

The life and times of -

" A HOOSIER BOY"

- who grew up to

"AN AVIATION CAREER"

By Robert C. Evans

" A HOOSIER BOY"

Dedicated to my family, relatives and friends - who may enjoy reading about the life and times of an Indiana born boy - growing up in the years 1916 to 1938 - with it's different economic times, customs and attitudes.

His life continues in the book "An Aviation Career".

Robert C. Evans

WHO AM I?

By Harriet Young



Our "Who Am I" was born in Evansville, Indiana and has the steady gaze of a Hoosier lad. He went to school there, sang in the choir. His high school years were spent in Wayne, Michigan where he played varsity basketball. Then it was on to Michigan State College where he was in the ROTC, Cavalry. He went to flight school in San Antonio, Texas, was awarded his wings and commissioned 2nd Lt. Army Air

Corps. That same year, four hours after her graduation from Michigan State, he married his college sweetheart.

Pre-war, he was on active duty with a fighter squadron, flying P-36s, P-37s and P-40s. Our mystery man joined Pan American Airways in 1940, and was co-pilot on flying boats on Caribbean and South American routes. He flew ocean clippers and Navy transport planes as a captain in the Air Transport Command. Finally, victory and the war's end. After the war he did a survey flight for Pan Am for world routes flying a DC-4.

For 30 years he was based in New York, flying the latest commercial aircraft to all six continents on Pan Am's air routes. Our intrepid subject flew DC-4s, Constellations, DC-6s, DC-7s, Boeing 707s, and Boeing 747s. He also flew high as a family man: he and his wife have three sons and a daughter and 11 grandchildren.

Their "hobby" has been renting cabins to families in Oven Point Camp in the Adirondack Mountains. Off-season, they traveled with their Traveltrailer and canoe to 49 states, Canada and Mexico.

Before coming to Cypress Village, he and his wife lived near Tampa, FL. They were one of the first to come here, in one of the first houses. (At that time, the apartments consisted of a few floors in B-Building.) Not only did he serve on the first Council, he and his wife also welcomed newcomers, and they watched our pool being built. Our "Who Am I" has seen a lot in his life and though they have had to stop their traveling this year, he is content. He is happy, even in these difficult days, that he was one of the first to live in Cypress Village, was among the first members to help form our Village into the warm, happy family it is today.

He has a final goal: to write a book on aviation for his grandchildren. □

You can find the name of our "Who Am I" hidden on another page.

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BOYHOOD YEARS OF ROBERT C. EVANS

The record of "my footprints in the sands of time" began in Evansville, Indiana where I was born on May 31, 1916. My father was Jesse Weaver Evans and my mother was Ada Mary Rawlings Evans. I was the third child in their family, with two older brothers - Walter, age 5 and Lester age 3. Their fourth child, a girl named Norma, arrived 5 years after me - and another son named Jesse, 3 years after Norma.

Being the "middle child" of five children, possibly marked my personality by being somewhat alone. The two older brothers were a pair in their activity - and I often heard the words Walter-Lester in reference to them. With a sibling 5 years younger and a girl, plus a "little brother" 8 years younger - it left me as a "loner" that was shy and independent. But, I was free to grow among my siblings without many problems or interference.

My father was one of five children whose parents were Silas Evans and Elizabeth Hite Evans, and was born September 19, 1892. His siblings were sisters Clara and Effie, brother Asa, who were all older - and Floyd who was younger. His family lived in Palestine, Illinois where his father operated a saloon. His sister Clara died at an early age - for reasons unknown. When my father Jesse was about 14 years old, he was orphaned by the death of his parents - resulting in his being sent to Loogootee, Indiana to live with his married sister Effie and her husband Will Carroll. He lived with them while completing 8th grade in the local school. He then went to work at the Graham Glass Factory located in Loogootee.

My mother, Ada Mary Rawlings was the oldest of six children born to Ellsworth Rawlings and Dora May Slater. Her parents were farmers, living next to the Hindustan Falls on the White River, just outside Loogootee. Little is known of her childhood - except that everyone worked very hard on a productive farm. One story concerning my mother is that she took her lunch to school - as did all the students. She remembers taking home cured ham sandwiches - made with home baked bread. At school, she would exchange this quality sandwich with a town student that had a baloney sandwich with store white bread. Both would be happy with the exchange.

My parents met in Loogootee - and were married in the First Christian Church in 1911.

Family of Jesse and Ada Evans - 1919
Robert (4) Lester (7) Walter (9)



My earliest recollections (about 5 years of age) of a home were in Evansville - with a pottery factory near by. With my brothers, we would go to windows at the pottery and beg the workers to give us clay. We would take them home and fashion marbles to play with after they had dried in the sun. These were ordinary ones. The more prized were "aggies", made of colored glass, that were purchased at a store.

Our house was in the city, but there was a pony that my older brothers would ride. I was allowed to sit upon it, but with parental supervision. Family stories later on confirmed the pony was a pet - and was even allowed to come inside the house occasionally.

Christmastime is more clearly remembered. There were stories about Santa and presents - so there was much anticipation for Christmas Eve and Santa's arrival. We children were sent to bed, with great expectations that by Christmas Day wonderful things would have happened. And, sure enough, Santa did come during the night and transformed our house into a fairyland. Shouts from my brothers awoke me - "Come look, come look", they cried. Coming into the living room, I found it decorated with red and green streamers forming a canopy overhead. And, in the corner of the room stood a fully decorated live Christmas tree - piled with presents underneath. The spruce scent of the tree filled the air. Everyone had one box to open that was "the present" for that person. In addition, the children had a bag of one orange, candy and nuts - that we could enjoy at our leisure. It was a joyful time in our house. Later, we had a bountiful dinner we shared together. During the day, relatives would drop by to socialize and share the Christmas spirit. I remember I did not want the day to end - and reluctantly went to bed while adults were still enjoying the occasion.

At approximately 9 years of age, my family was living in Detroit, Michigan. I remember little about the house, but it was located with empty lots with trees in back of it. It was a marvelous playground for neighborhood kids - where we hung climbing ropes and swings to play on. We found a partially excavated hole that we enlarged. Then, we covered it over with planks and soil to hide its existence. We found an old carpet to cover the floor and then furnished the den with boxes for furniture. It became our hide-out for a place to gather, light a candle, talk, and eat snack food. It was such a wonderful adventure - it is vivid in my memory 80 years later.

At this same Detroit home, I was attending a grade school that would participate in a city-wide "Field Day" held on Belle Isle. I was part of the group participating. Belle Isle was several miles away and we were taken there by school bus. I was scheduled to run in some dash events - and did participate in my scheduled races. I don't remember any special honors, but I remember wearing my participation ribbons. I wore running shorts and a sleeveless shirt - for it was a very hot day. When my events were finished, I was hungry and I wanted to go home. I was unaware of any plans to take me home - so I decided to walk - advising no one.

I was only slightly knowledgeable of the route home, but started out and turned at familiar intersections. The sun beat down - and it was hot with no protective clothing. I was not aware of clock time, but it was taking longer than I expected - and I was becoming weary. But, finally, I entered familiar streets and in due course arrived home.

My mother saw a sunburned kid that was very hot and tired. She was upset about the lack of plans to bring me home - and remained a mystery to me. (Perhaps she learned more later.) I was just happy to be home, enjoy cold drinks and snacks, some salve on my sunburned skin, and a blissful sleep. Later, my Dad determined that I had walked about 10 miles and was amazed that I could find my way home.

At another address in Detroit, a tragedy occurred to seriously hurt my brother Walter. The two of us, plus brother Lester, were gathered in the alley behind the house with a group of neighbor kids watching some older kids playing with fire. Someone had brought a can of gasoline - and was amusing the group with fire trails and torches. It was a dangerous bit of play and invited an accident. It happened. Someone accidentally ignited the whole can of gasoline, creating a crisis situation. In a panic, someone kicked the can to get rid of it - and a lighted spray landed on my brother Walter's leg. Several of us got minor burns on clothing that we easily smothered. Walter, seriously torched and burning, began running. Our screams were heard - adults arrived - threw him down and smothered the flames. He was badly burned - and was taken to Ford Hospital for treatment. He was weeks recovering - and eventually had skin grafts from his body put on the burned area. It was a very critical time for my parents - and a difficult and painful recovery for Walter. Fortunately, he regained full use of the leg - although the scars remained for his life.

Unfortunately, my brother Lester and I got into trouble while our parents were on evening hospital visits. For amusement, we had learned how to make matchstick darts. By cutting off the head, we inserted a needle. On the other end, we cut the matchstick to hold paper fins to maintain directional stability. They flew very well - so now we needed a target. That was easily provided when we discovered the window blinds that pulled down. We enjoyed a wonderful evening of dart throwing into the blind target. And, happily the dart holes didn't appear very obvious - at night. However, the next morning in the daylight, hundreds of pin holes were easily apparent - and we were truly caught. We were severely lectured, but fortunately no switching, as we expected. Mother took away our darts, but we made more she didn't know about. But, we never threw them at window blinds again.

Speaking of switches - a subject that is an unpleasant memory. Mother did most of the switching - since she was on the scene the most. She did not believe in sparing the rod - if it was deserved. And, she used psychology with the process. She made us cut our own switch - extending the miserable anticipation. If she did not approve of the switch - we were sent back for a more durable one. Since I wore knickers in those days, the switches on my legs bring sharp unpleasant memories. But, discipline was a part of my upbringing - and I must admit - fairly administered for good reason. Worse than my Mothers discipline, was Father's. She took care of the minor offenses - he handled the major ones. I hated her admonition, "Wait till your Father gets home." I'd rather she do the switching and get done with it.

(Circa 1927 - 1928) When I was about 11 - 12 years old, our family moved again to Evansville, Indiana. My Father, who had worked for the Graham Brothers at the Glass Factory in Loogootee for his first job, had been recognized as a reliable and industrious worker. Consequently, he had been promoted to ever more responsible positions. Now, he was being promoted to Plant Manager for a Truck Factory that the Graham Brothers (Joe, Bob, and Ray) were financing in Evansville. It was an ambitious endeavor and received much favorable publicity in the local press and radio stations, since it would mean employment for a large work force.

When our family arrived in Evansville, our house was not available for occupancy, so we lived at the finest hotel in Evansville. It was the McCurdy Hotel, overlooking the Ohio River. We stayed at the hotel for

several weeks - even when we were enrolled in school. It was neat to be picked up by private car and taken to school. It did wonders for my school boy prestige. After school and returned to the hotel, I was allowed to walk down by the river to inspect the excursion boats - and enjoy the music that filled the air by the river. Another fun thing to do was talk to the black fishermen who used doughballs to fish for the large catfish in the river. They would cast far out into the river with a hand line - waiting for the bobber to indicate a catch. I have seen large 10-12 # catches - but they say that 25- 50 # are possible. At first, I doubted those stories, but later by newspaper accounts found it to be true.

