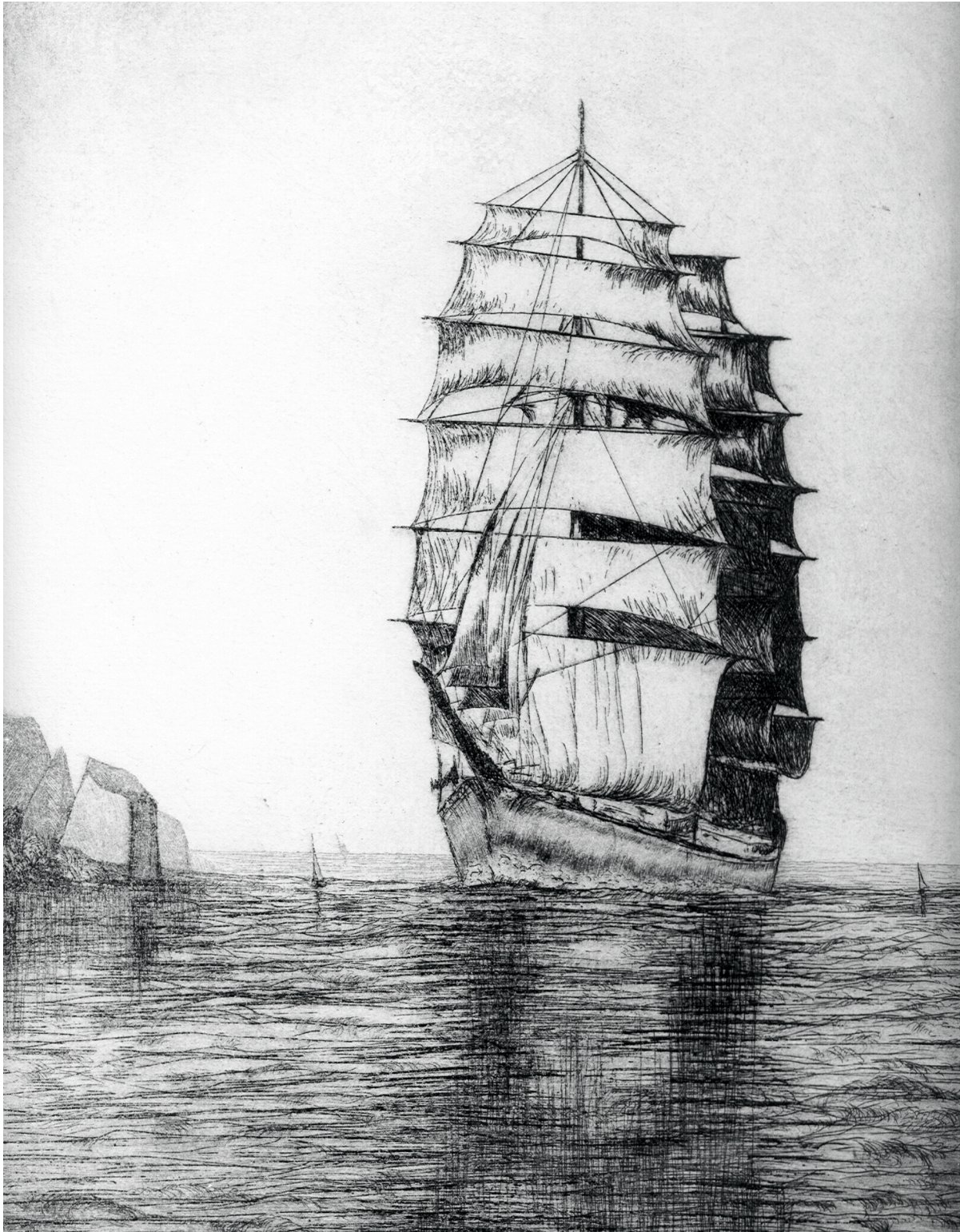


PART 4

The Koesters: Sail away from military

John Kester---he remembered the flying fish on the long voyage
Harriet Elizabeth Kester---She liked to run
The Darling mill: It employed 400 to 500 men
Calamity with the railroad, then at the mill
The family in Fordyce



SCHOONER IN FULL SAIL: One of our engravings. Artist is not known..but look carefully in the shadow of the schooner (or turn the page upside down) for a surprise from the artist.



John Kester's father, ca. 1880
(PROBABLY: STEPHEN KESTER, b. 1803)

STEPHEN KOESTER

(born 1803)

WITH SIX SONS and a daughter, German carpenter STEPHEN KOESTER headed to Bremerhaven in the Spring of 1861, to board the *Albano* and begin a trans-Atlantic voyage that would lead to a new life in America.

By family lore, the voyage took three months aboard a sailing ship, with an older sister taking care of the boys, whose mother had died in a childbirth. The average transit on a sailing ship between Germany and New York would have been 7-9 weeks, and even that certainly would have seemed like three months or more.

THE KOESTERS WERE IN 'STEERAGE'

The *Albano* was tiny--a mere 918 tons. Passengers were cramped and miserable. Here's a report about a similarly-sized sailing ship of the period:

"On the *Norden* sailing with 403 persons in 1866 the hold had been divided by a between deck, set up of planks. On the between deck there was set up bins fitted with bunks. There was one row along each side, and one along the middle of the ship. There was a narrow passage between the bunks. A primitive toilet on each side of the deck. Over the hatch there had been built a hood with an entrance down to the passengers quarters. There was no other ventilation than this, and the only fresh air came through this entrance. When the weather was rough the entrance had to be closed, and it became dark as in the night down in the hold."

(<http://www.norwayheritage.com/steerage.htm>)

The Koesters were among 238 "Between Decks Passengers," a fancy name for steerage passengers. There were 2 first class passengers, 31 second class passengers.

TWO BOYS DIE, ONE BABY BORN DURING THE TRANSIT

Two young boys died, and one baby was born before the *Albano* docked at New York on 20 June 1861. Here is the manifest, which the ship's master, Capt. B. Blanke submitted on his arrival:

DISTRICT OF NEW YORK PORT OF NEW YORK

I, B. Blanke, Master of the Ship *Albano*, do solemnly and truly swear that the following List or Manifest, subscribed by me, and now delivered by me to the Collector of the Customs of the Collection District of New York, is a full and perfect list of all the passengers taken on board of the said ship at Bremerhaven from which port said vessel has now arrived; and that on said list is truly designated the age, the sex, and the occupation of each of said passengers, the part of the vessel occupied by each during the passage, the country to which each belongs, and also the country of which it is intended by each to become an inhabitant; and that said List or Manifest truly sets forth the number of said passengers who have died on said voyage, and the names and ages of those who died. So help me God.

B. Blanke

Sworn to this 20 June 1861.

LIST OR MANIFEST Of All the Passengers Taken on board the Ship *Albano*, B. Blanke is Master, from Bremerhafen, burthen 918 tons.

(The segment showing the Koester family:)

64	Johann Conrad Koester	50	male	carpenter
65	Stephen Koester	58	male	carpenter
66	Wilhelm Koester	19	male	
67	Julius Koester	14	male	
68	George Koester	12	male	
69	Carl Koester	10	male	
<hr/>				
70	Johannes Koester	6	male	
71	Heinrich Koester	4	male	
72	Caroline Koester	21	female	

20 JUNE 1861, ABOARD THE ALBANO AT NEW YORK

Stephen Koester, 58, Carpenter

Wilhelm Koester, 19

Julius Koester, 14

George Koester, 12

Carl Koester, 10

Johannes Koester, 6

Heinrich Koester, 4

Caroline Koester, 21

(New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957 - Ancestry.com) (REB, May 2011)

After clearing Customs at New York, the immigrant Koesters moved on to Terre Haute, Ind., where the father lived the rest of his life.

MILITARY SERVICE, AFTER ALL

Though one of the reasons Stephen Koester brought his six sons to America was to ensure that his boys would never be conscripted into military service for a Prussian prince, the oldest son, Wilhelm Koester, was soon a soldier. The Koesters

had arrived in the United States a month before the first large battle in the Civil War, the First Battle of Bull Run. William was 19, and was in the Union Army within 3 years.



1. Pvt. William Koester (Kuster) (1842-1899) served as a "One Hundred Days' Volunteer" in 1864 in the 133rd Regiment, Indiana Infantry. Pvt Koester (Kuster) was mustered in, 17 May 1864, in Vigo County, and assigned to Company I.

Indiana's volunteers were used "largely for guard duty and in garrisoning necessary points, relieving veteran troops for active field work in the important campaigns of 1864," a unit history showed. At Nashville, the men guarded three railroad lines, and did so after they had served their agreed-upon time of 100 days.

Pvt. Koester was among 941 in the regiment. The regiment lost 16 to deaths, 2 to desertion. After returning to Indiana from Tennessee, Pvt. Kester was married; by 1870 he was father of a daughter, Ann. After returning to Indiana from Tennessee, Pvt. Kester was married; by 1870 he was father of a daughter, Ann.

([https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/133rd_Regiment,_Indiana_Infantry_\(100_days,_1864\)](https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/133rd_Regiment,_Indiana_Infantry_(100_days,_1864))) (REB 2011)

1870 WILLIAM KESTER, TERRE HAUTE, WARD 1, VIGO, INDIANA

Wm Kester, 26, laborer, with \$1,200 value of real estate.

Lizzie Kester, 22

Ann Kester, 1

William Koester, 56, died 20 June 1899 at Terre Haute. His widow, Elizabeth Kester, was a Civil War pensioner.

2. Julius Koester (12 December 1845-11 January 1931)

1880 JULIUS KOESTER, TERRE HAUTE, VIGO, INDIANA

Julius Koester, 23; Ana Koester, 24; Willie Koester, 7; Eddie Koester, 5 months. Born in Germany. Father, mother born in Germany. Blacksmith helper. By 1910, Julius Koester was 64, divorced, and living in Sullivan county, Gill township, Indiana. Later, he moved to Bollinger county, Wayne township, Missouri

1920 JULIUS KOESTER, BOLLINGER COUNTY, WAYNE TWP., MO.

Julius Koester, 74, born about 1846, Prussia; father born in Prussia; mother born in Prussia. Widower. Year of immigration: 1849. (*Error?*) Julius lived next door to Charles Kester, who had been in Bollinger County since at least 1900, and was raising his family of seven, after the death of his wife. (*Bollinger County is adjacent to Stoddard County.*)

1920 CHARLES KESTER, WAYNE, BOLLINGER COUNTY, MISSOURI

Charles Kester, 43, born in Illinois. Widower.

Carl Kester, 16, born in Missouri

Claude Kester, 20, born in Missouri

Stella Kester, 19, born in Missouri

Oval Kester, 14, born in Missouri

Audie Kester, 12, born in Missouri

Thelbert Kester, 6, born in Missouri

Delbert Kester, 2, born in Missouri

Julius Kester died 11 January 1931 near Puxico, in Duck Creek township, Stoddard County, Mo. He was 85, and afflicted with a "leaky heart," according to the death certificate. He was a retired farmer.

3. George Kester (b. 1849)

When he was 21, George Kester found a job in Terre Haute's Rolling Mill, and boarded in the household of David and Libbie Phillips. Phillips, 29, worked in the Nail Factory; other boarders were Louis Pushe, 37, a nailer; Samuel Baker, 30, heater in Rolling Mill; Charles Sutton, 22, nailer; C. H. Smith, worker in Rolling Mill. Frank Phillips, 17, was a bartender. Libbie Phillips, 27, kept house. (Young America was rapidly showing its industrial future, and Terre Haute was setting the stage with its rapid development of heavy industry. It was the county seat of Vigo County.

(A history of the county detailed the work that young George Kester and his fellow boarders found in the early days after the Kesters' immigration:

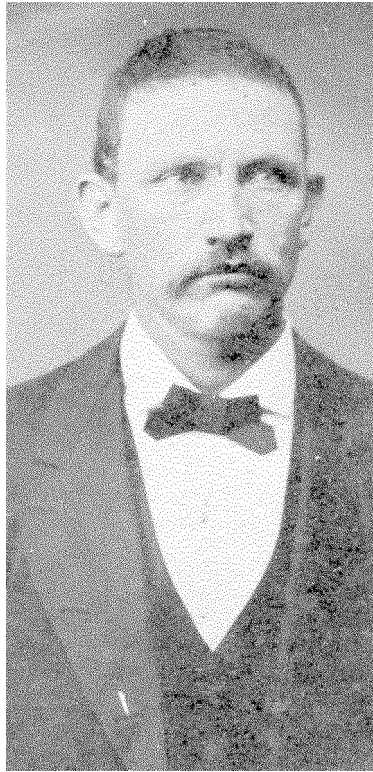
"Before the developments of the ore deposits in the Lake Superior region, a blast furnace making pig iron from local and Missouri ores was one of the leading industries here. There was also a rolling mill and extensive works for the manufacture of cut nails. In later years, the character of the plants has changed, but the importance of the industry has continued and has even become enhanced. At present, there are over ten concerns which are either directly or indirectly a part of the iron and steel industry in Terre Haute."

(History of Indiana from its exploration to 1922, Vol. 3., by Logan Esarey. Page 138.) (Google books, internet. REB 2011)

The 1870 Census listing for George Kester:

1870 GEORGE KESTER, TERRE HAUTE, WARD 2, VIGO COUNTY, INDIANA

George Kester, 21, born about 1849. Birthplace Hesse-Darmstadt.



John Kester, ca. 1880

JOHN KESTER

(born 1855, died 15 July 1934)

1855 John Kester was born in 1855, the youngest of 12 children, 8 boys, 4 girls, John's daughter, Harriett Elizabeth Kester Darling recalled in 1977, shortly before her 98th birthday: John Kester grew up near Hanover, Germany, without a mother, who had probably died in a childbirth. (*John [Johannes] might have been almost the youngest....since the emigration manifest of 1861 in New York shows that Heinrich Kester was 4, when John was 6.*)

John Kester later recalled herding geese as one of his regular chores as a youngster in Germany, and, subsequently, the excitement as he left Germany with his family embarked on a sailing ship to America. The schools of flying fish that he saw on the journey across the Atlantic made an impression on the 6-year-old that lasted a lifetime, Hattie Kester remembered.

ESCAPE FROM PRUSSIAN CONSCRIPTION....TO CIVIL WAR

He also remembered that his father had been determined that there would be no compulsory military training or fighting for a German prince by his sons. Ironically, the Kesters arrived in the United States in the midst of the Civil War.....and his brother, William, was a Union Army soldier within three years.

John also had told his family how his oldest sister took care of him in the absence of a mother. Caroline Kester, 21, accompanied her father, Stephen Kester, and the six boys on the trip aboard the *Albano* to the United States in 1861.

1876 In Fayette County, Illinois, JOHN KESTER, 21, and (SARAH) ELLEN HARRIS, 20, applied for and received their marriage license on 8 November 1876. They were married 9 December 1876. After the marriage, John and Sarah Ellen remained in Illinois. In 1880, they and their three children were living in Bowling Green, Fayette County:

1880: JOHN KESTER, BOWLING GREEN, FAYETTE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

John Kester, 26, head of household, laborer, born in Russia; father born in Russia; mother born in Russia. (*Prussia?*)

S. Ellen Kester, 25, keeping house; born in Illinois; father born in Illinois; mother born in Ohio.

Clara Kester, 6, daughter, born in Illinois; father born in Illinois; mother born in Illinois. (*Was Clara the daughter of Sarah Ellen, in an earlier marriage?*)

Charles W. Kester, 2, son, born in Illinois; father born in Russia; mother born in Illinois.

Harriett E. Kester, 5/12, daughter, born in Illinois; father born in Russia; mother born in Illinois. (Harriett E. (Hattie) was born in Ramsey, Fayette County.)

Thereafter, the Kester family moved south to Missouri. They first settled in Leora, Mo., about two miles from Sturdivant, Mo. John Kester was a carpenter, cobbler and farmer, remembered by Hattie ("Mother Darling," at almost 98, in October of 1977) as being able "to do just nearly everything."

RAILROAD TIES.....A LINK BETWEEN FAMILIES

"Anyone who had a hoe and a rake could make a living there," Hattie recalled. The area was also lush with wild fruit. At the site, John also was in the business of making railroad ties --- a business that was to link the Darlings and Kesters.

After the death of Sarah E. Kester, ca. 1901, and the marriage in 1904 of Hattie Kester to H. H. Darling, John Kester lived with the Darlings in Arkansas. He fired the boilers for the Darling lumber mill, and helped daughter Hattie take care of the large family. He was remembered as quiet, who smiled but didn't laugh much.

He also yodeled, and, as his granddaughter Helen Darling Buzbee recalled from her childhood with him, "He pampered me. I would take him sweet potatoes and he'd bake them in the boiler."

John Kester read extensively, both in German and in English, though he steadfastly refused to teach his grandchildren German.

JOHN REMEMBERED HE GOT SICK ON THE VOYAGE TO AMERICA

His granddaughter Helen remembered his tales of the trip to the United States: "He was so glad to see land, because everyone was sick."

(Not surprising he got sick: Passengers in those days wrote many details of the awful conditions, especially for those in "steerage," the cheap seats. A standard bunk was assigned to hold three to six persons, and the bunks themselves were generally double-decked. Straw mattresses. Lice, fleas added to the anguish of congestion and sea sickness. Little ventilation. Lousy sanitary facilities. The ceiling height in steerage (essentially the cargo deck at the bottom of the ship) was usually 6 to 8 feet.)

In south Arkansas, John Kester was fond of playing checkers, and regularly went to "Swigart's Mule Barn, where the men gathered to play checkers, cards or dominoes" in Hope.

He also was remembered as having told his daughter, Hattie, that as she grew older, she was going to get "as big as Christina," one of his sisters.

Hattie did.



THE Kesters, ca. 1880: John Kester, the youngest, is standing left. His father, probably Stephen Kester (b. 1803), is seated, front row. His brothers and sisters were not identified. The daughter, second from the left, may be Christina. Older brothers may be William, Julius, George, or Carl.

1900 John and Sarah E. Kester's twins, George and Mary, were 10, when the U. S. Census was taken in Stoddard County, Mo., on 25 June 1900.

In that census, John Kester was listed as being 45, having been in the United States for 38 years. Sarah E. was 47. The older children had left home.

Not far away in Missouri were Charles Kester, 23, and his family in adjacent Bollinger County; and Hattie Kester, who was working as a "servant" in the household of George and Norella Turner in Stoddard County. Hattie was listed as being 18.

1900 JOHN KESTER, STODDARD COUNTY, NEW LISBON TWP., MISSOURI

John Kester, 45, head of household, born May 1855; married 1876; father born in Germany, mother born in Germany. Emigrated 1862; 38 years in the United States. Farmer. Can read, write in English. Rents a Farm.

Sarah E. Kester, 47, wife, born January 1853; born in Illinois; father born in Ohio; mother born in Ohio. 7 children, 5 living (*in 1900*).

George Kester, 10, born March 1890 in Missouri; father born in Germany, mother, Illinois

Mary A. Kester, 10, born March 1890 in Missouri; father born in Germany, mother born in Illinois.

1900 CHARLES KESTER, BOLLINGER COUNTY, WAYNE TWP., MISSOURI,

Charles Kester, 23, head of household, born August 1876; married 1897; born in Illinois; father born in Illinois; mother born in Illinois. Day laborer.

America Kester, 20, wife, born August 1879; married 1897; born in Missouri; father born in Missouri; mother born in Missouri.

Claude Kester, 1, born in January 1899, in Missouri. Father born in Illinois; mother born in Missouri.

1900 GEORGE TURNER, STODDARD COUNTY, DUCK CREEK TWP., MISSOURI, 14 June 1900

George Turner, head of household, 39, born 1860.

Norella Turner, wife, 24, born 1876.

Lavata Fuson, brother in law, 22, born 1878.

Hattie Kester, servant, 18, born 1881 in Missouri; father born in Illinois, mother born in Illinois.

(U. S. Census, Ancestry.com. May 2011. REB)



THE Kesters in about 1910: (Left to right) John Kester, Charlie Kester, and George Kester; Mary Kester, Hattie Kester, and Clara (Minnie?) Kester.

1910 John Kester was a member of the H. H. Darling-Hattie Kester Darling household in 1910, when the U. S. Census was taken. He was recorded as a laborer in the Darling saw mill. Ten years later, in 1920, he was still in the Darling household, recorded as a boarder, and saw mill worker:

1910: HERVEY H. DARLING, NEVADA COUNTY, MISSOURI TWP, ARKANSAS

John Kester, father in law, 52, born in Germany; father born in Germany, mother born in Germany; year of immigration: 1866; laborer, Saw Mill

1920: HERVEY H. DARLING, BRADLEY COUNTY, PALESTINE TWP, ARKANSAS

John Kester, 64, boarder, widowed, born in Germany; father born in Germany; mother born in Germany; Saw Mill worker

John Kester lived with Hattie and the other Darlings until 1929, when he went to live with his other daughter, Mary. It was at the home of Mary Kester Lewis, in Poplar Bluff, Mo., that he died 15 July 1934 of cerebral embolism/arteriosclerosis. After his death, Helen drove Mother Darling to Little Rock so that she could catch the train for the funeral. Dick, 3, and Bobby Dale, 2, accompanied them to Little Rock.

(Based on conversations with Mother Darling, 12, 13 October 1977, in her room at the home of Edgar and Helen Buzbee, Fordyce, Ark., with REB; and on conversations 25 March 1995 with Helen Buzbee, Fordyce, Ark., with REB)

The obituary:

JOHN KESTER

"John Kester aged 80, veteran resident of this county, died at the home of his daughter Mrs. Mary Lewis, four miles south of Poplar Bluff on the Pike Slough road at 7:20 o'clock Sunday Morning.

