this research saved me from having to take a non credit course later in my college days. That is because a certain grade average had to be maintained in my two

semesters of English. If I did not, I would have to take a test at the end of my sophomore year. If I passed it, I was finished with English. If not, I had to take an extra class. I did not have a high enough average in this course to avoid it.

The test required us to write a theme of our choice. Mine, of course, was to basically rewrite my research paper of my freshman year. I even made references to specific court cases and their findings. Of course, I could not use footnote, but I did the next best thing. Anyway, I got a letter saying that I had fulfilled my requirement in English having passed this test. Yes, I was very happy to get this information!

Robber in our midst

One of my roommates was somewhat spoiled getting many of the things when he asked his parents for them. But when he saw a modular stereo set, he just had to have it. It's cost was about \$40. They refused to get it for him when he asked.

Strange thing that a few weeks later his parents' home was robbed, and he had the stereo set on his desk. (He really loved this, taking great care anytime he handled it.) Not only that, he cut out the hometown newspaper account of the robbery and tacked it to the bulletin board in our dorm room along with some dollar bills. They totaled to the difference between the cost of the stereo set and the amount taken in the robbery.

Well, I had a camera and took some pictures of what he had posted. I even showed him the picture after I developed the film. Strangely, he wanted the pictures and the negatives. He got the pictures, but his roommate was able to get me to give him the negatives. Fortunately, nothing more came of this that I know of.

Politics on campus

This being an election year, Richard Nixon and JFK were crisscrossing the country campaigning for the Presidency of the United States. While Richard did not, JFK came to our campus to speak to the students.

Since my parents were staunch Republicans, why would I want to hear a Democrat? Children follow their parents' lead until they take time to consider what the parties stand for. If they do this with a searching mind seeking which party is the better one for them, they may or may not change their minds.

Well our "robber" from Southern Illinois decided to go. (This seemed strange since Southern Illinois is known as a strong Republican area.) But it was the enthusiasm that he had when he returned that really surprised me. As JFK "pressed the flesh" of the crown, this young man happened to be one of the people whose hand touched the hand of JFK. He was absolutely positive that he would never wash that hand again! Well, that is what he said anyway.

Finals Week

This was definitely a new experience for me. At the end of each semester, a week was set aside for final exams, each one lasting 3 hours. So, a schedule had to be made out as to where each exam would be given and when (time and day). To me, this sounded more like a scholastic test than a final one. There certainly was a lot of information for me to remember for each course! Then shortly thereafter (a day or so), final grades would be posted for all to see by student id numbers.

As would be expected, English and History were my more difficult exams. And yes, Analytical Geometry and Chemistry were the easiest. After all, I had the better foundation in these two. So, I know the subject matter much more thoroughly. Besides, History was still requiring knowledge of

the name of generals (still does not make sense to have to know this).

One of my roommates (the robber) was having some problems with his math class, and he needed to pass this final. So, he set out to make a cheat sheet. What he did was to write all of the equations used during the semester on a 3X5 card. (He could write very small!) When he got back from this exam, he sounded a little perplexed when he told us his experience. There were several times (perhaps very many) that he needed a particular equation to use in a problem. But when he began to look it up on the card, he would suddenly remember what it was suppose to be. So, he never really used the card at all. How well he did on the test, I do not know. I do know that he left the university to go to an easier one that spring.

Second Semester

After a week or two break, registration began for the spring semester. Once again I got to meet with my advisor to verify the courses I would be taking: the major ones were continuations of the fall semester. History of Europe continued where the first course left off as did the English. Math was beginning Calculus, and Chemistry was Qualitative Analysis.

The latter had been part of my second year of chemistry in high school, so I still had a very firm foundation in this area as I had the fall semester. However, Calculus was a slightly different story. Analytical Geometry provided a partial foundation for it, but I failed to learn calculus as well as I should have.

Private Housing

I also had a new address. I had enough money to live in the dorm for one semester, but there was no way I could afford another \$600 for room and board. (My only source of

income was the \$250 my parents promised plus a few hundred dollars leftover from the fall semester. So, I moved to "private housing" for the rest of this school year.

I contacted student housing at some point in the fall about my problem with this expenditure (Room & Board). They said that many students live in private homes paying rent to the owners. Then they gave me a list of available places and costs. So, I made contact with one of the families on it. Then between finals and the second semester, I moved there before the new semester began.

I was put in a large room with a graduate student on the second floor in the front of the building. It sure was nice to have someone to take me under his wing explaining how this system worked. For example, the room was warmer than I liked. When I said so, he said that university rules stated the temperature in a student's room must be at least 72°F at a certain distance above the floor. (I think it may have been 3 feet.)

He was majoring in biology, and once in a while he would mention a little about what he was doing which was working with mosquitoes in captivity. This required breeding them in this state, which can be very difficult to do. But someone came up with the idea of twisting off the heads of the male mosquitoes. Strange, but it worked. The females were bred producing the offspring needed. The only casualties were the adult males.

There were some other students living here as well on the second floor. There was also a Cuban student living in the basement in a small room. We would sometimes gather in the living room to watch TV with the owners. (While the husband watched with us some, the mother and daughter seldom came into this room.) But I had never watched TV to any extent because my parents never owned one: they strictly listened to the radio which only came into use as

they were growing up. Any programs I remember? Rawhide and Dobbie Gillus are two of them.

There was something else that was "new": a dial phone. Edwardsville was just switching from operator service for local calls to dial the last part of this semester. So, you might say I was behind the times in two new technologies. (Oh how times have changed since then!)

We had kitchen privileges in the basement. That is, we had a kitchen sink to wash our dishes, a refrigerator (a rather old one at that) to keep perishables, and a table and chairs for eating what we fixed. OK, I can handle this. Mom forcing her three boys to learn how to cook would certainly come in handy now.

Now, where am I going to buy my food, and what am I going to buy? Well, I learned where the closest grocery store was and began walking there on a regular basis. (I could have taken a city bus, but I did not have money to spend for that. I survived anyway.) But I have to admit that a couple of grocery sacks full certainly got heavier and heavier the closer I got back to the house.

This location was actually a little closer to my classrooms than my dorm had been, and it was about the same distance from the main library building. Actually it was sort of in the opposite direction from the dorm. (It was northwest from Altgeld Hall, and the dorm was southwest of the dorm.)

How was I going to get my clothes washed? (We were not allowed to use the home's washing machine although I knew how.) Probably my roommate mentioned a laundromat that I could use and where to find it. It turned out that it was about a block or so north of Elder Clapp's home. So, this was another place for me to walk, but this time with dirty clothes. For some reason, I had my shirts washed, pressed and folded. (This now sounds like an extravagant expense, but I stopped doing this at some point.)

With all of this walking for necessities, walking to Stoughton Street to get a ride to church was now about half the distance. This meant that I did not have to leave quite as soon in order to be on time.

One thing I should have learned was to cook any meat I bought within a couple of days to keep it from spoiling. Why? With us opening the frig quite a few times a day, the meat was not really kept cool enough to prevent it from spoiling, especially ground meat. Anyway, my pound of it got thrown out by another student without telling me (the graduate student mentioned earlier) because it had a horrible smell. Now knowing this, I accidentally cooked his ground meat. Need to say, there was a heated discussion about this. (Well, he did not know whose it was, so how could he have known who to tell?)

Classes began

My courses for the spring semester was similar to the fall before. Analytical Geometry was replaced with Calculus. English was a continuation of the fall as was History. Chem 105 (Qualitative Analysis) replaced Chem 102.

I had now done something that my older siblings had not done: I was on my way of completing my full first year of college. Then again, I was more acquainted with university life than I had been five months earlier. I was beginning to settle in. True, moving from the dorm to private housing required several adjustments, I was more prepared for my studies, I thought.

Yet there was one pleasant surprise in the form of how history was taught. This professor was much more interested in trends in history than what general did what and which country's army did he command. I don't remember if I earned a better grade, but i certainly enjoyed this semester far better than the previous one.

Calculus

I had done well in my previous math course, so this was the foundation that I had to build upon. However, this math course covered material I had never seen before. Besides my study habits somewhat failed me. Why? Because I was use to learning (memorizing) the material rather than looking at the meaning of the subject matter. (What was the subject matter really telling me?) There was also a large amount of symbols used. I should have but didn't translate the symbols into their meanings either. I still managed to earn a B. (I managed to memorize enough.)

I do remember Mr. Powell in Advanced Chemistry in high school mentioning a method for studying with the formula SQR³. I vaguely remember him say what this meant, but no one took the time to help me apply this to my studies. Guess what? What I did not apply, I soon forgot and thus could not use. So, I continued to learn by memorizing the material and regurgitating it back to the teacher. Clearly this was not the most efficient method of learning new materials.

Then there was another method to learning any math course involving equations. This would be something that I did not learn much later. Math is a language; an equation is a sentence. So, to understand an equation is basically the same as understanding an sentence in any language. The basic parts of the equation and its structure needs to understood first just as the words and sentence structure does.

I would finally learn what this formula (SQR³) is and how to use it when I was teaching school in Scott County, Mississippi. It was in a reading class for elementary school teachers. (I was teaching fourth grade at the time.) And then after moving to Roanoke, Alabama, in the 1990's, I tutored a grade school student using this method with good results.

Chem 105

Like Chem 102, High school had prepared me very well for this course. This turned out to be both good and bad for me. I really did not learn that much more than I knew before the first lecture. Nor did my laboratory work improve as much as it should. I actually came to the point that I thought I knew more than I actually did. As a result, I failed the final lab test because I took a shortcut that I should not have done. When the classroom teacher told me why, I realized that I had really messed up! I was too cocky!

And yet, he had also noticed from lab and class homework that I was not really challenged by the usual lab work. So, he gave me a special project that lasted a couple of lab periods. I was given a brown powder (manganese dioxide) and the instructions to make a purple solution (permanganate). At some point, I would be using dry ice (carbon dioxide in solid form and quite cold!) at one stage.

This was just a little bit intimidating. I had to go to another lab to get the dry ice. There was even a little bit of fear in the whole thing. But I managed to follow the directions correctly. Sure enough, the solution turned to the desired deep color. I had done something much more difficult than I ever had in chemistry. This was nice!

Then came the end of the semester and time for another round of 3 hour final exams. I tried to get myself to study, but I really could not. I didn't even know why. I could not even get interested in doing this. This could have been disastrous grade wise.

It really wasn't though. When the final grades were posted, I had earned an A. My final exam grade was posted next to my course grade: 94. I probably could have done a little better, but this was very good in itself. I was told by someone else in the class. Or was it my classroom teacher? The exam was graded on the curve with the average score

being a 55. This made my score much closer to 100. I had actually done very well, much more than I would have thought.

PE: Swimming

This was my PE class for the spring. There were its good parts and bad ones as well. It was water polo. It used a volleyball and two goal nets(like in soccer). Yes, there was a person "in the net" whose duty was to keep any of the opposing players from throwing the ball into it.

The first class is when we got some basic instructions of what to expect. First of all, we were required to wear a cap over our hair. (Why was this? Did we really have enough hair among us to even partially clog the drain pipes? I would not think so!) But I bought and wore one any way. Secondly, that was all we were going to be wearing. Yes, we spent 50 minutes in the water nude. Oh, well! Well, my greatest concerned was that someone would open the door to this pool from the hallway. (Didn't happen, but that did not keep me from worrying.)

We also got a lecture about use of the lockers. They were to be locked any time that we were not next to them. There were always people lurking around ready to steal any money found in someones pockets. Unfortunately, I discovered how true this was as I forgot to lock mine when taking a shower. (I lost some change, but I really could not afford to have that happen to me again.)

I took this class at 11 AM, so the pool was empty when everyone left at the end of class. But I remained to do additional swimming. During this time I spent some of my time swimming underwater. I really pushed myself to see how far I could swim this way. Now the pool was 25 metes long (27.34 yards). I'm not sure how wide it was. But I am thinking that swimming the length and then width was about 100 feet.

I probably should mention that the pool was 8' deep. So, when I was swimming underwater, I was doing so at that depth. Before the end of the semester, I was able to swim this way the entire length. I was very much out of breath by the time I came back to the surface! Then I tried to swim underwater first across the pool and then the length. Bad idea! When I surfaced, I was showing signs of oxygen starvation. I still managed to get to the side of the pool and then out of it safely.

Some of the students elected to learn how to use a snorkel and flippers. The rest of us played water polo. All I remember is that we had lots of fun and got plenty of exercise.

But then came the end of the semester and our final test. We had to do a front and back dive from the diving board. Well, I did have a good knowledge of how to swim, but I never learned how to dive... I tried and received a passing grade. That is all that I can say about that.

Bay of Pigs

During the 1950's, Fidel Castro and his revolutionary army had successfully took control of Cuba from the previous dictator, Batista. At first, people thought he was trying to make Cuba a better place to live. It was not all that long before he became as bad as Batista. He was as ruthless; he demanded that people do exactly what he said or else.

Many of the people fled the country as he began to take over ownership of anything important. Naturally, the people, who lost businesses fled the country going to the Miami area.

As the Eisenhower presidency was coming to a close, a plan was developed to invade Cuba using Cubans as soldiers. Kennedy continued to develop this plan, and it was launched the spring of 1961.

As this began, Cubans living in the US began flocking to Miami to take part in this battle. But it was too late. The battle plans had a huge error in it. The battle was a disaster! The entire invading force was either killed or captured.

A Cuban student was staying in the same house as I was at this time. He was very serious when he said that he had to go to Miami. While we tried to convince him to stay, he was determined to become part of the fight. So, off he went. He got to Miami alright, but that was as far as he was allowed to go. He was so dejected when he returned to us. I don't remember what he did after this, but he was not there when I returned for the following fall semester. As a result, I asked for and was given the room he had had in the basement.

Summer 1961

After finals were over, I headed back home on the train. I'm not sure what I needed to do at this point. But, I did manage to get a job at a small plant north of town that made explosives. It was a place where Webb had worked after he graduated. (I was following in his footsteps.)

Ammonium nitrate is a fertilizer, but it also has explosive properties. But to use it in blasting required making a fuse that would cause the explosion. This is what we did: make the fuses. So we started with nitroglycerin soaked in some type of solid along with TNT. Anyway, we followed the directions coming out with the finished product in the end.

One problem we ran into was its weight. It was supposed to be one pound (453 grams). Some of ours were heavier than they should have been. In fact, when they test fired one of our heavier ones, a neighbor was jarred out of bed from the explosion. I really don't think he appreciated us waking him up let alone throwing him off his bed!

Our fuses were set off using electricity, so summer thunderstorms are a threat to our existence. As with Webb

some summer earlier, we had one of these. That is when we were evacuated from our building until the threat of lightening was over. Well, nothing exploded, but I would not have wanted to be there if it had happened.

Then much later in the summer: it was July 31st to be exact. I headed to work as usual, but I was quite cold for some reason. (I had not taken the time to look at the thermometer either.) One of my co-workers had picked me up and had his car radio on to KMOX, one of the more popular stations. I heard the announcer say that everyone at the radio station was going to get a pay raise that day! (Why???) Well, he told us why. The station manager had said that it would be a cold day in July before anyone got a raise. He thought this day should qualify. It was 47°! I really needed to have worn a much warmer coat, but I didn't.

And then Mom had some things for me to do at home as well: sewing and canning. So, she got out her treadle sewing machine (this was strictly foot power rather than electric). Then she took me downtown to buy the muslin for the sheets I was to make. It was measured and cut to the size she dictated. Then I learned how to sew in the hems of the sheets. (I may have made two sheets, or could it have been more?) Anyway, I now had a foundation for another skill that I would use in later years.

One thing that I fixed fairly often at night was spaghetti with perhaps different kinds of noodles. So, I would be using a lot of tomato juice. Having to be frugal most of her life, she saw no need for me to be buying this at the grocery store when I could take canned tomato juice from home. Of course, she was not going to do the canning for me. That was my job. (Well, she did pick the tomatoes...

So, by the latter part of September, I had canned many pints of tomato juice, had more money in my checking account, and had the sheets and pillow cases needed for my

bed. Time to get back to school for fall registration one more time.

Sophomore Year 1961-1962

New Room

When I got to Champaign on the train, I took a taxi to the same house I had lived in the previous spring semester. I had brought some of the canned tomato juice to use. I suppose I also had the sheets I had sewn at home as well. I was also staying in a different room for this year.

I moved into the basement because it was cheaper (\$5 less a month but this was \$45 less for the year). (The Cuban student had failed to return for school.) It was also somewhat lonesome. Once in a while one of the students would stop by my door to talk a little bit, but very seldom. When I lived upstairs, I could go down the hall. Or, I could talk with my roommate once in a while. OK, I could still go upstairs to watch TV...

And then there were some weird ideas about studying that I came up with. Where I got them I do not know. Somehow I got the idea that I could sleep a while, then study for a while, and sleep some more.

Of course, this meant setting the alarm for the middle of the night and then resetting it again after studying. First of all, I did not fall asleep immediately after going to bed so I was somewhat sleep deprived when I started studying. I really did not remember very much of what I had read during this study period. Then once again I had some problems falling asleep when I went back to bed.

Obviously, this was not the right way for me to do this! But some people can successfully study this way. That is because they have woke up without an alarm clock. This means their bodies are ready to do thing such as studying.

Then when they get tired, they can go to bed and begin sleeping quickly.

The room was rather small with a single bed and a desk. Also two of the walls were part of the concrete block foundation. This meant that they were always cool from contact with the ground outside. (The floor was concrete, so it was cool to cold as well. It also had a window just below the ceiling allowing me to see the sky outside. The door was a french door which means that I could have either the top or bottom open or both. Finally, my heat was supplied by a small electrical space heater. This did not always keep the room warm. (Should I have taken this room? Definitely not but I did anyway. Anything to save some money.)

Late in the 1950's, I had bought a small transistor radio to listen to it. I had brought it with me the previous fall and was still using it. At first, I was buying batteries for it, but I decided that I could get a battery charger and use it to provide the power the radio needed. This worked out quite well.

The radio used a 9 volt battery. At the very first, I was using a well know brand which lasted about a month. Then I tried buying a store brand battery. It lasted just as long. Of the three methods of providing power to the radio, the battery charger was the cheapest.

Classes

For the fall semester, I had four major courses (Calculus, American Literature, Quantitative Analysis, Biology) and two minor courses (ROTC, Volleyball for PE). This year was definitely going to be a bigger challenge than the last year.

Calculus

The previous year, my two math courses met five days a week, but my second calculus course only met three days a week. (The previous spring, I could have taken a 3 hour

calculus course and then a five hour course this semester instead.) But the most important point was that I was memorizing things without understanding the subject very well. As a result, I only earned a C for the course. My grades in my chosen major were gradually going down which is not all that good. Not much can really be said about this course.

American Literature

Now American Literature was another story. It was a disaster! (Well I did manage to pass it, but that is not saying very much!) What happened? I had not ever had a course like this one. When I read fiction, I do so to enjoy it. But such was not the case with my instructor, nor did it with other instructors. He insisted doing a deep analysis of what particular book we were studying. Of course my attitude was basically, who cares?

When Mom died, Webb divided up the possessions of our parents among the children. Among other items, I got a paperback book about Louisa May Alcott. The Introduction contains 25 pages of analysis of the short stories contained in this book. At least some to most of this was conjectures about her and these short stories. (Did she really write them, for example? Again, I am not a scholar, so why should I care?)

But this does point out my problem with this class. He expected us to become scholars who are concerned with all kinds of details about the books we were to study. What this had to do with getting a liberal education is beyond me.

I remember one specific test question late in the semester. We had read literature written by Herman Melville and another author perhaps Edgar Allan Poe. We were to create a conversation that might have taken place between these authors about a given topic. In other words, we were to determine each author's attitude about various things and

how they differed. (Why? He never could explain why this was necessary.)

I eventually got an appointment to see him to discuss my problems. During it, I point blank asked him how to do the things that he asked of his students. He never gave me a direct answer. From what he said, I do not think he knew the answer, even enough to suggest I try certain things. (Final conclusion about this course: not worth the time nor money spent on this course! But it did fulfill a course requirement for graduation.)

Somewhere in the 2009-2014 time frame, I got some of the books that I was required to study during this semester. The first one I got was Moby Dick by Herman Melville. This time I was beginning to see how this author thought. The only problem was that I did not like what I was thinking. Putting it bluntly, I did not like his attitude. So, I did not finish reading it, nor do I ever want to go back to it anytime in the future.

Another book was by James Fillmore Cooper that was part of the Leather Stocking Tales. The "Last of the Mohicans" was one of them. Since I had access to all of these books, I began reading them in the order suggested. But, I went back to read them as entertainment. So, I did not have any real opinions as to how he thought.

Quantitative Analysis

This is a much harder course than Qualitative Analysis which I had the previous spring. Then I only had to determine what elements a solution contained. Now I had to determine how much of a particular element a sample contained.

What makes this so hard? The amounts were very small. This meant handling the sample could introduce errors in calculations that are not acceptable. Measurements were in thousandths of a gram if not smaller. Sweat or oil from my skin can be weighed with this accuracy. I never quite got the

hang of making sure my equipment was clean enough to get good results.

Perhaps I should have asked my lab teacher what I should do, but I did not. I think this course had a scheduled 2 hours of more of lab time. Others said something about spending more time in the lab to get proficient even to suggest 4 hours or more. But I was relying upon what the course requirement was, so I only spent 2 hours a week. This is another example when I could have gotten better results if I had thought it through.

Carol (Biology class)

This almost sounds like my sophomore high school year. Only this time I did not have to collect insects for my teacher. Well, it was taught on a higher level, but there was still the dreaded classification of animals and plants. I know this knowledge is important for people who are going to work in this area as their life's work. They need this information, but I still think I only need a cursory knowledge of it. Once in a while I hear about some animal or plant in the news that the scientific name is mentioned. But this does not really mean anything to me other than I recognize that it is a scientific name.

In high school, we cut up preserved frogs. So, they smelled of formaldehyde. Also, if we were not careful, the organs would fall apart when touched too hard. But in college, the frogs were killed by sticking an instrument in its brain. Then we took it apart. This made working with the organs much easier.

And this was when Biology, Inner Varsity Christian Fellowship, and a nice young lady intersected. I had met her, Carol, in one of its meeting. We struck up a conversation, and I learned she also was taking this course. So, we began studying the subject together. (We just did not practice anything that we learned.)



This is the YWCA Dormitory where she lived and where we studied at times. (As far as location is concerned, it is across the street from Altgeld Hall. So, it is very close to all the buildings surrounding the Quad.)

This was also where we met at times for our study periods. Being a women's dorm, there were rules governing the behavior of the women. Any man who came to see one of them also had rules that they had to obey. This did not really bother me any because I was not about to do anything that I should not anyway.

At least one rule seemed to be a bit far out: When a man and a woman were sitting together, at least three feet had to be on the floor at any given time. I know exactly why there was this rule. But, what harm could it be for the two to have their feet resting on a coffee table when otherwise behaving themselves? OK, this might be damaging to the table, but it has nothing to do with the relationship between the two and what they were doing while having their feet propped up.

Yet what seems out of character for me at the time was that of all possible subjects to study with a young lady, I was studying Biology with her! Seemingly, I had always been shy

around females which goes back to the first three elementary grade. But somehow I managed to become comfortable with Carol.

As the fall continued, human reproduction was taught in the class. We did not skip any studying together during this part. It should have made me very uncomfortable, but it did not bother her at all. And this made all the difference in the world. I took my cue from her which allowed me to intelligently discuss the topic. So, she is the one that I had to thank for helping me in what could have been an embarrassing situation.

We continued studying together until mid December. Then I made another "blunder" because I mentioned something that Inner Varsity Fellowship believed that I found to be contrary to what is written in the Bible. Needless to say, that ended our relationship. Oh, well.

Seems like this was not the only blunder that I made this December. Bernice Allen, Jack's mother, had her birthday this month as I do, and she had a birthday party inviting me as a guest. I insisted that I be able to bring Carol with me. Now I wonder why I did not ask if I could. It would have sounded so much better. But I did not really think about the difference between the two.

Well, I did ask her if she would come with me later. She said yes. So we went. I had a nice time for sure because the Allen family know how to help people have one. Attending this party were Olad and Bernice Allen, Joyce, Jack, Carol, and I.

I'm not sure all of the things I remember, but here are a few things. Carol was really Martha Carol while Joyce was really Carol Joyce. Since both were attending the university, first names are more commonly used than the name parents may have used as they grew up. So, there was a bit of confusion when Carol was addressed. (Which Carol?) After

the supper, the four teenagers went down stairs to play table tennis. After a while a while, Carol and I took our leave and walked back to our residence.

She did not want to have any personal relationship with me anymore, but she did try to interest me in another young lady during the Christmas Vacation. She knew some people within 10 miles or so of my parent's home, and this includes this lady. Final arrangements were made by a special delivery letter that I received on Christmas day. Anyway, I made contact with her for a bowling date. Somehow, I managed to find her apartment, and off we went as I let her give me the directions to wherever we were going. There were quite a few people there including one or more bowling leagues bowling this night.

When we had enough, I returned her to her apartment. When she invited me in, I did. But when she sat down on the bed, I got a little unnerved to say the least. I sort of got the idea for what she did that she wanted me to sit on the bed with her. While I do not think she was being suggestive as far as what other activity might follow, I was having problems with even this. Anyway, we talked about a variety of things.

My biggest problem was that I was not over Carol yet. So, not knowing what I should not say, I kept bringing the discussion back to her. I still have a problem with doing this if I am not careful. (Susan now gets mentioned by me probably much more than is proper.)

There is an incident that occurred during the spring semester that has to do with Carol. But this is the last time I had any contact with anyone about her.

Volleyball

This was another PE class that I really enjoyed. Actually, all four of them fall into this category. Even so, I had some

studying to do with this one. Each one of us were given the rules for this sport and were expected to learn them.

The teacher assumed that we did not know anything about this game, so he began with the very basics. Each team consisted of six members: three in the front line and the other three in the back line. Each line had its own responsibilities including where on the court we could play.

The reason why I enjoyed it so much was that my team had several of the best players. This made it easier for me to relax and probably play over my head. But around the middle of the semester, the teacher moved the players around among the teams. (There were likely four teams in our class.) Sure enough, I did not play as well as I had earlier. Even so, there was a sense of belonging to a team which was definitely a very good thing.

Then at the end of the semester, each Volleyball class entered a team for a tournament to see which class was the best. Well, I was not one of the six best players.

Our class was well represented as we reached the semi-finals only to lose to the team that won everything. Being there watching made things even more enjoyable.

I need money!

The fall semester had ended with finals' week, and the spring semester had begun. Well, I had enough money to pay for my books and fees, but my checking account was getting rather low and decreasing every week! This was despite the government loan I was able to get for the year. Something really needed to be done and soon.

Surprise, Surprise! I actually did something rather than "stick my head in the sand" by doing nothing. Perhaps Joyce may have helped me, or someone else may have mentioned that I should check with the university. Anyway, I did exactly that.

There were not many jobs available at the time, but the student union needed workers in the cafeteria on the basement floor. So, I applied, was sent to see the contact person for an interview. I satisfied her that I could do the job, so if I could meet the requirements of the job, it was mine. I would be pouring coffee and later ice tea for the customers.

Because I would be working with food, I had to be free from TB. So, I was sent to the university health center to get a TB skin test which required a three day waiting period before having it read. As usual, my skin had completely healed the area where the test had been made. So, I qualified. Now to learn how to make coffee, pour it into cups, place the filled cup with a saucer over the top of the cup.

But first some information that I was given. My wage was \$0.95 per hour payable every two weeks. But there was more to it than this. We were allowed to charge our meals. At the end of each each pay period, what I charged was totaled and divided by \$1.35. The quotient was the equivalent number of hours for the meals I had charged. Then the quotient was subtracted from the total number of hours I had worked. I got paid for the remaining hours.

What happens if charged meals than I had worked? They put out a list each pay period of those who had done this and how much. Sure enough, I did this during the first two weeks I worked! Yes, it was very embarrassing to see my name on this list! (I did not do it again.)

And then they had a bonus feature in an attempt to keep their student employees working until the end of each semester which was nice. After the end of final's week, the total hours worked for that semester were calculated and then multiplied by the bonus value. This was added to the final check for the semester. During the first semester, the

value was \$0.20 per hour. This increased \$0.05 per semester until it reached \$0.35.

If we needed off from a shift we were scheduled to work, we need to get another employee to take our place and get this approved by our supervisor. If not, we could ask our supervisor to help us find someone to take our place.

Of course this can work the other way, and it did at times. For example, I had substituted for others which increased my wages. In fact, there were times before I graduated that I worked more than six hours between the other person's hours and mine. Of course, this meant that I had to learn how to do what the other person did. As a result, I learned how to do everything on the cafeteria line with the exception of serving meat. (Only adult permanent employees were allowed to do this.)

My complete job description was to make the coffee, serve it, and provide a cup of hot water (covered with a saucer) with a tea bag for those wanting hot tea. Well, as the weather got warm enough, I also made ice tea for those who wanted it. And yes, I had to clean up my work area after the cafeteria was closed.

I began my shift at 4:42 PM, and the cafeteria opened at 5. During this time, I made two 6 gallon urns of coffee using 2 pounds of coffee per urn. Some of the employees would go through the line during this time because they had things to do after the line closed. So, I would be serving them as I got my station ready to go. Then when 5 PM arrived, the crowd began to go through the line. My work had begun in earnest.

If I needed more coffee, I would rinse out the urn and make more (6 gal if I thought I might need this much, or 3 gal if needing less). Often I made at least 18 gal each night with a few exceptions of perhaps 15 gal. Times like the latter were very slow nights!

While the cafeteria closed at 7 PM, I remained on duty until the other employees had time to clock out and get their meals. Then I clocked out and got mine. Then after clocking back in, I finish cleaning up.

There was one very nice gentleman that had a specific way he wanted his coffee to be placed on his tray. It didn't take very long for me to learn to do it his way. I would be looking for him as he walked in, and then I would make sure to place his cup of coffee on his tray just so as he reached my station. He really did not have to even slow down any. He liked the service, and I enjoyed being able to give him this special service. (I really don't remember anyone else doing this, but I would have been very willing to do it however the customer wanted if possible.)

Although I did not recognize it at the time, this was one of the most important lessons I learned when it comes to helping others. It became second nature to me in whatever I am doing. It would be the one of the keys to my success as a dry cleaner later in life.

I was a little nervous about making the ice tea, but I managed to get it done right. All of this and the way I did my work that impressed my supervisor. So, shortly before the end of the semester, she had me learn how to run the cash register. (I don't know if someone was brought in to do my job during these times or not.) But the cash register was just past my station, so I could easily move between my station and the front of the register. (Perhaps the person running this traded places with me at this time?) Anyway, when I returned to school in early August, I was giving the cash register position. Someone else got my job making coffee.

Minnesota Multiphase Personality Test

Because I was in the Education Department, I had to take this test which I probably did sometime during the fall on a

Saturday. Later I received the results. It seems that I had scored outside the norms in certain areas of the test, so I was interviewed by a school psychologist which included my taking some additional tests. Ink blot tests are definitely not my thing.

With this test, I was suppose to look at picture and describe what I saw. The only problem was that I had no idea how I was suppose to analyze them. All I saw was a bunch of lines and dots. This response was not helpful to him to say the least. Oh, I might have seen something in some of the cards, but very seldom. Finally, he asked me if I saw two black men sitting in a tub. Sure enough, I had no problem outlining those specific things once he told me what some people have seen.

I had several appointments before he concluded that I did not really have a serious problem. So, I was cleared to continue in the math education program. Yet, this did not mean I had no problems. (Many times I did not have a very good idea of what I should be doing nor how to find out what.

Cuban Missile Crisis

On this Sunday morning, Webb was in his barrack as usual when his platoon was informed that they had one hour to get their gear together and be at the flight line. They were being flown to another location.

He had been gun-ho from the beginning of his enlistment, so the things he would need were already packed and ready to do. Such was not the case with everyone. Some did not believe that they had to keep their gear ready to go at any time, so they were caught off guard. Regardless, all of them were on board a plane an hour later. Several hours later, they learned their designation: Guantanamo, Cuba.

Upon arrival, they were put to work shoring up the defenses of this base. Until this was done, they did a lot of

work and got very little sleep. One thing they quickly recognized: if fighting broke out, they were the front line!

While they were busy doing this, I had clocked in so I could get my station set up for the evening meal. Then the people began going through the two lines we had. At some point, the music that usually played stopped, and President Kennedy began his speech telling us of the grave danger that we faced and what he was going to do about it. Even so, I had no idea where Webb was at the time; I would learn this later.

Over the next few days, the crisis reached its peak as Soviet ships made their way toward Cuba probably with missiles on board. We were sending our ships to intercept them. They blinked first as they told their ships to turn around. Things gradually calmed down.

Sometime after this, there was no longer a need to have the large Marine contingent at Guantanamo, so they were returned to Camp Pendleton at San Diego. But there was no hurry to do this, so the Marines boarded one or more ships. Webb got an ocean voyage which included going through the Panama Canal on his way back to his home base.

I dare say that the men, who had not kept their gear ready for deployment for an hour's notice, did so after this. No one had to tell them why: they knew why!

Spring Classes

This included a second semester of each Biology and American Literature, a math class, and Organic Chemistry. The best description for these classes was that I muddled through... And yet there are a few things that I remember. They were not good ones in many cases.

Biology

One day, our instructor brought in an equipment that measures our lung capacity. (I'm not sure what the subject

was that required this.) Anyway, she taught the lesson and then let us measure what ours was. Well, mine was less than I thought it should be.

She also mentioned that the size of one's chest has did not necessarily indicate one's lung capacity. It seems that there was a varsity football player in a class. He was a large person in every way. His lung capacity was rather large as in 3.5 liters which is almost a gallon. He was rather impressed with himself. Then after some of the students measured theirs, a rather thin looking lady took her turn. Surprise! Her's measured 4.5 liters. She was a member of the university band; her instrument was a french horn. Needless to say the football player was no longer impressed with his.

Lung capacity depends upon how we breath. Because of the instrument that she played, she need a lot of air every time she played her instrument. So, she learned how to increase her capacity. Over a period of time it became much larger than one would think she had.

Around the same time, we had a contest between the girls and boys. The instructor sent a group of girls out to run up and down the stairs and probably up and down some halls. Their breathing and heart rates were checked upon return. Then they were taken again a specific number of minutes later. Then she chose a group of boys to cover the same course. First they were told where they were to run. When they returned, these same measurements were taken. Who recovered the quicker? Surprisingly, the girls did. The differences of their heart and breathing rates were greater for them than the boys.

Having run cross country and track in high school, I knew how to breath deep and relax to bring both of these measurement down fairly rapidly. I noticed that the boys were not doing this. When I asked one of them why he hadn't done this. He basically said that this would have

given the boys an unfair advantage. Perhaps both groups should have been instructed in this technique before either one went out to run...

Organic Chemistry

I remember one person describe this subject as being one of the most difficult chemistry classes. Perhaps he was correct. The number of different organic molecules far surpasses the number of different non-organic ones. So, the study of organic chemistry is far broader. It also makes it more difficult to memorize what I was taught...

The laboratory work was also rather complex. Like one of the experiments was to create an antibiotic from simpler organic compounds. I was supposed to be able to do this? I think just the idea of what was expected of me scared me. Besides my poor laboratory practices got even worse. I really did not know what I was doing.

Supposedly seeing is believing, but is it? For the first time, I was given a thermometer using the Celsius scale. Up to this time, 100°F was rather hot but not scalding. But 100°C is the boiling temperature of water! At one point, I was working with an organic liquid with a temperature somewhat over 100°C. My brain told me that this was hot, but my fingers near the flask of this chemical told me an entirely different story! It was far hotter. The burns on them definitely did too. It was very confusing to say the least. And yes, I was so confused that I kept touching the hot flask. It really should not be this hot! But it still was. Ow! Ow! Ow!...

Mathematics: Vectors

Now how can I describe this course to people who have no idea what it is about? There were times when I wondered if I knew!

And yet, I still have memories about this course. They are only in very small pieces. I know the basis for this course

was algebra, but it went far beyond that. If I had access to a textbook on this topic today, I might get a better understanding of what they were trying to teach me. What good did this course do me? Not much I am afraid.

This was perhaps my first exposure to the use of logic in a college math course. I had managed to understand previous courses by learning the material found in the book and lectures. I did not discover how to learn the principles that were behind the material.

This course began with the Cartesian plane which is what a 2 dimensional x-y graph represents. Next was the 3 dimensional plane with three axes: x, y, and z. These were all concrete things that I had learned.

What are the principles of these things? The professor began to teach these in a more abstract way. He mentioned a 3 dimensional space with three axes which were mutually perpendicular. He called the axes i, j, and k. OK, this at least makes some sense. A mathematical operator was introduced which determined what angle existed between two lines in this space. (It is called a dot product.) One purpose for this operator was to determine if two lines were perpendicular.

Once the principles for a plane or 3-D space were developed, higher dimensional spaces were defined using the same principles. All of this was done with logic, and became very abstract to me. And clearly I did not really know how to apply logic to principles very well. I may have had this course listed on my transcript, but I had little idea of how to apply the principles of the course to anything.

English Proficiency exam

Early during this semester, I was notified that I had an English test to take because of my English grades the first year. The time was set, and I appeared as required. I was give the test booklet and told to write a theme of my

choosing. So I did. As I wrote earlier, I still remembered the research paper I had written a year earlier. So, I used the information I had gathered to write my theme. Again, I passed. (The emotions that I put into this paper certainly helped my recall of the facts I needed.

Wrestling

This was my fourth and final PE class. During this class, I learned a lot about this sport. It definitely was far different from what is seen on TV. It is a lot of hard work to say the least.

From the beginning, we were divided into weight classifications based upon those used in College Wrestling matches. During the semester we were taught the moves that are required and the rules that govern the sport. Three times a week we spent the most part of 50 minutes practicing these moves.

Near the end of the semester, all the students that were taking wrestling were entered into a tournament. For my first match, my opponent did not show up, so I got a by. For the second one, I was not so lucky. My opponent was very aggressive. I was the opposite. This made him rather mad because I would not do much of anything. He won on points, but he never was able to pin me.

What was my problem during this match? Simple answer was my attitude! I had very little confidence in myself. I had learned all of the moves as well as practiced them. But I just could not bring myself to use any of them. Obviously, there was no way I could win without doing what was required of me.

Later back in my class, we also had a tournament with it. I was in trouble from the very beginning of my match. This time I fought back doing as much as I could. Near the end of the three minute time period, he managed to pin me. But he had to give it his all to do it.

His next match was about 10 minutes later. This was definitely not long enough for him to recoup from the our match. So, he lost fairly quickly. That was when his opponent thanked me for making him work so hard. Pinning him was very easy.

The building that housed wrestling also had a running track (110 yards?) on the second floor. So, after class and sometimes in later school years, I would spend some time running on it. This was good exercise. It definitely had a good effect on my health.

And at the very end of the semester, the teacher took us outside to a track where we were told to run a mile. Gee, this sounded familiar to me from high school. While I did not hear my time as I finished the race, I felt that it might have been my best time for running this distance ever.

I did have one problem during this course with my toenails. Time after time during class we had to drop to our knees. This put pressure on them, enough to cause them to break off or bend back. This hurt to say the least! When I complained to my teacher, he had no sympathy for me. He simply said, "Then cut them!" This was not what I wanted to hear at all, so I was annoyed to say the least. (Yes, I finally did take his "advice". Strange thing: it worked!)

AFROTC

Having listened to the Enlisted Airman the year before, I decided to apply for Advanced ROTC for the final two years of my schooling. I learned at some point in this year that I had been accepted. So far, so good.

The last sentence is in there for a reason. I had some hurtles that I had to get over to be accepted. The first one was a physical exam, more specifically my weight. And then there was the personality test the previous fall. I had to report the results of that test in my application.

Weight wise, I was under weight. Why? Because I was just getting over the flu which put me in the campus hospital for three days. Of course, I was under weight (as in 112 pounds fully clothed)! But this was minor compared with the other one.

So, I got a rejection letter possibly during the summer. (Could this have affected my attitude then?) I immediately replied why I had entered the data that I had. I also gave them permission to look at all that the university had on the tests and the interviews with the psychologist. Well, this was exactly what was needed as I got another letter saying I was now approved for the advanced ROTC program.

What we did each semester

The men taking AFROTC (no women allowed) were organized into a wing just as the Air Force is. (one wing contains several squadrons; one squadron contain several flights.) The juniors were the flight commanders beginning the year as second lieutenants. Seniors filled all of the positions above flight commander.

This left the lower classmen to be the enlisted men. We all began our freshman year as just plain airmen. Again, we had the opportunity to advance in rank up to chief master sargent during our required two years of taking AFROTC. This was done by taking a specific test for each advancement in rank.

Why I did not take advantage of this, I don't know. I probably did not even think about it. It did change during this spring semester. During this 14 weeks, I began as a basic airman and passed all of the tests. Yes, officially I was chief master sargent Daniel E. Lewis! My name was on the bulletin board during the last week of school. So, I did not have time to get my stripes and pin them on my uniform. Oh, well.

Tornado

This happened on a day that I had drill (AFROTC). It was late March, and I was coming back from my 12 o'clock math class. By the time I got back to my room, it was 1 PM. So, I turned on my transistor radio to listen to CBS News (10 minutes long). Just before the news broadcast began, the local station announced that the temperature was 91°. (I knew that it was hot, but this hot?) Then ten minutes later, I heard that the temperature was now 68°! It had dropped 23 degrees in that 10 minutes. This is not normal.

Then I began looking out my window, and I did not like what I saw. There were all kinds of threatening clouds. Worse yet they were green and seemingly other scary colors. The wind was blowing rather strong as well. Things did not look good at all. I certainly was glad that I was in the basement in my small room!

My drill class was at 2 PM, so I needed to fix my lunch and eat it before I had to leave for the class. Meanwhile I continued to listening to the radio learning that a tornado had touched down in a shopping center at Rantoul about 20 miles away. The roof of a shopping center had been torn off killing about 20 people.

I was still concerned about the weather as I prepared to leave for my class. I did not like the idea of the wind blowing the rain almost horizontally. This certainly made my half mile walk to the Armory an adventure! Fortunately, there was not any damage from the wind in the area where I was walking. I certainly was happy about this.

Surprisingly, I did not get very wet on the way down to the armory. And the weather was much nicer as I walked back to my apartment after drill.

Who picked up whom?

This was in January or February that I walked down to the main library building. As I came down by Altgeld Hall, I happened to glance across the street and I recognized a

young lady heading in the same direction: she was the big sister to Carol! What luck. Maybe I can get some information about her. I did so miss her.

The upper class women at the YWCA dorm served as big sisters to the lower class women to help guide them through any problems that might arise. As a result, I met her a couple of times while Carol and I had been studied here earlier in the year.

So, I changed slowed my pace to match hers. I basically followed her to the library from the the other side of the street. (I would not really call this stalking because I had a different outcome in mind.) Anyway, she wound up in the Education Library which was nice because I had some things I needed to get done there as well.

But I really don't know how much studying I got done though. I would read some then glance up to see if she was leaving. I repeated this many times until she was ready to leave. So, I probably knew more about watching her than the subject matter in my book.

She started out first but had several books that she needed to check out. While she was doing that, I walked out of the room and down the hall toward the door we both would exit. Then I waited and seemingly waited some more.

There are paintings on the walls in this area, so I thought I would spend some time looking at them while I waited for her. But I became too engrossed in this because suddenly someone poked me in the ribs. It was Carol's big sister; she had recognized me as she walked by. With this we started a conversation as we headed out the door into the cold night air.

The first thing she did was to apologize for startling me. And then teasingly, she spoke of her "picking me up" this way. Well, someone got picked up for sure, but it was not exactly me, or so I thought. Actually it did not really matter

who thought this since we both played a part in our meeting and talking.

Anyway, I explained to her what I had done since seeing her heading to the library. Of course, this took her back a little bit, but it was not something that bothered her. We even had an wonderful conversation as I walked her back to her dorm. (I don't remember getting any useful information about Carol though.)

The infirmary

The university has a health department for the students' use when needed. This included a clinic and a "hospital" (McKinley Hospital). The latter did have some wards for those who were sick. These were four beds to a room.

Well I was running a fever and went to get checked out. The doctor who examined me decided a few days of rest in the hospital would do me good. So, I spent a while in it before he would let me go home.

This also turned out to be an education. Maybe I was curious, or maybe he took it upon himself to educate the students he doctored.

So, I was about to learn some things about a fever. I knew that when my temperature went over 100°F, that I was considered sick. But was this entirely true? He was certain that it depended upon the circumstances. Now, when my temperature goes that high, it usually is because I have an infection. It is is not always true for everyone.

Then he explained himself. When our football team played another team on Saturday afternoon, those playing on the field can exert themselves enough to have a temperature of 102°F. This surprised me, but it does make sense once I thought about it.

Fact number 2: Our temperature is not constant; it changes during the day depending upon what we are doing at the

time. Well, the football player sort of explains this in one way. But a fever varies during a given day as well.

I was not really about to believe this at first either. But he sort of convinced me: he showed me my temperature chart while I was in the hospital. You know, it is really hard to argue with the facts when they are staring you in the face! The only thing is that i do not remember a nurse taking my temperature in the middle of the night. She must have.

One of the other things that the doctor told me was that a person's temperature usually goes up in the evening. Again I did not believe it. But over a period of time and taking my temperature throughout the day, I learned that this was very true indeed.

Well, I might be sick, but four of us boys in a ward were not all that cooperative with the nurses one night. (Boys will be boys.) We had all been given a mild sleeping pill around 9 PM. This was a good start for a good night's sleep. But instead we continued to talk, and talk, and talk... Finally, our intercoms came on. We were told to shut up and go to sleep. Perhaps we were too loud so that we were disturbing others? OK, we said good night and at least got quiet.

There was one thing that I did not like while there, and it was not the food. The shower stall which we had to use every day was cold! Well, someone had this weird idea of what the temperature should be (probably in the low 70's). Obviously, I disagreed with this. I still do!

