

ODYSSEY

The Life and Times of Mary Thomson Schmal

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

I know everyone goes through this but when it happens to you, it seems unique. It's so strange. One day I was twenty-one and a few weeks later I am over seventy. How did it happen? I remember those twenty-one years clearly but the next fifty seem to run together with only a few of the more memorable events standing out. I recall a whirlwind courtship and a wartime wedding. These two events took three weeks. I remember the birth of each of my children. Four events are vivid in my memory and they are all traumatic. The first was the World War II death of my oldest brother, Tom. With this in my mind thirty years later I parted with my oldest son, also a Tom, when he enlisted in the Marine Corps. I thought my heart would break. The death of my mother was a terrible wrench. The only thing worse than losing a mother would be losing a child. And then I lost my oldest friend. Gerry was someone I had known since we were twenty years old and we were familiar with each other's secrets and skeletons. Part of my youth was lost, buried with her. I recovered from the loss of my brother and my Tom came home from the Vietnam War safely, but I still grieve for my mother and my friend.

My mother, Mary Smith, was the oldest of twelve children and she was always called "Mayme." Her sister, Bessie, died of consumption when she was two years old. It was remarkable for eleven children to survive in those days. To illustrate the manner in which her siblings played I must tell you that in the big Peter Martin Family Bible, one of the children had written a cast of characters for a play and designated two girls as Topsy and Little Eva! This was probably around 1890. Lizzie Martin Smith, my grandmother, was born in Chicago in 1867 and married and married Patrick Smith when she was just fifteen and he was twenty-seven. They were married in Minneapolis and after eight or nine years moved to Maple Lake, Minnesota and then back to Minneapolis. She told me that when Uncle John was born, Grandpa Smith went to get the doctor and just as she heard the wagon leaving the barn, John was born. She held the covers up over him so he wouldn't suffocate and she lay like this until Grandpa came home with the doctor. Of the men in the family, two were railroad men, one was a salesman and one a lawyer. Strangely enough, five of the women in the family married salesmen of one kind or another.

My father's grandfather, Mungo Chapman of Bathgate, Scotland, sired eleven children and only two lived to adulthood. Mungo was the son of John Chapman, owner of the Ballencreiff Mill, a granary in Bathgate. Mungo and his brother James ran the mill. He was called a millmaster but he was also an appraiser and the owner of a pub. It was through a simple little paper that I became acquainted with my fifth cousin, Jessie Chapman Watson. I had the marriage certificate of my grandparents, Marion Chapman and Thomas Thomson, and I noted that the marriage took place in Bathgate, so I wrote to the Mayor of Bathgate and asked him if he could give me any information about the family and he replied that he had given my letter to Jessie. How delightful to hear from a Scottish cousin, one that I never knew I had! Jessie had inherited the mill and while it was no longer in operation, she lived there, as her parents had converted the family building into a modern residence. She and her husband Bob were still living at the mill when I first heard from her, but within a year they sold it and moved to Norwich, England, to be near their daughter. A few years later we went to England and met her and Bob, had lunch at their home and thoroughly enjoyed them. We took a train to Bathgate and saw the mill and the old cemetery where my ancestors are buried, and I subsequently wrote a long letter about that trip.

After doing some research I found that Edinburgh is littered with Thomsons and I came to the conclusion that the marriage of my grandparents was arranged by the Chapman and Thomson families. How else could a girl in Bathgate meet and marry a boy from London in 1870? After their marriage, they moved to London and here my father was born. The first record I have of his American adventure is a document stating that he left Liverpool on the S.S. Victorious in 1908 and arrived in Noyes, Minnesota on September 27. In 1910 he left England and traveled to Winnipeg, Manitoba. I was told long ago that he made several trips to America before he decided to stay. I imagine he traveled first class because he told me that on one of his voyages the ocean was so rough that he and the Captain were the only ones at his table. He used to say he had a "cast-iron stomach." He became a naturalized citizen May 16, 1918. I wish I had been more inquisitive while he was still living and I might have more to tell my grandchildren. My parents met over a yard of calico in a department store called The Golden Rule in Minneapolis, where they both worked in the yard goods department. They courted for about five years and were married in 1917. My brother Tom was born in 1918 and Bob in 1920 and later that year the family moved to Davenport, Iowa where I was born in 1922. My father worked at Harned & Von Mahr, a department store where he plied his trade as a buyer and seller of silks and linens. His father before him was in the same line of work but in England he was called a "draper".



HOW IT ALL BEGAN

MY DEAR CHILDREN,

I would like to take you on a journey through the years of my life: years not only that I consider important, but were probably responsible for my character, or personality, or possibly for my peculiarities. Until I began this story I didn't realize what a conglomeration of individuals I have lived among and I wonder if my character has been shaped by these surroundings or if, given the same set of parents, I would have been the same person in any other environment.

You remember that I told you I was born on June 8, 1922 in Davenport, Iowa and I lived at 317 Hancock Avenue until I was six years old. I was originally slated to be called "Mary Elizabeth" but Bob called me "Mary Eebie" and I finally became just plain "Mary". All my life I longed for a more distinctive name (La Verne, perhaps?) but I finally became reconciled to "Mary".

I attended kindergarten at a nearby public school and the family went to St. Alphonsus Church. The only thing I can remember about the city itself is a street made of red bricks and aptly named "Rockingham Road." Another thing I remember which certainly does not indicate intelligence is the day when I had the sniffles, and my mother put me down for a nap with an old handkerchief so I could wipe my nose. I tore it in tiny pieces and stuffed them up my nose and when she told me to "blow!", I sniffed, and as a result, the doctor had to come to the house and remove them. As I write this I hope I was only two or three years old. I'd hate to think a five-year-old could be that stupid. The only spanking I can remember occurred like this: I wanted to go across the alley to visit a little friend and my mother said I could go there, but not to go into the house. So off I went, and into the back porch; but when my mother looked over there and saw me, she called me home, where she flicked my legs with a fly swatter. She claimed the porch was part of the house and I still maintain it was outside. INJUSTICE! My brother Bob, who was two years older than I, was pretty much of a scairdy-cat when it came to the upstairs of our house at night. I can remember him coaxing me to come upstairs with him in the evening because he had "something to show" me, and then making me sit at the top of the stairs while he went into the bathroom. Many years later I saw a movie titled *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* and I thought about Bob.

One Sunday the boys, who had worn clean white shirts to church, were told to keep the shirts clean or they couldn't go to a movie that afternoon. Somehow they managed to mess up their shirts and so they were grounded. To get even with my parents they decided to run away from home and take me and the dog, a collie named Queenie, with them. They put me in their wagon and started out for Rock Island, Illinois, to live with a family friend, Mrs. Sullivan. I don't know how far they got before my parents brought them back and I have only this sketchy account as it was told to me.

We moved to Hammond, Indiana in 1928 and we lived at 555 Lyons Street, right across from Maywood Park. There was a lagoon in the park where we went fishing. I never caught anything but the boys used to catch minnows and bullheads, using a piece of string and a bent pin. They brought the poor fish home and put them in a peanut butter pail. [Peanut butter didn't come in a jar, but in a small tin pail. It was not homogenized and the peanut oil floated on top so it had to be stirred vigorously before using]. The fish swam around in this pail for a day or two, leaving a little trail of blood and they finally died and then the boys went back and caught another one. Maybe they just wanted a pet because Queenie was given away when we left Davenport. Maywood Park was a good place to play, and my friends Jeannie and Kenny Klausmaier used to go with me to a clump of bushes which we were able to turn into a "house" by scraping the twigs and leaves off the ground and drawing lines to indicate the separate rooms.

My mother used to take us to Minneapolis every summer to visit her family at 252 Fremont Avenue North. This might have been for six weeks or maybe for the whole summer, and she drove the car both ways.

One of the earliest memories I have of those summers is of my grandfather, Patrick Smith. He had a garden in back of the barn, and when I was about five or six years old, we were walking through this garden and he pulled a carrot out of the ground, wiped the dirt off on his overalls and ate it. I suppose he thought a bit of good Minnesota dirt wouldn't hurt him. Every time I smell the foliage of tomato plants [which is more aromatic than carrot tops] I return to that day when he ate the carrot. I have always heard that the olfactory sense is the most powerful for conjuring up memories, more than a picture or a poem. I also remember him lying in a hospital bed in the living room of their house on Fremont. He had had a leg amputated and I recall sitting there, watching the empty space where his leg was missing. When he was twenty-one he took the "Pledge," a vow made by young men to never touch liquor. My mother was very proud of this and she mentioned it many times as I was growing up.

My grandmother, Lizzie Martin Smith, was a powerful force in the family. She was a politician, a member of the Farm Labor Party and a personal friend of Hubert Humphrey. She was an energetic homemaker; painting walls and furniture hanging wallpaper and gardening, sewing, baking and entertaining. She was a devout Catholic and an avid card player and she loved people. She was outspoken and not a bit shy about making her opinions known. Her sons-in-law affectionately referred to her as "Mrs. Fullcharge".

One summer while we were visiting in Minneapolis, my uncle Dan Smith came home with a rumble seat car. There was a round plate about four inches in diameter on the right rear fender. It had rubber treads on it and this was where you placed your foot in order to boost yourself into the rumble seat. When the seat was not being used, it could be closed in about the same way an oven door closes in a kitchen stove. We were so excited about that rumble seat that we took turns climbing into it and getting out of it and climbing in all over again. Then after we perfected the in and out of it, Uncle Dan took us for a ride.

When my mother drove us to Minneapolis she kept the car and I suppose when my father had his vacation he took the train to Minneapolis and spent a couple of weeks there. One time we went to Niagara Falls and I remember going under the falls on the "Maid of the Mist." Another time we stopped at the Wisconsin Dells on the way home.

When I was a very young girl, probably about six, our family had a Sunday routine. We had a big dinner at two o'clock, my father took a short nap, and at five o'clock we all got in the car and went to the Parthenon Theater downtown for a movie and five sensational acts of vaudeville. There were magic acts and dog acts and bicycle acts. There were singers and dancers and musicians. I think this was a bit of nostalgia for my father, who must have been lonesome for his British Music Halls. I know I was quite young because I can remember asking "what does it say?" when the subtitles appeared on the screen during a silent movie. I think this excursion was discontinued when money got scarce. And I remember that my father liked Charlie Chaplin, but I didn't.

We only lived on Lyons Street for a couple of years. The reason we moved to Hammond in the first place was the good job my father was offered at Kaufman & Wolf's Department store. He pursued his career as a buyer but his salary increased to \$100 a week, which was phenomenal in those days. All of his working life was spent in fabrics, buying and selling silks, linens, cottons and later on, synthetics. As a result, we always had lovely bed linens, towels, tablecloths and napkins. Since he was such a financial success, he bought a new car - a Velie. No one I have talked to has ever heard of a Velie, but I do know he was quite proud of it and he claimed it had an "airplane engine." Velies were made in Moline, Illinois from 1900 to 1929. Prior to the Velie we had another car, a Buick, I think. I can remember riding in that car from Minneapolis to Hammond on a muddy road. It must have been an act of bravery to start out on such a long journey knowing that half the roads were not paved.

The big Depression did not affect our family for another few years and I don't know if we left Lyons Street because of finances or because the house was sold. I often wondered why our family always rented a house instead of owning one. My mother told me that my father worried that he might not be able to meet the mortgage payments but whatever the reason, he just didn't want the responsibility of owning a house. It was

about 1929 that we moved to 1043 Drackert Street, about two blocks north of Lyons Street. We were the only children in the neighborhood who attended Catholic school. In fact, we were the only Catholics on the street.

The move to Drackert Street provided us with a more diversified neighborhood, perhaps because I was older and had a larger area to survey. Mrs. Broz was a German lady who lived two doors away. She had a small neat brick house on the back of the lot and every Saturday morning she appeared with a scrub brush and a bucket of suds and actually got down on her hands and knees and scrubbed that long sidewalk. My mother never stopped being amazed at that woman. She was the cleanest person on the block.

A family named Dorton lived on the other side of our house and they provided much of our entertainment. Bob Dorton was the age of my brother, Bob; Lorraine was a year older than I and Glen Junior was a year or two younger. We spent many a day playing house and acting out our weddings, in which I was the blushing bride and poor little Junior was the unfortunate groom. Lorraine dolled me up in curtains and arranged a bouquet of dandelions and the ceremony was held in the back yard with Lorraine officiating. Old Grandpa Dorton also lived in that house and we were all intimidated by him. He sat on the front porch and spat tobacco juice into the yard. The yard was his domain and no one, but no one, ever stepped on the grass. The Dorton kids thought nothing of running all over our yard, so when any games were played, they were played in our yard, and that included the weddings. Mr. Dorton worked on the railroad and Mrs. Dorton didn't know how to drive their car, and once in a while she asked my mother to drive her someplace in their old Chevy. Mr. Dorton was gone on overnight trips frequently and my mother was sure he had a girl friend in every depot in Indiana, so she wasn't surprised when Mrs. Dorton announced that \$800 was missing from their safety deposit box in the bank. We never knew who took it. Was it Mr. Dorton who needed it for his social life or did Mrs. Dorton take it to get even with him?

The McFarland family lived next door to the Dortons. The daughter, Marian, was huge. She seemed to me to be about seven feet tall. I say this because one day she slapped my face, which was indeed a shock for someone who had never been slapped. I suppose she learned it from her mother. Her father was a city policeman and he towered over all the men in the neighborhood; he was so tall he was frightening. I wouldn't be surprised if Marian had threatened to have us all arrested if she didn't get her way.

The Kennedys lived next door to the McFarlands. Mr. Kennedy was a real crab, refusing to return any ball that went in his yard. One time my Uncle Art Pharmer, who was married to my Aunt Margaret, stopped to visit with us. He brought two of his buddies with him and they had a game of football on the street with some of the neighbor kids. These were big men, graduates of Minnesota University and now professional football players, and we were so proud to have them in our house, but prouder still, when the football went into the Kennedy's yard and one of the men, Ed Haslett, jumped over the high hedge and retrieved it. Everybody on the block talked about that for days. Ed Haslett had dared the ogre and got away with it. The ogre probably never even knew about it.

The Ben Dortons lived next door to the Kennedys and they were just the opposite of their cousins, the Glen Dortons. They were dirty, dirty people. The yard was littered with trash and the house was badly in need of paint. There were papers and broken toys all over the front porch. They had six children and the oldest girl, Floris, lived a colorful life. I wish I had known more about the world and I could have enjoyed these Dortons much more. As it was, I wasn't sure what was going on with Floris, but I do know that she and her friends played strip poker in the living room. I imagine she was about fifteen years old, and while these games were in progress, the neighborhood boys used to gather on the front porch to peek in around the curtains and see what was going on. Periodically they reported on the various articles of clothing the players had lost. I was never allowed on the porch--that territory belonged to the boys. The oldest boy was named Bud, then came Floris and then came Warren. Warren was asthmatic and had a dreadful time breathing, so he just sat on the porch most of the time instead of joining in the games. Marjean was next in line, she was a little younger than I but I never played with her. No doubt my eagle-eyed mother had forbidden me to play with any of them. Finally there were Benny and Harry Lee. Benny's nose always ran, winter and summer, and all summer he was in raggedy clothes and bare feet. They all needed haircuts. They looked absolutely terrible and the smell of the house was horrific.

I don't know who lived between the Kennedys and the Dortons, but one night there was a shivaree at that house. I think a shivaree originated in farm country or in small towns. People gathered outside of a newlywed couple's house and played music, banged pots and pans and made so much noise that the bride and groom had to get out of bed and invite the people in for refreshments of some sort. The serenaders usually brought beer or a cake or some kind of food.

Mrs. Wright lived across the street from the Glen Dortons. She raised Persian and Angora cats and they were beautiful. The milkman must have let his tomcat in the yard at some time because a calico cat appeared in one of the litters. She gave this cat to Tom, who promptly named it Ichabod, from the story of the Headless Horseman. One day it was lying behind the wheel of a grocery truck and the driver backed up and killed it and that was the end of Ichabod, but he was soon replaced by another cat. I forget what we named it, but one night when Mrs. Wright was walking home from the movie theater, she found it in the street, dead, and she picked it up and brought it home to us. We had a funeral in the alley for one of those cats. My mother gave us an old dishpan and we put the cat in it, covered it with dandelions, dug a hole in the alley near the back fence and had a lovely funeral. Then Mrs. Wright gave me a cat and this one was a real Persian, sort of a cream color, long-haired, and I named her "Beauty." I remember dressing that poor cat in doll clothes and putting her in my doll buggy. I kept her on a leash in the back yard until someone stole her. I never really liked cats, anyway.

Refrigerators were not common in those days and most people had ice boxes. The iceman came by every other day with a huge block of ice in his open truck. The ice was covered with a tarpaulin and the iceman could chop off a piece according to the size you wanted. Each house had an ice card which was about a foot square and had the numbers 25, 50, 75 and 100 on each edge. If you wanted 25 pounds of ice you put the card in the front window with the "25" at the top. The iceman hacked off 25 pounds, picked it up with his giant tongs, slung it over his shoulder and brought it in your back door, put it in the ice box and picked up the money that you had left on top of the box. Mothers didn't let children get ice from the icebox because it was scarce and expensive so when the iceman went into a house, it was a signal for the neighborhood children to jump up on the bed of the truck and gather ice chips and when the man returned to his truck he had to chase all the kids off. I remember one particular time when Joey Wasko fell off the truck and broke his arm. Now when the ice melted in the box there was always a disposal problem. The icebox had a space about six inches high under it and this held the icepan. It had to be emptied every day and sometimes twice a day, according to how much ice was used and how often the icebox door was opened. There was a short hose from the ice compartment to the bottom of the box and the water dripped through it. Some ingenious people added more to that hose and let the water drip through a hole down into the basement, but most families just used an icepan. If it wasn't emptied, the whole kitchen could be flooded and it was not a pleasant thing to wake up in the morning to 25 pounds of ice water on the floor! Because the icebox was small and not very cold, someone had to make a trip to the store every day for milk and other perishables. I suppose this was why there were milk trucks and bakery wagons and grocery deliveries.

Besides the ice truck, there was Vivian's Bakery Wagon, which was a horse-drawn cart. This was enclosed on all sides and the driver had a bell attached to the horse which jingled as the wagon went down the street. When the mothers heard the bell, they could go out and buy bread, rolls, doughnuts and other bakery goods. This wagon only came down the street once or twice a week. There was a scissors grinder who came around the neighborhood occasionally. He had a machine with a large wheel and he could pedal a lever so the wheel went round and round and grated against a stone or emery block. He sharpened knives and scissors and when he showed up, mothers sent the children out with something that needed sharpening.

There was ragman who came around regularly. He had a wagon and a horse and the alley was his domain. He called "Any rags, any bottles any iron today?" Our boys saved all the newspapers, stacked them and tied them in bundles to sell. One time they hid a brick in the middle of the bundle to fool the ragman but he knew how much a stack of papers should weigh so he wasn't fooled. He was the worst looking old man and he looked like a bundle of rags himself. He went through all the garbage cans looking for junk he could sell. He had a big scale on the back of his wagon and a rope with a hook on each end. He jammed one hook into anything to be weighed, and then hooked the other end onto the scale. A bundle of papers such as the boys usually had would net just pennies, but pennies in those days were very welcome.

We had a large wooden crate in our basement on Drackert Street and this is where we saved the papers prior to stacking. This box was the center of all of our make-believe games. We called it the "paper box" and here it was that we acted out all of our games and movies, but we seemed to favor the Tarzan stories. We went to the Calumet Theater every Saturday for the afternoon's entertainment, which consisted of an amateur show on the stage, eligibility for prizes, an "Our Gang" comedy, coming attractions, Flash Gordon serial, travelogue, main feature and if you wanted to stay longer, you could sit through it all over again. There was a Mickey Mouse Club meeting every Saturday, thirty minutes before the movie started, and the meeting was led by the Mickey Mouse captain, usually a youthful theater manager. He led the games and contests, which were on the order of Truth and Consequences, with the winners receiving prizes.

When the "Our Gang" comedies were featured, each ticket holder received a small statue of an "Our Gang" character. The largest of these was about five inches high. Each week another character was handed out, and one week the bonus was a small watercolor paint set. Now the idea was to paint the statues and at the end of the series a complete set could be turned into the theater and the most artistic set would get a prize. Unfortunately, about half of the statues were dropped and broken before they ever left the theater. The same contest ran for the Tarzan series. Bank night was held one night a week at the theater; in fact, Mrs. Wright was on her way home from "Bank Night" when she found our dead cat. On Bank Night you had to hold on to your ticket stub because there was a drawing, and if your number was drawn you got a cash prize and if no one claimed the prize, the amount grew each week. Then another night was designated "Dish Night," when you received different pieces of milky-green bowls and jars as you bought your ticket. A lot of these met the same fate as the little statues.

Every Saturday I got 15 cents for the movie. The ticket was a dime and the other 5 cents was for candy. There was a small candy store next to the theater where I bought a large peppermint stick for a nickel and this lasted me well into the week because it was too large to finish in one afternoon and you can eat just so much peppermint. This little shop had a Karmelkorn machine and I would have liked some of that instead of the peppermint, but it wouldn't last for the whole show so I played it safe and was able to keep something for a rainy day.

There were several automobile display rooms right across from the theater. Most cars were dark colors, so when a creamy yellow Cord was displayed on the street, people stood around and admired it because it was such an exciting thing to see. We all felt very knowledgeable and cosmopolitan as we pointed out the fine qualities to our less enlightened friends. I think I've seen Cords in Antique auto displays, but I have yet to see a Velie. There were also Packards, LaSalles, Pierce-Arrows and the Essex. At this time you could buy a Ford for \$875 if you went to Detroit and drove it home. Gas was a dollar for eight gallons. If I seem to dwell on the price of everything, it's because these were the Depression years and money, or the lack of it, was a genuine concern.