When our house was ready for occupancy, it was a great relief for my mother. Hotel life with five children was not all that much fun. Our home was impressive - with it's Colonial design with two very large white pillars extending from porch to the roof. It had two stories, with additional basement and an attic reached by stairs. Five bedroom were located on the second floor. There was a separate garage, with a room and bath for a chauffeur - which we did not have - so it became a play room and storage space. The yard had a grape arbor and several fruit trees. In one corner of the yard was an large ash pit - where one placed coal ashes and garbage for town collection. There was an alley behind the garage - used for automobile entry - and refuse trucks collecting from the ash pits. It was a great route for kids using back doors for home entry. The house would have been ideal for an estate, but it was located in the middle of a city block with houses surrounding it. A street car track ran down the middle of our street, named Washington Avenue, that led into downtown - about three miles away. I soon noticed that the street cars had names. One had the name Robert C. Evans - which enhanced my pride. It was named for Admiral "Fighting Bob" Evans - founder of Evansville.

My school was only three blocks from my home - walking distance. I did not like being the "new kid" in school - but since I had been so many times, I managed. In fact, I soon had a number of close friends. The principal was a large kindly man named Mr. Byers. He encouraged me to join the school band. I was so inclined, but later refused when I found all the good instruments were taken, and all he could offer was cymbals. That was a poor decision - as my music education suffered by not being in the band. Besides, I later admired the cymbal players as percussionists.

Several weeks later, Mr. Byers contacted me after chorus practice at school and asked if I would be interested in joining the Boy Soprano section of the Episcopal Church located downtown. He stated that I had a good soprano voice - and that it paid a modest amount of money. I liked to sing and readily agreed to do it. With my parents consent, Mr. Byers transported me, and two other boys, to practice at the church every Wednesday after school. On Sunday, we sang at the regular church service.

The choir was made up of about 15 boy soprano voices, plus about 25 more older boys and grown men. It was a musical education for me - as we were taught to read music and to sing in harmony. This was new and very satisfying to me - so I enjoyed the experience. The few dollars we were paid were welcome too.

Mr. Byers played the organ for practice - and I remember an event that pleased me and remembered ever after. He would ask a boy to sing - and then find the tone on the organ that matched it. He said that my voice was like a flute - and had me sing along with flute music. He praised the results - and impressed a young boy and gave him pride.

Another wonderful memory of my choir boy days was the "after choir practice reward". Mr. Byers took a carload of boys to a bakery where fresh donuts were just coming out of the deep fat fryer. We were given several each - and highly enjoyed. The smell and taste of those donuts were "mana from heaven" - that pleased a hungry boy. The senses are still excited at the memory.

I was zealous in attendance at choir practices and for the church services. Mr. Byers kept records of the boys attendance and performance - and at the end of my second year's performance was awarded the "Best Choir Boy" award. I was given \$15 in gold coins (\$10 & \$5) as my prize. However, within two months after being awarded "Best Choir Boy" - my choir boy days ended on a sad note. It happened this way.

As is usual among boys, an older boy resented me and always tried to dominate or belittle me. Naturally, I reacted to show my dislike of him, but avoided him when possible. On this fateful Sunday - as the choir assembled to form the processional into the church, my tormentor was picking on me and I was resentful. Then, just as we were about to start into the church, he thrust his hymnal book at me and angrily stated, "Carry this". I refused, and would not accept it - so he dropped it on the floor at my feet - causing some noise and confusion. Mr. Byers was annoyed at the disruption - and noting that the two of us were the source of the problem, ordered both of us to leave the processional - so the service could begin.

I left, put away my choir robe, and began my long walk home. It was a new experience for me - to be punished when, in my mind, I was blameless. I had lots of time to consider the event as I walked home. While I was concerned what my parents would say, I was righteously indignant over my unfair treatment. Arriving home and recounting the affair, my parents, happily for me, were sympathetic. They agreed that I had nothing to be ashamed of - which reinforced my offended attitude. I resolved not to return to the choir.

Later, I did get an opportunity to explain the details of the disturbance to Mr. Byers - and he urged me to return. However, I no longer was inspired - and felt no inclination to rejoin the choir. It was timely anyway - as I was 14 years old - and my voice was beginning to change. But, the event was impressed upon me - and is recalled often as other inequities of life are experienced - and viewed with greater insight and understanding.

A very good friendship developed for me soon after our family moved into the Washington Avenue house. His name was "Red" Armstrong, a classmate who lived just one block away. We became constant companions and spent lots of time at one another's home. A third boy, John LaValle, joined us for many activities, but never had as close a rapport as with Red. The three of us used our garage spare room as our club house - where many an hour was spent talking and planning boy strategies. When we were not at our homes - we could usually be found on the playing fields of softball, football, or the tennis courts. Another group game the boys played, at school and afterward, was "Blacksmith". It was a simple running game - with someone being designated as "It". He counted to 10, while the remainder scattered. "It" then selected someone to chase down, usually the most vulnerable, to catch long enough to say, "one, two, three, you're mine, Blacksmith". Then, those two would select their next victim, until another was caught. That continued until the last person was caught. The chase could last a long time - with much running, dodging, and evasive action. It was a personal triumph to be the last caught.

I was offered and accepted a paper route of about 30 customers. I delivered every afternoon - and collected on Saturday morning. The weekly rate was 40 cents - of which I paid the paper Boss 25 cents per customer - and I kept the remainder. That earned for me about \$4.50 a week. It would vary some - as some customers delayed or failed payment - much to my disgust. But, I had some who would tip 5 or 10 cents - and I held them in great esteem. I usually threw the paper onto a porch, but one customer

wanted it placed behind the screen door. She tipped me 25 cents for the service - which I was happy to do. But, all customers were not so accommodating. Some were not home on Saturday collection day - or stated they did not have the money at that time. After two or three weeks of these excuses - I became nervous about payment. One eventually moved without settlement. I thought that unforgivable - but I was learning valuable social lessons.

When special events happened, the paper printed an "Extra". Then, I would go yelling down the street, "Extra, Extra - read all about it". Many were eager to get the news - and paid well for the service and generous with tips.

I was accumulating a sizeable amount of money - which my parents arranged for me to place in a bank account. When they explained about earning interest, I thought that was a neat idea. I had my own bank book and took especial joy at seeing interest added to the account - just for having my money on deposit.

Along with making money, I discovered the joy of spending it. I wanted a bicycle like some of the other newsboys had. They could deliver papers much faster than I - plus the joy of other fun transport. When I made the proposal to my parents - they readily agreed - and offered to pay half. Newspaper delivery time was cut in half - as I folded the papers and placed them in a bag and secured them to my handle bars of the bike. I became very adept at riding the sidewalk and throwing the papers onto the porches of my customers. I still dismounted to serve the lady who wanted it behind the screen door. Why not? She tipped well.

With money available, I enjoyed going to the 5 & 10 Cent store - where I could look-see all the interesting things to buy. While there one time, I discovered bulk chocolate - and the absolute joy of eating it. I became a regular weekly customer.

When Christmastime came around, I went shopping for a gift for my mother - at my 5 & 10 store, naturally. I found the perfect gift - that I was sure she would like - as she had been talking of wanting a lamp for a side table. I found a beautiful lamp that I liked very much. It was a grey metal figure of a resting camel with it's legs tucked under the body. On it's back was a protruding post and electric bulb. From the bulb was hanging a multi-beaded shade of many colors that shone brightly when it was lighted. I had to have it - and had it gift wrapped to keep it a secret from prying eyes.

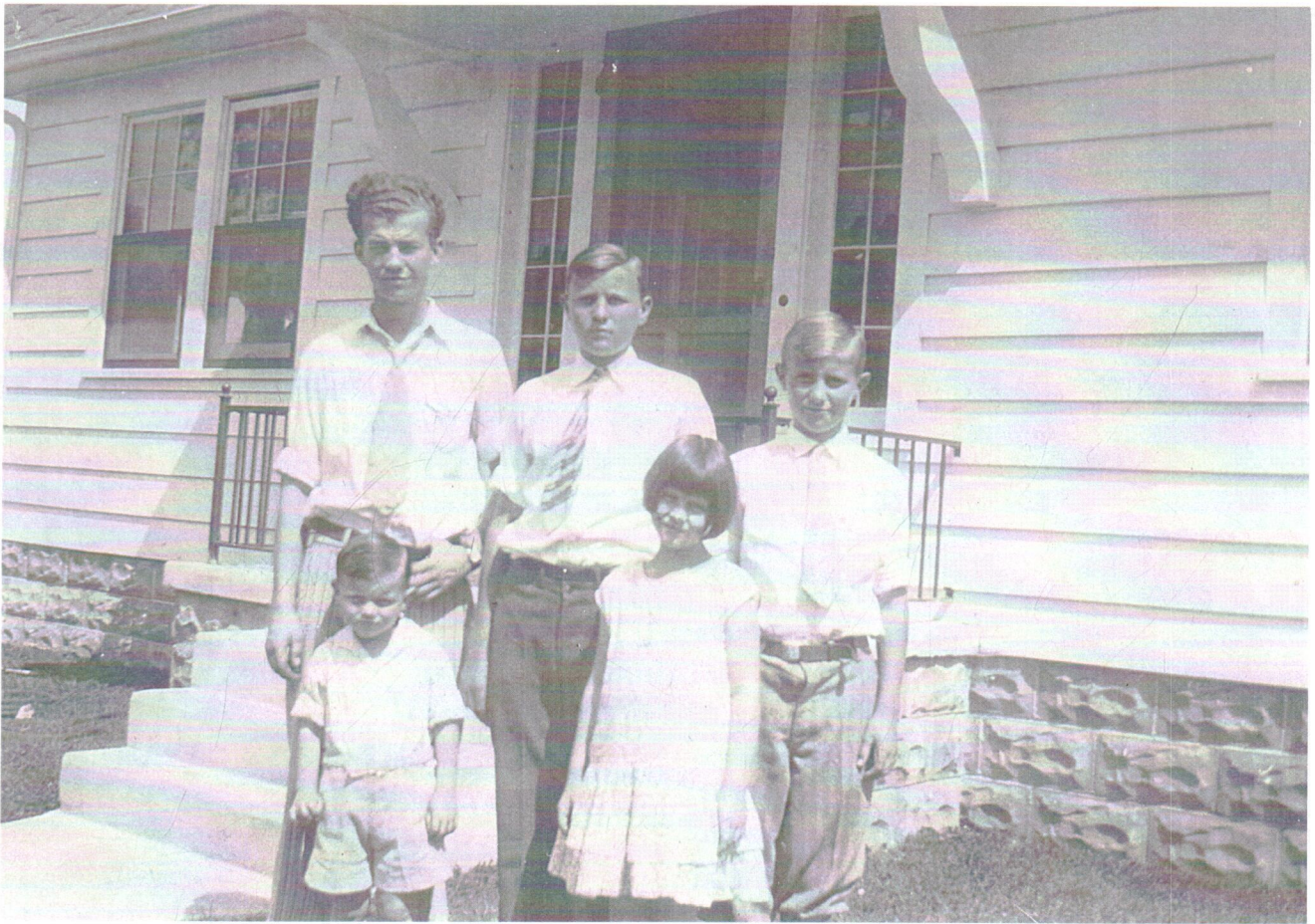
It was a proud moment for me on Christmas morning - when my mother discovered this special gift box under the tree. When she opened it - she was speechless for the moment. But, then she gave me a hug - and placed it on the table I suggested - and turned it on for all to see. (I was not sophisticated enough to consider the appropriateness of the lamp for our living room - but it remained there while we lived on Washington Avenue. Later, my brother Lester discovered it among my mother's possessions after she died in Michigan - and arranged to send it to me in Connecticut. It brought back poignant memories for me. Later, my young grandson Daniel admired it and it was given to him for his animal room. He may still have it today - saving it for some youngster who may admire it.) Viewed in much later years, the camel lamp was a childish delight. But, my mother never expressed such a thought - and always acted as though it was special to her.