God and I

This was probably the spring that I began spending time on the quad as the weather got warmer. The trees that lined the sidewalks were several years old, so I had enough shade to keep me from getting too warm. I would sit on the grass under one of them. It was then that I felt God enfolding me in His arms! This was totally unexpected, but I certainly

enjoyed it. It kept me going even though other parts of my life were not very enjoyable.

How often did this happen? Actually several times this spring as well as the springs of the following years. It was something that I enjoyed very much, and I still get good feelings flood through me today when I think about these times!

Summer 1962

Somehow I had gotten through final's week one more time. But my grades were not as good as they should have been, and I did not know how to change the situation. I got notification that I was no longer in math education because my grade average had dropped below the required level. So, I would have to change my major. So, I became a math major. It just seemed like the thing to do.

I had already made arrangements to move to another home much closer to the Quad (like half a block away). Since I was now eating all of my meals in the cafeteria where I worked, I no longer needed a place with kitchen privileges. And yes, this was a little cheaper than the previous one.

When I got home, I had not lined up anywhere to work, and I really did not know how to get a job. My parents were not really helpful either. Did they know what I should do? I do not have an answer to that either. So, for the entire summer, I was very depressed. I could be found laying around on the couch most of the time. Obviously, this was not one of my best times.

And yet, I remember a couple of events in one summer that might have been this one. So, I will describe some of the things I remember about it.

There was an eclipse of the sun that I remember well. It seemed to take forever for the moon to pass in front of the sun. As it did, the light became less in intensity. Shadows became less and less evident.

Everyone had been warned to not look directly toward the sun because we could damage our eye. Instead, they suggested that we do it using a cardboard box. We were to poke a hole through one end, point that end directly toward the sun, and look as the sun's image at the other end of the box. (This is the principle that a film camera uses.)

I did this, but I also had another idea that might work. As the eclipse progressed, I used this technique to see how much of the sun was being covered by the moon. When there was only a small sliver, I got out my camera to take a picture.

First I had to determine how to point the camera directly at the sun without me looking at it at all. That is when I thought about shadows. It seemed to me that if I held the box so that the shadow from one end of it fell directly on the other end, the box would be aligned with the sun. So, all I had to do then was to place the camera on the end of the box and take the picture. So, this was what I did. (I would not know whether I was successful until I took the rest of the pictures still remaining on the slide film.

Well, the wait was over, I got a package in the mail with my slides. The only problem was that one of the slides was not mounted. (They were nice enough to enclose an extra mount in case I wanted to do so.) At first glance, the film looked like it had not be exposed at all. This was kind of sad for a while. Then I looked more carefully. There in the film was a well developed crescent that was totally clear. It was a picture of the sun very near a total eclipse! I idea had worked. When my mother saw the film, she said that I had a

better picture of it than the newspaper did. She was proud of me!

This may well have been the summer that I took out my frustrations on our piano as well. I created some music pieces in my mind that I played. Actually, they were a series of sequences of notes that I would play over and over again. Sometimes they would be in C major only to be switched to C minor and perhaps back again. I did this loud enough for people living around us to hear me.

Sometimes in the previous year or so, a new family had moved into the house across the street. (It was directly across the street from our next door neighbor.)

The father had a band and seemed to like what he had heard me play. So, he offered to hire me. Someone offered me a job??? Well, I knew that I could not play the piano very well with the possible exception of what he had heard. So, I had to turn him down. It would not have worked out. Oh, well.

Well, he also had children. His oldest daughter was in high school (I think), and we hung out at times during the summer. I also think that there were also younger daughters that tagged along as well. But that was basically it. What else did I do? Probably helped in the garden and mowing the lawn are at least two things I did. I am quite certain that I did my share in doing the laundry.

Bathroom Remodeling

This summer was when Dad remodeled the bathroom in the kitchen as well as the kitchen. What had once been the bathroom in the corner with a rope used to open and shut its door, was now a half bath with a shower next to it. The odors from the bathroom no longer came into the kitchen.

The hall along the bath and shower had once had a gas stove where Etta and I wrestled as she tried unsuccessfully

to spank me on my birthday many years before.

To accomplish all of this, Dad had to tear out the back of the closet that was between the living room and kitchen. This certainly created quite a bit of dust. In the midst of all the noise, I heard my Dad say some things that I did not think he should have. I know that hitting oneself accidentally with a hammer as hard as he swung his can be very painful. But did this justify the words used? I did not think so at the time.

A little more than 20 years later, I had endured extreme pain myself. In fact, I had lost a fingernail in the process. I had almost fainted from the pain as well. This happened more than once. But I did not use the kind of words Dad had. So, I was still certain that enduring pain does not justify saying the wrong things.

25th Wedding Anniversary

So, I was muddling through life so to speak and the summer passed day by day. June had turned into July; the first two weeks passed oh so slowly. Then July 17, 1962 arrived. It was 25 year earlier that Mom and Dad were married.

Now this anniversary was special to others, but what were we going to do? Webb was in Camp Pentleton at San Diego, CA. Meanwhile Etta was married and a college student in Fort Collins, CO. Tom was going to be a junior in high school in a month. If there was going to be a party, who was going to organize it? I don't know about Tom, but I did not have any idea as to where to even start organizing a party.

I guess this is what happens when parents do not teach their children how to take responsibility for themselves, how to plan for things. Teaching them how to ask questions and apply the answers to real live situations.

But this raises bigger questions. How well did they know to do things like this? Did their parents know? Were they doing what their parents did? When will people learn to pay attention to new situations as they occur and learn how to handle them?

Our family had never really been close. Well Mom and Dad were close, but they were not as close to their children as we wanted them to be. (According to Susan, this is something that came from them not having been taught good parenting skills. And yes, their actions got passed down to me. I did what they did.)

I fondly remember what they did that evening while waiting for Etta to call. (She didn't.) We had an outdoor chair that Dad had made years ago. The arm rests on it were 18" wide which is enough to comfortably sit on them. That is what they did: they sat on the arm rests facing each other: a picture of the love they still had for each other after all they had been through. Their love was also because of all they had experienced together.

While I speak of their love now, that was not my impression at the time. I really did not know what their actions meant then. When I was young, I listened to Mom tell of the courtship she and Dad had, but I had no idea of how that applied to me. Only after my own marriage and other experiences throughout my life did I recognize the love that the two of them shared.

Junior Year 1962-1963

The rest of the summer continued to pass day by day. I still only had about \$70 to my name and no job. At least I had a job waiting for me at college. Meanwhile Tom started his junior year the week before Labor Day. The situation did not look very good. I did not know what to do, so I had done

nothing. Somehow everything was suppose to work out for me. Well it did, but not necessary the way I wanted.

Because I worked in the student union, I did develop a plan ill advised as it was. I would cut down on what I ate so that I could use the difference to pay what I owed for other things. Breakfast consisted of raisin bran, two slices of whole wheat toast, and a glass of milk. Lunched consisted of soup, a sandwich containing a protein, and milk. Supper consisted of a salad and milk. (Yes, I was scraping the bottom of the barrel, but I managed to pay for everything by the end of the semester with some money left over.)

One thing to remember: there was dinner on the first and thirds Sundays, so I could eat some extra calories at that time.

New private housing

Since I was eating all of my meals at the Student Union, I no longer needed kitchen privileges. So, I looked for a different place to live preferably less expensive. Well I found one less than a block away from the Quad.

I moved to a three story home which provided rooms for 20 or so male students. Some like me had a roommate, and others didn't. Ours was in fact large; it could have held three students easily.

My roommate was a freshman math major. I have to admit that he had a much greater math ability than I did; his math courses were advanced placement. Now I wonder why I did not ask him for some help with my math. He just might have been able to give me some pointers. Oh well! Don't ask, and don't get.

Sometime during this year, we sort of had a disagreement, almost a fight. I did something that he did not like. (I probably should not have done this!) Because of this, he put chalk all over my Air Force uniform. This meant that it had

to be cleaned before I could wear it, and this cost me money.

Needless to say, this caused me money that I did not really have. Yes, this made me very angry and afraid! Even so, at first I did not know who had done it. At some point, he confessed, and I got angry again. But we got it worked out; no other problems occurred during the year.

Sometimes several of us would be in one of the rooms conversing or perhaps even playing cards. Since I did not see all of the students in the house, likely various groups formed. So there could have been groups of people in different rooms at the same time. I have no idea of how much others mingled among the groups there.

One time we were in the room of a student majoring in chemistry. At some point the conversation turned to a bottle of clear liquid in his room. It was "pure" alcohol as in 94%. (A chemical has to be added to the alcohol to get the percentage higher than this.)

Anyway he passed it around letting each one of us examine it. What is this smell? It did not smell like whiskey, beer, or wine. Then it occurred to me: this is the smell of alcohol! It is certainly distinct. It was a smell that I remembered for years after that. It was also something that I used to my advantage more than once.

One time my sister put some vodka in some orange juice because she wanted to pull one over on me. But I noticed the smell and confronted her about it. She lost this argument. Another time, I had ordered a virgin screwdriver at a restaurant. When it came, there was that distinct order again. I sent it back to get the correct drink. (What I wanted was plain orange juice.)

During the winter, we were back in the chemistry student's room chatting about one thing or another. Outside the snow was falling rather heavily. The flakes looked the size of

quarters! He had heard a saying about the size of snow flakes, so he told us. When the temperature is below zero, the flakes are always small. So, his conclusion: the temperature had to be higher than zero! Well it did not feel that high!

About half a block away, the university had a working temperature measuring unit in a case in a wood box with glass on the front side. I could see a mercury thermometer and a temperature gauge unit. So, I braved the cold long enough to look at this unit. It was — 10°F! Of course, I just had to go back and report what I had just seen.

This was another situation in which I doubted what I had heard because of the evidence did not always agree with what I had been taught. If anything, I have tended to question more situations than I had in the past. (Just because someone says something that sounds good does not always mean what they say is right.)

And then there was a situation which was a real headache! Actually, this was real. I was near the house in the late afternoon; the sun was perhaps an hour or less from setting. Suddenly, I thought my head was going to explode! The glare of the sun seemed to be causing it. Somehow, I managed to get inside where the headache subsided. Then it was off to work. How I managed to do my job, I will never know. Thankfully, I have not had a problem like this again.

Etta and Dick had come in from Colorado for a visit during September. It had come to the time for me to leave for college; I needed to get started working in the cafeteria again. At this point in time, they offered to take me. Well, I thought they were going to take me to the train station at the north end of town. But they were heading a different direction... "Where are we going? The train station is another direction." That is when they informed me that they were taking me to Urbana/Champaign. They wanted to

see the U of I campus. OK, that is about \$10 I did not have to spend. Sounds good to me! So I settled back and let them do the driving. I was happy to be able to show them around.

New Cafeteria

For the past two years, the student union was being remodeled making it twice as large as it had been. It was completed during the summer. So, I got to show off a new building including a new 20 lane bowling alley. (We had earlier had only 8 lanes.)

Etta and Dick had worked in the student union at Colorado State University at Ft. Collins while students there. So they were mentally comparing what I was showing them to their experiences. I also mentioned what I was being paid. All of this impressed them: I had it so much better than they had had!

As we walked through the new cafeteria area, one of the managers saw me and called me over to her. She informed me that she wanted me to attend a scheduled meeting the next day. It was about the new, much larger cafeteria.

At the meeting, the staff went over how things were to be done in this new setting which was rather interesting. Obviously, I had seen the layout the previous day, but the details of how it would work were new. There were two serving lines which merged at the coffee area. From there the customers went to one of three islands containing two lines each. There were six cash register stations, one for each line. This should prevent any bottle necks as the customers paid for their meals.

As the meeting broke up, I was asked to remain for a while. They had more information that I needed know. First of all, I was told that I would be the head cashier which meant I had additional duties to those of the other cashiers. And then they laid out what they were. OK, I think I can do this. Well...

Then came opening day. I clocked in at the 4:42 PM, got my cash drawer and coin holder, and went to my station. Shortly thereafter, one of the permanent workers came to my station with his evening meal. I had a list of the personal workers, and he wanted me to mentally add up what his meal was worth. Then I needed to write it down on the paper next to his name. It took a little while before I got myself squared away enough to do it. Then as more workers appeared, I was able to do their meals quicker. (OK, now I think I can do this properly.) Also there were some student workers who also ate before the cafeteria opened. And as I finished this, the other five cashiers arrived. Then at 5 PM, the lines were opened for the general public. The new cafeteria was officially open!

Of course there were some glitches that evening, but not really very many considering everything. One of them was the number of cashiers that were needed. There were many times when one or more cashiers were not really needed. As time went on, the six was cut down to four, and this worked out quite well. In fact, the back two cashiers usually did not work the entire two hours that the cafeteria was open. There was not enough traffic to justify having them stand around doing nothing.

Another glitch was what we did with the money after the cafeteria closed. All six of us made out our reports, and then a couple (or was it three?) of us took all of the money upstairs to an office there. Because of the weight of all of the coins we had, a dolly was required to move everything. Even so, between the sales made and the change we were taking with us, there was over \$2,000 being transferred through the open hall ways! Well we arrived safely regardless of my fears. (A place was quickly made in the office portion of the cafeteria for all of these things. So, only made this trip the first few days or so.

So, here are the responsibilities that I had been given as head cashier. I was the first cashier to clock in on the evening shift. This was so I could record the cost of the meals for permanent employees and ring up tickets for student employees. Then like the rest, I would ring up all student employees and what anyone else who came to my station. At 7 PM, the other cashiers took their money to the office area and then clocked out. I remained to record the meal costs for the rest of the permanent employees and ring up student employees which had been working for the evening meal. When that ended, I got to take my money to the office area and clock out. Now it was my turn to eat. Someone rang up my meal, but I don't remember who did it. When I finished, I got my money, made my report, and turned my money back in. Time to clock out for the evening.

I really did not realize what was happening: I had been given a large amount of responsibility. To me, I was just doing my job. This was my thoughts, but quite obviously, management thought that I could be trusted to do what needed to be done: I was a responsible worker.

Sometimes one's mind can play tricks, and mine certainly did me. Quite some time later, someone asked me to sub for them during the lunch meal, and I agreed. Now being the head cashier, my reports were always more than the others. In fact, \$200 was about as small as I normally had even on a very slow night.

Because I was on the back cashier, I was not needed after the volume of people had gone down considerably. So, at the direction of the manager, I closed my cash register and made out my report. As the evening head cashier, I was used to making out reports of over \$200 all of the time. Now this report I had just made out was a mere \$169 and change. This did not seem very much at all! Absent mindedly, I folded the report around the money and put all of it in the white envelope and left it at the cash register. (Bad move!)

Fortunately, one of the supervisors saw it when she walked by my cash register. Needless to say, she did not like what she saw.

So, I got a lecture from her that did not really make any sense at first. When I got a chance to speak, I famously said, "But it is only \$169.00!" It only took a very short time for me to realize what I had said and why I was oh so wrong. Probably the expression on my face told the supervisor volumes. I definitely would not do this again. And she got to where she could trust me again...

By now you should know why I was so certain of the amount of money involved. As embarrassed as I was then, it is almost impossible for me to forget the amount.

Let me see, how else did I get myself into trouble? Hmm... We had students regularly going through the dining area with a pitcher of hot coffee. One of them was a very beautiful young lady.

She had just come through the my area going to the coffee area to fill up her pitcher again. Suddenly, there was a wolf whistle heard (It had come out of my mouth! Well, I did say she was cute.) I'm not sure I could describe the look on her face, but I have no problem describing my supervisor's look. She pulled her glasses down on her nose and glared at me over them! I really don't think she appreciated what I had done at all...

Fall Semester Classes

Because I was no longer in teacher education, I had some different requirements for gradation than I had the previous two years. I was officially in a liberal arts curriculum. First of all, I now needed two years of a foreign language and one year of philosophy. I still do not know why I took the Physics class; I just did. Then I wished that I had not done so.

Philosophy 303

This course was a survey of early Greek and Roman philosophies. Here I was with limited funds, and there were several books that I needed to purchase for this one course! Then there was the matter of doing all of this reading along with studying for other courses! Two books were by Plato. One was The Republic, and the other was his discussion about reincarnation. The first was rather long, and the second was short to medium long. Reading these would take quite some time, but studying them much longer.

Then there was Aristotle's Elements. This contained his discussion of what he had come to believe. Again, reading would take quite some time, and studying much more. (Something tells me now that I should not have taken this course at all!)

And then later in the semester we came to the Epicureans and Stoics which were Roman. I mention these because the Bible mentions them. What they wrote sort of made sense, but God is not part of their thinking at all.

Here is where my lack of knowledge about studying really let me down. We had been told what we were suppose to look for in the books we read. But how do we do that? That was the part that I did not have an answer for.

Mr. Powell gave us a formula in Advanced Chemistry in high school, but I did not understand well enough to apply it: SQR³. That is: scan, question, read, 'rite, and review. Well, better put, the three R's are read for the answers to the questions, write the answers to the questions and review the material periodically beginning a week later. But remember that I had the formula, but not the explanations that I have given. This came to me much later.

Practice makes perfect. But my practice was developing poor study habits. The results? They were perfectly bad study habits! They accomplished what they were suppose

to accomplish. But what I accomplished was the wrong thing.

What were we suppose to get out of this course? We were told that we were to be looking for certain principles in the teachings of each philosopher. Somehow, what I was told did not stick as well as it should have. But here are some "guesses." First, what is real? (If you please, what is foundation for everything.) Another was about politics (government). What is the beautiful? was another. There are more.

This course began with very early Greece as in centuries before Plato. For some, reality consisted of four elements: fire, air, water, and earth. At least one had the universe on a continuous cycle of beginning, continuing for a while, and ending only to begin again.

A very early philosopher had the premise that there were only two classes of things: ones that existed, and ones that did not exist. They can not change from one to another. This had a profound effect on the philosophers that followed him even many centuries later.

I had heard of "Platonic love" and what it was suppose to mean. Somehow what I had heard did not quite match what I read in The Republic. There were two classes of people: the upper class (rulers) and lower class (slaves). The former married for life, and they all of the advantages of society.

The latter were assigned a spouse for a period of five years. During this time they were suppose to have children to provide the workers for the society. If they produced good quality children, they could remain together. Otherwise, they were given a different spouse for the next 5 years. So this was "Platonic love:" these five year marriages.

Aristotle was a student of Plato, but his ideas obviously were much different from that of his teacher. Besides that,

he had a great influence on the Roman Catholic Church. It relied upon Aristotle for the basis of many of its doctrinal points. The one which is well known is the question as to whether the earth revolves around the sun or vice versa. Aristotle would think the later (the sun goes around the earth).

Getting back to why I chose the philosophy courses that I did, I had another choice. Also offered was a three course set of 3 hour credit each. So this requirement was spread over 3 semesters. That may have been a draw back. All three of these were at the freshman or sophomore level. Why wouldn't I take classes that were easier? Perhaps, I thought that the professor might misled me with the ideas he advocated. I thought I was thinking the right way about my Spiritual life, and I did not want to have it changed by someone who did not know as much about life as God does. (Of course, I thought that I was thinking the same way God does. A little too much confidence in myself, wouldn't you say?)

The other point was that the two courses I took were upper class/graduate level. That is, a graduate student could get graduate level credit for taking this course. I did not really think about this point at all. I was asking for a difficult course given that I had not background in the subject. Make the wrong decision, and suffer the consequences!

Advanced ROTC

This started off with hazing that was totally unnecessary. What this was suppose to accomplish, I do not know. But then again, it was similar to how my parents had raised me: you have to do what I say and when I say it. But it also meant that I was less likely to do my best work when under that kind of pressure. I was also less likely to remember as much.

One of the first things we did was get measured for our uniforms. Anyway, a pair of brogans was given for all the new juniors for this course. In the end, I had a new pair of oxfords to put a shine on them. I also got an overcoat which was much nicer than the horse blanket overcoat I had during the first two years. There were also metal rank insignia: one set for the blue uniform, and the other for the overcoat.

Like the previous years, we had classroom work and an hour of drill. This time, I had a "flight" of underclassmen to teach the fundamentals of drill. This means that I had to learn how to speak loud enough for them to hear me. (It must also be spoken with authority.)

Class work was designed to prepare us to become officers. They did this by issuing us several manuals. Well it seems that the Air Force has a manual for everything. (It does!) And over the next two and a half years, I studied all the manuals given to me. Among the most important ones was the Uniform Code of Military Justice. This contained all of the court structure used by all military services and how it was run. It was a rather large manual and definitely very detailed. It took a long time for us to get through it.

Somehow I managed to get into a fuss with my roommate, and he decided to get even by putting chalk marks all over my uniform. This really made me mad when I saw it because I had to get it dry cleaned. That meant I was spending money unnecessarily. I could have used it for other necessary expenses. Then I even angrier when he confided to me that he had done this. This became quite a confrontation before we settled the situation as in throwing shoes at each other! Thankfully, this was the last incident like this between us.

My sore arms!

During the fall, the Air Force decided that the juniors in ROTC needed to get their shots up to date. So, they had us all meet at the Armory to get them. The airmen giving them to us were very efficient to say the least. On the one side we got small pox, and on the other side we got three needles: tetanus, typhus, and typhoid. We also were told to put a sugar cube containing the polio vaccine in our mouths and swallow. (I didn't.)

It was how the airman gave us all of these. First he scratched my right upper arm and put a glob of small pox vaccine on it. Then with three syringes in his left hand, he rubbed down my left upper arm with alcohol. Next he stuck all three into my arm at once. Finally, he used his right thumb to push the plungers one at a time. He took about one second to empty each needle. Well maybe it was 2 seconds for each? (One thing was for sure. This medic and ones like him knew exactly what he was doing: there were no wasted movements at all.)

In the next day or so, I and others began to get the side effects of the vaccines. Both of our shoulders became sore and tired. I found that I had some problems lifting my arms above my head as a result. My right arm? A year earlier, I had gotten a small pox vaccination at the university health center, and I had no effects at all. But this time, the area where the vaccine was placed became red. This time the vaccine took for sure.

Finally the first of December came around, and I got my first check, a whole \$81! Well, considering the military pay scale, the government does not take in consideration the cost of living. (A new recruit got \$72.80 a month at that time! A new second lieutenant received \$220.20.)

Presidential assassination

Also associated with the weekly drill was a weekly squadron meeting held at the squadron commander's

residence. There we would discuss anything that concerns the squadron. This includes what we were to do during the hour of drill. There were other announcements as well. Because of his class schedule, these were held on Friday afternoons.

One of them was on November 16. President Kennedy was in Texas and was scheduled to have an open motorcade through Dallas early in the afternoon. Well, this did not really concern me as I had more important things to do: attend classes and also study.

So, shortly before 2 PM I arrived at the squadron meeting not knowing what had happened. The first thing the squadron commander said was that I might have to learn a new chain of command. This really puzzled me as I had no idea of why he would say this. Then he told me that JFK had been shot. I didn't believe him at first. But in the end, I had to. Anyway, not much got discussed this afternoon except the assassination.

I was somewhat of a zombie for sometime. Reality seems to have disappeared all around me. I watched TV much of the time; no studying got done at all. I just could not make myself do any of it.

Math

I don't remember the name of the course, but I know we studied the properties of groups, rings, and fields. Most people reading this is likely to think: OK, but what are these things? Concretely, they are ways to describe a set of numbers with one or more operations that can be performed on the numbers, two at a time.

Consider the positive even integers as a set with addition as the operator. This is a group because when adding two positive even integers together, the sum is also a positive even integer. So, now we have a close system. We begin with a set of numbers and an operator. Applying it to two

members of this set produces another member of the set. Of course, the set does not have to be numbers, but the same rules have to apply.

For those whose eyes are not quite glazed over yet: a ring has a set of things with two operators. When either operator is applied to two members of the set, the results must also be a member of the same set. (If anyone cares to know more, I will let them look up what a field is. Hint, it is a ring with one more operator.)

I have already defined what a group can be. For what it is worth, a ring could be the set of all of the integers and the two binary operators can be $+$ and $-$. A field could be the set of integers and the three binary operators can be addition, subtraction, and multiplication.

This was another course that began with the properties of our number system. It then used logic to build a system based upon these principles. This began the simplest and added principles to make the system more complex.

This did not make much sense to me in the beginning, but as the semester continued, I began to "see the light" a little bit clearer. But with my diet, I still did not get a very good grade.

German 101

Why German? Why not Spanish which I had had the first two years of high school? College Spanish is much more verbal than in high school. Yet, if I had decided to take Spanish in college, my first class would have been The second semester of College Spanish. So, I was suppose to enroll in a class that I was not ready for? No thank you!

This is another tip I had gotten in high school by a former student who had gone to the University of Illinois. He had made the mistake of taking high school Spanish his first two years and then enrolling in Spanish in college. (He is also

the same person who how not learned enough math in high school. He had to take a non credit math course as the result.)

Again, why German? I think this was one of the more popular language courses. I don't know. At least, this was my thinking when I signed up for it. But, there was another reason for it: God had a part in this. Between spring semester finals and the beginning of ROTC summer camp, I needed to have a decent knowledge of German because a family had recently come to America from Germany and moved into the house two doors down. The wife needed some help, language wise.

Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship was also part of God's plan in this as well. Through this group, I met a young man who made money selling religious materials on the edge of the sidewalk in front of Altgeld Hall. This included different languages.

I was impressed to buy a German Bible which I did. (I think he had to order it.) I thought this would help me with my German as well as with my understanding of the Bible.

I also took my German Bible to church with me. But I am not sure what others at church thought about my actions this time. Even so, I don't remember anyone else even bringing a Bible other than ministers. So, this might have been another strike against me.

It really did not matter in the end regardless of what I may have thought at the time. I did learn both German and the Bible as a result of my actions. So, I got the benefits of them. If someone else questioned my actions, then that was their problem, not mine. (God is the final judge of these things.)

To go along with this Bible, I bought a German-English dictionary. This way I could look up German words and see the equivalent English meanings. This made reading the

Bible time consuming, but I was able to get the meaning when I read it. So, this idea did work.

Physics

Why I took this course I will probably never remember. Even though it was an sophomore level course, it was not easy at all. It had one requirement: the two basic calculus courses. Well, I had taking them already.

But the problems was that I was expected to apply what I learned in calculus to physics. I learned the formulas all right, but I had never learned how to apply them. So, I did poorly on every test and lab work. Results: I failed the course. (Oh well, I did not really need this course anyway.) I chose not to repeat the course. However, there have been times when I would like to find a physics book on this level. I would like to see if I could actually prove that I can learn this subject. Am a glutton for punishment?

What really bugged me about this course was the test questions. I read them over and over again. How in the world am I going to answer this one? I may have tried to solve them with little or no luck.

Then they would show us how to solve them. Everyone of them was based upon simple calculus equations. All we had to do was to set up the equations, and the answers became obvious.

I wonder what I had done with my calculus textbook? Why didn't I use it along with the physic book when studying? Was it because I had sold it? Or, was it that it never occurred for me to use it as a resource? I really have no answer these. But the conclusion that seems clear to me is, I blew it!

Ice Capades



During the fall months, this came to the campus. The Assembly Hall had recently been completed, and that is where the performances were held. I remember seeing a performance many years earlier, but I was not prepared for this one.

Jack and Joyce had been dating since she became a student at U of I. Actually, they had been making eyes at each other for a couple of years before then. So, they decided to attend one of these performances. They were also nice enough that they suggested I might want to see it also. They even thought that a double date would work.

How did Alice become my date? I'm not sure whose idea it was, but she is Joyce's cousin. Besides, she had just begun attending the U of I this fall. This would be something that she might want to see also. So, it might just have been the natural thing to do.

Anyway, I asked her if she would like to go, and she said yes. So, I bought tickets to the same evening as Jack had bought for Joyce and him. By the time I got the tickets, there were no tickets that were side by side. I had to settle for row seats one row apart. (I let her sit in the front seat, and I sat beside her. This way I could lean down and talk to her.

As the evening approached, I became more and more nervous. Why I don't know. But I managed to get through my evening shift in the cafeteria. Then I think that I walked to Jack's house. From there we drove to pick up Joyce first and then Alice.

Both were dressed nicely. Alice wore a white pleated skirt which she had dry cleaned. I remember her saying that it had 22 pleats in it and was charged extra for each one. Gee, she did something special for me?

You can see from the picture that the Assembly Hall is a large building. Actually, huge would be an underestimate of the truth. But when we went inside that the size took my breath away! There were no interior supports for it which was more amazing, and the ceiling was the usual concrete color. Yet, the color of the lights bathing the ceiling made it somewhat eerie. It seemed like a huge cave; cavern would describe it better. Or, perhaps it was the inside of a flying saucer?

About one third of the seats were roped off because they were not being used. (This was the area which did not offer a good view of the performance. Yet, 10,000 or more people would be watching it this evening!

It was a truly wonderful performance, and the date was not over yet. Afterward we went out to eat pizza, the cost of which Jack and I shared. (I was wanting to pay more than I did, but Jack was more stubborn than I.)

Then we were off to play miniature golf on grass. I have played on "artificial grass" before but never on natural

grass. Gee, it is so much harder. The golf ball would not go where it was aimed! Then the evening ended. Alice and I were dropped off first, and the two love birds were off on their own.

Thanksgiving 1962

I was still in a funk from the JFK assassination during this entire weekend. So, I had no idea what I may have done as far as going somewhere. Nor do I remember working for anyone in the cafeteria. (I could still use the money, that is for sure.)

Mistletoe at the Allens

This was likely around the middle of December which is when Bernice (Jack's mother) has her birthday. Jack, Joyce, Alice, and I were in their home for a meal. Then came some teasing that I was not prepared for, and neither was Alice. Seemingly, Bernice mentioned the presence of mistletoe hanging somewhere, but I don't remember where. Kissing was also mentioned if caught under it. Both Alice and I were agitated every time we heard this. I don't know if she had ever been kissed before, but I hadn't kissed anyone other than family. Yes, I know this does not count. Frankly, I did not really know how.

And then I did something that I should not have done: I joined the teasing which means that Alice was getting the brunt of the teasing. This really was not fair to her. The fact that she did not deliberately stand under the mistletoe and dare someone to kiss her tells me that she likely had not been kiss very often, more likely little to never.

Spring Semester Classes

Math: Vector Algebra

This course used matrices and determinants. It was also based upon the fall semester's course. While this could have

presented some problems, it didn't. My high school introduction of the matrix and its associated determinant was sufficient for me to understand the subject material. And that allowed me to understand better what my previous course's professor had been teaching. So, I did better in this course; I just don't know what the grade was.

Advanced Organic Chemistry

This was an upperclassman/graduate course. That is both groups could take it for credit; underclassman courses were only open to undergraduates for credit. Now this was a lecture only course with the laboratory work either another course or none existent; I don't know which.

At this point, I had already earned 18 semester hours of credit in chemistry, and I needed a minor. Well, it took 20 hours for a minor, so a 3 hours course would do it. So, I chose this one.

The professor was an older gentleman who did not take himself too serious. His first classroom comments points this out. He had graduated from high school in the early parts of the 20th century and had wanted to attend the U of I. But this did not happen: the school had refused to admit him. So, he had to get his college education somewhere else. And yet, here he was a professor of chemistry in the same school teaching upperclassmen and graduate students. Well, mistakes can be made, and people sometimes can prove that they are capable of greater things than others might think possible.

OK, I made a bad boo-boo. To begin with, there was no textbook for the class as it had not yet been published. But in the middle of the course, he announced that it was now available.

Jack was also taking the course. Since he was a chemistry major, he bought the book. I, however, was still somewhat

short on funds and a math major. So, I decided not to spend \$1 per ounce (what the professor said it would cost). At a couple of pounds, that would be about \$36. Was this a boo-boo in not buying the book? Or, did I really have any good use for the book after the end of this semester? Regardless, I got a C for the course and a guaranteed minor. (Now to get enough math courses to earn my degree.)

Philosophy 306

This course also had a lot of books to read, each one being fairly thick. So, this was a very time consuming course, of a person is not going to be able to really understand what the individual philosophers advocated. I really did not have the time to study thoroughly everything written in the book let alone question the logic they used.

This covered philosophers in Europe during the modern period (since 1500 AD). So, some of them were contemporaries of each other. And they were known to disagree with each other in writing. So, what did I get out of this? Not much other than a C as my final grade. I doubt that I even opened any of these books after the class was over.

German 102

I did better this semester with a C grade. (Was it the extra food I had been able to eat? I really do not think so.) But I was getting better translating German to English though, so I was progressing.

However, a German lady whose family would move into my parents neighborhood still needed me to have a better grasp of her language than what I had so far. But God was taking care of this as well.

I was in the cafeteria one day and walked into the seating area for the old cafeteria called *The Tavern*. (Well, it was dimly light like a tavern, but no booze was allowed that I

know of.) Anyway there was a general seating area and a smaller room at one end (for a party perhaps?). While there, I noticed a sign about German or something in the doorway to this smaller room and became curious. So, I went in and asked some questions.

It was a meeting of German 113 course (conversational German). For three days a week, students of this course met in classrooms. For the fourth class of each week, they met in this room where they practiced what they were learning in class. Main rule for this room during this hour: German is the only language to be spoken unless absolutely necessary. And as I learned, any student could also join in as long as on German was spoken.

Not knowing why, I decided that I could use the help that this weekly time would give me. So, from that day through the rest of the semester, I spend an hour a week there. As a result, my grade went up one notch this semester to a C. More importantly, I was learning much more about conversing in German which would be required as soon as I got home! (God's plan was working, as it always does.)

Advanced ROTC

The first thing of importance here was based upon what happened at the end of the fall semester. The decision came down that ROTC was no longer mandatory as of the beginning of the spring semester. So, as a result, there were far fewer underclassmen enrolled in the program. This of course required some changes in the organization of the entire wing from top to bottom. But that was something that other people had to take care of. I was basically along for the ride. As a result, I remember very little about the events of almost all of the semester.

But I was a junior which meant that I had summer camp beginning in the middle of June and lasting for 4 weeks. Well, someone in the program decided once again that all

the juniors needed some special training to prepare us for what was coming. Actually, it became another excuse for the senior to haze the juniors. (I really did not need any of this because of my being in the boy scouts. But maybe others did not have this background.) Besides, yelling at me is not going to make me a better person or get me to do things that I would not ordinarily do. It just might lower my ability to accomplish any given tasks. This sounds like counter productive to me.

This "pretend" weekend began on Friday night as we gathered at the Armory and then boarded buses for Chanute AFB near Rantoul. They stopped in front of some barracks that had to have been built during WWII. Then the yelling commenced if not earlier. Beds were assigned, and linen was provided. They had to be made just so. Well, I had been make my bed this way ever since my sister, Etta, was helping out a local hospital as a girl scout. So, nothing new here. And so it went until Sunday afternoon.

All the yelling accomplished was to increase the adrenalin level in our bodies. Well, their levels were likely rather high as well. This did not do anything good to any of our bodies as I would later learn in a psychology course. Of course, I could say, "Given that they had basically made themselves hoarse, they decided they had accomplished their mission." They had really had not in my estimation.

Shortly after I got home, I realized that I needed to take a shower and finish getting ready for church that evening. OK, it only took me 5 minutes to take a shower because of my high adrenalin level. And this is suppose to be a good thing??

God and the campus

In the spring, I would sit on the grass under the young trees around the quadrangle (quad) to study as I had done the previous spring. (They had been planted over the past

couple of years because Dutch Elm's Disease had killed the trees around the quad.) The sun was warm and enjoyable. I also watched people walking around and others headed to their classes.

Several times during this spring and probably occurring during later springs I could feel God enfolding me in His arms. This sustained me throughout what I had to endure. They made life well worthwhile. I have had similar experiences throughout life. As far as college was concerned, I would rather be there on the quad with my LORD than any other place.

I mentioned some of these experiences to Mom at some point later only to learn that she had never had such an experience. I really felt sorry for her because she had missed out on a wonderful experience.

Finals Week

This one went much better than the previous one. All of my grades were C or above. So, I can continue to attend the university. What a relief! However, my grade point average was still below 3.0. So, they continued me on terminal probation. I was not yet out of the woods, but I was getting much closer.

I probably should mention a tradition I had created the first semester I worked in the cafeteria. I splurged on food choosing the more expensive items on the last night of the semester. The menu would include roast beef, mash potato, a vegetable, a salad, 2 slices of whole wheat bread with butter, pie with ice cream, and 8 oz milk. This was equivalent to 2 hours of work, but it was well worth it.

The concoctions that I came up with were certainly different. For example, I found out that pecan pie with strawberry ice cream is delicious! Of course, having pieces of strawberries in the ice cream sure made it taste even better. (It just does

not sound very good to anyone not trying it.) On the other hand, pistachio ice cream is horrible with pie! I learned this the hard way. Never again, that is for sure.

Summer 1963

Speaking German

A German family had moved in two houses down (409 E. Schwarz Street) having been brought to this country by a local church. The wife spoke very little English, and Mom did not understand German. Neither was she having any real success communicating with Ursula (the mother).

Shortly after I returned home, I was outside while Mom was once again trying to talk to Ursula without any success. And then it seemed to dawn on her that I was taking German in college. So she decided that I could do it better than she. Well, she was getting rather frustrated with her lack of success.

So, she turned this over to me to see if I could do better. So, this would now be my true final test for my first year of German. Had I really learned any German that was useful, or had I just memorized the material in the German text books?

I had learned enough German that I could make myself understood to her. This included my asking questions in German for things I did not understand. So, over the next couple of weeks we were making a lot more sense to each other. I learned more German and how to speak it; she learned more English and how to speak it.

One of the problems she was having was with idioms (phrases that have specific meanings but can not be directly translated).

For example, Mom had told Ursula that she would "pick up" English in time. And then Mom would pick up some gravel

out of our driveway and say that she did not mean this kind of "pick up."

In English, we refer to this type of phrases as idioms. German has a name for this also. At some point, we were discussing the problem she was having with this type of phrases. That is when I told her what I thought the German name for this was (*idiomatische Ausdrücke*) and an example in German that I knew.

Suddenly, she understood the situation. (I had used one German name for this, but she had learned another one in school (*automatische Ausdrücke*). So, I decided to accept what she had learned as the proper name.) And this led to a short discussion of examples of German idioms. Some of them were actually funny when comparing the direct translations and the meaning of these German phrases.

For example: *Was ist los?* Literally, it means, What is loose? But it is used to mean, What is wrong? Of course, an answer to this question can be, *Alles was nicht angebunden ist*. Translation: Everything that is not tied down. Obviously, this is the answer to the literal meaning of the phrase.

It was Ursula that taught me this. As she explained it, this answer is used in a teasing way at times in Germany.

Soon, it came time for me to fly to Eglin AFB in Florida for Summer Camp. I had enjoyed the time conversing in German. I was learning a lot, and so was she. I had made another good friend.

Summer Camp

I needed a way to get there, and the ROTC people told me how to arrange for transportation both ways through Scott Air Force Base near my home. So, after I got home, I got the use of the family car and went to do this. At the front gate I was given something to put on the car to identify it. Then following the directions given me, I found the office I

needed. They took my paperwork and quickly prepared my tickets for me. (This was nice to know as I would use this same service to get to Keesler Air Force Base three years later.)

Then the time came to fly south. It was probably Mom that drove me to the St. Louis airport. I found the gate that I was to use and settled in until the time to board. During all of this time, I was rather nervous not having flown before. Besides I have always been afraid of heights. And here I was flying from St. Louis, Missouri to Atlanta, Georgia in a jet flying over 20,000 feet up! And then I would transfer to another plane (I did not know what kind) that would take me to Eglin AFB. (Southern Airways landed on the base where they had a small terminal.)

The first leg of my flight was far different from what I had expected. I had no problem sitting in the window seat once I got accustomed to being in the air. And yet, I was still nervous until I was actually in the air.

Then again, looking out of the window at the ground was different than standing next to a drop off while looking down! I had a seat belt on, so I was not in danger of falling. (Well, I was also in an enclosed area which also helped.)

But remember that I am a very curious person, and I was not different on this day. As we gained altitude we passed through a fairly thin layer of clouds which was really nice. I could still see the ground and things happening on it. Then as we passed over Kentucky (I presume), I saw a horse running on a race track preparing for a future race. It was not any bigger than an ant from my altitude! It was fun to watch anyway. And as we got closer to Atlanta, the Appalachian Mountains came to view. Since I had seen the Rocky Mountains seven years earlier, I was not very impressed with the height of these. (The Rockies in many places are a mile higher than these.)

Then came the "scary" part: landing the plane. Well someone said that this is the most dangerous part. We were traveling more than 100 miles per hour slowly getting closer and closer to the concrete runway. You don't want to "hit" this if you are dropping to fast. Obviously, the plane landed safely, and I survived whatever I was thinking as it did so.

I had some time before my next flight would be taking off, so I decided to get something to eat somewhere in the airport. It was a nice dining room, but there was something that felt a little strange to me: all the waiters were Negro men. No women and no other races. Regardless, I enjoyed my meal and then headed to the next gate where I take off on my final leg.

This flight was different in a couple of ways. First of all, it was a much smaller plane. It seemed to take me back in time as in maybe ten years or more. It was a twin piston engine Martin 404 that held probably less than 50 passengers. When the pilot started the engines, they sounded just like the ones on old planes in a movie: rather noisy.

This time we were flying at a much lower level. Besides there were many more cumulus clouds in the air which was something new. This would not be the last time that I have flown in and around clouds either. Each time fascinates me to be this close to them: it is truly a joy to behold.

But by the time we got to Eglin, we were flying through solid clouds. As a result, I lost my sense of direction. This I did not notice for a couple of days. Then for the rest of the summer camp, the sun rose in the south and set in the north. (Well, it sure seemed to me that it did!) Another safe landing, and I was off to a local motel to spend the night. All of this had drained my finances more than I would have like.

The next morning, I noticed that the temperature was higher than I was use to. (It would remain that way.) But I

got a taxi back to where I needed to be on base and began the process of checking in.

I was assigned to Alpha Flight along with 24-28 men. This placed us the closest to the camp headquarters. Some thought that we must be the best men in this summer camp because of our location. Such was not the case, but some will dream. Anyway, we had been assigned our barracks which were much like the ones at Cheunute AFB near Champaign that we had used that weekend in May. We were also told which bunk and foot locker we would use. Then there were instructions on the required layout of our socks, underwear, etc. on the insert of the foot locker. We were allowed to store additional items in the bottom of it as well. No particular order was necessary for this. If the insert had to be organized, it made sense to me to organize the bottom as well.

More instructions were given concerning what was expected of us including what time certain things would happen. For example, we would be getting up at 4:30 AM. By 5, we would be exercising for half an hour which included callisthenics and finished with a mile run. Then we returned to our barracks for personal hygiene. Breakfast was next in the mess hall. And we have not even got to classroom work yet. Wait, that was the next thing. We used buses to get there. Then came lunch and more classes. After supper, we had a little time to ourselves. Taps were at 9 PM, and everyone was expected to be in bed by this time. (With this amount of work each day, going to bed this early was not exactly a hard thing to do.)

A little bit of information about the base. It is very large with 9 fields (runways) scattered throughout it. (I had landed and would later take off at Field #2.) Besides there were two active fields while I was there. There was also an area for practicing bombing runs. This had not been done

for some time, but it could be used at a later time. (They had another purpose for this while we were there.)

Another part of the base ran the the missile test range that ran from our location out over the Gulf of Mexico to the southern tip of Florida. Here, there was a anti-aircraft missile battery including personnel. Periodically, a test aircraft was flown out into the test range followed by the firing of a missile to intercept (and destroy) it. The actual firing was controlled by personnel at Maxwell AFB, Montgomery, Alabama.

A firing was to take place during our visit to this facility. It was impressive in some ways but not in others. The missile was liquid fueled which I thought of as outdated. Otherwise, seeing the missile take off was breath taking. Results of the test? They had to get another test vehicle: this aircraft had come apart in the air.

Each one of us were given several Khaki uniforms to wear, but the problem I had was that we were expected to pay for laundering them. We were basically expected to get a hair cut once a week. Or that seemed to be what everyone thought. (My money was not going to last four weeks at this rate. In fact, it did not. I had to borrow it from the captain who was assigned my flight as an instructor.)

I did not see the sun very much for the first two weeks because we had rain everyday. The ground was very sandy, but at times it rained hard enough that there were puddles in the sand! One day the radio said something about 14" of rain fell somewhere in the area. Then I saw the sun every day for the last two weeks, and the temperature definitely got warmer. The sandy area where we did our calisthenics became hard as concrete. (The back of my tennis shoes became scuffed badly while doing sit ups because of the hardness of the sandy soil.)

Things of interest included the climatic hanger. The inside of this thing was measured in terms of football fields. How many? I don't remember, at least a couple.

The day we visited this hanger, we saw men in Arctic gear looking like Eskimos. Then were learning how to work on a helicopter in cold weather. Well the temperature was -40° !

It would have been nice if we were outside looking through a glass, but we were not. They had us walk through the hanger wearing our summer uniforms! (Khaki short sleeve shirt and pants) To add to this, we were walking on half an inch of frost on the floor. It was a cold experience for sure. Although I am not so sure that it was that much different from going to the locker plant where my parents had rented a drawer containing half a cubic year of storage.

Remember that this was during the first two weeks of July, in Florida! It was mid morning true, but the temperature was already in the mid to upper 80's! That hot air was certainly a sharp contrast to our bodies. I got very weak quick but recuperated almost as quick. Even so, it took a lot out of me for that day.

During the Cuban missile crisis just six months earlier, this hanger was used as a giant food freezer storing food for whatever contingency that might occur. It certainly could have held a very large amount of meat.

There were educational items in the building housing this hanger as well. One was a smaller area where they could bring the temperature down to -65°F and temperatures and up to 165. I definitely would not want to be in that room at all!

There was also a barometric sphere which could simulate varying atmospheric pressures. When we were in it with attendants, they simulated 30,000 ft. We were given masks to provide supplemental oxygen. Then they gradually lowered the pressure until we reached the desired level.

While doing so, we got a lecture on the effects of not wearing a mask at this level.