About four blocks from our house, on Calumet Avenue, there was an ice cream store called the Igloo. This place sold double dip cones for a nickel and we occasionally walked down there on a hot summer evening for a treat. Then the IGLOO started selling triple dips, believe it or not, for a nickel. I am sure the dips weren't as large as 1994 dips, but the taste was welcome on a sweltering night. The dips were not piled one on top of the other; the cones were made with three holes instead of just one and a dip of ice cream went into each hole. Even then ice cream was my favorite thing. While we could still afford it, the milkman delivered milk daily and on cold winter days if it was left on the porch too long, it froze and the cream rose an inch or two over the top of the bottle. I was made to believe that this tasted like ice cream so I ate it whenever I got the chance.

There was a barber on Calumet Avenue named P.J. Edwards. He was a good barber and he cut my brothers' hair for thirty five cents each. At the beginning of every summer my mother took me to see P.J. for a "boyish bob," and believe me, it was really boyish. I looked just like my brothers. It took the whole summer to grow out and by the time school started in September I was ready for a girl haircut.

All this time we were going to All Saints School. While my father was working at Kaufman & Wolf and could afford to use the car, he drove us to school every morning. He picked us up at noon and brought us home for lunch and then my mother drove everyone back to school and work. At 3:00 she came to school and picked us up and then at 5:30 she drove downtown to bring my father home for dinner. Between them they provided a pretty good taxi service. I feel sure there were buses running but I can't remember seeing one, much less riding in one. There was a streetcar that ran down the middle of Sibley Street, where the school was located, but it didn't go near our house.

We were pretty sheltered and never wandered out of the neighborhood without a parent. All of this changed when the Depression finally caught up with our parents; and when using the car became too expensive, we began walking to school, which was probably a mile and a half from home. The terrible part about walking to school was that my father insisted that we wear long underwear as protection against the winter cold and wind. A lot of other children wore long underwear but theirs invariably bunched up under their long stockings. My mother sewed stirrup tapes on mine to prevent bunching and it solved the problem of creeping underwear but nothing could solve the stocking problem. Most girls wore long, tan cotton stockings; some were ribbed, some were plain, but none were full fashioned and the utter shapelessness resulted in wrinkles around the ankles. Ruthie Meyers was the only girl in school who wore black stockings. She was a tomboy and I'm sure her mother tired of washing the knees. Anita Heckleman and her sister Rosemary wore white stockings and they had clean ones every day. Their father was the manager of the Conkey Printing Company so they were the only girls in school who could afford white ones. The stockings and the underwear were the bane of my growing up years. I took dancing lessons from Lucy Granger, who lived about three blocks from us on Drackert Street, and on my route home from school. One day a week I went there for a lesson. Now my father was adamant about the long underwear and I was not to take it off for any reason at all except to sleep and to bathe. However, Lucy said I had to wear a green gym suit for dancing practice, so I had to roll up the legs of the underwear, stretching it enough to get it and the stirrup tapes over my thighs in order to keep it from showing below my gym suit. I had to struggle to get my foot over the bar because of the underwear handicap. I only took lessons for a couple of years and I learned to tap to "East Side, West Side" and to "Shuffle off to Buffalo". Our class was in a recital but for some reason I was not included and to this day I don't know if the costumes were too expensive (black satin shorts and a white satin shirt) or if I simply wasn't a good enough dancer. Whatever the reason, that was the end of my dancing career.

I think the boys wore argyle stockings over their underwear. They wore corduroy knickers and high-top boots with a knife pocket on the side. Imagine being given a knife and sent off to school! They needed knives to play one of their favorite games, mumblety-peg. Bob spent many a night rubbing lard into his boots to make them waterproof and they wore leather hip-length jackets with sheepskin linings. Their clothes were store-bought, but my mother made everything I wore, including underwear and heavy coats. I wore a garter belt to hold up those cotton stockings and over that a dress length petticoat and my school uniform. This uniform was navy blue wool serge with white collar and cuffs. My mother put snaps on the collar and cuffs and attached them to the uniform this way so they could be changed every day. She kept them washed and starched so I had the best looking uniform in the school. We wore these uniforms most of the year - I would say from September to June but I find it hard to believe that anyone expected us to wear those heavy uniforms before Indian Summer began. However, the rules for stockings and garter belt always held. **NO ANKLETS ALLOWED!**

I was eight years old when I made my First Holy Communion and of course all the girls wore white dresses. The mothers had the option of buying a dress or making it. My mother made mine and it was white organdy with two or three hemstitched ruffles on the skirt. The sleeves had to be long enough to cover the elbows and the skirt long enough to cover the knees. My mother could take any pattern and alter it to suit the requirements so she found a pattern and added the ruffles and lengthened the sleeves and made a beautiful dress. We didn't wear veils, but had a sort of wreath of greenery on our heads. They were all alike and came from the same florist. We must have been financially secure at that time because I was taken to Bodie's, a rather expensive photography studio, to have a portrait made in my outfit.

The school day started with 8:00 Mass. If you got there after 8:00 the door of the church was locked and the door of the school was locked, and whatever the weather-- rain, sleet, snow or wind-- you had to stand

out on the Church steps waiting for Mass to end. No one was ever allowed to go in late for Mass and I think that is why I am always early for my appointments. I was indoctrinated while I was young and impressionable. After Mass we marched double file over to the school, put down our books and lunch and then went out to the playground until the bell rang at 9:00. We marched everywhere, keeping our hands and bodies a good distance from each other and there was no talking, pushing or shoving in the lines. The playground was not paved or grassy, but completely covered with black cinders. The nuns drew a line down the middle and the girls played on one side and the boys on the other and they were not allowed to mingle during recess. There were dozens of railroad tracks that went through Hammond and at least ten of them ran immediately behind our church, school and playground. In those days the steam engines would belch out black smoke and soot and just standing upright could result in being covered with dirt, so imagine how dirty the cinders were! If you fell on the playground and skinned your hands or knees, the dirt went into any broken skin and stayed there. It seemed as if I had black spots under the skin on my hands for years.

The girls played games like I Spy and Tag and Drop the Handkerchief, Red Rover, Simon Says and Hopscotch. We also played a game called Pump, Pump, Pullaway. It was more or less a tug of war with several children on each side and the ones at the head of each line would hold hands and pull against each other. They might have something to hold--a rope or something similar and they pulled in rhythm to the shout, Pump, Pump Pull Away! This could be disastrous to the ones who formed the ends of the line because when one side lost power, the winning side backed up on itself. As the girls got older, they would link arms and walk around the playground, ogling the boys and talking over the events of the day before. Few families had telephones so the only way to communicate was in person and when a playmate came over, she stood at the back door and called your name until someone answered her. Children never rang a front doorbell.

It seems like everything we did involved running or jumping. Maybe that's why I never knew any fat people. We jumped rope a lot and that could be done with several girls or just alone. There were many nonsense rhymes we chanted while jumping, for instance: "Fudge, fudge, call the judge, Mother's got a newborn baby. It's not a boy, it's not a girl, it's just an ordinary baby. Wrap it up in tissue paper, send it down the elevator, first floor, out; second floor, out; third floor, out," and so on.

We used pencils for typical school work and pen and ink for special papers. There was a penholder and a point which was inserted into it. Each desk had a hole in the upper right hand corner and in this hole rested a bottle of ink. Most classrooms had large blue stains on the floors as a result of dropped and spilled ink bottles. No matter how many times my mother told me to fold back the lace cloth on the dining room table while doing my homework, I disregarded her and either spilled the ink or put my inky pen down on the lace.

My mother was determined to turn us into musicians so Bob and I took piano lessons and Tom took violin. Sister Florina Marie was the music teacher and she was very strict and not good at teaching children. While my mother could afford it, I took lessons twice a week for a dollar a month. (School tuition was also a dollar a month). Now this nun was great on studying the lives of the old Masters and she demanded that her students memorize the lives of those composers. I don't know what that had to do with playing the piano but that was the requirement. There was an oval space at the top of the page in the music book that was just waiting for the composer's picture and when the student had memorized his life and learned the prescribed bit of music, the nun pasted his picture in the oval. There were only four or five lines of music on the page. I took lessons for seven years and all I ever learned to play without the music was Paderewski's Minuet. One summer Tom bought a piece of sheet music for me. The name of it was "It Looks Like Rain in Cherry Blossom Lane" and I practiced it all summer. When the nuns returned from their Motherhouse in August I showed it to Sister Florina Marie and she threw it out. She said it was "trash" and I was not allowed to play it. That was my first experience with popular music and I can still remember the words to that song. Now when my mother could no longer afford the dollar a month for music lessons, Sister told her that if she would do the curtains for the convent she would give me lessons in exchange. This was a good deal for the nuns because that convent was a two story building and it had a lot of long windows and all the windows had starched curtains. I remember my dear mother doing those curtains--washing, starching and stretching them on the curtain stretcher which she had standing in the dining room. The nuns really took advantage of her because the curtains normally were only done once a year and after she got the job, they had to be done several times a year. I often think of all she did

in order for me to be a musician and she never reaped the benefits. My father had a good singing voice and he could play the piano by "faking" some chords. He loved the British music hall songs and used to sing them to me, the way Beatrice Lillie and Harry Lauder sang. (Incidentally, his cousin, Mildred Thomson, was engaged to Sir Harry's son, who was killed in World War I.) One of my favorite songs he sang for me went: "Goodbye, little girl, goodbye. Don't cry, little girl, don't cry. I only know that I love you and I'm marching away to be a soldier. Goodbye little girl, goodbye. Don't cry little girl, don't cry. For I'm coming back to you in my uniform of blue; goodbye little girl, goodbye."

When I was in grade school there were two big fund-raisers each year. The first came in the fall with punchboards. The children were each given a small board with numbers on it and the idea was to sell a chance that one number might win a prize. The buyer punched the number through the board and a tiny rolled-up piece of paper came out on the other side with a message on it which might say, "You have won a class A prize," but more than likely it would say "Pay 5 cents" or 25 cents or even 50 cents and if you were not awarded a prize, you had to pay that amount. I may be hazy about this but it's the best I can remember about punchboards. The prizes were all displayed in the convent and you could go and pick out something if you won. Everybody hated punchboards. The other fund-raiser was the annual school play. We practiced for months; we sang and danced and strutted our stuff. Each class carried out part of a general theme. For instance, one year the theme was foreign countries and my class represented Japan. I don't know what role the boys played, but the girls wore pastel kimonos and carried fans and did a little dance. We sang, "We are little girls from far Japan across the sea, where the cherry blossoms pink are lovely as can be, where Fujiyama lifts it head with snowy cap so high, I think if I should climb it I would almost reach the sky." Eileen Keane and her father ran a dance studio and they put in many hours teaching us the steps and turns and I'm sure they did it gratis. The next year the theme was a flower garden and our class was full of jonquils. We all wore yellow dresses and bonnets with petals and performed a few dance steps. In seventh grade, the theme was Mother Goose and I played Bo-Peep. Betty Clusserath was Mother Goose and children from all grades were selected to be various nursery rhyme characters. I remember one year Bob portrayed a magician and he sang "I'm the seventh son of a seventh son and possess great magic power. I can change into a dog or cat in less than half an hour." That year he sold the most tickets to the school play and he won a bike. It was a second-hand bike, but it was the only one in our family. Tom and I never had bikes, but then only one or two of my friends owned bikes so I didn't feel deprived.

There was an expression that must have started with the Depression: "use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without," and I think this most fittingly applied to our shoes. We wore them until they literally fell apart. I can remember having large holes in the soles and cutting cardboard soles to slip inside the shoes. There were also outer soles called "Sav-it Soles" that cost 10 cents at Woolworth's. They came in a little kit with a tooth-edged piece of metal for roughening up the existing sole, a tube of cement to apply to the shoe and the Sav-it Sole. Sometimes the sole adhered well, sometimes not, and if it did not, then when you walked, the sole flapped with each step. Tennis shoes were a dollar at Kinney's but they were probably not allowed at school.

Another economy most women practiced was cutting old bedsheets in half lengthwise and sewing the outer edges together. This put the worn middle part on the edges and made the sheets last twice as long.

I remember my mother and father having trouble getting the car to start. This was that famous Velie. There was a crank that came with the car and in order to start it when the battery was low or when the radiator was cold, someone had to insert the crank in the front of the car and turn it until the engine "turned over." I don't know if the crank went into the motor or the radiator or just where. When the boys were old enough, they could do it for my mother. The battery was kept in the floor, under the driver's feet, and the windshield opened with a winding handle, like windows in some houses, and the hood opened on both sides.

There were two ailments I had when I was a little girl. One was pneumonia when I was nine or ten years old. The treatment for pneumonia or any other chest problem was a mustard plaster. My mother took a piece of cloth and smeared it with a mixture of dry mustard and flour and water and no doubt some other beneficial ingredient, inverted it on my chest and let it sizzle. I can still remember how it burned. The idea was to draw out the infection. (Thank God there were no leeches around.) I don't know how long this plaster

remained on my chest, probably ten minutes, but when it was removed, my skin was red as flame. Then she wrapped me up warmly and this was supposed to cure me. Evidently it did, but oh for a bit of penicillin! Another problem I had was something the doctor called rheumatism. The treatment for this was to rub Oil of Wintergreen into my sore legs. My parents took turns at my bedtime, rubbing the liniment in and tucking me under the covers. I think I was about eleven or twelve because by this time we had a little dog named Sandy, and the boys used to put the cork from the liniment bottle down for the dog to sniff and when he inhaled the fumes he sneezed and choked and ran around the house nearly turning somersaults while the boys stood by, laughing.

A "quarantine" sign hanging on the front door of a house meant that someone in that house had a contagious disease--smallpox or whooping cough or measles or scarlet fever. The quarantine for scarlet fever lasted six weeks. I remember when Jack Einsele contracted scarlet fever, the father and two daughters moved into an apartment for six weeks, leaving Mrs. Einsele and Jack alone in the house. The father brought groceries and left them on the front porch.

When someone went to the doctor you knew they were really sick because no one went just for a checkup. An office call was \$1.00 and a house call was \$2.00. There was no machinery in the doctor's office, no X-ray or laboratory. Very few people had X-rays or blood tests done. The doctor had a good supply of ordinary remedies in his office or his little black bag and he put a few pills in a small envelope at no extra charge. I can't remember getting a prescription filled at a drug store when I was little. Over-the-counter drugs were pretty basic. We had castor oil for just about anything that ailed you and Sloan's Liniment for aches and pains. The castor oil was horrible. My mother poured it in a glass, added several inches of orange juice and then a spoonful of baking soda to make it fizz. This was to fool you into thinking it was orange pop. If you didn't drink it while it was fizzing, it reverted to orange juice and castor oil. It always took me such a long time to summon up enough courage to swallow it that I was nearly sick to my stomach. In this case the cure was worse than the sickness. We had mercurochrome and iodine for cuts and aspirin for headaches. I had a large mole on my left shoulder and when I was about eight years old our family physician, Dr. Pugh, said it should be removed. This is the way he did it: he had me lie face down on the table in his office and he cut out the mole, which was about an inch in diameter. My mother gave me a handkerchief to hold, one end in each hand, while I hugged the table. The doctor used Novocain and I didn't cry, but I nearly tore the handkerchief in two. My mother told me if I didn't cry, she would buy a scooter for me, so after the operation we went to the store and bought the scooter. It cost a dollar and not crying was a small price to pay for that reward.

Dr. Marion Sullivan was our dentist. We laughed at him in later years because he hummed all the time he was drilling and digging. He was a nice friendly fellow and his wife and my mother were friends. When I was out of high school and a working girl I had a couple of dates with his son who was terribly handsome and polished but definitely weird. There was a sign hanging on the wall in Dr. Sullivan's office in full view of the patient and it read: "There is nothing in the world that some man cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper, and the people who consider price only are this man's lawful prey." John Ruskin." Somehow it never seemed appropriate in such hard times to promote quality instead of quantity. (Remember the candy cane?) After all these years I can still remember that quotation. It is imprinted on my mind like the "Our Father." A patient rarely got novocaine so a trip to the dentist was a dreaded and harrowing experience.

The first jigsaw puzzle I ever got was given to me for a Christmas gift by my Aunt Therese. It was a small puzzle and it depicted a cottage in a garden. I loved putting it together and I did this over and over. One year after that I got a United States puzzle. It was a Christmas gift and early in December I found it under the bed while I was snooping. I got it out and worked it every chance I got so on Christmas morning I could put it together without any hesitation.

When the Depression really hit our family we no longer went to Minneapolis for the summer and the Sunday movies were given up. We did go to the "Century of Progress" World's Fair in Chicago in 1933. I remember that Bob kept trying to fool the men who had a "guess your weight" game. If they guessed correctly you had to pay them a dime and if they missed, they gave you a prize--most of the time it was a bamboo cane. Bob was skinny but he weighed more than he appeared so we had a lot of bamboo canes in our house. I think he

went to the Fair several times but it was probably with the Boy Scouts or the altar boys. Sally Rand was a big star then but we weren't even allowed to look at the pictures advertising her famous "Fan Dance"!

During the Depression there were so many people in need--most of them worse off than our family. Often hobos would come to the back door asking for food and work. Sometimes my mother found something for them to do around the yard but mostly she just told them to sit down on the back porch and she fixed a plate of food for them, then packed a sandwich or two to send them on their way. Every once in a while an extra-clean fellow would show up and she brought him into the kitchen to eat at the table. I often think of those days and how trusting people were. It never occurred to her to be wary of strangers. I never heard of anyone being robbed or "mugged" or raped. In fact, I had never heard the word "rape" until the Errol Flynn scandal broke. "Statutory rape" made the headlines in the Chicago Tribune and I had no idea what it was!

My mother was adamant about good manners, especially table manners. We always had a tablecloth on the table, even in the kitchen. She had a low opinion of women who used "oilcloth" (a forerunner of plastic) on the table, and we always had cloth napkins and napkin holders. We each got a clean napkin on Sunday and we used the same one all week and after each meal, rolled it up and put it in our napkin ring. I still have the little sterling silver napkin ring that my Aunt Isabel sent me with my name engraved on it. Paper napkins were used only in cheap restaurants. In our house no one ate with their elbows on the table. No one talked with a mouthful of food. No one argued at the table and no one tilted their chair. And absolutely no one talked about the price of food, or the cost of something we were eating at that moment. At some time my mother must have laid down the law about the way we dressed at mealtime because no one came to the table half-dressed, which was the way she described men who wore undershirts. She was very rigid about what was right and what was wrong and when she said "no," there was no arguing about it because she meant "NO!"

As I read what I have written so far, it is apparent that there were many restrictions when I was growing up but I can't see that they were harmful. My brothers were allowed a greater degree of liberty and my mother kept me on a pretty short leash but at least I knew my limits and there was never any question about who was the boss. My mother used to say "be it ever so painful, always be a lady" and the boys would tease her by saying "be it ever so painful, there's no place like home." We were taught at home, at school and in the Church that obedience is very important and while I can't remember this philosophy producing many scientific geniuses from All Saints School, it surely made good, upright law-abiding citizens. I think a little fear is a good thing. It promotes good behavior. In the schoolroom we kept our arms folded when we sat at our desk; the nun would say "Attention, class" and we put down our pencils, folded our arms and gave her our undivided attention. Now I wonder if I was brainwashed. While there were definite rules of behavior in my house, very few of my friends had the same rules. And when I look back at some of the things I learned at home it makes me wonder how I would have turned out with a different set of parents. Early on I learned to stay in the background (empty barrels rattle loudest), not to get my name in the paper (fools' names, like fools' faces are often seen in public places). Don't shout. Don't attract attention. Keep your knees together and covered with your skirt. Settle down. I wasn't careless or sloppy about my clothes or my books or homework and I was always on time. I simply never rocked the boat. The more popular people were irresponsible, always late, they forgot their books and pencils, and I would love to have been like that--to act crazy and harum-scarum (my mother's expression) but it just wasn't in me. And no matter how I tried, it was too awkward to change. If I had the liberty that children have now, would I be the same person? Was my character determined before I was born? Would I be a cautious, middle-of-the-road woman, looking before I leap, or would I be a Donna Quixote, looking for fossils in South America, climbing Mt. Everest with a mountain team, or possibly leading a Civil Rights march in Alabama? I'll never know.

At school we said "Yes, sister" and "Yes, Father" and at home we said "Yes, Ma'am." We treated all adults with respect and girls received respect from boys. If a nun dropped anything, at least five children scrambled to see who would be the lucky one to pick it up and hand it to her. It was expected of children to have good manners and it made life more pleasant for everyone. It was just another form of discipline and part of our education. Another discipline was memorizing the Catechism answers, the Gettysburg address and other long poems. In High School we memorized Mark Antony's "Friends, Romans, Countrymen" speech. A lot of those things we didn't understand at the time, but the practice of training our minds to perform was good for us.

It was the usual thing for a man to tip his hat to a lady or to remove his hat in an elevator if a lady was present. A man or boy, whatever his age, would get up and offer his seat to a girl or a woman in a crowded room or a bus. The first time I saw my teenaged son Tom rise when a woman entered the room, I almost swooned with pride. I was sure I had done something right!

My mother was a hard worker. Her main social life centered around the Church and because my father didn't go to church, she had to work out her own entertainment, and because he worked long hours, she lived pretty much like a widow. I can imagine her longing for Minneapolis and the affection and closeness of her brothers and sisters. My parents had no mutual friends and no mutual interests except the children. I think both of them would have been happier if they had stayed in Minneapolis. My mother was a great cook and despite hard times, we always ate well and on Sunday we could count on a big meal at two o'clock. She rose early, went to eight o'clock Mass and spent all morning cooking. We ate in the dining room and used good linens and the good "Sunday dishes." We had either roast beef and Yorkshire pudding or roast pork and applesauce or roast leg of lamb with mint sauce. And always pie for dessert: apple, pumpkin, mince or lemon meringue. I can't remember the cookie jar ever being empty. I think this was the way my mother showed her love for us.