"Death was sudden and was caused, according to Coroner J. R. Reynolds, by a heart attack.

"Surviving are the following children: Charles Kester of Wappapello; George Kester of Broseley, Mrs. Hattie Darling, Fordyce, Ark., Mrs. Mary Lewis of Poplar Bluff and 27 grandchildren. Funeral services were held at 2:30 o'clock this afternoon at the Ashcraft Church. Frank service. (*Undertaker*)"

(http://awtc.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=*v24t0288&id=1394. Name of family researcher is not known)



1934: Mary Kester Lewis, Hattie Kester Darling, and Charley Kester in Missouri for the funeral of their father, John Kester.

Thirty one years later, John Kester's great great grandson was named, John, and it delighted Mother Darling. She beamed when she heard that John Richard Buzbee had arrived, and that he would carry the name of her father.

The children of John and Sarah Kester were:

1. Charley Kester (1878-1952), m. (1) America Young (2) Callie Jackson)

1910 CHARLES KESTER, NEW LISBON, STODDARD COUNTY, MISSOURI

Charles Kester, 32, born in Illinois; America Kester, 31, born in Missouri; Stella Kester, 8, born in Missouri; Carl Kester, 5, born in Missouri; Oval Kester, 3, born in Missouri; Audy Kester, 1, born in Missouri

1920 CHARLES KESTER, WAYNE, BOLLINGER COUNTY, MISSOURI

Charles Kester, 43, widowed, born in Illinois; Carl Kester, 16; Claude Kester, 20; Stella Kester, 18; Oval Kester, 14; Audy Kester, 12; Thelbert Kester, 6; Delbert Kester, 2

NEXT DOOR was living Julius Kester, 74 (Charles' uncle, who arrived in 1862 from Germany, with Charles' father, John Kester.) Julius was listed as a widower.

1930: CHARLEY KESTER, STODDARD COUNTY, DUCK CREEK Twp., MISSOURI

Charley Kester, 52, age 21 at marriage. Born in Illinois. Father born in Germany, mother, Ohio; Callie Kester, 27, age 21 at marriage; born in Kentucky. Father, mother born in W. Va.; Thelbert M. Kester, 15, born in Missouri. Father, Illinois; mother, Missouri; John Kester, 74, born in Germany. Father and mother born in Germany.

NEAR THE FARM of Charley and Callie Kester in Stoddard County in 1930 was the farm of Audy Kester, 23, and his wife, Willa Kester, 17. The census showed Audy Kester as having been born in Missouri; his father, Illinois; mother, Missouri.

2. Harriett (Hattie) Elizabeth Kester (b. 18 December 1879 in Ramsey, Ill., m. Hervey Holder Darling on 14 April 1904, d. 22 June 1979 in Fordyce, Ark.)

3. George Washington Kester (b. 18 March 1890 in Leora, Mo., m. Dicey Adaline Prince 4 November 1914 in Arkansas, d. 1969).

Dicey Adaline Prince Kester was daughter of Elisha Iverson Prince and Frances Fanny Ellen Fitzgerald, b. 1 November 1893, Puxico, (Stoddard County) Mo., d. 11 July 1984 in Dexter, Mo., according to family researcher who posted data on *Ancestry.com*. In 1930, the G. W. Kester family lived adjacent to the A. G. Prince family. The family:

1930: G. W. KESTER, STODDARD COUNTY, DUCK CREEK Twp., MISSOURI

G. W. Kester, 40, born in Missouri, age 24 at marriage; father born in Germany; mother, Ill.

Dicey Kester, 36, born in Missouri, age 21 at marriage; father born in Tenn., mother, Ill.

Violet Kester, 14, born in Arkansas

Elvis Kester, 12, born in Arkansas

Paul Kester, 11, born in Arkansas

Pauline Kester, 11, born in Arkansas

John Kester, 9, born in Arkansas

Helen Kester, 8, born in Arkansas

Arthur Kester, 6, born in Arkansas

Allah Kester, 4, born in Missouri

Arlene Kester, 2, born in Missouri

The dates of the births of the children coincide with the years of operation of the Darling Lumber Mill in South Arkansas. The mill burned in early 1921, and all the employees lost their jobs. George Washington Kester was a twin of:

4. Mary Kester (b. 18 March 1890 in Leora, Mo., m. (1) Ike Daniel and (2) Roe Lewis)

Mary suffered from asthma and smoked a clay pipe during her visits to her sister, Hattie, in Fordyce, Ark., in the 1940s. She said the pipe smoking helped her breathe.

1930: ROE LEWIS, BUTLER COUNTY, POPLAR BLUFF PORT Twp., MISSOURI

Roe Lewis, 45, born in Missouri; age 22 at marriage.

Mary Lewis, 40, married at age 18

Erman Daniel, 18, born in Missouri

Pansy Daniel, 16, born in Missouri

Earnest Daniel, 12, born in Missouri

5. Jess (James) Kester, who died with appendicitis

6. Clara (Minnie?) Kester, who died while young.



COON HUNTING in MISSOURI.....the Kesters, friends, or kinfolk, at the turn of the century



Harriett Kester, ca. 1882 and 1904

Mather Darling

HARRIETT ELIZABETH Kester

(born 1879, died 1978)

1879 Harriett Elizabeth Kester was born near Ramsey, Ill., 18 December 1879, and later attended a one-room school near Leora, Mo. "Oh, how I loved to run," she said, as she recalled the 1 1/2 -mile journey daily to her school.

THE HIGH COST OF A BOOK

"I was going to school, in about the 5th or 6th grade, and there was a girl there who had a book I wanted. She was through with it."

"I asked her what she would take for it.

"She said, 'A quarter'..... and in those days, you had to go to Bloomfield to get a book. (That was a day's travel to Bloomfield, and a day to get back.)

"I said I'd have to work for someone until I got my quarter. A few days later, her grandmother sent for me to pull onions, so they wouldn't freeze or spoil. So I went over and worked all day. At dinner, after working 1 1/2 days, the girl came in and said, 'I brought the book, so you can give me the quarter grandmother gave you.'

"I've laughed about that 1,000 times. A quarter a day wasn't bad. But we knew how to be saving."



It was about 1888, and Hattie Kester was in Leora, Mo. She decorated the first page of her "Standard Arithmetic" book with a creative drawing of her name. The photo was taken about 1881.



So much of their food grew wild those days, she recalled: "Wild mushrooms, especially. Oh, how I loved them! They'd pop out about the 1st of May." The other wildlife was abundant, too, in south Missouri of the late 19th century; once when she was alone on the river, she saw a flock of perhaps 100 wild turkeys: They paid me no attention and went on a turkey trot --- but, oh, I had something to tell my friends when I got home! Deer, coon, possum, mink pa trapped a lot. A pet coon was the cutest pet I ever had."

THE MOST EXCITING INVENTION: ICE

But the most exciting memory of those early days was the Methodist preacher-- who could make ice!

"I remember an old man who made ice (not 100 miles from where we lived.) I think it was a Methodist preacher. He told his congregation he could make ice, and if they would help, they could do it." Though the congregation didn't believe him, he did, and what a marvelous thing it was for the time, she recalled, ranking that bit of progress as exciting as the arrival of electricity or the telephone.

"I read a lot, everything I could get my hands on. The hardest thing was getting the 20 to 30 cents to order a book or pamphlet." When there was farming to do, she was "right there, too." She recalled planting corn or other grain, and "even my neighbors would come get me to drop seed for them!"

1890 Hattie Kester was 11 when an archaeological team reporting to the Smithsonian Institution came to Stoddard County to excavate and study the county's extensive Indian Mounds, as part of a national ethnological study of North American Indians.

The team included in its report to the Smithsonian details of the countryside at the time, as well as some of its findings about the many years in which the Indians had lived in Stoddard County:

**SLOUGHS, CYPRESS, GUM,
OAK, HICKORY**

"The swamps in this county consist of parallel sloughs of no great depth, with low, sandy ridges between them, which are for the most part above overflow. They are crossed at intervals by lower places that are covered during high water, thus converting the higher portions into islands.

"A good many farms have been cleared up on these ridges, so that the swamps support a scattered population. The sloughs are filled with a heavy growth of cypress and Tupelo gum. On the ridges the timber is principally different species of oak and hickory and sweet gum.

"Groups of small mounds are to be found along most of the little streams among the hills. Several were observed on the low ridges in the East swamp, south of the railroad.

"What is said to be the most extensive system of mounds in southeast Missouri is found 7 miles south of Dexter city, on that portion of the sandy divided between the swamps, which is known as the "Rich woods."

HUT RINGS, ASHES, BONES.

.....AND A PIPE

The archaeologists detailed the "hut rings, or circular depressions" in their excavations, along with "beds of ashes, containing broken pottery, burned clay, bits of bone, mussel and turtle shells, etc." They also discovered a sandstone pipe, the photo of which they included in their report.

One of their findings: "No. 32, a low mound but little more than 3 feet high, was, like most of the others, built of a mixture of sand and clay. It contained human bones and fragments of pottery, which were scattered irregularly though it. The ground was damp and soft and most of the bones were soft, falling to pieces when any attempt was made to lift them up. We were unable to trace out a single complete skeleton or to find a whole vessel."

In other mounds, complete skeletons were uncovered, along with "unio" shells, some of which had holes bored through them, and were apparently unfinished beads; many fragments of pottery scattered promiscuously through the outer layer, and quite a number of animal bones, from the skull of a deer down to the delicate bones of very small birds."

(Annual report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Smithsonian Institution, 1890-1891, googlebooks.com, REB 2011. Pages 172-182, Government Printing Office, 1894.)

While her father had given some thought to homesteading land in the Sturdivant-Bloomfield-Leora area in Stoddard County, John didn't like the locations available. So he rented land, continuing in farming, raising grain, with some cows and pigs; as well as with his carpentry, cobbling, and railroad-tie work.

THE RIVER AND THE TOWN ARE NOW GONE

"We were in the country and living on a river which has since been drained, and disappeared," Hattie Kester Darling recalled. The town, too, had disappeared. The area in which her father and family had come was lumber oriented. Her father made railroad ties, an occupation that could have led to the meeting with Hervey Holder Darling.

1900 The Kesters lived in Stoddard County. In adjacent Bollinger County, Missouri, two Darling brothers were boarding in the household of F. Strickland. Clinton Darling, 27, was recorded as a "foreman." Hervey Darling, 25, was recorded as a "sawyer" on 27 June 1900.

1900: CLINT & HERVEY DARLING, BOLLINGER CTY, WAYNE TWP., MISSOURI
F. Strickland, head of household.

(10 Boarders included:)

Clinton Darling, 27, born Nov. 1872. Foreman.

Hervey Darling, 25, born September 1874. Sawyer.

(U. S. Census, Ancestry.com. May 2011. REB)

1900 GEORGE TURNER, STODDARD COUNTY, DUCK CREEK TWP., MISSOURI, 14 June

George Turner, head of household, 39, born 1860.

Norella Turner, wife, 24, born 1876.

Lavata Fuson, brother in law, 22, born 1878.

Hattie Kester, servant, 18, born 1881 in Missouri; father born in Illinois, mother born in Illinois.

The two Darling brothers had come south, from Ohio, though Hervey Darling had made the trip by way of Kansas. On 1 March 1895, H. H. Darling, 22, had been working on the Kansas farm in Jewell County (Randall), with his older brothers Fletcher Ryan Darling and Clifford Darling. Nearby, when Kansas took its census, was the Steihelman family. The Steihelman (Steelman) family would remain close friends of the Darlings through the next generation.

(Kansas State Census Collection 1895: Jewell/Vicksburg, p. 22, ancestry.com. REB 2011)

Though Clint and Hervey were boarding when the U. S. Census was taken in 1900 the two brothers were able to set up their own lumber mill, with their own railroad....a gift from their father, George Washington Darling, back in Ohio.

And Hervey Darling met Hattie Kester.

THE HONEYMOON: MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS

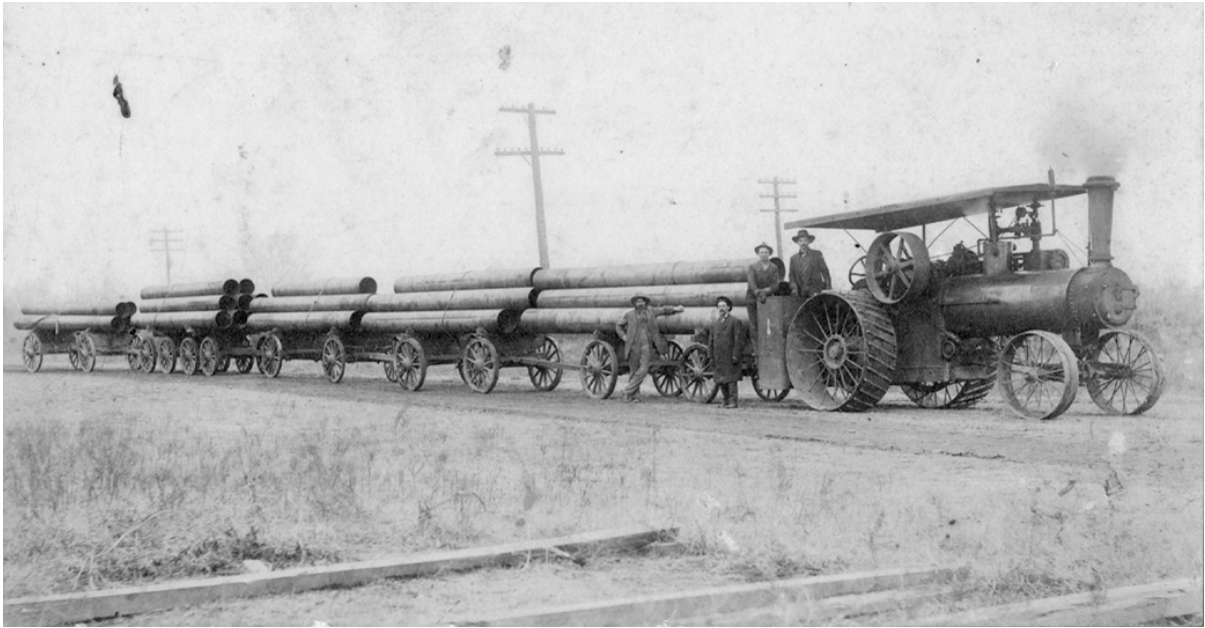
1904 Hervey Holder Darling and Hattie Kester were married 14 April 1904, and for their honeymoon they went to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. The trip was to remain the vacation highlight of Hattie's long life, and was always remembered as the "1904 World's Fair," commemorating as it did the centennial of the Louisiana purchase. It was located on 1,200 acres in what is now Forest Park, and at the time was the largest fair, with 62 nations participating.

(Details of the Fair and what Hattie and Hervey would have seen in 1904 can be found on:

<http://washingtonmo.com/1904/index.htm>)



1904 THE MAGNIFICENT MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE
 OF H. H. DARLING AND HATTIE KESTER ON 14 APRIL 1904.



"This load of Gas Pipe was hauled at Prescott, Ark., by Darling Bros., 1910, and contained 33 pieces, 16 ft. long (528 ft in all), weighed 65 lb. per ft., 34,320 lbs." The description of the load was probably by Clint, possibly by Hervey. Hervey H. Darling is at the controls; Clinton P. Darling, is second from the left.

WITH THEIR SAWMILL and RAILROAD, Hattie and Hervey were able to get in the lumber business in a big way.

The new mill, and especially a new boiler for it, presented by Hervey's father, was "the talk of the town.....They'd stop the railroad train just to look at the boiler." The men were busy in those days, "and had so much work to do, it seemed Hervey had to work all day and night. He did a lot of his own sawing, using a circular saw. "We didn't work on Sundays, and Hervey would take me riding on our railroad --- 5 miles of it --- to visit another mill," Hattie Darling recalled.

Initially, Hervey and Clint Darling leased the land in Missouri on which they ran the train to transport the timber to their mill. Hervey ran the mill. Clint took care of the books. But unfortunately, no one took care of the lease.

THEY LOSE THE LEASE

"When Hervey and Clint went off to Bloomfield to pay for renewal of the leases, they found that others had gone in and bought up the leases. So he lost the lease on the land. I don't know how many hundred acres. He had to sell the railroad. I remember the man who bought it took up the ties the same day he completed the sale."

The loss staggered the family, and they moved south to Arkansas. By then, Orville Hervey Darling had been born. (25 August 1905). In 1906, the family settled near Prescott, Ark., bringing with them the remnants of the hardwood mill.....and they started over.

"Hickory had been the main wood up north, and Prescott had a lot of hickory -- - so that Hervey could resume construction of hickory products (wagon spokes, etc.) But autos had suddenly come on strong, and there was no demand for hickory products!" It was at Prescott, 27 July 1910, that Helen Koester Darling was born.

The next move was to Hope, Ark. where Hervey bought 1,400 acres of timberland for use in the hardwood mill. Then the family's final move with the mill was in 1916 to the Fogel Wood Yard on the Saline River, near Crossett, just below Vick.

In the early years, the firm employed 400-500 men, cutting mostly oak timber. Pay for a worker was about \$1 a day; food and housing \$2.50 to \$3 a week.

HATTIE RAN THE BOARDING HOUSE

Taking care of the workers was Hattie's job. She ran a boarding house for their company, and like any other manager, if she couldn't hire the help, she did the work herself. She couldn't hire enough cooks. "So I had to get another woman and little girl" to help her do the cooking. "I was the bread baker, pie baker and cake maker if I wanted to make them. First thing in the morning, I would sift a whole sack of flour and make a pan of light bread for dinner. An, oh!, it was good.

"They had better flour then, because it was 'water-made' flour. I don't know why, but they said they had to run it through different silk cloths to make it just so-so."



The Darling mill near Prescott, Ark., on Carouse Creek, about 1910. H. H. Darling (with the big mustache) is in front row, right.

THE NEXT CALAMITY---THE MILL BURNS

In 1921, the mill burned.

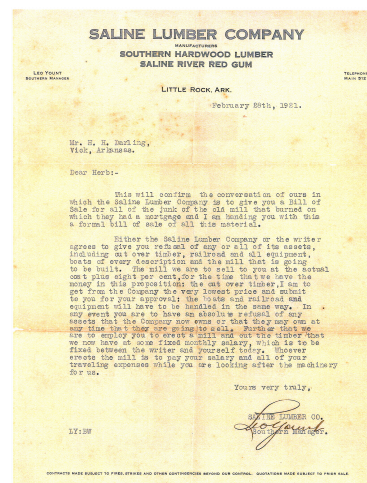
"He put everything he had in the lumber. So we went from riches to rags," Mother Darling recalled.

"The children also were coming so fast." At Hope, there were 11 to feed, since her brother, George, and father, John, were living with them.

"The repeated business reverses "simply killed Hervey. He never got over it."



THE FORMAL LETTER AFTER THE FIRE.....and the family: George Kester (?), Don, Orville, H. H. Darling, Hattie Darling, May, Helen, Dale, Jesse (in front)



1921 The 1921 fire that destroyed the Darling Brothers' mill wrecked the finances of the family. There was no insurance.

Saline Lumber Company, which held the mortgage on the mill, outlined the disposition of the wreckage in a letter to Hervey Darling on 28 February 1921. Here it is:

**SALINE LUMBER COMPANY
MANUFACTURERS
SOUTHERN HARDWOOD LUMBER
SALINE RIVER RED GUM**

Leo Yount, Southern Manager

Telephone Main 5121

**LITTLE ROCK, ARK.
February 28th, 1921**

Mr. H. H. Darling,
Vick, Arkansas.
Dear Herb:

This will confirm the conversation of ours in which the Saline Lumber Company is to give you a Bill of Sale for all of the junk of the old mill that burned on which they had a mortgage and I am handing you with this a formal bill of sale of all this material.

Either the Saline lumber Company or the writer agrees to give you refusal of any or all of its assets, including cut over timber, railroad and all equipment, boats of every description and the mill that is going to be built.

The mill we are to sell to you at the actual cost plus eight percent, for the time that we have the money in this proposition; the cut over timber, I am to get from the Company the very lowest price and submit to you for your approval: the boats and railroad and equipment will have to be handled in the same way.

In any event you are to have an absolute refusal of any assets that the Company now owns or that they may own at any time that they are going to sell.

Further that we are to employ you to erect a mill and cut the timber that we now have at some fixed monthly salary, which is to be fixed between the writer and yourself today. Whoever erects the mill is to pay your salary and all of your traveling expenses while you are looking after the machinery for us.

Yours very truly,

**SALINE LUMBER CO.
Leo Yount
Southern Manager**

The calamity was recorded in stark terms in a comparison of the U. S. Census reports of 1910, 1920 and 1930 for the head of household and his occupation:

1910: Hervey H. Darling, Proprietor, Saw Mill

1920: H. H. Darling, Proprietor, Saw Mill

1930: Hervey H. Darling, Laborer, Mill. Not Employed.

The census reports:

1910: HERVEY H. DARLING, NEVADA COUNTY, MISSOURI TWP., ARKANSAS

Hervey H. Darling, 38, born in Ohio, father born in Ohio, mother born in Ohio; Proprietor, Saw Mill

Hattie Darling, wife, 30, born in Missouri, father born in Germany, mother born in Ohio

Orville H. Darling, son, 4, born in Missouri, father born in Ohio, mother born in Illinois

Chester H. Darling, son, 2, born in Arkansas, father born in Ohio, mother, Illinois

Flora M. Darling, daughter 1, born in Arkansas, father born in Ohio, mother born in Ill.