A student was given a deck of cards and told to remove his oxygen mask. He was told to go through the deck naming each card as he did so. He began naming all of the cards, but as the time passed, he began making more and more mistakes. That is when he was told to put his mask back on. I don't know how much of this he remembers, but the rest of us certainly noticed the effects of oxygen deprivation has on a person's ability to think. He gradually loses it without realizing it.

There was a reason for doing this. We would be flying in T30 jet trainer twin seater aircrafts. We needed to know why we needed to wear the mask all of the time while in the the aircraft.

But first some basics about using parachutes. If we had to bail out, we needed to know what to do. Specifically, wherever we landed we needed to get free from the parachute. With the size of the chute, even a light wind could drag up just about anywhere. Most of those places are where we would not want to go. We really would not want to dragged that either!

There were two places on the harness directly over our collar bones to do this. By squeezing each of these between my thumb and forefinger, separation was accomplished. We practiced this until the instructors were satisfied we would do this correctly if necessary. Since we would be flying over the Gulf, we needed special instructions for this. We also had a live practice some would never forget.

Winds were common over the Gulf, strong enough to drag a parachute through the water. Granted, a 3 or 4 mile an hour wind does not seem like much. But being dragged through the water this fast by our parachute was a life

threatening matter. So they had to make sure that we could survive if this happened.

So we were taken out in a boat (something like a Coast Guard cutter perhaps). One of a time, we were dropped over the bow of the ship with our harness attached to two lines. We also had a rubber life boat (that would have inflated if we had to bail out) attached to us. Then without warning, The boat went into reverse dragging the person through the water just as a wind would do to a parachute. We were told to wait a couple of seconds after the dragging began before we released the lines. If we did this right, we would pop up to the surface where we could then climb into the rubber life boat.

Not everyone did as they were told. More than once they could not release the lines as they should have done. Then the boat had to stop and start all over again. The boat had dragged the cadet more than 5 minutes without the parachute lines being released. I happened to be close to the boat commander when this happened. There was a strong sound of grave concern about the ones who failed to release the chute. This person might drown if the jet he would be flying tomorrow went down. So, I took him serious!

How did I do? Just fine of course, thank you. Well, this is my opinion, and no one contradicted it.

When it came my turn, I jumped over the bow of the boat into the water. Now I am usually afraid of doing things like this, but somehow I managed to control my fear this time. I may have felt more secure because the parachute harness I wore was attached to the boat. Perhaps my swimming training in high school helped.

I came back to the surface and shortly thereafter I was being drug back under the water. Now came the tricky part. How quickly do I release the parachute lines and free myself? I don't want to to it too quickly as it might not be a

good simulation. I don't want to wait too long as the boat might stop. So, I waited a little bit (how long I can not be sure) before releasing the lines. I popped back to the surface and the boat stopped nearby.

At this point, I was basically in my own environment because I knew how to swim quite well. When I jumped off the boat, I took with me a 2 man rubber raft attached to me by a rope. So, I simply swam off to it and managed to get in it. (This was not as easy as I thought it would be.) Then I rowed to where I was suppose to go. Piece of cake.

Then came the next morning. After calisthenics and breakfast, we boarded buses heading to the flight line. Waiting there were several jets with their instructors... Finally, it was my turn to go up into the wild blue yonder. So, I climbed into the back seat. It really seemed like a long time getting me settled into it. But the airmen assisting me knew what they were doing. I rather quickly learned to let them do everything. If they needed me to do something they would tell me.

Then we took off. Upon reaching altitude, he demonstrated several maneuvers and even let me use the stick to guide the jet. Now, hydraulics were used the same way as power steering is in cars. So, a small movement got the results needed as I learned quickly. Then he turned off this system and let me continue flying it. Moving the stick earlier an inch or two required moving in a foot or more. What a difference! Oh, I was having so much fun, I did not want to return to the earth! But it is was someone else's turn.

As usual, I made a boo-boo! Well, call it a learning experience. I did not do what I had been told to do. I survived my stupidity, but it was not fun!

We had been told to turn the lever for the air flow into my mask to pure oxygen before take off. I did not, but I should have. I was nervous about touching anything in the cockpit.

What I got was the smell of the jet's exhaust. What an awful smell!

Then while we were there, a groups of us went up in a Gooney Bird better known as a DC-3. (It was extensively used in WWII.) Each took his turn in the cockpit of it once airborne. Others flew it in all kinds of directions, but I just sat there. I suppose I prefer flying a jet to this old bird.

I need to go back to our early morning routine: exercising portion. Before the end of summer camp, we all had to pass a physical test, do a specific number for each calisthenic. Most of them were no problem for me, but I never was able to do a lot of pushups, well not until now. By the time I tested near the end of camp, I did everything required of me. I felt pretty good as well. I can not say the same for some of the others, but they were not putting out their best.

As I mentioned, every morning we would do our exercises and then run a mile. (I think it might have been slightly shorter than that.) Just as in high school, I ran the entire mile. Others would run only far enough to get beyond the sight of the officers. They would walk until they got close to where they could be seen again. Then they would run the rest of the way.

At one point, the camp commander issued an order that everyone was to run by themselves. I don't know if this ticked off some of the members of my flight, but they did not like it. So, the next morning they insisted that we run the mile in formation which we did. They were challenging our commander, but we won! As we came closer to the finish line, there was the camp commander. At this point, we got really gun-ho: we remained in formation and began singing cadence as we ran!

Later that day we got a revision to the order he had issued just the previous day. Obviously, he was impressed with what we did. As the members of a flight crossed the finish

line they were to get into formation. When all of the men had got into formation, only then could the entire flight march back to their barracks to get ready for the day. Obviously, stragglers would shorten the amount of time the others had to do this.

We all had a physical examination that we had to pass, so on this day we went to do this. Two blood pressure readings were necessary. The first one was taken immediately. The second one was right after our pulse rate was increased to above 100 beats per minute.

At one point, the doctor took my blood pressure. Then he wanted to know what it would be if my pulse when I am exerting quite a bit. Target: over 100. Apparently, I had been doing this every morning, more so than others. Because he told me to do 10 jumping jacks. That hardly raised it at all. I would up having to do about 10 minutes (not 10 jumping jacks) to get barely over 100.

As I write this, I wonder how much of a lasting effect this four weeks had on me. Specifically, how much effect did this have in how I approached my stroke rehabilitation that happened in 2008? What about since that time?

I took my turn holding the flight guidon (this is a specific name for it). It was not that easy because of its weight and height along with my upper body strength was not enough for it. Anyway I took time to learn how to hold it during everything we did in formation. One day I was doing this when an officer came by. I immediately saluted and spoke to him as I should. I had seen others do this, but they had forgotten the one holding the guidon had a special way to do this. They instead had give the usual salute with the hand next to their right eye brow. They also was told very quickly that they had done it the wrong way. However, I had

remembered and did the right thing. He returned my salute and replied to me. (Good, I did it right!)

Some of the men wanted all of us to get the traditional basic trainee haircut: very short. I went along with everyone else. For the rest of the camp, that is what I wore. (It certainly made it easier to dry my hair: just moving my hand through it took almost all of the water out of it.)

All of the camp was not fun. Some of it put me very much on the defensive and passive. Earlier in the year because of what someone else suggested, my shoes had cracks in the shine. Well our instructor did not like that at all. He made it quite clear that this was total unacceptable. He could have given me demerits every day for having them. Here I was having serious financial problems which means that I could not afford another pair of shoes. What was I suppose to do? This sort of ruined things for me.

About the middle of the camp, I began wondering about my transportation back home at the end. I talked to my instructor and he sent me to camp headquarters. Until then, no one was aware of the situation that affected me and I did not know how many others. But they knew what had to be done, and they did. That day, an order came out for the people like myself who had arrived through government provided transportation.

In the latter part of the camp, we went on a camping trip better known as survival training. After breakfast, we headed out (in fatigues and with camping gear) to the bombing run area. Hopefully, there was no unexploded bombs. But that was not the problem: there were live alligators in the area. Did I mention poison snakes were a possibility as well?

We were also given a map of the area and a compass. We were shown where we were and what our destination was. Unfortunately, I don't remember anyone being told what the

various markings on the map meant. We got rather wet as a result.

As a boy scout, I had done something similar to this at Camp Sunnon in summer camp. At the beginning someone else was reading the map telling leading us. But at some point, I got this job. Then off we went. I sort of did a good job because four hours of less later, we arrived perhaps 100 feet from our designation.

The only problem was that I did not know what some of the markings meant: they were swampy areas. So, instead of going around them where possible, I led us directly through the center of them. So, this was the bad job part. (Next time I would likely do differently.)

From there our guide, that went with us, led us to our camping site. Fishing lines were set along a stream running through the area. The only problem: when checking these lines we had to keep a close outlook for alligators. (We never caught anything anyway.

Meanwhile we were provided with the standard military meals (K rations) to eat. Then that night, we were given a couple of fish. The one my group got was given was packed in a layer of mud and cooked in the fire. After a while, it was removed and the now hard clay broken into two parts.

Now, fish is normally very moist, and frying it removes most of the water from it. But baked like this, the fish when done is very moist indeed. In fact, I thought it was wet enough for someone to could wash their hands with it. But regardless of how I describe it, it was delicious!!!

Some of the men took matters in their own hands and scouted out the area. They found a farm that was willing to give us some vegetables and fruit to eat. (This is really what we would have to do if we were really in a survival mode depending upon whatever was in our area to survive.)

We had drill contests to see who could do this the best. How many times this occurred in four weeks, I am not sure. I seem to remember two of them. Well, one of the men in my flight had a rather complex drill procedure that he suggested. It sounded good, so we agreed. It certainly required a lot of practice.

Our flight formation was four columns of eight men. When this command was given, the outside columns would do a flank movement. (One did a right flank; the other did a left flank.) The third column continued marching forward; the fourth did a to the rear march. Then each of the columns did some additional maneuvers which eventually formed the normal four column flight formation.

We were not judged as being the best, but I certainly enjoyed doing it. We all put ourselves out to accomplishing it, and that was well worth it.

Probably near the very end of summer camp, we had a cookout for everyone. (Civilian clothes only) This was held on the whitest sand I have ever seen. (We were warned that it was white enough to give us a nasty sunburn.) It was nice to relax some. Well, camp was almost over as well...

The next morning we gathered up our things, boarded our buses, and headed back to our barracks.

All good (and bad) things must come to an end and the middle of July arrived. And one of the bad things was the amount of money I got for these four weeks. It was the standard monthly pay for an enlistee: \$72 and change. But we had been on "active duty" for four weeks. Besides they removed income taxes and social security. I wound up with \$66 and change.

The afternoon to leave came (Saturday), and I got on my plane to Atlanta. I was getting used to flying by now, and the weather was good on this leg of my trip. Such was not the case on the second leg.

It was late evening before I boarded my flight to St. Louis. (Arrival time: after 9 PM) This plane was a four engine Lockheed Constellation owned by TWA. Everything was fine as we took off. But there was turbulence ahead. Regardless, I was again in a window seat with a lady sitting on the aisle of the same row.

I had brought my camera along containing slide film, and had taken several pictures. Then for the first time, the ride began to be rather bumpy. In fact, this lady had gotten some coffee to drink holding it on a pillow on her lap. It was now bumpy enough for it to spill onto the pillow. But we all survived this.

What came next took my breath away! I was looking out the window and low and behold, we were flying between two layers of clouds: one above us and the other below us. This was fascinating in itself. But as time passed, the sun began to set on the lower cloud layer. All the colors of a sunset now appeared in both layers. Yes, I took a picture, probably more. It is a scene I will likely remember for the rest of my life!

We landed in St. Louis, and now began a problem. How was I going to get back home. Mom, Dad, and Tom were somewhere else, probably in Wisconsin on some lake property they owned. Webb was in San Diego. I was on my own. Since I had taken the train from home to Champaign, my first thought was to go to the train station and ride to Edwardsville from here. So, I did. By the time I got to the station, the ticket offices were closed. So, I spent the night there napping through the night. This was definitely not the thing to do in the downtown area of a large city! I could have been robbed. I learned from someone working there that he had seen someone eyeing me.

When the ticket offices opened, I asked for a ticket home, but I was told they do not sell them. I would have to get a

bus to get to where I wanted to go. So, I took a cab to the bus station. I was finally heading home as my bus left the station. A few hours later, it let me off at the corner of Troy Road and Schwarz Street. I walked the last block and a half.

Association at Bentley

I actually had a plan to afford the fall semester even if there were serious problems with it. I had made arrangements to return to Champaign to work in the cafeteria the first of August. Since summer school ended around this time, I would begin working at the beginning of the fall semester. This also meant that at the end of the semester I would be paid a bonus for every hour worked from August to the end. That would certainly give me extra money for the spring semester expenses.

Then as the fifth weekend approached, Mom decided that I need my hair cut a little bit. Well, she tried with an electric raiser. It really did not work very well for what she had in mind. So, we all went to the three day association (Friday through Sunday) in Bentley, IL.

At the time I was smitten with Alice who is Joyce's cousin. While at the association, our family stayed with her parents. They returned after the Sunday morning service, but I remained there until Monday morning when I came home on a bus.

Alice and I did quite a few things that afternoon, and it certainly was enjoyable. Then after supper, it was off to church for the evening service. I remember us riding in the back of their station wagon.

It was a relationship that I would have wanted to continue, but it ended shortly thereafter. I never knew why though. What did I do wrong? (It turned out that this did not matter. I had someone waiting for me in the future.)

Moving again

A few days after I returned, I headed back to the Champaign area and my new housing. Once I got myself settled, I went to the cafeteria to let them know I was back. A schedule was worked out for me from now until school began in late September. Then I went back to my regular position: head cashier during the evening shift. One that was really nice is the amount of work I was able to get during this time. It certainly increased my bank account.

House mates

One of them was a graduate from Jamaica studying mechanical engineering. He was very friendly, and we talked about a variety of topics during the time he was there.

One of the things that he could not understand was that he could not find a barber who could cut his hair. The comment often made was that they did not know how to cut his hair. This was in fact a true statement as far as I know. White barbers had only been taught how to cut the hair of Caucasians. (I don't like the term "white" as this is not the true color of my skin nor of any other Caucasians.) This student is of the Negro race. It is just as possible that the barber did not want to have him as a customer considering his race. But then again, why didn't one of them offer to find him where a Negro barber was open for business?

Final Exams and a blizzard

Mid January brought a blizzard on the first day of final exams. That morning I walked to the student union for my breakfast as usual. While only 6" was measured, the drifts were much higher. In downtown Urbana, one drift was about 12' high! Many of the employees (civilian and student) could not make it to work that morning.

The city was completely cut off from the outside world, all the roads were closed. In fact, barricades were put across

one of the main highways, and even then the snow drifted over the barricades!



This picture was taken 40 years later, so some additions had been added: the brick wall and placed to sit. The sidewalk had been widened as well. Still, on that January day back in 1963, there was not more than an inch on the sidewalk portion. But there was four feet of snow up against the building! What the wind had done to the snow was amazing!

While I did not have any real problem walking to the Student Union, I noticed that there were many of the usual workers missing in the cafeteria. I think they were only running one line. Was I first noticed the supervisor, or did she see me first? But I was asked if I could work. Still needing money, or course I said yes!

So after eating breakfast, I clocked in to work. For most of the rest of the day I was doing something from one end of the line to the other. I may have gotten a little rest during the afternoon, and then I finished the day in my usual job I had worked more than 8 hours.

The university was shut down for a few days, and finals week was rescheduled when people could again get around. The people in that area were used to snow during the winter but not snow like this with the high winds. But it did not take long to get things back to normal.

My roommate was still a boy at heart, so he decided to build a snow woman. Needless to say, she was huge with all the snow he had available. A snowman would have been a better choice in my way of thinking.

Meanwhile, the studying that I should have done did not get done. Considering the problems I was having in my courses, I should have done more. I just could not get myself to do this. There were definitely consequences for my inaction!

Then out came the new finals schedule. I had one scheduled for Sunday afternoon, another that evening, and the third Monday morning. And here is where I really messed up. Students were not suppose to be taking that many exams in a row. I should have said something to someone about this, but I did not. I do know that by the time I took the third 3 hour exam that I was exhausted!

This was a hard semester. I had to pay my tuition in installments and limit my food to questionable quantities. Breakfast was two slices of toast, serving of cereal, and a glass of milk. For lunch: meat sandwich, glass of milk and a vegetable. For supper: soup, salad, and a glass of milk. As a result, I could not really study like I should, and my grades suffered badly. At the end of the first semester I was placed

on terminal probation. This meant that unless I did much better, I could not continue at the university.

Bad grades? Why would I say this? For the four courses other than ROTC, I received three D's (Math, German, and Philosophy) and one F (Physics). On a five point scale, this was 1.75. This put me on terminal probation. If at the end of the next semester I did not earn at least a 3.0 grade point, I would be expelled.

Mom asked me later why I had not said anything to anyone about my finances. Well, I did not think that I could or should. Perhaps I did not feel worthy of help. Our family had never been close, so I did not know what was possible and what was not. Honestly, I did not know what to do period.

Back in early spring of 1960, Etta had asked for help from Mom and Dad, and they gave it to her. a month or so after this she told them that she was getting married in June. It was clear to Mom and Dad that she got help from them for school expenses and used her money for the wedding instead. They did not like this, saying that this made them responsible for providing more for the other children. Seems like I thought this meant that we should not ask for help... This was what I may have thought; it probably was not reality though.

Anyway, I came home for the shortened break between semesters. I headed back to school as soon as I was needed to work in the cafeteria.

Then there was a Jewish student who had been a policeman (perhaps from Chicago). While he had faced religious discrimination, he had a bad attitude and actions to match.

Once he mentioned working on a farm in Minnesota some years before. One thing he faced was the farmer's son who said, "I hate Jews." When asked why he felt that way, the reply was that his father hated them. This of course implied

that this hatred had been passed down from generation to generation. This created enough anger in him that he was ready to beat this son up. But first, he said, "I'll have you know that I am a Jew." This shocked the son enough that he replied, "You can't be: you're human!" And this shocked him enough that he did not beat up the son.

But he was also a bully, and he decided to pick on me. I found this out when I found a piece of plastic covering the toilet bowl when I got up. (Well, he may not have specifically targeted me at this point.) Another time, I found a clear coating on my bar of hand soap. So, before I could use it, I had to scrape it off. Another time another student and I were in the attic looking at something when someone locked the door to it. So, we had to wait a while before we could get back down. At one point, he spoke of adding something to my clock radio so that the alarm would go off an hour after the time shown on the face of it. (His explanation seemed to make sense to me, but when I was in Biloxi studying Basic Electronics 18 months later, what I learned clearly pointed out the flaws in what he said.)

Later he admitted that he had been behind all of these pranks. So, I passed this information to the lady owning this house. So, he tried another tactic. Under threat of bodily harm, he made me tell her what he wanted me to say. Well, I did. But then I finished with the statement that he made me say these things and he had threatened me if I did not do so. I never had any more problems with him again. Did he remain in this house for the spring semester? I don't remember, but I doubt it. Was he forced to move, or did he have academic problems that forced him to leave? I don't know and don't really care.

This leaves two freshmen; one was my roommate and the other had a room of his own. They were on scholarships (football and track respectively). Of the two, my roommate was the less serious.

He did not really have serious study habits and liked to have a lot of fun when possible. As a result, he did not make the required grade point level needed to remain in college.

The one running track was a different story. As soon as school started, he made a schedule to follow. And he did. So, I saw him later as he was finishing college. He did quite well for himself.

But he liked to get out a bit as far as exercising is concerned. In fact, he, I, and possibly my roommate went running around a nearby block. I think that it was about half a mile around or something close to that. So around the block we ran at a nice pace which he set. When we stopped, we talked a little bit. I may have mentioned something about my breathing. So, he noticed as was surprised at what he heard. I was not breathing hard at all, not even deep breaths! So, around the block we ran again. This time when we stopped, I was breathing faster and deeper. Still it took almost a mile for me to make me do this.

But I had another problem by the time we finished the second lap. I was wearing flip flops! Now this is not an easy thing to do. Before it was over, one of them came off. So, I had to stop long enough to take the other off and run barefooted. This produced scrapes in the bottom of my foot. (This did not feel very good!)

Senior Year 1963-1964

Fall Semester Classes

Math: Real Variables

I remember this one course, but I must have taken more than one math course. It stands out because I finally understood what I had been taught during my two calculus courses a couple of years earlier. This time we were

studying how everything worked. I could really sink my teeth into this! My grade proved this point as well.

I wonder now if I had finally discovered how to study more efficiently. Was I beginning to understand how things worked? Was I seeing how to organize the study material into patterns that made sense?

It is also possible that so much had been thrown at me during the calculus classes that I was not able to see the forest for all of the trees. This course permitted me to step back and view everything as a whole.

German 103

Because of the early part of the summer, I approached this course a little different. But the results were the same: a C grade. This was despite that fact that I was still attending conversational German in the Tavern in the basement of the Student Union. At least it was fun to converse in German for the most part.

Believe it or not, I was in the Christmas pageant held by this group. (It was completely in German, of course.) At the same time, I also continued to take my German Bible to church with me as well as reading it along with my KJB. The latter required me making a lot of use of a German-English Dictionary. This gave some insight into the meaning of the Scriptures as well.

Advanced ROTC

As a senior, I was assigned to a squadron command in a staff position. Remember, the juniors were the ones that drilled the individual flights. What were my duties? I really don't remember. I guess I had some.

I think that between reports made by the squadron commanders the previous year and those coming from

summer camp, decisions were made as to what positions the seniors would have. I just can not be sure.

What I did know was that I was not outstanding in either place. That is why I wound up in a staff position.

Of course, we continued to study the manuals that cover our activities as Air Force officers. But there was nothing that stands out...

Marriage Counseling Lectures

The Psychology College had invited a professor in this topic to come to the university as a guest professor. He was suppose to teach certain topics to graduate students majoring in marriage counseling. Well, he did not. According to on student, he spent his time trying to get students to transfer to his program at a college in California! (The best laid plans of mice and men...)

This professor also give lectures for the general student body on marriage. This was held in the student union. So, on these days, I remained in the cafeteria area after work until time to go upstairs for them. They were quite enlightening to say the least. The only thing is that I don't know how much I actually retained long enough to apply them in my relationship with Susan beginning about years from when I heard his lectures.

Thanksgiving 1963 weekend

Rather than spending any money going home, I decided to earn some money. I had some money, but not all of that much. Since other students were going home then, I got a chance to work my own shift and shifts of those who were not going to be there. This was especially true for Thanksgiving lunch.

Once again our football team was playing on this day, but I don't remember who the opponent was. At this point in the

season, we were 6-2 and had a very good chance of going to the Rose Bowl on New Year's Eve.

The game was being broadcast as had all of the previous ones. Only this time, it was being played through the cafeteria sound system! So, I listened to it after eating my lunch.

Since we won, it was obviously exciting because we had won the championship of the Big 10 that year. Actually, there was one play that I really noticed. Our opponents had the ball inside our 20 yard line. Then they fumbled the ball, and we recovered the ball! Actually Dick Butkus had stripped the ball from the runner and then held on to it.

Spring Semester Classes

German 104

I continued to attend the conversational German class in the Tavern for the rest of the year. While I still was finding times when I could not think of a word in German that would fit what I was thinking, I was much more fluent in the language.

But there were still things that I could have done to increase my grade that I did not do. It was something that I had been told, but I had not recognized the importance of it.

English Essentials in high school began with several weeks of daily spelling tests. Why do I need to do this? I did not see how I should apply this.

But now in German, I could have increased my German vocabulary greatly by doing this one simple thing. If speaking the language increased my ability to talk in the language, why wouldn't writing in the language help in learning this part? This would definitely improve it.

Then at the end of the semester, my last German instructor complimented me on my conversational German. He told

me that I would not have any trouble making myself understood if I were to travel through Germany. This is something that not many of his students would be able to do. However, my classroom work was only C level, so that is what he had to give me. But he did want to let me know of the verbal ability that I had. Actually, he was proud of my accomplishments. Well, he may have wanted me to have done better.

Math: Complex Variables

This was a more difficult course than Real Variables. My biggest problem was understanding the concept of complex numbers. Then again, it was presented more in the format of the first calculus classes that I had taken. So, I failed to organize the material in a way that made sense to me. But, I still managed to get a C. And yet, I would now like to get a textbook on this subject and learn more about it. Would I be able to organize the material like I think it should be done? It would be interesting to see.

Summer school (1964)

Rather than return home for the summer with the previous problems of getting summer work, I decided to remain on campus and take a couple of courses: Topology (math) and piano. I planned to work in the cafeteria as well.

All of the other students in this house were leaving for the summer, so I had the upstairs to myself. Yes, this made it rather lonely; it even reminds me of my senior year in high school. Well, the owner had a young lady staying with her whom I think was a relative of hers. Should I say that she was good looking? Well, she was! Unfortunately for me, she also kept to herself, and I was never introduced to her. Other than this I think I got to watch TV once or twice. Otherwise, I remained upstairs in my room.

Then there was the problem with the weather: it was summer time! Air conditioning? What is this?! So, my room was not exactly very cool; very hot might be much more accurate. In fact, I walked into the Student Union one day and almost began shaking. (It seemed that I was shaking from the cold air in the building!) Then I spied a thermostat nearby. Being curious, I looked at the temperature at which it was set. 80°F! It much have really been very hot outside for me to shake like I did.

Summer classes

I had gone through registration as usual, and I thought I would have two classes: Topology and piano. So, on the first day of classed, I went to the classrooms at the time they were suppose to meet. The first piano lesson was fine, but I ran into a problem with the math class that afternoon.

The professor began his lecture, and it sounded very familiar. It should have. He was teaching the same course as I had taken the fall semester of my junior year! Another student noticed this as she had also already taken the course as well. She interrupted him to ask about the course, or we talked to him after class. In either case, we learned that the course we wanted was taught at 9 AM in another classroom.

We then left the class to go to the business office to clear up this mess. All she had to do was to drop this one and enroll in the Topology course.

I had more of a problem, but not really. The piano class was at 9 AM, so this was a conflict. Well, I decided to just drop the piano class, drop the afternoon math class, and enroll in the Topology course. This being accomplished, I now had one class to attend for three days a week. The rest of the time was my own.

I could have taken some additional classes but I could not get enough courses to complete my degree during the

summer. So, I decided to just take this one course and take the rest that I needed in the fall.

Topology (Math)

I had learned a little about sets as a senior in high school. While I doubted that I knew enough about topology to know that it was based upon set theory, I thought that this is a course I wanted to take. It was being offered this summer in the afternoon for 12 week instead of the usual 8 week schedule. (I really think that it was basically for high school teachers, and this was the reason for the 12 week schedule.)

This was a very interesting class, and I learned much. So, I got a good grade probably at least a B. Again logic and basic principles were used to develop the course materials.

In mathematics, things are divided into different categories. This would be obvious in terms of the names of the math courses. But it would not be all that clear that a coffee cup and a doughnut are equivalent. Yet topographically, they are. Think about it this way: if you made a doughnut out of modeling clay, you could move the clay around until you had a coffee cup instead. In either case, the object would still have a hole surrounded with the clay. The rest of the clay would still be connected.

Playing cards instead of studying

This summer was an example of what not to do when attending college. It was hot as it always was in the summer while on campus. Some of the students spent part of their day in the cafeteria at one of its tables. There was not that much studying going on there. We were too busy talking about whatever came up. We also played cards which included Hearts and bridge. We played enough that someone had to get a new deck of cards every month or so. Then one of them got a plastic deck of cards from the Base

Exchange on a nearby Air Force Base. This was not a plastic coated deck but plastic throughout. They did not wear out.

What did we accomplish in doing this? We got plenty of practice in bad study habits! For the most part it was a waste of time. It did help me just a little bit when I first began playing bridge here, but how does that compare with the time I wasted then?

I had one hand when playing bridge that I will never equal again that I know of. A poker deck was used, and the face cards were given points: Ace, 4; King, 3; Queen, 2; and Jack, 1. Given this, there were 40 points in the deck. When I saw this hand, I could not believe it! I had at least 34 points in my hand. This left my partner with 6 or less. I bid, but he passed because he was sure that he did not have enough points to bid. Then when play began, my partner laid down his cards in front of him which was what he was suppose to do. Then came another shock: between the two of us, we had all of the face cards. So, we took every trick.

I was very disappointed with him. We could have taken the bid to the ultimate level: seven no trump. OH well. Since that time, I have bid seven spades one time. My partner and I made that bid as well.

Wet palms and a nice young lady

It was in the middle of the summer when I decided to get out of the heat sometime before my evening shift. Apparently, none of the card players were in the cafeteria, so I went into the Tavern instead. Whether the dim lights in the seating area had anything to do with my decision or not, I will leave up to you.

How did she and I wind up sitting at the same table? I don't know, but we did. And then we began talking about who knows what.

Now, the Student Union also had a restaurant type meal service as well as the cafeteria. That is where she worked in the evenings. As a result she would come through the cafeteria line before it opened. After eating she would go upstairs, clock in, and work.

So, this is how she knew me; I was the only cashier on duty when she got her evening meals. It also had to be the thing that broke the ice and resulted in our talking together.

It was very easy for me to talk to her although I had not done so in the past other than maybe say something as I rang up her meals. I felt comfortable to tell her that I had problems talking with young ladies.

"Well you are talking to me," she said.

This is when I turned my hands over so she could see my palms. "Look at this," I said. Low and behold, both were covered with droplets of sweat! She was very surprised at what she saw. It was not what she would have expected given the seemingly ease that I was talking. How much sweat was there? I often say that I could have worked up a lather using a dry bar of Ivory soap!

This was the only time that I remember talking to her that summer or fall. Why had this happened? I don't know. Perhaps others might.

Wedding of Dan and Nancy

A year or more ago, Dan, who was in the Air Force, had been assign to Chanute AFB. His father was a Primitive Baptist minister in southern Indiana, and he was raise in this faith. Furthermore he remained faithful to it wherever he was sent by the Air Force. So, when he arrived, he began to attend church services regularly. That is when Nancy had caught his eye, and he began to date her. This all led to their marriage during this summer.

After the ceremony, everyone that attended it went to the Clapp's home for ice cream. It was there that Dan said something that completely surprised me. Somehow he had gotten the idea that I and Nancy still had feelings for each other. (Nancy still having feelings for me? I don't see how this was even possible.) So, he apologized for taking her away from me.

Recently, I was in Illinois at my younger brother's home at an annual meeting, and they were there along with some others from Champaign. That is when I told him that he did not really take her away. They belonged together. Besides, there was a young lady in Mississippi that I was suppose to have as my wife. Nancy and I would not have made a good couple. I definitely was not ready for that!)

My experiences with God: Driven into a corn field

One night I was feeling very depressed. It seemed that God was punishing me for some reason, and I did not know why. I felt the need to leave the house to get alone. I don't know how long I walked, but I found myself in the middle of a corn field outside of town. I did some really serious praying out there. After a while, I headed back into town. How I managed to get back into town in the middle of the night as in 3 AM, only God knows for sure. But I feel rather confident that He guided me.

As I arrived on campus, I met a couple of ladies out walking (graduate students) that I briefly knew somewhere in the past. And it has taken me quite sometime to figure who they were. But some of our conversation has recently come back to me. They were majoring in marriage counseling. And this leads me to thinking that they had seen me at the lectures on this topic the previous fall. But they may also have eaten in the cafeteria in the evening some times.

During our walking and talking, these lectures came up. That is where I learned why the professor came to our campus, spoke to a graduate class on this topic, and the lectures were held in the Student Union in the evening. One of them even said that the class received an apology from their professor. The visiting professor wasted their time in class trying to get them to transfer the university where he taught. He did not teach them anything knew.

And then they said something else that still does not make much sense: they told me that I would look better if I at least ironed the collar of my shirts. Now why would they say this? Why were they concerned with my appearance? OK, so I don't have any idea why.

And so we continued walking and talking for a while. They decide they had walked long enough, so they wanted to get back to their residences. I could probably use some more sleep as well. So I walked them there and then went to mine. Seems that I never saw them again.

Fall preregistration

Up to this point, computer programs were not quite ready to handle student registration until this summer. Finally the time had come to use the program developed for this purpose. I had filled out a form stating what courses I wanted and when and returned it. Then I waited, and waited to get conformation. It never came. So, I had to manually register for the fall semester. (I was one of the very few people who had to register this way.) So, the program work rather well with a few glitches that could easily be corrected before the spring semester.

Cafeteria work

It was either late August or early September that the cafeteria had been contracted to cater a two or three day event in the Agricultural area of the university where they experimented with crops. They told me that they could use

me there and asked me to consider doing it. I worked from 8-3 and then was driven to the Student Union where I would clock in at 4:40 PM for my evening shift. So this was about 10 hour days. I was standing on my feet most of that time. As far as my checking account was concerned, it was a cashing! Otherwise, I managed to get some rest over the next few days after it was over.

When I was in boy scouts, I learned the importance of having good foot support. This is why my parents insisted on my wearing hiking boots when I went hiking. (Well it at least sounds like it makes sense.) Anyway, since I had a pair of brogans courteous of the Air Force, I wore them both days. This may have been very important to do this, but the only that I knew at the time was that they made me very tired. But this was no different than I had felt on hiking trips.

In our cashier stations in the islands, we had a tall stool that we could sit on once in a while. (We were really suppose stand up when ringing up customers.) Well, that sort of went out the window for me those two days. I need to get off of my feet as much as possible!

Then came the Sunday of Registration week. Freshmen were do in this day, and others came as well. Unlike me, most of their families came along. Well, they had to eat somewhere, so the cafeteria was open all day from 7 AM until 7 PM when the supper line closed. Breakfast was served until 11 AM with two lines. (One was closed at at 10:30 to get ready for the lunch crowd.) At 11 AM, the closed line opened for lunch while the other line shut down to change over to the lunch menu. Then it reopened.

We had enough business that we were using four cashiers. Just to make sure everything ran smoothly, they added two more cashiers. Everything ran like clock work. While there were some slow periods, none of us were without something to do for very long at a time.

Periodically, a supervisor would come out with a note of something different being served on one of the lines and the price. This was more for the types of meats than for other items. All of this was fine for the most part. But, it is rather hard for someone a little new to know the difference between prime rib (\$0.95) and rib eye steak (\$1.95). Obviously, we did not always charge the correct price.

So this was another time when I was very tired after a long day!

Fall Semester

AFROTC

Congress finally increased the amount of money they gave to people in Advanced ROTC to a little over \$100 a month. (Big deal!) Then they required us to become members of the reserves. We had in writing that we would not be called up for active service. I got caught up in all of this.

The only problem was that the program was only for two years. Well, For me that ended as the fall semester began. Finance wise, I was on my own. No more money was coming my way.

I still had class to attend. I just don't remember if there was a special class for people like me. Perhaps there was. It seems like it was new material we studied. But I did not have any drill class responsibilities. Nor did I have any metal insignia as far as rank was concerned. I was not considered to be a "third lieutenant" which was higher than any of the undergraduates. I think that the sleeves of my uniform coat had a dark blue ribbon around it indicating that I was an officer.

Some time during this semester I came in contact with a representative of the Communist Party. He was passing out literature (The Communist Daily Worker). I took one because I was curious. Was this written the way I had been taught in

Freshman English? Or was it different? As I read it, I got my answer: It was written just as I had been told! The things that were written seemed to make sense until I looked at it more closely. Then it did not make any sense at all. It was a bunch of lies made to look like the truth.

For some reason, I decided to show it to my ROTC instructor. He looked at it and then asked if he could keep it. That was alright with me because I really did not have any reason to keep it anyway. I have no idea why he needed it.

Algebraic Topology

Speaking of studying: I was having trouble with this class during the fall semester. It was far different from what the summer class had been. Once again, I had not organized the subject matter: just memorized it for the most part. It was really based upon logic which I could see, but I still did not know how to learn a subject using logic. This does not do all that well for one's grade point average.

I also was having another one with my grades. I did well enough during the spring semester of 1963-64 to take me off of probation and never returned to it. But I had accumulated several hours of D's. To graduate, I could not have more than 25% of my total hours that were D's. Well, I had all the D's I could handle. So, I went to my math professor for a chat. I asked her to give one of two grades: a C or better if I deserved it, or an E (failing grade) if I deserved something less than a C. When the grades were posted, all of my classes were C or above.

After I saw my grade posted for this course, I went to her office to see why I had gotten the grade that I had. Her reply was that I had earned the grade she gave me. In fact, she was impressed with my abilities so much that she suggested that I should think about applying to graduate school. Gee, she had noticed something about me that I had not. (I still think I could have done better if I had better study habits.)

Thanksgiving 1964 Weekend

Once again, I chose to work in the cafeteria instead of going home for a long weekend. (I really don't know what my parents thought about this.) We had not done as well in football, so I did not get to hear the game on the cafeteria sound system this time. As a result, I quietly ate my lunch, made my report, and went back to my room.

I made it!

Was I excited when I learned I had passed Algebraic Topology! I had finally made it! The math building being next door to the student union, I headed there directly from her office for a celebration. Still being very poor, I splurged on a milk shake in the grill (all of \$0.25). The last of the big spenders! I don't remember who I told first. The person I rented from was likely told that evening because I would not be there for the next semester. She had been so nice for the three semesters and summer school that I stayed in her home.

I also wanted to know about the time from the end of the fall semester and the day I received my commission from the Air Force. She even allowed me to stay in my room during the week or so between the end of final exams until I received my commission, free! (I really do not know whether this was standard practice of something special for me.

How did I contact my parents? I don't remember calling, so I must have written. Neither do I remember them calling me. Anyway, they prepared to make a trip to Urbana for my commission ceremony.

As far as the church people, I may have walked to either the Allen's or Clapps with the good news. I would not see any of them before I left because it was all between the third weekend of January and first weekend of February.

The last day of finals was my last day to work. This was a sad time for me. I had worked there for 3.5 years. Thereafter I continued to eat in the cafeteria, but now I had to pay for it. The bonus was mailed to me at home. It does not seem that much to me now, but it was about \$165. I had worked about 470 hours from the end of summer school to the end of final exams. And since I had worked so many semesters, my bonus rate for this semester was the full \$.35 per hour.

Air Force Commission

Receiving my commission

Mom and Dad drove up for the commissioning ceremony which was on a snowy day. She was the one who pinned my 2nd Lt. bars on my uniform since I did not have a girl friend (as many usually do) to do this. Mom had some problems doing this for me, but somehow she managed. I made some adjustments in where she had pinned them to make sure they were in the proper place.

There is a tradition in the Air Force that a newly commissioned second lieutenant gives a dollar to the first person who salutes him. So, as we left the building after the ceremony, there was an airman holding the door and saluting. I returned the salute, but I did not follow the tradition. I had been living on very limited funds throughout my college days. My habit was not to spend money unless I had too. Traditions are not a "have to." Besides, I still was not use to doing things just because someone said so when it comes to something like this.

I was told to go home, and I would later receive orders to inform me where I would be going for my first duty station. So after the ceremony and I had gotten all of my things from my housing, we headed home on snowy roads. (There might have been an inch or so of snow that day.) I even got a chance to drive part of the way which was nice. Even so, I was excited in having completed my time in college.

As I look back, many of the things that I needed to learn while there were learned. Yet there were some things that would not be learned until many years later.

Pre-service time

I went to the board of education at home to fill out an application for becoming a substitute teacher while I was waiting for orders. (Considering my timidity, this was the last thing I should have done.)

Then about 45 days later a thick manilla envelope arrived (70 copies of my orders, and yes I counted them). I was headed to Biloxi, MI, for training as an ground electronics officer (ground radar) with a report date of April 30, 1965. Gee, what do I do now?

My first church service

It was the third Sunday of February that Elder Ford asked me to introduce services. This was a total surprise to me. Besides, I had moved my membership from this church to the church in Champaign. I was not certain what they would think about me doing this. Well, he convinced me that it would be alright. (I later asked Elder Clapp about this, and he said that it was alright.) I read the 150 Psalm and made some comments. I really don't know if any of it made any sense to anyone or not. In any case, I don't remember having to do this any more before I left for Biloxi, MS, the end of April.

Finding out

Webb had served his time in the Marines and was staying at home for a while. He was also going to college. This time he knew what he wanted and was making sure that he got it.

The only place that I knew to find the answers was in Champaign, and he was nice enough to let me borrow his car for the weekend (Mar 5-7) to go there. The first place I

went was to the Armory building and the Air Force ROTC offices. I even got to talk with the commander there. With this information, they issued a press release about my first duty station to be sent to the Intelligencer. They also told me what I needed to do which was very helpful.

Webb had looked up Biloxi in one of the encyclopedias we had at home to see what he could find out. It mentioned the climate. However, none of us learned how to pronounce the name correctly. I would learn after I got there. We were no where close! Most new people pronounce it wrong at first.

Another place I went was to the cafeteria to see my friends (employees and students) and ate there. A couple of young ladies talked about attending services in a local synagogue. One of them was Jewish and the other were Catholic. Anyway we all went. It was an education for me. Then after church Sunday morning and lunch, I headed home again. Being March, there was snow on the ground as usual. I also drove through it which was something that I had not done much of.

I made a trip to Lawrenceville to see Grandma Lewis probably in mid April. I don't even remember how many went as well. She was in the hospital in rather serious condition. I can still see the oxygen tent over her. I really did not know whether I would ever see her alive again.

Bible Argument

(Not sure where this should go.) By this time Webb was out of the Marine Corps returning to college with a purpose, something he did not have the Fall of 1958. One of his courses was philosophy. He seemed to enjoy bugging Mom about her religious beliefs. In spite of the number of times I had seen her read her Bible, it did not seem that she understood what she had been reading very well.

This happened one time while I was around, so Mom got me to take her part in this conversation thinking that I would

know more about the Bible than she did. So, I did. It turned out that Webb had the same thoughts: I knew more about it than he did. So, when I made some statements about the Bible, he accepted what I said as fact. That ended that discussion: he gave in. In reality, I did not really know what I was talking about either. It just sounded like I did.

What I really should have realized from this incident was that there was much more that I needed to know about the Bible than I did. I should have spent even more time reading all of it on a regular basis than I did. As it is, it would be another 18 years before I began reading all of it every year. I had a model for reading it from Elder Greathouse from a few years previous. But I had listened to my Dad instead of a minister of the Gospel. (Dad had found fault with what Elder Greathouse was doing.) Now, which one should be the one to learn from if there is a difference of opinions? (The correct answer is God.)

Air Force provides transportation

After I got back from Champaign, I borrowed the family car and headed to Scott Air Force Base (Belleville, IL) to arrange for a flight to Biloxi. This was the same place I had gone to get my flight to and from Eglin AFB in Florida for summer camp.

I would be leaving Friday, April 30, 1965 from St. Louis and flying in one of two directions: toward Atlanta and then to Biloxi or toward Memphis and then to Biloxi. The former was the one I was suppose to be given, but the lady making the arrangements booked me on the latter. She was questioned about this by someone in the office, but held her ground. As she saw it, the big problem was the arrival times. Going through Atlanta arrived after Keesler AFB offices shut down for the weekend. Going through Memphis would get me there before this happened.

Finding a parking place anywhere near the transportation office was proving very hard to do. So, I did what I should not have done: I parked in a marked parking place. Boy was this officer made when I came back out of the office! But he let me go with just a stern lecture. At least I had my ticket to Biloxi in my hands!

Bachelor Officer

Pre training life

Trip South

When I dressed this morning, I put on my blue uniform; I was not a civilian anymore. With the passage of time, it became mid morning on April 30th. And I was driven to the airport in St. Louis. Once inside I looked around and found the gate I would be leaving from. And then I checked in with the personnel running it. After waiting a while, they announced that we could board the plane, and I said good by to whomever drove me to the airport. Then I got on the airplane heading to Memphis.

This was my third time in a passenger plane, so I had become accustomed to flying already. It sure was nice. Anyway, it was not long before we arrived in Memphis where I would be transferring to a Southern Airlines flight.

After an hour or more, I got on this airplane, and it was time to head further south. Southern being a regional air line, its airplanes were not the most modern in the air at the time. Just as when flying in and out of Eglin AFB, I was in a Martin 404. It was a twin propeller plane.

Then as the afternoon wore on, we touched down at the Gulfport airport. From there I got a ride to Keesler AFB. In fact, I wound up at the housing office for the base. And as predicted, it was getting close to closing time when I arrived.

Preschool events

That is when they needed to make a decision. There was not an opening in the Bachelor Officer's Quarters (BOQ). Where were they going to put me? Visiting Officer's Quarters (VOQ) were by definition for officers who would

only be staying for a short period of time. I would be assigned to the base for a full year. But they decided to put me into the VOQ anyway. Then I would be moved into the BOQ as soon as a position was made available. OK, that is fine with me. I needed a place to stay, and I did not have the money to afford a motel!

Keesler AFB is a training base which means most of the people assigned there are for training in electronics of one type or another. With the large number of officers arriving for training on a regular basis, they were coming and going every week.

The plan was to move people out of the BOQ after their being there for several months. A list was published every month containing the names of officers who could move out if they wanted to do so. This would keep the BOQ nearly full all of the time and yet give these officers an opportunity to move out on their own after they had adjusted to life on the Base. (Married officers were placed in married housing which has its own locations just off base.)

From the housing office, I made my way to the BOQ/VOQ and into my assigned room. After getting my things situated in the room, I noticed that I would like to get something to eat.

But first a description of my surroundings. The building had three wings each several stories high. The VOQ occupied one wing on the ground floor. A second wing on the ground floor was reserved for female officers. Some were for nurses, and the rest for the female students. (Nurses were considered to be permanent party; the latter were trainees.) The rest of the building was reserved for male officers. I presume that there might also have been some single male officers that were permanent party as well. But I don't remember ever meeting them.

Also on the ground floor was an office, a community room with a TV, and a recreation room containing a pool table. These were all in the center of the building with the wings connected to it.

So, likely I went to the office to sign and get my key to my room. I don't think that I got much more information from here possibly because I did not ask.

I was very much in a state of what do I do next? Where do I eat supper? How to I get there? Well, at least I sort of solved this problem. I walked back toward the front of the Base where I saw a snack bar. So with my blues (uniform) on, I walked into this place which was filled with enlisted men. Having looked over the menu and my meager amount of cash, I ordered something. This had to be a strange thing to be looking at: an officer ordering something from a snack bar frequented by enlisted personnel when the officer's club was just across the street! (Well, I did not know this at the time.) Anyway, when I finished eating, I walked back to my quarters.