She attended every wake and funeral in the parish and she always took me with her to the wakes. The one wake that stands out in my mind was for a young mother and her baby who was stillborn. The mother had died giving birth and she was laid out in the casket with the tiny baby in her arm. I will never forget it. A spray of flowers on the front door of a house meant that there had been a death in the family and most probably there was a wake going on inside. Wakes were held in the home in those days, and the kitchen was full of food brought in by the neighbors. It was often an ordeal to get the casket through the door and the living room might be small and not conducive to crowds. People came to pay their respects and stayed until midnight. A wake was part of the social life and everyone attended.

Along with baking, cooking, cleaning and sewing, my mother also did some preserving and canning in the summer. She made chili sauce every year; she canned tomatoes and bread and butter pickles and some jams and jellies. Farmers came down the street with their trucks or wagons and the women went out to price their wares. For a few years my mother made root beer. She filled quart bottles with root beer flavoring, water and yeast and then put the bottle on the capping stand. She placed a cap on the top of the bottle and pressed the lever over it to seal it. Sometimes these caps didn't seal too well and the tops popped off. This meant a cleanup in the basement. This was long before people kept soft drinks and cokes in the house. This was even before Kool-Aid. The most common refresher was home-made lemonade.

When we moved to Hammond and as long as she could afford it, my mother sent the clothes to the laundry to be done as "wet wash." The clothes were returned wet in a laundry bag, and then she hung them in the back yard or the basement. I can't remember when she got her first washing machine, but I suppose that at some point she felt it would be cheaper in the long run to do the laundry herself and so the Maytag wringer washer came into our household. There was an old stove top in the basement and my mother heated large pots of water to pour into the machine. We usually had a water heater, but water heaters had no regulators and they were only lit for a particular purpose and then turned off to prevent an explosion. It cost a lot less to heat water on the stove and I can remember heating water to do the dishes or take a bath; however, in wintertime the furnace heated up the water pipes so there was a lot more hot water available. We didn't buy soap powder for the dishes. In fact, I can't remember any product made specifically for dishes. We saved small pieces of soap, probably Ivory, and put them in a little wire mesh box which had a long handle. When the dishpan had hot water in it, you shook this little box back and forth until the water got good and sudsy and then you did the dishes. American Family and Fels-Naptha soap came in large brown bars and my mother used a potato peeler to shave off strips of soap and let them swish in the washing machine until a good suds was formed. There were always clotheslines in the basement and they were used in the winter, but with the first warm day all the women had their clothes hanging outside. Every yard had at least one clothes pole. This was a sturdy strip of wood with a notch in the top where the clothesline rested. If the pole was put up at a good angle, it kept the clothes off the ground and let the breeze blow through them. Spring cleaning meant bringing winter clothes out to hang on the lines and, when it was possible, bringing out the rugs to get a good beating. No one had wall-to-wall carpeting

so the rugs were hung over the clotheslines and there was a special rug beater made out of heavy metal wire with a handle on it. We had a vacuum cleaner so it was never necessary to take our rugs outdoors.

When I was growing up everyone used coal for heating purposes. There was always a coal bin in the basement and a small window for the coal man to insert a chute and dump in the coal. You could order a ton of coal and depending on the weather, it would last a week or two. My parents or my brothers got up in the morning went down to the basement and shook up the embers and then shoveled in enough coal for the morning. I suppose my mother did the shoveling at noon and the boys took over after school. At night the furnace had to be "banked" and I think that kept the embers glowing until morning. Some people had a "stoker" on the furnace that kept a steady supply of coal going in. It seems to me that this was on the order of a treadmill. We didn't have any other kind of heat until we moved to Webb Street where we had oil heat in hot water radiators. The oil tanker came in next to the basement window and the oil man connected the hose to the furnace and poured in a hundred gallons of oil. This was a lot cleaner than a coal furnace and certainly a

lot easier on the people who had to do the shoveling. I began singing in the church choir in the third grade. That meant singing at weddings, funerals, daily Mass and the Childrens' Mass on Sundays. It was all exciting and gave a little girl a feeling of importance. There was a lot of practicing, and for an added bonus the choir members in the choir loft got a birds-eye view not only of the bridal party, but also the mourners at a funeral. We especially liked funerals with a lot of crying. For a truly magnificent wedding or funeral, Tom Doolin sang. This was without doubt the handsomest man I had ever seen and he became this little girl's absolute, flawless, ideal man. He was what I had in mind when I thought of "happily ever after." He had lots of gorgeous black wavy hair which later turned to silver (not gray) and a beautiful voice. When he sang the "Ave Maria" he sent chills up and down my spine. By the time I was married he had nine children, and so the only way I could get him to my wedding was to ask him to sing the "Ave Maria", and he did. It was quite an honor, when as a choir girl, I turned the pages of his music for him. He had his own accompanist, Adeline Etter, not Mrs. Meyers, the regular organist.

In those days the boys were just clamoring to get on the altar and they had to memorize all the responses in Latin. I can remember the boys walking around the house repeating "Ad deum qui laetificat juventem meum" and all the other Latin answers they had to learn. One boy said the priest's part and the other would respond. They practiced a lot and both of the boys served on the altar but Bob was THE altar boy. It seemed that for years Bob served at the 6:00 a.m. Mass. He got himself up at 5:00 and ran all the way to church, about two miles, in the dark, just to be able to serve Mass. The nuns gave him breakfast in the convent because there was nothing for him to do from the time Mass ended and the next Mass began at 8:00. He got to be what was called "the Master of Ceremonies" by the time he was in the eighth grade. When there was anything special going on at Easter or Christmas, or for weddings or funerals, he directed the other altar boys, telling them what to do, when to kneel or stand. He was efficient and he really liked doing his job. He considered the priesthood for a while (or maybe my mother considered it for him) but he changed his mind by the time he entered high school and discovered girls. My mother did most of the mending of vestments and she also made altar cloths and some linen vestments. My father brought home white linen and she made albs for the priests and surplices for the altar boys. By the time I was in eighth grade, Ritamae Einsele and I were sacristans and our job was to return early from lunch every day and lay out the vestments for the next morning Mass. We folded the garments in just the way the priest put them on, but we were not allowed to touch the hosts or any of the sacred vessels because the sisters considered it their job.

When I was in seventh grade the nun decided to make a speaker out of me and she gave me elocution lessons at recess time. There were a few stories or long poems that I had to learn and then on a Friday afternoon if our schoolwork was finished she requested me to present something that I had memorized. She wanted me to be dramatic, raising my voice, pointing my finger and flinging my arms about and I tried, but never became an actress. Maybe my mother's warning about not attracting attention was beginning to pay off. One long poem started, "It's nothing to laugh at as I can see, if you'd been stung by a bumble bee and your nose swelled up like a load of hay, you wouldn't want people to laugh at you...."

My free time was spent making doll clothes, cloth and paper, and embroidering dresser scarves and dish towels. I played on the trapeze or rings in the basement; I learned to knit, I ironed handkerchiefs and pillowcases and napkins and occasionally I played the piano. I can't remember ever being bored.

Once again our rented house was sold and we had to move, this time to 929 State Street. This was not a very desirable street, but ours was a nice section that had four respectable brick buildings, each having two flats. We had a downstairs flat with five rooms. There was a back porch which was unheated but I used it for a bedroom in the summer. The walls were brick and the former tenants had papered them with newspaper, which we continued to use. When a page started to peel off or tear, I could replace it with the Hammond Times. Living on State Street meant I could walk to the branch library and find good reading material. I could go there on Saturdays and any day during the summer. Miss Sykes was the old maid librarian and she was crabby and bossy. She maintained strict silence and insisted on checking little boys' hands before she checked out their books I belonged to the library Summer Reading Club and I was expected to read one book a week. When it was finished, I sought out the librarian and told her what the story was about and received a grade on the report and at the end of the summer I was given some sort of a certificate. Tom and I loved reading but Bob hated it.

State Street proved to be a thoroughly exciting neighborhood. The Korus family lived right across the street from us and they had three children, John, George and Evangeline, but we called her "Vangie." They all seemed kind of strange to us. The parents yelled at each other and everybody else in Greek. The father had no regular work but in the Fall he and a friend gathered bittersweet from the woods and in the Spring he picked cattails from the swamps. He sold his gleanings to the local florists. I have no idea what he did in the Winter and Summer. He had an old truck and a dirty house and yard and the mother never wore shoes. The whole neighborhood was fascinated with them, in spite of the fact that they ridiculed them. The Korus children always played in someone else's house or yard and I'm sure my mother thought that was a good idea. One Halloween night a group of boys (Bob included) went to the vacant lot which was adjacent to the Korus' kitchen window. Now the boys all swore that these people threw their garbage out of the window into this lot. On this particular Halloween, as the garbage was thrown out, the boys picked it up and threw it back into the kitchen. I don't know how true this is, but the boys said it happened, and as we all know, young boys don't lie. Vangie was a flamboyant girl; she had blazing black eyes and a lot of curly black hair. She told me her grandmother advised her to turn her back on a boy if she was ever caught naked because everyone is the same from the back. This was probably my first chapter in sex education because I thought everyone was also the same from the front. I learned later that Vangie went to Beauty school, bleached her hair, changed her name to "Bunnie," married a rich Greek, bought a full length mink coat, opened two beauty salons and in short, became a success. Georgie entered the Marines, came home and joined the police force, and Johnny went to law school, and later on into politics. These children had three strikes against them when they lived on State Street and it's a miracle they didn't end up in jail. I guess they could be called part of the American Experience.

In those days Halloween meant ringing doorbells and being a general nuisance. "Trick or Treat" was unheard of. If you rang a doorbell and stuck a toothpick in it, it would continue ringing while you made a safe getaway. We shot peas from a peashooter and some of the braver kids went right up on front porches and soaped windows. It was safer to soap the windows of a parked car, but there just weren't many cars around to soap. I remember waxing our basement screens and how provoked my mother was about it. I was supposed to remove the wax but I don't think I ever got it completely out. Soap would wash out, but wax, never. Imagine waxing your own house! Even in those days I was timid. One year Ed Austgen and Tom had a Halloween party in the basement. We all thought their ideas were so original--They had pieces of raw liver, some cooked spaghetti and a peeled grape for props. They brought in each guest individually, blindfolded, and handed them these things, meanwhile inventing a spooky story about the dead person's liver, brains and eye. That was the only party I can remember that was held at our house--or at any other house. People just couldn't afford to feed anyone but their own family.

The Ewalts lived next door to us on State Street. Leonard Ewalt was in my grade at All Saints School. He was sort of pudgy and had very straight hair. He and his family were prissy and proper. I can imagine his mother's chagrin when faced with the Korus family right across the street. But my mother was glad to have the Ewalts next door rather than another Korus Menage. The Ewalts' chief entertainment was popping corn and I

was sometimes invited to the fun. At the time I thought it was great to pop corn but when I look back it wasn't so wonderful, except that I was in some sort of a social group, prissy or not. The bad thing about popping corn over there was that they had a gunny sack full of dried popcorn on the cob and in order to get enough to pop, you had to rub your fingers up and down the cob until the kernels came off. And only after enough kernels were accumulated did the popping start. We did this in the basement in order to keep the mess out of the kitchen. I said they were prissy. My fingers and hands were sore for days.

A family named White moved into the house on the other side of the Koruses. They came from southern Indiana and they were strictly hillbilly. The father was a store detective at Goldblatt Brothers, which, incidentally, was formerly Kaufman and Wolf, where my father had once worked. There was a boy about my age named Howard who used to play the mandolin which was something like a guitar, and I really liked him. He used to sit on our front porch with his mandolin and sing cowboy and hillbilly songs. I suppose they were the early Country and Western songs. When he sang about the "Little Mohee", an Indian maiden who had a short and tragic life, I was reduced to tears. There was another song about a young man who was "sentenced to Nashville for twenty-one years." Eventually we moved and State Street and that part of my life was left behind, but oh, how I would love to know how all of those people turned out!

Our boys found great pleasure in shooting targets, but their most fun was shooting rats in the nearby brickyard. They used to make slingshots using a crotch from a tree and strips of inner tubing from old tires. Then they graduated to BB guns. They took their guns to the brickyard on Columbia Avenue and they could spend all day shooting rats. When they tired of that, they walked or hitchhiked to Memorial Park to swim. This was in Calumet City, about four miles away. On hot days there were so many swimmers the pool could not accommodate them, so they were issued pins with numbers on them and they stood in line, waiting until about fifty swimmers left the pool and then fifty more could go in. About every hour a certain number of people had to leave so more could go in. This was the only pool in the area. We also did a lot of roller skating so we knew which sidewalks were smooth for skating and we avoided the rough ones. The skates were made of a heavy metal and they were adjustable both for length and width. Everyone had a skate key which was necessary to make any adjustments, and the key was usually hung with a long string around the neck. The girls in Bob's class used to skate past our house, slowing down for a glimpse of Bob, who was sneaking out the back door because he didn't want to be seen. There were always girls who suddenly became interested in me just because he was my brother. I, too, skated past a boy's house on the chance that he might be out in the yard.

The Hoffman Drug Store was on the corner of State Street and Calumet Avenue. Mr. Hoffman was the pharmacist and the soda jerk. He didn't sell triple cones like the Igloo, but he had something even better. He used a large dipper and then turned the cone upside down into some chocolate syrup that hardened and became like an Eskimo Pie. They were so good and still only five cents. Schrepfer's Bakery was next door to Hoffman's and they had the best eclairs, cream puffs, long johns and doughnuts that you could imagine. We didn't get bakery items very often because my mother did most of her own baking, so when we got an éclair or a cream puff it was a real treat. We usually stopped there on the way home from Mass on Holy Days and bought something for breakfast.

All of the time we lived on State Street I was playing with dolls. There was a long closet in our house that was formed under the stairs that went up to the other flat. As the closet became longer, the ceiling became lower. It was in this closet that I had all of my doll furniture: table and chairs, rocking chair, doll beds and buggy, high chair and little cupboards. Mind you, at this time I was in fifth or sixth grade! My mother let me have a little kerosene lamp to be used in the dark closet and it's hard to believe that she trusted me enough to light a lamp for me, but I must have been a very dependable child. Maybe all of that discipline was paying off. I certainly would never have let any of my children play in the closet with a lighted lamp. My Aunt Veronica used to send in all kinds of coupons for trial sizes of products and have them sent to me. In this way I obtained a lot of Postum and Maybelline Mascara and face creams and lotions. All of this helped to swell my drug supply under the stairs. I fancied myself a surgeon or a nurse and I worked on the dolls with pins and colored water. Their stomachs and backs were brilliant. In order to make mercurochrome I put red crepe paper in a small bottle of water and when it turned dark enough I had a new drug. I could always find something to make colored water for my pharmacy. I also played paper dolls. I had a lot of them and every week the Sunday paper carried

a new one to color and cut out. Then I got some paper and began to design clothes. I colored those, too. Sometimes I cut dolls and clothes out of the Sears or Montgomery Ward Catalogs. I also made a lot of doll clothes for my real dolls. I really wanted a Shirley Temple Doll but I knew they were too expensive and my Patsy doll was the easiest to sew for. One Fourth of July my mother gave each of us fifty cents to buy fireworks. Tom bought some, but Bob didn't because the noise hurt his ears. I took my money and bought a Patsy doll which was about the equivalent of a Barbie doll in popularity. She was about twice as big around, however, and had painted hair and a very boyish figure. I went to all the neighbors with my shoebox of fabric and asked for scraps to sew on. Then I'd bring the pieces home and sit on the front porch and make doll clothes. Even this didn't turn Howard off because he continued to sing and strum that mandolin.

Tom and Bob were both active in the Boy Scouts and there was not only a weekly meeting at night, but the yearly Minstrel Show which required weeks of practice. The boys were all made up in blackface and sat in a line on the stage, told jokes and spoke in southern "negro" accents. This would be impossibility now. One year they put Margery Hulett in the Minstrel Show--they blackened her skin, put her in stage clothes and she sang "We're in the Money" in pig latin and she brought down the house! No one knew a girl was in the show until it was all over.

We had a large Victrola, but only a few records. I remember in particular the Irish songs sung by John McCormack. The cabinet was about four feet high and there was a handle on the side that had to be wound before the platter would turn. No matter how tight it was wound, it was never enough to finish an entire record. The first sign that another winding was in order was when John McCormack, the tenor, became a baritone and then a bass, and he sang lower and lower. We kept that Victrola for years, even after we moved to Webb Street in 1937 and it was moved to the basement. And we kept the piano too, finally paying a black minister five dollars to take it for his church. We didn't have a console radio like the kind pictured in a television commercial depicting the "olden days." Ours was a small one that sat on an end table and was shaped like a cathedral window. Every afternoon I listened to Jack Armstrong the All American Boy or Little Orphan Annie or Buck Rogers in the 25th Century. These were fifteen minute programs and they came on just before dinnertime and I tried to listen to them while I was doing my little daily chore of setting the table. (The boys did the dishes). Jack Armstrong was sponsored by Wheaties and Annie by Ovaltine. Bob ate Wheaties and I drank Ovaltine, not because it was good, but because you could get a tin drink shaker if you sent in a certain number of Ovaltine labels.

I think we must have moved from State Street to 832 May Street around 1937. It was a small house but a much nicer neighborhood. By this time Franklin D. Roosevelt was in office and things were getting better. He was like a member of the family. He had been crippled by polio when he was a young man but it only seemed to intensify his courage, which was badly needed in that decade. He was a symbol of strength to the entire nation. Every schoolroom had his picture on the wall and every front window had an NRA Blue Eagle sticker with the quote "We Do Our Part." Mrs. McGrath, a friend of my mother, used to say, "I place my trust in God and Mr. Roosevelt," and that's just the way most of us felt, young and old alike. There were a lot of songs written about him but the most popular was "Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt Jones." We used to listen to his "fireside chats" and while I was not interested in politics, I can remember my parents reacting to his magnificent voice and the way he inspired people to hold on because things would get better. And they did.

Every Sunday afternoon my father listened to Father Coughlin, a Catholic priest who had a radio program broadcast from Detroit. I hated to hear him because he shouted and sounded like a rabble-rouser. I remember he was anti-Jewish, but little else remains in my memory. I think my father disliked Jews, too, because he had some bad experiences with them in his line of work and this colored his thinking. Father Coughlin must have been pretty convincing because he had a large following, but after a while the Church was instrumental in getting him off the air. His ranting was offset by Jack Benny and his "Jello" program, which came on at six o'clock. Every Sunday after the Jack Benny show we had something which surely must have been like "high tea." We had sliced meat left from the dinner roast, maybe a jello salad, toast or crackers with melted cheese, and of course, tea.

About this time I joined the Girl Scouts. We had a meeting after school once a week and we learned very little that helped us in future years. We did spend a lot of time tying knots and we learned some first aid and how to build a fire in the woods. I think I was in eighth grade when our leader, Katie McGrath, took four of us out to Robertsdale, near Whiting, Indiana, to a small subdivision where we went from door to door selling cookies, and to this day I can't remember if we took orders or if we actually had the cookies with us. I think they were a quarter a box, but people were a little leery about buying cookies that way. I never did get very wound up about Girl Scouts, but I did like belonging to a group.

In January of 1935 my mother received a telegram from my Aunt Therese, saying that my Aunt Veronica had pneumonia and was seriously ill. The next day another telegram brought the news that she had died. I can still see and hear my mother crying, "Ma, Ma, what will you do now?" Times were bad and I think Veronica was the breadwinner for everyone at 252 Fremont Avenue. This was the first time I had actually seen my mother lose control of her emotions.

One year my cousin, Jean Lacy, came to visit us. Jean and Bob were both thin and yet they ate all the time. The only between meal snacks we had were home made cookies or cake and eating peanuts or potato chips was out of the question. At night Bob and Jean sat in the kitchen eating graham crackers slathered with peanut butter. This was acceptable snacking. Sometimes they would eat their way through an entire box of crackers while I, deathly afraid of getting fat, lay at their feet doing bicycling exercises. I was not fat, but because I worried so much about it, my brothers called me "Porky" or "Tiny" Later on, one of my dearest boyfriends called me "Tubby". I loved having a pet name. Bob was a terrible tease and never missed an opportunity to pester me, but we never hit each other and my mother tried to console me by telling me he teased me because he liked me.

There was a little clothing store called Lynn's right next door to a milk store. One Sunday another girl and I were out flying a kite. We didn't know much about kites, but we had a string and a tail of rag strips and we chose the vacant lot next to Lynn's. As soon as the kite was airborne it got caught on some wires on top of the store and even though it was just a one-story building, we didn't know how to get it down. Then some big boys came down the alley and we asked them to get it down for us. Without any discussion they climbed the building wall and retrieved the tangled kite, came down from the building and walked off with it. That was the last we saw of the kite or the boys. I never wanted another kite after that. While I was flying a kite, Bob was collecting stamps. His prized possession was a large yellow stamp from China. It was triangular and he showed it to everyone. In those days American stamps cost one and two cents. If you didn't seal a letter you could use a one-cent stamp. And penny postcards were just that--a penny. Bob also tried to construct a crystal radio set. I think it was supposed to be a short-wave radio. Cheese came in a wooden box, sort of like the cardboard box Velveeta cheese comes in now. He cut a slit in the top of the box and he would run a little gadget up and down this slit until a sound came through. He always said he got some far off station, but I never heard anything but whistles and static.