Clinton P. Darling, brother, 41, born in Ohio, father born in Ohio, mother born in Ohio;

Partner, Saw Mill

John Kester, father in law, 52, born in Germany; father born in Germany, mother born in Germany; year of immigration: 1866; laborer, Saw Mill

1920: HERVEY H. DARLING, BRADLEY COUNTY, PALESTINE TWP., ARKANSAS

H. H. Darling, 47, born in Ohio; father born in Ohio; mother born in Ohio; Proprietor of Saw Mill

Hattie Darling, 39, born in Illinois; father born in Germany; mother born in Illinois

Orville Darling, 14, born in Missouri, father born in Ohio, mother born in Illinois

Chester Darling, 12, born in Arkansas, father born in Ohio, mother born in Illinois

May Darling, 10, born in Arkansas, father born in Ohio, mother born in Illinois

Helen Darling, 9, born in Arkansas, father born in Ohio, mother born in Illinois

Dale Darling, 8, born in Arkansas, father born in Ohio, mother born in Illinois

Don Darling, 5, born in Arkansas, father born in Ohio, mother born in Illinois

Jesse Darling, 6/12, born in Arkansas, father born in Ohio, mother born in Illinois

John Kester, 64, boarder, widowed, born in Germany; father born in Germany; mother born in Germany; Saw Mill worker

Clint Darling, brother, 50, born in Ohio; father born in Ohio; mother born in Ohio.

OTHERS:

Charley Wright, boarder, 41, born in Missouri; doctor, Mill Company

Will Ferris, boarder, 37, born in Michigan, laborer, Saw Mill

Myrtle Bradford, boarder, 20, born in Arkansas, school teacher.

In 1920, many saw mill workers lived near the Darlings and their mill, where many worked.

With destruction of the mill in 1921, the jobs ended and the former employees moved on. The Darlings and John Kester moved to Fordyce in 1922 for a fresh start, and what turned out to be the start of the Great Depression. In Fordyce, Hervey established a cabinet-making shop south of the Cottonbelt Railroad tracks, near the south edge of the city, still in partnership with Clint, as Darling Brothers.

1930: HERVEY H. DARLING, DALLAS COUNTY, FORDYCE TWP., ARKANSAS

Hervey H. Darling, 60, born in Ohio, father born in Ohio, mother born in Ohio; Laborer, mill. Not employed.

Hariet E. Darling, 50, born in Illinois, father born in Germany, mother born in Illinois

Chester H. Darling, 22, born in Arkansas, father born in Ohio, mother born in Illinois

Flora M. Darling, 20, born in Arkansas, father born in Ohio, mother born in Illinois

Helen C. (K.) Darling, 19, Sales Lady, Variety Goods. **Employed**, born in Arkansas, father born in Ohio, mother born in Illinois

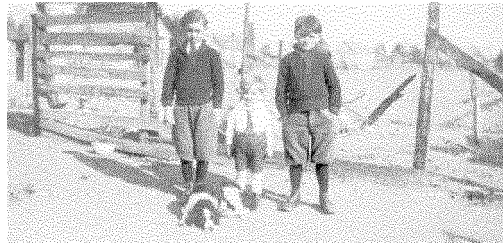
Dale Darling, 18, born in Arkansas, father born in Ohio, mother born in Illinois

Don Darling, 15, born in Arkansas, father born in Ohio, mother born in Illinois

Jessie E. Darling, 10, born in Arkansas, father born in Ohio, mother born in Illinois

Clint P. Darling, 62, brother, born in Ohio; father born in *Germany*; mother born in *Illinois*.

The only member of the family who was reported employed when the census was taken on 8 April 1930 was Helen. She was a sales clerk at Fordyce's Sterling Store. And she remembered that she used some of her income to buy hats from the Stover Sisters' hat shop on Main Street.



1905-1917: Mother Darling with young Darlings: (l to r) Orville; Chester and Orville: Dale, Jesse, Don

In the 1930s, Hervey tried to establish a burial casket-manufacturing company in Fordyce, but the banker refused a loan. In later years, Fordyce's Benton Casket Co., operated by the banking Benton family, was a major employer. Hervey and some of his sons, especially Don, also attempted to market a duck-caller which Hervey manufactured in his southside shop. They built hundreds of the devices, but, apparently, ran afoul of another man's patent, and were not able to put them on the market.

By the mid 30s, Hervey and Hattie had three grandsons. They were Bobby Dale and Dick Buzbee, and O. H. Darling, Jr. O. H., Jr., was the oldest. He was "Junior" to the family, and "Doogie" to everyone else.



1934: Doogie Darling at Carpenter Dam, Hot Springs

The Darlings' Shop & Grist Mill in Fordyce

LATHES, DRILL PRESSES, SANDERS, PULLEYS, BELTS & MACHINES

By O. H. (Doogie) Darling, Jr.

I remember going to Grandpa Darling's shop, with Daddy (Orville Darling, Sr.) It seems that we were there quite often as Orville almost always had a wood-working project on.

Also we lived fairly close, at 802 South Main (about eight blocks), and prior to that only a few blocks away at the Pride house. Uncle Clint was there, of course, helping Grandpa (H. H.), on various projects. The shop had a truck motor power plant with an overhead line-shaft, common in most plants of all sizes in those days. This shaft ran over the machines and was taken down to the individual machine by pulleys and belts to be engaged when the machine was to be used.

The most-used machine was a planer, to surface rough, dry lumber that the customers brought by to be surfaced or "dressed" as it was sometimes called. When the planer was running no other machine could be used because of the power drain in the process. There was, as I recall and certainly as I can imagine, lots of noise and shavings. Grandpa Darling also

operated a grist mill, grinding customers' corn to yield meal. Other power tools were lathes, drill presses, and sanders. A lot of this was built by H. H. and Clint, and involved bearings, pulleys to adjust tool speed, etc.

The road in front of the shop went to a cotton gin to the east of the shop, at the junction of the Rock Island, and Cotton Belt railroads, and the road in the fall was "bumper to bumper" with teams and cotton wagons from surrounding farms, awaiting their turn to get to the gin. There were two gins in Fordyce at the time. None now. And if cotton is grown at all in Dallas County now, I expect that it is 40 miles away near Sparkman in the Ouachita River bottom land.

CANDY AT TOLAND'S STORE

At the intersection of the shop road and South Main, on which we lived, was Toland's Store, and I have had many a piece of candy from there. One had to watch carefully for bugs, as packaging at the time was not as good as today, nor in retrospect do I think the turnover of inventory was very fast. H. H. died in 1942, and I was 14. Things were poor, economically, although Edgar and Orville had regular jobs pretty well through the Depression, but times were tough. The Tolands were friends with my Morrill grandparents. The store and all are gone now.

H. H. was in some sort of a business venture with Andy Carraway on bird callers, either hawks or ducks. I remember a lot of brass rings, corks cut to fit and turned wooden caller cylinders stored upstairs over the shop, but apparently the market was not good as I never recalled any ever being shipped. Probably another sign of the times with a poor economy.

THEIR INLAID TABLE WAS A CLASSIC

H. H. and Clint were superior wood workers. The inlaid red gum table on Helen's back porch sitting room was one of the classics, I always thought. An acquaintance of mine refinished that set of chairs, the table, and other parts for Chester in about 1960, and told me that only two of the inlays, out of the hundreds in the set, were loose and needed re-gluing. It was animal hide glue, heated before application. I guess it and the master fittings of the inlays kept them in the furniture.

H. H. and perhaps Clint were also masters in working large headsaws for portable (ground-hog) sawmills. The saws were 48" in diameter, teeth all around the circumference and required sharpening every day and other maintenance to make them run true and efficient.

THEY MADE THE SAWS "HUM"

I've had dozen or more people in later years tell me that they used to sawmill and that H. H. made their saws "hum." These mills were small, using 5 to 8 men cutting logs in the woods usually into railroad crossties and rough lumber. One of these that thought H. H. was great was Patsy's dad, Otis Miles, I found out later.

Later than the 1940s, I was told that H. H. built the boiler installation at a non-portable, rather large, Anthony Lumber Company mill at Kingsland in the late 1930s, and that he rebuilt The Fordyce Lumber Company Sawmill in the 1920s.

I often wondered if this is what brought the family to Fordyce from Vick and "Moore's Mill" on the lower Saline River, all in lower Bradley County, Arkansas. Like so many other things, I waited too late to ask, although Helen may know.



THE OLD STEAM TRACTOR WAS SOLD FOR SCRAP

Two blocks south of the Darling Shop on South Main, there was a steel, steam tractor similar to some that I expect you have seen in museums in Kansas and other farming states. It was under a shade tree, rusting down. With other school kids going home, I had played on it. It belonged to "The Darling Brothers," having been brought from Moore's Mill, where it was used to haul lumber from The Darling Mill to the Rock Island Railroad. The lumber was put on rail cars and delivered to Bradley Lumber Company. The Darlings' arrangement at Moore's Mill was that they were contracted to saw Bradley logs into lumber for delivery to Warren.

STEAM TRACTOR WAS PURCHASED AT PRESCOTT

The purchase of the steam tractor, I have been told, occurred at Prescott, where they were running a sawmill where they bought logs and timber and sawed them into lumber, and then arranged the sale of the lumber. I have seen a picture of the steam tractor pulling wagon loads of steel pipe to a pipeline project of some oil or gas operation. The tractor was sold for scrap after World War 2 began, and after H. H.'s death. They were actually small steam locomotives that ran on big steel wheels. The advent of internal combustion engines leading to the tractors you see today, put them obsolete.

UNCLE CLINT WAS AN AVID READER

Uncle Clint was an interesting person, living a good while longer than H. H. After the death of H. H., I am sure things were slow for him. I think he read the encyclopedias through that were in Grandma Darling's house.

I recall that he was amused that Sammy Hornaday, a neighbor boy called into the service, came home on furlough and mentioned that he had been across the equator three times, and Clint wondered how he could cross an uneven number of times, and still be on this side?

While I was in forestry school in the late 40s, Uncle Clint told me that the last log he saw cut in Floyd Sturgis' mill east of Fordyce was so small that it made only one 2 x 4 board, and all four corners were rounded! This was a shock for him. He had spent his life working with large, high-quality old-growth hardwood logs.

THE MEN ATE AT THE 'FIRST SITTING'

Prior to Christmas, Grandma Darling had us draw names for Christmas presents. I hoped Jesse would get my name as he was in the service before Pearl Harbor. One time he had given me a lead soldier casting outfit which I used and cherished for years. I also remember getting old enough to eat with the men at the "first setting" on Christmas. If there was not enough room, the women and children did not eat first.

I also remember Grandma's fresh coconut cakes with icing thick enough to be confused with divinity.

GRANDPA USED A SHOTGUN TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

After coming to Crossett, I met two men who remembered H. H.: One was a brother of a man who owned a mill H. H. was called down to see about. The flues in the boiler were working poorly, and not drafting correctly. After inspecting the situation, H. H. got a shotgun from the owner and shot the screen on top of the smoke stack. This dislodged the soot and the flues drew well. The other man knew a lot about the newly-arriving

internal combustion engines and H. H. made him an offer to exchange H. H.'s knowledge of steam for Mr. Jordan's knowledge of gasoline engines. H. H. was in Fordyce when this occurred, but he worked on lots of mills.

LOTS OF PRACTICAL SENSE

No doubt H. H. was a smart man, capable of reading books, understanding them, and with lots of practical sense, from what I have been told.

O. H. (Doogie) Darling, Jr., 4 February 1998
1203 Chestnut Street, Crossett, Arkansas 71635

1942 In the evening of 3 September 1942, Hervey Holder Darling walked up the street to visit Edgar and Helen Buzbee and their family at their home. He walked back home that night, and went to bed. During the night, he suffered a heart attack and died in bed, early on the 4th. He had known of the heart problem, and had been keeping his refrigerator stocked with beer, which was thought to assist, in the treatment at the time. Prior to the fatal attack, he'd told Hattie: "You get something the matter with that ticker, and you'll never get it cured."

The death was reported in *The Fordyce Weekly News*:

H. H. DARLING

FOUND DEAD

FRIDAY MORN

Death Angel Calls During Night. Funeral Services were Held Monday

Harvey Holder Darling, 70, was found dead in his bed here early last Friday morning, by members of the family when he failed to wake up at his usual time. Physicians said death had overtaken him about midnight Thursday night, so quietly that none of the family were disturbed.

Mr. Darling was born at Warsaw, Ohio, on March 19, 1872, and had resided in Fordyce for twenty-one years. During most of these years, he was engaged as a cabinet maker, being associated with his brother, C. P. Darling, under the firm name of Darling Brothers.

Besides his wife, the deceased is survived by five sons, Chester, O. H., Dale, Don and Jesse, and two daughters, Mrs. Joe Jarvice of Fort Worth, Texas, and Mrs. Edgar Buzbee of Fordyce. Six brothers, including C. P., of Fordyce, and three sisters also survive.

Funeral services were held Monday at the Benton Funeral Home, having been delayed pending the arrival home of Chester and Jesse, who are in the armed forces. Services were in charge of Rev. B. F. Roebuck, assisted by Dr. C. W. Caldwell, and interment was in Oakland Cemetery.

Active pallbearers were Roy Kilgore, A. E. Crowder, J. A. Maguire, C. P. Ledbetter, O. M. Wilkinson and Cleve Heinley.

Honorary pallbearers were H. B. Benton, Dr. W. S. Ellis, Henry Hearnberger, R. M. Jordan, Walter Lewis, Pug Wood, Jim Wright, U. R. Clark, L. L. Chandler, John Vaughan, Harvey Marks, Ed Tomlinson, Sam Nutt, Nin Russell and Bruce Stover.

(The Fordyce Weekly News, p. 1, Thursday 10 September 1942)

(Roy Kilgore operated a grocery and butcher store near the Kilgore Hotel; A. E. Crowder was a grocery man and father of Dick's classmate, Jack

J. A. Maguire was county agent and father of Bobby Dale and Dick's classmates, Jim and Mary Louise; C. P. Ledbetter was a blacksmith

(O. M. Wilkinson operated a dry goods store with L. L. Trussell on Main Street; Cleve Heinley was a sawmill worker.

(H. B. Benton owned Benton Funeral Home and Benton Furniture Store; W. S. Ellis was one of the town's doctors; Henry Hearnberger was a lumberman

(R. M. Jordan was postmaster and one of the town's few Republicans along with Hervey Darling. R. M. was the father of the football-famous Jordan twins, Click and Jud.

(Walter Lewis was a city employee; Jim Wright was a neighbor; U. R. Clark ran a shoe repair shop; L. L. Chandler was a retired carpenter; John Vaughan worked at the Fordyce Lumber Co.

(Harvey Marks also worked at Fordyce Lumber Co. He lived nearby. In later years, he rode back and forth to the Lumber Company with Edgar. Ed Tomlinson was a merchant; Sam Nutt owned Nutt's Grocery Store.

(Nin Russell was road worker for the county. The story is told that Hervey Darling once voted for Russell when he ran for public office, but the vote was thrown out when it was discovered that Hervey, a Republican, had voted in the only election that counted, the Democratic primary. In those days, the Democratic primary was tantamount to election.

(Bruce Stover was a neighbor.)

Hattie lived on in the old home to become the oldest member of three families, as she put it. "I feel bad, but I'm fighting," she said in October 1977, two months before her 98th birthday. By the late 1970s, her eyesight and her hearing had begun to fail, her breathing was labored, requiring oxygen; and she suffered multiple internal problems. (She had known at least one major internal problems years earlier:

During the early 1940s, she suffered an attack of appendicitis and had to be rushed to Little Rock's St. Vincent Hospital for surgery. The operation on the appendix was successful, but one of the doctors left a pair of scissors inside her body when he sewed her up. The scissors were soon discovered, and removed without aggravating consequences beyond the acute discomfort of the time.)

Yet even as she approached 99 years of age, her mind was clear, and her sense of humor still lively, though she increasingly depended on Helen to take care of her. For many years, Helen held down a full-time job at Caplinger's and Word's, and watched after Mother Darling in her old home. Helen and members of her family regularly carried drinking and cooking water to her. Then, with Mother Darling's increasing infirmities and lack of water at the old home, Helen would drive her to the Buzbee home to spend the evening, before returning her in the morning to the Darling home.

As the years went by, Mother Darling needed further care, and eventually came to stay in the Buzbee home, where Helen ministered to her as well as to Edgar, as both required much care.

MOTHER DARLING'S PHILOSOPHY

THE WORLD TURNS, and nobody knows where you are going to land," she told me, as we looked back over her long life.

On one of Mother Darling's hospitalizations during which I visited her in the Dallas County Hospital, she had been given medication that inflicted unusual side effects: She wanted to tell me about events in Caribou, Maine, though she had never been there in her life. She was not accustomed to having taken medicine throughout her life, and when she did take some in the final years, the medicine invariably caused freak side effects.

Nevertheless, once the medicine wore off, she was mentally active until the final months of her life. Arthritis had taken its toll first on her fingers, then her knees and other joints, but she dearly loved to watch television....and especially All-Star Wrestling. It was grand theater for her in the later years, when she was unable to be independent.

"I've had a tough life, and I've seen a good life, and I have enjoyed it all. I enjoyed working."

(Conversations with Mother Darling, 12, 13 October 1977, in her room at the home of Edgar and Helen Buzbee, Fordyce, Ark., with REB)

She didn't live to see 100. She died 22 June 1978 at age 98 1/2.

The obituary was published in *The Fordyce News-Advocate* on Wednesday 28 June 1978:

Mrs. Harriett Darling

Mrs. Harriett Darling, age 98, of Fordyce, widow of H. H. Darling, died Thursday, June 22, in the Dallas County Hospital. A member of the Methodist Church, she had lived at Fordyce for the past 58 years.

She was born Dec. 18, 1879 near Joliet, Ill., the daughter of John and Sarah Kester. Mr. Darling, who was in the timber business, moved his wife and family to Dallas County in 1920.

Survivors include three sons, O. H. and Chester Darling, both of Fordyce, and Don Darling of Minden, La.; one daughter, Mrs. Helen Buzbee of Fordyce; 13 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at 10:00 a.m., Saturday, June 24, in the Benton Funeral Home Chapel with Rev. Clint Atchley and Rev. Rufus Sorrells officiating.

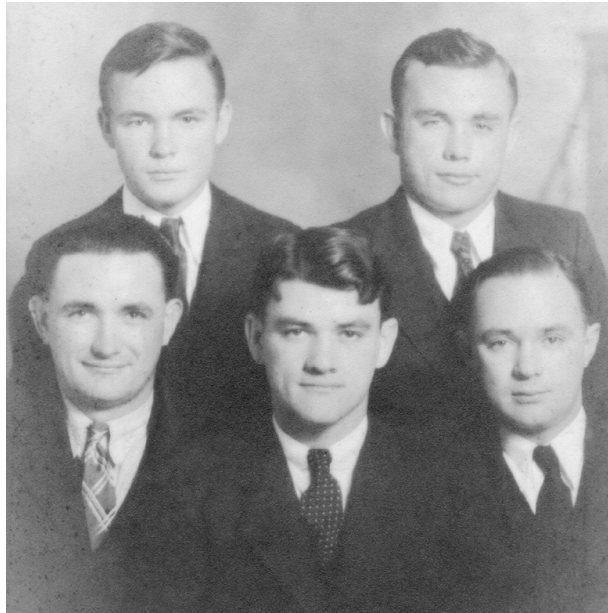
Burial was in Oakland Cemetery.

Mrs. Darling's grandsons served as pallbearers.

(*The Fordyce News-Advocate*, Wednesday 28 June 1978)


Hattie was buried next to Hervey in a pine tree-shaded Darling family plot at a corner of Fordyce's Oakland Cemetery, in which also were buried Clint, May, Dale and a stillborn daughter of 29 June 1922. Elsewhere in the cemetery would be buried Chester, Jesse and Jesse's son, Jesse Robert.

Hervey Holder and Hattie Darling's children:



The 5 Brothers: Orville, Don, Chet, bottom; Jesse and Dale, top.

1. Orville Hervey Darling (25 August 1905-9 January 1979), married Alleen Morrill (1 May 1909-24 October 1978) on 30 July 1927. They lived in Fordyce, where he was a machinist for Fordyce Lbr. Co., guard at Phelps Dodge Co., and a member of the Fordyce City Council. He was a member of the official board of First United Methodist Church and had been president of the large Men's Bible Class. One son:

a.  O. H. (Doogie) Darling, Jr., (b. 28 June 1928), who married Patsy Miles (b. 28 May 1934) on 7 February 1953, in Fordyce. Military service: National Guard, Fordyce, Ark. Two children:

(1) Edward Collins (Eddie) Darling (4 September 1956-23 October 1994).

Eddie, 38, was killed in a crash of his small plane in Bellingham, Wash.

(2) Linda Darling (30 November 1959-11 December 2010) who m. Kenneth Williams, Jr. They and their family live at 4958 Colina Way, Sierra Vista, Arizona, 85635, where Ken is assigned with the U. S. Army as a chaplain. After the death of Linda, the home was in Branson, Missouri. Two daughters:

(a) Megan Elise Williams (b. 8 June 1988) in Little Rock.

(b) Bethany Darling Williams (b. 14 June 1993) in Little Rock.

Doogie had researched the old Darling Mill sites in south Arkansas:


***D*ARLING HISTORY: FOGLE'S WOODYARD, MOORE'S MILL**

The Fogle, Buleet and Acan families, all French, came to this area from Louisiana, by river in 1750. Some of them, including Jock (Jacques?) Fogle, worked in timber for years along the Saline River, rafting logs, shingles staves, and the like to Monroe, La., and beyond. This is according to a history of Ashley County, written by a Hamburg man in the early 1900s. These families all left about 1825, returning to Louisiana following The Louisiana Purchase.