Once I got back, I ran into some officers, probably in the community room. We started talking, and I got the information that I needed about the officer's club including how to get there. So, now I knew where I was going to eat for a while. A lot more information was given me as well.

But I soon ran into a problem: how do I pay for my meals? Well, I did have a final \$50 traveler's check that Dad insisted I use. (This is what he used when we made our trip to the Seattle area in 1955 and on other trips as well after that.) When I went to the office of the club, they would not cash it!

I was on a military base, and the only identification accepted was a military ID. I did not have one, nor would I be able to get one until Monday morning which was at least 36 hours away. (I ran out of cash on Saturday evening (May 1st.)

Fortunately, a captain near the cashier's office cashed it for me. Even so, he really could not believe that I did not have a Military ID.

He had gone to Officer Candidate School in Texas to become an officer. To do so, he had joined the Air Force which meant he was on active duty for the entire time he was in this school. As such, he was given a military ID there. I had just gone on active duty and did not have time to get an ID yet because I arrived too late on Friday.

He was an instructor for Block 10 of my electronics training, and we would meet again when I reached that area of training.

One of the first things that I noticed was that the sun rose an hour earlier in the morning than I was use to at home. Well, the St. Louis area had always been on Daylight Savings Time, but Mississippi had always remained on Standard Time during the summer time. But I quickly got use to the difference.

A few days later, I was walking somewhere in the afternoon. It looked like rain so, I was wearing my raincoat with a protector for my wheel hat. as a precaution. My had remained dry, but the back of my neck did not; water was trickling down my back even when wearing a raincoat!

Now I was not use to that amount of rain falling, but I soon learned that this was a common occurrence. In fact, this area averaged 50" of rain a year which means an inch of rain fell every week, week in and week out. And again, most of it fell from late morning into the afternoon hours.

So, one thing every new person learned very quickly was to keep the windows of a car closed during the day. While rain showers were rather random, leaving the car windows open would often allow the inside of the car to become very wet from the rain. So, we had two choices in the summer: have a hot car with a dry inside or have a hot car with the seats

wet... Rather quickly, people learned that a hot, dry car was preferably.

Then Monday morning came, and I found out where I needed to go to check into the Base. Then off I went with the manilla envelope containing nearly 70 sheets of my orders. (Likely one or more was kept at Scott AFB in the transportation office and some more at the housing office at Keesler.) I guess you could say I did a smart thing: with the envelope in my hands I told the first person at a desk that I was reporting in and I had no idea what I needed to do. Then I did whatever I was told. It went rather smoothly from there. **Finally** I got my military ID. I also got assigned to the 3380th training wing.

One of the things I was given was a key to my post office box. This was located between the Officer's Club and the BOQ on the right side of the road. These had a roof over them with a post at each corner. The whole thing was screened in with a door for an entrance. I usually checked my mail after eating lunch at the Officer's Club.

I did not start school until June 9, 1965 which was 33 days later. So, I was given a couple of extra duties to perform until school started, three of which I remember. Well, they could not just let me sit around doing nothing...

Can anyone say yum!?! This assignment was to inspect a mess hall for student airmen. I had heard stories of mess hall food before, but what I saw was quite good. They were having some type of steaks, and they really looked delicious! They looked better than the ones that are shown in a meat department of a grocery.

Then I got another inspection duty: inspect the dorm area of building housing enlisted trainees. Yup, I was doing that same thing as you see in movies. The only thing was that I did not have to see if their bunks would bounce a quarter off of them.

And finally, it was time for the weekly parade. This had to be some time in May since it is too hot in the June - August time period. I was given a flight to march with. Ho-hum, just like my junior year.

Oh, yes, another list of those officers who could move out of the BOQ came out. Shortly there after, they did. Then I moved from the VOQ wing to the ground floor of the BOQ. Time to learn something more about life on the Base.

Our facilities had two rooms plus bathroom and shower. One had two beds and a chest of drawers. I'm thinking that the other room had two desks for studying. We also had maid service to make our bed for us and clean up things. So, once again, I got my things organized.

My new roommate welcomed me and gave me more information that he thought I needed. (Boy, was he right!) He started with describing the daily routine for students. Up at 4:30 AM for daily hygiene. Then to the officer club for breakfast. Around 5:45, a bus loaded up with the student to take them to class. They would be returned by bus around 12:30. Time to stop at the officer club for lunch. Then a short nap or studying for the afternoon. Then back the the officer's club for supper. And then more studying. Well, some people would have an alcoholic drink during this time. (I didn't.)

I joined the others watching TV in the evenings in the community room. Once in a while I would go into the recreation room to watch someone playing pool. At times, I would be asked to join in. Having said that I did not know how, they would take time to teach me some pointers. In a while, I got... well, bad playing this game.

Over the first few week, I notice a weekly TV watching habit. On Monday nights, some of the officers would gather in the TV room to watch Twelve O'clock High at 7 PM. Then the room gradually filled up as the time neared 8 PM. For

the next hour, everyone would watch *The Men from U.N.C.L.E.* But at 9 PM, the room would almost completely empty. Well, the classes ran from Wednesday to Tuesday with all exams being given on the latter. So, people scattered to finish studying.

Forty years later, one of the main characters of this program began playing a part on a new program named NCIS. He does the autopsies. I don't know what he has done in between, but his beginning and ending are very good in my opinion.

Then there was a matter of transportation. I had never owned a car, so I was dependent on the bus to take me back and forth from my schooling. Others already had their own, so drove both ways. And yes, some of the students car pooled. I even took advantage of one the end of August.

It would be more than six months before I was permitted to move out as well. One of the students in the radar course lived off base where there was a garage with an empty apartment above it. He helped me rent it, and we then rode to our class together. After the course was over, I remained there, and he was transferred somewhere else.

Dental

Check up, movie, and x-rays

While waiting for my class to start, I was sent to the dental facilities to determine the condition of my mouth. The x-rays were showing 13 cavities: 2 were in my wisdom teeth, and the rest were in 11 different teeth. While I was there, I saw a film on dental care. It emphasized that people drinking soft drinks should rinse their mouth out afterward. What seems to be missing was flossing. (This must not have been main stream yet.)

The first step was to get my teeth cleaned, so this was the first appointment. So, basically my mouth was a mess. The

first cleaning took some time to complete. Then I was told to come back in six months. Boy was I stubborn! I returned once a year. I suppose this had something to do with the dental care that was done at home. I don't know if Mom still had her own teeth when she died, but I know that Dad did not.

Sounds like I was heading in that direction too. But I have finally learned my lesson (about 5 years ago) before it is too late. The lesson? Always floss before going to bed. Well, I had also began using an Oral B electric toothbrush and an oral irrigator(Waterpik). But I have used an electric toothbrush for decades along with an oral irrigator. It was the flossing at night that made all the difference in my mouth.

Fillings

This was the first time I was given a shot before a filling was done. It took 5-6 appointments to fill the 11 cavities. They refused to fill the caries in my wisdom teeth, and I was not going to pay for this to be done either. The other choice was to pull them. This may seem a little drastic (I thought it was). But then they let me look at my x-rays. I really did not have room for them. They were pointed forward and outward; they were not even meeting. So, out they came. Novocaine kept it from being really painful; I only had to put up with the small amount of bleeding. The last two were pulled the third week of August (one week before the Little Walbash Association in Champaign).

These appointments continued into the summer. Since I was going to school from 6 AM to noon, my appointments were for the afternoon. This worked out fine until I was having problems with my school work, I was suppose to remain after school until 3:30. But talking to the right person, I was excused from school that afternoon.

Ground Electronics Officer training

There are three types of electronics training taught at Keesler AFB: Communications, Avionics, and mine. All of them take the same 10 blocks of training known as officer fundamentals. So, we all began at Annex 7.

May 5th arrived, and I began the first day of my training. This began with the bus ride from the officer's club to Annex 7 which was across US 90 from the beach.

The trip took us along the beach which runs from the front bay bridge on the east to perhaps 50 miles or more west of Gulfport. Next to the highway were parking bays you can drive into or out of. And just south of this was a six foot sea wall complete with steps for the entire length of the beach. Then there was about 100 feet or more between the wall and the water. Because of the geography of the area, this water was from the Mississippi River (known as the Mississippi Sound) that flows from Louisiana across the northern Gulf of Mexico. So the warning we all got early: DO NOT SWIM IN THIS WATER! It is polluted.

Biloxi is on the end of a peninsula. The Back Bay is along the north side of it flowing along the northern part of it and then down the east side. Somewhere along the northern shore of the Back Bay, the Biloxi River flowed into it. Even so, salt water made its way into the bay and even into the river as well.

While the water was a little cleaner in the Back Bay, it still had its dangers. People have been known to dive into the water along the shoreline. Some have been killed or broken their necks because the water was shallower than they had thought. So we were also warned not to attempt any diving in that area. (Well, I do not exactly like the idea of having salt water in my mouth...)

Now it is warm enough to sun bathe from the first day of spring (March 21st) into October or November. Sure enough, people were doing this as long as the weather was warm enough. Some of them were good looking too! Well, when I was riding the bus, I could look for as long as there was someone to see. But, the situation was different when I bought a car. I had to find another way to do this.

This too could be rather dangerous. It is now called distracted driving. At this time the main highway from New Orleans to the Atlantic Ocean in northern Florida was US 90. (Since that time, I-10 was constructed about 5 miles or so north of the beach.) Anyway, the traffic volume was heavy 24 hours a day. Paying attention to what the drivers are doing around you was always a very good idea.

But being a "youngster," I thought I had a solution to this problem. I would quickly glance out on the beach to see who I could see. If it were a good looking girl, I would make a very quick mental picture of her. Then as I drove along, I would recall what I had seen. I'm pretty sure now that this habit I developed would be a perfect example of what distracted driving is. But I thought I was doing the right thing. I survived regardless of my behavior.

Years after my wife died, I would see that a lady named, Sherri, would have a way to get to a Senior Center where we played bridge. It turned out that she spend one summer on the Beach at Biloxi during one of the two years that drove along the same area. Now I wonder how many times I may have seen her on the beach?

Academic Guidance

Wouldn't you know it? The first thing they did was to give us a test! What did I know about electronics? Very little that I could think of. But I had to take the test anyway.

The purpose for this was economic in nature. It separated those who could learn some or all of the information taught from those who need help learning the material from the beginning. Each week a student can learn on his own is one less week his training needed to be. Besides he can be shipped out to a working unit sooner as well.

My specialty was ground electronics (ground radar), and the course lasted 51 weeks: ending May 31, 1966. My actual graduation day was April 5, 1966. So I saved the government almost two months of training time.

Those who needed help began Block 1: Direct Current. The rest including me were sent to Academic Guidance to began studying on our own. We had Instructors from whom we could get help to point us in the right direction.

When I began, I was given the same books that the students in classes received, took the same tests, and did the same lab work. The only difference was that we were expected to take less time to learn the material. If we failed the test, we were put back into the next class that began the block whose test we failed.

I made it through the first three blocks in less than half the class time. The fourth block was on vacuum tubes and transistors, and I rather quickly got lost in the terminology and how these things amplified electrical signals. So, back to a regular class I went. I did rather well until I got to the block on regulations, and this threw me for another loop. I did manage to pass it though...

My experience with LBJ

Just like ROTC, the students were organized into a squadron. (3380th) We had to meet with our squadron commander monthly for a squadron meeting. Well the summer of 1965, the Gulf of Tonkin became news. We were getting much deeper involved in Vietnam. As President of

the United States, he decided that service personnel needed to know why we were in this war. So, he had a film made named, Why Vietnam, and he narrated it. Sure enough, one summer month, this film was shown to the entire squadron. So, now we were suppose to know the answer.

The film began around 4:15 PM. It was well made. The only problem was in the content. This became painfully obvious during the CBS Evening News which was broadcast from 5:45 to 6:00 PM. Included in this broadcast was film which had been taken in Vietnam only the day before. (Each day CBS shoot the film and fly it to the US for broadcast the next day.)

Almost every important point that LBJ had made was contradicted by CBS film. How can I respect someone who seemingly lied to me with a straight face? I lost my respect because of that.

Now it occurs to me what I should call LBJ's message: propoganda. It was a bunch of lies that he had made to sound like the truth.

Water Safety Instructor Course

At the beginning of summer, one of the officers began this course right after morning classes ended, and I decided to take. it. We were in the water from 12 noon until 1 PM. Between eating all of my meals at the Officer's Club and all of this swimming I put on almost 20 pounds. Yet the only thing that got tight was my throat when I wore a shirt and tie to church. Almost all of the extra weight was pure muscles. Well my shirts were a little tight through my chest area...

My first car June 1965

This is when I did what I had been told not to do. I had received \$300 for buying a Mess Dress uniform (military tux) that all new officers receive. I was told in a ROTC class not

to spend this money for a car. I did anyway. Later I had to put one on layaway. Every News Year the base commander had a reception for all the officer on the base. Dress Code? The Mess Dress uniform.

I was in the Officer Club doing something when a retired major approached me about buying a car. I was interested so I went to the Ford dealership with him. He wanted to sell me a 1965 Mustang which was in its first year of production and was quite the rage. I settled for a '64 VW Beetle instead. Yup, the down payment was \$300. The financing was handled by the Base Credit Union, and I got GEICO insurance for it. From then on I drove to class. Finances were rather tight for a while though very tight. My monthly payment was \$97 and change while my monthly salary was \$220.20 minus taxes and withholdings. Not very money left over that is for sure!

One day I was checking my mail as I drove back to the BOQ. There was a letter from my sister, Etta, who was in Germany with her husband. As I opened it and began reading, I noticed the date. It was the day before! Now this is what I call fast delivery. She wrote about being in a laundromat as she wrote this letter. So, it had taken the letter less than 24 hours from the time she wrote it until I was reading it. This definitely fascinated me.

Now that I have a car, I can start looking for a Primitive Baptist Church in the area. This would be very nice. But I also had schooling to attend and many lessons about ground electronics to learn.

DORE

It was mid summer when I was told to take this test. Oh goody! I am expected to spend 6 hours and then take this four hour test. That is 10 hours! When am I suppose to study, and how much material could I learn with all of this? It was another achievement test. Other than that I did not

understand why the test. Later, I learned that it was used to determine whether it would be worth while to sent people to college for advanced degrees. It was not until I had taken the Graduate Record Exam did it occur to me that the DORE was very similar to the GRE. I scored 1220 in the DORE and 1230 in the GRE eight years later. Had I remained in service and learned how to be a mature officer, I would likely have been sent to graduate school at a university by the Air Force.

It did not occur to me that there might a relationship between the two tests. GRE is the Graduate Record Exam which is required for entrance to graduate degrees. Well, I was told that DORE stood for Defense Officer Record Exam. Yet, I did not make the connection between the two until I took the GRE in the early 1970's.

Class time again

Why can't I understand how these vacuum tubes work? I read all of the manuals, but nothing seemed to make any sense! Even the laboratory work did not help any. Well, I only had a certain amount of days to take and pass it. Well, I took the test and flunked it. So the next morning, I was sitting back in a class again. They had just begun studying these topics which was good for me. But that was not the only reason for putting me into this class. Likely real reason: all these officers were also in the Ground Electronics program. The next class with officers studying this would not be for another month. So, this worked out for the Air Force and me.

Church

Mom and Dad had a directory of our churches in various parts of the country, and they may have sent a phone number in Pascagoula to me. So, I called it. After getting directions, I drove the 30+ miles to his home to visit him. Well, he lived next to the church building, so I now knew

where it was. He also mentioned that there a group meeting in Biloxi area, and he gave me the name of the deacon who was also attending services in Pascagoula.

Now I had another call to make. This time I met Bobby and his family to get more information. So, now I had additional information that was useful. He was an instructor for airmen, but I do not know which specific course. From this point, I began meeting with these two groups (Biloxi and Pascagoula).

Biloxi was not yet a church. Instead, a group of Primitive Baptists living in the area were meeting together hoping to form a church in the future. This meant that they did not have a regular minister to preach for them. They got who they could. Sometimes, they asked one of the deacons at Pascagoula who was exercising at the time. While I sometimes questioned whether he was called to preach or not, most of the times he came to preach, he did a good job.

I don't know how long it took, but my singing ability became apparent. So, I began to do some of the leading. Otherwise, I would sing tenor. But since they used a different song book than the one I had grown up with, I did not always know the tune that they knew oh so well. I had some learning to do in this area as well.

I became rather close to this group during the latter of the summer. The people were very friendly, especially considering that I was a yankee and did not drink coffee.

The first few times I went visiting, the lady of the house would bring out coffee for everyone including me. I soon learned to notice when she went into the kitchen. Then I would follow her into the kitchen as say as kindly as I could that I do not drink coffee. This saved embarrassment to several people.

In fact, this became a joke when with the other Lewis family. You see, their ancestors immigrated from Germany.

When they went through Ellis Island to be accepted into our country, their last name was changed to Lewis by the Immigration people. So, when they mentioned that I could not be a Primitive Baptist because I do not drink coffee, my reply was that at least I was a true Lewis. And so it went with no hard feelings by anyone. (This family would play a very important part in my life just two years later.

Little Wabash Association

I was still thinking like I was still in college: I was free to do what I wanted as long as I did what was required of me during the six hours a day that I was in schooling. Well, I really wasn't. I almost got myself into trouble this time.

This meeting went from Friday morning to Sunday noon in Champaign, IL, over the fourth weekend. No problem, I thought, I could make connections from Biloxi to Memphis, from there to St. Louis, and finally from there to Champaign. My parents could pick me at the airport there. I also made arrangements back which took me in a different direction. I thought everything was now set.

Mind you, this was the end of August which is very warm in Biloxi! But I showed up for class in my Class A Blues. (winter uniform). The captain which was my class leader spoke rather sternly about what I was about to do. He sort of let me go, but I was really breaking the rules, and we both knew it. (I should have taken leave to make this trip.)

Speaking of hot weather, it really was. As I mentioned earlier, it is likely to rain any time during the day. So, cars were sitting in the hot sun until noon with all of the windows up. Needless to say, the temperature in the car was way over 100. This sure feels good when wearing a winter uniform, let me tell you! Can anyone say really sweating?

Well, I got on the plane in Biloxi and headed north. Now, this was not the most modern airplane being flown at the time. It was a 25 passenger DC-3. It is better known as the

Gooney bird that was used for flying cargo from place to place in WW II! At least we got to where we were going.

I made all of my connections; so far so good. In fact, the evening flight to Champaign was a new experience for me. I was surprised at the number of lights that were visible from the air at night. So this was quite enjoyable. Well, it was until I tried to get my luggage in Champaign. Some how, it had not made the complete trip yet. So, I had to make do with what I had. (I don't remember how much that was.) Meanwhile the airlines would try to find it, and I gave them information as to where to deliver it when they found it.

So, my Mom and Dad drove me into Champaign to where we would be staying. Then in the morning, we were off to church for the morning, lunch, and afternoon. When we returned, my luggage had already arrived. So, things were good.

During this weekend, Elder Clapp needed to talk to me about where I attended church in the Biloxi area. Between Champaign and Biloxi, there were problems with church fellowship. I might not be attending a church which was in fellowship with Champaign. So, he gave me some information on a church (?) that met in the area which was in fellowship with a church he knew in northeastern Mississippi who was in fellowship with Champaign. I had one more thing to do when I returned to Biloxi.

Then Sunday I flew back. In my mind, I was not back in service again. In fact, I never was out of it. Come Monday morning at 6 AM I was back in class again.

Church Conflict

The first week, I contacted the people in Ocean Springs to get some information from them about when and where they met. Then I attended their next meeting. Everything seemed alright until I was invited to spend the afternoon with them. That is when something seemed very wrong. The

people did not seem godly. There was too much fussing among them; harmony between them was missing. I did not quite know what to do now.

One of the families in the Biloxi group had the same last name as me. They were a very nice family, and I became friends with them visiting with them from time to time.

So, soon after visiting the group in Ocean Springs, I took my problem to them. This is when I found out what the situation was. Some time seemingly after 1945, a split had developed in the Amite Association (southwest Mississippi) because of the behavior of a certain elder. One side claimed that he had made advances towards some of the ladies. Others in this side said that the ladies were warned never to be in his presence alone. Some on the other side claimed that he had been exonerated by a council he had convened. Others of this side later stated that he had the reputation of being a "lady's man." Apparently, the other associations surrounding the Amite recognized the verdict of innocence.

Well, the accusations all included the same situation: the lady and he were always alone. It became a "he said, she said". How can one determine who was telling the truth? Either one could be lying to gain something he or she wanted.

The minister who preached at Ocean Springs lived east of Mobile, AL, which took 90 minutes to drive there. I also talked to him about the situation. He had a similar view of the group in Ocean Springs as I had formed. They had asked him to preach for them to give them some recognition. This did not sound very good either.

Later in the fall, Elder Clapp would contact me again. This time he wanted me to meet him and his family in Amory, MS. It had to do with the church situation in the Biloxi area. It would be during November.

Betsy: a hurricane to remember

This was the last part of August, and the weather was hot. Meanwhile, we were finishing up the Water Safety Instructor course. Needless to say, being in the water felt real good with the usual 90° temperature. Meanwhile in the Atlantic Ocean, a tropical depression was forming.

I was not concerned at the time, but the "natives" had been through hurricanes more than once. They were keeping an eye out on it. They always do until a hurricane makes land fall somewhere else.

Labor Day came and went. This storm was heading our way. Where would it make land fall? Somewhere between Galveston, TX, and Mobile, AL. So, it was time to make preparations for anywhere in that area. Windows needed to be boarded up. Anything that could be blown away needed to be brought inside. And the list of things to do goes on and on.

But with this large of a target area, most of the area will not be affected by this storm. But the part that is will receive a large amount of damage. The people living there are going to wish that they had done more than they were able to get done.

I did not know what a hurricane was, but I was going to find out. For that matter, neither did two students from Pennsylvania: they wanted to experience one. I think they changed their minds after this one. I'm not even sure that either one had experienced a tornado let alone a hurricane.

Through Wednesday, nothing seemed to be anything out of the ordinary. It was just as hot, and there was nothing unusual about the wind either. But this began to change quickly Thursday, September 9th. It was a little after 1 PM when I headed back to the main base after my daily swimming class. The sky was filled with clouds, and they were moving due north at more than 30 MPH! We had much

stronger than usual southerly winds as well. The weather was beginning to look worse and worse.

The BOQ building was made of reinforced concrete, so we were not likely to have any problems. But it was not safe to venture outside of it. By late afternoon, the winds were getting stronger, and the pine trees were beginning to sway and bend in the wind.

I'm not sure, but I think I ate supper at the Officer's Club probably early. Then it was getting back to the BOQ with the wind blowing (not fun). The progress of the storm was ever so agonizingly slow. All we could do was wait it out. The power never did go out, so we had access to the TV where people gathered at times to watch what was happening in Biloxi and New Orleans. But this got rather old for me.

It must have been somewhere near 10 PM when I learned of some of the things happening in New Orleans. Things were not going very well at all. They were getting some flooding because the wind driven water from Lake Pontchartrain was topping the levies. They had pumps that were used to remove the water. They are capable of removing 1" of rain for an hour. (This rate was somewhere near 1 million gallons per hour.) But in order to keep the pumps from over heating, they will only remove ½" per hour thereafter. There have been times in which the rain fall exceeded these amount causing minor flooding. But, with time, the pumps finally removed all of the rain.

But this night Betsy was dropping a very large amount of rain on the city. Then there was the 110 MPH winds that was downing power lines. At one point, the city lost 90% of the power needed to run the pumps. So, there was quite a bit of flooding in the city which is below sea level.

Sometime earlier, I had seen a small transistor tape recorder in a Radio Shack store and bought it. It would record perhaps a few minutes at best. It was cheap and was

not worth anything more than I paid for it. (It was an electronic toy to me as it probably was to others.)

At times instead of watching the TV, I listened to a local radio station which was located right on the beach along with its antenna. As the night progressed, the winds continued to increase in speed which pushed the water in the Mississippi Sound northward. With this, the water height increase first topping the sea wall and then even higher. This interfered with the transmission of radio signal which began to fade in and out.

Over a period of time, I taped short segments of their radio transmissions until I had used all of the tape. I kept it for a while. It might be interesting for my family to hear later since they had never experienced something like this.

That Thursday night the eye of the storm hit New Orleans. While that was 90 miles west of us, we had a lot of damage as well. We were in the southeastern quadrant where the strongest winds usually are. New Orleans had up to 110 MPH winds, and we had 90 MPH. US Hwy 90 ran along the beach just north of a 6' sea wall. The strongest winds were from the south, and they washed about a foot of sand over the highway. Driving through that on the way to and from schooling was really a strange feeling, let me tell you. And remember that I didn't start doing this again until the middle of the next week.

Several miles south of the beach was a group of barrier islands. Cat Island was about 4 miles south while Ship Island was closer to 13 miles. In between were a group of small islands. I don't know if people inhabited any of them (probably so), but animals definitely did. Specifically, water moccasins do, and they were washed ashore with and plants that the water up rooted on its trip north from the Gulf.

We probably were tempting fate when we walked along the beach directly south of the base. I at least was watching where I was going and that was around me. OK, I thought that I was; maybe I was not(?).

The debris on the beach was much more than can be imagined. And remember that the beach was quite long and at least 50' wide. Hurricanes were fairly common in that area. I know of at least 4 of them from 1965 to 2014. There have likely been more (about one every 10 years or sooner). So, they know how to remove the debris efficiently. They piled the debris up in domes (10' diameter and about 10' high) that were about 10-15 feet apart.

It remained windy for several days. The other thing I noticed was that the temperature remained lower than normal for a while. The Thursday before the storm hit, the water temperature in the pool we used for our swimming class was rather warm. But a couple of days after the storm, I noticed that it was uncomfortably cool if not "cold". The class was ended shortly thereafter. Was I happy about that!

(Back to classes)

I was gradually learning what was being taught and really understanding it. Well this was true until Block 10: Manuals. This really threw me for a loop. Perhaps this was because there was so much memorization required, and yet there seemed to be no rhyme nor reason to the system. Or, maybe it seemed so much like the system in Biology categorizing animals and plants that my mind would not let me to a good job. You could say my eyes glazed over again.

As a result, I failed one the the quizzes during the two or three week block. So, I had to spend time in Academic Guidance until 3 PM for a period of time. Something must have clicked because I got a passing grade in the end.

Block 10 is the last block taken by all officers regardless of which program they were in. Those in Communications

remained at annex 7. Avionics had the rest of their training on base. Ground Electronics officers went to Annex 1 for the rest of their training.

This annex included two working radars. One is used to determine where a flying object is relative to the radar. The other determines how high the object is. There was a lot to learn for sure.

We also studied the characteristics of other ground based radar. We even visited one of the newer versions which was on base. (I think the airman who were learning how to maintain this radar got to work on it.)

Trip to Armory, MS

Elder Clapp wrote me that he was going to be in this city sometime in November. He wanted me to be there as well. So, I prepared for this trip, and on Saturday, I headed north to Amory.

I mentioned the problems occurring on the coast. They had had some of their own in Amory. The brethren decided it was time to solve their fellowship problems, and this weekend was when they were going to do this. So, I got to witness brethren agree that they had made mistakes and were willing to forgive and forget.

What did this have to do with me? One side in the Amory area recognized the brethren from one side of the Amite Association. The other side recognized the other side. So it was official now: both sides on the Coast were now in fellowship with Champaign. I could attend either one as I chose. (I chose the more friendlier group.)

More schooling

By this time, my class was at a radar installation which was used for training only (Annex 1). We spent week after week going over the schematics of the radar units there.

The height measuring radar's manual was perhaps 20 pages thick. But remember that each page was 1 foot high by at least 2 feet wide. There were lines all over these pages showing how everything was connected together. I'm guessing that there were more than 50 pages in the manual for the ground radar unit. We had to be able to trace electronic signals from page to page to page. (You get the idea.)

Our schedule was 50 minutes of instructions and 10 minute break for each hour of the 6 hours. We were free to go to the bathroom, get something to snack on, gab among ourselves, etc. during this 10 minutes.

At the end of a break one day, the instructor came back very upset. He was definitely pale, and his voice was somewhat trembling. Another class was studying the circuits in a particular cabinet. So, the instructor had opened the cabinet to let them look inside.

Well one student got a little bit too curious. He wanted to know something about a particular vacuum tube in the cabinet. There was nothing wrong with asking, but he used his pencil to point out which tube he was talking about. He should not have pointed his pencil toward a tube that had had a charge of approximately -5,000 volts (Direct Current or DC) on it! The pencil disappeared! The student was not harmed other than he must have realized that he was lucky to still be alive.

Obviously, this probably scared the entire class. It definitely made an impression on all of the instructors. A great deal of emphasis was placed on what could have happened instead of only vaporizing the pencil. Moral of the story: when being around a cabinet that has power to it, keep your hands in your pockets.

This was one of the more dangerous vacuum tubes. But there were also 5 other tubes with 20,000 volts on them.

Now these can do some real damage to the human body!

I thought that I had good hearing. Well, one of the students in my class had much better than mine. He claimed and I believe him that when he would be given an audio hearing test, he could hear the audio tones all of the time. He could even hear the sounds as the the tones were being changed.

But anyway, one of the instructor at Annex 1 spoke rather loudly, and others were somewhat softer. Now when we had this instructor the first time, this student was having problems with the instructor's volume. So, during the break, he asked me to trade places which I did. So he went from the front row to the last one; I went from the back row to the front. Problem solved. Well, I did not really like how loud he was because of my very good hearing.

Near the end of 1965, my name came out on the list of officers who could move out of the BOQ. Well, another student in my class was already living off base which came with a two car garage. It had a stairway up to a second floor which was vacant at the time. So, he suggested that I move into it. This way we could share a ride to Annex 1 and back. So, I agreed.

This apartment had its good and bad sides. \$30.00 a month was a rather low rate; in fact it was less than half of what I got for my housing allowance (\$85). Even with the electric and gas bills, I still came out ahead. But neither the floors nor walls were insulated, and no air conditioner in the window: only a window fan. So, it was cold in the winter and hot in the summer!

It had a space heater in the living room which would not really keep even that room warm. I found this out the first night that I was there. I only had a thin blanket. This will not keep anyone warm when the air temperature was much less than 70 degrees! So, even with the heater on as high as I could get it, I shivered all night long!

There was a problem with sharing a ride to the annex periodically: he did not wake up very well in the early mornings. So, a couple of times were almost late. (He had to go without breakfast those mornings as well.)

I messed up royally during the block which included visiting a newer radar unit on base. All the information about this was classified, so all of my work had to be done at the annex. I read the manual, but I did not really comprehend what I was reading. To make matters worse, I had to make a report in front of the class on what I had read. This was before we visited the actual radar unit. What I said about it did not really match what the instructor said about it. This brought down my grade for this block as well as the grades of the officers that I was working with. Bad move.

The captain who was the class leader had been doing quite well from the beginning. In fact, he had the top grade average of our class. He had worked hard to maintain it, because it would affect his future in the Air Force. He even came to me privately asking me not to do well enough to obtain a higher average than he had. Without this award to the highest grade average in a class, he might not get promoted. Instead, he could be separated from the Air Force. I thought a lot of him, and I may have helped him unconsciously, I don't know.

Sometime during the later part of the course, I applied to remain on base as an instructor. But I did not hear from anyone about my request. Then as the end of the course grew nearer, everyone else was getting their orders for their next duty assignment. Still I was not hearing anything. Finally, I asked someone that could tell me the answer I wanted. Yes, my request had been granted. When I completed the course, I would be reassigned to the 3383rd Instructor squadron. I would be teaching at Annex 7.

Our course ended Tuesday, April 5, 1966. Many of the students had Keesler as their first base assignment. We had not been through a military class before. A couple of captains had been in military schools before. They knew of the bonds that can form in them. I did not.

So, this day was really a party since we were not likely to see each other again; our assignments scattered all over the place. No one was in a hurry to leave but me. They wanted the camaraderie to continue for as long as possible. So, I had to wait until I could leave the other.

A few weeks before, I had asked for a two week leave. It was granted. During this time, I wanted to visit Etta in Flagstaff, AZ and see my first niece which was born a few months earlier. From there I wanted to be at my grandparent's 60th anniversary in Lawrenceville, IL. Then I would be heading back to Keesler.

I had done some planning ahead of time, so I was on a tight schedule. I wanted to drive to Shreveport, LA, where I planned to spend the night in the VOQ. This was not a short drive. So this is why I was in much more of a hurry leaving Annex and our party than anyone else.

Oh yes, I had already packed my VW bug with all of the things I needed for the trip. Another reason to be antsy. Well, I was only thinking about what lay ahead of me, not what others might want.

60th wedding anniversary April 14, 1966

Trip to Flagstaff, AZ

I was really getting antsy by the time I left the annex somewhere close to noon. To make matters worse, I needed to eat something. So, to the Officer's Club I went to fill my poor tummy up. Then I headed north.

I certainly shifted the gears plenty of times during the next six or so hours. So, I was now at Barksdale AFB near

Shreveport, LA. The VOQ had a vacancy, so I got a free night's rest. The Officer's Club there provided me with supper and breakfast (at my expense). Then it was time to hit the road again: all day driving until 7 PM Mountain Standard Time.

I headed west until I got into Texas. Then I headed north west to Amarillo. Now this area is known of the hill country. There were so many trees in this part of my trip; they were so beautiful.

The roads I traveled were either state or federal highways (no Interstates then). Of course this means that I had to go through all of the cities which added some driving time, that is for sure. But the speed limits were such that they limited the amount of extra time needed.

I have seen many cities posting slow speed limits to increase the amount of time required to drive from one side of the city to the other. Such was not the case in Texas. I would be driving perhaps a mile or two doing about 45 MPH or more (posted) before the speed limit started dropping into the 30 MPH or less range. As soon as I got out of the really busy part of town, the limit would begin to pick back up. I certainly liked this!

I got to Amarillo around 6 PM CST. I still had a little over an hour to get to Tucumcary, NM. It was getting late, but I decided to continue driving. Then as I crossed the Texas/New Mexico border, I noticed that I had just entered the Mountain time zone, so time wise, it was not so bad. Well, all that driving using a four gear transmission in my beetle is a little hard on the legs. I still managed to get a good night's sleep though.

Then in the morning, it was time to head further west. There were a few large cities between me and Flagstaff, AZ, Albuquerque in particular. This city is located in a valley which is more like a bowl than a valley. Mountains surround

it, so an approach to it requires going through the mountains and then drive down into the valley which is a very nice view. Then after enduring the city traffic, I got to drive back up the mountain side before continuing further southwest.

Then came what I considered to be an unnecessary stop at the Arizona border. This state took so much care of their fruit trees, that they would not allow an fruit that was grown outside of AZ to come through the border. It must be eaten or thrown away before a person could go any further. They are probably right in doing this, but I did not like someone telling me what I could not bring into their state! Anyway, When asked, I told them that I did not have any of the fruit that they banned; I had not any of them in the car anytime during this trip anyway. Then I headed onward. By late afternoon, I was in Flagstaff and then at Dick and Etta's home. I could finally unwind for a while!

New niece

Wendy was a little over a month old when I arrived. This was a new experience for me as I had not been around a new baby since Tom 20 years earlier. I had a hard time getting myself to hold her at all. (Scared? most likely. But what did I have to be scared of? I just was.)

Things might have been different if Mark had lived back in 1956. Then I might have had to diaper him and otherwise take care of him at times. Well, I wonder about this once in a while.

Etta was breast feeding her which meant that I diffidently did not have to give her a bottle of formula, but I'm not so sure about a bottle of water at some point in time. Still, I had another problem: watching her doing the breast feeding. I was bothered with looking at her anatomy shall we say. I still have a problem with this even though I was married for 35 years.

I certainly got a large dose of baby care lectures as Etta would explain what she was doing and why. It is a shame that I did not remember that much until Kevin was born.

Cold but not cold mornings

The next morning, I was going to do some site seeing. As a member of the police, Dick took to warn me about how to drive in various places, specifically the school zones. The posted speed limits were completely enforced. If the radar indicated your speed was anything over the posted limit (15 MPH), you paid a fine, period. There was no reason for traveling 16 MPH! The judge is known to say that the offender is driving in a school zone. He/she should have been driving slower than the posted limit. (I stayed away from the schools.)

While there, I made a mistake while there: I had my tape recorder with me including the recording of the sounds of Hurricane Betsy. Well, they got to hear these sounds when no one else did. Anyway, they had me record a message for my grandparents, or did I suggest they do this? I do not know which. Why was this a mistake? I mention this again at the anniversary.

Diversion

While in Biloxi, I had my VW serviced at a unauthorized shop. I think I had heard that they gave good service. I trusted the person who told me and had not had any known problems before. It turned out that I did.

I had had the front wheel bearings repacked, and all seemed to be OK. But driving down the highway toward Pascagoula, the car quick slowed down and pulled to the right for a very short period of time. Then everything seemed to be alright. I should have had this checked, but I did not.

Anyway, it was time for an oil change while I was in Flagstaff, so I went to the local VW dealership. While there, they checked the front wheels, and something did not feel right. So, they did some checking: the right wheel bearing had been put in backwards! I was very fortunate that I had not had an accident when I was driving to Pascagoula. The right front wheel could have frozen up, which it almost did. Possibly, I was traveling fast enough for the bearing to be sheared enough to allow the wheel to continue turning. (This was the last time that I used the mechanic shop; but they still would not pay for what it cost me to repair what they had done.) I should also mention that I got to see the bearing that they had to replace.

Trip into the desert with cactus blooming

One morning, Etta told me that we needed to take a drive without telling me exactly why. (Wendy went with us obviously.) So, we headed south toward Phoenix. So far, so good. Now Flagstaff is in the mountains, and we were heading out of them. Even so, I was unprepared for what I saw as we headed down the mountain side toward the desert below.

As far as I could see, all kinds of cacti! Well, you could see this any time of the year. But this was spectacular because this was the time for them to bloom. And bloom they did: the blooms rival the autumn foliage that I have seen anywhere. Oh, man, they were covered with blooms!

Well, such an education that I got does not come for free. They had not really expected me to stay as long as I had. But they had things that needed to be done that I could help with. So, I did.

Dick had gotten out of service the previous fall and had accepted a position on the Flagstaff police department. Then they had found this house and moved in. The previous owners seemed to have left some things laying around that

needed to be taken care of. My father had helped with part of this when he and Mom came down shortly after Wendy's birth. I helped with more of it. It was good exercise.

Home for anniversary

I had been here long enough. I now planned to spend the next three days driving to Edwardsville stopping at Amarillo AFB the first night and eastern Kansas the second one. It did not work out this way though.

I got to the Air Force Base, but their VOQ was already full for the night when I got there. So, I was put in the Visiting Family Quarters instead. OK, if I have to, I have to. So, I got a meal and went to bed.

Then I ran into a problem: I woke up at 4 AM because several people staying there were up and packing. I could not get back to sleep for the noise they were making. So, I got up, ate breakfast, and headed northeast.

This took me through Oklahoma City and then Tulsa before heading toward southwestern Missouri. Well, I was getting low on gas as I reached Oklahoma City so I stopped to get it. Little did I know that I was about to get taken advantaged.

While I was using the bathroom, the attendant squirted some oil on the fenders and door to mimic bad shocks. Gee, I was so gullible! Anyway, I wound up paying for shock absorbers that I did not need. You better believe that they charged me more than they should as well! I did not learn what had happened until I got back to Biloxi. Fortunately, I did not have anyone else take advantage of me.

By 2 PM, I crossed the OK-Missouri border. It was too early to stop for the night. So, I decided to drive the rest of the way. Good thing that I was young! I arrived about 6:30 PM (a 14 hour day). It took some time for me to unwind (as in a couple of days)...

After being at home for a while we all headed to Lawrenceville for the anniversary. And this was when I realized I had made a mistake. Mom had thought that Etta would call during the anniversary get together. I had wound up recording a message from her to her grandmother. So the call did not happen, and no one got to hear the recording of the sounds of the hurricane winds I had recorded earlier. I recorded Etta's message over the hurricane sounds. (I'm not sure that she really wanted to call in the first place. Remember she did not take the time to call Mom and Dad on their 25th anniversary either.) Besides, recording a message is far cheaper than making a call. Ma Bell made sure of that.

After the anniversary celebration on Sunday (the 17th), I headed back to Biloxi on Monday morning from Lawrenceville. Nothing stands out in my mind as I was bored with the whole thing. (Sounds a lot like their Golden Anniversary ten years earlier.)

Well, I had another scare driving through Tennessee. I was on a divided highway meaning that I was driving 70 MPH. Two roads were merging, and I did not know exactly how to do this. Really, I was not really aware of my surroundings at all; nor was I paying as much attention as I should have.

I had to go around a curve that required a much slower speed than I was traveling. So, I kept turning the wheel a little bit more while slowly lifting my foot off the gas. Suddenly, I could no longer control my steering as the car swung around 180 degrees; I started going down the highway backwards! Oh yes, the engine quickly stopped running at the same time which slowed me down some. Now I could steer the car once again which allowed me to guide it over to the side of the road and to a stop. I was thankful that I had a full seat belt snugly fastened. This kept me from being thrown around in the car.

So, after I calmed down a bit, I easily started my car. Then I got it pointed in the right direction, and continued driving home glad to be alive. Even so, when the car had spun around, I was imagining other cars driving toward me while I was going down the highway backwards. Now this scared me.

But I managed to continue on my way and arrive safely in Biloxi. After getting all of my things back into my apartment, I called my squadron informing me that I had returned.

Even back then, I can be fascinated with statistics. I had written down all of my expenses and my mileage every time I filled up with gas. Total miles driven was 4,000; total gas cost was \$40.00. So, my fuel cost was one cent per mile. Not bad, not bad at all. Price per gallon on this trip was 34.9 cents. Mileage: 34.9 MPG.

Instructor

It was time to begin schooling again. The only difference was that I was suppose to learn how to teach others. Before, I was learning things so that I could pass a test. Now, my grade would be coming from how well my students learned what I taught them. This certainly requires a different mind set!

There was a problem with the captain in my section in Annex 7 or it could have developed later. He said that this course was useless. He could teach anyone how to teach others in 10 minutes. Well, he certainly did not even try to do this with me at any time while he was there. And to think that I may have actually listened to him on this point!

It was not Tuesday, and I reported to the section in which I would later be teaching. I would be working here until the Instructor course began. This lasted three weeks, I think. After completing it, I returned to my section.

Instructor Course

Strange thing, but this course did not seem any different from any other course. Well, I may have been the only officers among enlisted personnel. Even the fact that I had a sargent as the instructor did not phase me at all.

This was the time of the Gulf of Ton-kin incident (one of LBJ's many lies to the people). More and more people were being sent to Vietnam. But they had to be trained and quicker so they would be ready sooner. So, all of the enlisted courses were moved from a 5 day to 6 day per week while I was taking this course.

I may have been an officer, but I spent one Saturday in the classroom. The sargent apologize for my having to attend the Saturday class. I told him that I did not mind; if the class was held on Saturday, I would be there. It was only right. (The class ended before another weekend.)

What I did not but should have learned is the importance of my attitude toward the subject I was teaching: I can do this! But instead, I was timid and not sure of myself. I did not see myself as helping my students learn what they needed. So, my lectures were very dull, and dry. In other words, I did not learn what I needed in this course. Of course not being convinced that I could really teach did not help at all.

And yet, I could teach and teach well. I just had to be in a situation in which I forgot about myself. This became quite obvious a couple of years later. Captain White was now in charge of the section, and he was filling out an officer performance evaluation on me. He gave me very low points on teaching in the classroom. Well, we all knew that was absolutely correct. But he also gave me very high points for helping students in Academic Guidance.

I happened to be there several times, but I don't ever remember having a reason for being there. Anyway, I offered to help a student with a problem. After explaining it to him, I left him with a much better understanding than he

had before I came. This happened over and over again. They even reported how well much I had helped.

Somewhere along the same time, an other instructor was needed in the Academic Guidance section as someone had left. I really did not understand why I was not picked to do this. Seems to me that I had already proved that I could do this, and do it quite well.

It is a matter of what Captain White was thinking. If he considered what I did in the classroom, I had to be a bad choice. If he considered what I had done in Academic Guidance helping students, I would be a good choice.

There was another consideration: the head of AG was Captain Van Atta. He was hard to get along with. Well, I really think that I can get along with most people. (Personal opinion of course)

Teaching electronic fundamentals

My section taught the basics of electronics in three blocks. The first one was Direct Current and lasted for three weeks. The second one was Alternate Current and lasted for three weeks. The third one was Power Supplies. Each one of these included how particular circuits work with them being more complex as the students progressed through the blocks of instruction.

At times I was told to be the second instructor when a class was doing laboratory work. (I really do not remember what the class instructor thought about my work during these times.) But otherwise, these three years as an instructor were not good times for me. It was the other things that occurred during this time that made a difference for my good.

Even so, I have some memories that I want to share that are related to being an instructor, some good, and some bad.

It was not long after I had become an instructor that there was a family get together of all of the instructors. The captain in charge of it decided to delegated me the responsibility for providing the entertainment. But I had not idea how to do this, and I told him so. It did not matter; as far as he was concerned, I had to to it. Well, I didn't. I was on Annex 7 during this gathering watching from afar. I was wanting to know what was happening.

The captain was very unhappy with what I had not done. So, he sent word to me to see him in his office at 4 PM on a given day. When I arrived, I did not see him. So I asked another instructor who was still there. When I asked about him, I was told that he had left earlier.

Now I see this as tit for tat. As far as I am concerned, he was wrong both times. When it was obvious that I had absolutely no idea of what to do, he could have provided some help in some way. And the latter situation was just plain dumb no matter what the lesson was suppose to be. I got a bad opinion of this officer even if he was the one who had cashed the \$50 cashier cheque at the Officer's Club.