We had a milkman in my earlier years, but during the time when we lived on May Street, the way I earned my spending money was to take the empty milk bottles to the little store next to Lynn's, which was just down the alley. I turned in the empties and the store owner gave me full bottles. I paid for them, but I got to keep the few pennies saved by eliminating the middleman. In those days most stores had cookies in large jars and I used to say to old Joe Therion, "How many of those can I get for a penny?" and the answer depended on how generous Joe felt on a particular day. Some days I got two cookies for a penny, sometimes only one. Even then I loved sweets and that was the way I spent my milk money.

Even before the war when Victory gardens became popular, we had a garden in the back yard. My mother and Bob dug up part of the yard and planted vegetables. They raised radishes and leaf lettuce but mostly I remember the cabbages. They sprouted up full of bugs and no one had any insecticides so we threw most of them away. Our family was still feeling the effects of the Depression. It hit my parents later than most, largely I think because they had saved cash or had some sort of stock. We were never on welfare, a fact my mother was proud of, but many families were. It was especially hard on my father because he grew up in a different world, one with servants and resources. The Thomsons were well off; they had a large home and no financial worries,

but his family never forgave him for becoming an American. When England went into World War I, my Aunt Marian wrote to him and told him to "come home and fight for your country." My father told her when his country went to war he would fight for it, but by the time his country entered the war, he was married and had a child. Of his siblings, only his sister Lizzie ever held a job. She was the vice president of the London Tram Lines. Marian was a musician and never worked at a paying job and Andrew never did anything but work the daily crossword puzzle in the newspaper. My father always held a good job so the depression was a terrible jolt to him. Kaufman and Wolf sold out to Goldblatt Brothers and he was offered a job by the new owners but he refused to work for "kikes," which was what he called a lower class of Jews. Then he had to scramble around for another job. This was about the time we lived on State Street. He got a job in Joliet, Illinois for \$18 a week and he paid a man a dollar a week to pick him up in Calumet City, about three miles from our house. This meant he had to leave the house at six in the morning walk to Calumet City, work all day and then when he was dropped off in the evening, he walked the three miles back home, getting in about eight o'clock. This went on for years until he got a job at Frank's Department store on 79th Street in Chicago. Then he took the bus to work. But no matter how many years he lived in America, he never lost sight of his roots. He walked tall (even though he wasn't), his head held high, and even without a dollar in his pocket, he was definitely "upper class".

I will deviate now from my story to tell you about my father. My friends were fascinated with his table manners. He retained his English customs and held his fork in his left hand, upside down, and with his knife in his right hand, he selected food to pile carefully on the back of his fork--peas, corn, potatoes--then plunged the whole cluster into his mouth without dropping a crumb. His favorite dessert was a piece of fruit, and I loved it when he ate an apple. He could peel it with a table knife so the peeling was in a long spiral. I watched him doing this, wondering if he could keep the peel from breaking. I always thought if the peel broke, there must have been something wrong with the apple, not the peeler. When he ended up with a long peel, he gave it to me, but I didn't want to eat it, I just played with it for a minute. As long as I can remember, my father wore a smoking jacket when he relaxed. He put it on when he came home from work and wore it almost all day Sunday. It was burgundy with satin lapels and cuffs and eventually it wore out but when I became a working girl I found another one for him at Fox's Men's Store in Hammond. He didn't own a sweater and when he went out of the house he wore a topcoat or a suit and tie. He wore a derby hat in the winter time until derbies went completely out of style and finally gave in and wore a felt hat. He wore spats during chilly weather. In the summer he wore a straw hat, flat crown and flat brim and it might have been called a "sailor", but I'm not sure. He also wore stiff starched collars on his shirts for years. It seems to me that he was the last holdout in town against shirts with sewn-in collars. His collars had to be sent to the laundry and they were held on to the shirt with a round collar button.

We always had a Christmas tree, no matter how desperate the family finances were, and we always had presents--usually practical things, and always, always had oyster stew for Christmas Eve dinner. It was a day of abstinence, so no meat could be eaten, but we did love the oyster stew. After the dishes were done and we went into the living room we opened our presents. The lights on the tree were a full time job because when one burned out, the whole string died and then you had to find a good bulb and start testing all of them. I don't think I ever saw colored Christmas wrapping paper or birthday paper, for that matter, until sometime after World War II. We all used white tissue paper and sometimes it was necessary to use two sheets to prevent the recipient from seeing the printing on the box underneath. If you really wanted to impress somebody, you bought red or green tissue. A package gift-wrapped at the store (and this was seldom done, except for exclusive shops) came with shiny white paper and perhaps a fancy gold sticker on each end. The common folk had colored stickers--Santas, Christmas trees, manger scenes--and these held down the edges and ends of packages. Scotch tape was non-existent. We used red, green or gold twine to tie the packages, and then just tied a bow on top. I remember when narrow ribbon came out and we discovered pulling a scissors blade across it and making curls. We sure thought we were creative. While we had a few presents under the tree, it was nothing compared to the gifts our children or grandchildren get. My father, who was not Catholic, always went to three Masses on Christmas morning. This was the only time all year when the priest could say three Masses in one day and they were half-hour Masses: one at 8:00, another at 8:30 and the third at 9:00. Then the next set would start with another priest at 10:00. I think my dad felt this would take care of his religious obligation for the year. However, sometimes he went on Easter Sunday.

I was in the eighth grade when I was confirmed. This was a big occasion because only the Bishop could confirm and he only came to a parish every four years for this sacrament. This meant a procession, a new dress and a godmother of my own choice. It also meant picking out a Confirmation name. This plainly took a lot of thought. I had never heard of a St. LaVerne so I chose Anne. And Maxine Meyers was my choice for a godmother. She was the daughter of our organist and enamored of my brother, Tom. She gave me a Schaeffer fountain pen which I valued highly. It cost a dollar.

In 1935, the summer before I went into eighth grade, something memorable happened in my life. It was August 15, the day the nuns came back from the Motherhouse and we were all waiting to see which nun we would have for the year. Then someone came over and told us that Will Rogers and Wiley Post had been killed when their plane crashed in Alaska. Losing Will Rogers was a terrible shock for the American people.

When the lagoon at Harrison Park froze we all got out our ice skates, took them to the alley and ran the blades over ashes that were brought out from the furnace. This polished and smoothed them, but since I was not an athlete the condition of the blades didn't make a lot of difference to me. It just gave the impression that I was interested in skating. By the time I was in high school my mother decided I was old enough to go skating at night. It got dark early and around six o'clock I was on my way to Norma Clusserath's house, skates swinging over my shoulder and looking forward to seeing some boys, talking and sitting around the warming house. The actual skating was pretty low on my priority list. It was about a half-mile from May Street to Norma's house, along a railroad track all the way, but it was perfectly safe for a young girl to walk alone in those days.

Once in a while I felt a little apprehensive, but I certainly never worried about being attacked by anything worse than a stray dog. And after I met Norma, we walked another half-mile to the park together.

Until I was in the eighth grade I never had a zipper in anything. Then my mother made a "swagger suit" for me. It was bright blue wool. The skirt was straight and the coat was a stroller length with a mandarin collar and frog fasteners on the front edges. Bob's best friend was Harry Howard and his mother showed my mother how to put a zipper in the side of the skirt. This was a new experience for us because ordinarily a skirt was closed with snaps. Later on, dresses were made with a zipper under the arm, on the left side seam, and unless a dress buttoned down the front or back it had to go on over your head. I don't think zippers were ever longer than seven inches.

I was in seventh or eighth grade when I did some baby sitting for Tommy and Bobby Maginot. They lived about three blocks from us and I could walk to their house in the evening and sit for three or four hours and get 25 cents for the job. Along with the cash, I could eat a whole batch of peanut butter fudge that Mrs. Maginot made for me. At least I thought she made it for me. It's possible that I didn't quit that job--I might have been fired!

The boys used to work at Pictor's Open Air Market on Calumet Avenue during the summer. They helped to unload the trucks that came in from Michigan at four or five in the morning. They were paid a dollar a day for that job. I don't know if they worked all day or just until the trucks were unloaded. Then at other times they hitchhiked out to South Holland to pick onions and that job also paid a dollar a day but it was hard, working bent over in that hot summer sun. Bob could always find a job. When the circus came to town he watered the elephants and since he was the most eager worker, he usually found a job for Tom. When we lived on May Street the Howards lived a few blocks away from us and then they moved again, this time only a block away. Harry was a dear and lovable boy and he and Bob applied for jobs as ushers at the Parthenon Theater. There was a Paul Muni movie being advertised and since the name of it was I Was a Member of a Chain Gang, all of the would-be ushers were shackled ankle to ankle, wearing placards like sandwich boards, and marched back and forth in front of the theater. The placards carried advertising and pictured a scene from the movie. This was some sort of screening process to weed out the faint-hearted and come up with some sturdy ushers. I don't remember if they even got the job, but Harry did go on to become an usher at the Hohman Theater. He always let his friends in free, but only second rate movies were shown there and none of the stars were recognizable.

Tom graduated from Catholic Central in 1935 and he got a job immediately at the Betz Company, which made office supplies. He made \$12 a week and gave \$10 of it at home. The company was about three miles from May Street and he walked both ways. Sometime later he got a job with the telephone company as assistant to the wire chief and then we got a telephone. I think it cost \$2 a month. Our number was Hammond 1070. When you picked up the phone the operator said "number, please" and you gave her the number you wanted. It was very personal.

There were eight graduates from my class who enrolled in Catholic Central High School so I didn't feel totally friendless in new surroundings. Tuition was five dollars a month and not many families could afford it. There were only two buildings that comprised the high school. The larger one was two stories and had about ten rooms with a chemistry lab and a biology lab and two locker rooms. The smaller building had four classrooms and a gymnasium which was used for basketball games, assemblies, dances, physical education, school plays, bazaars and daily Mass. There was a tiny place which was used for parking cars, but there were only three or four students who drove the family car to school so a real parking lot wasn't needed.

I was voted class secretary during my freshman and sophomore years and vice president my senior year. In my junior year the school newspaper originated and we named it "The Hi-Lite". Joe Radigan and I were the co-editors but he did very little editing as I recall. Reporters wrote their columns and I checked them and turned the articles over to senior typing students who cut stencils and then another crew ran the copies off on a mimeograph machine. Every year the Drama Club had two or three productions. I was in the freshman Christmas play and then the next year I played a part in a comedy show. My junior year I worked backstage making thunder and lightning and in my senior year I was Martha in the Lenten play. The stage was definitely not my calling and it was terribly hard for me to emote and even harder to remember my lines! Bill Enright went through eight years of grade school with me and by the time we were in seventh grade I knew he liked me. We entered high school together and some time that year he asked me for a date. On a Sunday afternoon we went to see Swing Time with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. He put his arm around me during the movie and I was indignant. He asked me to go out again but I didn't want anything to do with such a bold fellow!

During the summer of 1937 when I had just completed my first year at Central, I went to Minneapolis for a month and while I was there my mother wrote that my father had a new job, at the 12th Street Store in Chicago. This was the salvation for which we had been waiting, the light at the end of the tunnel. He was making good money again, had his own yard goods department, and just about this time the May Street house was sold and we moved to 34 Webb Street. I felt that we had finally "arrived" because this was a much better part of town and the new friends I had made in high school lived nearby. A landmark event was our first refrigerator and a whole new world opened up for us! We could make our own ice, and the ice cream could be kept for days. In May of my freshman year, I was one of four girls chosen to pour punch at the Junior-Senior Prom. I borrowed a formal from Katie McGrath and this was a big occasion for me. I can't even remember how I got there and back, but someone's mother must have taken all of us.

My Aunt Sue and Uncle Stewart Brown were my godparents and Uncle Stewart was especially fond of me. They lived in Dallas and had two sons, Stewart and Bob, and my uncle probably would have loved a daughter. He was a salesman so occasionally he passed through Hammond and he always told me he wanted me to come and live with them and go to high school in Dallas. I really believed him and even though I had started school at Catholic Central High, and was on a Scholarship for my sophomore year when we got the telegram in November of 1937 that he had died of a heart attack I felt cheated because I never got to live with him in Dallas. He was so much fun. He talked all the time and brought life and laughter into our house, and when he died Aunt Sue packed up her boys and moved right back to Minneapolis.

I know of two oil refineries that were located in Whiting, Indiana--Sinclair Oil and Standard Oil, but the names have changed since then. On a hot summer evening while we sat on the front porch the smell of oil would suddenly reach us and we knew the wind had changed and was coming off Lake Michigan and we basked in the cool air, actually enjoying the refinery aroma. For many years we didn't have an electric fan so we relied on the outside breeze. We had an old porch swing, that hung on chains from two large ceiling hooks and we all spent many hours there. I remember Tom used to take a book and sit or lounge on the swing, neck against one

end and knees bent to enable him to brace his feet against the other end. Then he could pump gently and keep up a swinging motion. Because the porch was not screened in we had to fight flies and mosquitoes and I used a lot of Citronella oil to keep the mosquitoes away and everyone in the family complained about the smell. Even then mosquitoes bothered me more than they bother other people.

When we moved to Webb Street we were only a block away from Harrison Park. This was the park with the lagoon where Norma and I did our ice skating and it also had tennis courts. I could just see myself buzzing around the tennis court so for my sixteenth birthday I got a tennis racquet. My friend Jane Etling and I went over to the park and since neither of us knew how to play tennis, we found a little hill and there we sat, holding our racquets and waiting for the court to be vacant. Fortunately for us people kept coming to play and we were too embarrassed to get out and miss the ball while someone was watching so we never got on the court. At least I didn't, but I imagine Jane went sometime or other because she had a neighbor who played.

Kissing games were popular at parties and we all thought them terribly daring. I was in seventh grade when I took part in my first kissing game at a party at Joe Kasper's house. His big sister gave the party--she was supposed to be doing the chaperoning. She arranged the games and I am at a loss to remember any other than kissing games. The girls at first refused to play, but she said anyone who didn't play had to pay her fifty cents and since none of us had a dime to our name, we all played. I just can't remember anyone I kissed, so evidently the evening was not remarkable. Then when I was a freshman, Josephine Pohlplatz had a party at her house and of course the inevitable "spin the bottle", "wink" and "post office" games were begun. I did kiss Johnny Watson in one of the games and I remember that. I really liked him and always considered him a good friend. He and Norma sort of paired off the next year and they were the most popular kids in the class.

By my sophomore year I was dating often, mostly for a movie or just a "coke date". The place for cokes was Dietrich's Sweet Shop out on Hohman Avenue and we could spend an hour there, sipping a coke and getting home by ten o'clock in the summer. I was allowed to go out on school nights but only for a coke and I always had to be home by nine. When I didn't have a date, Jane and I sauntered out to Dietrich's and found some boys to talk to, and if they didn't bring us home, we walked.

The house on Webb Street was originally a one-family dwelling, but at some time the upstairs had been turned into an apartment and in 1938 the apartment became available and the Howards rented it. Mrs. Howard was a dressmaker, one of the best in town, and Mr. Howard was a railroad man. Both of them drank a lot and on railroad payday they both took off for about three days. They played the horses and drank and when the money was gone they came back home and Charlie went to work and Clara started sewing. You could hear that old sewing machine rattling over our living room and it wasn't safe to talk to Clara for a week because her money was gone and that made her crabby. At times like these she sewed night and day to make up for her losses.

There was a girl named Ginger Morris who had an apartment on our corner. Ed Austgen considered her his girl friend, but I think she liked Tom the best. However, she and Tom remained just good friends. She had a white rabbit fur jacket and Tom borrowed it for me so I could go to a formal dance in style. It was the first time I had worn a fur and I felt elegant and glamorous. When I was a junior, my mother made a pink taffeta formal for me to wear to the Christmas dance and when I found out another girl was wearing the same dress, I didn't know what to do. So Tom went upstairs to the Howard's apartment and got Harry's sister, Louella, to come down with one of her formals. It was a beautiful black moire taffeta dress with straps and tiny buttons down the back. I had never had a dress without sleeves of some kind. Louella was a very skinny girl and at least ten years older than I, but between her and Tom they buttoned me into that dress. I was sure I looked like a debutante and I wish I had a picture of the startled look on my date's face when I walked into the living room. I had quite a few clothes, all of them made by my mother and I dearly wanted something ready-made, but until I graduated from high school and went to work I had only homemade things. There were a lot of formal dances and I always had a new dress for each dance. We went to Chicago and picked out fabric from my dad's department and my mother made just about anything I wanted. There were dances sponsored by different clubs and sororities in Hammond and some at Chicago hotels. We also had barn dances and Homecoming dances and hayrides. There was an exclusive club called the Tokalon. It was started by the girls in the class ahead of us and when we were juniors they selected some of us to join their club. I think there were only about ten of us in

it. There were Jane Etling, Jewell Bartell, Babe Heibel, Eleanor Koch, Norma Clusserath, Jeanette Moser, Mary Louise Getty, DeeDee Hodor and me. There were more, but I just can't remember and as I look at these names I realize that only Jane and I are still alive. Even though it was a small membership, we managed to have good dances. I am sure a club like that would not be tolerated in a Catholic school nowadays, but at that time all we wanted was a club with girls we liked. At the end of our Senior year, we rented a cottage at Cedar Lake for a week. That was a real eye-opener for me because Mary Louise Getty told me about the birds and the bees. I was eighteen and I thought she didn't know what she was talking about and I never really liked her after that.

By the time we moved to Webb Street and the Howards lived overhead, I wanted to learn to dance and the best dancer I knew was Harry Howard. There was a program called "Make Believe Ballroom" on the radio every afternoon and I used to come in from school and turn on the radio and lie in wait for Harry as he tried to sneak up the back stairs. I grabbed him whenever I could and made him come in and dance with me and he never refused. When Harry danced with a girl, she knew exactly which direction he wanted to go. I never danced with a better partner. He was so good-natured. He had a model T Ford and one day he washed it and left it parked in the side yard. When he wasn't looking I used some pink paint to brighten up the wooden spokes on his wheels and he didn't even get mad about it. After the war, I arranged a date for Harry with Mae Austgen and eventually they married. Many years later, about 1967, dear Harry was shot and killed by a teenager while he was working as a railroad switchman. I felt that I had lost another brother. He was kinder to me than Bob and I could always wrap him around my little finger.

It must have been about 1938 when the Woolworth store downtown installed air conditioning. What excitement! You could wait for a bus right inside the front door providing you had made a purchase. I remember when my Grandmother Smith was visiting us and we went downtown, and into Woolworth's. While waiting for the bus, we bought frosted malteds for a nickel and they were delicious. The theaters were getting air conditioning now and the marquees sported large signs advertising the temperature inside. The Parthenon Theater was the nicest in town. It had a beautiful lobby with carpeting and furniture and a winding staircase going up to the balcony. There were box seats along the sides on the upper level and draperies and tassels decorated the walls. The restroom was not just utilitarian, it was elaborately decorated.

A music company issued a song sheet which cost a dime and had all the words to popular songs. The printing was of poor quality but these pink, yellows or green sheets were passed around and the words copied by everyone. We all knew the words to the songs and we sang them on the bus, in the bathroom and along with radio music and I can remember the words to almost all of the songs I grew up with. Young people today don't have to learn any words or even write them down because they all have records or tapes. None of my friends had a phonograph and we relied on the radio for music. Joe Radigan's father owned a furniture store, and at Christmas time his two young brothers kept music going in the store during the holidays. One year they bought a record changer; this was the first one I had seen and it was so hard to realize that the machine knew just when a record was finished so the arm could move aside to make room for another record to fall in place.

When I was a freshman I desperately wanted to use some lipstick. I didn't know anything about makeup and my mother never used anything but a little dab of powder. There was a lipstick called Tangee which resembled pink Vaseline. If it was applied and the shine wiped off, a tiny bit of color remained. No one knew anything about eye makeup, but somewhere during the high school years, someone discovered pancake makeup which we used generously resulting in mask-like faces. We wore saddle shoes and ski shoes. Ski shoes had square toes and thick rubber soles and at last we could wear anklets to school. We usually wore them over silk or rayon stockings in the winter and thank goodness the cotton stockings were a thing of the past. We now wore stockings with some shape to them, and I still wore a garter belt to hold them up but several of my friends wore the new Playtex rubber girdles which I was never able to tolerate.

All the time I was growing up I never knew a black person. By the time we moved to Webb Street and my father had a better job we had a colored lady named Ruby who came once a week to do the heavy cleaning. There were no colored children in All Saints School and it wasn't until my senior year at Central that two black girls began school there. They were two years behind me so I never got to know them, but they were good basketball players and reported to be good students. I never really came in contact with colored people until we

moved to Georgia. But we always referred to them as "colored people" and never used a derogatory name. My mother would not have tolerated that.

My mother kept her extra money under the rug between the kitchen and dining room on Webb Street. When she needed money for the store she just lifted up the corner of the rug and took it out. And we were not very security conscious. For years we didn't lock the doors and then for some reason we started locking the front door. It's pretty laughable when I think of it now, because after locking the door, we hung the skeleton key on a nail on the outside door frame! Later on we became even more cautious and became even more cautious and slipped the key under the door mat. I can't remember any incident of burglary or breaking and entering in any of our neighborhoods.