My bike opened new horizons for me - as I was allowed the freedom to ride most anywhere in the city. The riverfront was my favorite place to visit. If the fishermen were out, I liked to check on their catch to see if there were any really large ones. And, they always had some stories to tell - either about their largest catch - or about the big one that got away. Sometimes they liked to brag on their mixture of dough balls - and how that was the secret to their success. All used a long line with 20 or more hooks on it and a weighted end - so they could cast a long distance into the river. Seldom have I seen a fisherman with no catch - and that was a good thing - as he would say the family would not eat that night.

When the paddlewheel steam boats were in - I was attracted by the calliope music and the excitement of the people. I enjoyed talking to the deck hands - and when they got to know me - would send me into town for cigarettes. They tipped me a small amount - but I would have gone for nothing. They let me come aboard to deliver the goods - and then I managed to see other areas - such as the engine room and the auditorium. It never occurred to me to spend money to come aboard to see a show.

I delivered Sunday papers very early, so the customers had them when they got up from bed. Consequently, I was delivering papers when the milk man was on his rounds delivering milk. It was a memorable day that I realized that I could buy cold chocolate milk from him. I'd buy a whole pint - and savor the treat to the fullest. I was living very high. I still like chocolate milk - and often recall those early morning encounters with great pleasure.

The children of Jesse and Ada Evans - 1929



Back row: Walter Lester Robert

Jesse, jr. Norma

Two popular service people at that time were the "Ice Man" and the "Ice cream Truck". The Ice Man used a horse and wagon to transport his ice chunks. He would know what size people used, according to the size of their icebox. Usually it was sized for 25 or 50 lbs. of ice. Consequently, he would often need to chip it to size - creating small ice chips that he would share with the kids gathered around the tail of the wagon. It was a source of amazement to us kids that the horse knew the route - and at the signal from the Iceman - move on to the next house to service.

The Ice Cream Truck announced his presence with a shrill bell that often brought kids running - plus some adults. He sold a small portion of ice cream wrapped in paper. They were called "Dainties" - and came in all flavors. They were modest in price (5 cents) - but it was still money. So, only on special occasions would we be treated. That was why the Iceman was so popular - the cool treat was free.

We did get to enjoy ice cream. On weekends, my parent made up the mix - and we made ice cream by putting the mix in a metal container that had paddles and a lid covering. This would be fitted into a wood bucket with ice packed around the mix container. A crank handle then allowed someone to turn the container, cooling the mix until it hardened, and difficult to turn. Then, it was ready for eating. The one doing the most turning usually got the paddles to lick. Our ice cream maker was big enough for everyone to have seconds.

Occasionally, we had store bought ice cream that was sold at the pharmacy - located just a block away. It was hand packed into a container, pressing down hard to insure a full measure. Often the Pharmacist would give me a treat, if I was admiring the counter with the penny candy. With the ice cream pack, I'd run home to insure the least melting of the ice cream. The family would be waiting to enjoy the ice cream treat.

Summers in Evansville were hot - reaching into the 90's - with high humidity from the Ohio River. Fortunately, there were swimming pools, where I frequently went to cool off and frolic with my friends. We had to check the schedule - because there were "boys hours" and "girls hours". Never did we swim at the same times. However, I think they had family evening schedules - and then whole families could swim. Parents were expected to keep the rowdy boys under control.

In 1929, I remember being called one evening for the newsboys to assemble to sell an "Extra" newspaper. I was eager to go, since it always meant good money. The big bold headline was "STOCK MARKET CRASH". That meant little or nothing to me - but it did to many households. As I walked down the street crying out, "Extra, Extra, - read all about the STOCK MARKET CRASH" - people hurriedly came out of their houses demanding a paper. I soon sold out my supply - except for one that I took to my father. He was just as eager as others to read about it. Apparently, he had a considerable investment in Graham stock - but at the time, had little significance to me. I do remember talk that he wanted to sell the stock, but Mr. Graham talked him out of it by predicting it would rise again.

The spring of 1930 I graduated from the 8th grade and eagerly looked forward to High School. My brother Lester was already attending there - and spoke of more exciting events than my grade school. I remember he played the Tuba in the school band. My eldest brother, Walter, was attending Jasper Academy, on the recommendation of Mr. Graham - and perhaps at his expense. During the summer prior to entering High School, I remember playing lots of tennis - but my mother thought it was too hot. Heat did not bother me. My other recreation was reading. I liked to read adventure books - like Tom Sawyer and the Hardy boys. When the local Library announced a book reading contest, I entered and started reading. Before the summer ended I had read twenty books - and won the prize.

The Fall of 1930, I enrolled at Bosse High School, located on Washington Avenue, about 20 blocks north from our home. I rode my bike and securely locked it at a bike stand - and had no problem. I liked the routine of the school, with a home room, and moves to other rooms for classes. I liked the cafeteria for lunch - as it was a real treat to choose my food. After school, I answered the call for football players - and enjoyed the practice. I only weighed 92# - so I did not attract much attention of the coaches. However, when I was assigned to play end - and admonished by the coach, "Don't let the ball carrier get around your end." That was a command - and I stopped the ball carrier several times. That got me praise from the coach - but I took some hard knocks to achieve the result. I made the freshman squad - but I needed some additional growth to compete.

By the Fall of 1931, when I was looking forward to my sophomore year at Bosse High School, I heard the news that we were moving to

Wayne Michigan - where my father would be Factory Production Manager for the new Graham Paige automobile. The Graham Brothers were opening a new plant to produce the cars. While the news of moving sounded exciting, I regretted leaving my very close friends. And, the rest of the family regretted leaving our fine Washington Avenue house. Moving our residence was a way of life for our family. My mother expressed it well - she said, "Every time we get the curtains fitted to a new house - then it is time to move."

Our new house was called the Stellwagen House - after the old lady owner who rented it for income. It was a fine old brick building, with four bedrooms, front and back stairways, and beautiful old fashioned wood trim. There was small acreage, with chicken coop and hen house, and a very large vegetable garden area, with fruit trees surrounding it. It was located fairly close to a railroad line - just beyond which was the Graham-Paige auto plant, making it convenient for my Dad's drive to work.

It was into the fall school season when we arrived in Wayne. The academic classes had started. Most subjects could easily be caught up, but the Chemistry class was the exception, so it was dropped. I reported to the coach for football, but that too was far advanced, and he suggested that I start early practice for basketball. Coach McLain was so encouraging, I agreed. He said I had to be good - as I was a Hoosier. Consequently, I never returned to football, but played three years on the basketball team. My senior year was memorable for winning our league Championship - and making it to the semi-finals in the State Tournament.

We lived in the Stellwagen House for a year or so - then moved - due to the well going dry. We moved to a house on Sophia St. that was smaller, but very adequate. It was located near a creek that was fun to explore, and in the winter we skated on it when it froze over. Our home was about five blocks from school, so we easily walked it in 15 minutes. However, since I always went bareheaded, one winter I froze the up wind ear, en-route to school. The top of the ear swelled up rather dramatically - and hurt as it thawed. Surprisingly, the girl sitting in the next row, froze the bottom of her ear - and swelled and hurt. We commiserated with one another - and thereafter I wore a wool hat on cold days. Michigan had penetrating cold weather in the winter- being surrounded by lakes. But, we took advantage of the lakes - to swim in summer and skate in the winter.

My experience at Wayne High School was very satisfying socially - from academics, to athletics, to very close friends. I was included into the active group of my classmates - so there was always something being planned. The names Bob Clark, John Lents, and Bill Janner were my close male friends - and Pat Maben, Vetha Taylor and Doris Fidh were the prominent female friends. None of these were boy and girl couples - but just friends who enjoyed being together. Others were included, but not regularly in the core group. We would go to athletic events together, swimming at popular lakes, movies, and house parties - primarily at Pat Maben's house. Her father was town supervisor, and her parents owned a big Victorian type house. Pat was the only child, so her parents were willing to entertain The Group, for Pat's sake. They always had food to eat, such as popcorn and sodas, or sandwiches and cake. Naturally, this made it a popular choice to party. At that age, my male friends were always hungry - so after school would meet at one home to snack - and probably progress to another in order to survive till dinner.

I was not keenly aware of finances in those school boy days. But, when President Roosevelt announced a bank holiday to stabilize the country financial markets - I was aware of financial distress in our family. The local bank, where my parents deposited all their funds after selling the Evansville home, closed for the holiday - and was slow to reopen. Of all the assets my parents deposited - all that was returned to them was 7 cents on the dollar. These were depression days - and must have been very difficult for my parent - with four children to feed and cloth. (My brother Walter had married Tillie Laugel - and they had a small child. They lived in Wayne in an apartment. Walter worked at the Graham-Paige plant.)

With the financial depression, money was very scarce - and especially so when my father came home one evening and announced that he had a 50% cut in pay that day. But, he never complained during all those difficult years - because he said he was fortunate to have a job. He was well aware of the men in the factory that had to be "laid off" due reduced production. And, at first, there was no welfare provision - that came later.

With scarce money, prices on all goods were reduced. Typical prices were: Bread - 12 cents; eggs - 12 cents; milk - 20 cents a quart, hamburger - 30 cents a pound. With a family of six - I remember my mother trying to buy a weeks groceries for \$5.00 - and the distress of exceeding it. Something else would suffer, as a result. We wore shoes that were half soled several times. We ate a lot of beans. But, the family liked them - navy bean soup, beans on bread, and bean salad. We did not - but many families

had chicken yards and put in vegetable gardens. For those who did not have garden space - the factory allowed them garden space in their empty fields.