And this time it was around 5:45 AM on a weekday. The head of my section was on leave for a while. A young captain in the section was now the acting head as of this day. Betty, a second lieutenant, had been assigned to my section beginning on this day. She did not make it.

She was at a traffic light which was red. And then it turned green. But as she began driving through the intersection someone ran their red light hitting her car. She was taken to the Base hospital, since she was wearing her uniform.

So, a phone call was made to my section informing this young captain of her accident. This put a great burden on him. Somehow, he managed to get everything done. Obviously, he did a much better job at taking care of this than I had done with the assignment I had been given.

It was some time before she was well enough to begin her duties as an instructor. She was full of life despite what happened and quite a character. She was also a tom boy of sorts and I mentioned her in my married years as well.

One thing about her was that she seemed to be addicted to cokes. When she got to work, she would open a coke. Then she would drink from it during breaks between instructions periods. When there was only a little left, she would open another. And so it would go through out the day.

Well it pays to keep something over the coke bottle. OK, it did one time. While she was on a break, she picked up the coke bottle to take a drink. That is when she saw something in the coke. It was a fly! She had almost drunk it. When she told this experience to us, she added this statement, "And it was still moving around!"

One thing about her teaching method was that she was very enthusiastic. It is something that I should have learned how to do. It would have made all the difference to my teaching method!

I may not have know how to teach properly, but I did know the subject matter. I just may not have used this knowledge as well as I should.

Charlie was one of a few civilian instructors in my section, and he had a diagram of a DC voltage multiplier in front of him. (DC output was four times the AC input.) It appeared that he did not really understand how it worked. So, I said something to him that others overheard. They later told me that I had approached him in the wrong way.

Regardless of this, I began explaining how this voltage multiplier worked. I don't remember how many times we went over this, but it finally made sense to him. So, I felt good that he understood.

When I was told what I should not have done, I went back to Charlie to apologize for the way I had approached him. But he said that it was alright. He had learned something.

There were softball diamonds at Annex 7 that were used in the afternoon after morning schooling was over. There was also a place which served lunch. So students or instructors could eat and then play softball before leaving for the day.

The instructors had a good team, and we would play some of the teams made up from individual classes. Well the word got around that we were undefeated. And there was a class that did not believe this could be possible; they said so. They even dared to challenge us since they thought they were better. OK, we're willing to play them. That is when they learned how good we really were. The score was not even close!

Since I was on duty from 6:00 until 3:30, I began taking my lunches. It consisted of a pint of milk, two peanut butter and honey sandwiches, a few carrot sticks, and an apple or orange. Other officers and civilians were doing the same.

Some of the people also played double pinochle during this time as well. I had played pinochle while in high school with my parents and others at home. So, it was not very hard to get acquainted with double pinochle. It was rather enjoyable to say the least.

One set of partners had almost all of the high cards. So, their bid was rather high to start with. Then they began to play the hand out. Time after time, they took the trick. In fact, they were down to the last trick; they had taken all of the rest. Well, their luck ran out. One of their opponents had managed to keep one high card which took the last one. Yes, it was Charlie who prevented his opponents from taking it. He rose up out of his seat said something with the biggest grin on his face! It was a sight to see.

Pistol qualification

Officers were required to qualify with a pistol. What they meant by "qualify", I do not remember. (Probably they were suppose to fire a 38 calibre pistol.) The target and pistol were the same as summer camp with the same basic training (hardly any). But this time I did much better: 235 out of 300. (240 would have given me a sharpshooter ribbon. At the time I wished that I could have fired the pistol again because I thought I could have earned this ribbon.

Did I say anything? Nope. But now I wonder if my saying something would have given me the opportunity to qualify for sharpshooter.

My big mouth

I had gotten to know the church group rather well. Somehow, it was suggested that I visit some other churches, specifically the one at Natchez. (I wonder if Earnestine had anything to do with this. The pastor's wife there was her sister.)

So I drove to Natchez, MS, for church in July. I thought it was just to attend church, but was it? The Mississippi pageant (for Miss America) was held in Natchez that Saturday evening. Arrangements had been made for me to attend it along with a couple of young ladies from the church.

I may have been 24 and looked (gawked?) at the women in bathing suits on the beach, but I was not ready to spend time with a lady let alone two of them. Was this some sort of a blind date that I did not know about? (I still do not know.) Needless to say, I did not enjoy beauty pageants. Truly boring!

My last semester at the U of I, I had gotten a hold of literature put out by the Communist Party of America. Sure enough, it was written exactly as my freshman English class had said it would be four years earlier. Propaganda can

sound like the truth, but when the facts are investigated, it is not the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

This led me to say something that Sister Evelyn did not appreciate at all. She had some literature that had been written by the Citizen's Council. This was also known as the White Citizen's Council since it was published by whites and sanctioned by the people in a position of power in the state.

Because of who was backing this publication, many of the Caucasians in the state thought that the information in the articles the publication contained were factual. If it was in there, it had to be the truth.

She gave it to me and asked me to read it. I suppose she wanted to let me know what was going on in the state. I did not take this in consideration. Instead, I was reading it to get some information. That meant that I would judge it based upon what was written and how.

So, I read all of it. It just did not read like it was a factual account of anything. Highly emotional words were used when describing events. This quickly raised a red flag for me. It sounded good, but was it? Why did the language seem so similar to the Communist literature I had read almost two years before? If the latter was not really the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, how could I believe this publication?

I actually came to the conclusion that the paper she handed me could have been written by the same people as had earlier written the Communist literature. The purpose of writing propaganda is the same whether it is for ultra liberals or ultra conservatives: only tell the part you want people to know, but make sure you leave out anything that might be something you don't want anyone to know.

My "mistake" was that I bluntly said what seemed obvious to me. Evelyn did not like my comments at all. I'm not sure what she thought of me. Was I some liberal Yankee that did

not what was right and wrong? Was I just misguided? Nor did I ever find out what her husband Gerald thought of what I had said to her. (They are both dead now.)

Another way to get myself into trouble! Well we have remained good friends until their deaths.

The rain maker

I was getting lonely after church services and headed to other church members' homes for some company on a regular basis. Now that I think about, I wonder if there were other things that I could be doing on Sunday afternoon. (A second story garage apartment is not a pleasant place to be all of the time.)

Well I could have gone to the officer's club. There might be some people there that I could hang out with. But somehow, that does not sound like something to do after being in church this morning.

On the other hand, I had been at the casual bar on Friday evening. (I did not have to wear a tie while in this area of the Officer's club.) They had music playing and people were dancing including some WAF (Women's Air Force) officers. One of them coaxed me to get up and at least pretend that I was dancing. After doing this for a while, she suggested that we go to her apartment to talk. (I think that was all.)

So we did, and she never suggested doing anything else. It was definitely nice to do this, but I was clueless as to what I was suppose to do if anything. Why did she ask me? Did she think she wanted to begin a relationship of any kind? Was she bored like me and just wanted some company? I did not know how to interact with a lady, so I may have missed out on having a good friend.

I suppose this shows that I really did not know very much about the base and what I could do on it. For example, was there a library? If so, I could have gotten some books to

read. I later learned that the base had a theatre where I could watch movies. But even this could get old after a while. So does watching TV especially a badly working one!

One of the families I visited were Vic and Bonnie. They had a daughter who graduated from high school that spring, but I was not interested in her. She was not interested in boys yet either.

With the amount of rain we usually got, Bonnie paid attention to rain that came by Wednesday night. It seems there were some old signs early in the week that forecasted rain by Wednesday night. Well, I began to be another sign for this same purpose.

Any time I visited there on a Sunday afternoon, it seemed to rain before Wednesday night. Since we averaged an inch of rain every week, this was not all that strange.

But it was now getting into late August. Their corn was ripening and would be ready for harvest in a few weeks. So, I was asked not to visit them during September. So I did. Sure enough: there was very little rain that month! They got their corn crop in without any problem. (I could brag that my lack of presence at the farm that month made the month even dryer than normal, but I won't.)

But one summer later, I was very busy doing something else. So, I did not visit from early June until the beginning of October. It was a very dry summer for them! (More about that later.)

September passed into October. This is association time in the Primitive Baptist churches in Central and Southern Mississippi. So, I attended them on Saturday and Sunday for the first and three weekends.

Sometime during this month, an event happened that would affect me in a way that would change me greatly. My pastor, Bro. Lonnie Sr. was coming home from a church

meeting. On the way, he stopped at a home in east central Mississippi to tell a young lady something. He was glad to get a cup of coffee (or more than one) as well. It was what he said that counted. He told Susan that there was a young man (me) on the Gulf Coast that he wanted her to meet. She said, "Bring him on."

Now how was he going to accomplish this? She lived 180 miles north of me. How were we going to get to the same place at the same time? How could anything really come of even such a meeting? Besides, I was not really one to become close to a lady. (I just mentioned a similar situation in which this WAF officer lived less than a mile apart without anything coming of my visit with her in her home.) So, I really did not know how even if I wanted to do so.

Now why did Bro. Lonnie want us to meet? Well he was the pastor at both churches, so he knew both of us fairly well. It just seemed like we would make a good couple: we would be good to and for each other. But from where did this idea come from? Did this come from God? I am very much inclined to think so.

God takes my case

I mentioned a lot of reasons why this would not and could not happen. But it only takes one reason for it to happen and create a good marriage that lasted 35 years. This heading says it all. There were ups and downs, twists and turns that led to our wedding on September 10, 1965. Many of them were because of mistakes I and others made. By April, 1967, I was positive that she was too young for me. I even told Bro. Lonnie this in a tone of voice that said I serious! As a result, he never said anything directly about it after that. God also heard me, but He did not listen to me at all. Instead, He continued to carry out His plan as if I had never said it.

By now, it was probably the first weekend in November. A church meeting was scheduled over the Thanksgiving weekend for young Primitive Baptists at Whitehaven, MS, a suburb of Memphis. The idea behind it was to get the youth of these churches more involved in their individual churches.

Bro. Lonnie told me about it and insisted that I attend. So, I made arrangements to do so. I had to teach the day after Thanksgiving, so I decided to fly to Memphis Friday evening. He would pick me up at the airport and take me to where I would be spending the nights.

Thanksgiving Weekend

Wednesday and Thursday are known for large numbers of people flying, but the opposite is true for Friday, November 25. So, I almost did not get going to Memphis. Even so, it was a "milk run." Our first stop was Mobile, AL, which was 90 miles or so east. Then the airplane headed northwest making several stops before Memphis. Bro. Lonnie was there to greet me.

From there we headed to the Guess home where I would spend my nights. This family consisted of four people: two brothers and two sisters. They had earlier lost their parents at some point but stayed together as a family. They had a fairly large home that included one large room that they had made into a dormitory for this meeting. That is where I would sleep along with several young men (boys might be a better term consider our ages.)

The next morning I got up, ate breakfast, and got myself ready for church. Next came the real reason that I needed to be at this meeting, and it had nothing to do with what Bro. Lonnie had told be. But, it had everything to do with what God knew that I needed to learn.

A young engaged couple came to the house to visit. (They knew the Guess family very well. While there, they also

visited with some of the others staying there.) It was not what they said that caught my attention; it was how they said it. It was their body language. And being engaged, they were not even aware of any of this: they were so very much in love!

It was what I sensed much more than what I physically saw that I needed to learn. They seemed to have a little world of their own, and they were reaching out from this world to others as they talked. Even when he was talking to one person and she to another, they were still doing so from this world.

This amazed me! Suddenly, this was the type of relationship that I wanted to have with a lady! It was something that I thought about all day even all the way to when I was in bed.

Meanwhile, we left the house to go to Whitehaven Primitive Baptist Church. Our usual church services consist of 30 minutes of congregational singing (no instruments) followed by a sermon. Since this was suppose to be to get the youth of the church more involved, the young men spoke instead of a minister, usually 3 for each service. And on this day we had three services: morning, afternoon, and evening. (Lunch and supper were served at the church.)

I enjoyed all of the services, probably more so than the ones I had attended at home. I was even given time to speak as well. This was only the second time I had been in a pulpit since the time God called me to preach years before. Even so, I was somewhat excited about the entire experience.

But things were building to a crescendo as I laid down on the bed. Now I began speaking to God very emphatically. I really wanted to have a relationship like the one I had seen this day! I had to have it! And then came my answer, not in words, but I could feel it. In words I felt, "You will have it,

and you will preach." I had my answer from God, and I was really excited! I tried to get some sleep, but this was very difficult. I never really did calm down very much for the rest of the weekend.

Somehow I managed to get through the Sunday morning service and lunch. I returned to the Guess home for the afternoon and tried to get some rest. I was too excited. That evening, I attended another Primitive Baptist church in the area where I was asked to speak along with an ordained minister. The pastor, Bro. Jerry, told me afterward that he very seldom lets someone else take his pulpit which surprised me. He did not regret doing so for me.

Then it was time to fly home. I was flying standby which meant that I was subject to being bumped if the air line had enough passengers to fill the airplane. So, I got as far as Jackson, MS, before having to give up my seat.

Then later in the night, I managed to get on a plane to New Orleans. Now, the bus station was at the airport, so I got a bus heading toward Biloxi/Gulfport early in the morning. It was probably around 4:30 AM when it arrived at the Gulfport bus station. There I got a taxi to take me to the airport where my car was. Then I drove to my apartment to shower, eat, and put on my uniform. I arrived at school shortly before 6 AM.

There was something very different about how I taught that morning! I was still excited about what God had told me on Saturday. I could not stand in one place. I was "bouncing" around as I spoke. Even my students noticed the difference.

Oh, if I had only learned how to harness this! How much better I would have been as a teacher. But I did not, so my lectures quickly became dull and meaningless again...

But the excitement continued to bubble within me. I was looking forward to this relationship even if I did not know how this was going to happen. God said it would, so it was

coming. I also began spending more time reading my Bible. Again, I did not have a good way of doing this. Instead, I was reading one area and then another. I was learning some things, but I was not studying the Bible like I had studied textbooks during my high school and college years.

Christmas week

It was now one month after God's promise about marriage and the ministry (December 26). I was so excited that I just had to tell someone. I was about to burst! So, I called my grandparents which I had never done before. We talked for a while, and I spilled the beans. I had finally made a definite decision. And so I said, "I will be married in two years!" I did not know any lady that would make this even a possibility. I don't even know where this idea came from. After talking for a while longer, we ended the phone call. What no one has ever told me is whether my grandparents told anyone about this call. It does not appear to be the case. But when they learned the following June that I was in fact going to marry, they knew that I had be serious when I told them.

Four days later, my father had scheduled a conference call for the family. Etta was still in Flagstaff, AZ. My two brothers were in Edwardsville, IL. My parents had arranged to have an extra phone for the four people who would be in their home. One phone would be plugged in on the main floor, and the second phone would be plugged in on the second floor. (How different things are now with cell phones!) Anyway, Mom and Dad shared one receiver; Tom and Webb shared the other one.

Then the call came. The six of us chatted for a while until something was said that made Etta think that the call was over, so she said good-bye. That is when I decided that I just had to get my news in and quick! Well, Dad was complaining about this costing him money. (Knowing AT&T, it probably did!)

But I continued anyway. The news was for everyone, But I directed it directly to Webb. I said, "If you are not married in two years, I will beat you!" And with that, the conference call ended. I have no idea what anyone thought about what I had said. But it did not matter! I was going to be married within two years, and that was that. And yet, I had no idea who she might be. But there was someone who was available; I just did not know who.

I wonder now why I had to see what the proper example of a relationship between a man and woman is from this couple I mentioned. Why didn't I see this in my parents? It has only been recently in interacting with a nice lady in Westview Tower that I realized some of the signs of love in my parents' actions toward each other. The possible answer is that I was not ready yet for this revelation. It was part of God's plan.

January through the second weekend of June, 1967

It was the second Sunday of January. Where do I go to church this morning? I really did not want to go to Pascagoula because the minister preaches the same thing month after month. It was beginning to become boring. The next closest church was in an unincorporated area, Petal, northeast of Hattiesburg. So I headed out early in that direction. This is Bro. Lonnie's home church which he also pastored.

After church, he invited me, "Come go up the country with me." Being foot loose and having nothing else special to do, I agreed to do so. Then I went home with him and his family for lunch. After a while, he and I headed to Sharon Church outside of Lake, MS. First, we stopped by Bro. Winfred's home for a visit and supper.

Bro. Lonnie and I left before the others, and I really did not know why exactly. His comment: he wanted to be there first

so he could welcome the people as they entered the church building. However, on this night, he drove around several of dirt country roads while he talked to me.

There was something about a young lady that might be at the church that night. And this is when he did his best to sell me on her. Yet, he said there might be a problem. Her Dad did not see well at night, so they may not make it. (His wife nor the young lady drove.)

Remember that I did not know about Bro. Lonnie's conversation with her, so there was no hint that I was being set up. But with this knowledge, a call could have been made to her home before we left Hattiesburg. Or, Sister Shirley could have called after we left. So, this family could have made a special effort to attend this particular night service. I just do not know.

Well, we were the first ones at the church, and the rest came in gradually. Then singing began, and I took my seat in the second row on the right side. I was use to sitting up front, so I did again this night. But still there was no sign of Susan and her parents that I knew of. They may have come in after the singing began.

After the end of the service, we always have the right hand of fellowship with the minister and others. I have to admit that as the people went up to the front of the church row by row to do this, I saw some more people that had come in late. I just did not know if this young lady was one of them. (He had not yet told me what her name was. In fact, I don't think he had ever told her my name.)

Bro. Lonnie usually says good-by to the congregation at the back of the church as the people leave to go home. He did this this night as well. Some people leave immediately; others stay around to chat for a while. After a while he took me over to where a young lady was standing. We were about to be introduced.



My introduction to her was rather short. He mentioned her name and a few things such as that she was the one he wanted me to meet. But there was not anything very special about any of it that I remember. At least, now I knew her name, it was Susan.

But did he ever lay it on thick when he was introducing me to her! Again he mentioned my name, and then he got into some specifics, some of which were at best exaggerations. I was in the Air Force. I was a lieutenant. I was rich. I was single. I was not married, and I was all hers.

She later said that when she heard all of this, that she wished that there was a hole she could get into hide. And she was definitely embarrassed. But it did give us a topic of conversation. I understood how she felt because I was considerably bothered by what I had heard out of his mouth.

So, for the few moments that we had to talk, I tried as best I could to comfort her.

If this was suppose to bring us together in some way, it sure seemed like a lead balloon! Or was it? I suppose time would tell. In any case, because of this I really wondered why he said what he had. I know he likes to joke around...

Gulfcoast Primitive Baptist Church

During 1966, the group meeting in Biloxi decided that they wanted to organize a church. So the process began, and ministers were invited to help us do this over the fifth weekend in January. The meeting began with services Friday evening through Sunday morning. The constitution of it was Saturday afternoon.

All of the families were preparing to have company, so I decided to do the same thing even if I was a bachelor. So, I bought a set of plates and flatware. Did I buy any cooking things? Possibly so. I even went so far as buy some bacon and eggs which I had never fixed for myself. And there was the matter of of linens to buy. I thought I was ready for company! I think I even bought a toaster for toast.

Well, I did have company on Friday night. Bro. James Allen spent the night with me. Then Saturday morning, I fixed breakfast for us. I burned it would be a better description. Anyway, we both managed to get it to go down and stay there.

This was the male part of the engaged couple I had met the previous Thanksgiving. Even though he spent the night, I did not mention anything about God's revelation to me two months before. Why, I don't know.

His car, a VW product, was having some problems: it kept smelling like gas when the engine was running. Since I knew where the local VW dealership was located, we drove to it. When someone came out the Service Department, he

gunned the engine a couple of times to make sure that the gas could be smelled.

He was quickly told to turn off the motor. This was repeated before he realize they knew exactly what was the problem. Gas was leaking out of a hose onto the motor. We could have had a fire at any time, and they knew it. Well, this was fixed is short order.

Then in the afternoon, our church was constituted. Most of the regular attendees brought their letters from the churches where they had been members. I had gotten mine from Champaign. A few decided that they would not. But we all rejoiced that we now had a church near our homes that we could call our own!

Then in February, I again decided to go to Petal for church the second Sunday. Afterward I got another invitation "to go up the country" with him. Only there was a different twist this time; he also invited a young lady that had attended his church that morning. (She was a member of another denomination.)

After lunch, the three of us headed northeast for supper and church. (I don't remember where we at that evening. I do remember that he insisted that she and I sit in the back seat together.

Before leaving Hattiesburg, Bro. Lonnie and I drove in separate cars to another home which is where we picked up the lady.

What would have happened if Susan and her family would have come to church that evening, I don't know. It now seems that that could have thrown a wrench in the works for sure. Was he trying to get me to play the field some? I still do not understand the logic in any of this.

But he was thinking from one view point, and I am from another. Besides now I know that Susan was the one for me.

He did not know this yet.

Meanwhile, I was still thinking that I would be married in two years. Could this young lady be the one? There was a possibility to that. So, I decided to find out. As a result, I was rather serious in the things that I said to her during our conversations that evening. Even she could sense this.

Honestly, I was too involved in her being by my side to think much about Susan and what might happen if she came to church that night. And to describe that service: it was the usual congregational singing (A Capella) and a sermon. Then we headed back to Hattiesburg.

It was cold by the time we got back, and there was a large amount of frost on the windshields. So, we started our cars to warm them up and get rid of the frost. Well, my car quit on me while we were inside. Some of the frost came off but only enough to peek through a small hole in the ice. Stupid me, I thought that I could safely drive this way. I almost had an accident doing this. She must have had some very negative thoughts about me after this fiasco!

Somehow she got through to me about the dangers of my driving without a clean windshield. So I stopped and let the car run a while until the engine heated up enough to clean the ice off. Meanwhile we were both more than a little cold. By running the window wipers, I was able to get a larger area of the windshield that I could see through. So I took her home and then headed back to Biloxi.

For the month or so, I talked to her on the phone several times. Good old AT&T got her money out this relationship. It cost me about \$30.00 But she finally told me that she was not a Primitive Baptist nor did she want to be one. So that ended this relationship. She was a nice lady, but it would not have worked out.

Beginning of the relationship

This brings me back to Janet and James, the engaged couple at the Whitehaven meeting at Thanksgiving. Since then, they had set a wedding date: March 25th. I thought a lot of them, and I wanted to be at their wedding. So did Bro. Lonnie, and he suggested that I go with him. From there he would be going back to Lake, MS, for church Saturday night and Sunday morning. He was also planning to stay in the area to attend a Sunday evening service at Bro. Hilton's home church. I was welcome to do all of this with him. We would return after services that evening.

I agreed to do this. Well it made more sense for us to take one car than two. I really did not have that much to do over this weekend anyway. What I did not anticipate that this was chance for Bro. Lonnie to get Susan and I together again. But I was only thinking about being at this wedding and attending services three times over the weekend, nothing else.

I had one more wedding to attend before this weekend. Friday was Good Friday which is a holiday for service people. So, this is when Betty, who taught in the same section as me, decided to get married. This way we could all attend if we wanted to do so. Well, I did. I dare say that she was very, very happy. I got to buy a wedding gift as well.

Then Saturday morning, I headed to Hattiesburg. I may have eaten lunch at Bro. Lonnie's. Then early in the afternoon I moved my suitcase into his car and we headed for Bay Springs, MS, an hour away.

Bro. Lonnie found the church fairly easily, but he had been there before. It was a nice wedding, but events later that day have clouded what happened at it. After the reception we headed once again to Bro. Winfred's home for supper.

He has a daughter, Cheryl, who was trying her best trying to get my complete attention. Seems like she would do this with any young man... So, I was definitely not interested in

her. (She found her a husband years later when she was more mature.) We visited for a while before supper, and then headed to church afterward.

At some point, Bro. Lonnie mentioned that we would be staying at Susan's parents' home. That was alright with me, and I did not think anything more about it. Besides, they were not at the evening service. So afterward, we headed to Union, MS, a 20 minute drive from the church.

When we got there, Sister Mildred had supper ready. So very wisely, Bro. Lonnie took me aside. He told me that it would be an affront for us not to eat with them. OK, that made sense to me, so I sat down with everyone else and had my fourth meal of the day.

Nothing was said about me being with Bro. Lonnie. Now Sister Mildred is usually quite touchy about serving meals. She always wants to make sure that every one has everything they need. So, it seems to me that she knew before hand that I was coming. Otherwise she would have apologized for not having enough for all of us. That is who she was.

Perhaps 30 minutes after this meal ended, I had had enough, and so had Susan. So she invited me to her room. She had a record player on her dresser with several Elvis Presley 45 RPM records. She began to talk which led to our beginning a conversation between us. While doing so, she played some of these records, not really knowing for sure what she should do.

Our conversation led to recent events, and I mentioned that I had attended a wedding that afternoon. Her interest peaked, so she wanted to know who got married. So, I told her. Well, she knew the bride fairly well as she should have. Janet was her double second cousin! And we continued to talk about one thing or another.

We were getting to where we both felt comfortable with talking about many personal things. This was when she revealed that years she felt like she should join the church. The only problem was that the church her family was attending had recently split over something. She really did not know which side she should join. So, she did not.

This is when I began to encourage her to do something about it this weekend. And so, we talked rather serious about this for a while. But the time was getting later, and later. When the clock read 12:30 AM, the decision was made that we all needed some sleep!

So, Bro. Lonnie and I were given Susan's room, each one taking a side of the double bed. Susan was sleeping in her parent's room on a single bed.

The next morning, Susan gave me a sheet of paper with her address on it. She said that she wanted me to write her. After we all got ready for church, we headed there. I was still hoping that Susan would join that morning, but she did not.

Clearly she was interested in developing a relationship. There was something about our conversation over the period of two hours that peaked her interest in me.

Strange thing: I did not tell Bro. Lonnie about what Susan and I had discussed about baptism. Why wouldn't I? Somehow, I thought it was something that should be something between the two of us, I guess.

Lunch was always served on the fourth Sunday. Afterward we headed west toward Bro. Hilton's home. I do remember that there had been a lot of rain recently, and the roads were of dirt. OK, they were basically mud on this afternoon. But we made it safely. After visiting for a while, we had supper. Then it was back to driving in the mud on the way to church.

After the congregational singing, Bro. Hilton announced that Bro. Lonnie and I would preach. I definitely not ready to hear this, nor was I ready to do so. But then Bro. Lonnie got my attention. He told me that the people expected him to do the preaching regardless of what Bro. Hilton had said. I should only speak for a few minutes and leave the rest of the time for him. Boy was I glad to hear this!

After church they gave Bro. Lonnie some money, and they handed me \$10. On the way home, I slipped it in Bro. Lonnie's Bible which was sitting in the middle of the front seat. When he said something about this later, I said that since he was doing all of the driving, he should have it to help with his gas. He was appreciative of that.

When it came to understanding what it takes to court and then marry a lady, I obviously did not have a clue! Well, this was the case with many other things as well. I still had a lot of growing up to do. Worse was that I did not realize it at the time.

For example, she told to write her. I really think that I took this the wrong way: it sounded like a demand. (It was not!) So, I did because she told me to. But what should I write? We had talked about so many different things Saturday night. Perhaps something more about myself would be good. Nope, I didn't write anything about this.

Instead I wrote about one thing and it was not me. I sought to encourage to join Sharon Church and be baptized. Paragraph after paragraph was about this. And I should mention that it was sometime before I sat down to do this. Some procrastination was definitely occurring!

It never occurred to me that she might be the right one for me; it really did not. In fact, I did not see any connection between writing to a lady and perhaps marrying her later. So, when I got a letter back from her, I did not even think about writing back let alone doing it.

This is sort of a side topic: Bro. James Allen was to be ordained as a Primitive Baptist minister. (He was a licentiate when I first met him in Memphis in November.) So, I just had to attend this meeting as well. This time I did things the right way: I asked for and got leave for this week (Wednesday before to the Tuesday after the ordination. Then I drove to Memphis instead of flying. I suppose part of the reason was the fact that I was looking forward to my own ordination as well. (I just did not know when or if this would happen.)

Two weeks later (fourth weekend), I took another week of leave. This was for an annual meeting for my parent's home church. It was also when my Dad and Bro. Bob were ordained deacons of that church.

When Little Flock Church was organized a year earlier, one of the first items of the business meeting at that time was for this ordination to take place. So, when the ordination service began, the church clerk read the portion of the minutes that authorized the ordination about to take place.

Then I had another bobo that my Mom noticed. At the end of the ordination, everyone was given the opportunity to shake hands with the two newly ordained deacons. For some reason that I do not understand, I did not do this. I just stood there. It bothered her to say the least. He did not say anything one way or another.

Then on Monday, I drove south to my home in Biloxi. When I got to Hattiesburg, I decided to stop at Bro. Lonnie's home. After all, I did have some news: my father's ordination.

He had some news as well. Likely he thought it was something that would be good for me to hear. The previous Saturday evening, he had preached at Lake, MS, as usual. This time Susan and family were there.

But she did something he was not expecting at all. When the invitation was made for anyone who desired to join this

church, she slipped out the right side of her pew and walked up the right side of the church and over to him. Here he was looking at his hymnal when he notice some movement near him. He looked up, and there she was. She finally wanted to join! She was accepted and then was baptized Sunday afternoon.

My comment was that another of God's children had come home to the church. Yes, I was happy, but I was not prepared for came out of his mouth soon afterward. He said, "You need to go see her." To this, I blurted out, "Bro. Lonnie, she's too young!" I said it with enough authority that he knew it was useless to say anything more, my mind was made up!

But it did not matter what I said nor how obstinate I was about what I thought. God was not listening to me. He knew what needed to happen, and in the next month, He made sure they happened.

Apparently it was important that Susan be a member, and God had a part to play in this happening, all part of His plan. On that fourth Saturday afternoon, she was a little tired, so she lay down. Then she drifted off and had a dream. She saw two ponds with a bridge going between the two. One pond was very agitated, and the other was calm and peaceful. She realized that all she had to do in this dream was to cross the bridge to get to the peaceful side. When she woke up, she said, "Yes, I am going! And she did. (One more thing checked off on God's plan. You should be able to see more of the earlier ones if you look carefully.)

It is the early part of May, and the scene is Susan's home in Union. She and her Mom are talking. She asked but I had not replied to her letter. I'm not sure that her Mom knew, but she told her daughter that my letter had had the desired effect. Still, this was clearly bothering her.

Yet, I was not the only young man that she had written. There was a soldier from a town about 20 miles from Union with whom she was corresponding. He was stationed in Germany at the time. So, she had already written more letters to him than me.

Another important point. She knew that I was speaking in church services. So she assumed that I would be ordained as a minister sometime in the future. (This did not occur in reality until 20 years later, and she was by my side when it happened.)

In another conversation with her Mom, the topic turned to marriage. Susan said, "When I get married, I want Bro. Dan to marry me." (She was really meaning that she wanted me to perform the ceremony for her and her husband to be.)

Well, Sister Mildred purposely took it to mean the opposite. So, she replied, "He can't marry himself."

Susan could think very quick on her feet just as her mother just did. So her reply was, "Dan Lewis does not know it yet, but I am going to date him!" And before Mom could say anything more, she said, "Dan Lewis does not know it yet, but I'm going to marry him!" (Sounds like my "goose" was already cooked, and I was still thinking that she was too young!)

I think this is another part of God's plan. If she and I were going to become a married couple, she was going to have to settle on one young man. Bigamy does not work in this case. Well, what had come out of her mouth definitely proved who she really wanted. She had also committed herself to make this a reality. So, she was then ready to do what was necessary during the coming fourth week of May.

Bro. Lonnie gets involved in this as well. Somewhere around this time he was telling me once again what I needed to do. This time, I needed to attend the communion weekend at Lake, MS on the fourth weekend. There was an

older minister who knew his Bible very well and knew how to teach it. I had to listen to him. So far, I listened to just about everything he told me to do except when it came to Susan. I listened again.

But how did the church decide to invite this particular minister on this weekend. Even if Bro. Lonnie suggested him, did he do it just as way to get me to come to where Susan lived? I doubt that. Besides that would have been for the wrong reason. I don't see God bless the services if this were the truth. That would make me more important than God. Anyway I agreed to be there for Saturday and Sunday.

But God still had to work on me some more. This came in the form of a taped sermon that Bro. Lonnie preached at my church the third Sunday evening. It was like no sermon he had ever preached to my knowledge.

At some point, I had bought a reel to reel tape recorder with 6" reels. I could record two stereo tracks or four single tracks. With the latter I could record slow enough to get three hours on each track (12 hours total). I had it with me on this Sunday evening.

Bro. Lonnie usually starts speaking at a normal speed. But as he gets more into his sermon, he begins to pick up speed. Then as Sister Mildred often said of his sermons, before he finished she had to run to keep up with his preaching. He could speak very fast!

He warned us when he began that this sermon was going to be different. He wanted to preach the entire sermon at his normal beginning speed. Then he started out. Well, we kept waiting for him to speed up, but he never did. As Bro. Ruffin would say afterward, "He actually did it!" We were all shocked. Well, at least I had to sermon to listen to later. This time I could pay more attention to what he was saying rather than to how fast he was saying it.

So, how did this evening fit into God's plan? I would not know until the next Saturday afternoon. It was the one of two things that can only be attributed to God. The other was the choice for the visiting minister in Lake, MS, on the fourth weekend.

The weekend had arrived, and everything was in place. Only God knew this to be true at the time. The rest of us would be finding out as the day progressed. I was up early Saturday morning and drove out around 7 AM. (It would take a little less than three hours to drive to Lake.)

So I was the first one to arrive, and I parked on the left side of the church. Not very much later, Elder James Allen and Sister Janet arrived parking next to mine. We chatted for a while before other began to arrive. After someone unlocked the church, I went inside to set up my tape recorder. I also visited with people after finishing this.

About 10:30, the singing began, and I started recording the service and sat down in the second row. For some reason, I was looking back periodically to see who had come in. No sign of Susan. (Now why would I want to do that?)

The song service was over, and the preaching was about to begin. It did not take me very long before I discovered that this minister was as good as advertized. Before the morning was over, I decided that he was actually much better than that! I still remember the text 50 years later; it was really this inspiring. 1 Corinthians 1:30. His emphasis was on wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

The service ended with the usual right hand of fellowship. Then I went up to the pulpit to take care of my tape recorder. Others were already heading out the door to return to their homes for the afternoon. So, Bro. Lonnie was at the back door saying good-by to them. Then while putting the microphone in the recorder, I happened to glance up. Why, I don't know, but I did. What I saw was Bro. Curtis Ward

walking out of his pew and then down the aisle toward me. Susan was on his arm.

No one else had bothered to ask me if I wanted to have lunch and spend the afternoon with them. But when he got to where I was, he did. I said, "Yes" of course. But I was not sure how to get to their home, and I said so. I really wanted someone to ride with me to make sure I did not miss a turn. So, he said that Susan could ride with me.

Now why would I say something like this? Did I secretly want it to be Susan? Was it God that was directing my mind? Curious!

And then there was what had been going on in Susan's mind after church. She later told me that she had wanted to spend the afternoon with Belinda, her cousin. This was why she was hanging on her Dad's arm. Now she was not going to get to do that. There was a young man that could use some attention after lunch. Mom needed to wash the dishes and clean up the kitchen.

So, they left for a short while. Shortly thereafter, Bro. Lonnie appeared seemingly out of nowhere. He asked me if anyone had asked me to go home with them. I replied, "Bro. Ward did."

This made him happy. Why shouldn't it? I was going to be in the same house with Susan until time to return for the evening service, or so I thought.

But then he told me that I was suppose to have supper with him and the visiting minister at Sister Ruby's home. She was a widow and a very wonderful lady. I really loved being around her until her death some years later.

I didn't know where she lived, and I told him so. He replied that he could meet me at the church at 4:30; he would drive me the rest of the way. This made sense, so I agreed.

So, he left me again, and I went looking for Susan as I carried my tape recorder with me. I found her, and we headed to my car. I put the recorder behind my seat and went around the car to help Susan get into the car. Yes, I opened the car door for her. (I was an officer and a gentleman by act of Congress. Why shouldn't I do this?)

She sat down, and I made sure her seat belt was fastened. Then as I prepared to close her door, I noticed that her full skirt was hanging out. So, I mentioned this to her whereupon she took care of it. Now it was time to close the door...

But that is when I hear Bro. Lonnie's voice behind me, "When the two of you decide to get married, I will do it for free!" You see, he had parked about 5 feet behind me. Even so, I had not heard him walk to his car.

Then he got into his car and left. Yes, he was teasing again. He also had an alternative motive in saying this as well.

Since then, I have wondered if this comment may have reminded Susan of what she had told her Mom about what she was going to do with me. It might have affected what she did that afternoon. What I do know is that I have a very good memory that lasts for a long time. It would still be on my mind three and a half months later. I guarantee you that it affected my actions at the reception...

I walked around to my side of the car, and soon thereafter her parents pulled out of the church parking area. I followed them. Susan and I had no problems in following them all the way to their home.

Sister Mildred went inside and finished cooking. I probably talked with Bro. Curtis while Susan may have helped her Mom. Soon, it was time to eat which we did. During the meal, we talked about a lot of things.

Then I thought they might want to hear about Bro. Lonnie's sermon the previous Sunday night. When I mentioned how slow he preached, she was amazed as I had been when it happened. I mentioned that I had brought the sermon with me. She definitely wanted to hear it! And so the meal continued until we had all had enough.

Sister Mildred had the kitchen and dishes to tend to, and Bro. Curtis had a TV program he wanted to watch. So, it was Susan and me. He probably thought Susan could entertain me better than he could. He was right!

So she invited me outside, and I went. Surprisingly, I placed myself in her hands as far as entertainment that afternoon. We did several things during the next two hours. But there was one thing she did almost made a big mess of things.

I am very possessive of my things. For some reason, I had my keys in my hand. Suddenly, she grabbed them and threatened to put them down her blouse! I really wanted the keys back, and I was getting a little angry. I was even thinking about reaching into her blouse to get them if necessary. But then again, that would really cause a problem with her parents. I didn't want to that either. But after a while, she gave them back to me. Fortunately, I cooled down and she went back to being a very good hostess.

Right after lunch, I had promised to play the sermon for Sister Mildred, and I really wanted to do so. But Susan must have found the invisible ring in my nose because every time I tried to do it, Susan found a way to stop me. And so it went.

After this went on for a while, I happened to look down at my watch. It was 4:00! Where had the time gone? I had no idea. There was not time to play it now. Besides, I had to leave in ten minutes so I could meet Bro. Lonnie at 4:30. (I like to be on time if not a wee bit early!)

So I did the only thing I could do, I went into the house to apologize to Sister Mildred. That is when she said that I could come back that night and play it after church. This sounded like a plan, so I agreed.

Susan still had a spell over me, and I did not know it. It took me another 20 minutes to leave her and drive to the church! Yes, I had had a very good time. She was very pleasant to be with. It sure was hard to leave her.

Notice some more pieces falling into place? The congregation was not know for inviting people to their homes all that much, and Bro. Curtis was willing to do so. So this is sort of a wash. However, Susan wanted to keep my attention on her kept me from playing the tape during the afternoon. So came the invitation to spend the night. Even so, Bro. Lonnie inviting me to eat supper somewhere else limited when I could play the sermon. Yes, everything was fitting nicely. There were only a few more pieces to go...

When I arrived at the church, Bro. Lonnie was sitting on his car. When I apologized for being late and explaining why, he got this grin on his face. (I wonder why!) Then off to Sister Cooksey's home we went. Given what had already happened that afternoon, there was not anything that stands out in my memory. Anyway, after supper, we headed back to church for the evening service.

Once again, I set up my recorder and visited with people until the song service. Susan and family had not arrived yet. The first hymn began and so did the recorder. I sat where I had in the morning. And yes, I again looked around. This time I was looking for a specific person: Susan!

Once again, this sermon stood out. His subject: "What manner of man is that the the winds and the waves obey Him!" It was truly amazing. And so the sermon concluded along with the service.

Again I was at the front of the recorder getting everything put where it belonged before closing the lid. This time it was Susan that had come to me. She wanted to ride back home with me.

Her next to oldest sister, Joan, had driven the family to church that night. She had two young girls (6 and 7 perhaps) and a three year old boy. So there were four adults and three children in the car. The latter can be rather active to say the least. She claimed that she wanted to get away from this. (We shall see.) This sounded alright with me, so I agreed. (Why wouldn't I?)

Again, I got my recorder behind my backseat before helping her into the passenger side. Seat belt was fastened nicely. But no comment from Bro. Lonnie when we left.

Of course not; we left earlier than others did. In fact, Joan left the church several minutes after we did. (I did not notice this, or it did not matter to me.) Anyway we chatted on the way back. This include talking about coming home to a dark house. Also something was mentioned about someone hiding in the bushes intending some harm to someone. But it was mostly talk. And so we arrived at her home.

We first went inside and turned on some lights. Then I was determined that I would not make the same mistake as this morning. I went back to get my suitcase and tape recorder. Now, both were inside the house.

Then I sat down in an overstuffed chair. That is when Susan decided to sit on the right arm of it. Obviously, she was deliberately doing this, but what happened next may not have been planned. The chair was covered with Naugahyde which meant that it can be somewhat slippery. Sure enough, she rather quickly slipped down into my lap. She would jump up apologizing for doing this. But she sat back down on the arm...

If you notice, I did not say that I did anything in response to her actions. That is because I did not. See I told you that I was clueless when it comes to being with a lady! Now I know that this would have been a good time to put my arms around her and hold her in my lap. But at least she had my undivided attention.

Then we heard Joan's car drive up, so her playfulness had to stop for a while. They came in for a while, and we chatted. Finally, Joan left with her children for their home across town.

Finally, I could play the tape! So, I got the recorder out and found the location of the sermon. I pushed the play button. Sister Mildred and possibly Bro. Curtis too listened to it.

But Susan was a different matter. For all the time I knew her, she did not like to listen to taped sermons. This night was no different... She wanted me to go outside with her instead listening to it.

But it was what she wanted to do. Star gazing! Now I knew what that phrase meant, but I did not think that this was what she meant! I was prepared to go outside and gaze at the stars which I enjoy doing anyway. I really don't think these are the same activity.

When we got outside, there was a female dog in heat near the road. So there were several male dogs around her. Well, we managed to chase them all away before getting back to looking at stars. I was anyway.

Then I ran into a problem: I was getting a crick in my neck! Union is a small town, so there are not many street lights to block one's view of the stars. Well, I was really enjoying the view, and I don't mean Susan. I never asked her what she was thinking of my actions up to this point.

I finally had to bring my head forward so I could rub this crick. I suppose this was when she attacked me. Well, she

did kiss me. As clueless as I was, what is the difference?

Suddenly, I had this great desire to kiss her back! But there was a very big problem with doing this: I did not know how. Well, I tried anyway, but she was very disappointed in my kiss. "You don't do it that way," she hissed. Then totally frustrated, I blurted out, "I don't know how!" So, she began to teach me... I was certainly a quick learner because I did not get a lot of complaints. So, this is the fun that can be had by making out!

What about the thing I had said to Bro. Lonnie nearly a month earlier? Well, she had just proved that she was definitely old enough! Boy, was she!

But all good things much come to an end, or so I have heard. Well, this time I heard Susan hiss in my ear again: Mom is looking through the drapes at us!" "I don't care," I quickly replied. I really didn't. But with a sigh of disappointment, I followed her into the house. Besides, it was nearly 11 PM. The sermon was almost ended, and shortly thereafter I headed to Susan's room where I would sleep. Susan and her parents sleep in their room.

By now, very few pieces of the plan were left to be put into place. This would be complete until Sunday evening. And yet there was another plan to follow this one: going from committing me to her and her to me to being ready to become one flesh.

Cheryl played a part in all of this even if she did not realize it. She had told Susan that she had bought a new wardrobe to catch me. Susan was determined to not let this happen. But even so, God is the One who actually arranged things to bring Susan and me to this point in our lives.

The next morning, things were looking very good to me. Actually, I was still excited! Strange thing though: I don't remember if I got any kisses that morning or not. Anyway, I

was very happy as she I went with me in my car. Her parents were going to have to go by themselves.

When we got there, I performed the same ritual as the day before. I set up the tape recorder and turned it on when the singing started. And yes I also chatted with people, but this time Susan was by my side.

But something was very different! When I came back to the pew in the second row, I no longer would be sitting alone. Susan was there. Now, this time I actually got it right the first time: I put my arm around her. Yes, it remained there throughout the service.

Somewhere in the middle of singing, Bro. Lonnie asked me (kiddingly), "Don't you want to come up here and help with singing?" Very quickly I replied, "I'm fine right where I am." And I was! He smiled. So did several others.

The sermon this morning? For some reason, I just could not get interested in it. It seemed dry. Yes, I have a very good idea of why: her name was Susan. But then again there was a communion service after the sermon. He had to shorten the length of it.

After the communion service, there was dinner on the grounds. But I would shortly have to leave Susan for a while as in two weeks. This was going to be hard to take. But I got several kisses from her before I left. Oh yes, this time I promised to write her on a regular basis. Now I had a very good reason for doing so, wouldn't you say?

Then there a confrontation between Sister Mildred and Bro. Lonnie. She complained, "I' going to get a brush broom after you. He's after my daughter!" Then he said something about her needing to encourage it. It really wasn't a confrontation. I think both were kidding some as well. Then again, she did not know me as well as he did. And Susan was the last daughter at home. So, some changes were going to have to be made in the Ward family.

So, excited and yet despondent, I headed toward Biloxi. Around 5 PM, I was driving down US 90 along the beach... This is where I have been looking at young ladies in bathing suits for a couple of years. Doing this had become a fine tuned habit.

But such was not to be this evening. OH, I tried, I really tried. But the first time I began to move my focus from the highway to the beach, it only got to the right edge of the highway! Then suddenly my head and eyes jerked back to looking straight down my lane of traffic! I had never had this every happen before.

Then thoughts started running through my mind that totally surprised me. "The women on the beach are no different from female movie stars: something nice to look at, but they were not real." (They may well be to someone else, but they weren't to me.) "What am I looking for? I have found the one that I want."

It was this last thought that was a definite revelation to me. I had never thought about Susan in this way even earlier in this day. So, this was the final piece of the plan to find the person I would marry. It had begun for Susan with the conversation between Susan and Bro. Lonnie last October. It began with me in late November when I saw Bro. James Allen and Sister Janet together that Saturday morning.