Our Webb Street neighborhood was a mixture of people and religions. The house next door was a Methodist Parsonage. The minister had been born and baptized Catholic, but he was "stolen away" by his Methodist aunts when his mother died and was raised Methodist and ended up in the ministry. His sisters used to come and visit every year and when they did, my mother took them to Mass with her. The house next door to the Methodists was occupied by a Jewish family. It was a large house with three generations occupying it. Grandpa Taussig owned it and I think his wife was still living when we moved on the block, but eventually both the old folks died, leaving two old maid sisters, Gussie and Edie and a married sister Bertha and her husband Arnold Loeffler and daughter Joann. Gussie did the cooking for the whole family and Edie held down a good job on the railroad. Arnold left the house every day but I have no idea what kind of work he did. All I remember is the way Gussie and Edie shouted at him at the top of their voices. Arnold was sweet and meek and very humble. He cut the grass and took good care of the yard. When Joann opened her mouth she roared. You wouldn't believe a child could make so much noise. She had a crush on Bob and always wanted him to "come and play, Bob." When she called him "Daddy Bob," he cringed. On the other side of our house there lived a Christian Science family. Mrs. Steinmetz was a real beauty--white hair, good figure and very stylish. They had a daughter named Phyllis Ann (Phyllis Ann was the original owner of the white wicker cabinet that all of our children have used.) They also had Gordon, who wanted to be a doctor, much to his mother's despair, and Rex, good looking with a little moustache when moustaches were rare. One Sunday morning we opened the newspaper and saw Mr. Steinmetz' obituary, so naturally my mother and I ran right over to see what had happened. The family was in the living room and when my mother asked what had happened, one of the boys said they thought it was a ruptured appendix but they had called in a reader from their church instead of a doctor.

About the most daring thing I did in High School was going out with Jane Etling, Joe Beckman, Lucian Lauerman and probably a couple of other kids to a roadhouse called The Green Shingle. They had offered to bring us home from a ball game at school and wanted to go someplace for a coke. This was a roadhouse out of town on the highway and it seemed like a nice place, but Jane and I suspected that we were not supposed to be frequenting a tavern and when I got home and told my mother she was not pleased. We took some teasing at school about it. It must have had a bad reputation, and I never went there again. For days I relived this excursion and I felt like a real daredevil! After a trip to The Green Shingle, Miller's Sweet Shop in East Chicago was pretty tame. Millers' was one of the main attractions about high school. I never went there alone, but many, many times with a boy. You could order any kind of a coke you wanted and I usually had either chocolate or lemon. The clerk squirted coca-cola syrup into a glass, added aerated water and then put in the flavor you wanted. Cherry cokes were the most popular and this was long before Dr. Pepper was invented.

The summer before my senior year I helped to teach young public school children Bible lessons. These children needed a summer program and somebody arranged to have it held in an old store on the East side of Hammond. I had the kindergarten children and I tried to teach them some catechism. I don't know how much they learned, probably not very much. This was how I spent part of that summer and I enjoyed it. I can't remember how I got there as we had no car and it was a pretty good distance from Webb Street. I suppose I walked the three or four miles there and back. Bus tickets were five cents and you could ride all over town and back on one ticket. You could get a transfer and change to another bus and the price remained the same. The sister in the high school office, Sister Cecile Patrice, must have had a private income because she always had an extra bus ticket or some money for any students who were in need. The poor nuns were badly underpaid. I

think they got the same salary as soldiers--\$21 a month, but they had to buy their own food. The parish and school did pay for the upkeep of the convent, however. No wonder the nuns were grateful when they got a bottle of cologne or a shawl or a pair of stockings for Christmas instead of a rosary, which was something children always wanted to give them.

Tom bought a black 1937 Ford around 1938. I don't know what happened to it but a couple of years later he and Bob bought a 1938 gray Plymouth in partnership. It wasn't long before Bob went to a Polish wedding in Blue Island, Illinois and on the way home he hit a tree and landed in the hospital in Chicago Heights with a broken collarbone. But the Plymouth was totaled. Then when Tom went into the Army early in 1941, Bob and my mother bought a maroon Chevrolet coupe in partnership. Later on when Tom saw it he said it was small enough to say "we haven't got room" and big enough to say "we'll squeeze you in." I must have these dates wrong or else there was another car between the Plymouth and the Chevy because when I was seventeen I started my driving lessons. Oh, what a painful process that was! At least for everyone who tried to teach me. Joe Radigan let me drive his car around the streets in Marquette Park and I ended up in a sand dune. Tom took me out a few times and once I nearly hit a cow that was crossing Columbia Avenue. Then he let me drive to Rensselaer and I did all right until we got into town and when I made an extremely wide left turn I hit the stop sign on the right side. I started to cry and jumped out of the car and even though the paint was scraped off the side of the car, Tom insisted I get behind the wheel and continue to drive. He was so patient! Bob would have hit the ceiling. I failed my first driving test and had to go back in a month. Then I passed the test and got my license. One time my mother took me out to Lincolnshire Country Club to give me a lesson and she taught me to "ride the clutch" instead of braking on the hills. I might still be doing that if I had a clutch to ride. Harry Howard also did his part--he taught me to hang my left shoulder out of the window and look in the rear, steering with my right hand and backing up, truck driver style. We used hand signals then; you put your arm out of the window and pointed left for a left turn and bent your elbow and pointed to heaven for a right turn. If the weather was rainy or snowy or just plain cold, it was uncomfortable to say the least.

During my senior year I realized that college was out of the question, finances being what they were. Mrs. Radigan offered to pay my tuition if I would work in one of the sorority houses waiting tables to pay my room and board, but my mother turned thumbs down at the thought of my being a waitress. So I changed from a science course aiming for a nursing career to a commercial course so I could work as a stenographer. As it turned out I became a receptionist and secretary but my shorthand failed me and I was all thumbs when it came to typing. I managed to make a living, but always in the back of my mind lurked a memory of nursing.

I attended every prom during my high school years, and even went to the one following graduation, but after that I went on to other interests. After our senior prom we drove to Chicago to the Blackhawk Lounge and following that, to the Radigan's house for breakfast. They had a new movie camera and one of the boys took our pictures. This was my first movie appearance and later on when I saw the movie I was somewhat disappointed. Joe Radigan and I had dated steadily during our school years and after we graduated, he went to Bloomington to Indiana University. I went there a few times for weekends or a dance, and when he came home he called and we went out and of course we were together during the summers, but with him out of the picture I expanded my social life and enjoyed it immensely.

Ed Portz had a party the summer after graduation and Bob arranged for me to go with Gordon Schmal. I don't know if we went together or if I met him there. I was just fresh out of high school and I was dying to go to a real grown-up party. Well, the guests--all in their late teens or early twenties--had the run of the house and it was a real eye-opener for me. My brother's friends were all drinking whiskey! Bob was drinking! To tell the truth I don't know if I had a drink or not--I suppose I did, but up until then I had only had a Tom Collins and I'm sure Ed Portz didn't have the ingredients for anything that complicated.

I gradually advanced to the local bar, Tropical Inn, which was the hangout for all of my friends. There was a small dance floor, a couple of booths and stools at the bar. The owners, Paul and Gil, dispensed wisdom with the drinks. Tropical was on Wentworth Avenue in Calumet City, only about three blocks from my house on Webb Street. The boys all went through a stage of drinking Peppermint Schnapps and then Cuba Libres but mostly it was Calvert and Coke at 10 or 15 cents a drink and the more daring tried Boilermakers--whiskey and

beer. When Jim McShane came home from college he took me out and we sat around a table and played drinking games, "The Prince of Wales" being the only one I can recall. Our activities all seemed to revolve around a bar or cocktail lounge, doing grown-up things, drinking, smoking and worrying our parents. Jim was what was called a "real character" because he did zany things, but it was hard to keep up with him because I was so strait-laced. Maybe I thought I would lose some of my primness by going out with him. Jim was absolutely without pretense and that's nice to remember. He wanted to marry me but my mother couldn't stand him or any of the McShanes. I had the reputation, at least among my friends and family of falling in and out of love within twenty four hours. It happened many times. I was probably in love with love and the idea of being in love and upon close examination I didn't like the idea after all.

New Year's Eve was a time for celebrations. Anyone who was anyone had a date and no one adopted a ho-hum attitude. There were formal dances and there were house parties. Wherever you went or whoever you went with, everyone stopped a minute or so after midnight (after kissing a crowd of people) and called home to wish their parents a Happy New Year. And since New Year's Day was a Holy Day and the first Mass at St. Joseph's Church was at 6:00 a.m., all the Catholics stayed up and took their dates to Mass, then home for a long sleep. I suppose I only did this for four or five years but I can still see all the bleary-eyed people coming into the church.

Movies were always our greatest entertainment. The theaters usually ran double features which could keep a person entertained for four or five hours. There was a list published by the Hays Office, I believe, and approved by the Catholic Legion of Decency that monitored all the movies. The listings were A, B, C, and Condemned. We were all allowed to see A movies, but the B movies were a little spicier and needed parents' approval. The theater didn't care, but the parents certainly did and in those days parents knew just about everything their children did. Nobody ever went to see a C movie and I never knew anyone who saw a condemned movie. Hedy LaMarr was naked in one but I never got to see it. I think *Gone with the Wind* was on the "C" list but by the time that was showing, I was out of high school and no longer reported all of my activities to my mother. The movie was not considered totally evil but that final line of Rhett Butler's was evidently the bad part. Of course Scarlett married at will so that might have been the cause for the C rating. Movies were a lot cleaner and much was left to the imagination, and there was very little violence. Also the tickets were a lot cheaper. When I was a girl a movie cost ten cents at the Calumet Theater and a quarter at the downtown theaters. Adults paid fifty cents downtown. I went to Chicago with Joe to see *Gone with the Wind* and the tickets were \$2.20, the extra 20 cents being a new entertainment tax by the government. This was the first movie I ever attended that required everyone to come at the beginning of the showing. Ordinarily you just bought a ticket and then began climbing over the people in the outer seats, all this while the movie was going on. On the plus side, though, you didn't have to leave the theater when the movie ended and you could stay through many more showings if you wanted to.

I graduated from Central in June, 1940, and took it easy for the summer. On looking back I guess my parents spoiled me. I never did any hard work around the house. I didn't know what it was to shovel coal or snow and I never took out the garbage or cut the grass. Bob scrubbed the kitchen and bathroom floors and Tom vacuumed the whole house and I did the dusting. Every night I set the table and the boys did the dishes. My mother must have been raising me to be a lady and marry a rich man. When the boys left home and I worked in the yard or washed the car, it was my choice and there was always a good chance some boy would come along and help me. My mother was not too anxious for me to get a job and enter the business world because I had really led a sheltered life for eighteen years. She just wanted me to enjoy the summer after graduation so I wasn't too eager about finding a job, but one day when I was in Brahos Coffee Shop Mrs. Brahos asked me if I would like to work there as a cashier. I said I would, not knowing all it would involve. Being a cashier also meant wiping and clearing tables, setting up tables and making change. Making change was the hard part, especially when the lunch hour was ending and several people lined up to pay their checks and they were all in a hurry. Luckily for me, that job didn't last long, because my mother went to see our singing dentist, Dr. Sullivan, and talked with his secretary, who told her the Lake County Business Bureau needed a girl. I went for an interview and was hired and I was able to quit the coffee shop. I think it was that summer while I worked at Brahos, that I took a thirty day program at the Hammond Business College. It was three hours every night. One class was devoted to Dale Carnegie's book, "How to Succeed in Business," and the other classes were typing

and shorthand. I absolutely hated shorthand and did poorly in it, but I managed to type a little better than I had done in high school. About this time I began to realize that I was not meant for the business world and I regretted my decision to change courses in my senior year. Too late for nursing, I thought. There was a young Chinese man in my class who seemed to be having trouble with typing. His name was Fred Chang and he was short and fat and very Chinese, but being a good neighbor I tried to help him with his English. Well, he became smitten with me and bombarded me with long love letters written in longhand in perfect English! He told me his life story, sent me a framed picture cut in cork, Chinese doilies and finally a subscription to a Chinese newspaper. Tom made quite a comedy out of that paper. When he came home for lunch he inquired, "Did my paper come yet?" and then he'd sit down and read it--making up stories in English as he turned the pages. Finally, he became worried about Fred the Chinaman and he met me at night at 9:00 when school let out because he wasn't sure if Fred would take me home with him. Fred wrote to me long after my month's schooling was over.

That summer after graduation, I started helping out at St. Vincent's Orphanage in Hammond. On Sunday afternoons some of us went to the orphanage and picked up a few children and took them to a movie and then out for ice cream or a treat of some sort. I think this was sponsored by the NCCW (National Council of Catholic Women) and I can't remember how long this went on, probably just for one summer. One time there was a photographer at the front of the theater as we came out and my picture appeared in The Hammond Times.

Christmas of 1940 found me working at the Lake County Business Bureau, and shortly after that, Tom and Ed Austgen joined the Army. The Selective Service System was in effect and they volunteered without waiting to be drafted. They signed up for one year and vowed to "go over the hill" when that year was up. I remember when they left the Monon Depot in Hammond with some other recruits. I left my office and walked to the depot to say goodbye to them.

I continued to work at the Bureau for over a year and then Harold Wagner, a lawyer in the office next door, offered me a job. I made \$58.00 a month at the Bureau and \$30 of it went at home to pay living expenses. I was making \$100 a month with Mr. Wagner and I was finally able to buy a lot of clothes instead of wearing homemades. My mother continued to make anything I couldn't find in the stores, however. Sometimes we wore twin sweater sets and since sweaters were all wool, they needed special care. Lux soap now came in flake form and it was the usual thing to "Lux your undies" every night. It seems like I always had stockings or underwear hanging from a little line in our bathroom. We discovered snoods to hold our hair back and all women, young and old, wore the everlasting "babushka" scarf all seasons.

Tom and Ed were stationed in Mississippi and they hated the Army. In April of 1941 Tom and Lee Austgen married in a big wedding in Dyer, Indiana. I was the maid of honor and it was a gala affair. But in December the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the plans for a rosy future had to be set aside. On December 7, 1941 Joe and I were with three other couples at the Radigan's beach house on Lake Michigan. We had gone there on Saturday afternoon and spent the night and on Sunday after wading in the icy cold lake, we played football and tag on the beach, cooked hot dogs and marshmallows and late in the afternoon we turned on the radio. When we heard the news of the attack we weren't frightened because from what we knew of the Japanese, they were little yellow men, monkey-like, copy cats and their country was just a tiny island. Somehow our knowledge of current events had been sadly neglected. The boys in our party kept saying it was just a skirmish and it would all be over in thirty days. Little did we know how threatening it really was. This spurred most of the boys into enlisting or signing up for some branch of the service. Tom was able to transfer to the Army Air Corps and pilot training, and Ed went into Officer's Candidate School which took three months to complete and these men were called "Ninety Day Wonders." Bob tried to enlist in the Marines but was rejected because the doctor said he had an enlarged heart. This nearly broke that heart because if there ever was a gung-ho kid, it was Bob. He tried again after a few months and this time a different doctor passed him and he was inducted into the Marine Corps. Little by little we realized that this was an actual war and it would not be over in thirty days. We were issued ration books with coupons for meat, sugar, shoes and gas. A person was allowed a certain amount of meat per month and when the coupons were gone, we ate eggs or Spam. We couldn't buy a tire without going to the ration board to get a coupon and this might take half a day. We saved bacon grease in a can and when it was full, we exchanged it at the butcher shop for a meat coupon. When you used up a tube of

toothpaste you rolled up the empty tube and took it to the store where you handed it to the clerk and bought another tube. There were stickers that you put on your windshield in order to get gas. If you had an "A" sticker, you got three gallons a week. "B" stickers were given to people who drove in car pools and "C" stickers were for doctors, ministers and people who produced war goods. The wartime speed limit was 30 miles an hour! Tires were so scarce that people sometimes bought an old car just to get the tires. Each family member had a ration book and each person was allotted 1/2 pound of sugar a week. Therefore many recipes were adjusted to use corn syrup and molasses. Another thing we saved was tinfoil. It came in gum, candy and cigarette packages and I am not sure just what we did with it but I imagine it was turned in to some collection place. We opened tin cans at both ends, flattened them out and put them in a box out at the curb for a city pickup. Silk stockings were impossible to get and nylons were relatively new and scarce. If they came into a store, you could only buy one pair at a time. There were counters set up in the store where you could have a run mended but the charge was 10 cents a stitch and if you had a wide run it might cost you \$1.50 to have it mended. Kenny Rundle was in the Air Corps and on a trip to Brazil he bought a pair of real silk stockings for me. Stockings came in sizes; for instance, I took a size nine. Unfortunately the stockings Ken brought were a size seven but I wore them anyway. There was a buyer in the hosiery department in the 12th Street Store named Joe Simon and he used to sell me a dozen pair of Phoenix nylons for a couple of dollars. At least my stocking worries were over. I had a lot of stockings and a lot of dates.

Due to my father's good job, times were much better financially, but I know my mother would have given up those "good times" just to have her boys back home again. Most of the boys in town were 1-A and in the service. The ones who were still around were either deferred because of their job or because of a health reason. Joe tried to get in every branch of service but his eyes were terrible so he was classified 4-F. Four-effers were usually embarrassed to go anyplace where there were men in uniform. When a serviceman came home on leave, his parents did everything they could to make his stay enjoyable, including the keys to the family car and all the money they could spare. So a girl was wined and dined for a week or ten days and then she had time to wash her hair and get ready for the next boy who called. When boys came home they all wanted to do something memorable so the one big thing was to go to Chicago to a stage play. I saw Oklahoma five times and The Student Prince four times. We went to cocktail lounges and nightclubs in Chicago that featured Artie Shaw, Glen Miller, Dick Jurgens, Harry James, Bob Crosby and Vaughn Monroe. Anyone in uniform got special treatment and it was especially nice to go with an officer.

Occasionally there was blackout practice, although people in Hammond never really thought there would be an air strike there. I remember turning out the lights and sitting on the front porch, waiting for the sirens, signifying the drill was over. Car lights were turned off and also the street lights and it was very, very dark. One time Tom happened to be home on leave when there was a drill and he sat on the porch and lit a cigarette and we all shouted at him to put it out!

When Bob went into the Marines my parents received a lot of literature from the Corps, letting them know what a terrific outfit they were and enclosing a decal that said "This is the Home of a United States Marine." My mother put it on the glass in our front door and when Tom came home on leave he looked at it and said "Sooo, this is the home of a United States Marine." That sounds pretty simple now, but at the time I suppose he wondered why it was not also the home of an Army Air Corps Officer. He used to say "Give Bob a medal and enough to eat and he'll be happy."

Fritz Gericke was a friend from school and he worked for the Tim Cloghessy Construction Company, but Fritz was going into the Navy and he asked me if I wanted his job. Of course I did--it paid a lot more than I was getting. So I quit Mr. Wagner and went to work for Tim at \$165 a month. Now I was sitting pretty. I bought a fur coat and I had a charge account at a nice store in Hammond. This was the fall of 1943. On Christmas Eve when Fritz was home on leave, Tim wanted us to run errands for him. He asked us to go to ten churches in Chicago, light a candle and deposit \$5 in each vigil light stand. We did as he requested, but then had to drive back to Hammond late in the day. It had started to snow and the traffic was terrible around the Union Station because so many servicemen were trying to get home for Christmas. The police stopped every car at an intersection, asked where the driver was going and told him he'd be doing a boy a big favor if he could

take him home. I don't think anyone refused under those circumstances. After all, each of those drivers probably had a son who was also trying to get someplace.

There was a daily column in the Hammond Times, reporting the latest news of servicemen. It told of schools completed, transfers, and those missing or killed in action. The first death that really touched me was Mickey Dermody. Mickey was one of the characters in our grade school Mother Goose play. He was red headed and freckled and just didn't seem old enough to be in the Army, let alone die in war. He was eighteen. Just about every house had a small flag with a blue star hung in the front window. This told the world that you had a household member in the service. On some flags the blue stars were replaced with gold.

My dear friend Gerry Poole was engaged to Bob. This was in 1942. She worked in the catalog order department of Sears. At that time Sears in Hammond was just a tiny store. They didn't sell appliances and most of their merchandise was hardware or material to replace or repair some farm equipment. But they did have a catalog department. Gerry was not happy at Sears and was plainly looking for another job. I was working for Harold Wagner at that time and he was also on the Draft Board, which was the Selective Service System. He told me they were looking for a girl for that office so I told him about Gerry and she came to the office for an interview and he hired her. The Draft Board was in the basement of the Post Office building, right next door to the FBI office. One day Gerry called and told me there were two new FBI agents in the office and she had a date with one of them for the next night and she wanted me to go out with the other one. I jumped at the chance but I told her I couldn't go out until after 9:00 because I had volunteered to sell War Bonds and Stamps at Penney's. The next evening I went to Penney's and dressed up in my costume. I was to wear blue satin striped pants, a red coat with tails and a top hat to represent Uncle Sam. I really wanted to be Miss Liberty because she wore a white gown and had a crown on her head. Our job was to walk through the store, selling War Stamps for a dime, or a corsage of stamps for a dollar. These corsages were made of stamps individually wrapped in cellophane and then gathered together with ribbons. As I wandered around in my striped pants I did a pretty good business. Then two young men came in and talked with me, asking the price of the stamps and then they asked about buying a bond. I sent them up to the office and when they came back they continued to flirt with me. At 9:00 I took off my costume and went home and told my mother about these two cute fellows. I knew they wanted to ask me out but I didn't encourage them because I had this darned date with the G-Man. So I changed my clothes and got ready for Gerry to arrive with the boys and when the doorbell rang I answered it and there stood Gerry with the two boys from Penneys'. I nearly fainted. And that was the beginning of a beautiful friendship. These fellows didn't have a real home because they were from out of town. My escort, Ted Renne, was from Minnesota and they had rented a room in the home of a doctor in South Hammond. They were about five or six years older than Gerry and me. They took all of their meals out, so every time I had a date with Ted it involved dinner in a restaurant. They also had no car so we went everywhere in a taxi. It was a lot of fun and I dated him right up to the time I got married. He told me one time that he was working in Gary in the "Red Light District" and I, ignorant in the ways of the world, had to ask for an explanation, which he gave me.