I was not aware that any High School students owned a car. One of the farm boys would drive to school - but probably that was so he could come home quickly after school to do chores. Most of the boys had drivers licenses - so they could do necessity driving when required. Occasionally, we would be allowed to drive the family car for a special event. When a car was available for a planned event, the boys would all chip in money (25 cents or so) to buy 2-3 gallons of gas @ 18 cents / gallon. If it was an outing over lunchtime, the girls would bring the sandwiches and drinks. (Ham salad was popular at the time.)

The summer of 1933, our boy group planned a camping trip to a nearby lake site. (My brother Lester, who had dropped out of school by this time, offered to take me to the Cleveland Air Races in his car. (Ford roadster with a rumble seat.) But, I preferred the camping trip and turned him down. Little did I realize that aviation would enter my life in a few years, or I may have changed my mind.) The camping trip went well, but two events are remembered. One - was cooking rice. Someone had brought it, but did not know quantities. Since we were hungry, we decided to cook the entire 2#. That started a comedy scene. We started out in one pot - and as it expanded - used the second pot - and then, finally a third pot. We were hungry - but not hungry enough for four boys to eat 2 # of rice. The second scene is better. We had found a blueberry patch and picked several pails of berries. As we walked back to camp, a lady saw our berries and made us an offer we could not refuse. She said, "If you would trade a pail of berries - I will make you a blueberry pie." We gave her two pails of berries - and returned later for her fabulous pie. It never tasted better - after camp food.

Mid- summer '33 - my Dad offered me a job at the factory. The saw tooth roof windows of the Graham factory were being painted by professional painters - but they had quit due to the extreme heat. Dad wanted the job completed - and offered it to me. I accepted - and anticipated the real money that I'd earn. I had painted before, so I could easily do the job. All it required was a steady hand to avoid too much paint on the windows rather than the frames. As I painted, I sang, and apparently amused the workers below - because they kidded me about it. The job lasted about six weeks - and was my first big pay. As for the heat - I worked in shorts and no shirt - getting my very best tan ever. I liked the job.

My senior year at Wayne High School was significant with events. Class elections took place - with Bob Clark being elected President. I was elected Vice President and our friend John Lents, Treasurer. When it came time to select a Class Motto - Bob Clark suggested one I have always remembered. It was, "Success comes in cans - you can and I can." It was not adopted - just some old dumb thing - long forgotten.

Our senior play would be the H.M.S. Pinafore. I had a small singing part - and I thoroughly enjoyed doing the play. Those memories have stayed with me very vividly. I remember some of the girls singing solos - and thought them very talented. I've often wondered if they sang in their careers.

Basketball was a very dominant event during my senior year. We had a very good team - having played together several years. And, we had an inspirational coach, Mr. McLean, who taught us good winning basketball tactics and in addition - good sportsmanship. We handily won our League Championship - and were going to play in the State Tournament. We won several games - and reached the semi - finals. That was a tough game - and we were tied going into the final minutes. Our team decided to stall - until the best opportunity to score. Unfortunately, a junior member of our team, took a long shot when we did not expect it. He missed - and our opponents got the ball and scored - putting them ahead by 2 points. We could not recover in the closing seconds. It was hard to take - and we would have condemned the junior player. But, Coach convinced us to forget it. But, I remember.

When I told my parents I would like to go to college at Michigan State and study Forestry - I was given the O.K. - even though money was tight. My courses in High School were not college preparatory - missing the Chemistry course - and taking business courses like typing and shorthand. My grades were good - and any High School graduate would be accepted in a State College. When my Dad told Mr. Graham about my plans, he asked to see me - as he had a proposition. When I met him, he said that he was planning to open a number of Farm Implement Stores through Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. If I was willing to change my study to Business Administration, he would guarantee a job after graduation. It was a very good offer - and after some thought - I agreed to make the change. The job offer had good potential and I was glad to make the change. My Dad was pleased too - since Mr. Graham had been a strong influence in his life.

When the basketball season ended in late March, most of my efforts were directed to preparations for entry to Michigan State College. I was excited at the prospects, since no one in my family had ever attended college. Consequently, there was no one to advise me, leaving me a little in awe of the prospects. But, I did enjoy the prestige of going to college. Being college bound, and 18 years old, I was beginning to feel the mantle of manhood and its responsibilities. In a few months, my life would change.

One big social event was scheduled to occur in late April that had me concerned. That was the Senior Ball - where the Grand March was led by the officers of the Senior Class. As Vice President, I was expected to be there and fulfill my office obligation. My problem was that I did not dance. And, furthermore, I did not have a girl friend that I wanted to invite. When my dilemma became known - family and friends came to the rescue. My cousin Corrine volunteered to teach me to dance - and my close friends group informed me that Doris Fidh still did not have a date. She was a cute girl and easy to know, and she was part of our group that partied together. In fact, the girls had been trying to pair me up with her for some time. I invited her and she readily accepted. Now, I am committed - and I felt like a condemned person - reluctant to go. But, my spirits began to rise when the dance lessons began. My vivacious cousin was rhythm filled, and soon had me moving with the music - and soon I realized I was dancing. Maybe I was still a little stiff - but I realized I was not stepping on her feet. After several sessions, she declared me a dancer and I began to relax. The dread of the Senior Ball was passing. As fate would have it, it became a small triumph and my inability to dance had passed. The Ball was my first dance, and all conventional courtesies observed. I order a corsage (my first), called for my date with the family car - and the evening was a great success. Doris and I did not become a dedicated couple, but we were always good friends. My cousin Corrine was always pleased when I gave her credit for making me a dancer. But, dancing never became one of my strong interests.

The summer passed quickly, and I was working at any job I could find to make money. I set pins at the bowling alley, cut grass for neighbors, and filled the basement of our home with hard wood scraps from the frame shop at the factory. Before fall, I had nearly filled all available space with the wood. It would be burned, with some coal, in the furnace come winter and cold weather. Another job that I enjoyed, was working the trap machines for the Gun Club, used by the executives of the Graham plant. They met weekends to shoot Trap competitively. Consequently, there was always some conniving going on in order to win a bet - or a competition. Since, I

directed flight of the clay pigeons - I was contacted to make an easy flight for # 3 shooter - and difficult for # 5 - with whom # 3 was competing. The tip for this "service" was substantial - ethics ignored. But, it was in good fun, even when the ruse was discovered.

The Gun Club House was a nice size for a party of 20 - 30. It was well furnished with open floor for dancing, tables and chairs around the perimeter, and a bar. When I found that my father would permit me to use it for a party, my close classmate friends helped me to organize an after graduation party. As usual, the girls agreed to furnish the sandwiches, and the guys would bring the sodas. We had Victrola machine to play records - so there could be dancing. It was a great party - and as usual, conducted with reasonable decorum - with jokes, tricks and laughter. But, that escalated to wilder actions when some one introduced Orange Sloe Gin to ready drinkers. Why not - it tasted like Orange soda with a bite and I liked it. Some liked it so much - they sent for more at the liquor store. After that, things kind of went to pot. Some got sick, there was a fight, and the general conduct was rowdy. Fortunately, the hour was getting late - and we managed to send people home. My friend Bill Janner was staggering drunk, so his friends and I agreed to see him home. When we arrived, he staggered to his front door and fell to his knees. His mother opened the door, and Bill crawled through. We left before his mother could identify us in the car.

With about 6 weeks before departure to college, my Dad offered me a job at the factory. I would work in the wood shop, where the wood frames for the cars were produced. He told the foreman that I could work offset on the band saw machines, but not feeding into the machine, as I was inexperienced for the danger. I enjoyed the job - and the prospects for a paycheck. But, it soon became boring, as I received the wood cut and placed it on a hand truck - to be later taken for further processing. My co-worker was an old man - who fed the wood into the band saw and pushed it through for the cut. Care was needed - to avoid the high speed blade - and possible serious injury. One day - as he was routinely reaching for a wood piece, and pushing it through the machine, he must have been diverted. As he pushed the wood piece - he absentmindedly failed to remove his hand and pushed it through the band saw and cut off his thumb. He swears it didn't hurt, and he was only aware of it when he reached for another wood piece. Off he went to the hospital, while I contemplated my father's good decision for me to work only on the offset side of the machine.

FALL - 1934 - FRESHMAN - MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE

Of the four good friends in High School, only John Lents and I were college bound. Bob Clark would work for his father at his Hardware Store, and Bill Janner would go to work at Fords in Dearborn. John and I would be room-mates in the Freshman Dorm, located centrally on the campus. Nearby was Beaumont Tower - with chime bells that kept us well informed of the time. The Dorm was a red sandstone building three stories high, with six sections, each with its own doorway. Each floor had five rooms and one bath serving the floor. The Dining Room was in the basement - half underground. We were served all meals - except the Sunday evening meal. We were permitted one serving of meat & dessert at a meal, but unlimited helpings of vegetables, milk and bread. For this, we paid \$2.75 for a week.

John and I had a first floor room - that happily faced out on the campus. The furnishings were Spartan, but we had no plans to enhance it. It had two beds, two desks and two closets - with a fair amount of central space. We furnished our own bedding. Sheets and personal laundry would be sent home via mail - and returned to us. (No other method of laundry was known at that time.) Our parents delivered us to school - and after getting us settled - made their goodbys, to return to Wayne 80 miles away. Our first night was restless - and both of us were awake to hear the Bell Tower chime all night long.

At Registration time, I joined the Business Administration line and was able to make my necessary classes schedule. I did have a problem with ROTC registration - as I wanted to join the Cavalry Unit - rather than Infantry or Artillery. As I hesitated, I was urged to make a choice. I said, "I know what I want, but I'm not sure of the 40 hours of horseback experience." The officer asked, "Have you ever ridden a horse"? When I answered in the affirmative - He said, "O.K. - you'll do for Cavalry." That proved to be a great decision for some future fun experiences.

Classes were held in many different buildings. The schedule was 50 minutes in a class - and 10 minutes to make the transition to the next class. With a wide-spread campus, this was a challenge that had no allowance for dawdling. We developed a high speed walk. All my classes were challenging, but interesting and acceptable. All, that is but chemistry - and it was a required course. It consisted of a lecture with 100 students - and later Lab classes. With no High School chemistry background - I was lost.