During the next two weeks, I kept my promise and answered both of the letters she had sent me. I even mentioned that I was not ready to make a commitment yet. You see, this thought about having found the one I want deeply affected me.

Should I have answered her first letter back the first of April. I really don't know. You see, I don't know if our writing back and forth would have gotten me to drive up to visit her during this spring. How long would it have taken for me to think about her the way I did as I drove down US 90 this

Saturday evening? Would it have been shorter or longer?
Who knows? But I sure will take what I now had.

Ah yes the *what if's* of hindsight. Then again, what happened was exactly what needed to happen. We had to develop trust in each other as well as begin to enjoy being in each others company.

More importantly, we come to realize that each was more important than anyone else in our lives. It took the drive down US 90 this Sunday evening for me to accomplish this. Susan's conversation with her Mom did it for her.

By the first Saturday in June, my VW needed an oil change. So off I went to the dealership for it. While there waiting for my car to be serviced, a salesman approached me about buying a car. Usually, I would have completely ignored his pitch because I had just me. My bug was all I really needed.

But this last weekend had changed all of that. I had more people to think about than me, more people than only Susan and me. Somewhere in the back of my head was the realization that I would be spending weekends in Union seeing her. I knew that her parents liked to attend church services. It would be nice to have a new car to drive the entire family to church every time I would be there.

So, the person who did not think he needed a new car, suddenly it was quite clear that he really did. So I had driven to the dealership in a VW bug; I left in a robin egg blue new VW fastback. The following Monday, I made the arrangement for the car payments in the Base Credit Union. I also notified GEICO about my new car.

That Saturday evening, I drove the new car to church. Others noticed that it was new, but I did not tell them why I had gotten it. In fact, I did not tell them anything. Fortunately, Bro. Lonnie did not say anything about Susan and I either.

It was during the latter part of the next week that I was getting edgy as I had before calling my grandparents. I had come to another conclusion. I had decided to make a commitment to Susan that would affect us for the rest of our lives.

This next week seemed so very long. By Friday, I was chopping at the bit. The worst time was waiting until 3:30 PM so that I could change into civilian clothes. (My working hours was 6:00 AM to 3:30 PM.) As soon as I could, I make the change; I headed toward Union.

I got there a little after 6 PM. But then I had a problem. Joan and Susan look very much alike. And there both of them were standing in the front yard! Which one was which. Well, I really should not have worried. Susan would not stand back and let her sister come to my car. Well, she didn't. Ah yes, some more kisses. How lovely they were!

After a short conversation between the two of us and probably saying hello to everyone outside, I told Susan that I was ready to make a commitment to her. What I really like to hear came from Susan's lips. She was ready to do the same. Then it was time for supper.

After eating, we went off by ourselves to talk. The conversation turned to wedding dates. Surprisingly, we both had thought about this during this week even though neither one had written it in this week's letter to the other.

It was what each of us said that really surprised me! Both were thinking of the fourth weekend of October. She wanted a Saturday wedding, and I wanted a Sunday wedding. She had a good reason for this, but I liked my reason too. But she persuaded me that Saturday was better. (In the end, obviously I won since we married on a Sunday.)

Then on Saturday, Susan began a habit which we kept much of the summer. I would sit in a rocker on the front porch, she would sit in my lap, and we would kiss, and kiss,

and kiss... I just could not get enough of them! Oh we would talk some as well.

Sunday morning I drove the entire family to church outside of Decatur, MS, perhaps 15 miles away or less. During the summer we sometimes would attend this church; sometimes we attended another church northeast of us. Bro. Curtis rode in the front passenger seat while the women rode in the backseat. (He had a form of myotonic dystrophy making this arrangement necessary. My car was a 2-door.)

I wanted to be with Susan as much as possible, so I decided to attend Sharon Church near Lake for Sunday evening services. I would drive back to Biloxi afterward. But I noticed that I needed some gas. I knew of a station that took my gas credit card south of Union, so I decided to drive down there to get it. I took Susan with me of course.

As we got closer our conversation turned to marriage again. And I began to talk as if we had already agreed to get married. That is when Susan said, "You have to ask me first." I first tried to get out of it, but she was stubborn. I finally got out the correct words, but I almost didn't. It was much harder than I would have ever imagined! Thankfully, she said, "Yes."

Later she would say that she was afraid not to say yes. She was afraid that I might drive off the road and crash into a tree! (I wouldn't. I don't think that I would.)

When we got back, I asked permission of her father to marry her, sort of. Actually, I said, "I would like to run off with your daughter." When he agreed, I said, "I mean run off with her permanently." "Oh," he said. He still said yes.

And then came my parents. I knew that I needed to tell them as well. So, I asked permission to call them.

When I told Mom, she questioned my wisdom. She also had some questions for me. Well, it did not really matter. I was going to do this regardless of what my parents thought. Remember this came completely out of the blue to them. All they had was what they heard me say the end of December. I had not mentioned anything in my letters since that time.

And then came Bro. Lonnie. Susan and I went to church at Sharon the second Sunday evening, but was her parents with us? I don't remember. Anyway, after the service and we were prepared to leave, we told him the good news as we were saying good-by.

Just a year ago, I would visit with the Taylor's on many Sunday evenings in the summer. That was about to change. I no longer had the time to do this. I was spending all the time I could with Susan. Their crops would show it. Last year it rained early each week after a visit by me. This year? It didn't rain much at all! (The "rainmaker" was not doing his job.)

Let the courtship begin

Let me see. Who else should know about my engagement? There was the church people and the people I worked with. I may have told the latter during the following week. I know that I did sometime.

On Friday before the third weekend, I headed to Union again. After going to church on Sunday morning and eating lunch, I headed back to Biloxi for our evening church service. After eating supper at the Officer's Club, I drove to church. I had said nothing about Susan at all. (What was I waiting for? I do not know.)

This was father's day. Now, Bro. Lonnie had a habit of saying something about any such special day as he began his remarks. This time, he started talking about the fathers in the congregation and naming them. Sure enough he mentioned my name with the others. Then he said, Now Bro.

Dan is not a father, but he could be sometime. He is getting married." (The cat was out of the bag.)

This was a shock to everyone present! They all were looking at me, and I had on the biggest grins I had ever had. (Well the biggest ever until I was posing with my new bride at our wedding in September.)

Sister Richardson turned around to say, "Brother Dan?" Her voice kept rising in tone as she said it. It was total disbelief! I wonder how much anyone got out of his sermon after this announcement. Possibly not much. I was definitely the center of attention after church was over.

Fourth weekend was somewhat of a bummer for me. As a permanent party officer, I was required to have Officer of the Day duty. This time it was from 4 PM fourth Sunday afternoon until 8 AM on Monday. I could not get to Union this weekend, but I had to leave before church in order to be on base by 4 PM. So this was what I did. I kissed Susan good-bye as she walked into church for the morning service at Sharon Church.

I did not get much sleep that night which was not a fun thing either. Furthermore, when I was relieved of this duty Monday morning, I had to go to work for the day. I was needed there. But in the end, this was not so bad at all. I was supposed to get the day off, but they would let me take another day off in its place.

July 4 this year was on a Tuesday. So what they suggested was that I take July 3rd instead. This means Susan and I could be together from Friday evening until Tuesday afternoon! I took it before they could change their minds! Actually, I think they were thinking of Susan and I when they told me this.

The other Lewis family were not at church the third weekend, but they heard about it later. So, I got a call from

them telling I was expected to be in their home on Tuesday, June 27 at 7 PM (or some time close to that). It had everything to do with Susan.

They were not sure that I knew what I was doing. (I did not.) But they having more experience in this matter thought I needed some down to earth instructions. (Boy was they right!) So, I was there at the time requested.

Some background info: both of them had been married before. She was a navy widow whose husband had died in an accident at a pier. He had had a bad marriage. So, between the two of them, they knew the good and the bad of marriage. I certainly got grilled with questions and given lots and lot of advice.

One of the first questions was, "Had I given her a diamond yet? No, I had not; I was going to wait until the wedding ceremony.

Well, that would not do! She had experienced both ways: one time she got her diamond before the wedding and the other time at it. She knew from experience that Susan needed to get it now. I need to look at these rings this week. No argument on my part was allowed. This was a command that I had to obey! This was made quite clear. "OK, I will look in the BX tomorrow," I said. Then it was on to the next topic.

At some point came another command to me. I would bring Susan to Biloxi the following weekend, and she was going to stay with them. They were bound and determined to check her out. They promised a report after the weekend was over. What could I say? I went home and called her.

AT & T had recently introduced 1+ dialing. So, for more than an hour I dialed Susan's number constantly getting a busy signal. Finally, I gave up and went through an operator. Others had said, and I believed it after this fiasco: Ma Bell was not willing to open up some of their cables to this type

of dialing. (Using an operator instead of 1+ meant more money in her pockets!)

When I talked with Susan about this weekend, she was determined to go regardless of what her parents thought. Even so, I have a feeling that a phone call was placed to Bro. Lonnie for his advice since he was the pastor of both churches. When I left Union Saturday morning heading to Biloxi, Susan was sitting beside me; her suitcase was in the car trunk.

As promised, Wednesday after work, I was in the BX looking at diamonds. At least Susan had told me her ring size $4\frac{1}{2}$. Under an agreement, the BX was limited as to the diamond size. So I picked out the one that would fit her finger. Among the very few that did fit, I picked out one I liked while with the largest allowable diamond. OK, I thought. This was not so bad.

Then I had an idea of how to give it to her. This involved a Christmas gift I had gotten several years earlier. My cousin from the state of Washington was working for the TWA (Trans World Airlines) in Kansas City, MO. Because of his work schedule, he could not fly home for Christmas. But he could fly to St. Louis and have Christmas with us.

For this my parents decided to have a gift grab bag for his sake. Each person was to buy a gift to be placed into the bag. Then each would draw out a gift. Some how he got the idea that he was suppose to buy a gift for a female, so he did: a very nice pearl necklace. I wound up with it! This bothered him. But I told him not to worry about it. When I found a girl that I really liked, I would give it to her. (I know that Susan fit this to a T. It would be her's.)

The necklace came in a 3 by 5 box with two layers of cotton. It laid between the two layers. Hmm... I could coil the necklace putting it as close to the sides of the box as possible on top of the bottom layer. Next I placed the

diamond in the middle of the box on the cotton pad. Finally, the top layer would go on top of the ring and necklace; the lid was used to close the box. Ah, it was ready to go.

Friday morning seemed to pass rather slowly, and it got worse in the afternoon! It almost seemed like time was standing still. But my watch finally showed 3:30 PM, and I rushed into the bathroom to change into civilian clothes. Then I rushed out to my car, and headed to see my sweetheart!

Courting

July events

4th of July weekend

Engagement ring

On the way to see Susan, I stopped by Bro. Lonnie's home. We talked a little while before he asked me if I had given her a ring yet. *Slyly*, I said, "No, but I'm going to bring her back to Biloxi tomorrow, and we will be looking at rings." I tried as much as I could to make sure that I did not mention anything about the ring in the car at that time. Then after a little while I headed north. (I certainly did not want to be late arriving at her home on this evening!)

After our usual kiss or more upon arriving at her home, I mentioned that I had a little something for her. (I was a little nervous at this point.) But she had to wait until after supper for it because Sister Mildred had supper just about ready. So we sat down and ate. Then her dad went to a back room to watch TV and her mother was washing dishes in the kitchen. We went to her room where I got out the box. I'm not sure what she was thinking at the time, possibly that I had changed my mind about giving her a ring before the ceremony?

I delicately lifted the box lid making sure the cotton pads remained covering the ring and necklace. Then I pulled up one corner of the top cotton pad gently and **slowly** unwound the pearl necklace, from around the ring, for her to see. I did this rather nervously! I may have even put it around her neck but not right away. She was so excited that she left me standing there! She ran out of her room to where her father was. (He was impressed.) Then she ran to her mother to show what I had given her. (Her mother was excited too, not expecting it.)

I suppose that part of Susan's excitement was because I had never given her anything before. Then again, I don't know just much she thought I might have paid for the necklace. Likely she thought it was worth more than Fred had paid for it, but I really didn't know for sure.

After she calmed down a little bit, *very nervously* I said that I had a little something more. Was she **now** thinking a ring? This time I removed the top cotton pad completely. Now that she could see the ring, she got really excited. So off she went again with the ring to show her father and then her mother. As I looked down the hall at the two of them (mother and daughter) in the kitchen, I saw them doing a jig! It was after she returned to me that I finally got to place the ring on her finger. You might say that she took the ring and ran with it.

I'm not sure how seriously either parent thought that I was after asking permission to marry Susan. This definitely change things. Now it was obvious that I was serious.

The rest of that evening was a blur in my mind. I'm quite sure that I got many kisses though. We probably talked quite a bit (between kisses of course).

Biloxi bound

Saturday morning we got up perhaps a little earlier than usual because we had 180 miles to travel that morning. Usually, Sister Mildred would make home made biscuits for breakfast, but her arthritis had been acting up recently. So this morning I got canned biscuits, and she apologized for this. It did not really matter to me. She did not need to be making biscuits if it was hurting that much, and I said so. Besides, the only thing that really mattered was being with her daughter. Food? I had no problems eating canned biscuits.

Speaking of being with her daughter, when I got up and met Susan in the kitchen, I asked, "Where is my good

morning kiss?" This embarrassed her, and she led me into the living room. There she made it quite plain that she did not like me saying this in front of her mother. To which I replied, "Don't make me ask." Was I being too blunt? I only wanted as many kisses as I could get...

Afterward, I got our suitcases into the car, and we headed to Biloxi. For some reason, I was not very talkative. Most of my comments were monosyllable, and the rest were longer single words. I was not a very good conversationalist! That 180 mile probably seemed like a very long way to Susan.

As we neared Hattiesburg, Susan insisted that we stop at Bro. Lonnie's home so she could show off her new ring. (I had not told her anything about the short visit he and I had had the previous evening.)

So, we stopped, and Bro. Lonnie was talking long distance to another minister about some church problem. While we waited for him to get off the phone, Susan showed Sister Shirley her new ring.

Her first words to me were "But you said ..." This was almost as much fun as I had when I gave Susan the ring. That is when I told the whole truth about what we would be doing in the BX (Base Exchange) that afternoon. "We are going to look at rings: wedding rings!" Of course, I said it with a big smile.

Sometime later Bro. Lonnie finished his phone call. So, Susan again was showing off her ring. He immediately turned a bright red with embarrassment. This was not what he had expected either. His words were similar to his wife's. My reply to him was the same as to his wife. If anything, I had a bigger grin on my face than when I answered his wife earlier.

While they were not expecting to see "the ring" this way, they were well pleased that I had given it to Susan. (Considering what he had said the afternoon before, Bro.

Lonnie might have been wondering if I was going to mess up and not get her a ring. I didn't.)

After a while, we took our leave and headed to the coast. The first place I stopped on Base was the Officer's Club for a meal at the "grill." I think we went to the BX next where we picked out the wedding rings we wanted. (They were purchased later, but this time I made sure that they measured her ring finger.)

At this point Susan was a little tired and wanted to rest, so we went to my apartment. I parked my car inside the garage. While I was getting our luggage, she opened the garage door to go up the steps.

She really should not have done this, and I had forgotten to warn her. Forgot about what? A small bulldog, named Sarg, that belonged to the people in the house that also used the garage.

He was a pussy cat, temperament wise. But his bark was entirely different! You would think he was going to attack and tear you to pieces. One thing for sure, his barking certainly made him a good watch dog. Much of the neighborhood knew when anyone other than the family opened the garage door. So, there was no way I could ever come home without others knowing it.

As a result, she quickly came back inside the garage and sat down on my car's fender. I had to quiet her down before I escorted her upstairs. Then I brought up the luggage.

She was tired for sure. Shortly after she came in, she laid down on the bed. I sat on a chair a few feet away. So for a while, we talked off and on this way.

After a while she was refreshed, and got up. Now she had a great aunt who lived in Biloxi and wanted to call her. (Good idea?) She did anyway. Of course the aunt wanted to know where Susan was at the time, and Susan told her.

OK, the cat is now out of the bag! One of Susan's relatives knows that Susan and I were in my apartment alone. Now, I had not planned to do this, so I had not said anything to her parents. (Lecture from my future mother-in-law coming up.) Oh well, we did not do anything wrong. We hardly kissed each other while there if we kissed at all. I definitely was not close enough to kiss her while she was on the bed!

By this time it was late afternoon. And still on the schedule was supper at the Officer's Club followed by church services. So, we both needed to change.

She wanted to take a shower before changing, so I showed her where everything was in the bathroom including towels and especially the hook to lock the bathroom door. Then she took her clothes with her into the bathroom, and I heard her lock the door. I was satisfied now.

When she came back out, she was fully dressed except for ... The back of her blouse. It had buttons on it. She wanted me to do what?

Buttoning her blouse was a simple task, but it was something new to me. Again, it was the way she did it: as if it was the most natural thing to do. She simply walked up to me and turned around. She then asked me to button it. I managed to do this even though I was much more than a little nervous and seemingly all thumbs.

Again she was showing me that she trusted me to do what was right. It sure did make it much easier for me to put more trust in her.

Probably after leaving the BX, we had paid a visit to the Lewis household. Only the children were at home at the time, But Susan was happy to be showing off her ring, again. They were excited as well. Then it was off to the Officer's Club for supper in the dining room.

For the last two years, I had been coming here regularly asking for a table for one. So the lady who sat people was used to me coming by myself. As usual, she ask me if I wanted a table for one. But she got a shock when I told her this evening that I needed a table for two instead of only one.

Susan was behind me rather than beside me for some reason, so the lady did not connect the two of us. At this point, Susan excitedly showed her ring as well. After she seated us, she must have went into the kitchen to tell the waitresses about me and my fiancé. Several of the waitresses came out to see us and the ring as well when they heard. They had always been very nice to me.

After we ate, it was time to go to church which was close by. As before everyone was wanting to see her ring and meet her. After church I drove her to the Lewis' home. They allowed me to stay for a while but then sent me home. (They showed me the door???) They wanted to have her by herself for a while. There was much that they wanted to find out. I insisted that I get one more kiss before I left.

After I left, they sent all of their children to bed. I don't remember if she ever felt grilled or not: I don't think so. She spoke in admiring tones and words about that evening. Sister Earnestine and Susan continued to talk after Susan got up Sunday morning. I don't know if Bro. Linwood was involved in any of this on Sunday or not.

Later I picked her up for church. (Yes, I got a few kisses.) After the service, lunch was served at the church. Then it was time to head back north.

On the way, I was back to very short answers again, but Susan put an end to that! She threatened to give the ring back to me if I did not start talking more. She felt like she had to throw a hook down my throat and pull my words out of my mouth one by one (her very words).

Apparently, when she said this, the hook was yanked. From then on, I did a lot of talking. As she joked later, there were times when she wished she had not said what she did: now she could not shut me up! So, we spent the rest of the trip talking with each other. I was actually using full sentences! (Shock, surprise)

What was really nice this weekend was that I did not have to head back soon after arriving in Union. Instead, I had the next two days off. Yeah! Two more whole days with Susan. Well, I would have to drive home the afternoon of July 4.

Somehow I had forgotten to pack my pajamas this time. So, Monday we walked downtown to buy me another pair. While doing this, Susan took me into several of the other stores, so I got a tour of the town. Very likely afterward, we spent quite a bit of time on the front porch kissing. I think I was starved for kisses and could not get enough of them.

Then Tuesday afternoon, I headed back to Biloxi and to work. I would be back in three days on Friday. For the rest of the summer, I spent the second, third, and fourth weekends in her home going to church somewhere each time. The first weekend of each month I would bring her to Biloxi for church.

The report on Susan by the Lewis': Other than she was somewhat immature, she was fine. I needed to make sure that we did many things together. (See I was right when I told Bro. Lonnie that she was too young. Well, in some ways I was.

Sometime during the summer Susan's sister, Rachel (my age), had us for supper, possibly on Saturday of a third weekend. I got to meet her family, and they got to meet me. Her oldest sister, Carolyn, came home sometimes this summer so we also got acquainted. What did they think of me?

As the summer progressed, They developed their opinions of me, and I also developed ones of them. How did this help in developing relationships with each of them? Probably not very well.

It is much easier to see the mistakes that others make than the mistakes we make, and we each have our own whoppers. But in the end, the test of time reveals them all. Perhaps not working together to make good, solid relationships is one of the biggest of mistakes. We miss out on all the joys we could have had.

Wedding date changed

By the later part of July, Susan was becoming agitated about the wedding date. It seemed so very far away. She was then wanting to move it from October to August. Her mother pleaded with me to not go along with this because it would have put too much of a burden on them. Besides, it was way too soon. My feelings: August was too early for me as well. Finally an agreement was made for September 10. Sister Mildred said that this would be OK as it eliminated the problem she had seen with an August date.

Annie Oakley

While a student at Keesler AFB, I was not required to fire a 38 caliber pistol once a year. But once I became an instructor, I had to do this every year. In 1966, I fired a pistol at the firing range for only the second time of my life. Just as at the firing range during summer camp in 1963 I was shooting at a bulls-eye from one place and in one position. The results were somewhat disappointing to me: 235. Why? Because the sharpshooter ribbon was awarded for scores 240 or above. I was getting good!

Fifth weekend in July was a sad time in my life. There was an official event on the Base Saturday morning that I had to attend. There was not any way for us to be together, or so I

thought. It did not occur that I could have driven north to see her late Saturday morning after this event was over, until it was too late. So, I just had to suffer. Susan did also.

Things sure changed in the letter writing department considering my lack thereof in April when I did not answer hers. I made sure she got a letter every week, and she did the same thing for me. Often she would write a letter after I left on Sunday afternoons. I would get it by Tuesday.

There were times when I drove into the garage and then walk slowly up the outside stairs. My mail box was directly below the landing of these stairs. I would seldom look at it when I drove into the garage, but I would look down at the mailbox from the top of the stairs.

Sometimes there in the box was a letter! I went down the steps a little faster. But after I saw who the letter was from, I went up the steps two at a time! A letter from a love one certainly will change a person's attitude and behavior. I wanted to know what she had written.

The student that I had driven to our radar class with, left after the class was over on April, 1966. Since that time an airman , who had a boat (sort of a cabin cruiser) had moved in and moved out later. Now another sergeant's family had moved into the house with whom I now shared the garage space.

The wife had seen me do what I described above many times, and she told Susan about it after our marriage. (I really think she got a kick out of watching me mope as I went up the stars, look down to the mailbox, go down the steps quickly, and nearly run back up the steps.)

Some time during this month Susan practiced some of her cooking on me with the help of her mother: broiled liver. While others may not think much of this meat, I now eat it regularly. Honestly, it was the best liver that I had had. Mom cooked liver the way Dad liked it: very dry and hard. It was

only half-way edible even when smothered with onions and gravy. She cooked it until the moisture was gone. Susan's was moist and tender. Hers was done but not overdone. Hers was also more nutritious. Taste wise it was very delicious! Surprise: She could cook something much better than my mother!

For whatever reason, Susan had not really learned how to cook very many things. It could have been because of how good of a cook her mother was.

Then again, Rachel had said before she married that she wanted to wait until after she married. Then she would learn to cook the way her new husband wanted it done.

Could this have affected Susan's attitude. It does not really matter, with time, she provided me with meals that I needed.

August events

2nd trip to Biloxi

The Ruffin's had agreed to keep Susan on Saturday night. So, when we arrived in Biloxi, we headed there. I did not know it at the time, but Bro. Lonnie had another appointment and sent Elder James Allen Rushing in his place. He and Janet were there when we arrived. Surprise: she got to see her double second cousin again.

I mentioned how important their actions had been to me in Memphis to Bro. Rushing. From what he said, I don't think he really understood the lesson they had taught me. It has occurred to me that he was thinking about their outward show of their love for each other.

He thought their actions were immature; I saw them in an entirely different light. They certainly greatly affected my

actions from that point on. They contained principles that I still treasure today.

It has occurred to me that he was thinking about their outward show of their love for each other. But I had seen how a couple can develop such a loving relationship that permeates their very actions.

Later in life, I have also seen older couples still showing their love for each other in public with tender kisses. All these emotions that young couple share are shared by older ones also! This is something to look forward too!

Susan's wild tale

They had a son, Doug, who was somewhat of a jokester. He decided he was going to get Susan's goat if he could. (He did not know Susan!) So, he asked her if she knew that I had been married before.

She proved she could think very quickly on her feet as she had in her reply to her mother the first part of May. She answered that yes, she already knew this. She also mentioned that I had a couple of children as well. In her wallet, she had a picture of two of Joan's children. So she took it out to show everyone what my children looked like.

While Janet was Susan's second cousin, she had not seen Joan's children, so she could not spill the beans on her. She had everyone believing her. They were getting ready to have me thrown out of the church if Susan and I actually got married. After a while, she told them the truth. Doug's joke had backfired on him. None of them tried to pull another joke on her. (I wonder why?)

During this time, I was at home getting ready for church. So, I missed the whole thing. I think this evening we ate with the Ruffin's before going to church. This exchange between Doug and Susan was the really exciting part of the weekend.

2nd weekend

I don't remember what we had done to make Susan a little tired on Sunday afternoon, but she was. It turned out that she also had another reason for doing what she did.

Our wedding was just four weeks away, and she knew that we would be sleeping in the same bed. What was this going to be like? Was there something that we could do to help us to get ready to do this? Of course, this had to be done in a godly way.

Since I had never been married, I had not spent any real time in the same bed as a woman either. I did not believe in premarital sex either. So, what could we do?

She was the first one to suggest something. We started with leaving the bedroom door open. Then she went to her side of the bed and had me get onto the bed on the other side. Then she lay down on her right side (facing away from me). Also laying on my right side, I slid ever closer to her.

I used my left arm to determine when I was as close as I wanted to be. I had my upper left arm laying on my left side with its elbow near to my waist. Then I had my forearm at a 90 degree angle and placed the ends of my fingers on her side just above her hip. This kept me about a foot apart.

Once again, she got some rest. I may have as well, but I mostly was very nervous just being this close to her. During the entire time she rested, neither one of us moved from our position. Well, I was shaking inside, of course.

How well did this work for her? You will have to read on to find out. I was not sure how much it may have helped me when we first married. But hindsight is 20/20, or so they say.

Actually, this was a good idea from the beginning. What we were suppose to accomplish was laid out from the beginning. It was only about rest while in close proximity of each other. None of the things that we should not do until

after the wedding was even mentioned or thought about. These things were still in the future as far as the two of us were concerned.

During the summer we had gradually built up trust in each other which is very important. This particular event added to that trust. And that made the adjustments after the wedding that much easier.

3rd weekend

Sunburn!!!!

This Saturday, Susan had arranged for us to spend the day at a local lake (Tiacota). While we were in the water some of the time, we were "sunbathing" most of the time. Susan never did learn how to swim anyway. But then came time for me to put some sun tan lotion on her back. (It was no problem letting her put it on my back.) She was wearing a one piece suit. My problem was covering her entire back with the lotion especially the area that included part of her side. This was getting little too close to her chest for me. I forced myself to do it, but it certainly was hard. I was not ready to get that well acquainted with her body. That would have to wait until after the marriage.

Fortunately, she put the lotion on her legs. I would have had a very hard time placing it close to the bottom of her bathing suit. What would I have done if she had asked? I don't know, but I would have had to work up a lot of courage to do so. Neither would I have wanted her to put lotion over all of my legs either.

Regardless, we were out in the sun too long, and we returned to her home looking more like lobsters than human beings. Sister Mildred got out the old remedy, vinegar. It actually worked! We did not smell very good though. (Like that this really made any difference to us at the time!

That evening, she was sitting on one of their couches, and I was laying in her lap. (There were other times when I was sitting on the couch, and she laid in my lap. Both were a lot of fun which we did once in a while.)

The next week, my skin peeled across my shoulder blades where I had been laying on her lap, and I wrote to her about it. Apparently, the vinegar had kept the rest of my skin from peeling even on the lower part of my back.

She got similar results: where she had had her back against the couch, her skin came off in sheets. Looks like vinegar can prevent peeling as long as the area does not come in contact with something for very long at a time.

I got my first experience with family reunions the next morning. It was boring. My problem was that I did not know very many people. So, I had no idea of what to say to any of them. What did I have in common with them? This may have been my fault though.

4th weekend

Car wreck

As I left Biloxi this Friday afternoon, there was a light rain falling which continued as I drove. I coming down a hill near the northern edge of Laurel, MS, when a drunk driver pulled out in front of me. I almost missed her car. Had she been driving faster I would have, but she was just poking along as in maybe 5 MPH. She had been playing cards and drinking with some friends and was now driving home.

She had a Chevrolet Impala, and I had a much smaller car. Nevertheless, the impact turned her car 90 degrees so she was headed up the hill against on coming traffic. (The street was four lanes divided, and it was now about 4:30 PM.) She tried to get her car started again, but someone following her took her keys out of the ignition to prevent her from getting into a much more serious accident (speed limit in this area

was 40 MPH). After I got out, I walked around her car. That is when I smelled alcohol at the passenger side. She was not coherent at all.

Poor Susan, she was use to seeing me at 6 PM, and I did not show up. Three hours after that I called her from the motel to tell her what had happened. I also promised to be on the bus that went to Union at noon. She did not exactly believe me that I was alright. But I had been wearing my seat belt (lap and shoulder), so I was only a little sore from it.

I was OK except for two things: I did not know what to do, and I did not know who could tell me what I needed to do. Furthermore, I did not have enough faith in myself to do what I might be told should be done. (Thinking I can't do this or that does not make life's troubles any easier, only much harder.)

I was not the only one who did not think very straight at the time. Susan's uncle live about half a mile from where the accident happened, but their only concern was about Susan and me during my call. Later there was talk of someone in the family taking Susan to Laurel to see me that night, but that was not done either.

After the phone call, I tried my best to get some sleep with some success. Then came the next morning when I needed to talk with her insurance agent and fill out some forms to process the accident claim. Then by late morning, I was riding north on a bus heading to Union.

I was happy to see Susan even though the aftermath of the accident was still in the back of my mind. Her family and I talked over things which included their agreement to take me to the Meridian bus station.

By evening, it was time to head to church. During much of the summer, we had all gone in my car. But this time we

went in theirs. It was also important that we be there during both services.

Bro. Lonnie had another appointment and had arranged other minister to take his place. The latter did not know music, so Bro. Lonnie had asked me to do this for the services this weekend. I did, so all was well.

After we got back to to Union after Saturday night's service, I got a lesson in Biology which Susan's Mom knew I needed to know. Susan had begun her monthly period. Her Mom was definitely right. This would be a monthly occurrence for the foreseeable future.

Why was this so important to include it? It all has to do with married life. I needed to become aware of Susan's needs which includes this. It is also about trust. Her Mom had come to trust me enough to prepare me for my duties as a husband. The Lord provided for me through her.

After services on Sunday morning, we came back to their home for lunch. Then it was off to Meridian for my next bus ride. I sure hated to leave Susan. Besides I had absolutely no idea what I needed to do next once I got back to Biloxi.

From Meridian, I rode to Hattiesburg where I had to change to a bus heading to Gulfport. From there, I took a third bus to Biloxi. I then got off this one along the beach south of my apartment. So, I ended my journey walking several block while carrying my suitcase. Wearily, I first ignored Sarg, the dog next door, and then walked up the stairs. I don't remember calling anyone after that.

Rental car

Now it is Monday morning. What do I do next? How do I get to Annex 7 which is seven miles west of my home? Other questions were swirling around in my head. I definitely was not thinking clearly at all.

In the end, I managed to get to the Officer's Club for breakfast. There I used the phone to call Base Transportation to get a ride to Annex 7. Then I had a lot of explaining to do since I was more than 3 hours late.

First I got a talking to for not contacting anyone. (I should have called my section before 6:00, etc.)

Then I began to get the help that I needed. The only problem was my attitude. Dominating my thoughts was bad ones. I can't do this! I don't know how! (They seemed to stick to anything someone told me to do.)

But I did get some help when it came to transportation. Not only was I told to rent a car at the airport, I was driven there to do it. So at least I now had a car to drive until my car was fixed.

The next week was a blur for the most part. Most of it seems like was one blunder after another. The biggest one was not writing or calling Susan. (The latter would have been the preferable one.) As a result, she did not know what to think. So, she began thinking bad thoughts. What if I had decided that it was not worth the trouble to get married? She convinced herself that the wedding was off.

Her father told her differently based upon how he read my character. Come Friday, he was sure that I would appear at the usual time. He was right...

Another one was my not being persistent. But then again, I had not had any real training in this area. I was frozen with fear for the most part.

I had GEICO car insurance. Rather than have their own insurance agents, they had contracted independent insurance agencies throughout the country to handle claims for them. So, all I had was a book with names and how to contact them. Somehow, I could not bring myself to call one of them once I got back to the coast. So, the whole situation

was handled by her insurance agent. It was not the best idea as I would later find out.

September events

Third trip to Biloxi with Susan

Strange thing, this were so blurred that I do not remember getting a letter from Susan this week. I feel very safe in writing that I got a letter from her either Tuesday or Wednesday. But...

I did managed to get a suitcase packed though. And as usual, I changed out of my summer uniform shortly after 3:30. When I arrived at her home in a bright red Nash Rambler, Susan was wondering who in the world was driving it! She had already given up on me, so it could not be me. But it was. And so when I got out of the car, she got excited. I still cared for her! The wedding was still on! (I'm not going to guess what she thought about me not contacting her all week...) I suppose looking at what was to come overshadowed the *very big bobo* that I had done.

The Richardson's had graciously agreed to provide lodging for Susan Saturday night of the first weekend. This gave Susan a chance to get to know their two teenaged daughters. The other part I remember was that driving home in a car with A/C was nice! My VW Fastback's engine only had 40 horsepower which is not enough to power an AC system. Well, on the other side, the wedding was only 7 days away, so there was a certain amount of excitement in the air for both of us.

After church services and dinner on the ground, the two of us headed back to Union in a cool car for a change. And considering that it had a bench front seat, she sat right next to me. (The VW had bucket seats.)

Unfortunately, I had to head back to Biloxi not long after we arrived in Union. One thing for sure, the next weekend she

would be going to Biloxi with me as my wife.

But we had to get through the week first. Well, I knew that I would be getting Friday off from work. This was SOP (standard operating procedure). Even so, that meant I would not see her for four whole days. I could just anticipate how slow the time would be passing this week!

Marriage weekend

But first I want to mention something that played a very important part in making it easier to make the wedding a success. It made adjusting to marriage much easier as well. Sister Mildred and sometimes her daughters sat down with us to discuss things. I have already mentioned Susan cooking liver as well as her Mom telling me about Susan's period.

Sister Ward sat me down with Susan to find out what I had in my apartment. Susan could verify the amount of bath linens that I had since she had used them when she took a shower. She was also interested in kitchen items. What about cooking items? What about dinner ware? What about bed linens? There were questions like these.

So for a change, I told her exactly what I had in each one of the categories. After looking at the list she had in front of her, she became convinced that I had the necessities that we would need. I have no doubt that this was a relief to her. Very likely, the same could be said of her other daughters. Now they could all decide what they wanted to give and in the cost range they could afford. (No expensive item was needed.)

Time off from work

However, I must have been so out of it by Wednesday at noon that Captain White told me to leave: he gave me the rest of the week off. Obviously, he did not think he could get any useful work out of me this week. When I said something

about the SOP, he told me that I had better leave fairly soon, or he might change his mind. I was happy, and I got out of the office ASAP! I did not need to be told again, that is for sure.

OK, bobo time again. I packed the things that I thought I needed and left. I didn't called Susan with the good news like I should have done. Instead I just appeared Wednesday at mid afternoon instead. (Again, I did not stop to think about what I was doing nor how my actions would affect others around me. (I knew that I would be spending more time with her before the wedding! This was all that mattered to me.)

Funeral

Early in this week, the husband of a member of Sharon Church had driven into a deep pond and drown, and the funeral was on Thursday, the day after I arrived. So, Susan and I went.

Sister Ward probably was doing more of the last minute things for our wedding. I'm not sure why Bro. Curtis did not go with us. Well it was raining quite heavily. In fact, I found it hard to see where the pavement because of the density of the rain. I was also surprised that we did not wind up drenched! Dry clothes were definitely needed when we got back! The rain storm passed out of our area before morning.

This evening, My parents called from where they were spending the night (Granada, MS). They needed directions which I gave them. I think they also got to talk to Susan's parents some.

Up to this time, the Wards wanted to know more about my parents as their imaginations went wild. Were they anything like me? What were their attitudes towards the South and Southerners? They had some many other similar questions as well.

Well, my parents were asking me a lot of questions about the Wards. What were their attitudes toward the North and Yankees? This one of many that I had gotten from them.

I really did not tell either one about the other. To me, both were Primitive Baptist. That should answer all of the questions. Primitive Baptists do get along with each other, don't they? After all, I had been at some church meetings where a minister from one part of the country preached. He preached the same things that we believe, and he was treated well. Why wouldn't they get along?

But given the experiences I have had since that time, they do not always act like they should. Sometimes, they do not really get along at all. But I was green back then...

I knew that they would all get along very well, so I did not understand why anyone should worry. I just did not tell them why.

Once the four of them met and talked for a while, they got along quite well (just as I had thought). However, I certainly could have prevented a lot of their worries if I had talked a lot more about each couple with the other.

Wedding arch

Friday was a nice sunny day, so this was a change from Thursday. Part of the decorations for the church was magnolia branches for the wedding arch. Bro. Curtis had made arrangements for us to get them from a tree of someone he knew. So this morning we headed there to get the branches we needed. Then it was back home for lunch.

Then it was time to get back to work, and there was no time to think about where my parents might be. The magnolia leaves needed to be coated with oil to give them a nice sheen. The branches we got needed to be divided so they would fit into the arch. And then there was the payment for the flowers that had to be taken care of. I'm not sure what

was done when, but between Friday afternoon and Saturday, they all got done.

Meet my parents

They arrived in the later part of the same afternoon with a definite surprise for me: Dad was wearing shorts! While I know he did it later in life, this was the first time I saw him with them. I was shocked! He would not have done so if he had not earlier injured his knee like he did. It was good to see them again.

At work, he had swung his hammer, but he missed what he wanted to hit. Instead, he hit his leg just above his knee. It damaged an artery enough that they had to do a vein graft. So from this point on, he had to take a blood thinner to prevent a clot from forming in this graft.

Originally, Tom was suppose to be my best man, but the Army was not allowing anyone in his unit to go on leave. I learned later that they had been scheduled to go to Vietnam, but then this was canceled and they were moved to the East Coast instead. (Was this when he met Elaine at a minister's home in Indiana?)

So I had Webb to take his place. Two of Susan's brother-in-laws served as the ushers. So this was my part of the wedding party. Susan had already decided to have a maid of honor (Bro. Lonnie's oldest daughter) and two bride's maid (Cheryl and Brenda). She had even picked out the color of their dresses and shoes.

Etta and Webb came with Mom and Dad. She had Wendy with her. After supper, they gave Susan and me the wedding gifts. The one I remember was a card table with 4 folding chairs which is what Mom and Dad gave us. Well, Etta gave us a pair of embroidered pillow cases and possibly something else. Webb? This I do not remember.

Mom and Dad's gift meant so much to me that I gave Mom a kiss of thanks that rivaled the kisses I gave Susan at the time. Teasingly or otherwise, she wondered out loud if I had mistaken her for Susan. I hadn't. It was the only way I knew how to say thank you with all of my being. I told her that I knew very well the difference between the two of them. I also said it in a way that I convinced her. Even so, I had never shown that much affection to her in my life that I know of.

There was not enough room for my parents and siblings, so Rachel had them sleep in her home. This was for Friday and Saturday nights. Possibly, they spent Sunday night there as well.

Saturday morning at breakfast, I brought Susan's birth control pills to her as I had the day before. I also made sure that she took the tonic that her doctor had prescribed. At least someone had enough wisdom for her to begin using these so that we would not be burdened with a pregnancy early in our marriage. (She had already been taking them for a week.) And given her history of periods, her time of highest fertility would have been the first week of marriage. (Yes, it definitely pays to have others to think of the things that both Susan and I would have missed on our own.

For some reason, Mom took the meaning of the pill differently than its real purpose. So, she had a private conversation with Susan afterward. (I did not learn about this until a few weeks afterward, and this upset me.) Or did this really have to do with the fact we had moved the wedding date up from October 28 to September 10? Anyway, her question was, "Do you have to get married?" Susan being Susan, she quickly replied, "Yes, we can't stand living apart." Knowing her, she said it like she really meant it, and she did.

When Susan first said something about this, I got rather angry to think my Mom would say anything like this! Besides, I felt that she should have asked me; I was her son.

Most likely experiences that my older siblings had had was the main reason for my anger. Both had gotten themselves into situations that they should not have been in.

Was Mom thinking that I might have made a similar mistake? It sure looked like it to me. It was as if She did not trust me to do what was right. My opinion: "I was not either of my siblings in this regard!" Neither did I like the suggestion that Susan was not a virgin. It did not matter who the persons, I was going to uphold her before them! (Or did I completely misunderstand my mother?)

The only thing that I had said to Susan when I brought the pill was, "Here is your medicine." So, I do not know who knew what the pill was or why she was taking it. What Mom thought the pill was or why Susan was taking it is still a mystery. The same applies to the tonic.

Taking a step back and looking at it as if it were other people having this experience, I conclude that there are several possible explanations of what the individual people would think. Likely there was a better way to talk it out so that everyone understood what was what.

Sometime Saturday afternoon, Tom called Susan and I to talk for a while. He really wanted to be there, and said so. I wanted him to be there also. But Uncle Sam can be very strict causing serious problems for those who choose not to do what he commands.

Wedding rehearsal

Later Saturday afternoon Bro. Lonnie appeared at Susan's home for this. Then he excused himself to head toward the

church saying we could join him later. When we got there later we found out why.

No one had thought to clean the mud off the tile floor after the funeral Thursday afternoon. The floor was caked in dirt from the rain. He suspected as much, so while waiting for us, he mopped the floor using paper towels that he bought.

Mom fussed at him for not telling us earlier because we could have helped him. And it was clear from her tone of voice that these were not mere words: she meant every word she said. Then Bro. Lonnie led us through what would happen Sunday afternoon step by step.

Sunday morning

This was the longest morning of my life! I think that others went to the church and put all the decorations in place, but Susan and I did not have anything to do but to twiddle our fingers. On top of this, Mom and Etta got into a discussion about whether an aspirin would be helpful or not. Me? Just how would taking an aspirin help me? I did not have a headache. Aspirin does not help anxiety, does it? Wait a minute! Hearing them talk at each other almost gave me a headache. Even so, taking one would not have helped at all.

Me? Right or wrong, I wanted to be in church that morning. But I got no encouragement and instead got discouragement. So, I took Susan for a ride that lasted from 11-12. Lunch was not that long away when we returned.

Whether I would have gotten anything out of a church service that morning or not, I felt like the place I needed to be was in church thanking God for the one that would be walking beside me for the rest of our lives. This is when I should have put my foot down and gone to church regardless of what anyone said or did! I still regret not listening to my own feelings.

God is the Creator and to be loved above all others and things. So what is wrong with being in church before one's wedding? Besides, I clearly remember my Mom telling me of a couple who sat together in a church service. At the end of it, they came to the front of the church to get married. Did Mom forget about this?

By the 1980's I began putting my foot down to buck what others are saying that I think is wrong. So, I have applied some lessons I have learned from the past.

Wedding

After lunch, I changed into my Winter Blues for the ceremony. (I could have worn my formal Mess Dress which is the same as a tux. But my attitude got the best of me again... so I didn't.) Then it was getting to be the time to head to Lake for the wedding.

Susan and I went in my rental car alone. I dropped her off at Aunt Ruby's home which is close to the church. There she was to change into her wedding dress. She also visited with her aunt and female cousin as she did so. Meanwhile, others followed us later bringing her dress with them. (Remember that I was not suppose to see it until in the church.) Then I drove the last quarter mile to the church alone and lonesome.

I was in plenty of time for the wedding, but when I got there Bro. Lonnie and his family had not arrived yet. On the way from Hattiesburg, an accident had happened right in front of them. They managed to avoid the cars that were in it, but this slowed them down for a while. For a while they were more anxious than I was waiting for them to arrive!

Meanwhile that morning, the Ruffin's (in Biloxi) had planned to go out on their boat for a while. When they arrived where it was docked, it had sunk! So much for an outing that day. A little later they decided to come to the wedding. So, they

got ready and did so. This was a total shock to me, but I was very happy to see them! At least I had some more people to talk to. I needed something like this to help pass the time. Why is the second hand moving so slowly? Does it need winding to help it move faster? Nope, that does not help. When will this wedding finally get started?

(Months later, our wedding came up for discussion while in my parent's home. Webb said that he was the best man. But Susan insisted that he was not. So, after she let this disagreement go on for a while, she ended it with these words, "You were not the best man: I married the best man." Ah yes! Susan is being Susan once again. I love her for it!)

There was a door on each side of the church near the pulpit, and Bro. Lonnie led me to the one on the right side of the building. He may have had some last minute instructions, but I was not in any shape to remember any of them. (Webb was with me.) Then I saw someone wearing white in the back seat of a car as it was driven into the church yard. I was thinking it was Susan, but I could not be sure. It was a beautiful scene that is for sure. Meanwhile the people were being seated in the church.

Final chance to back out

For a few minutes, Bro. Lonnie disappeared and then reappeared. That is when he told me that it was not too late to back out. He had already talked to Susan, and she was sure she wanted to go through with it. I gave him a very simple answer as I pointed to the door: "There's the door, hit it!" I wanted to get this thing done right now! Things would be a bit different inside...

When I said this, I was very emphatic. Anyone around me would have heard me clearly. But when it came to repeating my vows, the only ones that likely heard me were Susan and Bro. Lonnie. I doubt that even the wedding party heard me.

For some reason, I could not say, "I do," louder than a whisper.

The moment had arrived! As I looked to the back of the church, I saw Susan and her Dad come through the door.