For 75 years, these were the only white residents of Ashley County. Today, this spot on the river is accessible only by boat, and is called, Bogalusa, and several of my companions over the years have told me that they have seen the concrete foundations of the Darling Mill, this being a summer swimming spot. The other location of the mill in that area was Moore's Mill. There are a number of camps now at this location and a good gravel road to it. It is still known by that name. I had Orville there in the early '70s, and he found their old well pipe behind one of the present-day cabins.

O. H. Darling, Jr., Crossett, Arkansas, 12 February 1998

1203 Chestnut Street, Crossett, Arkansas 71635

2.  **Chester Holder Darling (6 October 1907-20 February 1992)**, married Lucy Katherine (Tunk) Kulze (b. 13 December 1921, d. 2007), and operated Chet's Mobil Service Station in Fordyce. He was active in sports in Fordyce. He starred as the Fordyce High School Redbug football quarterback in Arkansas' 1929 state championship team that also included Paul (Bear) Bryant.

SERVED IN ARMY AND THE NAVY

In World War 2, he served in both the Army and the Navy. He enlisted first in the Army on 9 July 1942, in Little Rock, and was recorded at the time as having completed 2 years of college; height 65 inches; weight 160; single, with dependents; civil occupation: automobile serviceman.

When it was discovered he had flat feet, he was discharged from the Army. Then, on 20 May 1943, he enlisted in the Navy and was a member of the crew of the USS Snowbell (AN 52) on its commissioning 16 March 1944.

Early on, the ship operated in the San Pedro, Calif., area in net installation duty, and also as a training ship for small craft. After refitting and installation of guns, on 27 January 1945, the Snowbell sailed for Pearl Harbor enroute to the war in the south Pacific. It was in battle in the Okinawa campaign, and also laid nets to protect the other ships in the campaign. The ship remained in the Okinawa area after the end of the war, and was caught on 9 October 1945 in a major typhoon.

In the typhoon, she collided with Chinquapin (AN 17), and went aground. The Snowbell broke up and the crew was forced to abandon ship. The hulk was destroyed 14 January 1946. Chet returned to Fordyce and his station. No children.



3. **Flora May Darling (12 April 1909-20 April 1969)** whose last husband was the Rev. J. Barney Nunez (1895-1980), in Nunez, Ga. No children.

4. **Helen Koester Darling (27 July 1910-9 April 2007)**, married **Edgar Andrew Buzbee (16 February 1906 - 22 April 1978)**, on **16 June 1930**. (*Notice the change in spelling of "Kester." Mother Darling changed spelling when she recorded Helen's birth.*)

5. **Dale Darling (9 January 1912-20 July 1964)**, married Pauline Ferguson (b. 24 November 1917) on 27 Sept.. 1940. Divorced. Dale died of a heart attack. Son:

a. Terry Dale Darling (b. 30 March 1942) who married Glenda Kay Collins (b. 1 August 1943) on 21 September 1962. They live at 5807 Liberty Cove, Little Rock, Ark., 72209-7925. No children.

Terry Dale recalled some of the early days in Fordyce:

***M*Y MEMORIES OF THE 40s:**

Ration tokens of red and blue. Green blackout shades, and three stars that hung in Mamaw's (Darling's) window.

I remember Don and Myrtle walking through Mamaw's front gate; he was in his dress whites and looking like a recruiting poster.

Most of my summers were spent at Mamaw's and Helen's plotting ways to get Helen to make the world's greatest divinity candy.

One day, Harriette and I decided to play canasta and to get to a million points. We didn't meet this objective, and I haven't played canasta

since. My fondest memories were of Christmas time at Mamaw's. Almost everyone came in at some point. The Christmas tree always seemed so tall. There were always fireworks.

As for the 50s, I always refer to the movie, "American Graffiti," and the record, "Keeping the Faith," by Billy Joel. These pretty much say it all.

I spent 30 years in heavy equipment parts, doing everything from the warehouse, to parts manager. After two heart attacks, two heart operations, and seven bypasses, I decided to let someone else deal with the pressure. I retired in 1994. I do miss my horse, my 15 dogs, and the open woods.

SSOME OF THE FAMILY STORIES:

GREAT UNCLE EARL DARLING

Our great uncle, Earl Palmer Darling, was in the Spanish American War. He said that once in Cuba his squad ran low on food. They saw a dog in a village and it quickly became a meal. He said it tasted like chicken.

GREAT UNCLE CLINT DARLING

Our great uncle, Clint Darling, was at Helen's one day. He told her that he was feeling bad. He said this several time until Helen got tired of hearing it. So she gave him a dose of castor oil. A big dose. Uncle Clint didn't go back to Helen's for a long time after that. And nobody told Helen if they felt bad.

JESSE DARLING

When Uncle Jesse was young, he was always running away from home. Papaw (*H. H. Darling*) had a dog named Popeye that would see Jesse running. Popeye would catch him and sit on him until Mamaw (Hattie Darling) could get there. One morning at breakfast, Jesse slipped some biscuits in his pocket. Later as he was running down the road with Popeye in hot pursuit, he dropped the biscuits. That slowed Popeye down by a good three seconds, and once again, Jesse was captured.

ORVILLE, DALE, DON, AND CHET

Orville, Dale, Don and Chester built their own cars from parts they would find in the junk yard, and various other places.

One day they were all in Orville's car, crossing the Cotton Belt railroad tracks. About the time they got in the middle of the tracks, the car stopped. That was at the same time someone saw a train coming. After scrambling out doors and windows they pushed the car off the tracks just in time. These were the same railroad tracks someone would put soap on.

When the engineer would put the brake onto stop at the depot, the train would just slide by.


AFTER THE FUNERAL

As the cars pulled away from the old Darling house going to Papaw's (H. H. Darling's) funeral, his old dog watched from the side of the road. When everyone came back, the dog was gone.

Mrs. Morrill, Orville's mother-in-law, found him about two weeks later, and took him to her house and kept him. The old dog was deep in the woods, where he and Papaw used to hunt. Maybe he was looking for his hunting partner, or perhaps he was reliving old memories.

Terry Dale Darling, 7 February and 15 March 1998

5807 Liberty Cove, Little Rock, Ark. 72209-7925

6.  **Don Darling (14 April 1914-3 August 1982)**, m. Myrtle Elizabeth Adkins (22 August 1916-April 1995) and lived in Ruston, La. School superintendent. Served in U. S. Navy, World War 2. Ensign, USS LST 957; detached at Pearl Harbor 16 February 1945 by authority of U. S. Naval Hospital, Seattle. (*Details, photos, vol. 2-S.*) Children:

a. Phyllis Maudine Darling (b. 3 July 1938) m. Phillip S. Scurria, Jr. (b. 16 December 1938) on 31 July 1961. Divorced. Children:

- (1) Phillip S. Scurria, III (b. 30 May 1962)
- (2) Vanessa Elizabeth Scurria (b. 24 October 1972)

b. Hervie Roy (Butch) Darling (b. 2 October 1941) m. Jo Ann Harrell (b. 17 February 1943) on 22 June 1963. Children:


- (1) Tammy Lorin Darling (29 November 1968)
- (2) Shannon Dale Darling (15 June 1971)

c. Mary Elizabeth Darling (b. 16 July 1944) m. Richard B. Gross (b. 13 December 1943) on 18 April 1966. Daughter:

- (1) Stephine Anne Gross (22 October 1968-28 February 1986)

d. Don (Tinker) Darling, Jr. (b. 2 September 1951) m. Karen Duvall on 11 April 1974. Children:

- (1) Damion D. Darling (b. 30 October 1974)
- (2) Damitra Darling (b. 16 May 1977)
- (3) Durad Dale Darling (b. 7 July 1980)

7.  **Jesse Edward Darling (9 September 1919-9 June 1973)**, m. Elizabeth Stewart (1929-16 May 2011) and settled in the Houston area, where both were school teachers. Jesse died after a heart attack. Elizabeth (Betty) died near Houston.

TWO SHIPS, THREE MAJOR BATTLES

Jesse served in U. S. Navy, World War 2. He had enlisted 13 February 1942, and was a member of the commissioning crew of USS LST 337 on 16 December 1942. The LST 337 fought in the European campaigns of Sicily in July 1943; Salerno landings of September 1943; and the Normandy invasion of June 1944. When the ship was turned over to the Royal Navy, Darling was transferred to the USS Dale W. Peterson (DE 337) (*a stunning numerical coincidence*) on which he served until the end of the war.

The Peterson was an escort for transAtlantic convoys, but as the war neared an end, she was transferred to the Pacific. On 2 September, as the Japanese surrendered, she was ordered to return to East Coast, where she was placed out of commission. (*Other details, photos, vol. 2-S.*)

The children of Jesse Edward and Elizabeth Stewart Darling:

- a. Ginny Darling (b. 23 June 1947)
- b. Jesse Robert Darling (24 February 1952-9 February 1995)
- c. Mary Victoria (Vicky) Darling (b. 9 November 1964).

8. Daughter, stillborn, 29 June 1922

THE DARLINGS of this generation didn't live nearly so long as did the preceding generation, including their Darling uncles and aunts, mostly back on the farm in Ohio. The 12 Darlings who grew up on Evergreen Farms, in Coshocton, Ohio, lived, on average, almost 87 years. The next generation in Arkansas averaged only 66, except for Helen. Helen was the only one to equal the life span of the family *average* of Victorine and Wash Darling.

With Orville, Chet and Dale living in Fordyce, and Don, Jesse and May returning frequently, I saw a lot of the uncles and aunt. One day, when I was about 10, Chet surprised me at Mother Darling's. He gave me \$5, which was a minor fortune to me in those days. One Christmas, Chet gave me a recording of Mozart's 41st Symphony, as my introduction to Mozart and a lifetime enthusiasm for the classics. Mozart's 41st remains my favorite symphony.

THE UNCLES WERE A LOT OF FUN

The Darling uncles were always a lot of fun to be around.....and I was to use and wear out Chet's wood clarinet; his bicycle (which a Fordyce welder was able to keep in operation for years); and later on, his pickup truck; and the cold-water shower that Dale built at Mother Darling's. Between the pear orchard and the home, Dale erected a small building, installed drainage facilities, and a shower head linked by pipes to a small water tower south and west of the house.

Conserving water was assured because of the always chilly water temperature, but Dale's shower was one of the best deals that Bobby Dale and I were to have in those days.....since indoor plumbing and "city water" would not be installed at our home until after we'd gone off to colleges.

BUT WE DIDN'T USE THE BASEMENT

I suspect that Bobby Dale and I used Dale's shower more than he ever used it; I'm confident that I used Chet's clarinet, his bicycle, and even his pickup truck more than he used them. One thing we did not use at Mother Darling's house in those days was the basement. There was a good reason. It had never been finished.

With the help of his sons in about 1940, Papa Darling had started the digging under the existing eastern part of the house, but they ran into water seepage problems when the excavation was about half completed. They abandoned the project, but the huge hole and its continually damp red clay walls remained until the debris from the demolition of the house itself was pushed into the hole in the late 1990s.

UNCLE CLINT TOOK CARE OF THE GARDEN

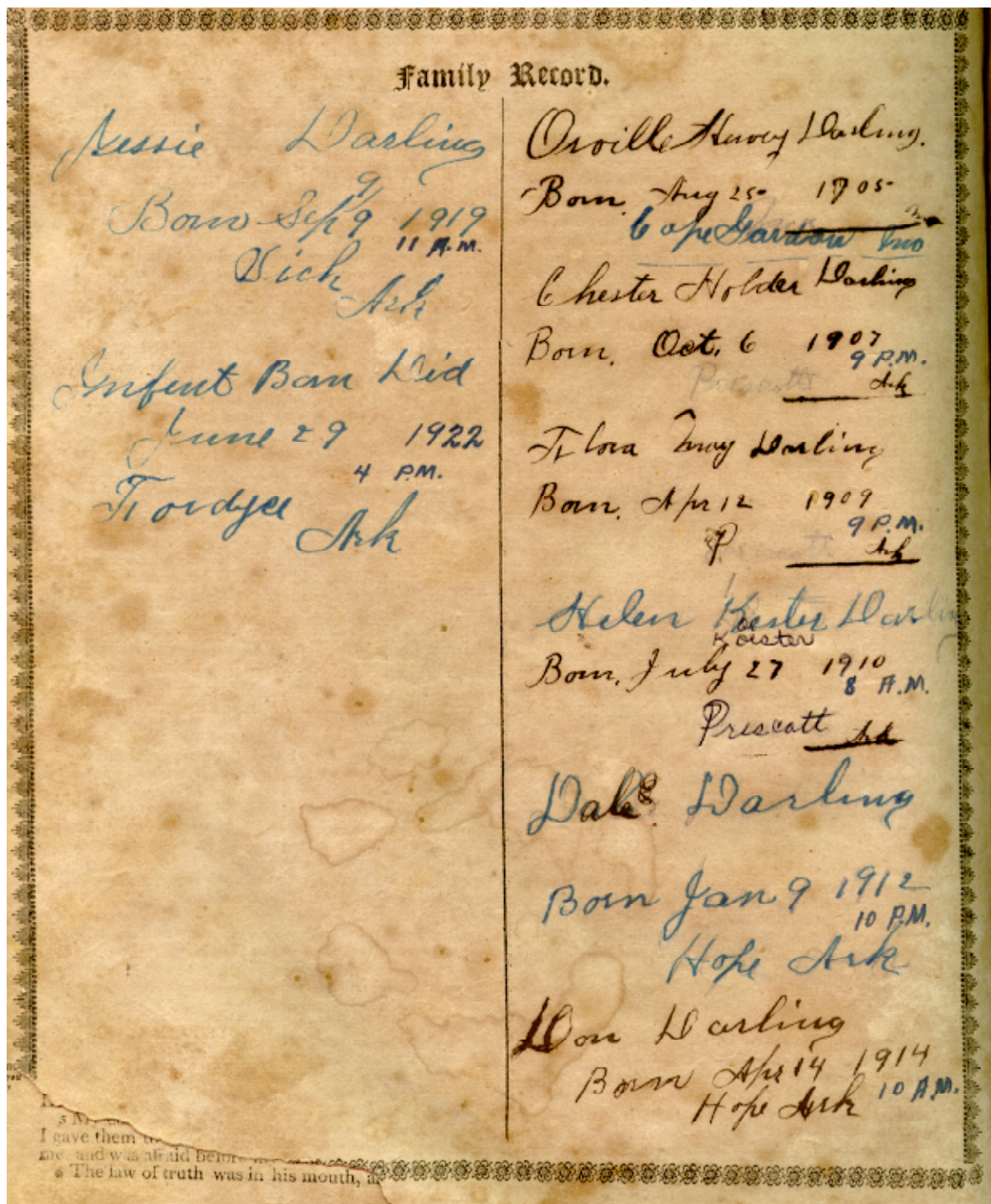
During the World War 2 years, Uncle Clint cultivated several acres of land, and harvested substantial amounts of vegetables in two areas east of the Darling home. Also, in those years, the six or so large pear trees delivered huge surpluses annually for the entire family. Pear preserves were a staple throughout the year, because of the large canning activities at harvest by Helen and Mother Darling.

A large barn near the vegetable plots and the water tower continued to be useful through the early '40s, but it burned one day shortly after a neighbor boy, Ernestine Word, had been seen in the area.

I happened to be walking down the road from our home to Mother Darling's the afternoon of the blaze, saw the barn engulfed in smoke, and alerted Mother Darling. But it was too late. There was no way to save the barn by then....and the only fire department was two miles away in Fordyce.

RAIN ON A TIN ROOF

After the death of Papa Darling, Bobby Dale and I frequently stayed overnight with her and Uncle Clint. We shared a bed in the large southwest bedroom, and slept well..... gloriously well during storms, when the rain would bounce off the tin roof of the sturdy, old building. (The sound may not have equaled the elegance of Mozart's 41st, but it was close.)



A FAMILY RECORD: Hervey H. and Hattie Darling recorded the arrival of each of their children, in a family Bible that has survived a century. Some of Mother Darling's faded hollyhocks blooms still exist inside the book, where she placed them decades ago. Helen recalled that Mother Darling always had lots of hollyhocks, and used the blooms as bookmarks. Notice the change Mother Darling made in spelling "Kester," for Helen. It appears she chose to return the name to a German base, as "Koester."

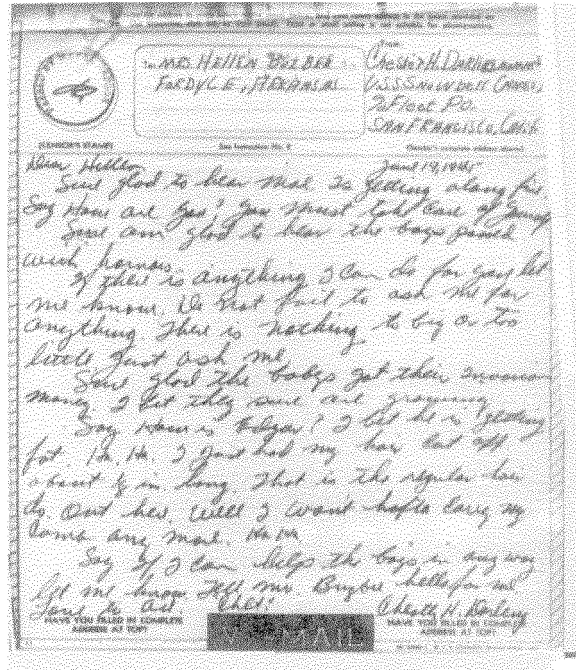


ONE of MOTHER DARLING'S HOLLYHOCKS BLOOMS: The colors have faded, but the bloom exists in the old family Bible.

The Bible also contains a few historic records of the Farquhar family, back in Coshocton County, Ohio. The Farquhar papers include a receipt for \$2.10 that Elijah Farquhar paid to probate the will of Phebe Scott, before the probate judge, 1 July 1868.

A 4 November 1875 contract is also included that shows an agreement by J. B. McKenna, City Marble and Sand Stone Works at Mount Vernon, Ohio, to erect an Italian marble monument and two markers for the late Elijah Farquhar and Caleb Farquhar.

The Farquhars were kin to the Darlings. Hervey Holder and Clint Darling's older sister, Lizzie (Dolly) had married William C. Farquhar.



BY THE EARLY SUMMER of 1945, World War 2 was just about over, though few, if any, Americans knew it. At nearly 14 and getting far too close to the World War 2 draft to suit me, I was taking care of the soda pop at Chet's station, with Dale in charge.

Aboard the USS Snowbell (AN52) 19 June, Chet wrote to Helen, using "V-Mail" of the time. With "V-Mail," the serviceman wrote his letter within the borders of a prescribed sheet. The letter then was inspected by the military censors (stamp, upper left corner), and then photographed in reduced size much like microfilm. A small copy of the letter, about 4 inches wide by 4.5 inches deep, was mailed to the addressee. The letter:

Dear Hellen,

Sure glad to hear Mae is getting along fine. Say, how are you? You must take care of yourself. Sure am glad to hear the boys passed with honors.

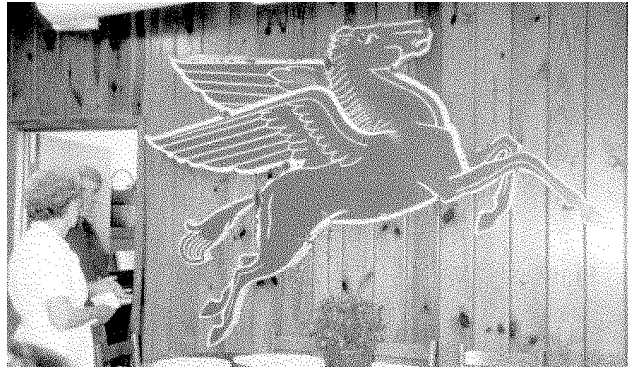
If there anything I can do for you, let me know. Do not fail to ask me for anything. There is nothing too big or too little, just ask me.

Sure glad the babys (*Harriette Jane and Joy*) got their Invasion Money. I bet they sure are growing. Say, how is Edgar? I bet he is getting fat. Ha. Ha. I just had my hair cut off. About 1/8 inch long. That is the regular hair do out here. Well, I won't hafta carry my comb any more. Ha. Ha.

Say, If I can help the boys in any way, let me know. Tell Mr. Buzbee hello for me. Love to all. Chet.

Chester H. Darling

Chet was a Machinist's Mate, 3rd class. He was 38 at the time he wrote to Helen, and like the millions of other servicemen, would be home later in the year. He returned to his station after I had enthusiastically greeted the end of the war in August, and resumed school work at Fordyce High school soon thereafter.



Now a museum piece: Chet's old Flying Horse sign from his early Magnolia Service Station. Donated to a Fordyce bakery as restaurant decoration. (Helen (left) with Dick, in photo by Marie, 1991)

THE ANGRY REUNION

The reunion of Dale and Chet after World War 2 was tragic, and bitter. Prior to the war, Dale worked as a clerk at a downtown Fordyce drug store (where he supplied Bobby Dale and me with unsold copies of comic books), and Chet had just purchased his own service station, at the corner of Main and Fourth streets. At the time, it was a Magnolia station, later to be the town's Mobil Station.

Chet joined the Navy in the early days of the war and he turned the station over to Dale. Dale operated it throughout the war years. He invited me to handle the soda pop operation, and it was there that I began to earn the money that would get me out of town, and through my first year at college.

The war years were hectic at the service station. Gasoline and all supplies were scarce, and repairs were essential since replacement tires and all car gear were not available. The station also was well located: It was at the center of the Fordyce business district and adjacent to a stop light on the main highway that connected much of south Arkansas to Little Rock and points north.