One of my classes was located in the Dairy Building. That was where the Agriculture students took their courses - and had the Dairy Lab. They made ice cream - and the school had a counter to sell it. I had a double dip cone going into class (5 cents) and another coming out of class - plus buying a pint of chocolate milk to take to the dorm. (By the way, I weighed 152 # and was 5' 10" tall arriving at MSC - but I was a growing boy. I graduated with a weight of 203 - and 6' 1" tall.) The Dairy Building routine helped this growth.

Student work for 25 cents an hour was advertised at the Union Bldg. In my spare time I would sign up for jobs -and was able to make extra spending money. This entailed snow removal, furniture moving, and some misc. chores. The worst job I ever had was cleaning the abattoir of the school slaughter house of the Ag. Department. It was unpleasant - and the smell permeated my body - that several showers failed to remove. Once of that was enough - especially at 25 cents per hour.

I enjoyed getting acquainted with the campus of MSC - and walked along Red Cedar River - out to the Farm Buildings of the Ag. Department. There I could see the cows and learn about the experiments in their feeding. My other favorite was to the horse barns of the ROTC Cavalry - where I could learn more about the horses - and listen to stories of the enlisted men.

The academic courses at MSC were going well except for Chemistry. When I talked to the Instructor about it - he suggested I drop the course rather than risk flunking the course. Then I could pick it up at a later time. That was what I did.

My room-mate John Lents was not happy at MSC - and I'd guess it was for no other reason than homesickness. When we went home for Christmas vacation, he surprised me when he announced he was not going back. He got a job at the local bank - and never returned to college. When I returned, I had the dorm room all to myself - for the rest of the year. My familiarity with classes, the friends I made, and the college activities made MSC life exciting and fun. I was over the unfamiliarity - and was comfortable with my prospects. Consequently, my grades improved and I was growing in confidence.

In retrospect, the event seems unbelievable - but in the Spring Term - the Freshman Dining Room raised the weekly fee - from \$2.75 to \$3.25. We were incensed - and threatened to strike at this injustice. Imagine.

My Freshman year was ending - and I knew my grades were good - if not outstanding. When the grade record arrived, I had A's in Gym and Military Science, B's in all the others except for one C - that I expected to be higher.

My Dad had arranged for a job for me at Grahams for the summer - in the mail room. It was an enjoyable job. Part of the time, I distributed mail to the executive offices, where I often met the department heads. They all knew my father, so they always had a good word for me. Mr. Graham had an office, but was seldom in it. When he was in, he was gracious enough to inquire about school - and my life there. The other part of the mail room job was sending brochures to the dealers throughout the country - and it increased my appreciation & knowledge for national geography. I liked the job - and time passed quickly. Suddenly, it was time to go back to school.

FALL - 1935 - SOPHOMORE - MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE

I would not be staying in a dorm my second year, but had a room in a private home, two blocks off campus. They rented to four boys in two rooms in their upstairs. The owners were very pleasant - and tolerant with some of our hi-jinks. I don't ever remember their ever being harsh in their criticism. Since they were so gracious, we tried not to offend. Two of the students were seniors - so they were more disciplined and set the example for the others.

My registration for classes went well - as there was no choices that would complicate a schedule. I was required to take 2nd year Gym and Military Science (ROTC - Cavalry) - and the remainder were Business Ad. Courses - including a Speech Class. The latter made me nervous at the prospects. I never liked being the center of attention - and feared making a speech with mistakes. Fortunately, the instructor gave us some good advice that worked - and I have remembered it ever since. He said, "Always speak about something you know - then you don't have to remember it - just tell it as it is." The day came when I was scheduled to speak - and I was nervous. But, just a few days before I had learned all about the parts of a horse - in Military class. I was still nervous when called to speak, but I knew my subject and started telling the class about the horse and it's various parts. They were attentive - and I actually enjoyed telling them the facts. I received an A on the speech - much to my surprise and appreciation. A milestone was passed that day.

My other academic classes were interesting, and I found that they were more challenging. They were not more difficult, but they dealt with subject matter for practical use. One was Accounting - with methods and principles that have been useful in later life. As I kept accounting books, even a one cent error was intolerable - and I spent many an hour locating the error. Geography was especially interesting. We did not just locate continents and countries and cities, but learned populations, climates, and products of the countries. That proved to be especially helpful later in my pilot life flying worldwide. I remember the professor - when I remember the class. He was almost late for our class one time - and the rule was, "Class was cancelled after 10 minutes of scheduled time". The class was watching the clock - and at the stroke of 10 minutes after the hour, we rushed the door. But, he met us and herded us back into class. Then, he berated us for our hurry to depart - using this logic. He said, "If you bought some bananas in a store and paid for them - you would not go away and leave them on the counter". "So why are you so eager to get away from your education?" (I've recounted the story to many in similar circumstances since - asking them, "Why are you so eager to leave the bananas on the counter?") It is a rather dumb analogy - but I do remember it well.

Rush week for Fraternities was due - and I was pleased to be asked to visit Lambda Chi Alpha. They showed me around the house that was very impressive - and introduced me to a fine group of members. I stayed for dinner, that was an excellent menu. I listened to the promotion speeches - and was duly impressed. I did sign up to pledge - having a month before formally joining. I liked the group - and would have liked to join. But, when I considered the cost - I could not afford it without going to my parents for the money. That I could not do, knowing the economic times and their struggle. So, I had to decline the membership. An incident happened at the fraternity before I left, when I was there for a dinner invitation. One of the seniors announced his engagement to marry - and passed out cigars. I was holding mine - when a member was offering me a light. I was too embarrassed to admit I didn't smoke - so I lit up. About 5 minutes later, I felt light headed and woozy, and excused myself. I made it to a bathroom, and then was sick as a dog. Looking in the mirror - I was green. As soon as possible, I sneaked off for home. I cannot recall having smoked ever since. The experience was bad - but it cured me of having a smoke habit.

Campus jobs were always being advertised - and I found I could use the extra money. There was a job at a local church - and I decided to accept

it. When I reported for work on Saturday, I found that they wanted the walls and ceiling of the sanctuary washed down. I would have to work on a ladder, and wash the walls and ceiling with sponges, soaked with a very caustic solution. I should have had rubber gloves for the job but they were not offered - so I ignored the situation. It caused my hands to shrivel and get red splotches - and when I worked overhead, the solution ran into my eyes. It was the second worst job I can remember. (The abattoir cleaning was the worst.) I committed to the job - and I finished it that day. But, I did not have the time - when offered additional work.

On the weekends, I often wandered over to the military horse barns. I liked to get acquainted with the horses - and I enjoyed talking to the enlisted men that worked there. They always had some adventure to tell - and I especially liked hearing the hunting stories. When they got to the coon hunts - I expressed that I would love to go on such a hunt. One of the men had several coon hounds and invited me to go on the next weekend. I eagerly accepted - and looked forward all week to the hunt. He met me with his panel truck, with five coon hounds in the back, at 10 PM Saturday night. We drove to a wooded area - and he released the dogs. They knew it was a hunt - and immediately started yelping and searching for a scent. Soon, they were on a scent - and were off running and barking. We were running to keep up - but they got far ahead. Soon the barking became more agitated, as they were close. Then, the barking turned to baying, and my companion said, "They have got him treed." In another half mile, we came to the dogs that were baying and trying to climb the tree. Using a strong light, we shined it up the tree, and sure enough the coon's eyes were shining at us. I held the light, and the hunter shot him out of the tree with a .22 rifle.

The hunter got the dogs off on another part of the woods, and got them searching for scent. Again, they took off - and we were hot after them. This time they were trailing a wily one. He crossed a stream, he went up a tree, but jumped off a limb, so they thought they had him treed. But, the dogs picked up the trail after the hunter realized the trick. Finally, after an hours run, they finally got him treed, and bayed until we arrived. But, the coon was smart. When the light was shone on him, he would go to the other side of the tree and climb higher. It was impossible to get a shot. Finally, the hunter suggested that I climb the tree and shake him out. That, I was not eager to do - but when I realized he was serious - I decided to do it. But, as I climbed this tree at 2 AM - I felt a little ridiculous. But, I was committed. As I neared the coon, apparently he felt trapped and started down the tree. I almost panicked - and frantically climbed down too. But the coon was

faster. Fortunately, he dropped to the limb below me - passing me by. Then, he dropped to the ground - and the dogs met him. It was a hell'uva good fight, but the coon was outmatched - and soon was finished.

We had intended to quit - but one of the dogs start trailing something. We waited to see what developed - and soon heard it yelp in distress. It was a young untrained dog - and he had cornered a skunk - who let him have a direct spray. He smelled awful and was quite contrite and suffering - and I'd guess it wouldn't happen again. But, the problem was getting the dog home. We couldn't leave it - so it was put into the car with the others - and us. We left the windows open - but the smell was still almost unbearable. When I got home, the hunter told me to bury the clothes - and shower well. I did that - but the atmosphere still lingered after repeated showers. Even in my Monday classes - I was still potent - and forced to sit well in the rear of the class. That was my one and only "Coon hunt" but it was a great adventure - in spite of the pungent dog.

Every Friday afternoon, all the ROTC units would have a parade assembly. The MSC band would play, each unit would march to the parade field - then at the command - would "Pass in Review". It was a good show and attracted many visitors.

The Cavalry was horse mounted - with three platoons. This day I was given a new remount horse that was not well disciplined. The horse would not stand still, but would fidget, toss his head and cause a commotion. One of the Upperclass Officers was annoyed by this distraction and yelled at me - and at the same time yanked on the reins, scaring the animal. The horse screamed and reared high up - became over balanced and rolled over backward. Fortunately, when the horse toppled over, I instinctively slid sideways out of the saddle, so it rolled only on my leg. But, to the crowd, it appeared to have rolled over me. Excitement reigned, the horse broke away, and when I tried to stand - they insisted I remain prone on the ground to avoid greater injury. The ambulance came and I was taken to the MSC Infirmary for x-rays. Happily, There was nothing broken, but I had a bruised leg that troubled me. But, I walked out that day - and went home. I heard later that the Officer was severely criticized for his unwarranted action. In a few days, I was as good as new.

One of my senior housemates worked at Sorority for his board. He served table and then wash dishes in the kitchen. Then, the tables were set up for the next meal. He was getting ready for graduation, and asked if I was interested in the job. If so, he would recommend me to the "House

Mother" for the position. I eagerly agreed to the offer - as it would be a big money saver. The result was that I got the job and was asked to start the following week. In the interim, I could come when it was convenient to learn the routine. "Ma" Miller cooked the meals - so essentially she ruled the kitchen and the meal service. I was there to serve her requirements in kitchen and dining room. But, a more kindly and considerate lady could not be found. I was her young man, and she looked after my interests very well.