But when Susan began walking down the aisle, she became somewhat disturbed: the ushers had put the mothers on the wrong sides of the church. So, I saw her coming to me biting her lip. Yet I had never seen a more beautiful lady in my life, and she was coming to me! I had never experienced anything quite like this. (The picture taken outside describes my feelings more than I can.)

Three candles

As the last part of the ceremony, we walked to where there were two candles burning. Then together we used ours to light the third one (two lives becoming one). The other two lights were blown out by us.

Then came the fun part: I got to kiss the bride: my bride! And then there was time for people to take pictures and others to mess up the car. (The baby shoe polish used ruined the finish on the car which was a rental. I was fortunate that I did not have to pay for it. Needless to say, this upset me. It became the reason why I dislike the pranks played on a newly wed couple so much.)

In the top picture, Susan Mozingo is on the left and Elder Lonnie Mozingo Sr. is behind Susan and I on the right.



Sister Mildred is on the right of us.

Reception

More pictures were taken after we got outside. Then we headed to our car amidst a shower of rice. "Some" of it went down Susan's wedding dress. By this time everyone had been invited to the Ward's home for the reception. And now Webb finally headed the car toward Union, MS.

We were not quite ready to be husband and wife yet as far as dressing or undressing in front of each other. So, her mother helped her get the dress off only to have rice fall all over the floor. (She said there was enough rice to cook for a meal.) They were in her parent's bed room, and I was in what had once been Susan's. They were quicker in getting her changed than I was.

While I was taking my uniform pants off (over my shoes [I was really thinking clearly just then!]), I heard Susan say rather loudly, "Help, Percy is trying to kiss me!! (He was the husband of Susan's oldest sister.) So, I replied also loudly, "What am I suppose to do? You caught me with my pants down!" That caused a great deal of laughter. I reappeared not long after this (Still did not take my shoes off before removing my pants (will I ever learn?). But this only goes to

show that I had been around Susan (and her Mom) long enough to reply like they did in situations like this one.

After helping Susan with her dress, Sister Mildred went into the kitchen to get the refreshments ready for the reception. Knowing my Mom, she was in there as well asking what she could do. She is the type that she does not take no for an answer in situations like this. So between the two of them (possibly more considering Etta and Susan's sisters), the cake and soft drinks were ready to be served. There may have been more things, but my attention at that time was more on my new bride. (How nice that sounds!)

I had really hoped that more would have come, but they went back home after the ceremony. (The church was nearly full at the ceremony, so this was nice even if they did not come the reception afterward.

After a while, I was getting anxious again. I wanted to get going because the time was approaching 6 PM which meant it would be 9 PM before we got home. And since I have a one track mind at times, mine was only on getting home at a reasonable time.

Others may doubt this, but I am hard headed enough that when I have a goal on my mind, all other thoughts get crowded out regardless of what they may be. I was not even thinking about anything that would happen later either.

The "check"

It was now pay back time for the things that Bro. Lonnie had said to Susan and I the fourth weekend of May. "Now when you two decide to get married, just tell me and I will do it for free." I had a plan to do exactly that...

I wrote a \$50 check to him as payment because I felt he deserved that much. After all, He drove 100 miles twice. (Well the church was suppose to take care of his needs for the evening service.

So the check was a payment for services rendered, not a payback. The latter was written on the envelope which contained the check. Actually, the front of the envelope became a bonifide check as well. It had all the requirements of a check: the payee's name (his), the amount (\$0.00) my name and address on upper left, the date, the amount printed out (Zero and no/100~~~~Dollars, and my signature. This was the perfect example of a check not being worth the paper that it was written on! I forgot something. It also included the bank name I used plus the routing and account numbers.

Sometime after this, we head toward **our** home. (Yes, it was nice to think of what had been my home was now our home.) Bro. Lonnie and others followed us as we traveled through the town while blowing our horns until we reached the edge of town. Then we were alone again. So, we headed south sitting very close together with my left hand on the wheel, and my right arm around her shoulder. Like on our trip the previous weekend, she was sitting in the middle of the front seat. Yet there was also a difference from before.

Our attitudes had changed from the week before. Then again, our attitudes had gradually changed over the summer. First there was our kissing. There was very little body contact other than our lips to begin with. Later she would sit in my lap while we kissed. Some bodily contact, but still very limited. Later when one of us would lay in the lap of the other, a little more incidental contact occurred. Yet this was not deliberate that I know of.

All relationships need to have certain rules of conduct. Without them, mistakes can easily be made that should not have happened. Of course, this can be in the form of do this, or don't do that. And yet, the attitudes of the couple in a relationship are just as important as the rules themselves. Even more so, the rules should be based upon being godly.

One thing that has bugged me were the "you can do this" and "you can't do this." Using these kinds of rules means the couple is often reminded of what they can't do from the time they begin dating until the wedding. Now they can, and so they do as they should. But there can be a problem. The emphasis has been on "don't" for so long that they can feel guilty about what they did.

God gives us instructions as to what, when, and how we should do things. Such should be the case with rules for courtship. There are certain activities which are proper for married couples. They are to wait until then to do these. Even so, there are stages of courtship each of which permits certain activities while requiring waiting until later to do other things at a later stage.

When a marriage ends in death, there are a different set of rules for the survivor. The same can be said in the case of a divorce. God requires us to revert back to being a single person.

This attitude stayed with me though out our marriage. The moment she died, our marriage ended. So, accidentally touching her in any of the enjoyable ways that I had in the past was wrong as far as my mind was concerned.

1Cor 7:4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

This basically defines part of the interaction within a marriage. Among other things, it is what the two of them need to work on especially during the first week or so. Notice that submission is required from both. It is also true that both must be considerate of each other. Each has things to teach the other; each has things to learn from the other.

An example of this occurred on the way home this evening. Up to this time, the only places that I would place my hand and arm around her were on her waist and shoulder. Well Susan decided at some point in our first trip as husband and wife to experiment a little: she took my hand in hers and gently placed it inside her bra. As she did so, she said, "Now you can."

I have to admit that it was somewhat of a shock to me, but only for a moment. Then I realized, yes I can! And I did in the gentlest way that I could.

I almost missed a very important part. After the wedding ceremony, Susan and I signed the marriage certificate. So did the ones we had designated as witnesses. Bro. Lonnie had promised to file this with the County Clerk's office in Decatur, MS. This is what made our marriage official.

Early Married Life: September 10, 1967 to August, 1969

First week

I did not know it at the time, but during this week we were in one of the most critical time of our marriage. How we interacted with each other would affect how well we got along later.

We both had habits that we had had for years. Some of these were likely to lead to conflicts. How either one of us reacted to a conflict was very important. Each one of these needed to be confronted and solved. But if either of us had not done this, it could well fester with in. Many a problem that seems to appear later in marriage can be traced back to this festering.

In college, I had attended some lectures about marriage. This information may well have helped in our adjustments to living together. The fact that years later I could still

remember some of the things said by this professor indicates that these lectures did provide at least some of the foundation I needed.

Part of the foundation needed came from my interaction with Susan's family during our courting. Particularly, the discussions I had with my future mother-in-law (and sisters-in-law to a lesser extent). These pointed additional things for me to think about as well as realize that there was more to life than what I had had. What kind of cookware did I have? What about bed and bath linens? Basically, she really wanted an inventory of what I had. So, the emphasis was placed more on did I have enough of these items for both of us. Having enough for me was no longer the more important point.

Her comment the last of August that Susan was beginning her period was also important raising questions to be considered. What were her needs for these times? How should I treat her? What type of problems could this lead to? (I may have gone a little over board on the questions.)

One of the most important times was on the ride from Union to Biloxi and the one coming back. Prior to this time we would spend time talking about somethings, but mostly we would kiss, kiss, and kiss some more. But 3 hours of driving together with me using almost completely monosyllable words is answering her questions can lead to serious problems. Obviously it did on the trip back. I had to change if our marriage was going to work right!

Well, she certainly scared me! It probably was the only thing she could have done to bring this change about. I did not want to lose her, so I found a way to begin talking. And as I did, I found it even easier to do this. By the time we got to Unions I had actually comfortable enough to where I could discuss any and all topics that came up. This continued for the rest of our marriage with few exceptions.

But now it was time to put this into practice. We were faced with how are we going to do all the things needing to be done. And this includes a wide variety of things. It began with what is for supper. Are the dishes washed right after eating, or let them wait for the morning.

Obviously, we will be sleeping together. How do we prepare for going to bed? Do we undress together or separately? If the former (as in our case), who undresses and gets in bed first? Once in bed together, how do we approach our first sex? Do we keep our clothes on, partially disrobe, or completely disrobe? Then what does each one do next? (Yes, this includes all the physical actions of the sex act.)

Neither of us had done this, so getting it all done right took some experimentation on both our parts. Ah yes, this definitely required patience on both our parts. In the end, all of the starts and stop which we went through was well worth the time involved. It provided us with more practice in helping each other to learn something new.

After I recovered from my stroke in 2008, I read book about how the brain can change when our habits need changing. This is known as plasticity of the brain. Memories are formed when paths of neurons are made in the brain. When we want to perform a particular task, the brain goes to the memory for that activity and tells the body what to do. The more often this is done the stronger the path becomes. (It becomes an engrained habit.)

One would think that once a habit is formed, it will be there forever. But this is not the case, and this is very important in marriage. The brain also has chemicals which it can use to erase anywhere from a single pathway to vast numbers of pathways. Highly charged emotions can cause this to happen more thoroughly than lower levels of emotions.

In my stroke, the area affected was deep down in the white matter on the front right portion. As I understand it, a large number of cells were destroyed in that area. During my recovery, the brain used this eraser chemical to wipe clean another area of my brain. Then it rewired this new area with connections to the cortex of my brain. There were now connections from my brain to various parts of my body. My ability to do things improved as this continued to happen.

First night

It was about 9:15 PM when we arrived at **our** apartment. I was getting the luggage, and Susan was the first person out of the side door of the garage. Now she had done the very same thing two months earlier, and history was about to repeat itself!

Sarg, the dog, had seen us drive into the garage, and he was waiting at the other side of the back door. Now everyone in the neighborhood knew that we had returned! Like a flash, she ran back to the car and jumped up on the fender. OK, I had to calm her down and do something with Sarg. Done. Now to head upstairs to our front door. Next, I placed our luggage down inside the screen porch.

Of course the bride is suppose to be carried over the threshold which I prepared to do. The door handle was not exactly held together very well. So when I turned the key and then the door knob, It came apart. One part was in my hand, and the rest of it fell to the floor inside the apartment. Embarrassing? Very much so!! I managed to get the door open, pick up Susan, and carry her in. Next came the suitcases. It was warm that evening, so I turned on the window fan. I did not have a window A/C unit. So we had to make due with a window fan, and it did not cool the apartment very much at all. So we sweat a bit to say the least.

First meal together as husband and wife

After each made a trip to the bathroom, we prepared to have a simple supper: cream of mushroom soup and a cheese sandwich. Somehow we managed to burn the soup a little, and this is not an easy thing to do when the pan is Teflon coated. Not much for our first meal together, but we survived.

By this time it was around 10 PM. The dishes were either done or rinsed to be done tomorrow. (At least one question had now been answered.) At this point we could have frozen as to what we would do next. (Fear of the unknown can cause it.) But we did not because we had each other to lean on. Even so, we were facing all the questions I listed earlier about this night.

So we began by discussing the first one: getting into bed. Susan preferred to get into bed first. She was not sure about getting into bed if I were already laying in it.

OK, so she went into the bathroom to put on her gown and negligee. She went to bed, and I went into bathroom to put on my PJ's. Now, it was time for me to join her, and I was having an uneasy feeling to begin with.

Here is where Susan had helped me greatly. A month earlier, she had asked me to join her on top of her bed (fully clothed). It was not the same this night with me wearing my PJ's, but it was close enough that I was more comfortable than I would have been otherwise. Besides she was encouraging me verbally as well as by body language.

Then it was time to find out what sex is about. This took a lot of starts and stops, repeats, and above all discussions as to what we should do next. This included what to do when we successfully engaged in sex and the what to do afterward. Then after some resting, do we try again?

At some point, we decided that we did not know that much about the physical body of the other. Yes, likely we both had "book" knowledge (what it looks like), but that is not the same as our physical appearance. This time I went first, and I let her move her hands over me to her heart's content. One time she got a little "rough" with me, so I gently explained how to play with that particular area. This way she could get the pleasure she wanted while I would also get pleasure from it.

Sex is a very important part of the first week. There is a need to find the activities that make this pleasurable for both. This takes a lot of practice to get it just right. Well, most couples have a desire to engage in sex many times during the early part of a marriage, so they do get the practice. This is true for people who are "experienced" as well as for those like me who have never had any.

This is why I will mention sex in various parts of our first week as newly weds. In the beginning, sex between the two of us was mostly mechanical. Only as the week progressed did we gradually engage in foreplay and afterplay. Sex was becoming love making. (I will take the latter to the former any day or time!)

Little sleep

I do not think that either one of us got very much sleep this night. At some point, we decided that we needed to try to get some sleep. We definitely had things that needed done tomorrow. (Or, was it already after midnight?) Even with all we had done, sleep was hard to come by.

I did manage to sleep, but I don't think very deeply. In fact, I woke up around 3 AM **alone** in the bed after a few hours of sleep. Susan had gotten up earlier, and I found her sitting in our stuffed chair in the other room. Her emotions were swirling in her mind just as they were in mine. We were not

prepared for these emotions from so many things that were new to us.

But as we shared our thoughts and emotions, we established our bond just a little stronger. After some time we returned to the bed together. We slept a little better but not much.

Well we woke up with someone very special laying beside us our spouse. Ah, this was so nice! And like most newly weds, we "practiced" again. Gee, we were getting a little better. We were also getting more use to each other which was so very important (paying attention to each other might be a better description).

But then we still had things to get done this day. So, we finally got up, dressed, etc. Then we headed out to do them one at a time.

Meeting people where I worked

My leave papers were waiting for us where I worked. So this was my first stop: Annex 7. As we approached the building, we met a major. Out of habit, I saluted and greeted him, and he returned the salute. I was in civilian clothes at the time, so I did not have to salute him.

We went directly to where my section office was located. While there, I introduced Susan around to those who were not in the classroom at the time. Complements, etc. were exchanged by those present. Then we got down the the important things: the leave papers and the things Susan needed to do to be registered as my wife.

So Captain White told where I needed to take Susan to get a military ID and whatever paperwork needed to be completed. By this time, it was past mid morning. We said our goodbys and headed to the Base to get these things done. It was at least noon by this time. Perhaps we had lunch at the Officer's Club in the grill?

Ironing and Packing

Other decisions have to be made about our trip. What are we taking? What needs to be cleaned before packing it? What needs to be ironed? Again, this now applies to both of us.

First of all, it has been a week since I have washed my clothes. So, they have to be cleaned before being packed. And we did this at a nearby laundromat which I have been using more than a year. Then we went back to our apartment to begin the packing process. And yes, it took a while to decide what we wanted to take. After supper, we continued working on this project.

Well I was doing the ironing as well. I must have had a lot of it because it was 12:30 AM before I finished. It was about the same time when Susan finished the packing. Why did it take so long? It seems to me that today I could have done this much quicker than I did then.

Time for more experimentation with our bodies in bed. We are learning and getting better at it. Another night with only a few hours of sleep. Well it was easier for us to fall asleep next to each other the second night. Then we were up in the morning and headed toward Florida.

The geese

My goal was to go to Okeechobee, FL, to introduce Susan to Jack's aunt and grandmother and their husbands. I thought a lot of them while I had been in Champaign, so now I wanted to let them meet my wife. (I explained what I wanted to do to Susan and got no complaints from her.) Then we planned to cup back up the east side of the peninsula including Cape Canaveral.

But what kind of planning did I do? I did get the directions to where we were going. I may have done this through AAA of which I was a member then. In fact, I am bound to think

that I even had the directions to the motel where we spent the first night. But there were a lot of details that I did not plan for on this trip. This was especially true of the trip up the east coast.

We drove as far as Tallahassee by mid afternoon. There I saw something very strange to me: the yellow lights at the traffic signals were showing numbers instead of just a yellow light. Well, I slowed to a stop when I saw the yellow come on. Then it dawned on me that these numbers were showing the number of seconds until the light would turn red. When I first realized this, I was sitting still with about 10 seconds still left. So, I went through the intersection on yellow with seconds to spare. Then I drove on to the motel.

After signing into the motel we went to our room. This is when we discovered that our room was different: it had two bath rooms! So, still being somewhat shy, we used separate ones. It was Susan who suggested this, but I was oh so happy to do this too. (We had used the bathroom separately while in our apartment up to this point.)

We rested for a while before going outside to see the grounds of the motel. One thing caught our eyes: a lake with some geese on it. This invited us to investigate further, so we did.

Well, the geese saw us, and they thought: food! Others before us had regularly fed them, so they expected us to do the same. And they headed our way honking! Neither of us really understood why they were acting like they were. They were very aggressive.

Susan had never had this happen to her before, so she thought they wanted to attack her. Off she went to get away from them. We may have gone somewhere else, but she did not go back to the lake.

At some point we went to the restaurant on the motel grounds for supper. That is when the "geese attack" was

mentioned to an employee. And she explained what had happened. The geese only wanted some food. But... we still did not go back.

After coming back to our room, we did something together, but what I don't remember. Even so, we turned in earlier than normal. But even with the nap in the afternoon, we might have gotten 4 hours Sunday night and five hours Monday night. We definitely need longer sleeping hours.

This night we came closer to making love than before. We are definitely learning how enjoyable this can be for both at the same time. And this night there was more learning for me and more enjoyment as well. As promised on Sunday night, the time would come when I could physically examine her body. Again, it is one thing to study a subject in a book, it is another thing to explore my wife's body in detail! And another point: she allowed this to be done laying nude without any cover on her. And I was nude at the time as well. We were finally getting much more comfortable with each other's bodies. We closer to being one.

The next morning, we got closer on both counts. It was Susan that suggested we use the same bathroom together. So, we did. I got to watch the things she did, and she got to watch me as well. It was educational to say the least. It at least ended me from asking her "What are you doing in there that is taking so long?" I was watching her.

When it comes to a couple sharing their love for each other, the most important part is sharing their lives, the things that they do everyday: their thoughts, their actions, their emotions, their preferences, their pet peeves. The love they share in bed, while important, becomes the reflection of the other aspects of love. Without them, making love will degenerate to only sex and could even become loathsome. This is why a couple needs to focus their attention on sharing the rest of their lives first. Then making the

transition from their first sex to learning how to make love in a way that pleases both comes later, as in the early weeks of their marriage. The first week is important for the initial stages, but this needs to continue beyond that point.

Staying with the Higgins

In the morning we got up, ate, and headed south. While this was a bad idea, Susan laid down on the seat placing her head in my lap. This allowed me to caress her, but her head was next to the bottom of the steering wheel. If we had been in an accident, she would have been killed. (I as usual was wearing my seat belt.) So while it was delightful to do this, it was also dangerous. By mid afternoon, we had arrived at Lake Okeechobee where the Higgins and Fox's lived. (These were the grandparents and aunt and uncle respectively of Elder Jack Allen.) I came by their homes because I wanted them to meet my new wife. We wound up staying one day, and had a wonderful visit. They had some avocado trees and serve us some of them.

I later learned that they were really impressed that I had thought to do this. You might say that we made their day! So, my objective had been a very good one. They knew that I cared.

The Atlantic Ocean

From the lake we headed east to the coast and then north. We could have toured the Kennedy Space Center (known then as Cape Canaveral), but I had not checked into how to do this. So we continued heading north.

In the afternoon, we stopped along the beach for a while. The waves were coming in, and they were a blue-green (mostly a green which was a color I don't ever remember seeing before). We even waded out in the surf a little bit getting our feet wet. Even if it was the middle of September, the water was just little bit cold. (In reality, the temperature

was likely in the low 80's though.) Yet this was an amazing scene that I still remember. But all good things must end, so we continued on our way north just a little bit longer. Another surprise was waiting for us.

We found a motel along the beach with vacancies, so we stopped. They had a bridal suite, but I decided to get a room closer to the beach. I didn't yet know the wonders this would bring us, but I was about to find out. We could hear the surf coming in. It was so soothing to hear it!

Before going out to eat, we took a shower together. This was a new experience for me for two reasons. First because it was the first time we had done this together. This was another part of learning more about the other. Secondly, the "tub" had a square floor 2.5 feet on each side. This was a little tight but very cozy. (This was our first time to shower together, but definitely not our last.)

When we returned from eating at a restaurant, we spent some more time out on the beach watching the surf come in and listening to its sounds. At the end of the evening, we drifted to sleep listening to the surf. What a sound!

On Friday we drove almost as far as Mobile, and this was mostly just driving as we did not see any sights on this day. By this night, I was not feeling well at all for some reason. I personally blamed it upon wading in the ocean the day before, but this was not likely the cause either.

Prior to entering service, I usually had the flu twice a year: once in the fall, and once in the spring. But now the Air Force required me to get a flu shot every year. This way I only got the flu once a year. The previous year, the flu shots were given early in the fall. Come spring, I got the flu. This year, the flu shots were not ready until October. As a result, I got the flu on my honeymoon!

Sickbay

We got home in the early afternoon on Saturday, and I was feeling bad enough that I had to go to the sickbay for some medication. I was running a fever by this time, so they gave me some APC's (aspirin, something that started with a P, and caffeine). I was told not to report to work until later in the week (I don't remember for how long). Poor Susan. She had not been married for a week yet, and she had to be my nurse maid. Unfortunately for me, I was not feeling well enough to enjoy the pampering.

Despite feeling bad I reported in when I first got home. You know first things first. Each day I did not use for leave now would be a day that I could use later or receive pay for it when I got out of the Air Force. In this case, Friday was my last day of leave, and Saturday was my first day of duty.

Wedding presents

This was the third weekend which is when Bro. Lonnie preached at our church on Sunday evening. More over, the other members had decided to bring their wedding presents to church and give them to us then. But come Sunday I was still feeling really lousy! There was no way that I could have gone the way I felt. So, he came by our apartment.

Arrangements were made for the lady next door to check on me once in a while while he took Susan to church with him. Afterward, he returned her to me along with the presents. Then after staying a little while, he headed back home.

By mid week, I was feeling much better and returned to work. What a welcome I received! I was given quite a ribbing about getting sick at the end of our honeymoon. The most often comment was I must have used my "illness" as an excuse for staying home with Susan. Come to think of it, they were probably insinuating what we might be doing while I "supposedly" had been recuperating ("Yah right, they thought.")

This left me with one very bad regret. I was not feeling well enough to enjoy what the others thought we were doing!

Adjustments to marriage

During the first week, everyday brought something new. So we had to take the time to decide what we were going to do for that day. This allowed more interaction between the two of us.

But when I had to go back to work during the middle of the second week, a certain amount of repetitiveness began to creep in. I was gone from 5:30 AM to 4 PM on weekdays. Susan was suddenly on her own during that time. She had to face this on her own.

By the time I was ready to go back to work, she was having medical problems of her own. She was due to have a period on Saturday. This meant that the content in her daily birth control pills were beginning to change, and this caused a reaction that neither of us really understood.

If she had been in Union, she would likely have gone to the doctor to correct it. (Her Mom probably would not have understood what was happening, but one of her sisters might have.) But she was not in Union. We were both very new to how to handle medical problems in service. I obviously knew about my medical problems, but how do I handle hers? I did not know, and I was too ignorant to ask. Anyway, the contractions and pain gradually subsided over a day or so.

During the latter part of this week, I decided that it was time to wash all of the junk off of the rental car. This was something that we sort of did together. Ah, yes, doing things together, how great this made me feel! But then I also got somewhat depressed.

Why people think that they have to pull pranks at a wedding, I will never know. I just can not find any

justification for it. (It is oh so childish!) In our case, someone used white shoe polish for baby shoes to write on the car. Perhaps, I could have gotten it off if I had washed it as soon as possible which I obviously did not. Then again perhaps the damage was done by the time we arrived in Biloxi the very first night. Either way, we could not wash it writing completely off of the car finish. I did not like this at all! Was I going to have to pay for someone's prank? This can be quite expensive as in three or four month's pay. Not funny at all!

Then Friday afternoon, we did what I had done for the past summer: head to Union for a visit. She and her parents got to visit after being apart for two weeks. With this, both got some time to revert to past habits for a while. And yet, even this was somewhat limited as far as Susan was concerned. She was not the same person that she had been. She is now a wife having learned new things about herself and others.

There were lessons that the parents had to learn as well. Susan was still their daughter, but she was responsible to someone other than them. She was now doing some things that they would not have permitted her to do just a couple of weeks before.

Specifically, during the summer, Susan had slept in her parents' bedroom while I slept in hers. Now, she and I slept together in what had been hers. As I learned from her Mom, it is not easy for a mother to watch her daughter go into a bedroom with a man even if it is with the daughter's husband. Parents are also very sensitive to how their daughter is treated in her marriage. This can last long after the honeymoon!

Susan began her period as scheduled (Saturday evening). So there was not problem in this. And we had a nice visit. A very important part of the weekend was the Saturday evening and Sunday morning services. I drove everyone in the rental car for the evening one. I'm not sure about

Sunday morning. Since there is always dinner on the grounds on this day, Susan and I might have ate at church and then head home. But since this was so soon after our wedding, we might have gone back to Union for a while before heading out.

This was now the third week of our marriage. A certain amount to habits were beginning to be developed together. Washing and drying clothes had become a weekly affair. My uniforms needed to be ironed, and that became my responsibility. Did she iron her things? Perhaps she did.

My going to work daily was already a habit, but this was not necessary a good thing. It was so similar that I actually slid back to what I had been doing ever since I moved to the garage apartment. The only things differently was that I was leaving Susan early in the morning and not seeing her until late afternoon.

There was one habit that I had had before when driving down the beach: watching women on the beach. But the evening of May 28th put a stop to that. And I did not go back to that habit. But then again, I had the one that I wanted!

Then Friday came again. This weekend was when the Good Hope Association met in Petal (Sept 29 — Oct 1). So, we packed church clothes for Saturday and drove up there for the Friday evening service.

Afterward, Bro. Lonnie invited us to spend the night with them along with a few others. I think that he and Shirley wanted to know how we were adjusting to married life. So, this was a topic of conversation. Then as it got later, we all went to bed: Susan and I were given a pallet on the floor. There was a first time for everything, I suppose. (No making love this night: it would not be proper.)

We attended morning and afternoon services and then returned to Biloxi. This was the first weekend, so we had

services at home tonight and Sunday morning.

My ability to bring rain

This was about the time that the Taylors asked us to visit with them Sunday evening. I had not done so since the first of May. Ever since then the weather along the coast continued to be abnormally dry. Sister Bonnie told me that throughout the summer, they had seen all of the signs that pointed to rain coming, but still no rain in the early parts of the week. There was not much later in the week either. They needed some rain. At least that was the excuse for asking us to visit them. Then again, I think they were teasing me which was alright with me. So, we went. It was a nice visit. Besides we all were hoping for rain soon.

Then the strangest thing happened: we had a good rain before Wednesday night! This really tickled me! It would seem that I really was a rainmaker. One year I visited them very often, and there was plenty of rain. The following year, I did not visit them during the summer at all, and there was very little rain. Seems very strange, but it was only a mere coincidence, and I know it. But it is nice to pretend anyway.

Strange thing though: they did not mention anything about their daughter Joan, nor the upcoming marriage at the end of the week...

This is now the fourth week of marriage. We are both getting use to our daily routines. So, learning on both of our parts was lessening. There still were some new things popping up, but not as often.

I did get one bit of advice at work: I needed to move into married housing. (When I was told this, I don't remember, but it had to be in the first few weeks.) They were right. Susan needed to have access to others more so than our neighbors near the garage apartment.

So the two of us went to Base Housing to make arrangement to get an apartment. We got it rather quickly because a family had just moved out going to another permanent duty station. We could move in during the early part of October.

Now we would have air conditioning instead of only a window fan. It had 2 bedrooms, full bath, kitchen, living room, and a utility room containing a washer and dryer. Outside we had a trash can which was picked up once a week, a storage room in which I would later kept a lawn mower, and a clothes line. (We were not permitted to hang out any undergarments though. So, we just dried all of our clothes.) Well we might have used the clothes line once or twice during the approximately 15 months that we lived there.

Most housing units were duplexes with a single units (3 bedrooms) for large families. This meant that we were responsible for cutting the grass that grew around our part of the building. And since we had pine trees growing throughout the area, we were to rake the pine needles periodically as well. In addition, we could not allow too many of these needles remain on the roof. (I think I removed them one or twice a year, but I am not sure.)

I suppose the one thing that bothered me the most was all of the higher ranking officers that lived around me. Saluting all of them when in uniform was required. But this was just my timidity in thinking that I might mess this up somehow. In reality, there was really nothing to this worry of mine at all.

When the furniture was delivered, one item was "conveniently" not brought in. I was at work, so Susan signed for everything. Later, I had to pay for the "forgotten" item when the furniture was returned to the base. It is a scam that has been known to happen for years. It is easy to

trust people who deliver the furniture everyday. It turns out some airmen fed on that trust.

The apartment had a few items in it though, but very few. There were two $\frac{3}{4}$ beds in the front bedroom that I remember. As a result, we moved one of them to the back bedroom and slept on the other one. This is when the card table and chairs my parents had given us came in handy: they were our dining room furniture. When we called base housing, we mentioned that we wanted a double bed delivered with the other items and a $\frac{3}{4}$ bed removed.

My garage apartment was furnished, so there was not any furniture to move other than what I had bought. All the things in the kitchen and bathroom cabinets had to be moved in my car. So, this got done over a period of a week or less. OK, all of our clothes had to go as well.

Once again, there were many new things to that required both of our attentions. Decisions had to be made about where each of the items went. I let Susan make many of these by simply agreeing with what she thought. After all, she was spending much more time around them than I was. Even so, I may have made some suggestions and the reason for each of them.

During this week (I think), an older man (Brother Bush) died. He had attended our church regularly (His membership was at Pascagoula). We attended the wake (visitation), and his pastor, Elder Ira Easterling was there as well. Now Susan had met him several years before at an association.

For some reason he had found out then that he and she had the same birthday. So, he teased her about it. Since they had the same birthday, they must be the same age. She was too young at the time to know what to think. But she now remembered what he had said so long ago. When I met him, I introduced her as my wife. Of course he

recognized her. She recognized him, and so she immediately asked him if they were still the same age...

Anyway, we had a nice visit with him. Then we left for home. Since I was working the next day, we could not attend the funeral. We missed Bro. Bush after that.

This brings us to the second weekend of October. (we had been married one whole month!) The Bethany Association is located in this area, and this weekend is their annual meeting. So, we headed to Union again. We get to be with Susan's parents and attend church as well. Friday afternoon we headed that way.

We all went in our car for Saturday morning and afternoon services. After the morning service, I saw Bro. Lonnie and chatted with him for a while. He told me that he had not been there the previous evening because of a wedding he had conducted. It was Joan from the church in Biloxi! Her husband lived within a few miles of her parents where she was living at the time. (This really caught me by surprise because no one knew that she was even interested in anyone.)

Flashback: During the previous spring, Doug (a member of our church) had begun dating her, and this lasted for a while, but that was it. Fortunately, they parted on good terms. And at some point he even hinted to me that I might consider dating her. (I was not interested.)

Anyway, this initial dating must have awaken her desire for a husband. She began dressing up much more when she came to church when she dated Doug and did not stop. So, we all missed the signs, except her parents.

After the meeting ended, Susan and I headed back home again. I suppose one exciting thing for the weekend was enough.

Welcome to my world

What brought me even much closer to Susan was how open she was to me. As a result I got to learn how she viewed things. In many ways she acted as if she had always been around me. This began while we were still in the garage apartment, but it seemed like even more so after we moved into base housing.

She would walk into the bathroom regardless of what I was doing if there was something she needed to get or do in it. It took a little while to adjust to this. At the same time it was a joy that she would do this.

There was one of the civilian instructors in my section who was a wise guy of sorts. He also loved to tell jokes. Well, he had a definition of when a honeymoon was over. He said this happened when the husband was brushing his teeth and wife came into the bathroom to do something else. (I will let the reader try to figure out what.)

Obviously, she had become accustomed to being around me: her level of trust was growing. This certainly developed similar feelings in me as well. I did not know it at the time, but this was a great accomplishment on both our parts. It certainly improved our marriage!

Then came the end of October. It was time for Susan's period again. Well, she did not have enough tampons when it began. She could not go to get them so... I have to do what?

OK, I will go get them. So off I went. I found them on the shelf (so far so good) and took them to the checkout counter. But the cashier was a woman! I am really getting very nervous, definitely embarrassed. There is no telling how red my face might be either. Well, it certainly did not bother her any. She took my money and gave me any change due. That was that.

Other than for my emotional state, nothing really happened. What was my problem? (Oh, really? Go back and

read the problem I had just talking to a young lady. My very wet palms; remember")

Come to think of it, I have not the slightest idea of how I would have acted if we were in the store together and Susan added tampons to the rest of the items. This was a natural body function, and I was overreacting. Over a long period of time, I gradually got use to things like this.

October 19th is her birthday, and she was 19. I suppose that we could have gone out this evening, but she wanted to invite Joan and her new husband to a supper. After all, it was almost two weeks since they got married.

Susan invited the Taylor's daughter and her husband on Susan's birthday (Oct 19). We had a nice visit, but no real close friendship was created. Well, we did see them at church on first and third weekends.

The Lewis' had told me that I would need to take Susan out to do things once in a while. This is because she was a little immature. In time, following this advice should help her to mature more.

One of the things we tried once was get together with our next door neighbors. This time, we went to a movie with them. But there did not seem to be much that we had in common, so this fizzled. And we really did not develop a habit of seeing any movies. In fact, we saw only one more movie.

It would be years later that I learned about planning our lives. By that time, it was basically too late. I read it in a book, but that was as far as it went. It was not until after Susan's death that I have begun making plans and seeking to fulfill them. In fact, the first computer files I have on goals only go back to 2005 (two years after her death).

Family Planning

While the birth control pills worked well in September, they were too strong for Susan's system, and she had a reaction to them toward the last few days of her month. She seemed to be having some contractions. So, that resulted in her refusing to get another prescription of it. It may have upset her hormones enough that she could not get pregnant for a while. While I do not know this for sure, she didn't for about a year.

As I reread this, I think: Where would I have gotten a refill for this prescription? It was something that I did not think about at the time. We could have gotten it on a Saturday while visiting her parents. Or, I could have made an appointment at the OB/GYN clinic at the base hospital. They would have written a prescription for her. But, this was another one of the "little things" that are a part of a marriage that the couple is not likely to think about until they are forced to. Or, they might do what I did: nothing.

Getting my car repaired

It took a while for the woman's insurance company to make an agreement with me so that the repair work could begin. Meanwhile, I was very naive as to what I should have done. Personally, I had the wrong auto insurance: I had GEICO. They were handled by independent insurance agencies. Instead of contacting one of them once I got to the coast in late August, I waited for her company to decide what would or would not be done. Of course, they were going to do as little as possible. Live and learn does not produce good results in situations like this.

It was sometime in the latter part of October before I was notified that the car was ready. (It really was not.) So, I headed to Laurel, MS, to get the car. On the way, I picked up Bro. Lonnie who was going to drive the rental car back to the Biloxi Airport where I had gotten it.

On the way back home from Laurel, I kept having problems with the brakes. I had to stop at the side of the road several times to bleed the lines relieving the pressure build-up during the trip back from getting the car. I was smart enough to take it to the VW dealer to have it fixed thoroughly. I did not mention that the car had been in an accident, so they fixed the problem because the car was still under warranty. I really should have told them; now I say that.

Other than that, I had no further problems with it. When I wrecked it, the speedometer read approximately 7,500 miles. (Not bad for one summer's driving) When I traded it in 1970, it had 64,000 miles. So, I got my money's worth for this car.

First Thanksgiving

I took a two week leave beginning on the Wednesday before this holiday. On the way to my parents, we spent Friday in Memphis at the meeting at Whitehaven Church (their Youth Meeting). This had impressed me so much the previous November that I decided we would attend together this year as well. Susan was quite willing to do this as well. We were both impressed with this meeting.

Friday night we got a call from my Dad. Tom was due in Sunday morning, on leave from the Army. So, we left Memphis Saturday morning heading north and arriving seven hours later.

To reach us, Dad called the Wards trying to reach Susan and I. They were thinking that they might know someone in Memphis who might just know where we were. Well, Sister Mildred did. In fact, she had a relative living there that was Primitive Baptist also. So she called there. Then the relative called around the area to locate us. This information was relayed to Sister Ward who relayed it to Dad.

This was a first for Susan; she had never been this far north before. It certainly was much cooler than the 70's and 80's of Biloxi only a few days before. But after arrival, we got a chance to relax a bit. There was a matter of them getting to know Susan and vice versa. So, this might just have been a bit unnerving for both.

In the morning, we headed to church riding in my parent's car. I looked for Tom, but he was no where to be found. He was flying in from the east coast, but I was not aware of this then.

Tom arrived after services began on Sunday morning. During the right hand of fellowship at the end of the service, he hugged Susan when he got to her. This was when Mom or Dad asked him how he knew he was hugging the right woman. His reply, "Well I knew everyone else there except her." (It was a no brainer.) I don't remember how long he remained before having to return to post, but I don't think it was very long. This may have been the first leave he had had for this entire year. At least he got to meet Susan, and we also had a good visit.

The following Friday evening, Mom and Dad went downtown to do their weekly business items (banking, shopping, etc.) as the banks opened Friday evenings for this very purpose. (Seems like everyone else came downtown to do the same thing.) Mom asked me if I wanted to go along, and I said no.

Susan went though. While downtown, Mom and Susan met one of my female high school classmates, and Mom introduced them. When Susan was introduced as *my* wife, the lady was completely surprised. This could not be possible! If Mom had said that Susan was Webb or Tom's wife, she would believed it. But me? No way! (Maybe I should have gone that evening if only to see the look on her face.)

Another time while we were there, Webb was over for a meal. (He was living in perhaps a half mile away on Quincy St.) During it the conversation turned to our marriage, and Webb said, "I was the best man." Ah, Susan, she did it again! She immediately said, "No, you weren't." He kept insisting he was, and she insisted that he wasn't. Finally, she ended it with this, "You were not the best man; I married the best man." (She got him all right. There were other times later like this as well.)

I suppose you could say that I got my shot at him as well. It only shows that I was not the same man as the one who stood with him at my wedding two and a half months earlier. I had heard two adjectives that described how a couple made out. So, I asked him what was the difference between the meanings of the two. He told me. Then I asked an additional question about his answer. At first, he did not understand my question. No wonder, it was X-rated! From his point of view, I was not suppose to think this way, and this caught him off guard. It took him several minutes before he finally understood the real meaning behind my question. Then he began laughing.

On the other hand, when he first kissed Susan hello, I began seeing **red**. She was my wife! A peck was fine, but that was far too deep of a kiss in my thinking. I almost told him to get his hands off my wife. He had a serious girlfriend, go kiss her this way.

Finally, on December 3rd or 4th, we headed back home to warmer weather. I had to be back by the 5th. Then it was back to me working and Susan staying at home by herself.

Athletics

After going to Annex 7 for some time, the decision was made to make it into a retirement home. So we were moved to Maltby Hall which was much closer to the base. This meant that we no longer had access to the softball field at

the annex. Well, there were some of these on base. So, we decided to start playing at one of them at night.

There was enough of us to form two teams, so we played among ourselves. This way the families could come out to watch and cheer us on. Well, there was at least three newly wed couples at the time. (I know this was what Susan needed.)

I wrote softball because we used a softball. However, it was pitched overhand. One of best pitchers we had was Betty. She could throw rather hard. One time, someone managed to actually hit it, and it went whizzing by close to her head. This bothered the older officers in the group because they did not want to get her hurt. So this ended her "pitching career."

Sometimes I pitched, sometimes I caught, or I played in the infield. I was not fast enough to play in the outfield. Neither I could not really throw hard enough to get the ball back into the infield quickly.

It was while I was catching that they got their next scare. I was not always catching it with the glove. Instead I would catch it between my legs. At the time I had very strong leg muscles and fast reaction times, so there was not really any danger of injury. I doubt that I could find anyone else that would believe this though... So this also ended my "catching career."

What is the real temperature?

This occurred in the winter time of 1968. The regulation for the uniform of the day was that the temperature had to be at least 40 degrees before a person could wear the summer uniform (tan shirt and pants). Otherwise, they had to be wearing the blue uniform complete with a tie. That morning the temperature sure felt like it was in the 30's. The major in charge of the unit was talking to Captain Proctor about it. The latter mentioned that he had a thermometer in his car

which should settle the issue. I happened to go out to his car with him. While it was probably in the high 30's outside the car, the bright shining sun made sure it was not inside it: 104 degrees! He and I had a big laugh as we walked back into the building, shaking from the cold. (We were wearing our blue uniforms, but I was still more than a little chilled.)

I want a family

As time went by, Susan became more agitated because she was not pregnant. She even talked herself into thinking that she was. So she insisted on buying some maternity outfits and wearing them when we went to see her parents. She was not big enough to fit into them properly. They just hung on her. There is no way to exaggerate just how poorly they hung!

She began to have some emotional issues that I did not really understand nor know how to help her with. This would continue throughout her life. I think that I have had similar problems possibly because we had somewhat similar backgrounds.

She was the youngest of four girls. The next youngest was almost 8 years older; the oldest was more than 13 years older. So, she was not only the "baby" of the family: she was also the "doll" of it. She had four "mothers" that were controlling how she acted. This resulted in two things: a revolt against outside pressures, and the belief that she knew what she was doing even when she had no idea what was required. (Sometimes I wonder just how much any of the three sisters really knew what they were doing. Over the years their actions did not really show that they did. But this only proved that they were human beings just like the rest of us.)

In the very first part of our marriage, she had provided me with what I needed to adjust to having her as my wife. She introduced herself to me in a way that made it easy for me

to introduce myself to her in a very intimate way in both cases. Whether someone had taught her to do this, or she decided this, it was what I needed her to do. Then again with only girls in the family, this intimacy would be much more likely than with the mixed sex family that I grew up in.

Also we made frequent trips to see her parents which likely helped her some to begin with. But there was still the time between visits that led to a few problems.

The people who taught in my section got one afternoon off a week, and I began to take one off toward the end of the week. The reason being that when I took Monday afternoon off, she would be talking about my taking an afternoon off for the rest of the week. She was obviously having problems with the long days without me (or perhaps at least without someone). As a result, she began having medical problems because of the underlying psychological problems (psychosomatic).

Penni, our cat

A month or so after we moved to base housing, one of the church families gave us a cat of our own which we named Penni. She was quite a character! She was basically all white with a right black ear, and she had a ringed black and white tail. Their cat had had a litter of kittens a couple of months before, and they were trying to give them to someone who would take care of them.

This required getting cat food and kiddy litter. Well, food yes, but I had another idea about the litter. So I got us into my car to drive to the beach. I put sand into a container which became Penni's litter box. Later we got a litter box complete with scoop, probably when we bought her food. Or my improvised litter box was too messy: too much sand on the floor. We began buying kitty litter too.

Penni did some strange things that may have been because of our "training" her. We could take her out on a

leash which is very uncommon. However recently, I did see a cat on a leash. I would also go for rides with her on my bicycle during which she would ride inside of my jacket and stick her head outside my jacket. All of these were enjoyable. Some of them took time to accomplish, and others she did willingly with little effort on our part.

The strangest thing was how she would ride when we drove to Susan's parents. She would begin sitting on Susan's lap with her face as close to the slightly opened window as possible. She was rather agitated for a while. Then she would relax drape her body across my shoulders with her head hanging down on my right shoulder. There she would nap for the rest of the trip. If we would run through some rain, she would raise her head up just long enough to see what was going on. When she saw the rain drops hitting the windshield and the wiper blades running, her head came back down on my shoulder and she would go back to sleep.

The back of the driver's seat came to the top of my shoulders. So, in reality, she would lay on it next to my shoulders with her head hanging down over my right collar bone.

One time that Mom and Dad came down, we all headed to Union, MS (in separate cars). They followed us on this trip, and Mom became very concerned with the dangers she saw in having a cat lose in the car. I have to agree to a certain extent. Cats have been known to cause an accident when lose. Why Penni was so docile, I do not know. But then she was our spoiled brat.

I think that Penni helped Susan somewhat but not as much as she needed. She was Susan's baby in so many ways. Yes, she would talk to Penni. But, Susan needed to hear words spoken to her as well. Somehow, Meow is not enough to continue a conversation...

Venation blinds covered the windows and were usually kept close. Why they were not left open to see out at times is something that I do not understand. This way Susan could have seen me when I arrived from work. Well, it didn't matter because Penni made sure that she knew. Our cat would jump on the couch below the windows and look out. Sure enough, there I would be walking up the front walk!

She was fun to have around though. At Christmas time, she would play with any tree ornaments that were within her reach. She was having fun, but the floor was getting littered with broken ornaments! We very quickly learned to buy plastic ones for that area of the tree. After that, she had her fun, and we stopped having broken ornaments.

We also got her toys which she would play with. One was a scratching pole which she used quite a bit. Another was a ball which she would chase all around on the floor. And there were various toy animals.

Our apartment had spring door-stops, and Penni learned how to play with them. Some times when we wanted to be alone in our bedroom, we would close the door with her in the hall. After a while she learned how to strike door-stop with her paw making a noise (boing,boing, boing...). Once she learned this, she would continuously do this until we opened the door and let her in.

Where did she sleep? Under the covers at the bottom of the bed, of course! Her fur sure felt nice to my feet, but I worried about her scratching me for a while. After a while, I relaxed because she never did, scratch me that is.

Before we finally got accustomed to making sure Penni had access to the litter box, she left a mess on the floor in the kitchen. The laundry room which had the litter box in it was next to the kitchen and we had just accidentally closed that door. We never made that mistake again. What a mess!