A ROBUST BUSINESS

The traffic was heavy both ways. Everyone was busy. Dale did a fine job with the station during the war, and by the time that Chet returned at war's end, the business was in far better shape than it had been in the prewar days.

What the business arrangement or understanding had been between Dale and Chet, I never knew, nor did I ever know what deal Chet offered to Dale when he returned to resume control. Whatever it was, the misunderstanding that arose from it led to an ugly dispute that soured their relationship the rest of their lives. Dale left the station. He hired on at the Fordyce Lumber Co., as one of Daddy's employees. After his divorce, Dale visited Helen and Edgar more often, but not nearly as often as Uncle Clint had visited during my high school years. Dale worked for Daddy in what appeared to be a consuming bitterness until his heart attack and death at the age of 52 in 1964.

SODA POP OPERATOR UNTIL COLLEGE

After the two brothers clashed in 1945, I stayed on as Chet's soda pop operator during the summers until I went to college in August of 1949. Chet operated his station until 1989, when he had completed 50 years of service and ownership at the station. He died three years later, having had to spend his last year in a lousy

nursing home. With Helen, I visited him in late November of 1991, essentially to say, goodbye, and tell him how much he had done for me, and how much I appreciated it. He gave me a hug, and within three months, he died. He was 84.

DON FOUGHT SEASICKNESS, TOO

Don, like me, was a former Naval officer who had to fight sea sickness. After Don retired from his school superintendent's job, he and Myrtle moved to a Louisiana lakefront in retirement. At the time, I was astonished that Don, who had been active as a school superintendent, could tolerate so much inactivity at what seemed to be so young an age.....and be satisfied watching squirrels and birds, as he so cheerfully detailed on his subsequent visits to Fordyce. Later on, I understood. Don died in 1982. Heart attack. He was 68.

ORVILLE WAS A MACHINIST

As I had worked with Dale and Chet, I also worked with Orville. In the summer of 1950, I spent a few weeks of my summer job at Fordyce Lumber Co., in Daddy's department. Orville was a machinist. We'd see each other daily at the Flooring Mill, though my main thoughts were about getting away to college as soon as I could. Orville was a member of the huge Men's Sunday School class at First Methodist Church, and I'd see him there when I would attend the class during visits to Fordyce in later years. I don't remember anything about the Sunday School lessons in that huge men's class; however, I do remember that membership alone was a great rite of passage: I had grown up and joined the men. Orville died at age 73.....and, alas, the huge old Men's Sunday School class withered away, too, within a changing culture that de-emphasized the value of a church class for men.

WILSON'S DISEASE

We were not able to give much help to Jesse and Betty, when their son, Jesse Robert (Bob), was diagnosed with Wilson's disease, but we did provide the youngster housing once in Olathe, when he was traveling between treatments. The disease was hereditary and irreversible when it was belatedly diagnosed. He was severely handicapped, but the diagnosis arrived in time to help his sister, Ginny. Jesse, too, died after a heart attack in 1973. He was 53.

MAY BROUGHT GADGETS

May always brought interesting trinkets and gadgets home to Mother Darling when she returned on visits that sometimes extended into a couple of months. One time, she brought a mantel stagecoach-clock. (Bill now has it). May also occasionally brought new names. She married several times. She died at 60.

UNCLE CLINT

One of the prime challenges over the years to Bobby Dale and me was to defeat Uncle (really our Great Uncle) Clint in the card games, usually Rook or Canasta, that we'd play with Daddy. Clint was remarkably well-read. He appeared to have a lack of patience for everyone, and an abundance of answers to any question or problem. All the tragic business failures with his brother, Hervey, were long past during the '40s and '50s, when I saw him the most.

With only Social Security, he whiled away the days reading under a huge cedar tree, or on the porch.....where periodically, he would record the day's temperatures in pencil on the front porch columns. He didn't show any interest in television (which Mother Darling loved, especially any film with horses in it). He died at age 90 inside the old Kilgore Hotel, which had been converted into a nursing home.

PART 5

Helen Koester Darling

Life on Carouse Creek and the river
Darlings move to Fordyce in 1921
Marriage, 14 June 1930 to Edgar Andrew Buzbee
The family, South Side, near Mill Town, and near the Airport



Helen Kester Darling (r) and Flora May Darling, at the river, ca. 1918

HELEN Koester DARLING

(born 1910, died 2007)



Helen

HELEN Koester DARLING was born at 8 a.m., 27 July 1910, a few miles from

Prescott, at Carouse Creek in Nevada county, attended, other than by her parents, by Dr. Histerly and a Mrs. Oakley. Mrs. Oakley was the wife of the minister from whom Helen's father, Hervey Holder Darling, had bought 40 acres of land to put up his sawmill. The family moved to Hope, Ark., when she was 9 months old.

"There, I had the mumps when I was about four years old, and caught them from Tom McClardy, who had a car agency (in the 1960s) in Hope. We left Hope when I was about 5 years old, for Vick. Can remember riding on the train and eating fried chicken Mother Darling had packed.

:When we arrived at Vick, the gas lights were burning so brightly, and we went to Ferrell Hotel across the railroad tracks in front of the depot. It was a big two-story building with a porch all the way around both the first and second stories. The train was late, and every one at the hotel had eaten and I have never seen so many men, and the cook was as mad as blue blazes because she had to make biscuits for everyone.

"I can still see her sock apron tied around her fat middle and remember her saying, 'Just another batch of young 'uns.' Never did go into her kitchen again.

"We went to first year of school there. One thing Dr. Jackson's son, Jobe, did here I never learned to do, but only tried it once: He could skate the length of the boardwalk, barefooted, on ice. (That's maybe why my feet stay so cold.) Oh! how I wanted to do that. We left Vick and went to the Saline River where Pappa had the mill.

"This was the first time we really saw the woods, and Saline River. Can still hear Cleve Trotter, a colored man, singing, 'I Heard the Thunder Roar.' He had a beautiful voice. He could be heard above the mill running. Incidentally, Orville and Aleen were down there several summers ago, and he has several sons and all of them sing. He pulled logs across the river for the mill. We had a school teacher, Mrs. Myrtle Bradford, there one year."

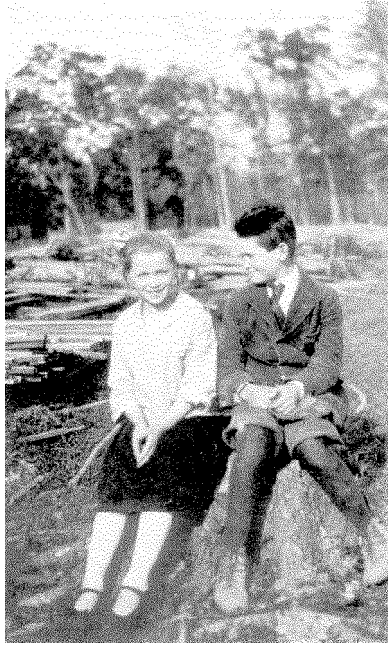
ON THE RIVER, Helen listened regularly to classical music. "I never heard

anything but classical music until I was about 15. I heard my first folk music then. We still have (rather, Junior (*O. H. Darling, Jr.*) has) the same music box that had cylinder records. Some diamond needles in it that came with the box."

The old cylinder music box stayed at Mother Darling's for years, along with boxes of the cylinders. (Later, Bobby Dale got a shell of another old Darling record player.....possibly the successor to the cylinder player.....and he plans to restore it.)

"We moved to Fordyce in 1921, where I started in the 4th grade (having had two years of schooling previously). Only had 10 years of schooling."

The Darlings first lived on East 3rd near the Rock Island depot in Fordyce. They soon moved to the South side of town, on a tract of land on South Main where Orville later lived.



With a young friend, about 1920

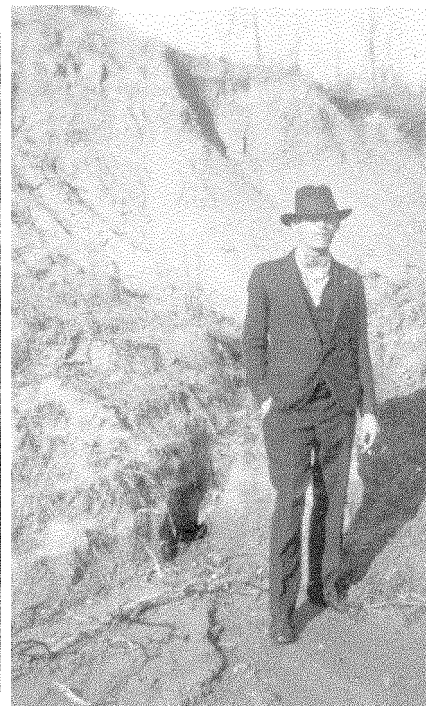
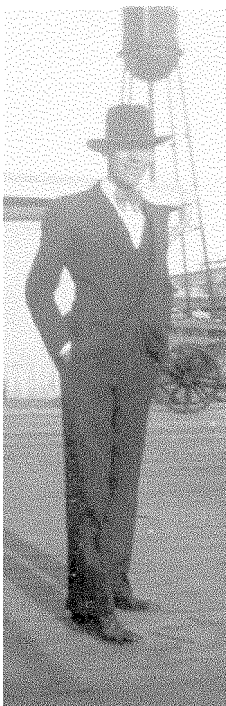


With Orville, about 1925



Outside Fordyce High School, about 1927

Thereafter, the family moved in 1925 to East 1st, east of the railroad, from which Helen walked to work at Sterlings. In 1929, the Darlings moved to East College Street, east of the railroad tracks, west of the Fordyce High School.



1929 or 1930: The props are the same in the photos to the left.....and the shadow of Daddy's hat is conspicuous in his photo of Helen. At the Fordyce Lumber Co., with incoming logs on the rail cars in the foreground. (Right:) Same day, but in a local ravine. Daddy holds his cigarette.

1930

Helen was graduated from FHS in 1930 and was married 14 June 1930 to Edgar Andrew Buzbee. They selected a small home adjacent to Hervey and Hattie Darling and her sister and brothers on East College street, between the railroad tracks and the high school.



BOCO CASH STORE
FRESH MEATS AND GROCERIES
PHONE 474
Little Rock, Ark.

6/14/1930
M. Edgar Buzbee

Item	Amount
White Karo	39
Box of crackers	20
3 matches	10
8 lb lard	1.00
Bananas	30
Corn flakes	6
Spuds	60
6 Oranges	30
2 Gall Oil	40
6 Apples	25
9 Soap	65
Total	3.87

ACCOUNT FORWARDED 4.78

or account stated to date. If error is found return to store.



Arkansas
STATE OF ARKANSAS
COUNTY OF _____
TO ANY PERSON AUTHORIZED BY LAW
TO SOLEMNIZE MARRIAGES

I, _____, do hereby certify that _____ and _____
were by me lawfully joined in Holy Matrimony according to the rites and ceremonies of the _____
and the laws of the State of Arkansas, on the _____ day of _____, 1930.

CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE

Given under my hand and official seal this _____ day of _____, 1930.

Minister of the Gospel

1930: Helen's FHS graduation card. Their first grocery bill, 14 June 1930. The wedding license, 14 June 1930

They went grocery shopping on their wedding day. Helen picked up the family's first supplies at Boco Cash Store ("Fresh Meats and Groceries"). The tab was \$3.87. It included 8 pounds of lard, \$1.00; bananas, 30 cents; corn flakes, 6 cents; spuds, 60 cents; 6 oranges, 30 cents; 2 gallons of oil, 40 cents; 6 apples, 25 cents; 3 matches, 10 cents. White Karo syrup: 39 cents. Box of crackers: 20 cents. Soap: 65 cents. They charged it.

1931

On 16 August 1931, Edgar and Helen's first son, Richard Edgar Buzbee, was born while the family lived adjacent to the Darlings between the railroad tracks and Fordyce High School.

On 8 September 1932, Bobby Dale Buzbee was born. The family was to stay this size for 10 years; the breadth of a national Depression; the start of World War 2; and at homes at 309 West 8th, 323 West College Street, and east Fordyce. In east Fordyce, they again lived near Hervey and Hattie Darling, who had moved in 1935 to a 40-acre site adjacent to Fordyce Airport.

TWO YEAR OLD BOY DRINKS COAL OIL.

Bobby Dale Buzbee, aged two, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Buzbee, became quite ill Monday morning as a result of drinking about a quarter pint of coal oil. Mrs. Buzbee heard the child choking and coughing, and rushing to him, found him with an almost empty cup in his hand. The cup had been left half full, on a nearby table. He was rushed to a doctor, where he received emergency treatment, allaying the effects of the liquid.

The youngster is quite well now, and playing around, apparently none the worse for his experience.



Excitement inside, and outside, the Southside home in Fordyce: (Left) Bobby Dale makes Page 1 of *The Fordyce Weekly News*, 16 August 1934. It's a first for the family! (Right) Bobby Dale and Dick survive the scare, as the cross-street neighbor's house burns in the middle of the night, in 1936.

1934 Bobby Dale survives, after testing coal oil (kerosene) on his digestive system, Monday 13 August 1934. Two years later, the excitement was outside the house: Dick and Bobby Dale posed for Helen in front of their neighbors' home that had been destroyed by fire during the night. Fortunately, the neighbors escaped. In 1938, so did the Buzbees. They moved close to the Fordyce Lumber Co.

1940 Across the street from the Fordyce Lumber Co., the Buzbees were at home at 323 West College Street, which also was in close walking distance to the Fordyce Grammar School. On 5 and 6 April 1940, the Census taker called on the residents in that part of Fordyce, and recorded the Buzbees:

1940: EDGAR BUZBEE, DALLAS COUNTY, FORDYCE, ARKANSAS

Edgar Buzbee, 34, Flooring Grader, Lumber Mill; received \$1,000 pay in 1939. He worked 42 weeks.

Helen Buzbee, 29

Dick Buzbee, 8

Bobbie Buzbee, 7.

323 West College Street was a company-owned house, a block from the company store. Edgar could walk across College Street to work at the company's

hardwood flooring mill about a block away. Edgar paid the company \$10 a month rent. He received about \$24 a week in pay from the company, as one of the graders--men who determined the quality of the raw oak, the best of which would be turned into Royal Oak flooring, a specialty of the Fordyce Lumber Co.

At the time, the Buzbees were among 3,429 residents of Fordyce, in which most everyone was hired by or influenced by lumber mills, especially the Fordyce Lumber Company, which was the largest, and employed perhaps a fourth of the available work force.

EDGAR F. and JENNIE BUZBEE LIVED NEARBY

Several houses south of the Edgar Buzbee family lived his parents, Edgar F. Buzbee, 70, and Jennie Buzbee, 60, at 506 Russell Street:

1940: EDGAR F. BUZBEE, DALLAS COUNTY, FORDYCE, ARKANSAS

Edgar F. Buzbee, 70, Laborer, Lumber Mill, \$600 pay in 1939. Worked 50 weeks in 1939.

Jennie Buzbee, 60.

The Edgar F. Buzbees also lived in a company house and paid \$8 per month rent. (The home was site of many family gatherings in the 1940s, with a back yard where Dick remembered the education that comes so quickly when a kid holds a firecracker in his hand too long.)

Edgar A. Buzbee's oldest sister, Mary, was the wife of Frank Jordan, and lived on the west side of South Main:

1940: J. F. JORDAN, DALLAS COUNTY, FORDYCE, ARKANSAS

J. F. Jordan, 43, Laborer, Lumber Mill. \$500 in pay in 1939.

Mary Jordan, 36

Aniece Jordan, 14.

Also on the South Side was Helen's brother, Orville Darling:

1940: ORVILLE DARLING, DALLAS COUNTY, FORDYCE, ARKANSAS

Orville Darling, 34, Hardwood Lumber Grader, Lumber Mill, \$960 pay in 1939. Rent \$10 per month

Aleen Darling, 30

O. H. Darling, Jr., 11

THE DARLINGS LIVED JUST OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS

Just outside the Fordyce city limits, in Dry Run Township, were Helen's parents, three brothers and uncle:

1940: H. H. DARLING, DRY RUN TOWNSHIP, DALLAS COUNTY, ARKANSAS

H. H. Darling, 69, Cabinet Maker, Cabinet Shop.

Hattie Darling, 60

1939 Chester Darling, 33, Service Station Salesman; Retail Oil, Gas and Parts, \$988 pay in

Dale Darling, 26, Salesman, Retail Drugs, \$700 pay in 1939

Jesse Darling, 20, Attendant, Service Station, \$520 pay in 1939

C. P. Darling, 70, Cabinet Maker, Cabinet Shop.

Value of the Darling home was declared at \$1,500.

PULLING A PLOW: ODIE and OLLIE WORD

Just north of the Darling homestead lived the Word family: Ollie Word, 58, Road Project WPA; Odie Word, 56, Laborer Public Works; Guy Word, 46, Road Project WPA; Vera Word, 38; Ernest Dean Word, 8; Louise Word, 6.

Ollie and Odie Word helped grow the family's vegetables in a large garden on three sides of the home. When they didn't have a horse to pull a plow to break up the garden plot, they made do with each other; one would pull the plow, the other would guide it. The Words also continued in Fordyce as longtime owner of a black Ford Model T auto.

Adjacent to the Word homestead to the north was the family of J. W. Davis, 38,

a log cutter; his wife, Ruby Davis, 40; and children Pauline Davis, 17, and Edward Davis, 7. Davis earned \$670 in 1939. The Davis family would move from the home in less than a year. At that time, the owners of the 10-acre tract with its red wood house (and a small mountain of trash in the back yard of the home) would sell the property to Edgar A. and Helen Darling Buzbee. The Buzbees' neighbor to the east was the Fordyce city airport.

Helen christened the place "Three Oaks," and the Buzbees moved in, in January of 1941. The sale price was \$500.

As home prices were in 1940 in Fordyce, \$500 was modest, and about 50% of Edgar's annual income. His monthly mortgage payment could have been about the same as the \$10 per month rent he had been paying the company, though his travel expenses would have increased dramatically with the move away from "Mill Town."

FORDYCE'S MOST LUXURIOUS ESTATE

The most luxurious and conspicuously elegant home in Fordyce in 1940 was "Pine Shadows," a classic ante-bellum type of Southern mansion owned by A. B. Banks. He had run a statewide insurance companies and banking empire until his pyramid of companies collapsed in late 1930. His failure also carried 45 small Arkansas banks down the tubes, too. Banks never served prison time.

For details about Banks' development of the home and area, see an historical report by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program: http://www.arkansaspreservation.com/historic-properties/_search_nomination_popup.aspx?id=1329

Throughout the 1940s, Bobby Dale and Dick daily walked past the Banks mansion, with its outdoor swimming pool, gazebo, tennis court, blocks-long brick fence and elegantly landscaped yards. The Banks property was adjacent to the site of Fordyce High School, with upscale homes north of the property, and, paradoxically, homes of the much-poorer black population to the east.

VALUED ONLY AT \$10,000

Yet, lavish as was the Banks mansion and estate, it was not declared as Fordyce's most expensive home in 1940. Banks, 72, set the value of his home at \$10,000 in the census.

Across town, Henry HERNsberger, 45, owner of a saw mill, put the value of his attractive but modest-appearing brick home at \$15,000. The HERNsberger home, at 409 West Fourth, still stands; the lavish Banks mansion burned in 1964, though other parts of the estate remained after a Fordyce lawyer built his home on the original site.

PAY DISCLOSED FOR HIRED HANDS, NOT OWNERS

The 1940 census disclosed the pay received by the hired hands of the various companies of the time; however, the incomes of those who owned their own businesses or who received compensation in a form other than payroll, were not declared.

The wealth of the non-salaried residents may have been suggested by the values of their homes, however. The 1940 census did record the values that the citizens placed on their homes.

Just as the census showed or hinted at the gulf between the upper, middle, and lower classes in town, the census also laid bare the vast difference in jobs, income and housing status between the white and black residents in the rigidly segregated life of the times.

SOME DECLARED HOME VALUES in 1940:

Lawyer, \$7,000: L. Weems Trussell, 31, 405 Spring Street
Merchant, \$6,000: Ben A. Mayhew, 57, 407 West Fourth Street
Vice President, Bank, \$3,000: E. Clark Benton, 48, 601 West Fourth Street
Editor and Owner, Weekly Newspaper, \$2,700: Roy L. Elliott, 57, 403 Charlotte Street
Men's Clothing Store Operator, \$2,000: Kelsey Caplinger, Jr., 55, 300 Pine Street
Manager Hotel, \$1,500: Roy Kilgore, 43
Proprietor Retail Grocery Store, \$1,000: Mary Toland, 73, 101 South Main Street

SOME RENTS PAID in 1940:

Imon Bruce, 28, Superintendent, High School, \$20.
J. A. Barton, 34, Agriculture teacher, \$15
Ed Morrill, 52, Barber, \$12.

SOME DECLARED PAY LEVELS in 1940:

(Income of business owners and persons not receiving payroll checks was not recorded in the census.)