My Sophomore year at MSC was winding down - and soon final exams were pending before departure. My two year requirement in ROTC had been completed, but I was approached by my Cavalry Army Officer to consider two more years, during which time I would become a student officer in command of a platoon. After two years and graduation, it would be expected that I would receive a 2nd Lt. commission in the U.S. Army - Cavalry. Further, as an Advanced ROTC student officer, I would be paid \$30 per three month term until graduation. And, I would be furnished with the standard officers uniform - with riding pants and boots. I accepted - and was very pleased at the prospects. I liked the military discipline and the way of life it offered.

One more opportunity arose before the Sophomore year ended. I was offered the position of Dorm manager at a private home, where a family had converted the third floor of their home into a dorm arrangement for four male students. My duties would be to maintain order and discipline - lay out fresh bed & personal linens each week - and be available for the occasional house job. I accepted - and now had both room and board cost covered by relatively easy jobs. The military pay just covered tuition - and my summer job took care of personal costs.

My job for the summer was the Mail-room position of last year - with somewhat more responsibilities. I had a car dealer list and was responsible for seeing that all factory literature was sent to them. I still distributed mail to the executive offices - where I was warmly received with questions about my college career. They seemed to genuinely want to know my progress.

I saw my high school friends when possible, but my absence made the relationship a little less cordial - as we had less to relate to one another. We did arrange some swimming outings at the nearby lakes - and a few house parties to renew friendships and reminisce about high school years. Then, the summer ended - and time to return to my 2nd home at MSC.

FALL 1936 - JUNIOR YEAR - MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE.

With two years of life at MSC - I had the confidence that I could handle the academic courses - and the opportunities ahead looked bright. The academic subjects of Business Administration were not particularly inspiring - but with my job prospects - they must be learned. So, I plugged along - and passed the courses with B's. However, I could count on A's in Military Science - and much of my interests were there.

The Dorm and Sorority jobs were going well - with no complications. A freshman acquaintance came to the dorm - and welcomed my presence and friendship. Jim Oliver was a quiet guy, with few close friends. He came from wealthy parents, who owned a lumber and furniture business. He was a Bus. Ad. major who expected to enter the family business someday. He was not an accomplished student - and he passed Freshman math by copying my answers on the final exam, for which he was most grateful. Now, we happened to have the same two classes - that both required a research theme. I had finished mine - doing one theme report that was suitable for both classes. I made two copies - one for each class. It was probably not completely ethical. But, I would risk it.

Jim was desperate, as he said he could not write the material needed. It was due the next day - and he had little or nothing to submit. He asked for my help - and I could not deny him. That night, we worked all night long, with my writing and Jim typing. He made two copies to submit to the two different classes - just as I had done. After an all night session, by 8 AM we had finished - and Jim turned them in before the deadline. When the grades came out on the themes - he got an A & an A- on his; and mine earned only an A- and a B. But, we both got away with one theme for two classes. Jim was effusive with his gratitude, but I couldn't use the "shirt off his back".

As an Upperclass Military junior - I was eligible for membership in Scabbard and Blade, for outstanding military service. I was honored with being selected, along with eleven others. We were inducted at the Friday Military Parade Ceremony. It was a proud moment for all of us. And, for me, it strengthened my military attitude and appreciation.

Tom Matlock, was a junior student Cavalryman. His father was a Colonel in the Cavalry, and Tom wanted to follow in his father's footsteps in a military career. Tom easily assumed leadership of our junior Cavalry Officers - and as such organized a tight knit group - the Cavalry Club.

Our activities were varied - but were mostly social. It took on a more serious nature when "Farmers Week" arrived in February. One of the big events was a horseback wrestling contest between junior and senior student officers. It was held in the Field House where there was sufficient space for a large circle to be designated. Two teams would assemble within the circle - for a wrestle. If a rider touched the ground, or a horse steps out of the circle, that rider is eliminated. The winning team is the one that has a rider, or more, still in the ring when the other team has none.

The senior group, with many macho football players, had been bragging that they would "wup our butts". Tom Matlock, had other ideas, and we assembled to discuss and practice at the horse barns. Tom demonstrated that if we grabbed their legs, instead of the upper body, that when they kicked to eliminate the hold, they would provide the lift to raise them off their horse. It worked amazingly well - especially when two rode up. One would get his attention, and the other to go for the legs on the opposite side.

The big day of the "Horseback Wrestle" arrived. There would be twelve horsemen on each side - wearing distinctive colors. At the signal, the fight began, and it was a melee of confusion. We juniors worked our strategy - and it was successful. I had the pleasure of grabbing a senior's leg, and when he kicked at me, found himself propelled off the horse. Finally, I was grabbed from behind - and found myself being dragged off. I hugged the horse's neck to hold on - but finally slid down and touched the ground. I was out of competition, but I had the bonus of watching the final assault on the seniors. They never did catch on to the leg trick - and the final senior went flying off his horse. The "Juniors" won handily - with five horsemen remaining when the last senior went down. The senior team were in disbelief - and cried for a rematch. But, the schedule did not provide for it - and they had to accept their shame. Needless to say, they took a lot of ribbing - and our victory a great satisfaction. Tom was given full credit for the strategy.

Tom also organized "Sunday Morning Paper Chases" that were very popular. We could invite girl friends to these - and were a popular invitation. The "Paper Chase" was started by a leader, who was given a 10 minute start riding the roads and trails of the countryside. Every minute or so, he would throw out a handful of paper. The object was to try to follow him - until he was caught or when you reached him at the destination. Over hill and dale we would go, and even cross some creeks. It was great fun - and at the destination - would enjoy a breakfast cookout. It was reminiscent

of the fox chases in England.

During the winter months, a traditional formal Military Ball was held in a ballroom of downtown Lansing. The girls wore long dresses and the student officers wore full dress military uniforms. I was in a funk about who I would invite - as I was not dating anyone seriously at MSC. There were casual girl friends for class chats and a movie date - but not for this formal occasion. I solved my problem when I thought of the girl next door in Wayne - named Anne Ripley. We had been close friends but not dating friends - because she was one class lower in High School and was not included in our class gang. When I called, she eagerly accepted the date. However, the date was complicated, as I would have to hitch hike home to borrow the family car. Then, late afternoon, drive the two of us back to Lansing for the Cavalry Club cocktail party - preceding the Military Ball. (Youth - complications become the ordinary.) The evening went well - and Anne was thrilled to be at this unusual military affair. It was a fun affair with a Grand March, that neither of us had experienced before. I had never danced in boots before - so I blamed any ineptness to the footgear. Finally, at 1 PM the dance ended. We, however, had a 80 mile drive home. I was so keyed up, the time seemed to go quickly - but I noticed that Anne was cat-napping with fatigue. When we arrived at her home about 3 PM, her mother met us at the door - probably relieved that we were home safely. I was glad I lived next door - by now I was beat. I went to bed and slept till noon. When I saw Anne the next day - we agreed it had been a fun party for which she thanked me nicely.

The Junior year at MSC was rapidly ending. It was a good year - academically, job wise at the Dorm and my job at the Sorority. I would not be taking my usual summer job at Grahams, because I was committed to military summer camp at Camp Custer located at Battle Creek, Michigan - about 60 miles from MSC. It was traditionally, an assembly of the student officers of a half dozen schools - and lasted for six weeks. It sounded like fun - and I looked forward to it.

When my junior year ended early June, we assembled for the 60 mile ride to Camp. We were assigned a horse that we would keep for the six weeks - taking care of her for all that period. Mine was a her - a mare that was a bit small. I felt sorry for her when I loaded my personal military gear - then mounted with my 200 lbs. But, she just shook a little - then settled down to do the ride. She had a great heart - and a cooperative animal.

We were formed into a platoon, with its three squads of eight men. We were equipped to ride on the McClellan saddle, that had been standard for many years. It was uncomfortable compared to the English saddle that we used for recreational riding. The saddle, rifle, and other military gear weighed 120 lbs, plus our personal weight, was a load for the horse. Our 60 mile ride to Camp Custer was divided into two days of riding - so we expected make about 30 miles after we departed. When ready, our military Army Captain, who would lead us to Camp, gave the order to, "Mount up". If the Captain had reviewed his outfit at that time, he would have noted sleek horses and sleek men. And, with his experience, he would have recalled, they will be slimmer and harder when we return after six weeks.

We were ready - and the order came, "Move out". We were on our way - and we were allowed to be "at ease", so we could talk and enjoy the ride. The first couple hours were fun, enjoying the countryside and the people who waved and cheered us on. It was an interesting sight to see. We rode two hours, then walked 30 minutes to rest the horses. At 12:30 PM, we stopped at a scheduled "field stop" for a lunch break & horse watering. At that time, I noticed a discomfort on the inside of my legs, where the McClellan saddle was rubbing them and getting raw. So, be it - I'd just have to tough it out. That afternoon, was a repeat of the morning, fun, but the men were more subdued and tired. About 5 PM, we came to our campsite where we would overnight. However, the first priority after arrival was - "See to your horse". His feet need to be inspected for bruises, he had to be watered, then brought back to the tether line to be fed. While feeding, the horse was curried and brushed down where he shone like polish. Then, we were free to set up pup tents and prepare our beds and clean up ready for our meal. We were very hungry when Mess Call came - and we could line up for supper - using our personal mess kit for the food and drink.

After supper, I checked my raw legs, from the saddle rub. Then, I asked an enlisted Sergeant if there was a First Aid kit available - telling him about my legs. He said he had just the right thing - and came back with horse liniment for raw places. At his bidding, I dropped my pants and lay down for the treatment. When he applied the liniment, "Wow", it burned like hell - and momentarily wished I had not asked for treatment. But, he said it would heal quickly. And, I found that to be true, because by reveille the next morning I had thick scabs, indicating healing.

However, I had another day's riding to do - and when I climbed into the saddle, could feel the pressure of the scabs. And, it proved to be a painful experience to ride and rub the scabs off in the process. It had to be endured - so the ride to Camp Custer was no fun.

Arriving at Camp Custer, we found large four-man tents already set up for us. There were individual areas for each school - and units from Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio were represented. Competition between schools was encouraged - in horse drill, rifle and pistol shooting, and in military strategy.

After our Michigan State unit arrived, we followed the standard procedure after a ride. Take care of your horse - then take care of yourself. Then, we had an assembly for an inspection. I had no time to change my pants that showed a bloody area from my saddle sores. Consequently, it showed at Inspection - and I was told to report to the Sergeant for another horse liniment treatment. Additionally, I was excused from two days of riding. Several of us reported to the Sergeant for the torture treatment. But, it worked - and in a few days my wounds were healed.