Gerry and I were going to be Nurse's Aides during the war. We attended classes two nights a week, from six until ten. We had to put in eighty hours of class time and when we completed the course we either bought or made our uniforms. I loved wearing that uniform. It consisted of a light blue denim pinafore, white shirt and white shoes and stockings. We got our caps when we graduated from the classroom and we felt oh! so important going to work two nights a week. The registered nurses were skeptical about us because they feared that somewhere down the line we would take over their jobs. Gerry and I really wanted to go into the Cadet Nurse Corps, from which we would graduate as registered nurses and enter some branch of military service as an officer. And in January of 1944 we went to St. Bernard's Hospital in Chicago to try to enter the program, only to be told the Sister in charge of cadet nurses was gone for the day so we came home, disappointed. The next program would not start for another three months.

The Red Cross had a group of "Gray Ladies" who rolled bandages at the Civic Center. The volunteers went in and picked up bundles of gauze and either rolled it or cut it in squares and packaged it to be ready for sterilizing. There were many women who went every day to do this but I tried it and found it so boring that I only went a few times. I worked at the USO (United Services Organization) in the Old Indiana Hotel for a

while. This was in the ballroom on the second floor of the hotel. I worked on Sunday mornings when I could arrange to go to an early Mass. The boys who came in were usually waiting between trains and would be there for a few hours. They could shave and shower and get a bite to eat while waiting to make connections. I remember one time when Bob was on leave he stopped to clean up at the USO before coming home to his family. He was always so persnickety about his appearance and didn't want to be seen in his traveling clothes. He probably shined his shoes, too. We used to say that even when he had no soles in his shoes, the uppers were shined to a high gloss.

With both of her boys gone, my mother lived in dread of a letter from the War Department, but all I could think of was a Room Of My Own. All the time I was growing up that was my greatest desire, and if not a room, then at least my own bed. It seems we always ended up with a two bedroom house and my father and brothers slept in one room and my mother and me in the other. There was one large dresser in our room and I had the bottom drawer for my clothes. During my high school years when girls spent the night with each other and it was my turn, my mother used to sleep on the studio couch so my friend and I could sleep together. It wasn't until both of my brothers entered Military service that I had the bed and room to myself. I painted the walls pink, bought a small dressing table, put a ruffled skirt on it and then Joe raided his dad's store to get a large wall mirror, a three way mirror for the dressing table and a flowered boudoir chair. I really felt special. I could read in bed or write letters any time I wanted to. My wardrobe was growing by leaps and bounds. A day off work was often spent in Chicago and the traditional meeting place was under the clock at Marshall Field's. We had a Marshall Field's Special for a dollar in the Walnut Room or the Narcissus Room and then ended up in Field's basement store, looking for bargains. Sometimes I met a girl friend, sometimes a boy friend. It was an exciting time.

Travel was dreadful during the war. There were no reservations and the railroads sold as many tickets as a train would hold. I don't mean tickets for seats, I mean tickets for aisles and lavatories and nooks and crannies. You bought a ticket, fought your way through the crowd and if there were no empty seats, you put your suitcase down in the aisle and sat on it. Most of the travelers were young people, either servicemen or their wives and girl friends. It was a dusty way to travel since there was no air conditioning and the windows were open all of the time in the summer and occasionally in the winter. When Bob was stationed in Norman, Oklahoma with the Marines, I went to visit him for a weekend. The train was terribly crowded, as usual, but I discovered a nice restroom and lounge in another coach. It was a coach with roomettes or bedrooms and offered a place to sit and sort out my makeup with no one hammering on the door. I found it unoccupied so I brushed my hair, repaired my makeup and then I heard a click! in the door. When I tried to open it I found that I was locked in. I pounded on the door, called for help and did a bit of praying before someone finally heard me and called the porter who wanted to know what I was doing there. I was locked in for about an hour. This was a setback in my attempt to be adventurous and served to make me more cautious than ever.

Because of the open windows, a steam engine would throw out black smoke and chunks of soot which of course came into the windows as we barreled along the tracks. By the time a person reached her destination, she was ready for a bath. One time I was sitting with a young soldier and as we neared the station, he offered me the use of his washcloth so that I could wash my grimy, sandaled feet. I gladly accepted his offer. What kindness! I never had to sit on a suitcase very long because a boy usually offered his seat to a girl. (Those good manners again!)

Girls were all wearing their favorite uniform--"sloppy joe" sweaters and a string of pearls. A New York debutante named Brenda Frazier wore an outfit like that, so every girl in the nation followed suit. We all wore skirts because ladies' slacks were unheard of. I used to wear an old pair of Bob's pants when I washed the car or worked in the yard, but I didn't have any of my own.

There was such a terrible restlessness about this time. Servicemen were coming and going, families were disrupted and moving and people just seemed to be living from day to day. While Gerry and I continued to talk about the Cadet Nurse program, something else happened. She met Doran Johnson on a trip to Florida, accepted his marriage proposal and came home and broke her engagement to Bob. As I mentioned before, Gordon Schmal was a friend of Bob's. I never really "met him." He was just always there. He was one of a

group of boys who were unemployed in 1940 and 1941. They all hung around Chubby's gas station on the corner of Hohman and Williams Street. They all talked and joked with me when I went in to buy gas but none of them ever figured romantically in my mind. Bob was working at Lever Brothers so he didn't hang around the station as much as the others. Gordon and I had a couple of dates before he went into the Air Corps, and then we went out when he graduated from Flying School. When he went overseas I added his name to my mailing list. He was not gone long when I received a letter from him, telling me his true feelings and asking me to marry him. I was stunned because I only thought of him as a friend and I wrote and told him so. He refused to be discouraged and when he came home in March of 1944, resplendent in his uniform with new First Lieutenant bars on his shoulders--how could I resist? I capitulated and married him two weeks later. This was the most daring and risky venture of my life.

During the war there was a shortage of white fabric and with countless marriages in every corner of the land (it was almost an epidemic) brides were having a hard time finding wedding dresses. Because of this, airmen began bringing their parachutes home for their brides. An ingenious dressmaker could take a parachute apart and turn it into a wedding dress. Tom's wife, Lee, and I went to Chicago and shopped from one store to another, looking for something white. I had only two weeks to buy my trousseau but I finally found a beautiful ivory satin gown at Saks Fifth Avenue and I felt very lucky to get it. There were simply no white clothes. I couldn't buy white slips or underwear so everything was pink or blue. It was impossible to buy an electrical appliance of any kind and our wedding gifts were mostly linens or crystal. We received thirteen blankets and a lot of crystal goblets and wine glasses. My mother gave us an iron that she had never used and counting my little Bendix radio, we had two appliances. Silverware was not available and good pots and pans were non-existent, and the automobile industry was now making tanks and jeeps so there were no new cars.

We were married at All Saints' Church on Easter Monday and the reception was held at Lake Hills Country Club. Most of the guests were older people, friends of our parents, because all of our friends were in the service and scattered all over the world. Jean Lacy came to be my maid of honor and Ralph Schmal was Gordon's best man. Father Mungovan said the Mass and married us, and gorgeous Tom Doolin sang the Ave Maria. Gordon had an R & R (Rest and Recuperation) coming, so we moved into the Lord Tarleton Hotel on Miami Beach, Florida and stayed there for three weeks.

We were only there a few days when I got a letter from my mother, telling me Tom was missing in action. My father had received the telegram from the War department the morning of my wedding, but he didn't tell anyone until the day was over. There were so many military men in our hotel who assured me that Tom would be kept prisoner, and a few of them told me how they had escaped capture and got back to England. I was so sure that he was alive that it was a shock when, three months later, my father wrote that Tom had been declared dead by the War Department. He said there would be a memorial service and said it wasn't necessary to come home, and like a fool, I stayed in Panama City instead of going home to Hammond to give my mother emotional support. I have always regretted it and my mother probably never forgave me. A few months after that, we received a letter written by a German and sent to my aunt in England. Tom must have had her address in his pocket. This German wrote that he had seen the plane go down and he and his friends ran to it but it was in flames and the crew were all dead. They buried the boys in a common grave and notified the authorities. Five years later Tom was brought back to Hammond and we had a funeral in All Saints' Church. He was laid to rest in Elmwood Cemetery in Hammond.

After three weeks in Miami Beach, Gordon got orders for Panama City, Florida and he put me on a train for Hammond while he went to his new assignment. It was only a couple of weeks until he found a room in a private home with a family named Cooper, so I went back to Florida. We only stayed there a few weeks and the local priest, Father McGovern, told us about his neighbor, Mrs. Rowe, who had a room for rent. We moved in and regretted it almost immediately. We had a small bedroom, and shared the bathroom with the landlady, her two terrible children and another couple. We were allowed "kitchen privileges" which consisted of using one shelf in the refrigerator and the use of the kitchen for breakfast. The rent was \$12.50 a week. One morning Gordon had to fly at 4:00 and I was out of bread so I borrowed two slices from Mrs. Rowe's loaf and when I got up again at 8:00 she confronted me with the fact that I had "stolen" two slices of bread. She must have counted it before she went to bed! Naturally, I denied it, but we left shortly after that.

There was a housing development going up about twelve blocks from downtown called the Annie B. Sale Park. I don't know who Annie B. Sale was, but she was a lifesaver. However, in order to get an apartment you had to have a war job and because servicemen were not considered war workers, dear Father McGovern suggested I go to the USO to look for employment. I was hired and I worked there doing a bit of typing and filing and answering the phone and, in between I learned how to make milkshakes. I worked 17 hours a week and was paid 50 cents an hour. The fringe benefits were great--all the ice cream I could eat and all the young male companionship I could tolerate. We moved our clothes into a small apartment and then had to buy furniture. I remember that furniture--we got a white wicker settee, a table and two large chairs for \$39! The buildings were barracks-type and pretty basic, but they were private. The Sullivans lived in the next-door apartment. They were rural people, kind of hillbilly, with seven sweet children. The parents were kind and gentle and Mrs. Sullivan used to say "Mary, you can be purr without bein' trashy." This was after hearing another neighbor yell at her kids "I'll cut the blood out of you, I'll beat you till you're blood and bone!" I don't think Mrs. Korus ever said anything like that to her children. Of course she spoke Greek so maybe she said something even worse.

I had never seen kerosene stove before, but I learned how to operate one. The eternal icebox was there and also a water heater which had no regulator. I lit it one day and forgot to shut it off and when it overheated, two hot pads on the top caught fire. There were no laundry facilities so I washed everything in the kitchen sink, including the sheets and khaki uniforms. I had pants stretchers for the uniform pants but they had to be starched and ironed. My mother had plainly not prepared me for this life.

While we were living in Annie B. Sale Park I became very bored and needed something to do during the day and the few hours I spent at the USO did not fill up my time. Gordon worked all day and when he was home he was content to read, but I craved people and action, and since I was a Nurse's Aide I decided to do some volunteer work at the Panama City Hospital. It was downtown and when I told them I would be a volunteer they welcomed me with open arms. It was the worst place I ever saw. This "hospital" was situated in two old ramshackle houses right next door to the Marie Hotel. It was run by a Dr. Watson and his son. I thought I would just do things that I did in the Hammond hospital, take temperatures and straighten covers, but as it turned out the "staff" expected me to do real nurse's work. I kept telling them I didn't know how, but one day I was told to assist at a tonsillectomy. I had never been in surgery anywhere but I did as I was ordered. My job was to hold the patient's head with a hand over each ear while a nurse administered ether. In those days, and at that hospital, they inverted a small funnel over the patient's nose and slowly dribbled ether from a bottle into the funnel. On looking back, I believe there must have been some gauze inside the funnel to keep the patient from drowning. Now this particular patient was a large, red haired woman and she was never completely anesthetized because she wiggled and squirmed all through the operation and there I stood at the head of the table, holding on to her ears and pulling her towards me as she struggled to go in the opposite direction. Every once in a while, when her knees reached the end of the table, the doctor stopped everything and the whole nursing crew grabbed her and hoisted her back to her original position on the table. As if this wasn't bad enough, repulsive old Dr. Watson kept a cigar in his mouth during the entire procedure. I won't go so far as to say he was smoking it, but it never left his mouth. Talk about a sterile environment! I was absolutely appalled and I never went back. When we lived in Colorado Springs I discovered that Ouida Miller, our next door neighbor, was born in that very same hospital in Panama City and not only that--Dr. Watson had delivered her!

I made many trips from Florida to Hammond, in spite of the difficult travel accommodations. The first trip I made was after my honeymoon and I was on a train going to Chicago. A group of sailors walked through the coach and I was conscious of one of them turning around. He looked at me and said "Mary?" and I looked up and saw Frank Schmal!

He hadn't been able to come to the wedding but now he was on his way home from Puerto Rico on leave from the Coast Guard. The fellow I was sitting with got up and let Frank have his seat. I hardly knew Frank because he was a couple of years younger than I and he traveled with a different crowd. I had wired ahead for Ralph to pick me up but no one knew Frank was coming so when we came into the station Ralph was surprised to see Frank and it was a good homecoming for both of us. This was just the first of five trips I made from Florida.

On another trip I remember, I had a suitcase that Gordon gave me for a wedding gift and I must have had it packed with everything I owned because it was terribly heavy. I was sitting with a nice young serviceman and when we pulled into Dothan, Alabama, we had to run for the next train. The porter advised us to by-pass the station and make a run for the train to Chicago. When I tried to pick up my suitcase the handle came off. My comrade, young and strong, hoisted it onto his shoulder and I took his AWOL bag and off we went, hopping across the tracks to our train. I met a lot of nice people while traveling and I knew I could trust everyone.

We hadn't been in Panama City very long when Gordon had to buy a car. This was a really tough job, and he had to go to Pensacola to find one. He bought a 1938 blue Dodge sedan. At some time the interior had burned, because all of the little knobs on the dashboard were reduced to cinders. The blue outside was obviously the second or third coat of paint. Gordon felt lucky to find this gem but he had a flat tire on the way home. It took almost a half day at the ration board to get a coupon to buy a new tire. Even retreads required a coupon. At some time we sold the Dodge and went home on the train and while we were there, we bought a used Buick. Then we drove back to Florida, developed car trouble and stopped in Nashville for the night. We got a room in a hotel and when I went into the bathroom I saw my very first waterbug! It was so big I heard it before I saw it. This Yankee girl had never seen anything but ants and flies and fireflies, and Gordon was no help--he didn't know what it was, either.

As I said before, I never had any contact with colored people and when we moved to Panama City I realized just how prejudiced people can be. Panama City was a small resort town that suddenly grew out of proportion due to the government shipyard that came into being when war threatened. At the store where I bought my white wicker furniture the salesman, a fairly young white man, sounded off about "niggers," and told me if he walked down the street in front of a store and a "nigger" came toward him, he, the salesman, could order him off the sidewalk and into the street. I just couldn't believe it, but later on when I saw black people going to the back of the bus and saying "yessuh" to the bus driver, and saw the separate drinking fountains for colored and white, I began to realize just how tough black people had it. In Hammond I never knew any colored people so I couldn't see how they were treated.

After several months I heard about a new subdivision going up on the beach and we rented a duplex that was roomy and modern. It was a brick building and it had a gas stove and a refrigerator. I felt like I had rejoined the human race. At that time the beach along the gulf was virtually uninhabited, except for a few bait shops and some souvenir stands. The sand in our front yard came right up to the door as there were no sidewalks and every day I swept lots of sand out of the apartment. The name of the subdivision was Gulf Shores and it was the only housing on Panama City Beach. The sand was so white and abundant. We could walk out the front door and cross the highway and go right into the Gulf of Mexico. There was not one blade of grass in the entire subdivision. We traded in the wicker furniture for new things and settled in. The beach was part of the "open range" and animals roamed at will. One night I wakened to some rattling in the back yard so I got up and looked out the door and a huge head appeared on the other side of the screen and roared "MOOOOOO!"

I remember when we heard that President Roosevelt had died, we spent all evening listening to tributes from World leaders. We knew that the end of the war was in sight and we didn't know when it would happen but the services were starting to release the men, and that meant I could finally go home. When I look back on my first year or two of marriage I wonder what I did all day. I know I wrote to my mother every day. The loneliness was indescribable. I ached for the security and familiarity of Hammond. I had no car while Gordon was at work, no telephone, no friends, no sewing machine, no mother. I suppose it was out of desperation that I sought work in the hospital and then it was to keep a roof over our head that I went to work in the USO. But even that job did not provide me with an escape from boredom. Because of Gordon's persistence I learned to play gin rummy and later on, bridge. I was never interested in either game and therefore, never good at it. It always seemed such a waste of time. I knew that I needed something more in my life and when I realized that I was going to have a baby I could hardly contain my excitement. I was finally going to have someone to play with!

When we left Florida for the last time, we loaded the Buick and headed for home. We left in July and moved in with my parents because apartments were scarce and Gordon got a job at Lansing Airport as a mechanic but it only lasted two days. One evening in August Gordon and his dad went fishing and while they were gone we heard on the radio that the war was over. We immediately started out for St. Joseph's Church to give thanks. As my mother and I walked down Hohman Avenue we could see people coming out of their houses all the way; the sidewalks were full, the bells all over town were ringing. Horns were honking and there was general jubilation. Everyone was so glad that it was over. When we got to the church, which was filling up by that time, Father Jansen began the Mass and we were all singing patriotic songs and there wasn't a dry eye in the church. Even now as I write this I remember the emotion of that hour and I am almost overcome. And when the bombs were dropped on Japan no one questioned the morality of it, whether it was right or wrong. All we knew was that the war was over and no one cared how many Japanese died. All we cared about was the fact that the American boys would soon be home.

After Gordon quit his airport job he went to work for the Wonder Bread Company. He was called a "salesman" but he was really a delivery man. He had to be pleasant to some store owners he couldn't stand. He had to get up at 4:00 a.m. to load the truck and start his rounds. We had found a nice apartment on May Street and bought some furniture and moved out of my parents' house. But we were only there for six weeks when he decided to go to college so once again we sold our furniture, this time to Ed and Opal Austgen. They needed an apartment and the best way to get one was to buy the furniture from the present tenant and just move in. I think landlords liked this too, because it prevented a lot of wear and tear on the floors if the furniture stayed where it was. We moved back in with my parents, Gordon quit his Wonder Bread job and went to work on the railroad, enrolled in Parks Air College in Cahokia, Illinois and in January of 1946 he left for his freshman year. I stayed with my parents and Mollie was born February 28. It happened on a Thursday evening as we listened to the usual fare of mystery and detective stories on the radio, and about 9:00 p.m. I drove my Mother to the hospital. She parked the car while I admitted myself, and Mollie was born about midnight. Gordon had arrived about fifteen minutes before I went into the delivery room. I was so thrilled with Mollie. I took my first look at her and it was like looking in a mirror. She seemed to be my double. The doctor and hospital each charged \$100 and I stayed in the hospital for seven days. On the fifth day I was allowed to dangle my feet and on the sixth day I got out of bed.

After Mollie's birth we went back to Webb Street and Gordon went back to school. About six weeks later he found a place for us to live in Dupon, Illinois. I call it a "place" because it certainly wasn't an apartment. It was unthinkable that I could live in a place like that, but I did. It consisted of two back bedrooms in an old farmhouse. There was no kitchen and no bathroom. The room that eventually became the kitchen was about six feet wide and maybe ten feet long. An old black kerosene stove took up almost half of one wall. It was very, very black and stood on high legs. It had three burners and one did not work. It had no oven. There was a tiny icebox, complete with the ice pan underneath and there was no sink. There was a tiny alcove, probably meant as a dressing table area originally, because there was a mirror over it. The landlord planned to someday install a sink. In the meantime, I used bathroom water for cooking, washing and filling Mollie's bottles. I washed dishes in a dishpan, then carried everything into the bathroom and rinsed them under running water in the bathtub. It was all very primitive. There were three chairs, two for the kitchen table and one which was a bit larger. We had no closet so everything we owned hung from the back of the doors. There were lots of mice and one big rat. I used to dry Mollie's little knit things on a paper under her bed because that was the only unused space in the rooms. One day I noticed little black paw prints all over the sweaters and I told the landlady about it and she was quite casual in telling me that they had a rat that came in every year. This was upsetting enough but what followed nearly gave me heart failure. Mollie was on a Carnation milk formula and I bought it by the case and kept it in the basement. This particular section of the basement was unfinished; it had a dirt floor and sort of a concrete shelf along one wall. On this shelf I stored all of the canned goods and kitchen and washing supplies. My mother had sent me a lot of homemade jams and jellies and on this day when I went down to get a can of milk for the formula there was a huge rat running along this shelf. This was the first and only time I ever saw a rat. He had knocked all the jars off the shelf and eaten everything, including a box of Argo starch! I ran back upstairs, grabbed my baby and went to Krogers to buy a can of milk. I stopped at the Post Office and complained to the Postmaster, who was our landlord and he was almost as casual about the rat as his wife had

been. I was never comfortable after that. There was a small hole under Mollie's crib and I just knew that rat prowled around as soon as I went to sleep.

Mrs. Beale, the landlady, asked me if I wanted to take over her job as "society editor" for the Dupo news in the East St. Louis paper. The title was a misnomer because all I did was call certain gossips every Monday morning and ask if they had been traveling, or had company or if they knew anyone who had a wedding or birth in the family. There were some women who always had a little newsy tidbit for me. Then I typed up the news in flowery language (the radiant bride came down the aisle on the arm of her father), described the gown and the decorations and sent it in to the paper. That editor chopped it up and the finished article might say "Betsy Jones married John Smith Thursday." I was paid ten cents an inch and while I might send in fifty inches, the newspaper cut it down to two or three. It was poor pay but kind of fun to talk to someone every week, since I didn't know anyone and had nothing to do but take care of Mollie. At this time we were living on the G.I. Bill pay of \$75 a month. In the year I lived in Dupo I went to one movie. However I still had the little white Bendix radio my brothers had given me and I began to listen to soap operas. I listened to "David Harum," "Our Gal Sunday," "Backstage Wife," "Helen Trent," and many others. They were fifteen minute programs. I soon became a soap opera addict. It was sometime that first year that the government raised the G.I. bill to \$90 a month and this helped a lot Our rent was \$25 a month.