Later we moved the litter box inside the house. this time we accidentally left the laundry room door closed with her still in it. (She had been out there with Susan doing laundry.) She meowed quite a bit wanting to get out, and fortunately we found her before it was too late. (Yep, she ran to the litter box very quickly! No mess this time.)

Another time, Susan was putting some of her clean underwear into the top dresser drawer. Somehow she did not notice that Penni had crawled into the open drawer. She closed the drawer with the cat inside. This time she went missing for quite a few hours (it seemed like a day). After another search, we finally found her. Once again, a bee line to the litter box. How she help it all inside of her until getting to the litter box, I did not know.

Anne Oakley at last!

It was the summer of 1968 when I returned to the shooting range for the annual pistol qualifying fire. This time we were shooting at a silhouette from a variety of distances and positions from standing up to laying down. Gone was the targets with circles and a bulls-eye from before. We were given 42 rounds to fire. I only managed to put 39 holes in the target.

This was so close to qualifying expert that the man took another look. Sure enough, I had placed two shots in the same spot of the target. The only way he could tell was that the hole was wider one way than it was in the other direction. So, as far as he was concerned, I had placed two shots very close to the same spot; I had earned my expert ribbon. Not bad for this being only my third time firing a pistol! From then on, I wore this ribbon on my uniform with pride.

Another flashback: I had two more ribbons that I could also wear. The training wing at the base had earned the Outstanding Unit Award, so I could wear this for as long as I

remained assigned to this base. For that matter, while I was there another application to get an additional award for what they were then doing. I suppose this would have been a bronze cluster perhaps.

The other ribbon was because of the Gulf of Tonkin incident and the Vietnam buildup. This was the National Security ribbon. People that I knew thought very little of this ribbon. To get it, all someone had to do was to be in the Air Force on a certain date in 1965. We called it the "I was alive in 65" award.

More medical problems for Susan

Earlier during this summer, we made a trip to Illinois while I was on leave. She began to have some abdominal problems which she seemed to think was related to a possible pregnancy and miscarriage. So, I took her to the Scott Air Force Base hospital. The doctor we were able to see did not know what the problem could be, but pregnancy was not one of them. He did make so suggestions though. Nothing else seemed to happen, and we later finished our visit heading back to Biloxi.

The next time, she thought she had miscarried, so I made an appointment for at the OB/GYN clinic in the Keesler hospital to have this checked out. This time the doctor told us that he did not know whether she had been pregnant or not.

However, he believed that she needed to be on a birth control pill for a couple of months to help regulate her monthly cycle. At this point, I mentioned the problems she had had with the first prescription for birth control pills she had begun taking before our marriage. He seemed to use this information to determine what pill he prescribed. She certainly did not have any problems taking these.

In late July, Susan's grandmother needed someone to take care of her. Her son, Johnny, had been doing this, but he

could not do this all of the time. So, it was time for Sister Mildred to do this. At the same time, Susan wanted to be there to help as well. So, I brought her up there to do this for the month of August. (I did make weekly visits just as I had the previous year.

When I came up the second weekend in August, I was faced with the annual family reunion on Sunday. (Oh, joy!) We spent the morning there even when I would have preferred to be in church. But we decided to leave somewhat early in the afternoon to spend some time alone in her parent's home before I headed back to Biloxi. Her parents remained there for some time.

Being a young married couple we decided to take advantage of an empty house. Two weeks later, Susan missed her first period ever. But strange enough, she did not realize that she was really pregnant this time. Well, it did not occur to me either.

Two weeks later our first anniversary arrived. We went to the Officer's Club for supper to celebrate it. This part was nice. But this part was not: her morning sickness had just become evening sickness. This was embarrassing for both of us to say the least.

We profusely apologized for the mess, and the mess was mopped up in the dinning room. Then off to sick bay at the hospital we went. The doctor who saw her gave up the surprise diagnosis: she was pregnant.

He also told us that he could only enter what he thought was wrong. She needed to make an appointment at the OB/GYN clinic to have an official diagnosis. Actually, he had been an OB/GYN doctor, but he was changing his medical area to general practice. Red tape: only doctors assigned to the OB/GYN clinic could diagnose a pregnancy.

So we got an appointment for the next day. Sure enough, he was right: she was definitely pregnant, just what she

wanted to happen! But there were things that she was going to have to do over the next eight months. There the large prenatal vitamins and regular monthly appointments. And at these, she would be told more things to do. There was even baby care classes some months later.

Bingo!

I don't know when we began playing bingo in the Officer's Club on Tuesday nights, but we did so for over a year. On these nights, we went for supper first having the special for the night in the Officer's Club: a chicken basket including french fries.

One can learn something by just watching others pick out bingo cards. Some people were professional in how they picked their cards. Even though the calling of the numbers was basically random, some people noticed that some cards would produce a bingo quicker than others. So they got there early to look though the cards to pick these cards. (The cards were numbered, so this made it a little easier to find the cards they wanted.) How many would these people take? At least 8 and some more.

But this one night, I happened to get the right cards for a change. Truly, when it rains it pours. I got to yell "Bingo!" three times. Our winnings included a ladies watch (\$72 in the BX), a large covered cast aluminum BBQ grill, and three Teflon frying pans. For the first two, we were the only ones. For the third one, we were one of several. Based upon the drawing from a deck of cards that time, I got a consolation gift of the frying pans.

Appendicitis

On September 19, we went to play bingo. Of course, we just had to have the chicken basket before it started. We were doing what we usually did: covered the numbers on our cards and listen to someone else yell, "Bingo!" By 9 PM, my stomach was not feeling very well at all. I even ordered

a ginger ale, but this did not help at all. Around 10 PM or so, we headed home as my stomach became more of a problem. I just thought it might be indigestion, so I did not tell Susan anything about it. Then off to bed we went.

By 11:30 my stomach got worse. I was only able to doze off just a little bit. Then by 12:30 AM, I had to wake up Susan because the pain was much worse. I could get any rest at all. I don't remember ever having that much pain before! I had to have relief!

We dressed and headed to the hospital. First they did some blood work. It seemed like it took forever to get the results back. And here I was hurting still worse.

I was not the only one having problems. Susan is in the early stages of pregnancy, and she clearly saw that I was having a rough time of it. She was worried about me!

Then the doctor ordered abdominal X-rays. I laid horizontally for one of them. For the other one, they had be standing up. The latter one almost had me petrified!

I was already laying on the table for the first x-ray. Then he rotated the table to the vertical position. X-ray taken, and then he began rotating the table back to horizontal. For some reason, I thought that I was horizontal as he began the rotation. So it felt like my head was already lower than the rest of my body and still getting lower. In fact, I was certain that I would going to wind up standing on my head! Could this have been vertigo?

Still no definite diagnosis. This was getting old, and I was hurting still more. Finally, he used his finger to check for appendicitis. Surprisingly enough, this hurt even more. So, now we had a diagnosis. So, off to bed I went. Poor Susan, this only made her situation worse. She really didn't know how bad this might be.

When I was sick in college, the doctor thought that I might have appendicitis, so he checked with his finger. It did not feel very comfortable, but that was all: he removed appendicitis as a possibility. He was right: it was the flu.

Meanwhile Susan was given some linens and shown a place where she could rest some (not that she really did). She did come to my room once in a while, but I can't see her relaxing very much with me in pain. They may have done some more things for her, but I was not in good enough shape to know what they did.

I was rather disappointed that I did not get anything to even deaden the pain a little bit. So, I only dozed off and on until morning.

The final verdict came when a major from the surgery unit made his rounds. After talking some, he placed his stethoscope lightly right over my appendix area.

That was almost more than I could take. I had no idea that something so light could cause so much pain! I honestly felt like sitting up and hitting the major for hurting me so much. But it is a good idea that I did not try to do this. That would have really caused excruciating pain! (sitting up that is) But I was as angry as much as I was hurting.

Susan called Bro. Lonnie sometime before 7 AM, and there may have been others called included Susan's parents (I don't remember who Susan called). Anyway, Bro. Lonnie called them shortly after getting the call and told her mother that he was coming to get her because Susan would need her. They arrived shortly before I was taken to surgery (around 11 AM).

As they wheeled me into the surgical area on a gurney, I thought I saw Susan, her mother, and Bro. Lonnie. But I could not be sure. Anyway, I gave some sort of jester that I was OK. I learned later that Susan nearly fainted when I did this.

One thing that really bugged me while I waited my turn to be operated upon: what seemed like a very long wait. In fact, there was a clock near where my gurney was put. I remember seeing it read 11:30. Possibly, it could have been even later before they came to get me again. Here I was suffering with pain, and they did not seem to be doing anything for me at all! My anger was increasing in intensity.

Finally it was my turn, so they wheeled me into the operating room. Then they helped me onto the table. Next there was the matter of where to put what body part. At some point, I asked if my arm should be put a certain place, and they replied, "Yes." Apparently, all of this was enough to "exhaust me", and I lost consciousness at the point that I moved my arm to the point designated.

When I woke up, I was in as much pain as I was when the anesthetic put me out. In fact, I was worried that they had not operated on me yet! Then I drifted into and out of consciousness for a while. During this time I heard a nurse talking to someone, but I did not know who. It could have been me. Perhaps I was a little more conscious later, so moved my right hand from waist level down toward my groin area. I felt something, and it was not flesh. Later I realized that it was the surgical bandage.

There was also another pain: my throat was very sore. Finally, I was able to talk to a nurse and complain about my sore throat. That is when she provided me with a machine that put out a mist that was suppose to help it. I could see the mist what seemed like a couple of feet above my mouth. How is this going to help me any. It ought to be much lower than that! (Well that was what I was thinking.) Besides it did not help my throat any at all. (The tube they had put down my throat was definitely a pain in the neck!)

Then the decision was made to take me back to my room. And sometime afterward I opened my eyes to see Sister

Mildred in the doorway, but not Susan. So, I immediately asked about Susan. She told me that Susan was resting and taking care of Penni. At this point I drifted off to sleep again, but I can not be sure.

Sometime later, I saw Susan come through the door. That is when I asked about Penni which really peeved her. It sounded like I was more concerned with the cat than her.

Of course, I could always blame the after effects of the anesthetic. The last thing I remembered was the mentioning of Susan and the cat. Well, I was looking at Susan so I knew that she looked OK. It just seemed normal to worry about our cat too. Well, this is my theory anyway.

Then, something like 6-8 hours after my surgery, they had (made?) me stand up. I was told that it was for Susan's sake, but I am not so sure. It was so hard to do even with the help of the orderlies. Wobbly? Very definitely, I was this! I was so weak that I did not think I could stay upright for longer than a second or two, but somehow I managed.

Two days later, they removed the catheter. Then they told me that I needed to walk, which I did a lot of. The hospital had the same design as the BOQ/VOQ building close by (three wings connected to a center area.) Each time I took a walk, I would go to the ends of all three wings and back.

Many was the time that when I got back to my bed, I was exhausted. Within seconds, I would be fast asleep for an hour or so. But by the time they sent me home, I could stay awake after a walk.

One afternoon shortly after I had taken my walk, Bro. Lonnie came by to see me (third Sunday afternoon) which is when he preached at our church.) But I was sleeping soundly, and the nurses would not let him wake me up. It was nice for him to come by, but that was one visit that I missed.

A week after my surgery, I was permitted to go home. Given a follow-up appointment for October 9, a bill (food is not free for officers in a military hospital since we got a food allowance), probably some instructions which I quickly forgot, Susan and I headed home. I think Brother Bobby Richardson drove us home. Someone else also drove our car home.

It was the next day when I drove Sister Mildred to the local bus station so that she could get back home. (Bro. Curtis needed her there, and I was doing OK.) I am not sure I should have been driving so soon though. Shifting gears and applying the brakes put some stress on my abdominal muscles that I had not anticipated. What I had not realized was that my abdominal muscles were still rather weak. We could have had an accident. But we obviously made the trip to the bus station and back safely.

That weekend was an association at Laurel, MS. Bro. Linwood (and family?) drove us to it on Saturday. This is when Bro. Lonnie took over with Sister Shirley making sure Susan behaved herself as far as her pregnancy was concerned. (Both of them were pregnant, so she was taking care of herself as well.)

One of the things that I did during the week afterward was to walk everyday. Of course, Susan needed the exercise, and I insisted that she go with me. I was gradually building up how far I would walk each time. So was she. By this time of the year, the weather was getting cooler which made the walks more enjoyable. Of course having Penni (on a lease) walking with us was very entertaining as well.

Wednesday (Oct 9) was my appointment in the surgery department of the hospital. I got good news and what I considered bad news. The surgeon stated that I had healed nicely and could return to duty the next day. The bad news? I had to return to duty the next day.

I had developed another problem before the appendicitis manifested its presence: a naval drainage. This was obvious during the operation. The doctor said that they would have surgically fixed this, but my appendix was oozing. So, this was to be fixed at a later time. I was to make an appointment later to schedule this elective surgery.

There was another association near Susan's parents' home that I wanted to attend (all three days if possible). Now I was required to report to duty on Thursday, Oct 10. So, Susan called the officer to whom I reported and got permission to remain off duty until the following Monday morning (Oct 14).

A couple of weeks after I returned to work, I made an appointment at the surgical unit. It took a little doing to convince the surgeon as to why I needed the additional surgery. (It was classified as elective.) Anyway, an appointment was made for a later time. And even this had to be rescheduled.

It was my turn to be Officer of the Day again. I tried to get out of it, but I was told elective surgery was not a good reason. I had to do it. So, I did. Then I made another appointment.

They had me come in on Sunday morning with surgery scheduled for Monday. Then came a battery of tests as usual. Was I healthy enough to have it? Well, I had some congestion in my lungs, and I was sent home because of it. They told me to come back when this cleared up. (It didn't before I left the Air Force. Oh, well.

Back to being Officer of the Day. It was on a Friday shortly after the Yom Kippor War broke out in the Middle East. There were all kinds of teletype messages coming in. So, I only got a couple of hours of sleep that night.

When our nation is at war, there is a top priority message category that is only used in wartime. Next lower category

to this is the Ops Immediate one. Well, Almost all of the messages coming through were in this category! I read through all of them and concluded that all but could wait until Monday morning to be acted upon. Even that one could wait until morning. So, a sargent got a phone call after sunset telling him he needed to pick up his message.

I called the motor pool requesting a car pick me up and take me to the Officer's Club where I would be eating my supper. (This car had a mobile phone in because people had to be able to contact me anywhere at any time.) Anyway, I enjoyed my meal, called for the car again, and returned to duty. As I got into the car, the driver said that we needed to go by the communication's center. There were four Ops Immediate messages waiting!

As I read through the messages, I saw one that was to go to Annex 7! This was for the Communications section where advanced communications topics were taught. Nothing in it indicated that anything had to be done immediately. Why was this tagged Ops Immediate? With the number of messages being sent because of the middle east war, it was the only way the sender could make sure it would get through at all.

Susan and Penni

With Susan's pregnancy, we were required to enroll in a baby care class, and there was a wealth of information that we were given. Some of it we even applied. Well, I did learn how to diaper a baby using cloth diapers with a doll. There were other things that stuck in my minds as well.

Then again, I wondered how I was suppose to remember all of this. Yes, I was questioning my ability to learn things well. I did not have the same attitude at this point as I would have when I learned how to dry clean clothes a mere eleven years later. So, I could have done much better, but I didn't...

As the year passed, Susan began seeing things. She was put into the hospital in the mental ward for a while. After a short stay she was allowed to come home and attend group meetings. With her attitude these did not really help her any. Each meeting kept reminding her of people's problems because they were constantly being discussed. What were the solutions to these problems? Apparently, she did not see any, nor were solutions being offered as far as she was concerned. (She did not learn anything that would help her with her problems.)

Then there was also a time (during the warmer part of the year) when she locked herself in the bathroom threatening to commit suicide. I tried to talk to her through the door with no results. That is when I decided it was time to go outside and cut the grass, so I did.

So there she was inside the bathroom, but suddenly no one else was anywhere around. I had stopped arguing with her. Where was I? She could hear the lawn mower going outside the bathroom window. Was this me? Was it one of our neighbors? It took a while, but she came to the door to see what I was doing.

Somewhere I had heard or read that this would work. She wanted attention and got it as long as I remained outside the locked bathroom door. But when I went outside making sure that she could hear where I was, her actions were no longer bringing the attention she wanted. When she came out, I gave her some of the attention she was craving. It was not necessary to do this again, and she did not make any more such threats again that I remember.

Penni needed some medical attention as all pets do: rabies, worms, etc. We could have gotten her an appointment with the vet on base, but we chose to use a local vet instead. He was very nice as all the vets we have had seemed to be.

Penni was also maturing, and as a result, she went into heat. This was a new experience for me. Her constant meowing was unnerving. I really thought she was really in pain. So, off to the vet we went. His comment after checking her out: she was in heat. It took some doing, but we managed to get through it.

We thought we were very careful in watching Penni anytime she was outside, but somehow we let her get away long enough for her to mate with a tom cat. Her first litter was born in April 1969 at the Ward's home.

Last six months of Service

Susan had begun to worry about our car payments. I tried to explain to her that this was taken out of my pay before I got my part. But this did not register with her. She knew that we also had a savings account, so she asked point blank if there was enough money in it to finish paying for the car. Yes, there was. So, she insisted that we do it, as in right now. We did the next day.

This was really a good idea. We saved some money on interest by paying earlier. Besides, \$100 a month was still being deposited in the savings account. So, this continued to build back up.

It would not be all that long before we would need our own furniture. And this also concerned Susan. Then she saw an add for three rooms of furniture for \$300 plus sales tax. (This was a bait and switch advertizement to say the least. They really wanted to sell us a much more expensive set.)

They certainly tried, oh did they try. No such luck. They had to deliver what was in the newspaper add to our apartment.

Now we had more furniture that we had room for. So, I made another call to Base Housing to request they pick up the furniture we had borrowed from them.

This resulted in some additional costs. The mattress cover that had not been delivered to us, but Susan signed for it anyway. This had to be paid for.

Unfortunately, Penni used the front of the couch and perhaps the overstuffed chair for a scratching pad. So this had to be reupholstered. When they were picked up, they said, "You do know that the damage had to be paid for." Yes, I knew that; I was only waiting for someone to tell me how much it would cost.

When I took a close look at the quality of the furniture we bought, it was rather poor. Yet, we managed to make this last for 20 years. Gee, that is only about \$15 a year. Considering the quality, that is pretty good.

The buildup in Vietnam continued, and the Air Force needed more captains. The minimum service time required to become a captain had been four years. This fall, this was reduced to 3.5 years. So, by early October, I was looking forward to buying "railroad tracks" and wearing them on my uniforms!

What I did not understand at the time was that not everyone is automatically promoted. So, I was warned to not do either one of these things until I had received written orders verifying my promotion. OK, this was somewhat of a bummer. But as the end of October neared, I was given the written orders that I needed. Considering my proficiency reports, there had been a so-so chance I would get the orders. So, they must have been rather hard up when they promoted me.

I had to have an annual physical in my birth month. So, December 1968 was the next time. With me getting out of service by the end of April, this would also serve as my final physical.

Also during December, Swine flu was spreading fast. No one had anticipated that it would. So, it had not been

included in the fall flu shot. Well, health people rushed to produce a vaccine for it which was ready by early January. All personnel had to take it, and we all did as far as I know.

The annual flu shots came early in September which explained why I did not get the flu in the fall. Well, the swine flu shot in January seemed to stop me from getting any type of the flu during the spring. Oh, this was nice!

Premature labor (way too early)

With my leaving the Air Force in a few months, some plans had to be made as well as acted upon. I would not be getting a pay check after the end of April.

So, I decided to become a teacher. But that would mean I still would not have a pay check until the fall six months later. That is not a good idea! Then again, I qualified for the GI Bill. If I went to college using it, I would at least have a meager income until mid August. So, this is what I did.

I had been accepted for enrollment at the University of Southern Mississippi (Hattiesburg) for the spring quarter. This actually started in March which was about 2 months before I was due to leave service. Is there a problem here?

Not really there was not. I had an idea of how to arrange this, but I was wrong on all points. Yet, I was not the only one facing this situation over the years. They had a form that I had to fill out which allowed me to leave service early for the purpose of beginning college.

It had only been four years since I had dealt with housing at the University of Illinois. Yet, it did not occur to me to check for housing at USM. So, we needed to check out some housing in Hattiesburg.

So, the second weekend in February, we went looking for this and whatever that was required. Well, we found an unfurnished house which we could afford. This took part of the day. Then we began looking for the appliances that we

would need. I even put a washer, dryer, and refrigerator on lay away. By this time, it was getting to be late afternoon. So, back to Biloxi we went.

Susan had been either on her feet or riding around looking at a variety of things most of the day. She had expended a lot of energy. She needed to rest some. But she did not. After eating supper, she wanted (insisted) on going bowling. This was really more than she needed to do, but she was so insistent.

Then come Sunday morning, she had one more thing that she just had to do: going to her parents and then to Sharon Church for its evening service. She just had to have her way. I relented.

As I write, rewrite, and edit this, it now appears that Susan had become very nervous, uptight, and felt the need to constantly do something. What she really needed to do is to relax. She was heading for a medical problem, as in she could have lost our baby.

The problems began when Susan started to experience contractions during the latter part of the church service. So, after it was over, we headed to a hospital that was on our way home. The pains were bad enough that she thought the baby was actually in the birth canal; it wasn't. (Later she would learn the difference.)

Doctor Todd was at the hospital when we stopped by, and he immediately put her to bed after examining her. She was beginning to have contractions which was way to early. She can be a worrier that is for sure. What she needed to do was relax, but it is hard to do this and worry at the same time.

For the next several days, he gave her shots to help her relax. Unfortunately, she was not very cooperative: she remained very tense. Very likely he had to give her stronger

medication than he would have like because of this. I wonder what effect all of these shots had on Kevin.

I spent the night with her in Newton, MS. Early Monday morning, I headed to her parents which was only 20 miles away to tell them what had happened. Then I headed to Biloxi to tell them what had happened. This time I was told what to do and where to go to do it. By mid-afternoon, I was on my way back north with emergency leave papers. There I would remain for the rest of the week with Susan in the hospital before taking her to her parent's home. Then the first of the next week I headed back to Biloxi.

Susan was not in any shape to ever travel back to Biloxi, so she had to stay with her parents until after Kevin was born. I had to travel back and forth every weekend for the next couple of months until I left service.

On my next trip north, I brought Penni with me along with her food, litter box, scoop, and litter. She would remain at the Ward house until after she had her litter and they were weaned.

Sometime after her litter was born, two large dogs (hounds) tried to attack her (probably somewhere near where her kittens were). She stood up to both of them, and they left her alone afterward. Later Penni was given to someone. (I don't remember who got the individual kittens.)

Beginning College again

Meanwhile, Bro. Lonnie found a one bedroom apartment near the railroad station in Hattiesburg for me for the Spring quarter. I moved into to it the middle of March.

With only a couple of weeks before I was due to leave service, I had the final paperwork to be done along with cleaning our apartment. (This is another thing that I had been told what to do while still in college at the U of I. I had completely forgot about it.)

There were additional paperwork required of me before I left. One of them included the document promising not to reveal any of the information I had learned that was classified while I was in service. If I did, I could be prosecuted for doing so any time within seven years of when I revealed it. This point was driven home to me very hard.

More paperwork: my base credit union account and my last pay checks. The former required closing it and taking the amount with me in a check. My pay was more involved. I had leave time that I had not taken yet. These days were added to my final days I had left in service. There was paperwork showing how much each of these parts were as well as the total. Then I got my final check from the Air Force.

One of the last things was checking out of base housing. I cleaned the apartment up as well as I could, but it did not pass inspection. Actually, there was two men that came for the inspection. The thing is that only one was the actually the inspector. The other one was a man who cleans the apartments for a living. So, when I had not cleaned the stove like I should have, he recommended that I use the man he had brought with him.

This may sound like a scam, but it really is not for three reasons. First, the stove was not really as clean as it was suppose to be. Second, he guaranteed that it would pass inspection when he was finished with it. Third, the price was very reasonable, something like \$45.

In the end, I had to return to Base housing a week or two after I left service to finish all the red tape. Then I headed north and college.

Our furniture was packed up by movers paid by the military at shortly after I left the Air Force. It arrived in Union, MS a week or so later as I was coming in from Hattiesburg. So, I

guided them to the Wards who were so gracious to allow us to store our furniture in their home until we needed it a little over a year later.

Enrolling in classes at USM was much easier than the U of I. At the same time I applied for my GI Bill benefits, and began receiving them. Officially, I was now an undergraduate majoring in Psychology.

As I began classes, I was a little bit surprised: the course work was so much easier. Was it because it was a smaller school? Did they grade easier because of that? Or was it because of the type of test were given?

For the past four years, I had been involved in giving multiple choice questions. And now my class tests were also multiple choice. As I read through the test, I could usually select the correct response with only a minimum amount of knowledge required. A's and B's were a snap (mostly the former)!

Each of my weeks were divided into two parts: week days and weekends. I studied in my room during the week, and I spent the weekend with Susan at the Wards. Even so, the travel time dropped by more than one third (100 miles vs 180).

Meanwhile Susan's pregnancy was progressing, and she was reacting to this as other women have: cravings! There were two things that she really wanted: grapes and crumbled cornbread in a glass of milk. This resulted in a weight gain (30 pounds or more) that was more than she should have had.

At the same time there was no one who took her walking as I had through the winter. This did not help her weight either. Even so, the exercise would have helped her in the delivery, but walking was not something she wanted to do.

During the later part of most pregnancies, the future mother will have something like hot flashes. She thinks that she has to have relief!

It must have been late March. But she was very hot. So she turned on the attic fan which pulled the air throughout the house. Since all of them were barely open, the fan created a big wind. Even so, it did not help her to cool down as much as she had wanted. The rest of us were now far cooler than we wanted. Finally, someone else turned the fan off. She complained, but it was made plain to her that she was not to turn it on again. What she was experiencing was normal, and she was going to have to accept being uncomfortable.

But at least we were following the instructions given to us in Mother and Baby Care. Birth causes the vagina to stretch quite a bit. To limit the amount of stretching being done, we were given an exercise to manually expand it. This needed to be done on a nightly basis. But we had to make to with two to three nights a week.

Wife and husband's desirable characteristics

Behold, a sower went forth to sow; 4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: 5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: 8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold. (Matt 13:5)

1. The **seed** is the relationship that has the potential relationship they can share.
2. **Way side**: personal habits that interfere with the relationship. This requires getting to know each other and the willingness to reveal to the other what they are really like. Without this, the relationship dies.
3. **Stony places**: lack of trust or faith in the other person. Removing the stones requires time, patience, and willingness to work together to accomplish this task.
4. **Thorns**: Influences of others that try to destroy the relationship. Two possible ways is to encourage the keeping of bad personal habits, and causing a decrease in trust in either person in the relationship.
5. **Good ground**: She is as patient with him while he strives to meet her needs as he is with her while she strives to meet his needs.
6. **Absolute must**: They gradually learn how to work as a team to do what is the best for both of them.

Poems

Marriage: God's plan

Susan first

'Twas October of sixty-six,
Brother Lonnie was coming home
From a church meeting he'd attended.
He had a errand to be done:
A message for Susan to be told.
It concerned a brother named Dan.

He was so single and alone:
He needed a spouse, a soul mate.
Susan was in need of the same.
Could they become a good couple?
Would they complement each other?
Brother Lonnie thought that they could.

Susan was staying with her folks
When he stopped for some coffee.
It seems that he had it before
So nothing was any different.
Any yet it was when he told her,
"I have a young man you should meet."

She then did replied, "Bring him on."
Matchmaker became his title.
Did this really begin with him?
Or was it God who impressed him
With bringing us both together?
Keep reading on, and you will see.

The distance between, rather far:
It was one hundred eighty miles.
How do we meet? How do we court?

Brother Lonnie did not think of this.
At least he never suggested how.
It took God for to make this work.

My turn

Brother Lonnie talked to me;
He had something for me to do.
A special meeting for the youth
Over Thanksgiving at Memphis.
To Whitehaven Church we would go
To learn how to be more involved.

It began on Friday that year
And went through Sunday morning.
Three services were held each day;
Three men would speak in each of them.
They were young men and not preachers.
Spoke from the Bible what they felt.

Each service was the normal way.
It began with congregational hymns
Followed by prayer and preaching.
It ended with a hymn and prayer.
Preachers were present to help us;
They gave us guidance we needed.

I was in the U. S. Air Force;
I had to work on that Friday,
But I could get a flight that night.
So I did arriving after nine.
Brother Lonnie picked me up then
And drove me to where I would sleep.

Next morning I got up and ate;
I got ready to go to church.
But I had a lesson to learn

God was about to speak to me;
It concerned the rest of my life.
A young couple walked in then.

They were engaged and acted thus.
I saw their love, sensed so much more.
I had seen these actions before
But never had sensed this bliss!
They were in their own little world;
They reached out to others from it.

Behold their body languages:
They moved as if they were as one.
I sensed the love that flowed between:
A touch, their nearness, all was clear:
When they talked with the same person,
When talking with different ones.

I was a rather shy person.
When with women, what should I do?
When talking with one: sweat broke out!
I had a sister; no help here.
I wanted to be close to one.
How do I get over the great fear?

This couple gave me a great hope.
What I saw was what I wanted.
God said to me, "you shall have it."
Oh the joy, the great excitement!
God promised a relationship:
A little world for her and me.

God spoke to me Saturday night.
He also told me, I would preach.
How could I sleep with news like this?
So excited was almost trembling!

And yet I somehow managed it.
Next morning, I shaved no cuts.

This became more than a great hope.
God told me: it had to be true.
By faith, I knew it had to be!
Excited, I could hardly sit!
All day Sunday: remained the same.
And as usual I did not tell.

I rested Sunday afternoon.
Well, I tried to do this but failed.
I went to church at another church.
The pastor asked for two to speak.
I was one of them: surprise!
Why me? He must have a reason.

This was something he seldom did.
Usually he spoke at a service.
This time a minister and I
Split the time for the congregation.
He had heard me at that weekend
And must have been impressed with me.

Afterward I was homeward bound.
The next morning, I was teaching.
This was far different for me.
I usually was so boring.
Now I was very excited
I could not stand still: bounced around!

It would be nice if this lasted.
The next day was test day: taught naught.
Wednesday was a new week again:
My teaching was boring once more.
Enthusiasm: where did it go?
Why couldn't I make learning worthwhile?

At home, things were so different.
I began reading my Bible
Studying it more than before.
The things that God had said to me
Kept bouncing around in my head!
And yet I had told no one this.

Then came December twenty-sixth.
I had to tell someone the news!
I would be married in two years.
So, I called my grandparents (Lewis).
We talked for a while before I
Said what was on my mind so much.

Four days later another call
My Dad arranged for his family:
Etta in Flagstaff, I Biloxi,
Webb and Tom were with our parents.
At the end of the call I said
Webb I will marry before you.

We first meet (1/8/67)

This Sunday I wanted to hear
Something different from before.
Every time he was in the pulpit,
The minister taught the same thing.
So, I went to Hattiesburg where
A different pastor would speak.

The minister had a circuit
Preaching at two churches each week.
He pastored four churches total.
Each of them heard him two weekends.
This day he was here at Lake.
The latter would be for this night.

So he asked me to go with him
"Up the country" for church that night.
I had nothing to do that day,
I ate lunch with them, then we left.
To Lake where the next church was at.
Supper was at a Deacon's home.

Then we left for church by ourselves.
Something he had to say to me.
A young lady might be there, or not.
Her father often did not drive:
He could not see well in the dark.
I was to meet her if they came.

I agreed, did I have a choice?
We were the first ones there tonight.
We went in; others came later.
As church began, I sat down (front pew).
Her family came in later.
But I did not look around to see.

After church, time for us to meet.
Brother Lonnie introduced us.
He said straight forward things to me
But what he said to Susan was much.
"He is single, rich, and not married."
He finished with: "And he's all yours!"

We were both embarrassed very much.
If this had a purpose, I thought
This had to be a lead balloon.
I tried to comfort her after;
I felt sorry for her feelings.
I was not concerned for mine though.

What did I think of Susan then?
What did she think of me as well?

I don't know, but we did talk some.
My concern for her, was it clear?
Did it help her for our next meet?
But soon it was time to go home.

My Blind Alley (Feb-Mar 1967)

Second weekend I went to church
The same as last month: Hattiesburg.
I again got an invitation
to "go up the country" at Lake.
This time a young lady went also.
So after lunch we three sped north.

Instead of just enjoying her,
I was already quite serious.
Why she came also, I don't know.
Perhaps to have something to do.
After supper somewhere, off to church.
Susan was not there that night.

Then some talking on the way back.
I drove her home on a cold night.
The windshield covered with the ice.
It did not get defrosted well.
We almost had an accident.
I did get her home safe and sound.

I got her phone number some how.
We talked long distance several times.
Long distance that month thirty dollars!
My seriousness seemed to bug her.
We believed differently, so true.
She would not change, neither would I.

So this ended with us as friends(?).
I never spoke nor saw her once.

She was not whom God had for me.
This was not the way to find one.
But I did not know what to do.
I'm now free to try again.

Now the couple at Thanksgiving
Were getting married last of March.
I sure wanted to attend it;
Brother Lonnie was going too,
Invited me to come along.
Another "come up the country."

On Good Friday was a wedding
Of an officer that I worked with.
I was many of those who did.
I wished them well; they were happy.
They had a problem, had to face;
They would do this both together.

Susan and I Get Acquainted

Next morning I headed northward
To Hattiesburg, Brother Lonnie.
Our schedule was very crowded:
Wedding this afternoon and then
Lake for services for tonight
Morning and evening Sunday.

So Saturday morning we left.
Stopped at Bay Springs for the wedding.
Afterward drove to Lake for supper
At the Hollingsworth's once again.
Their boy crazy teenage daughter
Was talking to me constantly.

Saturday evening services:
Susan's family was not there.

They were to provide us bedding.
After church we went to their abode.
They had supper ready: we ate.
Never refuse a meal like this.

Everyone else continued talk.
But she wanted to talk to me.
So we both left the table.
In her bedroom she played music:
The records were all of Elvis.
I became less comfortable.

And so we began to talk some.
The topics became many things.
It's difficult at first to say
Things the other would understand.
But then I mentioned the wedding
I had been at that afternoon.

"Who got married?" she asked me.
When I told her, she was surprised.
She's my double second cousin!
Then she explained how this could be.
Her maiden name was Janet Sims;
Susan's mother's was Sims as well.

Things said became much more personal.
We had become comfortable
Saying things that we would not say
To others ordinarily.
I made some suggestions to her.
Things that I thought that would help her.

Time seem to pass without thought.
Hours ticked off of the wall clock.
It was 12:30, time for bed.
So off Brother Lonnie and I

To Susan's bed and a night's rest;
Susan slept in her parent's room.

We all ate breakfast together.
Afterward Susan and I spoke.
I mentioned some things I had said
The night before that she should do.
She said would think about it more.
I could find no commitment there.

A piece of paper, she gave me
Her address and asked would I write.
This time I was on the defensive.
I got a queasy feeling then.
This was more than I thought I could.
Suddenly I became very shy!

Then off to church that bright morning.
Susan and parents came later.
I sat down on the second pew;
Susan was farther back than I.
We did not converse anymore.
After church off to the next church.

After a couple of weeks I
Wrote to her admonishing her to
Do what I had earlier told her.
Very Romantic wasn't I?
Not! I should have written much more.
What about the things that I did?

I got a reply in the mail.
Was there a hint to continue
Writing to her about my life?
If there was, I really missed it!
I did not sit down, write again.
What was I thinking? I was scared!

One Month Later

Twas the four weekend of April.
Saturday PM she took a nap.
She had a dream; it changed her life.
It caused her to join her church.
This was not of me, but of God.
She did what was required of her.

The same weekend I was at home.
My Dad was ordained Saturday
As one of the two church deacons.
I left Monday for Biloxi.
I stopped at Brother Lonnie's home
To chat about the events we had.

I mentioned my Dad's ordination.
This was good news for him to hear.
Then he had news that surprised me.
Saturday night she had the church.
He had never expected this!
Sunday PM she was baptized.

Another of God's children had
Come home to the church, I did say.
I was really happy for her;
She should have done this years before.
Brother Lonnie changed subjects:
"You need to go see her," he said.

My reply was not what it should be:
"Brother Lonnie, she is too young!"
Four months after saying I will
Marry in two years, I said this?
I had crossed her off of my list.
I was so sure, but was I right?

He knew that I meant what I said.
He had nothing more he could say.
My mind was made up: it would not change.
So, he talked about other things.
But God does not listen like he.
He does what He knows is best for me.

Why did I do this? Why oh Why?
It goes back to March in her room.
Her Elvis records turned me off.
I thought from this: she's too young.
She was not what I had in mind.
What did I want? I had no idea.

Month of May

Susan's Commitment

Now it was early in the month,
When Susan talked with her mother.
Marriage was the topic for them.
When she did this, she wanted me
To perform the ceremony.
"He can't marry himself," said Mom.

You never should tell Susan this.
She had quick answers, sealed my fate.
"Dan Lewis does not know it yet,
But I am going to date him."
"Dan Lewis does not know it yet,
But I'm going to marry him!"

And so she had committed herself.
There was not turning back for her.
I was the opposite: not me.
I needed something to change me.
Commitment was what I must have.
God still had some things to be done.

Brother Lonnie's True Part

Twas the third Sunday evening
Church was in Biloxi this night.
A slower sermon was promised!
Brother Lonnie preached so slowly:
He never had done it before;
No one believed he would do it.

What this had to do with me
Would be clearer the next weekend.
Once again God's work appears.
Susan and I would meet again.
God would bring us near once again.
The stage was set: the finale.

Fireworks!

Come fourth weekend, the final part.
Sharon Church had a communion
Service beginning Friday night.
The elder knew his Bible well.
I need to hear him, I was told.
So I drove up on Saturday.

Morning

I arrived before anyone else.
The couple from Thanksgiving, next.
We chatted, Brother Lonnie came.
As others came, we went inside.
I had brought a tape recorder,
Set it up to get the preaching.

Again sat on the second pew
So I could do the recording.
I began it for the singing.
The brother preached so very well.

The trip was worth this one sermon.
Services end, everyone leaving.

I was packing my recorder
And I had glanced up the aisle where
I saw Susan and her father
Walking up in my direction.
Susan was on her father's arm.
Then they stopped right in front of me.

Eat with us, go home with us?
This is what he had said to me.
No one else had said a thing yet
So I quickly agreed, said yes.
But I also needed some help;
I was not sure where they did live.

I asked, Susan went with me.
She could tell me where I should turn.
So they left me; I finished up.
Brother Lonnie appeared to ask,
Anyone asked you to go with them?
The Ward's have just asked me just now.

He also told me he wanted me
To have supper at Miss Cooksey.
The visiting preacher was there.
He also wanted me there as well.
I agreed to meet him at church;
He would pick me up and go there.

I headed to out to find Susan.
I took her and recorder
To my car to head toward Union.
First I put one behind my seat
Susan I helped into her seat.

I had her put her skirt inside;
I did not want it to be damaged:
A closing door can do great harm.
Then I heard Brother Lonnie speak,
"When you decide to get married,
Just tell me, I'll do it for free!"

I closed her door, and then we left.
What he had said did not matter.
God's plan was now about to happen
So no help from him was needed.
We arrived without a trouble.
Sister Ward soon had lunch ready.

Afternoon

I mentioned the sermon I heard
Brother Lonnie preach Sunday night.
Sister Ward: "I want to hear it."
I had the tape with me: "I will."
After lunch, she did the dishes.
Curtis watched TV; we are alone.

The time was close to 2 PM.
Susan took me outside for now;
(I had a tape to play later.)
For the next two hours she never
Let me get close where the tape was.
Instead she kept me very busy.

Just how much was I enjoying
This special attention from Susan?
Most of the time, It was very great.
One time she did something that she
Angered me that I almost did
What I should not have even thought!

But time flew, it was almost four.
My anger was forgotten now.
Mildred I promised to play it.
How can I do it? There's no time.
I apologized, I'm sorry.
That is no problem; come back tonight.

Even after talking with her
Susan wouldn't let me get away.
And boy was I enjoying it!
I finally managed to get
Away so I could drive to church.
I was at least 10 minutes late.

Evening

After our good visit and supper
We headed to the church service.
Susan and family came later:
Driven by her older sister.
She also brought her three children
Two young girls and one younger boy.

She wanted to go back with me.
Seven in a car was too much:
Four adults, three active children.
It sounded reasonable then.
Did Susan want me for herself?
Time will tell so you be the judge.

So off we went toward her home
After I had gotten my things.
We arrived before the others.
I took in my tape recorder
Besides my suitcase for the night.
I wonder: had I been set up?

I sat in an overstuffed chair.
She sat on its arm falling into my lap.
Naugahyde will cause things like this.
She jumped up quickly saying
Something about I am sorry.
Yet it also happened often.

Yes, immature I must have been.
I could have put my arms around.
But I did not: was I this shy?
Oh why was she sitting so close?
What were her attentions for me?
I did not know: no idea...

Saved by others then coming in.
Then Joan with three children went home
After some chatting by us all,
I set up the tape recorder
To play the tape I had promised.
All sat down to listen to it.

And then Susan became restless.
She never has liked listening
To a sermon like this on tape.
So she took me outside with her
To gaze at the stars she had said.
Oh the night stars, how calming!

Yes, I knew what star gazing meant.
But I thought "looking at stars": nice!
So, as we stood close near my car,
I enjoyed the beauty of stars.
The street lights were few, what a view!
I knew she was near, that was it.

One problem: this causes a crick!
My neck hurt: I then bowed my head.

Just what she wanted: she kissed me.
She thought: this is what I wanted.
So I tried my very best to kiss
But she said, "You did it all wrong!"

"I don't know how," was what I said.
That is how she became my teacher.
A willing student I became,
I learned a lot from her that night.
I could now kiss her as she liked.
Never more was she too young for me!

All good things must come to an end.
Her mother checked on us at times
Looking behind the drapes at us.
Susan hissed in my ear what she saw.
"I did not care, please, one more kiss."
But we went in to join them.

Sunday

Nothing was said that evening, so
We listened to the end of it.
I put the recorder away.
We all went to bed; it was late.
The next morning Susan were close.
I drove her to church once again.

I then set up my recorder
And sat down in the second pew.
Only I was not alone now.
I had my arm around Susan!
she was so close, I held her tight.
I certainly was loving this!

Brother Lonnie led the singing.
He asked me if I would help him.

My reply: "I'm fine where I am."
That got some snickers and some smiles.
But the biggest smile? On my face!
Nothing more was said, Fine with me.

And then came the sermon that day.
It was not like the ones before.
It was almost boring to me.
Was it because he had less time?
Or, could it be me, distracted?
I do not know, does it matter?

Saturday morning was quite good.
Fifty years later, I can still
Remember the verses he used
To preach this sermon: the last two
Verses of chapter one of First
Corinthians. What a sermon!

Saturday night was similar.
"What manner of man is this that
Even the winds and the waves obey
His voice?" This was his text this night.
He spoke of the things Jesus did,
The miracles that help others.

And now looking back at then,
I see this applied to me
Sitting on the second pew
With Susan by my side that day.
Indeed, what manner of man was
He who had provided me with her!!

At the end of the sermon, there
Was a communion and then lunch.
Then came the time for me to leave.
I hated to think we must part.

Some kisses helped, but not that much.
I promised to write, I meant it.

I had some things to think about.
My life was changing; there's no doubt.
What was I going to do? I
Did not know; I would find it out.
My brain was whirling so it seemed.
What was possible? Had no clue.

I developed a bad habit
Of looking at young women in
Swimming suits on the beach each day.
A glance and I could memorize
Her looks and remember them still.
I tried it this evening once more.

But my brain would not let me now.
When I began to look, my eyes
Suddenly looked straight ahead!
Then it occurred to me, that they
Were not real in any sense at all.
They were to someone, but not me.

There is no difference between
Them and movie stars on a lit screen.
I had found the one I looked for.
It was Susan and no one else.
On this warm Sunday afternoon
How many people were on the beach?

I was close to a commitment.
I wrote to Susan telling her.
She wrote back saying she was too.
This time was definitely different.
I wrote her twice in two weeks!
This was all about us

Marriage

The two shall become one

The Bible: "They shall be one flesh."
A simple statement, oh so true.
Yet it applies to everything.
Before only the his or hers;
This must change to only ours!
Hard work to make this become true.

But first comes the joys of their love.
He enjoys being around her.
She enjoys being with him.
She thinks about him oh so much.
He can't keep his mind off of her.
This makes the changes so worthwhile.

Sharing is how changes are made.
This has to be done willingly.
Not sufficient for him to share,
Nor for her to share: for both must.
If either holds back, troubles come.
Is it worthwhile to share all things?

Relationships

Saying, "Share all things" is easy,
But what is included in this?
All relationships must be changed.
They have one between them from which
All others must be developed.
They're no longer mine but are ours.

My aunts and uncles are now ours.
My parents are now ours also.
My children are now our children.
My grandchildren: our grandchildren.

As one flesh, reach out together
To establish these bonds anew.

Comments

Friends are so nice, but will they last?
Siblings can help us with some things.
They may be too busy when we need
Help from someone for a problem.
Parents can not always be there
Nor know how we see everything.

But we need someone dependable.
He needs her to be by his side
To understand him and his problems,
To provide the support he needs,
To care for him showing her love.
He must too meet these needs of hers.

How long do they do all these things?
Is there a time limit placed here?
Is it until the children leave
Or they get tired of each other?
Do wedding vows mean what they say?

Commitments must be developed.
Excitement in the beginning:
We can do what ever it will take.
We will solve everything we face.
Then reality hits us hard.
We were not ready for all this.

He has much to learn about her.
She needs to also learn as much.
She knows so little about him.
Talking about themselves , each quirk,

Doing it with the security
Each needs to fully tell it all.

Not a time to find a fault,
But to listen with sympathy.
Look for ways that are best for both.
Be willing to change when needed.
Surprises arise over time.
This must be done all over again.

As she becomes more comfortable,
She becomes more to make changes.
But a comfortable man does not.
He wants things to stay as they are:
He already has her, why change?
He must work harder for her sake.