Merchant, \$6,000: Ben Mayhew, 57.
Clerk, Circuit Court, \$4,000: Charles M. Feaster, 60
Purchasing Agent, Mill Company, \$3,600: Jesse Dooley, 41
Auditor, Lumber Mill Company, \$3,600: Homer Cannon, 44
Banker, \$3,000: E. Clark Benton, 48, vice president
Sheriff, \$2,800: Henderson Kauffman, 49
Baptist Preacher, \$2,600: Ira Patishall, 45
Postmaster, \$2,500: T. C. Hagin, 59
Public School Superintendent, \$2,400: Imon Bruce, 28
Postal Clerk, US Postoffice, \$2,100: Franklin Hillman, 35
Undertaker, \$2,100: Carlton Mays, 35
Cashier, Bank, \$1,800: Cornel Talbot, 41
District Forester, \$1,800: Louis Ramsay, 51
Methodist Preacher, \$1,800: Edward Harris, 29
Teacher, \$1,800: J. A. Barton, 34
Railroad Agent, \$1,800: Lynn Gaines, 35
Retail Clothier, \$1,200: Kelsey Caplinger, Jr., 55
Barber, \$1,200: Ed Morrill, 52
Training School (Black school) Superintendent, \$1,200: J. E. Wallace, 46
Librarian, \$750: Fannie Smith
Journalist, Newspapers, \$50: J. Willard Clary, 41 (living in \$5,000 home)

Elsewhere, among white residents in Fordyce's Ward 1, a Laborer reported 1939 wages of \$360; Fordyce's night marshal, \$720; assistant manager of the movie theater, \$520; a waitress, \$300; Power and Light Co., worker, \$960; Salesman for a soft drink manufacturer, \$1,000; clerk for the Railroad, \$1,880; auto salesman, \$1,800; and a High School coach, \$1,550

"Across the tracks" or in the black areas of Ward 2 in Fordyce, many maids reported their 1939 incomes ranged from \$42 to \$576; many cooks, \$120-\$520; wash women, \$53-\$100. One cook for a private family reported annual income of \$8. A 35-year old wash woman, \$80. Two other representative laundresses, \$45, \$50. School teacher, \$280; Laborer, \$480. Many rents were \$2 a month; one home was valued at \$900; many were declared in the \$200-\$400 range.

1942 On 29 March 1942, Harriette Jane Buzbee was born. Joy Darling Buzbee's arrival, 22 July 1946, completed the family. Edgar became foreman of the Lumber Company's hardwood flooring mill, and in the 1950s made numerous trips to other mills as a consultant. During the war, Helen worked in the lumber mill, as she also plunged through PTAs, garden clubs, Girl and Boy Scouts, as she shepherded the brood through Fordyce High School.

PART 6

Life in a small Southern town

Bobby Dale reflects on growing up in a company town....and beyond it
THROUGH THE WAR YEARS IN FORDYCE---AND THE WORLD BEYOND

A one-company town
For a time, running water and an inside bathroom
The house and 10 acres cost \$500
Wash Day was Monday
7 December 1941: Where is Pearl Harbor?
The Saga of the Smoke Grenade
An Umbrella won't work as parachute
Blackberry Pickings in Moro Bottom
Hog Killing time: It was a big event in the Fall
W. T. Garrett earned a Coke that day
A trail of blood
Card game probably saved the house
What's good for the company is good for you
'Do you have your military obligation over with?'
The good life in Heidelberg, Germany
Co-existing with bootleggers
April 1966: The really big one
The Christmas in July / Thanksgiving Story

Harriette Jane remembers Fordyce in the 1940s to the 1960s

HELPING, RUNNING & OTHER EXERCISES

Helping from the couch---and other short cuts
Carrying water to Mother Darling's
Aiding Mom with the black washing pots
Helping Dad and Mom with the chickens
The Playhouse, plaiting, and cheerleading
Movies, TV and Christmas---the best
Mrs. Patterson's yearly pageants: From flowers to nursing
Canasta, piano recitals, metal detector, and wonderful times

Joy Darling remembers life in the 1950s through the 1990s

KAMIKAZE BUZZARDS & OTHER LIFE FORMS

Eating persimmons
Christmas carols in July
Bobby Dale shows how Tarzan did it
Harriette Jane wins a pair of skates
First telephone number: 858J2
Swinging on a tire swing in the front yard
Working puzzles with Mother Darling
From scorpions to castor oil.....and a (partial) report from Fordyce jail



8 September 1936: Bobby Dale is 4.

Through the War Years and Beyond

A RECOLLECTION OF LIFE,
beginning in 1932 in FORDYCE, ARKANSAS

BY BOBBY DALE BUZBEE

1932 was a very good year.

After the reveling and excesses of the 1920s, retribution arrived in October of 1929, with the crash of the financial institutions. Thus the country began a long slide into poverty, unemployment and hard times for most, although not all, of the average citizens. This slide, which began in 1929, continued without any improvement to 1932.

While 1932 was not a point in time when the situation changed, and the climb out began, it did, however, mark the bottom of this Great Depression and things leveled off and did not get any worse. It also was the year in which I was born.

While I have no great memory of the hardships experienced by many during

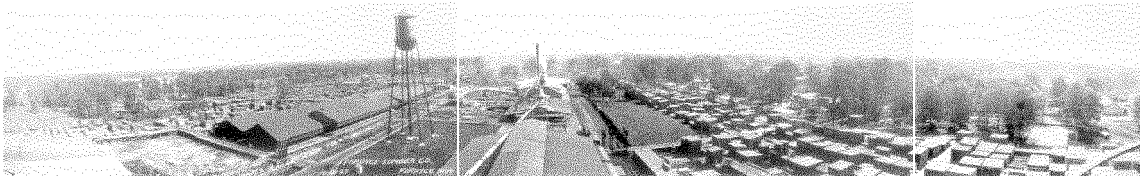
this Depression, it did, without doubt, affect the manner in which I was raised and has affected me throughout my life. I can only remember growing up, and as with most, do not recall any major inconveniences which I suffered from these times.

Living and growing up in a small lumber town in south Arkansas was probably not a lot different from many others throughout the state, and probably other states, notably southern states. Essentially, each town, or city, had three classes of citizens:

- (1) **The industry managers, bankers and lawyers,**
- (2) **Small shop owners or managers, and**
- (3) **Everyone else.**

"Everyone else" basically were indentured servants for the industry managers who were locals, with owners living elsewhere---usually in some other (usually northern) state. There were few true farmers in the area, that is those who depended on farming for their entire income. There was some cotton farming, which was, to some extent, the sole means of a cash income for a few.

Fordyce had a cotton gin which was near Grandfather Darling's shop by the railroad tracks south of the main section of town. I vaguely recall cotton wagons coming in to have their cotton ginned, although it must have discontinued operations in the late 30s or early 40s. Practically everyone had vegetable gardens and, depending on space, many also raised chickens, hogs, or beef cattle.



Fordyce Lumber Co.....24 October 1927, and as it appeared throughout the '30s and '40s: This 180-degree panoramic view begins north at rail cars, then east, over the flooring mill, then south at College Street (along which Bobby Dale and Dick walked to Grammar School) and ends with the mill's tennis court.

THE COMPANY TOWN

The majority of families in Fordyce and surrounding area depended primarily on a job with, or connected to the Fordyce Lumber Company, which was owned by the Crossett, Watzet and Gates families, who also owned the Crossett Lumber Co., in Crossett. Hundreds of men were employed in the mill, which processed pine and hardwood, or in the woods, cutting, loading or hauling these logs to the mill.

All work in the woods felling the trees, delimbing and sawing the tree trunks into 16-foot lengths was by hand using a two man cross-cut saw. Mules were used to pull the logs into a central area where they were loaded onto trucks for transport to the mill. At the mill, they were dumped into a mill pond, which was behind the mill. From there they were hand-guided onto chains which pulled the logs into the mill for processing. Today, probably five men with modern equipment can deliver more timber to the mill than 50 could in those days.

My earliest recollection is of sitting on my Grandfather Darling's knee in front

of a pot-bellied stove and hearing trains go by just a short distance from the house, while he was carving a small wooden figure for me. As this must have been while they lived between the railroad tracks and the old high school, I must have been 3 or 4 years old.

We lived for several years in a small house on the south side of Fordyce at 309 West 8th street. It was there we got our first dog. Must have been around 1936. I remember it was late one evening when we were sitting on the front porch about dark, and some older boys went by with a tow sack. Something was moving in it. They weren't gone very long before they came back without the sack. Dick and I went to investigate and found the sack, which contained a small puppy. We took it home and were allowed to keep it, so "Spot" joined the family.

FOR A TIME, RUNNING WATER AND AN INSIDE BATHROOM

In 1938, we moved again, this time to a house at 323 West College St. As the Depression had severely restricted most people's abilities to pay any kind of rent, many houses which the owners had formerly rented were given rent-free to about anyone who would live in the house and keep it up for the owner. Believe this is how we got this house. It was also the first house we had lived in which I remember as having a bathroom and running water.

I started to school while we were living here. As the school house was only a short distance away, we walked to school each day. Occasionally, the whole affair seemed rather useless to me, so after we got there and Dick had gone into his room, I would just turn around and walk back home. It always happened though that Helen would find me and take me back. After a few times of this, I suppose I got the message that it was intended that I stay, and come home with Dick.

It may have been, though, that I was afraid I would see Dick attempt to commit murder and didn't want to be a witness. This feeling was a result of an occurrence at the very beginning of my school experience. Dick and I had walked to school, and I recall we had new brown book satchels which contained all our notebooks, pencils, etc.

The rear entrance to the school was several feet off the ground and about eight or ten steps went up the back door. I was off to one side under a large oak tree, and Dick was standing at the bottom of the stairs some distance away. Suddenly, he and "Flop" Fulmer got into a shoving match and Dick shoved him down on the ground and started beating him with his new book satchel. Don't know what caused it or how long it lasted (it seemed like an eternity), but Dick was crying and beating "Flop" unmercifully at the same time.

"Flop" just rolled around screaming and trying to dodge the blows while I sympathetically joined Dick in crying. The school was a two-story brick building with a bell tower at the front entrance. It was for grades 1 through 6. On the east side of the school was another building, frame, which was used for school programs and I remember seeing several movies there. Also believe it was used for music and that is where I had my first band lessons.

For a long period, while Dick and I were younger, as the flooring mill was

getting few orders for flooring, Dad wasn't able to work regularly. He would have to go to the mill each morning, and stand around until it was determined if the mill was going to run that day. If so, the foreman would come out and select the men he would want to work that day, which was always less those waiting. Dad said the foreman was a good man, and would try to give everyone a day or two's work each week, especially those who were married and had children to support.

THE HOUSE AND 10 ACRES COST \$500

In 1941, as things were apparently looking better for Dad, he purchased a house and 10 acres of land at the end of Morton Street, which was just outside the city limits of Fordyce, and adjoined the Fordyce City Airport. The cost was only \$500, but to him then, that was a lot of money and with him making less than \$1 an hour at the mill, it took many years to pay off.

The house consisted of four rooms with a back and front porch. It was painted red, with a large part of the red paint flaked off, leaving the bare wood showing in many places.

The 10 acres was covered with a dense growth of sedge grass, which for a couple of young boys was the ideal place, although it probably gave Dad and Helen fits. In those times, as lawn mowers were unheard of, or at least unattainable for the common folk, it was the common practice not to have lawns but instead to scrape all the grass off the area around the house.

This was not only the only practicable way to maintain a yard, but as almost everyone in the country had dogs and/or cats, it served the utilitarian purpose of keeping down the fleas and ticks by not having grass to provide living or breeding places for them near the house. Our water, as with most people, came from a shallow well some 40 yards from the back of the house. The well was only some 20 or 30 feet deep, but furnished enough water for all our needs. It apparently was of sufficient purity that no one, to my knowledge, ever got sick from drinking it.

Wood was used in the house for cooking and heating in the winter. Dad would get loads of scrap wood from the mill and that was the primary source of fuel. It was always the job of Dick and me to stack the wood when the truck would deliver it. Needless to say, it always took twice or more time to stack it than it actually should have taken, as we spent most of the time feeling sorry for ourselves for having to do it.

Dad always had a big garden, which, when we had to hoe weeds or help with the harvesting, would have the same effect on our feelings.

WASH DAY WAS MONDAY

Monday was always "wash day." All the wash water had to be drawn from the well, a gallon or two at the time, by hand. Usually it took an hour or more just to draw the water from the well, get the fire going around the wash pot, and get the wash tubs ready. The procedure was to build a fire around the wash pot which, when the water began boiling, would be to put the clothes in and let them boil until Helen had pronounced them done enough; then we would, preferably with a cut-off broom handle, lift them out and put in a wash tub.

As they were coming from being in boiling water for some time, they were quite hot and fingers always got burned. Then, using soap and a rub board, we

would rub them until they were clean. Then they went into another tub for rinsing out the soap. As all this was done in the same water, those which were last to go through this rinse water probably had most of the soap still on them.

After this rinsing and then wringing until all the water possible was removed, they were hung on the clothes line to dry. The only difference would be with the white clothes, which would be run through a bluing rinse before wringing out and hanging on the line. After the clothes dried on the line, they had to be brought in and then most would have to be ironed. There was no such thing as wrinkle-free, so unless they were ironed, they were just a mass of wrinkles.

Helen did most of this until Harriette and Joy were born. Then the job got to be too much for her, so Dick and I learned to iron and did much of it thereafter. Old cast irons were used by heating on the cook stove until they got hot. Some years later, electric irons greatly simplified this job. While we each had only a few sets of clothing, this always nevertheless took up most of the day.

While we did not have running water, bathroom facilities, etc., in the house, we did have electricity. This consisted, essentially, of a naked light bulb and wall receptacle in each room. This was not an inconvenience. Initially we had nothing that required electricity except for the light bulbs. We did have a radio which operated using a dry cell battery. As batteries didn't last long, we were limited in the time which we could use it. Later we got a radio which operated on electricity. This made a great difference: Listening to the radio was the great pastime of the day.

7 DECEMBER 1941: WHERE IS PEARL HARBOR?

On Dec. 7, 1941, the great war began and although I can't recall the exact time I learned about it, I can remember being over at a Buzbee family gathering and listening to Dad and my uncles talking about it and (my) wondering where, or what, Pearl Harbor, was.

Although this event didn't have any great effect on me, I did notice the changes which occurred over the next few months and years.

FORDYCE SEMI-WEEKLY NEWS

U.S. AT WAR WITH JAPAN

Japs Attack Hawaiian Islands Sunday

Planes Roar Over Island in Surprise Attack Dropping Death and Destruction To Plunge United States Into The War

CHANGERY COURT IN THREE-DAY SESSION HERE

BOOSTERS FETE FOOTBALL SQUAD SATURDAY EVE

President Roosevelt Calls For Declaration Following Surprise Attack By Japs On Hawaiian Islands Sunday. War Declared Within An Hour After President Addressed Joint Session of Congress

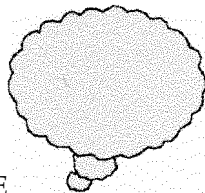
DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTORS NAMED

We probably received the town paper. However, the news I remember getting concerning the war was primarily from the radio and the "Movietone" news at the movie theatre. While I recall hearing the names, Bataan, Corregidor, Guadalcanal, etc., through these means I, at the time, had little conception of where they actually were.

I did know that at least initially, both Dad and Helen were seriously concerned that the war was going badly for us even though the government tried to dispel such thoughts. Up until this time, it was very unusual to see an airplane of any kind and any time one landed at the airport, which was just behind the house, people would all run out just to see it. After the second or so year of the war, it was not unusual to see formations of planes, although we still ran to see them fly over.

In the summer of 1942, a large number of soldiers came through Fordyce and camped overnight on the airport. I recall hearing the story (whether true or not, I am not sure) that they were from Camden on their way to Pine Bluff to take a troop train there and were having to march, as no transport was available from Camden. As I recall, there were rows and rows of two-man pup tents where the men slept for the night. I remember thinking at the time how much fun that would be. (Years later, I would find that it's not as much fun as it looked.) After they had left the next day, I remember searching the airport for any "souvenir" they may have left. Don't recall what, if anything, I may have found.

I did, however, find many souvenirs after a show put on by the Army at the football field in, I believe, the summer of 1943. This was probably in conjunction with a Savings Bond drive. This show was a reenactment of an assault on a "Jap" stronghold. In the introduction, the announcer introduced the participants and stated that they were all veterans of the fighting on Guadalcanal. The football field was covered with trees, bushes, etc., with the "Jap" bunker erected on the south end of the field. The attack began from the north end and after much rifle, machine gun fire, etc., (using blanks, of course), the final assault involved using a flame thrower to destroy the bunker. I can still remember feeling the heat from the flame thrower, even though it was some 50 to 60 yards away. Quite a show, I thought.



THE SAGA OF THE

SMOKE GRENADE

The next day, a couple of friends and I went to the field to see what we could find. I picked up a large number of spent rifle cartridges, plus some sort of canister, which although I wasn't totally what it was, carried it home anyway. I did know it was some sort of grenade, as the pin was still in it and therefore I knew it was still "live." Some two or three weeks later, as my curiosity had gotten the better of me, I decided to try it out and see what would happen. I therefore picked a Saturday afternoon when no one else was outside and pulled the pin out and threw it over between our and the neighbor's house (they always went to town on Saturday.)

As it turned out, it was a smoke grenade. Within a minute or so the entire neighborhood was covered with a bright orange smoke. While that thing was spewing smoke an airplane went over and I was sure they would report it and as I didn't know anything else to do I ran down to Mother Darling's so if anything was said I could plead ignorance. That night, I did muster enough courage to get the empty canister and take it down and throw it over our back fence onto the airport.

Worried for weeks, though, that the airplane had reported it and the military would come out asking Dad about it, and I didn't quite know how to explain it and that no one would believe me as to where I got it.

The highlight of every week for Dick and me was taking in the movies nearly every Saturday afternoon. Normally, we would go in at 1 o'clock and stay all afternoon, seeing the same movie, or movies if there was a double feature, a number of times, usually leaving around dark. Normally, in addition to the movie(s), we saw a cartoon, a serial, and all the coming attractions (movies scheduled for next week). With a quarter (our weekly allowance), we could pay for the ticket (12 cents), get a bag of popcorn (10 cents), and a Coke (5 cents).

Many times after watching some of the horror movies (the Mummy, Dracula, Wolf Man, etc.) all afternoon, we would get out after dark and then dread walking down the hill between Marks' and Mother Darling's. Usually I would either run at full speed down the stretch, or else have a handful of big rocks so I could at least attempt to fight them off.

The Saturday afternoon movies usually consisted of either westerns (Roy Rogers, Gene Autry), horror movies (Dracula, the Mummy, etc.) or war movies. The war movies always had the good guys fighting the Japanese or Germans. Never did quite understand why they didn't fight the Italians. Presume they weren't the really bad guys the others were. In any event, the good guys didn't always win, especially early on in the war. Initially, as the war was going badly for the country, when the good guys didn't win, they did always die a heroic death. Usually also involved the bad guys (Germans/Japs) not fighting "fair."

Usually, the war movies involved hand-to-hand fighting and we were always attempting to reenact some of the judo holds, etc., on each other--or at least Dick usually wanted to try them on me. Can especially remember the side of the hand to the neck blow which made it hard to swallow for a day or so. Seem to remember also that as Dick always went first, I was in no condition to try the blow on him to see how it felt to be a hitter rather than a hitee. To say I was gullible in this regard might be an understatement.

AN UMBRELLA WON'T WORK AS PARACHUTE

One day, after we had seen a movie regarding the paratroopers, Dick talked me into the idea that as we were small, an umbrella would effectively serve the same purpose as a parachute. He convinced me that we could jump off the roof of the wood shed (probably about 10 feet high) with an umbrella and would just float down like it happened in the movie.

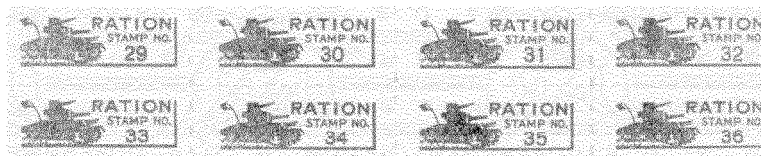
Naturally he allowed me to go first, so I took the umbrella and climbed up on the roof. I remember how much higher it looked from up there. After some prodding from him, I jumped off. From that point all I remember was hearing something go "pop!" I later decided it was my chin hitting my knee. When I woke up some time later, Dick was nowhere to be seen. After I finally managed to stagger around the house, I found him sitting in the swing on the front porch reading a book. Assumed he thought I had killed myself and was absolving himself of liability.

Patriotism was big then, as everyone had some relative, in most cases more than one, in the military. When Chet, Don and Jesse joined the Navy, Papa Darling erected a huge flag pole, must have been 30-40 feet high, in front of the house. Each morning he would raise the flag, and then lower and bring it in at night. Also, in each household in which someone was serving in the military they would be given a banner to hang in the window with the number of stars on it representing the number of those from there serving.

One night each week, the movie theatre would have a break between movies when they would show pictures on the screen, with appropriate music, of those individuals who had recently left for the military. Usually this would be 15 or 20 different people. Also, the town erected a large billboard between the Post Office and the store next door.

It listed, by name, all those from Fordyce and the surrounding area who were in some branch of the military. This was kept up and maintained for the entire war, and when someone was killed in action, a gold star was painted by his name. By war's end, there was a large number of these gold stars.

The number of men from Fordyce and surroundings who served was a considerable part of the population. A listing of those locals who served was compiled by the local American Legion, and shows almost 1,200 names. This from a total population of probably less than 10,000. By war's end, practically all of the men aged 18 to 34 were either in the military or had been in and been discharged. This was probably fairly representative of the entire county. Of a total population of around 110 million, some 11-12 million served in some branch of the military effort.



EVERYONE SHARED IN THE WAR EFFORT

Everyone was involved in the war effort to some degree. There were War Bond drives, collection of various scrap (i. e. paper, metals of all kinds, grease) to manufacture into war materials of some sort. I remember, probably in 1943, that our class went to the banks downtown and collected all their canceled checks which people had donated and we brought them back to school to add to the paper collection. This paper was stored in the bell tower in the front entrance of the grade school.

Several of the other boys and I spent some time in looking through these checks marveling at the amounts of money that some people had to spend through this means. This was also the first time that I had actually seen personal checks, although I wasn't exactly sure how they were used.