There was an old treadle sewing machine stored in a hallway between our kitchen and the common bathroom. I heard about feed sacks that you could buy at a local hardware store for 25 cents each. I decided to buy some and make a slipcover for the one horrible little chair in our kitchen. I learned how to sew on that machine and using a few feed sacks, I made my first slipcover. I was not very proud of it but it gave me something to do all day. Dupo was a lonely time for me, and because it was such a small town, people all knew each other and weren't anxious to make friends with someone who was going to move on when her husband finished school. I really felt blessed to have my Mollie. My mother came to visit for a week and she must have had a hard time hiding her dismay at the conditions her little girl lived in.

We lived in that place for a year and then the Beales asked us to move because Mollie made so much noise at night. Somehow she just never understood about nighttime sleeping. She jumped and bounced and shouted or cried most of the night. I was relieved and glad to leave that place. I went back to Hammond and stayed with my parents for a couple of months and then Gordon found a place in Cahokia. It was on Mildred Avenue and it was a bungalow that had been converted into two apartments with one bathroom in the middle. A couple and their two children lived on one side and we were on the other. We had a bedroom, kitchen and sort of a living-room hallway. There was a lot of traffic in that bathroom and a lot of mice in the whole house. After about six weeks we found a four-room house in Cahokia. It was owned by a local man who had married an Italian girl but she developed tuberculosis and couldn't come into this country, he said. So he rented it to one of the instructors at the college, who furnished it and wanted to sublet it, keeping one bedroom for himself when he wanted to stay in Cahokia. We rented it from the instructor and it was like pure Paradise! There was a washing machine in the basement and a refrigerator in the kitchen. Al and Katie Fowler were only two blocks away and many's the time they would arrive on their bike with Becky on the handlebars. They were the only students we knew with transportation. This only lasted six weeks because the owner told us his wife had been either cured or misdiagnosed, and she was coming to live with him. That was the end of Shangri-La for us. But it accomplished a very important thing for me--I had found a friend! We have remained good friends with Al and Katie Fowler over the years.

Once again I packed up Mollie and went back to Hammond and the security of my family. We had several things we couldn't take to Hammond and one of our former neighbors from Dupo said we could store them in her attic until we could find another place. Sometime in January of 1948, Gordon found another place, this time a room about 12' x 15' in East St. Louis. We hung sheets on a clothesline across the middle of the room and the beds, ours and Mollie's, were on one side and on the other side (the living room section) there were two side chairs (not upholstered) and an end table and a cardboard wardrobe. There was a tiny little area that we called the kitchen--it had a three burner hotplate and a tiny sink, a tiny icebox and a tiny table with two chairs. We could bring Mollie's high chair up to the table at mealtime but when it was not in use we kept it in the shower stall on top of a galvanized tub which we used for her bath. It was primitive but at least we didn't

have to share the bath and we knew the end was in sight. We had paid the former tenant \$200 for the furniture in order to get the apartment, and when we left we followed the same routine and got our \$200 back. The apartment building was located on the city sidewalk and people waited for the bus right under our window. I hit the streets every day, pushing Mollie in her stroller, just to get out of that room. I did have a couple of friends in the building, but they worked and their husbands were also students. Luckily for me, we only stayed there for four months because Tommy was due the end of June and Gordon was going to graduate from college about that time. The doctor said I could not stay for graduation and travel safely to Hammond or wherever Gordon happened to get a job. Katie had the same problem. Her Tommy was due about the same time. So sometime in April Katie went home to her mother and I went back to Hammond. Gordon got out of school and went back into the Air Force and was sent to Rantoul, Illinois. Katie's Tommy was born a month early and I waited and waited for mine to arrive.

When Mollie was sixteen months old she was pretty verbal. No matter what you asked her to say, she could repeat it. So when Frank Schmal and Connie Herbert went to Crown Point to get their marriage license, Mollie and I went along for the ride and they had a good time asking her to repeat long and difficult words and she attempted every one. They were married July 24, 1948 and Gordon came home to act as best man. While I managed to get to the wedding, I began to have contractions before it was over and Gordon took me to the hospital about midnight. Tommy was born at 2:30 a.m. By this time the doctor was charging \$125.

Gordon went back to Rantoul that same day, and five days later I went home to my mother.

When Tommy was about three or four weeks old, Gordon found a house in Ludlow, Illinois. Since we had no furniture the landlady lent us a bedroom set and a couch. I found a library table and two large chairs at a used furniture store and I painted the pieces green. We had a foot locker and a toy chest, Mollie's little table and chairs and we bought our first appliances, a Maytag wringer washer, a stove, a refrigerator and a sewing machine. I could finally cook and sew whenever I wanted to. We also had two baby beds, two small chests, a stroller, a baby buggy and a playpen. This was a new house and the yard had not been landscaped or sodded so I kept Mollie indoors rather than let her out in the mud. Connie and Frank, Bob and his fiancée Madeleine Ratajack, the Fowlers and our parents visited us while we lived there. I know my mother was relieved to finally see me in better surroundings. When it rained, the water filled the coal bin and the furnace was just about flooded, but discounting the water in the basement and the mud in the yard, I felt like I had rejoined the human race. Gene Blanton was a classmate of Gordon's and he and Nancy became our close friends and have remained so through the years. They had a little girl, Linda, and she had not been baptized so when Nancy, who was Catholic, decided to have her baptized, she asked us to be the godparents by proxy. We did such a good job that we became godparents for their next five children!

In November of 1948 Bob and Madeleine were married in St. Victor's Church in Calumet City, Ill. It was a big wedding and all of their friends attended--the servicemen were all home and things were getting back to normal. Gordon finished weather school the next spring and he was assigned to Wold-Chamberlain Airport in Minneapolis as meteorologist to a reserve detachment. I was happy about the move as I had a lot of relatives there. I asked my Aunt Therese to find a house for us and she did--a darling little four room cottage across from the church. It was small, but we were able to buy more furniture, and it was quite comfortable. By this time Laura was on the way and we did need something larger so we moved to a three-bedroom house in Richfield, Minnesota. Laura was born December 23, a month late, and Tommy was 17 months and still in the playpen, so when my mother arrived to help me, the first thing she did was rescue Tommy and put the playpen in the basement. He was such a good baby and a darling little boy. He was good natured, agreeable and no trouble at all. When he learned to talk he was so different from Mollie at his age. He was totally incoherent. He was such a little towhead that the neighbors in Minneapolis thought he was a true Swede.

Gordon got orders for Korea late that summer and I planned to stay in Richfield but both grandmothers rose up in arms and insisted I bring the children back to Hammond. I had gone to the doctor to see if I was again pregnant and just as Gordon was leaving for war, the phone rang and a lab technician told me the rabbit had died. Robbie was due the next May and this was October so I had a long hard winter ahead of me. Mollie was four, Tommy was two and Laura was ten months. The Schmals had turned their house into a duplex and Connie

and Frank lived on one side so I rented the other side. It was nice to live close to relatives. My parents were just on the next street so I spent a lot of time with them and Bob helped me a lot. He loved the children. About a month before Robbie was born, Mollie brought chickenpox home from kindergarten and two weeks later, Tommy and Laura got it. They were covered from head to toe and scratched all the time. My mother came over every evening and spent the night with Tommy, covering him with calamine lotion in an attempt to keep him from scratching and making scars. I had Laura in my bed, doing the same thing. I had never had chickenpox and I was due to deliver at any moment so I was worried that I might get it and be quarantined in the hospital. I never got the chickenpox and Robbie finally made his appearance May 29. Connie came in to stay with the children and Bob drove me and my mother to the hospital. Robbie was born about three in the morning and I stayed in the hospital for seven days. This was a bicentennial year for Hammond and there was a "Brothers of the Brush" contest going on in the city, with the men growing beards to see whose would be the longest. Well, one of the nuns took Rob and covered his chin with Zinc Oxide and black bristles from a hairbrush. Then she sent a nurse to bring me to the nursery to see the result. He had his picture in the paper as the youngest "Brother of the Brush!"

The little duplex was getting crowded with four children and me. I bought a badly needed kitchen table and then splurged and bought a gas dryer. Not many people had automatic dryers in those days and it was nice not to hang my clothes in the basement. Gordon was gone for sixteen months and I learned to do a lot of things but the one that stands out in my mind was cleaning up the automobile spark plugs when they got wet. I had never seen a spark plug so I felt a real sense of accomplishment when I was able to follow instructions over the phone from the service station attendant. Every Sunday I took all of the children to my mother's for dinner. I put Laura and Robbie in the buggy and Mollie and Tommy walked on each side, holding on to the buggy. They were very good and cautious and as we walked down the street we commanded a lot of attention in the neighborhood. My Uncle Art saw us one day and shouted "Here comes the safari!" If I didn't have the buggy and I was carrying a child, the others held onto my skirt or coat while we were crossing the street. It was a long sixteen months and I learned to drive in the snow, I stayed up alone with sick children and did everything myself that most couples do together. There was a part of the basement that was used for storage and an old shoo-fly rocker was up on the shelf. Somehow Laura got the idea that it was an alligator and she refused to go into that room, saying "odda-gata-bite-a-me". I think Tommy must have scared her at one time. Once time I scolded her for something and my mother said "Sure, she's only a baby," and the next time I scolded her, she said "Well, well, I'm is only a baby." We spent two Christmases in that duplex.

During all these months on Carroll Street, we spent a lot of time at my parents' house. Tommy got a fire truck for Christmas and he could sit in it and pedal it and ring the little bell. However he had a problem holding on to it when we went to Webb Street to visit. There were two little brothers who lived down the street named Timmy and Tommy and every time our Tommy took the truck down the street, Timmy and Tommy managed to get it away from him. He came home crying "Bimmy and Bommy took my truck." His speech was almost unintelligible except to members of the family and even then sometimes I'd have to ask Mollie to translate for me.

When my parents got their first television set, it was the only one in the neighborhood. It was a twelve-inch Emerson and many times some of the neighbors came in just to watch it. Mollie and my father, Grandpa Tom, used to sit in his big chair and watch all the shows. She especially liked Hopalong Cassidy. Cable programming was non-existent and the major networks didn't broadcast the entire day. A lot of the time the only thing on the screen was the test pattern and everything was in black and white. Later on, after we moved to the duplex, Frank and Connie had a set and they used to watch "I Love Lucy." I had never heard of the show but I did go to their apartment and watch it once in a while.

Every evening we had an amateur hour. This gave the children an opportunity to perform and everyone was required to applaud and act appreciative. Mollie was usually the lead actress. She would not only sing a song, she also acted it out. Sometimes she did a little twirling and dancing. She was actually a little ham. Tom dressed up in his cowboy clothes and pretended he was shooting someone or riding over the hills in pursuit of the bad guys. Laura might sing a song like "I'm a Little Teapot" or something Mollie learned in school.

In February of 1952 Gordon returned from Korea. He had been assigned to Robins Air Force Base in Warner Robins, Georgia and my heart sank. I had hoped for a Michigan assignment or anyplace closer to Hammond. He went to Georgia and found a house to rent and then came back for the rest of us. It was a nice brick house, the only drawback being that it was full of termites. Having always lived in the North, I had a lot to learn about insects. There was no air conditioning in those days but the house had a huge attic fan and at night we closed all the windows but one in each bedroom and turned on the fan and it did cool things off a lot. I met some people I still maintain contact with - the Whites, Margaret and Gillette, who had five children; and Mary and Bernard Lawler. The day we moved into that house the movers knocked the stovepipe off the space heater in the hall and black, velvety soot sifted through everything in the house. It was a terrible mess. About an hour after this accident, the spotter from the Officers' Wives' Club arrived to welcome me to the Base. Her name was Anne Key and I loved her and have kept a steady correspondence with her through the years. The children loved Warner Robins, mostly because of the large house and the vacant lots around it. There were good climbing trees and they spent a lot of time playing together. Mollie had a blonde Toni doll and Laura loved it, so for the next Christmas I bought a brunette Toni for her and immediately Mollie decided she wanted it so she began telling Laura how much nicer the blonde was and it wasn't long until Mollie was the proud owner of a new brunette Toni doll. Tommy and Laura were especially close. They played together exclusively. One time when Katie Fowler saw them at play, she said "those two are really a closed corporation." The people across the street gave us a beautiful collie pup and we named her Sheba. I kept her in a little basket on top of the stove pilot light until she was a month old. But Sheba chased cars and after she got hit by one I gave her to a man who had a large ranch outside of town.

When I became pregnant with Anita, maternity styles had changed and I was able to get some nice clothes. Up until this time most maternity dresses were made large, with a drawstring around the waist. Now I could wear two piece dresses and that was a blessing. My babies were always late and Anita was no exception. My friends called every day asking "Are you still here?" and so it was a relief to everyone when she was born. Mary and Ben Lawler came over and stayed with the other children when we went to the small Base hospital and then things became chaotic. A baby had died during delivery and the doctors were busy with that mother--so busy, in fact, they forgot about me, and when Anita decided to make her appearance, they all rushed into the labor room where she was born almost immediately. The next day the doctor told me when he heard her first cry it was like a "sound straight from heaven." Because it was an unsterile birth I received a shot of penicillin every day for seven days. It was a scary experience.

We continued to have our amateur hours in the evening and now Robbie joined in. He could sing "When I grow up I want to be a lovely ballerina" and the girls liked to dress him up in their clothes for his performance. Sometimes they played "church" and they took turns being the priest and the altar boy. They usually set up the altar in front of the fireplace. Playing library and school were also favorite games. Then they had a "testing" game. One child was blindfolded and another would put different foods and spices on his tongue to see if he could distinguish the flavors. "Hide the thimble" was another game they played. We did a lot of singing, and always sang in the car They sang "The Ship Titanic," "The Happy Wanderer," "Ninety Nine Bottles of Beer," and they each had their favorite songs, learned in the first grade, that were simple enough for the youngest child to sing. When we started out on a trip we began with the rosary, and when we finished our evening meal we said the rosary, kneeling down beside the table. Each child said a different decade and this went on for years, finally winding down to only one decade a night and then the telephone and doorbell began to play a big part in our lives and thus ended the recitation of the family rosary.

When we moved to Georgia I had four children from 9 months to 7 years and I found a maid. Now a maid as I imagined her would wear a black uniform and a dainty white apron but in Georgia a maid was anyone who cleaned house for a living. The people across the street, the Watsons, had a colored woman living in a shack on the back of their property. Her name was Rachel and she was big, barefoot and always smiling. For fifty cents an hour she would baby sit and feed the children, scrub floors and do the dishes, wash walls and iron. I came home one day to see her watching a television program and ironing, tears streaming down her face because the woman on "Queen for a Day" was so unfortunate. Dear Rachel. She always called me "Miss Mary." After Anita was born she also became a nursemaid and she loved to change diapers.

All of the children came down with the measles sometime in 1955. Robbie was terribly sick but the others were merely crabby and bored. I used to put the three oldest in our big bed because they couldn't go outside to play or go to school. In the afternoon when the sun hit the bedroom section of the house, the termites swarmed--a lot of them getting stuck in the blanket on the bed. I drew a circle of full-strength DDT on the floor so they couldn't go any farther after they flew out of the woodwork. I do believe my adventures as a military wife and mother provided vicarious living for my mother. She had never seen cockroaches or termites. She could never imagine living in the back room of a farmhouse. Being the farm girl she was, she couldn't imagine using margarine on the table instead of butter. There were many things that she had never foreseen for me because she always pictured her little girl in a rose-covered cottage with a picket fence. In Hammond.

Tommy still considered himself a cowboy and for his seventh birthday he got a suede jacket complete with fringe, Stetson hat, rifle, six shooters and a gun belt. When he played cowboys, he provided his own musical background, humming loudly, in imitation of the musical score in a movie as the militia rode over the hill to save the settlers from the Indians. That was the year he had a birthday party and I made a cake and decorated it with cowboys, horses and a corral. I left it on the kitchen counter and Robbie reached up as far as he could and grabbed part of the cake and decorations. It didn't bother Tommy at all--in fact, he said "that's all right, I'll eat that part." He was very easy-going and had not a mean bone in his body.

Anne Key had a cat that had kittens so she gave one to Mollie. It was a calico cat and Mollie named her "Puff." She was not a nice cat and we tried to get rid of her but she always came back. Finally we paid the vet to put her to sleep but he sold her to some other lucky person.

When Mollie started to school she attended St. Joseph's in Macon. She had gone to kindergarten in Hammond and also had a few months of first grade so she was able to read and do a little writing. The Air Force provided a Greyhound bus for transportation to the Macon schools, a 20 mile ride. Sister Stephanie, who was the first grade teacher, had seventy pupils, and the class was divided into two rooms. She was very strict and she managed to keep all seventy children under control. One day Mollie came home from school and told me that she had "worries and troubles" and after a lot of probing, I finally got to the root of the problem. She had asked to go to the restroom and on the way she spotted the teacher's lounge which had a couch in it so she went in and lay down to rest. Of course she was discovered and reprimanded. The last year we were in Warner Robins the little parish of Sacred Heart opened a school so our children transferred. Tommy went into second grade, Mollie fourth and Laura into first grade, even though she was only five years old. The men of the parish built classrooms out of a portable building and salvaged some bricks from an old building in Macon. Later on, I heard that a brick school was on the grounds but for the time we were there, there were only four grades. Mollie made her First Communion there and was confirmed; Tom made his First Communion and Anita was baptized there.

Everyone loved Father Donnelly, the pastor, and we met and came to know Father Ramon Blach, who was a chaplain at the base. Father Blach was plainly in need of a home and family because he loved to come to our house and play with the kids, and his favorite snack was peanut butter sandwiches.

I took a job as spotter for the Officers' Wives' Club and that was a lot of fun because I was able to call on the newcomers and talk to them and tell them of all the opportunities the base had to offer and the good places to shop. I don't remember how long that lasted, maybe until I got pregnant with Anita and then I called a halt to all extra activities. I did work at the blood bank at the base when I was needed but about all I did was take temperatures and hand out orange juice.

Mollie took dancing lessons for a while but lost interest and then she developed friendships with Susan Lawler and Sandra White. Tommy found a good friend in Mike Reilly and that proved to be a profitable relationship because Mike's dad furnished us with seven footlockers when we went overseas!

Gordon left for Germany in October of 1955 and we were alone until he was allowed to bring his family over in May of 1956. Father Donnelly arranged for a young airman named Sgt. Bilko to drive us to Hammond and it took two days but it was a very pleasant trip. We stayed with my parents for a month, waiting

for Gordon to return, and during that time Robbie and Anita got the chickenpox. My big worry was that Anita would not be allowed to travel if she still had the rash but nobody seemed to notice. Gordon came back and packed us up and we drove to New York, spent three horrible days at Fort Hamilton and then boarded a plane for a nightmare trip to Germany. We sat in the hot plane for three hours while someone repaired an engine, and then developed more mechanical problems over Newfoundland and we spent 24 miserable hours in the terminal with 85 hungry, dirty, crying children and their mothers. Gordon and Stan Dragnich were the only men on the plane.

When we finally got to Germany, nobody cared about anything except sleep and a bath. We stayed in the Schwartzerbach Hotel for a few days and then moved into requisitioned housing on Romerweg Strasse in Wiesbaden. It was a large house in a German neighborhood. The kitchen was in the basement; living room, sunroom and a huge dining room with a dumbwaiter were on the first floor. A tiny lavatory was on the landing and two small bedrooms and one large room on the second floor. There was also a bathroom on this floor, but no toilet. (Remember the tiny lavatory on the landing?) The third floor consisted of three rooms identical to the second floor. There were 62 steps from top to bottom. The doors were all closed with handles and there was not a knob in the house. There were no knobs or handles on the furniture drawers. There must have been a hundred keys for that house and its furnishings. Everything was opened with a key. Some of the men used to say they wanted to go back to the "land of the round door knobs." We had a German maid named Brigitte who had a daughter named Francesca and they were both a little daffy. I didn't like living in a German neighborhood and I didn't like the Germans. They are simply not a lovable people. I had such a surge of homesickness one day when we went for a drive to a nearby U.S. Naval Station. There, out in the middle of Germany the Stars and Stripes was flying in the breeze. It made me cry and it made me so thankful to be an American. Of course, I still cry when I see the flag, no matter where it is. But this time I was overcome with longing for my parents and Bob.

We lived in the house for four months and then moved into a new American housing development called Aukamm. We had a three bedroom apartment and lived there for about a year. The Blantons lived a few buildings away from us. They had three children and their fourth, Patti, was born in Wiesbaden. The Dragniches lived at Wiesbaden Air Base and we kept in close touch with them, and still do. Al Fowler came to Germany on Navy business and we spent a couple of days with him. We had left Brigitte in the big house to torment the next tenant and like all Americans, we were looking for a good maid. I had a few day-workers but there were maids' quarters in the basement so I hired a live-in maid. She had been highly recommended by a departing American family and her name was Elizabeth. All of the maids had to be registered with the American Military Police so I took her to the station for a blood test and I was told that she had Syphilis!! She had to spend three weeks in the hospital and then I let her come back to work for us because she had no other place to go. We kept her for a while but finally we just couldn't stand her or her boy friends and after that I just had maids by the day.