Cavalry maneuvers at Camp Custer was just like playing "Cowboys and Indians" on a large scale. It was pure fun - although, at times, a little challenging. Military maneuvers taught us scouting, communications, positioning, and engaging the enemy on favorable terms. Under a hot summer sun, this can be physically demanding, but we were shaping up - both horses and men. On a typical day, we arose early and checked the horses on a tether line. After breakfast, we assembled for the day's maneuver problems, taking a lunch with us into the field. If we returned early enough, we could take the horses to a nearby creek riding bareback, and swim with them to cool and clean us both. That was enjoyed by both horses and men - although it became a little hectic at times. My mare and I became close friends - literally. Returning to camp, we'd brush them down, find feed for them, then leave them munching contentedly. We, then, had just time to change and report for afternoon formation for inspection. The officers, too, looked after their men.

Even on days of hard maneuvering, instead of resting after supper, we were permitted to ride three miles to a near by town for ice cream. That was a great treat, and it somewhat became a standard, unless duties dictated otherwise. There were girls at the ice cream store - so maybe that was an inducement too.

As our 6 weeks end was nearing, we learned of the traditional assault on a nearby hill. All the units were assembled on a line, with their three squads forming three lines. At the signal, we were to "Charge the Hill" in a mad scramble to engage the mythical enemy in a final fight. At the bugle

call, the command was, "Walk" and the lines moved forward. Then, came the command to "Trot" - followed a short time later to "Gallop" and we surged forward. Then, came the command to "Charge" - and now we were free to move as fast as possible toward the hilltop. My mare must have caught the spirit of the competition - and we passed several and was among the leading horses. It was wild and exhilarating ride, and I could appreciate how it would demoralize an enemy, if 100 horses with screaming men were charging you. We swarmed over the hill - with the guys laughing and recounting the charge. It was a great adventure - and remains in my memory as an unusual event in my life.

Our six weeks of fun and games - and some set backs - were ending. One big day of inspections and parades - with awards presented - and we were finished. We packed that night for an early departure the next morning. Promptly at 8 AM, we moved out, to start our 60 mile return to Michigan State College. The six weeks had wrought a big change in men and horses. They were not the sleek soft bodied men and animals that departed MSC. Instead, they were a muscle hardened body of men and animals, that were confident and fit to do a job. It had been a great experience and I was proud to have been a part of it.

I had six weeks remaining in the summer - with no definite plans. I hoped that my Dad would find a job for me. Fate stepped in again, when my Dad suggested I might like to deliver a Graham auto to a dealer in Salem, Oregon. He wanted an early delivery, and did not want to wait for normal truck delivery. I accepted immediately, and contacted my friend Bob Clark to see if he would accompany me. He accepted, and proposed that as long as we were on the west coast, we visit his Aunt in Los Angeles. Why not, we as carefree as a bird. We each were able to accumulate \$50 of personal money - and the factory supplied money for transport of the car to Salem. After that, we planned to hitch hike to Los Angeles - and later back to Michigan. The possible problems and hazards were given little thought.

My Dad waved us off from the factory and wished us well. We estimated we would be in Salem in three days - and would call when we arrived. We had maps - and planned to go via Chicago, northwesterly across the plains states, north of Colorado and the high mountains, direct toward Oregon. We took turns driving, and planned to keep going past the plains states, and slow down when we hit the scenic country. We had a ball - driving, eating junk food, and sleeping in the car - but made good time.

Along the way, we marveled at the extent of the plains - and were in awe of the mountains that were the highest we'd seen. The roadways had little traffic, and we were pleasantly surprised how fast we could progress. The desert regions were dry and somewhat uninteresting. But, when we came to the Cascade Range, were very impressed with the snow peaked mountains and the forests covering them. Then, into Oregon and the lush land - washed by the Pacific humidity. We rolled into Salem on the third day, on schedule, and to an appreciated arrival. We had done a good job. My father was contacted to confirm the car delivery - and that we were well-and ready to head south. The dealer agreed to take us to the main roadway south - where he bid us good-bye. Now, we were really on our own.

We were hitching for quite some time before we got our first ride. Then, it proved to be a short distance. This was the experience for several more pick-ups - short rides so we were not making much distance. When let out in Eugene, Oregon - it was getting late. So we decided to eat - and find an overnight spot. We wanted to conserve our money - so after a grocery stop - we found a secluded billboard and made a camp behind it. Fortunately, the weather was mild, and we slept comfortably.

We had food left for breakfast, then we were out on the road again. This time, we lucked out, and got a ride from Eugene to Grants Pass - with a driver who was interested in our adventure story. He sounded like he envied us the opportunity. After a couple more short rides, surprisingly, we were picked up by a single old lady headed for Crescent City, California. Along the way, after we became acquainted, we asked her if she was concerned about picking up two young men. She said, "No, I am a good judge of character." That confirmed our already formed opinion - to keep ourselves as presentable as possible. It worked then - and would do so several times later. Crescent City was on the Pacific Ocean - and we wanted to see it. So, we decided to sight-see and go there. We found a beautiful beach - and relaxed there till we saw a beautiful sunset. There was a hamburger restaurant in sight, where we had a burger & milk. Then, we returned to the beach to overnight on the sand.

Our first ride the next morning, traveled down the beautiful coastline for an hour or so, then turned inland to Redding, where we were let out. After a grocery visit to buy lunch food, we were "on the road" again. This time, we were picked up by a large truck. He wanted company, and talked endlessly. He was en-route to Sacramento to drop off some load - and then was going on to San Francisco. We were welcome to ride all the way.

We expressed our appreciation and chose to go on to San Francisco. The ride to Sacramento was through scenic hills and valleys, many with crops or grape vines. The small villages were attractive - and the stores well kept. It would make a great place to live.

Arriving Sacramento, the driver indicated he'd be about an hour, if we wanted to get a bite to eat. We took a walk to get some exercise - and found a food store with beautiful fruit and vegetables. Then, we returned, to wait for the driver to show up. He came, and soon we were rolling west toward San Francisco. Bob and I were eager to see the city. First, we came to the suburbs of Oakland - then onto the Oakland Bridge - where we could see the beautiful San Francisco Bay - with the city ahead - and off to the north - the famous Golden Gate bridge. We entered into the commercial area, where the truck would be offloaded. The driver lived in the city and would leave us - but he recommended a rooming house - if we wanted a room. Since, we had progressed so well - and not many alternatives - we decided to splurge and get a room. Besides, a bath would be very welcome.

We walked to the Chinatown area that night - and enjoyed the unusual sights. It was just like the pictures of China, people and buildings. After a good sleep, we decided to spend the day sightseeing. We could ride buses or street cars for a nickel a ride. We saw Fishermans Wharf and on to a park to enjoy a beautiful view of the Golden Gate bridge. We rode the street car up the very steep streets to the hilltop - where many fine hotels were located. There, again, we enjoyed a beautiful view of the Pacific Ocean. We returned to our room - but later went out to see a movie.

Our stay in San Francisco was most enjoyable - but we had to move on. We were expected at Bob Clark's Aunt in Los Angeles within a few days. We rode a bus out of the city to the south as far as it went. Then, we were hitch-hikers again. We had talked about taking the coastal route for it's scenic beauty. But, the bus driver said we would get better ride potential, on the inland route where there was more traffic. We decided to take his advice. We did get rides easily, but unfortunately, they were short and our progress was slow. Consequently, it was the third day before we arrived in Los Angeles. We had an address, but did not know how to get there. We asked the first policeman - and he showed us a map - and suggested the bus route to get there. L.A. is a large spread out city - so one could travel miles to a destination. But, finally, the address was before us and we rang the bell. His aunt answered the doorbell - and was very gracious about our welcome. When she learned of our progress across the city, she said we should have called, and she would have picked us up. She was that kind of person.

Bob's Aunt lived alone, in a big house, a couple miles from the beach. She had our room ready for us, and our own bath - which by now was a welcome sight. It was nice to live in a home again. Hitch-hiking travel is adventuresome - but it does lack amenities. The Aunt reported that she prepared dinner for us - and we did it justice with two young men appetites. She served a strange salad, and when I inquired what it was, she informed me it was avocado. That was a first for Bob and me - and fortunately we enjoyed it. She served it several times after that.

Bob's Aunt seemed to enjoy our company, and was gracious enough to take us on sightseeing trips for the next two days. She liked the ocean and the beach - and on our final night there - did a very generous and considerate act. She made arrangements at a beach hotel at her expense, for us to overnight. She said, "You must have the experience of going to sleep, with the sound of the surf in your ears." We were both most appreciative of her thoughtful and generous gift to us. (It has remained in my memory for many years - and I have told the story repeatedly. She was a thoughtful and kind person.)

Bob's Aunt called for us at the hotel the next day - and was prepared to drive us to the eastern edge of Los Angeles. Another generous act. We tried to assure her that it was not necessary, but she would not hear of any other plan. It definitely did improve our departure from the area. She took us to the limit of the city - and dropped us off on the main road heading east. We said our appreciative thanks - and bid her an emotional good-bye. She, too, seemed emotional - and made a hasty departure. Now, Bob and I are "on the road again."

Our good luck had not run out - because within a short time a big fine car stopped to give us a ride. Within, were a middle-aged couple riding in the front - so we took the back seat. Almost immediately, they started questioning us about our background - and especially about our ability to drive. When we told our story of this adventure; and confirmed that we were both accomplished drivers of several years - they seemed quite satisfied. Then, to our amazement, they asked if we would like to drive them - as they were tired of driving. When we confirmed that we would be happy to drive - they traded seats with us - getting into the back seat. They were a bit nervous about the plan - and confirmed to us, "This is a trial - to see if you are satisfactory." They were headed for the east coast - and this could be quite a bonanza ride. So, we drove very conservatively and asked their opinion, or permission, on any debatable decision. They liked that - and soon were relaxing in the back seat - and even dozing at times.

We drove eastward on route 60 - holding the speed at 55 - 60 which seemed to please Mr. And Mrs. Holden. Soon, we were out of California and onto the desert of Arizona. The road was straight, with little or no traffic, so we were making good time. By 2 PM we were in Phoenix, AZ - with 367 miles behind us. It was decided to go another 150 miles - so by 5 PM we had arrived at the small town of Springerville, AZ. There was a nice motel with restaurant, and the Holdens decided to overnight. They said they approved our driving, and if we would meet them at 8 AM, we could continue with them. They did not ask our plans for over-nighting. Bob and I talked it over, and decided to find a room - rather than an outdoor camp. A short distance away was a second class motel - and arranged for a room for \$4. We had about 1/3 of our original \$50 - with good prospects for a quick trip home.

We were at the Holdens motel at 8 AM - and they appeared promptly. They crawled into the back seat of their car, without any discussion - and we took the front seat. We continued on rte 60 that was leading northeasterly, just where we wanted to go. We discussed what route they wanted to continue on - and they were open minded, but said their destination was New York. We suggested aiming for Indianapolis - which we could reach in three more days. For tonight, we hoped to make Amarillo, Texas. That, too, was agreeable to them. It was fun to see the country go by, and watch the desert gradually turn to greener lands with agriculture. We reached Amarillo by dinner time - and easily found a motel to suit the Holdens. We got the same admonition - "See you at 8 AM in the morning." Again, we were able to find a cheap room for the night. At 8 AM - we were there for the morning departure.