Each week also the schools sold savings stamps which cost 10 cents each. We would, when Dad gave us the money, buy one each week or so. The stamps were saved in a book and when a book was filled, it was exchanged for a \$25 War Bond. Don't recall ever getting enough stamps actually to get a Bond.

One project our class had one winter was to knit squares of wool. When enough of these squares were completed, then the mothers would sew them together to make blankets which were to be sent to the troops. Don't know how many we actually made, but the project went on most of the school year.

Most consumer items, when available, were rationed throughout the war and for sometime after the war. This included practically everything people used in their daily lives: Meats, sugar, gasoline, leather goods. Each individual/family was issued a ration book(s) which contained coupons which specified the number, or amounts, of the item which could be purchased and were required to be turned in when any such item was purchased.

Each ration book contained coupons which specified the amount of any such item the individual was allowed to purchase each month or so. Then, at specific times during the year (Monthly? Quarterly?) new ration books would be issued to cover the next period the books covered.

In the summer or fall, special allowance would be made for families in preparing for the coming winter, and some items could be additionally purchased for this purpose. Additional sugar could be bought for canning and meat preservative for, normally, pork or beef. Practically everyone had vegetable gardens and either hogs or cattle for this purpose. Dad had a big garden each year, and we (Helen, actually) would can corn, tomatoes, peas and beans, either individually or together as soup.

We also gathered pears from the pear trees at Mother Darling's, yellow or red plums and muscadines which were growing wild in many places around the area, apples and/or peaches when someone had these trees which furnished more than they needed. From these fruits, Helen would can many jars of jellies and preserves. Probably the staple jelly or preserve we would have available during most of the year was from blackberries. Blackberries were the most difficult and time-consuming to gather and preserve, however, when made into preserves or jelly were, to me, the best.

Blackberry Pickings in Moro Bottom

Blackberries get ripe in late summer, and each year Dad would set aside one or two Saturdays to pick blackberries. He usually got everything ready on the preceding Friday night and had everything loaded in the car to leave early the next morning. When we got to where the blackberries grew, his favorite spot was east of home on what is now the old Pine Bluff highway, near Moro Creek.

When the highway had been built there, large amounts of soil had to be moved to build the highway base high enough not to be flooded during the normal spring floods on this creek. The area where this dirt was removed was normally just off to the side of the highway right-of-way, and while technically known as a "borrow" pit, in the vernacular it was always "bar pit."

Many times from the amount of dirt moved, an excavation was left which was much lower than the surrounding area, and that resulted in this area eventually filling up with water creating a pond. Although normally fairly small in width, the length could run for miles.

These areas were ideal for blackberry bushes: Water was available for the

blackberries during the entire year, which was especially needed during the hot, dry summers which are normally experienced in the area. Blackberry bushes normally grow in a mass of vines some three to four feet high, with each vine covered with small thorns somewhat like rose bushes. The difference being that with blackberry thorns, they would normally break off in hands or fingers when stuck.

The blackberries themselves grow all along the vines, and required picking individually while attempting to avoid the thorns. Usually the vines were covered with all phases of blackberries from immature which were green, to ripening which were red, to fully ripe which were a deep purple or black.

When the blackberries were ripe, normally beginning in mid to late August, Dad would get us all ready on many Saturday mornings to pick them.

This involved putting on boots, long sleeve shirts, long pants which were tied tightly around the ankles which, theoretically, was to keep the ticks and redbugs out, and some sort of head wear. Helen would prepare some sort of lunch for the day, plus a large jug, or jugs of water. As there was not such thing then as a commercial type insulated water containers, Dad would put ice and water in glass jars and then wrap them in burlap sacks to attempt to retain the cold. This no doubt helped for a while; however, the water always seemed to be lukewarm by the time we stopped for lunch.

For picking the berries, we also took a small pail for each of us, plus a wash tub where the picking pails could be emptied. The goal for the day was to fill the wash tub, which would probably hold 15 to 20 gallons, with berries. After we arrived where Dad intended to pick for the day, everyone would cover any exposed skin as much as possible, then Dad would soak our boots and pants legs with coal oil, which would, to some degree, repel the ticks and redbugs.

As blackberry bushes will not grow in shade, even though we normally started early in the morning, by mid-morning it was usually very hot, especially with all the clothes we had on to protect from the thorns. Another hazard was wasps. As this was ideal habitat for wasp nests, we continually had to be on the lookout for these nests so as not to get stung.

It was necessary to wade carefully through the mass of bushes, in many instances where they were head high or more. Disturbing a large wasp nest while in such a situation could be disastrous as it would be almost impossible to move very fast with all the thorns on the bushes to hold you back.

Normally, by mid-afternoon we would either have picked enough berries to fill all of the containers we brought, or it would be so hot we could no longer continue. By that time, everyone's fingers were stained purple from the ripe berries and would also be full of broken-off thorns. We then would load everything in the car and head for home. On the way home, we spent most of our time picking thorns from our fingers. Although this was a hot, dirty job, I don't remember disliking it, as I did some of the others that we had. I think it was because I always so looked forward to eating the blackberry jam, jelly and pies that Helen made from them. Dad always wanted to have enough to preserve which would last all year until the berries got ripe the next year.

While we also gathered and preserved other wild fruit such as plums, muscadines, and a small wild grape (which we called possum grape), nothing compared with the taste of blackberry jam or jellies on a cold winter morning.

Canning (actually in glass jars) fruits, vegetables and meats each year was a large part of a family's spring and summer activities. This was to ensure that food would be sufficient to last through the winter. During the spring and summer everyone had big gardens and grew all kinds of vegetables which were eaten fresh. The standard meat for most was pork in fall and winter, and chicken during the remainder of the year.

Each year, Dad would get a pig or two in the spring and would feed them until fall when they were killed and prepared for storage for consumption during the winter and spring until fresh garden vegetables and chicken were available.

Baby chickens were either bought (through the mail), or hatched by the chickens left from the previous year, in the early spring and were large enough to eat in four or five weeks. Can always remember going in the Post Office in the early spring and listening to the many boxes of baby chickens cheeping, as this was the standard means by which most people got their chickens.

Occasionally these standard meats were supplemented by squirrel, which we hunted in the fall or fish, which we caught in the spring or summer. While I always considered this hunting and fishing merely as a sport, to Dad it was probably more important as a means of obtaining additional food to feed the family. Many times after we came in from such (hunting or fishing) trip, while I was just interested in cleaning the game the easiest and fastest way just in order to get through (which resulted in loss of much of the meat), he would require that we spend considerably more time to ensure that no meat was lost. Didn't really understand why until years later.

Hog Killing time

IT WAS THE BIG EVENT IN THE FALL

Hog killing time each year was a big event for all families. This was a job I always looked forward to as Dad let me do the shooting while he did the dirty job. This would involve shooting the hog in the head, which would, in effect, kill it, and then immediately cutting its throat to allow all the blood to run from the body. If the blood wasn't removed, the meat would not cure properly and would spoil before it could be eaten. Normally I would shoot the hog and it would just drop and then Dad would cut its throat.

One time, however, things didn't go as normal and things really got messy. A hog pen is, by its nature, a messy place and this time when I shot the hog, the bullet apparently didn't hit a vital spot and the hog started running around at full speed in the hog pen. As there was no chance to get another shot, Dad didn't have any choice but to chase down the hog and wrestle it to the ground, then cut its throat. By the time he got it done, he looked like he had been dragged behind a car for about a mile through a mud hole. It seemed as if it took 30 minutes, although it probably was nowhere near that long.

After a hog was killed and bled, it had to be scraped (all the hair removed.)

This required the use of boiling water. This had to be prepared and ready for use immediately after the hog was killed.

Here again the wash pot was used to heat the water to boiling and then poured in a 55-gallon drum which had been tilted over to where the hog could be slid in and soaked for the appropriate time. This time was critical as, if done properly, after removing from the boiling water a scraper would be used and the hair would just peel off.

If not done properly, the hot water would “set” the hair and it would then be necessary to take a sharp knife, in effect, to shave the hair off. This would not only make the job much more difficult but would take two to three times longer to do. After removing the hair, the hog would then be hung from a tall set of poles and butchered into various large sections.

As these sections were removed, they were removed to a large table and cut up into the various smaller sizes. Some of these were set aside to be cured for ham or bacon, some for pork chops which were normally eaten in the next few days without curing, and the remainder with most of the fat set aside to be ground into sausage.

Some of the fat was saved to be rendered down to make lye soap (which was made with lye and wood ashes in addition to the hog fat). Dick and I usually got the job of turning the sausage grinder. This involved putting strips of lean meat and fat into a grinder which when the handle was turned ground them together into sausage. Usually someone else had to feed the grinder as the correct proportion of lean to fat was necessary to make good sausage. After grinding, salt, pepper, sage, or other herbs were added to add to the flavor and also to add preservatives.

Even then, sausage wouldn’t last too long unless the weather stayed cold for a long period. Extended cold weather was a requirement for “hog killing time.” As cold storage wasn’t available, a great fear each year was that the winter meat was prepared too early and a warm weather spell would return which could possibly ruin that winter’s meat supply.

The hams and bacon were preserved using a sugar cure which effectively, over a period of time, extracted all the moisture from the meat, which then was smoked in a hickory chip smoke. This normally took several weeks so while this meat was curing, the sausage and pork chops were eaten.

“Hog killing” was a big undertaking and, in most cases, a multi family project. Usually it took all of us plus Uncle Clint, Mother Darling and anyone else that was available. We normally had one hog to kill and it usually took two days to get it done. I remember one time when Papa Darling killed three on one day, and in addition to all of us, Dale, Jesse and Chet helped out. It took several days.

During the war, an ammunitions production plant opened near Camden, and people from all over the country came into work there. Several thousand jobs were available, and as there was practically no housing available, anyone with a spare room could find someone to rent it. Mother Darling had several of these boarders up to the time the war ended, and the plant cut back on production.

I don’t specifically recall much of any of them except one, who I believe was from Ohio, and him only because he was living there when the war ended. With him we were sitting on the porch at Mother Darling’s when the mill whistle started

blowing. It must have been mid-afternoon, and didn't stop.

After it continued to blow for quite a while, Uncle Clint came to the front where we were and said the war was over. I remember the boarder got up, ran in the house and came back with his rifle and began shooting up in the air.

Another vivid recollection I have during the early morning of the 6th of June, 1944. Dad came in our room, woke us up, and told us that the American troops had landed in Normandy. Don't know what time it was but was still quite dark. We didn't know it at the time, but our uncle Jesse was participating, driving an LST in the landing operation.

Later, when the war was over and he came home, I remember all the battle ribbons he wore on his uniform. After he took the uniform off, he put it away, and as far as I know, never showed anyone, or looked at, the ribbons again. The only time I ever remember him even mentioning the war was when we were both attending college together and he told me, essentially, that the worst thing he ever had done was driving over the American bodies on the way to those assault beaches. He was also involved in the invasion in Italy at Anzio and also, I believe, in Sicily.

W. T. GARRETT EARNED A COKE THAT DAY

It almost ended in the summer, I believe, of 1944.

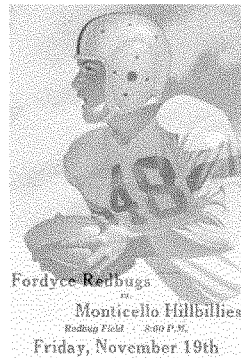
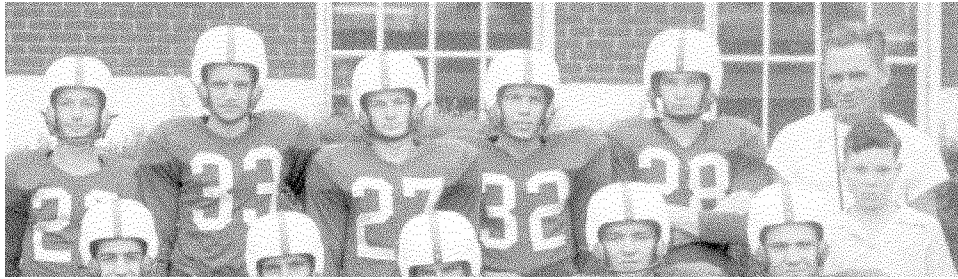
Our Uncle Don was home on leave. He was visiting Mother Darling and decided to take us to the Saline River to go swimming. This was the usual place everyone, in or around Fordyce, went to swim.

The swimming hole where everyone went was just north of what is now the old Highway 79 (bridge, which I presume is now gone) at a bend in the river, where, on the inside of the bend the river had left a big sand bar which made it ideal for camping, playing, etc.

I remember I was wading in the river and apparently went too far out and stepped off into a hole or into the main channel. In any event, I sank like a rock, and as I couldn't swim got into serious trouble immediately.

I don't know how deep the water was; I do know, however, that I never touched bottom. I vividly remember trying to call for help and my mouth filling up with water. I am sure I did a considerable amount of thrashing around in the water; however, in all probability it was all under water, and I had finally decided that no one was seeing me and there was no hope and had given up when I felt something hit me in the back and push me toward the shore where it only took a few feet until I could touch bottom again.

As it turned out, W. T. Garrett, who worked for Dale at the Station had seen me and had, effectively, saved my life. He pretty much carried me up on the beach and set me down by Don, who, as I recall looked pretty pale. In any event, I don't think I got more than six inches away from Don the rest of the day, and needless to say, Don never took us swimming again. I remember after sitting down by Don, while W. T. was standing there, some man came up and asked if I was going to buy W. T. a Coke the next time I came to the station. I was too scared to answer.



The Redbugs of '48: Bobby Dale is third from the right, upper row, as the 1948 Redbugs pose for their annual photo just north of FHS. There were 23 on the team that year, barely enough for practice scrimmages. Coach Clyde Trickey is upper right, Roy Johnson, team manager. The other coach was Jack Gresham, the other team manager, Billy Don Lynn.

Entertainment: A do-it-yourself operation

Entertainment for those growing up in the 30's and 40's (as was probably the case for all those in prior years) was, to a major extent, a do-it-yourself operation. There were no organized sports or activities available except for those essentially in grades 9 through 12 during the school year. These were limited to football, basketball and band, and were even further limited, not so much by individual ability, but as much by the number of uniforms which were available for use during these activities.

My first such experience was in 9th grade football. Training and practice for the two games we played with other school was primarily the "Coaches" having us run and take exercises until everyone was totally exhausted. Teaching the game relative to formations, individual plays, strategy, basic principles of blocking and tackling was, to a large degree, non-existent.

While the players probably could be faulted for not being more attentive to learning these things, I believe that probably the larger problem lay in the lack of knowledge of the game by the Coaches. In my senior year, as I played in the line, our "line coach" gave little instruction regarding the game other than encouraging a "hard hit" and, should the occasion present itself to occasionally throw a handful of dirt in the opposing player's face. This should be done of course outside the line of view of any of the official.

For the two games we played while I was in the 9th grade, our uniforms consisted of practice uniforms which had been discarded by the senior high team. All these discards were thrown in a large wooden box and issuance of these "uniforms" consisted of on the first day of practice someone opening the door and all making a mad rush to get to the box to pick enough of the individual items to

make up a complete uniform -or as near as possible.

I was more fortunate than some in getting shoes. I got a pair, although one was about size 7 and the other a size 10. One fellow in my class ended up with two right footed shoes. As they were much larger than his normal shoes he was able to get his feet in them alright.

Very few got any equipment that actually fit. One, (Floyd Mayfield) used an old leather helmet which must have been a leftover from the 1920's.

Another problem we had with the shoes were that the cleats on the bottoms were made of hard rubber and screwed on screws extending about an inch through the sole of the shoe. As there were never enough cleats for everyone's shoes many of us had to try to play without the cleats but with just the screws sticking out from the shoe. This didn't present any particular problem for those wearing the shoe, however, if someone else got stepped on it would be like a board full of nails being driven in that portion of the body that was stepped on.

In my first game that year (1947) we played El Dorado and as I only had about half the screws with cleats on them, I tried to never turn my back to any of the game officials as I thought if they saw the bottom of my shoes they would, with justifiable reason, make me leave the game. We lost, naturally, although by not as big a score as we were to experience later. If, as they say, losing builds character, our team of those years should have enough character to last two lifetimes.

For our (my Junior and Dick's Senior) year, we actually got new shoes and new helmets, which probably were the first bought by the school in many years. We were measured for the new shoes before school was out the previous year and received them, and the new helmet, at the start of practice the following year. Unfortunately, neither new shoes or helmet did anything to improve my ability. They sure felt good though.

Reading was a major activity for us, especially during the summer months. We would go to the city library, which was then located in the upper floor of the Dallas County Courthouse. We would usually go there one day a week and get us enough books to last through that week until we could go back the next week.

Western novels, especially by Zane Grey, were a favorite. This led to an interesting experience with me.

In many of the Grey novels, the hero, villain, or other such would trail someone, or something by following the "trail of blood". This also occurred in many other novels which I read.

In some, Indian renegades were trailed this way, or a hunter would follow the "trail of blood" would be left by the deer, bear, etc., he had shot. I was completely intrigued by this concept of following a trail of blood and wondered how it could be done. The opportunity presented itself one day at home.

A TRAIL OF BLOOD

THE FULL REPORT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

Helen was washing clothes at the well, which was about 60 - 70 yards from the house. Dad had built a small shelter covered with sheet iron under which he had a small bench on which the two wash tubs set. (This was used in the summertime or

when the weather was suitable enough to do all the washing outdoors - during inclement weather, all the water had to be drawn and carried to the house for this purpose) Anyway, Helen was washing under this shelter and I was playing around the house when I stepped (barefoot of course) on a broken coke bottle which flipped up and a long broken edge stuck in my foot just under the ankle. As it went in quite deep it started bleeding rather freely.

So I thought I best go tell Helen about it. The well and shelter where Helen was, was on the other side from me of the area Dad used each year as the garden and he had just recently cleaned it off and plowed it in preparation for planting.

As I started toward Helen the thought occurred to me that this would be an excellent time to see what a "trail of blood" looked like. I, therefore, walked very slowly across the garden letting the blood run down my foot and drop on the ground. As every few steps the blood would begin to clot on my foot I would have to stop and poke at it a bit to encourage it to run more freely. It must have taken me ten minutes to get to where Helen was. She had been scrubbing clothes on the wash board with her back to me so she had seen none of this.

Anyway, when I got to her, I called her attention to my foot, which was quite bloody (and dirty) after my experimentation, and the "trail of blood" I had left - which I was quite proud of.

To my great surprise, she looked at my "trail" and at my foot - and fainted. (Imagine she was already worn out from the washing done thus far that day). In any event, I solved my dilemma in my usual way - I ran off and hid for the rest of the day.

I never mentioned it thereafter, and don't recall her doing it either. Always presumed that when she woke up, she just thought she had had a bad dream.

Card game probably saved the house

We played various types of board or card games. One of the more popular was Monopoly. As the family next door had a Monopoly board, we played with the son and daughter of that family frequently for years.

Dad loved to play cards and this was almost a weekly thing with us. His favorites were "Hearts" and "Canasta". This became a standard Saturday night event with us. After dinner we would start a card game and many time would play most of the night. Later, after Harriette and Joy were born, Helen could hardly get time to play and Uncle Clint gradually took over playing in her place.

One night this card game probably saved the house from being burned. As it was in the middle of winter, Helen had washed some clothes in the house that day and had, for some reason, left a tub full of wash water in the front room. We were playing cards in the adjoining room with the door between them closed. In the front room where Helen had left the tub of water Dad had a little pot-bellied wood stove which was used for heat. The stove pipe went from the stove to the brick flu and chimney which extended from just below the inside ceiling out through the roof of the house.

Helen, between games, had, for some reason, gone to the front room for

something and I remember her screaming. We all jumped up and ran in there and she was throwing water from the wash tub onto the wall which was on fire above the stove. The inside walls were covered with wall paper and apparently somehow the heat from the stove pipe has gotten hot enough to catch this wallpaper on fire. Had the washtub of water not been there and had Helen not gone in when she did, there is no doubt the house would have burned before anything could be done.

Croquet and 'washers' sufficed

In the summer one of our favorite games was croquet. Dad bought a croquet game and set it up in front of the house between the three big oak trees. Practically every Sunday afternoon we would play it.

One Sunday, Edward and Annie (Dad's sister and brother in law) came over and introduced us to the game of "washers". Small steel washers, about 2-3 inches in diameter were used. Two holes, about 3" or so in diameter and 2-3 inches deep were dug in the ground about twenty feet apart. The object was to stand behind one hole and try to throw the washers in the other hole. The opponents stood at the other end and tried to throw their washers in "your" hole.

We played this many times thereafter. The game resembled "horseshoes" but presume we never had the money to buy the needed horseshoes.

Radio reception depended on the weather

Other than the movies, the greatest form of entertainment for most people during the 30's and 40's was listening to the radio. Radios then were all AM, that is, amplitude modulated, and reception of the radio programs were, to a large degree, dependent on weather conditions. We were disappointed many nights as stormy weather created such interference that all we could hear on the radio was static.

It was pretty much standard practice in all families, at the end of the day after the evening meal, to sit around the radio and listen to the various programs. In most cases there was little discussion regarding what programs to listen to as only one or two stations could be heard. First there was the evening news around six o'clock.

My major recollections are those during the war (WWII), of Edward R. Murrow reporting from, initially, London and later after the invasion of Europe, his reporting from various places on the continent. His, to me, most memorable reports were from London during what would later be called "the Battle for Britain" in late 1939-1940.