After a year or so we moved to better quarters in Aukamm, this time to a five bedroom fourplex. This was better, but still not like a private dwelling. When we finished all of the paperwork involved with living in Germany, the children and I were issued dog tags. Because Germany had been divided, there was always the worry that the Russians would attempt to take over the American sector. We were given a list of things to have on hand--including "sturdy walking shoes, warm coat and pants, a blanket for each member of the family, gloves, etc." I did make up a pile of sorts, including some canned food, but I gave up when I tried to put seven blankets together. We were told that orders would be issued in case of emergency and if necessary, an escape route would be designated. I had a friend who carried her sterling silver flatware with her when she went out of the city because she could "buy" her way across Europe with it if she had to. Since I am basically a worrier, and because I would have five children to get across the Mainz, I kept all precautions in the back of my mind.

We took the children to Heidelberg to look through the castle but they weren't impressed. We took them to Garmisch for a week's vacation and the Dragniches went along, but it rained every day so the most culture the children received was in the American library. I think this was where Mollie discovered "The Wizard of Oz." We took Tom and Mollie on a ten day tour to Rome, Pisa, Florence, Venice and Berne. We went to Paris with Pat and Don Moore, to Munich with the Blantons and I went to Lourdes on a tour with a

chapel group and to Beyreuth, in Bavaria, to see Therese Neumann, of the stigmata. We went to Salzburg with the Blantons. Gordon went to England on a business trip and I went along to visit my aunts and uncle in London. They lived in a nice duplex, they were all single, getting old and I think my Uncle Andrew was getting senile. I spent two or three days with them and I must have been too American to suit them because I'm sure I didn't make a favorable impression. I was smoking in those days. They had an old servant named Teenie living with them. She stayed in the kitchen and the only thing I saw her doing was feeding the birds in the garden. They must have had forty different kinds of rose bushes in this garden. Teenie was deaf and she held a horn-like thing up to her ear when anyone spoke to her. She was in her nineties and she told me she came to work for my grandfather when she was fifteen and the earliest thing she could remember about the Thomsons was that my father ran down the stairs and grabbed her and his hands were covered with "treacle."

One day Maxine took her two children for a picnic in a little park across from her requisitioned housing. She spread a blanket on the grass and passed out sandwiches, only to have Germans come screaming "das ist verboten!" She couldn't understand German but she got the general idea and went home. The Germans loved rules and wanted everyone to keep them. It seemed that every German, male or female, carried a bag or satchel of some kind, and there was at least one dog to every family. Whole families would go on a walk and take the dog with them. In 1957 it seemed like the only colors the Germans knew were black, brown and grey. Then they came out with a color we all called "German blue" and they used it a lot. And when an American woman said she liked some particular piece of German clothing, we all told her she had been there too long.

The summer before we left, our chaplain hired four young seminarians from Ireland to come and teach Bible school to the Catholic children. We wanted two of them to stay with us and that is how we met Sean Cooney from Ireland and Jerry Fitzgerald from Kentucky. They were delightful boys and we kept in touch with them over the years.

Robbie started kindergarten in Wiesbaden and almost from the first day he disliked it. He and Susie Gustafson played hooky one day by hiding under a balcony when the school bus came. He was reckless in playing and three days before his First Communion he went lickety-split down the hill on his two-wheeler and hit a tree head-on. He lost his front teeth and I rushed him to the hospital, but he recovered and was able to receive his First Communion. He spent a lot of time in hospital examining rooms after a doctor in Georgia discovered he had a heart murmur. It disappeared in a year or two and before we left Germany, he developed scarlet fever. I took him to the hospital for a shot of penicillin each day for seven days.

We had orders for Custer Air Force Station at Battle Creek, Michigan and since we couldn't get any housing, we found a house to rent for a month. In January of 1959 we bought a house on North 20th St. Gordon connected the washing machine and left for two months' jet school in Texas. We had started the children in St. Phillip's School in downtown Battle Creek and they had to take a bus, but they still had a long cold walk from the bus stop to the school. And winter in Battle Creek is fierce. The next year we were able to enroll them in St. Joseph's School in Lakeview, just a few blocks from home. They all loved living in Battle Creek. They had good friends and they could ride their bikes in freedom and safety anywhere they chose. I liked it because it was only 150 miles from Hammond.

There was a huge apple tree in our back yard which was wonderful for climbing, and the children had experienced a lot of that in Georgia. Not far from our house there was a deep ravine that they called the "gully." They had a lot of fun with flattened cartons that they used as sleds and they spent many winter days sliding on the snow and ice. The Latoszewski family lived on the next street and Tommy and Barry became close friends. They gathered hundreds of tadpoles and filled all of my fruit jars with them, planning to sell them to their friends, but there wasn't much of a market for tadpoles at that time. They found three baby black squirrels and kept them for a long time, finally releasing them in the woods. Tom had a teacher named Sister Frances Therese and everybody loved her. I think she was a tomboy in another life and Anita especially loved her. She used to write notes to her, calling her "Sister Frances Trees." When Anita was in second grade Sister gave her a speaking part in the school play but when the show premiered, Anita was sick in bed with scarlet fever. She was heartbroken. She was always so afraid of the dentist. I took her to Dr. Wakabayashi, a dentist who had an office nearby, and when he sent a bill for \$20, I called and asked him about it. He said he charged \$20 an hour and it

took him 45 minutes to get her to open her mouth. She made her first communion at St. Joseph's Church in Battle Creek and she wore Laura's white dress and wreath.

The children had a good time in the basement in Battle Creek. It was good for all kinds of games on cold days and while there was a ping-pong table down there, they didn't use it much. But they did play school and library. It was in Battle Creek that I started a family tradition of a "trim-the-tree" party. We had won a large freezer in a raffle at Mollie's school in Macon, so every year about a month before Christmas I began baking cookies and making candy. I froze everything until December 22. That evening after dinner, we put up the tree and while the children trimmed it, I got out the silver tea service and my good china, set the table and lit the candles and when the tree was finished I turned out the lights and we had a tea party by candlelight. The next day was Laura's birthday, the day after that we opened presents and the next morning Santa came. I had learned to play golf in Warner Robins and I played a bit in Germany and a few times at the VA course in Battle Creek. I planned to play a lot when Anita started school but abandoned that idea because when Anita was learning her ABCs I had a two week old baby named Jimmy. He was absolutely the best baby in the world. He was good and sweet and bright and charming. He talked early, he could mimic anything he saw on television and the children enjoyed pushing him in the stroller over to the convent where the sisters made a great fuss over him. Then Nancy was born 17 months later and she was just the opposite in personality. She didn't sleep well, she wanted to hold her own bottle and then her own spoon; she climbed out of her crib, her playpen and her highchair. She was very independent and beautiful and she had absolutely no intention of pleasing anyone. She had a lot of black hair and purple-grey eyes. I never looked forward to being pregnant because I was sick most of the time, but I did love those babies! They made all the discomfort worth while.

While I was in Germany I wasn't able to follow my radio serials but when we moved to Battle Creek I discovered soap operas on television. My favorite was "As the World Turns" and eventually it was the only one I watched. It wasn't long until Anita was watching too, when she wasn't in school. It proved to be a good ice-breaker when I met someone I couldn't find a common ground with. Even if a woman didn't watch my show, she was bound to watch another one.

Mollie turned sixteen in 1960 and we had a "sweet sixteen" party for her at the Officer's club at Custer.

By this time the house was getting crowded. The two upstairs rooms each held three children and the small bedroom downstairs held mother, father and baby. We lived in this house for four years and in March when Nancy was six weeks old, Gordon left for his next assignment in Colorado Springs. The eight of us were left in Michigan until he came back for us three months later.

I liked Colorado Springs. The wide streets and the big, big sky were such a change and I liked the house we bought on Prairie Road. We had good neighbors, the Schaefers and the DeArmonds. The first summer there was dominated by Laura and her circus. It was production that determined that she would lead the neighborhood in games and baby sitting. The circus was held in the back yard and the neighbor children all got a chance to display their talents. She loved to work with children and she was such a good baby sitter that the children begged their parents to go out. She loved horses and she used to bike up to the bluffs where there was a riding stable and did all kinds of work there just to get an hour of free riding. She had a friend named Sheila Shea who was large, loud and messy. There was also an odor about her so that Mollie didn't want her in the room that she and Laura shared. And when we complained about Sheila, Laura cried "She might be ugly outside but she's beautiful inside!" That was the way Laura always looked at people. She just had the knack of looking at both sides of everything and everyone.

After a year on Prairie Road, Gordon was sent back to Korea so once again I was mother and father to these children, but now there were seven so the responsibility was greater. Thank goodness they were good children. I joined the Toastmistress Club in order to think about something besides cooking and children. The members had to take an office every year and the first year I was Program Chairman and I liked that but the second year I was forced into the President's job and I didn't like that at all. There were so many factions and so much squabbling in that club that I didn't even want to be a member, let alone an officer. I was glad when the year was over.

Gordon got a ten-day leave and I was going to meet him in Hawaii, so Vera Schaefer took Jimmy and Barbara DeArmond took Nancy and Jan Doolittle took Robbie. We had been entertaining Lowell Schuknecht Jr. who was a cadet at the Air Force Academy, and his parents happened to be stationed in Honolulu so they showed us a wonderful time for ten days. And when Lowell graduated from the Academy, his mother and sister stayed with us in Colorado Springs. We still hear from all of them.

During the year Gordon was gone I got Mollie out of high school and Nancy out of diapers. Jimmy and Nancy were really shaping up into human beings. They were just darling. Jimmy learned to ride his trike down the hill standing on the seat and Nancy learned to go up and down the stairs without giving me a heart attack. One day Jimmy was mad at me for something I had done and he shouted "Well, I don't love you" and I shouted back "Well, I don't love you!" and he roared "YES, YOU DO!!" Who wouldn't love him? Laura had a large stuffed red dog called "Droopy" and one day Tommy and Robbie strung Droopy up in the basement and then called Laura to come down. She was pretty indignant but I think she rather liked the fact that her dog was getting some attention.

The day Gordon left for Korea in 1963 the washer broke, the garage door went off the runner and Tom went out in the back yard, grabbed hold of the bar on the swing set and turned the whole thing over. All of this on the first day. I wondered if this was an indication of how the rest of the year was going to be. Tom and I decided to improve the driveway so it would be smoother going into the street. I bought a bag of instant cement and we mixed it up only to discover that it would take another bag so I went back to the store for more and after mixing that bag, I realized we needed another one. The men at the store thought that this was funny, but we did improve the driveway. One night Tom went riding with some of his friends in a Volkswagen bus and was in an accident. He had a fractured femur and it was so bad, the bone tore through his pants leg. He held court in the hospital for a month, and the nurses finally had to hang a sign on the door saying he could only have two visitors in his room at a time. He used crutches for most of the summer. Mollie was going with Art McCann and they looked darling when they went to the Senior Prom. I made Mollie a beautiful blue and white formal and Art had a blue tuxedo. The tradition at St. Mary's school was that the prom-goers make their first stop at the Convent so the sisters could see how well they had turned out. Then they went to the Broadmoor Hotel for dinner and the dance.

We were near Ent AFB and the children went swimming there just about every day. One day Anita was riding her bike on her way home from the pool and she was startled by a car and fell off her bike, resulting in damage to her two front teeth. It is rather ironic that this would happen to someone who was terrified of the dentist.

It was Vera Schaefer who gave me my first taco. I had never heard of tacos so the next time she made them she gave me one and after that, tacos became a staple in our home. In those days you bought the corn tortillas and fried them and what a job that was! I always bought four dozen of them and it took an hour of standing at the stove to fry them.

On November 23, 1963, I was in the rec room in the basement on Prairie Road doing the ironing and watching "As the World Turns" when the program was interrupted by Walter Cronkite announcing that our young President had been shot in Dallas. Suddenly all my strength left me and I fell to my knees in prayer and disbelief. I remained that way, actually too weak to stand, until the final announcement by a visibly shaken Cronkite that John Fitzgerald Kennedy was dead. I could not have been more devastated if a member of my immediate family had been killed. I rushed upstairs to call my mother, who was in Indiana, and we cried together and she told me that three of her sisters from Minneapolis had already called her. The whole nation was drawn together and for four days we mourned the loss of our fallen brother.

Another loss that year was Clarence Schreiner, Gordon's brother-in-law. I left the children with a sitter and went to Hammond for the funeral. We survived that year with Gordon gone and when he returned he had orders for Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. He went there first and rented a farm house in nearby New Athens. We were miles from civilization so we continued to look for another house and one month later we moved to

Belleville. This was a good place for the children because the little ones could walk three blocks to school and Tom and Laura could take a bus to high school. The house was big and old and hard to keep clean but the children thought it was wonderful. I joined a group at Scott named the "Lovely Ladies" and went to the base hospital once a week to fix hair for women patients who had been there for a week or who would be hospitalized for another week. We gave shampoos, did sets and comb-outs and we had equipment for bed shampoos. I liked that and I met a lot of nice women and we really felt as if we had done a good deed.

Mollie was going to Illinois University and losing interest fast so she came home and got a job at an investment company in St. Louis. Tom finished high school and decided not to go to college; he got a job that lasted a week and then he joined the Marine Corps. This was the last thing we wanted him to do but he was determined to go. He was supposed to meet the Marine Sergeant at the recruiting office early one morning and I had to drive him there. It was about 7:00, it was raining and dark and I thought I couldn't bear to have him go. This was the first child I had handed over to someone else's care. This was not like college. This was going to be dangerous. He got in the car with the Sergeant and I cried the rest of the day. A week later the Corps sent his clothes home in a box. That was almost as bad as the separation and I refused to open it. After a few days Gordon took the box to the basement and opened it and I went down and salvaged the tee shirt he wore on his last civilian day. It was speckled with ketchup and coffee and I tucked it away in the drawer with my underwear. Every few days I'd take it out smell that boy sweat and cry a little. I didn't wash it until he came home all in one piece.

I had a letter from my mother about the middle of November, 1966, telling me my father was sick and in the hospital. She really didn't know what was wrong with him but he had a new doctor and she hoped for some improvement. I packed my bag and left for Hammond immediately. My mother didn't seem too upset; she seemed reconciled and I had to take only one look at him to realize that he was dying. The nurses seemed unconcerned until I went to the nurse's station and said "Do something! Are you going to just let him die?" Now I know that is what they were doing, as there was no hope. Still, they should have been more attentive. He was covered with an oxygen tent to help him breathe and the second day I was there my mother and a friend went to the cafeteria to get a sandwich and I sat and held his hand and he died before they came back. I regret that I didn't know him better. The day before he died he told the sister he wanted to become a Catholic. He received the last sacraments and was given a Catholic funeral. I think he was always Catholic in his heart but didn't want to commit himself to any religious rules.

Laura graduated from high school the next June and soon after that she entered Barnes School of Nursing in St. Louis. Once again Gordon was sent overseas, this time to Vietnam, and Tom followed him within months. Once again I was left to take care of the home front but this time I couldn't get all the children in bed at seven o'clock so I had more to worry about. Anita and Jimmy were in school at Cathedral and Nancy was in morning kindergarten, which meant that we could watch "As the World Turns" in the early afternoon. It wasn't long until she knew the characters and if I had to leave the room she was able to fill me in on the action when I came back. Belleville was a safe place to live and the children could walk wherever they wanted without fear. Jimmy was such a bright little fellow and a lot of the credit goes to his siblings, who never ceased giving him instructions and encouragement. When he entered kindergarten in Belleville, he could read like a fifth-grader and the Sister used to send him to the office to read for visitors. When he got to the first grade the sister gave him advanced books and workbooks to read mostly, I think, to keep him busy while she taught the rest of the class their ABC's. He went to morning kindergarten and I used to put him to bed with the St. Louis telephone directory while he took his "rest." Every day he would announce "I'm up to the C's" or the "L's." Sister Pacifica was the kindergarten teacher and while she was about eighty years old, she certainly was able to keep the children busy and happy. She complained that Nancy didn't say "please" and "thank you" enough but as I said earlier, Nancy didn't try to please anyone and strangely enough, everyone loved her anyway. The Hoppers, who lived next door, used to call her "The Little Princess."

There was a Junior College in Belleville so I took a course in English and Rhetoric 101 and enjoyed it. It gave me something to do while Gordon was gone.

Rob had a friend named Stanley Adams and the two of them worked at a carnival three blocks from our house, and when the carnival left town, Rob and Stanley went with it. The next thing I knew, they were in a small town in Illinois, working at a granary. They finally came home and from then on, our existence was dotted with Rob's escapades, some good, and all of them unexpected and unusual. The Blantons had been transferred to Scott, so I saw a lot of them and they were so kind to me, including me in everything they did, and I treasure our time together. When Gordon went to Vietnam we got another dog, this time a collie named Lady. Lady didn't like to stay at home and we spent a lot of time chasing her and bringing her home. When we moved we gave her to a family on a farm.

When Gordon returned from Vietnam, we went through the usual routine--he went on to the next station, which happened to be Colorado Springs again and he found a house to rent and came back for us. Mollie had applied for a job with the Red Cross and while waiting for her assignment, she and I and Nancy and Jimmy took a plane to the Springs and Gordon drove Anita and Rob. This house was not as nice as the other one we had in the Springs, and the neighborhood not as pleasant, but we did see a lot of J. C. and Doris Hostetler and the Schaefers. I started doing volunteer work at St. Francis Hospital and I worked at the information desk one day a week. My job was to direct people to their correct destination and sort and deliver mail to patients. My mother came to visit occasionally and Rob continued to keep us on our toes, eventually running away and joining the Army. Tom had come back from Vietnam unscathed and shortly after he arrived, he developed pneumonia. He was terribly sick but was able to go to his next assignment which was an island off Puerto Rico. Mollie was with the Red Cross in Puerto Rico so they saw each other occasionally. By this time Rob was in Vietnam.

Gordon was assigned to Silver Spring, Maryland and we bought a large house in Wheaton. Now we only had three children, but five bedrooms. I didn't like Maryland or Washington D. C. I have never met ruder people in my life. I went to the local hospital to do volunteer work but that didn't last because the patients were just as rude as the people on the street. Once again I was running out of things to keep me busy. I tried an oil painting class in a local night school program, I made inquiries about being a Welcome Wagon hostess, I even asked about becoming a telephone operator but nothing developed. Jimmy and Nancy were in experimental schools. Anita was in a very permissive school, but she made good friends and really blossomed in their companionship. Jimmy and Nancy went across the street to their school and they had to learn to study on their own. Jimmy, for instance, was given pages and pages of assignments for the semester, with requirements for passing that grade, and he was expected to work at his own speed. Nancy had a male teacher in the third grade and they did unusual things in class. One time they went "fish-tripping"--they were to bring a piece of bacon and some string to school and the teacher took the class to a nearby creek to fish. She also learned how to siphon water from one glass to another.

Mollie was now working for the Red Cross in Puerto Rico and she invited me to come and spend a week with her. It was probably the best vacation of my life. I felt so carefree and did another daring thing--we took a rickety airplane to the island of St Thomas and did some shopping and sightseeing.

We only spent a year in Maryland, thank goodness, then Gordon was promoted and we were sent to Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana. When we moved into base housing I met Millie Ochs and she turned out to be one of my very best friends. We have both moved since we met but we continue to keep in touch by mail and phone. Upon getting our house settled the next thing I did was inquire about a Practical Nurse program. There was one starting the next June and I was able to get in it. However, while I waited for the nursing class to begin, I signed up for Psychology 101 at LSU. I got an A and enjoyed the class. The next semester I took a class in Anthropology. But the nursing course was one of the hardest things I ever did and I felt a real sense of accomplishment when I graduated. I got up every morning about 5:00 and made the coffee, had a bite to eat and got to class a little before 7:00. On days when I worked in the hospital I didn't get home until almost 5:00. I kept the shopping and the laundry and the meals going but I'm glad the school only lasted thirteen months because I couldn't have continued much longer.

My early years prepared me for the nomadic existence of an Air Force Wife. In my first 21 years I resided in two states and six houses. The next 29 years found me living in 26 various abodes (some were

houses, some were homes, some were quarters and a few were just addresses), in two countries and nine states. So when Gordon retired from the Air Force in October of 1973 I was happy to end my roaming and move into our new home in Shreveport. I got my diploma and then passed my State Boards but before I could get steady work my mother, who was now ninety years old, came to live with me. In order to keep her amused I even got her to watch "As the World Turns" with me. By this time Anita and Nancy were regular viewers. I did a little work as a visiting nurse with the Home Health Department at Willis-Knighton Hospital, but I could see that it would be impossible to keep a house operating smoothly and hold down an outside job. I soon became acquainted with some of the women from our parish church and my closest friend was Norma Putman. Although she eventually moved to Tennessee we manage to keep in touch. It seems as if one of my strongest characteristics is my tenacity regarding my friends. Once I claim them I won't let them go!

I was born to be a mother. As you can see, with the birth of Mollie, my life began to revolve around my children. How could I write my story and not include them? With every birth I became more involved with children until I truly had no life without them. I guess I can say I was a career mother. That's the only thing I was good at. This was evident during my growing up years when I played house and dolls. I took the orphans for Sunday outings. I taught the Bible to kindergarteners. I could hardly wait to have a baby. There is nothing more fulfilling than holding your newborn baby in your arms, knowing that you are the two closest people in all the world. I loved mothering. I loved cooking and baking and keeping house. I was always there when the children came from school, and usually there was cake or fresh-baked cookies. I was with them morning and night, and was mother and father for the years when Gordon was gone.

This brings us to 1973, dear children and grandchildren, and I believe this might be an auspicious time to stop these vignettes and conclude this odyssey. You are all old enough now to think that your memories are more accurate than mine. But one is entitled to one's own memories, no matter how imperfect. So far it's been a wonderful journey. Some days were humdrum, some were spectacular but just look at the marvelous variety of people I have met along the way. My parents and brothers, teachers, boy friends, girl friends, forever friends, employers and workmates, the Dorton's, the Koruses, and dear Harry Howard, my wonderful husband and adorable children and all the others. How many more unforgettables are waiting for me? Whose lives will I touch and how many more paths will cross mine?

Tune in tomorrow.