We continued on rte. 60 - and enjoyed the green countryside as it unfolded. It thrilled us to cross this country that was new to us - so we were keen to know the borders of Oklahoma and Missouri. We overnighted in Springfield, Mo. - and counted on crossing into Illinois and Indiana on the next day. It all worked out that way - all of us marveling when crossing the Mississippi River. By nightfall on the 4th day - we arrived at Indianapolis, IN. From here, we would start north to Michigan tomorrow - and the Holdens would continue east. We had ridden about 2200 miles on this hitch-hike - which was very fortuitous for us - and we thanked them for the privilege. But, they were grateful for the driving relief - so we parted in a friendly way. We found a YMCA - and got a room for \$2.00. Tomorrow, with any luck - we would be home.

The next morning, we were in the YMCA lobby asking directions to reach the north highway, when a man overheard us and volunteered to take us. He was going that direction and would be happy to help. That put us on the road to start hitch-hiking - and we expressed our appreciation. Our luck held, and within a few minutes, we had a ride that took us to Fort Wayne, IN. Knowing we were continuing north, he drove an extra couple miles to put us in position to continue. We appreciated his kindness, and told him so.

The next three rides were short ones of 15-20 miles each, but the last one took us over the Michigan border and let us out on Rte. 12. That led to Detroit - right through our home town of Wayne - only 100 miles away. We were in the town of Coldwater, and decided to have lunch before continuing. After lunch, we counted our money remaining. Bob had just over \$5.00 - and I had almost \$10.00. We were getting close to broke - but just consider: We had been gone 27 days - covered about 6500 miles - all for about \$85. We had managed very well, along with kind people. To insure a final ride home, we made a sign saying "Detroit". Sure enough, before long, a business man heading for Detroit, stopped to give us a ride. He had made the trip many times, and knew that the road went through Wayne. Within two hours, we arrived Wayne, and I was let out only two blocks from my home. Bob continued on to the north side of Wayne, and was let out practically at his door step.

When I walked through the door at home, my mother, who was not a demonstrative lady, gave me a big hug and I noticed a tear in her eyes. I was not expected so soon - as they had just received a card - sent from Los Angeles. We had almost beat it home. I had lots of stories to tell, and questions to answer, as we sat around the table that night. It had been a great trip, but I was grateful to be home with my family - and my mother's cooking.

Bob Clark and I had many talk sessions after that trip, and enjoyed recounting the many incidents we experienced along the way. Time was drawing near for me to return to MSC for my final year - and I was eager to finish and start a job career. Before I left for school, my Dad brought me some "bad news". Mr. Graham had advised him that the stores he planned to open, selling tractors and other farm goods, was now a dead issue. Consequently, the job he had promised was no longer viable. I returned to school with all my options open - and cannot recall being particularly depressed about the job loss. C'est la vie - as the French say.

FALL - 1937 - SENIOR YEAR - MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE

When I returned to college, the Dorm job of last year was not available, so I arranged for a private room. Their name was Reynaud, and had three daughters. The girls were 16, 14, and 12 years of age - and suddenly - they had a big brother. I kidded them a lot, but they would get their revenge with tricks on me. The house was very convenient to the campus, being only a block away. My room was upstairs - and had a private bath. It was quiet - and very pleasant.

When the day came to register for classes, I was early, to insure I made the class for Freshman Chemistry. I had dropped the course as a freshman - getting an "Incomplete" status. It was required for graduation - so now it had to be completed. Fortunately, there was no problem and I was registered. The other courses were Business Administration subjects - plus the continuing Advanced Military Science.

I was aware of my difficulty with the Chemistry subject when I was enrolled as a freshman. So, I was fully alert to insure that I would pass the subject this time around. Right from the first, I recognized the simple logic of the course, and felt I had a good grasp of the subject matter. The lectures were clear and logical - and the experiments confirmed the theoretical. The subject proved easy - and I got an A in the course, at terms end. I recognized that three years of academic study had paid off in my ability to grasp a subject. Being a senior definitely was an advantage. (The final two terms were equally achieved.)

The other academic subjects were more challenging, but my study habits were equal to the task - and I was progressing satisfactorily. My main focus was in Military Science - mostly because it was the most fun. I realized that I would be awarded a 2nd Lt. commission in the Army Cavalry Reserve - and I could apply for active duty. Since, my job at Graham's had disappeared - employment after graduation was of prime concern.

At one of my ROTC classes, I learned that a Navy Recruiting group was coming to MSC - to promote their Naval Aviation Cadet Program. They were looking for candidates who met their qualification criteria - and ROTC students were favored because of their military experience. This sounded interesting - and I planned to attend and consider.

The Navy proposal sounded very interesting - as they outlined an exciting adventure. It would entail a year of pilot training at Pensacola, Florida - to become a pilot and graduate as an Ensign. Then, three years of active duty were required- with a potential of a career in the Navy. It sounded very good to me - and I agreed to take the physical exam, a psychological exam, and sign an application that day - indicating my interest. When all went well on the exams - I was advised that a decision would be mailed to me at a later date. It was exciting to contemplate a Navy Aviator career.

Within a few weeks after the Navy program was presented, the U.S. Army Air Corps was on campus - with the same mission of recruiting candidates for their program. Again, I attended their meeting to hear their proposal. Essentially, it was the same - a year at their flying school, and upon graduation be awarded a 2nd Lt. commission in the Air Corps Reserve with active duty. Again, I was impressed with the potential - and again took the required exams. I passed all their requirements - and signed their application. Again, I was informed that a decision would come at a later date.

A third military flying career opportunity arose, when the Michigan National Guard Unit at Wayne County Airport, advised that they were looking for a candidate from the ROTC. That candidate would attend the Army Air Corps flight school as an Officer. If, and when he graduated, would return to the National Guard Unit for active duty. This, too, was an attractive opportunity - and I was one of thirteen that reported as a candidate. We took the usual physical and psychological tests. I was pleased to learn that I was one of four for final consideration. Unfortunately, when the final selection was made, I was not "that one". I was disappointed, but I still had two opportunities "in the wings" to go as a cadet.

That opportunity arrived with the letter from the Army Air Corps, offering me a cadet position in the June class. I sent back immediately, an acceptance response. I would have to resign my commission in the US Army Cavalry at graduation - as holding two commissions is not allowable. Soon, a letter arrived from the Navy, confirming an offer to be a Navy cadet. Naturally, I had to reject it - due to the previous Army Air Corps acceptance. Now, I knew my plans for after graduation - and I was excited at the prospects. Fortunately, my academic studies progressed favorably - during my zeal and efforts to follow a military career.

When I registered for my second term of studies in January 1938, I had the possibility for an elective course. I chose House Architecture as a subject that would always have a need for increased knowledge. When I reported for class, I found it was comprised mostly of girls. Later, I learned that it was a required course for Home Economics majors. It was a fun course, that allowed us to choose a house design, and then develop the necessary working drawings to have it constructed. The professor suggested that we pick a home design that we might want to build some day - and we would be prepared for it.

I chose one that I liked very much. It was a colonial, with a sunken living room floor, three bedrooms and two baths, with a fireplace in the master bedroom. However, the professor was not impressed. It was impractical, and too expensive - and I would not likely be able to afford such a luxury house. He figured the expense at \$11,000 - much too costly for the average home owner to afford.

Of all the girls in the class, there was one that caught my eye - and soon I arranged to meet her and compare house plans. Her name, I learned, was Wilma Jean Acker, but went by the nickname "Willie". We mutually disliked the other's house plan. But, other attributes must have prevailed, because our friendship continued with walks back to her dorm, ice cream at the Dairy, and walks along the Red Cedar River. She consented to be my date for the Military Ball in March - and sometime about that time accepted my Scabbard and Blade pin. But, that did not mean we were going steady - as I was leaving for Texas in June. However, we were not dating anyone else.

Our friendship continued into Spring Term, after our House Architecture class ended, with walks, movies and drinking dates with the Cavalry Club members. Willie did not drink much, but I remember the 30 oz beer schooners for 25 cents were popular with the guys. I planned a trip home to see my parents, who lived in Detroit now, and asked if she wanted to come. I told her we would hitch-hike, as rides were easy to get - and she was still game to come. We got a ride easily - and my folks picked us up. They were not keen on our hitch-hiking, and said they would drive us back to school. The visit was a chance to meet one another - as I liked Willie a lot - and I wanted them to meet. But, it was much too early for more serious considerations. I had the military flight school pending - and she had her senior year in school to complete.

Late in the Spring of 1938, I made a trip to Wayne to participate as Best Man for Bob Clark's wedding. He was marrying his high school sweetheart, that most of his classmates guessed would happen someday. I took along a small table for a wedding gift. My friend, Jim Oliver had it made for me at his family owned Lumber & Furniture business. So, it had a special significance - and I was proud of it. It was a wonderful wedding, with his friends from school and his home town of Wayne. That was the last I would see of the many people I knew at Wayne - for many years.

My final year at Michigan State College was winding down. I gave up my job at the Sorority, where I had worked for more than two years. The House Mother was especially sorrowful as we had been very friendly while I worked there. As expected, she wished me well. My Cavalry Club friends were hard to say good-bye to, but all of us were starting interesting careers, so we had much to look forward to. We wished one another - "the best".

Classes finished - and finale tests taken. Graduation was at hand. My parents came up for the Ceremony - and Willie sat with them at the event. As usual, it was time consuming and a bit tedious - or were the graduates a little tense. At any rate, the event ended - and I had my B A degree in Business Administration. In addition, I received my 2nd Lt. Commission in the U S Army Cavalry. Now, the irony was, I was departing that training to become a Army Air Corps pilot. Life does have it's twists and turns. After saying my good-bys to Wilma - and receiving an invitation to visit at her home in Muskegon, Michigan - I accompanied my parents home, taking all my belongings.

A week later, I borrowed my parents car to drive to Muskegon, where I met Willie and her family. We seemed to get along well - parents, brother and two sisters. We went to the beach for picnics - and enjoyed some good times together. All too soon, it was time to go. I promised to write to Willie - said my good-bys - and returned to Detroit.

There I had a date with the Army Recruiting Office - where I signed in, took my oath of office and was officially "in the army now". They gave me a train ticket to San Antonio, Texas - where I was to be met by the Military personnel. I was 22 years old, my college studies were finished, and a career starting. I figured my "Youth" was passed.

(My life story continues in my book - "An Aviation Career".)