During that period, each evening his report would begin (if I remember correctly), "This is Edward R. Murrow, reporting from London". He would then report on the number of German bomber raids carried out over London for that day, (which would have been some six hours ahead of us) the damage, people killed, the number of German bombers shot down by the RAF (and vice versa), etc. It never ceased to amaze me that someone half a world away could be reporting on such events which were happening at the time and we could be hearing about it as it, more or less, happened.

These reporters gave these reports, which were descriptive summaries of the events which had happened, without any fanfare, showmanship, or attempts to impress. We knew nothing of how he, and the other commentators looked, their hair styles, their clothes or their demeanor, and such was never a consideration regarding favorites to listen to.

We listened to hear what was happening and what was the state of the war. Their opinions of events were of no consideration to us then (nor are current commentator opinions to me now). Those people had the ability to describe those events in such a manner that it made you feel that you were there seeing what they saw and feeling what they felt.

While we heard many such commentators: Murrow, Kaltenborn, Gabriel Heatter, etc., my favorite was Eric Severide (sp). I just liked to listen to the sound of his voice. All those, in those days, had distinctive voices, and just by hearing them everyone would know who it was. (As opposed to today's TV reporters where they all look alike, dress alike, act alike, sound alike and report alike - and seemingly to imply that their reporting is the only ray of sunshine in the "common people's" dull, ignorant lives. (Have to dig today's liberal-biased media just a bit).

A COMMON LINK THROUGHOUT THE NATION

Many of the comedy, mystery or variety radio programs were staples in most people's lives. Some of these were "The Jack Benny Show", "Lum and Abner", "The Fred Allen Show", "Fibber Magee and Molly", "Red Skelton", "Amos and Andy", "The Shadow", "Mr. Gildersleeve" and "George Burns and Gracie Allen". We especially looked forward each year to the special Christmas programs each of these shows carried.

Most repeated the same Christmas program year after year but we never tired of such as Fred Allen (or was it Lionel Barrymore?) reading "The Night Before Christmas". During this period, 1930's and 40's, radio was at its peak in popularity for entertainment purposes.

Throughout this period, which began with the beginning of the great depression in 1929 and ended in 1945 with the ending of WWII, (and the advent of television shortly thereafter), most people had little in material wealth and little or no form of entertainment except for the radio. As a result the most popular programs were those which made people laugh. It allowed, as did the movies for those who could afford to go in those days, an individual to, at least temporarily, escape the dreary, day to day living experienced by most.

Dad always went to bed at 9:00 each night (he had to get up around 5:00 each morning, build the fires in the cook stove, and heating stove in the winter, and do other assorted chores before leaving for and being at work at 7) so our radio listening usually ended at 9. Occasionally, however, Dick and I were allowed to take the radio in our room and listen to it if we turned the volume down low enough. We spent many evenings with the radio in bed with us with the covers pulled over us and the radio listening to "The Shadow" and other mystery shows which normally all came on after 9.

Radio reception then was usually much better late at night which was when the big, high wattage radio stations in the north and north-east came on. (They could not operate at full power until the more local low wattage stations signed off, usually around ten o'clock.)

Many nights we would listen to music, primarily classical, from stations in Chicago, New York and Kansas City. Radio programs on Saturday mornings then, as with TV now, was devoted to programs for kids.

Each week we could hardly wait to hear the latest episode of Terry and the Pirates, Captain Silver and the Sea Hound, Buck Rogers and a program whose name I have forgotten but which I believe had a title something like "Land of ? - Not even sure if that's close, but it was one of my favorites. Had to do with imaginary fish, crabs, etc., living in the sea.

These programs and later, the weekly movies, gave us a way to escape by transporting us to a different realm of adventure and excitement and we, at least temporarily, forgot the type of existence we were locked into at the time. One of the best thing about the radio programs was that it allowed the listener to use his/her own individual imagination to visualize the characters, surroundings and/or locale the actors voices portrayed.

This seemed to make each listener an active participant as you would put yourself into the program or activity as it was portrayed and it would feel as if you were actually there, not only hearing it but seeing it also within the context of your own imagination.

Movies had one advantage over radio

Movies, in those days, had one great advantage over radio, however. The theatres were, to the best of my knowledge, the first and only buildings in town for many years to have air conditioning.

There can be no describing of the feeling, while enduring a hot, steamy summer, like going into a cool air conditioned building and watching an exciting adventure movie. Most Saturday afternoons, we would go to the movie when it opened at around one o'clock and stay until six or seven that night. In those days you could stay as long as you wished and most times we saw the movie, or movies several times.

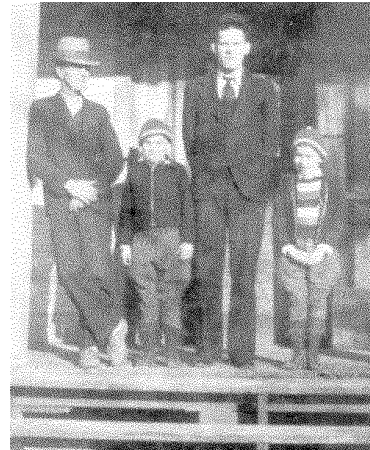
I think, in all probability, that we stayed as much to be in the air conditioning as we did to see the movie(s) over and over.

While, in comparison to today, living standards then were quite primitive, almost everyone was in the same situation and not much was really thought about it. It was just accepted as a fact and that's the way it was. Probably the biggest inconvenience then, as compared to today, was the lack of indoor plumbing and bathroom facilities.

Nothing else can quite measure up to one's feeling in experiencing the immediate necessity of having to make a trip to the out house late on a cold, dark, snowy January night without a light of any sort. Especially if you are only 10 or 11 years old.



Programme	
OLD FASHIONED GARDEN	
Toastmaster	Bobby Buzbee
Invocation	Supr. I. E. Bruce
Response	Bob Watts
Old Fashioned Garden	Chorus
Dirt In Our Garden	Pat Russell
Sweet Adeline	Male Quartette
Wishing Well	All



1943: Uncle Clint, Dick, Daddy and Bobby Dale on the steps at Mother Darling's. Dick and Bobby Dale are wearing their "boot pants" and boots, which were staples throughout the war years. 30 April 1949: Bobby Dale was toastmaster at the FHS Junior-Senior Banquet, at the Kilgore Hotel. He was president of the Junior Class, and presided over the affair which was built around an "old fashioned garden."

BATHING: A HIT OR MISS PROPOSITION

Bathing was, out of practicality and in some instances necessity as a result of low well water, at most only a weekly thing normally. For most of the week, washing one's self was mostly a hit or miss proposition with a wet wash cloth. There, basically, was no other practical alternative. To fully take a bath required drawing water from a well, (some distance from the house), carrying that water to the house (one or two gallons at a time) heating that water on a wood stove, pouring in a wash tub, getting in and washing off with soap, then attempting to wash off the soap with the same water.

This was totally impractical as a day to day thing. We, consequently, normally reserved all such bathing to a Saturday evening when all would go through that weekly ritual. Dick and I would, however, during the summer, take advantage of the water available on wash day and usually take a bath in the wash tubs of water which had been used for washing clothes. It did get us relatively clean and, probably to a greater extent, cooled us off and made us feel better.

One of our more grandiose attempts at modernization was to construct a shower. Dad, out behind the house, had built a large shed which was used to house the chickens, cow, feed and all his tools and gardening equipment. Dick and I added a frame structure to the east end which was about seven or eight feet high on top of which we put a 55 gallon barrel.

We had punched, with hammer and a nail, a group of holes in the center of the bottom to serve as the shower head. To operate, one of us would stand under the barrel while the other stood on top and poured buckets of water in the barrel which then ran through the holes in the bottom onto the one below. As much of the water ran onto the ground rather than the one taking the shower, several trips had to be made to the well for each to have a complete shower.

It would have been just as efficient, in all probability, just to pour the water directly from the buckets onto the showerer although this, at least, gave us the illusion that it was a real shower. Our "shower" lasted all of that summer but after

the following winter, the bottom had rusted out so we were without our shower after that.

A DISCOVERY ABOUT MONOPOLIES

Obtaining a paying (non-farm oriented) job during the 1930's and 40's was difficult enough for the average adult and were, essentially, non-existent for young people. Practically the only jobs open to teenagers during this time were those which were available through a family owned or operated business, with the hiring basically restricted to other family members. If no desirous family member was available, then children of family friends were next in line for any such available job. Rarely did anyone outside these circles have the opportunity for any such paying jobs.

My first attempt at earning some spending money was during the summer of 1943. At the time there were two bus lines (Greyhound and Trailways) and two railroad companies (Rock Island and Cotton Belt) which had several buses or passenger trains which stopped at Fordyce each day. These were the primary modes of transportation for all when traveling any distance.

Private automobiles were basically only used for short trips in and around the place of residence or to nearby towns. This limited travel by, or use of, the private automobile was limited to some degree for most by the lack of money to make any such trip, however, the primary limitations to any such use was rationing.

Gasoline, tires, and oil for private automobiles were rationed, or in some instances such as repair parts nonexistent, to the extent that one could prove the need for those items. When need could be proven then ration coupons would be issued by the Government in only those amounts for which that need was proven. Those rationed items could not be purchased, even if the purchase price was available, without the appropriate ration coupon. New ration books were issued each three months and were either used or lost; that is, after the (three month) period ended for which specific books were issued they were then void. Thus, no one (at least theoretically) could collect, to either buy or sell these books or coupons, for use in another time period.

Anyway, back to my first attempt at a money making project. The many busses or train cars which stopped at Fordyce each day were mostly fully loaded. That is, all seats were taken. In fact most of the time there were people standing in the aisles, and many stood that way for hours until either a seat became vacant or they arrived at their destination. I had heard that money could be made selling items of food to these people as the busses or trains didn't normally stop long enough at any one place for the individual to go to a restaurant or cafe to eat.

There was then no such thing as "fast food", except possibly a coke and candy bar. As I had heard about some who had made money selling roasted peanuts to those passengers I decided to give it a try. I went to Sterling's (a variety store) and bought a package of small brown paper bags (probably about fifty) for a nickel to put them in.

Mother Darling and Uncle Clint had raised some peanuts so I got probably a gallon of them and Mother Darling helped me roast them (actually she did it all). After that I put about a handful of peanuts in each bag which I proposed to sell for a nickel. As this took practically all day I got everything ready to make my first attempt at selling the next day.

The next morning about 9 o'clock I walked to town with my box of bagged peanuts and went to the Greyhound Bus Station at the old Kilgore Hotel and waited for the first bus. When the bus came in I started over to it to begin my sales and was immediately met by a boy, some two to three years my senior, and was told that this was his territory to sell peanuts and for me, in effect, to get lost.

He did suggest that I go up to the (then) Cities Service Station, which was the Trailways Bus Station and try it there. This I did but met with the same result. Thus I learned my first lesson regarding "monopolies" and "protected territories," especially when the one in charge of that monopoly is bigger than you are.

It wasn't a total loss however, on the way back home I ate about half the peanuts and threw the rest away at the bottom of the hill on the way to Mother Darling's.

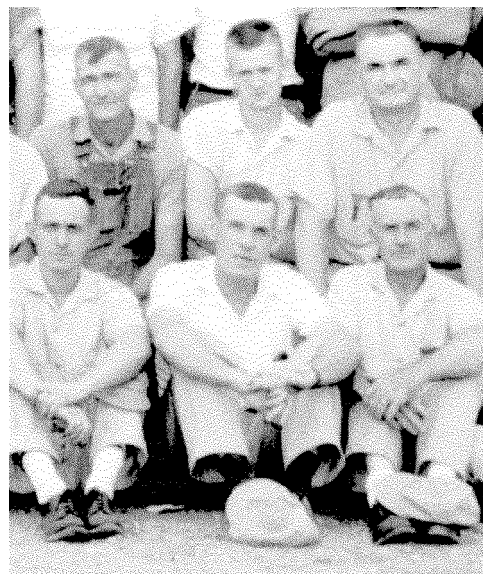
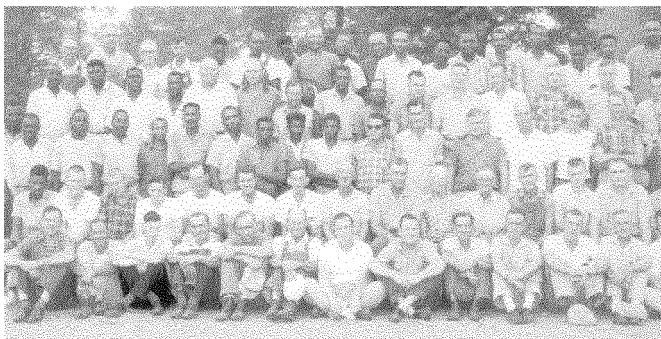
FINALLY, A PAYING JOB

I did, however, finally get a paying job at my Uncle Chet's service station, I believe, in 1946. Dick had been working there a year or so in charge of the soft drink concession. Chet gave me a job which mainly, at least initially, consisted of pumping gas to his customers.

Later I was "promoted" to also repairing flat tires. As new automobile tires for privately owned automobiles were not available during and for a time after the war (WW II) most people has to use whatever they could find. As a result repairing tire punctures or blow outs was a full time job. In any event, I worked only about two or three days a week at the Station during that summer with the understanding that I would be paid at the end of the summer.

Shortly prior to the start of school Dick came in one day from his coke concession job (I was home and no longer working) and told me that Chet had got in two new tennis racquets and that as he (Dick) had bought one, it would be great if I would buy the other so we would be able to play tennis. As I had no money (Chet hadn't paid me yet) I told him that I couldn't buy it. No problem he said, he had already talked to Chet and Chet would give me the racquet for my summer's work. I never did know how much I should have made that summer, or how much the racquet cost.

In all probability though, the tennis racquet was worth twice what my work was. We did have many years of enjoyment from those tennis racquets and I used mine until Rick and Martha gave me a new one in 1986, some 40 years later.



The Oak Flooring work force: Daddy gathered his entire Flooring Mill work force for a photo on the grounds at Fordyce Lumber Co. With his ever-present cap, he was seated at the lower right of the photo (enlarged), with Orville behind his left shoulder. Orville was the machinist. Dale worked for Daddy in the period, but he is not in the photo, which is undated but appears to have been taken about 1960. The crew was broken up in June 1963 when the owners of Fordyce Lumber Co. sold to the Georgia-Pacific Corp., and Georgia-Pacific eliminated the flooring mill. This photo was one of many that Mr. Alexander took in Fordyce.

WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE COMPANY IS GOOD FOR YOU

Full time employment for adults in and around Fordyce for all practical purposes revolved around employment levels and needs at the Fordyce Lumber Company.

Essentially, Fordyce was a "lumber company" town where the company official operated under the premise that what was good for the company was good for Fordyce and, by the same token, what was not good for the company was not good for Fordyce. This resulted in the virtual prohibition of any other business or plant locating in Fordyce which would in any way compete with the lumber company for the labor force available in the area.

While the Company did, to a great extent, completely dominate the town and any decisions pertaining to the town, it did furnish the opportunity for hundreds of people to have a fairly reliable full time paying job. Most of these jobs were low in pay in what was called common labor. That is, one needed no education, experience or knowledge to perform in these positions. Basically all that was needed was a strong back and the stamina to perform for nine or ten hours a day.

The mill complex itself probably was over a half mile in length. On the west end was the saw mill portion where the logs were brought in and sawed into various size products. Both pine and oak were sawn. One of the higher paying jobs here was the head "sawyer" who determined into what size product each log would be sawn.

The log rode on a carriage which traveled back and forth, at a very high rate of speed, into the saw which sliced off boards the size of which was determined by the sawyer. This would normally be in one or two inch thickness. Three men rode the

carriage and their job was to set the "dogs" which were clamps which held the log on the carriage. As the log was sawn and after each board or two was sawn off, these clamps had to be loosened, the log would be turned, usually 90 degrees, and then reclamped (or re-dogged) each time the log was turned.

The men riding the carriage had to hold on to this fast moving carriage which traveled at high speed some thirty or forty feet in one direction then reversed and went even faster in the opposite direction; keep an eye on the sawyer, who sat beside the saw and motioned to them regarding when and how to turn the log and also how to set the thickness to be sawn; and do it for hours at a time.

After the board were sawn they traveled on a conveyer chain past a line of men who sorted and stacked them by thickness. These boards were stacked in alternating layers of sawn boards and narrow strips which ran perpendicular to the board layer. This was to allow air to circulate between the board layers for drying purposes.

When the stacks were some eight feet wide and ten feet high it would be lowered to a lower mill level where the entire stack would be picked up by a machine which would take it to a huge field where it would be placed, with hundreds of others. Here it would remain for several months where "air drying" would remove much of the moisture content of the boards.

After remaining here for the appropriate time the stack would then be taken to the "dry kiln", a totally enclosed heated drying chamber, where the moisture content of each board would be reduced to the appropriate levels. This step stabilized the size and would prevent the board from shrinking or expanding later after it had been processed into its final consumer product. After leaving the dry kiln, the boards were sent to their respective milling department for final processing.

The pine went to the pine mill where it was finished primarily in one and two inch lumber used basically in home construction. The hardwood (oak) went to the flooring mill where the only product was flooring primarily for homes, but which was also used for floors in office buildings, bowling lanes, gymnasiums floors, etc.

When the lumber first arrived in the mill the stack of lumber were put on elevators which raised the top of the stack to a height where men would pull off each layer in order and run it through a re-saw where strips for the final flooring were made.

Each of these strips were a little less than three inches in width and whatever length the board happened to be. These strips were then run through a surfacing machine which planed the top and bottom smooth and which also sized the thickness of the wood to insure that all finished flooring would be the same thickness.

On what would be the bottom side of the flooring a portion of the wood approximately one eighth of an inch thick and about three fourth of the width of the strip was also removed. This was to allow air circulation and reduce any swelling or shrinking of the individual pieces after the floor was laid. The common name for this side was called "hollow backs". After this step, the strip was sawn for length. This was done not to standardize the length, but to cut out and discard any

imperfection such as knots, holes, etc., in the piece.

No flooring could be sold that had any such imperfection which would be visible after installation so all face surface had to be "clear" or with no imperfection. After this sawing each piece was then run through what was known as the side matcher. This machine cut a groove on one edge and a tongue (which would match the groove on an adjoining piece) on the other. It was then run through an end matcher. This did the same as the side matcher except the tongues and grooves were cut on the ends of the strip.

Through these means each strip could be matched up and connected with other strips on each side and both ends. This then would lock all pieces with each other and make a continuous smooth surface to finish for a home floor. After all these steps each finished piece of flooring went on the grading table where it was graded for quality.

This grading was based on color, grain patterns, imperfections left by the milling machines, etc. The grades used were "Select", which was the best and most expensive, "No. 1", next best and "No. 2," which was everything else. After grading it went to the bundle shed where it was sorted by specie (either white or red oak), grade and length. It was then tied into bundles of about fifteen/twenty individual pieces.

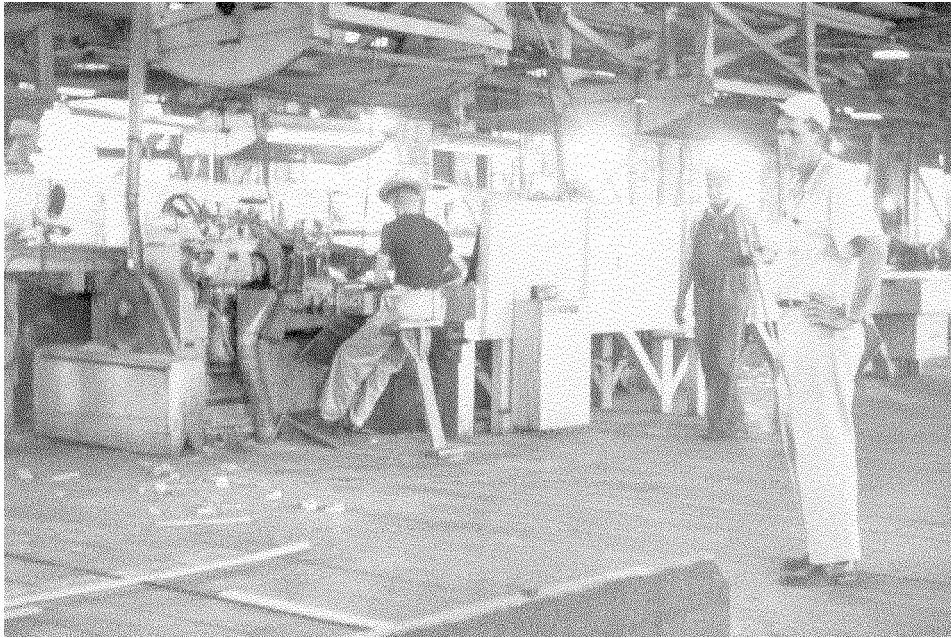
Each piece in each bundle could vary in length by up to one foot but as they were end and side matched they would all fit together and also with any piece from any other bundle.

The bundles were sold by a standard number of square feet of finished floor surface. For instance a bundle of four foot flooring could have individual pieces from three and one half feet to four and one half feet long but the average would be four feet and would cover the amount of floor indicated by the average for that size bundle. During the time this mill was in operation, prior to the advent of carpeting and vinyl floor covering in homes, several railroad car loads were shipped each day.

Dad started to work for the Lumber Company in the early 1920's (?) and worked there 41 years. Most of those years were spent in this flooring mill, initially on the grading table and later as foreman. As this entire operation was very labor intensive, and as there was little in safety precautions, minor accidents and mishaps were a fairly common occurrence. Major accidents were extremely rare as all workers were competent and intelligent enough to take the necessary precautions to avoid any such injury.

As Foreman, Dad was pretty much accepted as the local medical aide in event of minor mishaps. One of the big problems here, as with any operation involving wood, was splinters.

Apparently Dad was fairly adept, (though possible not too expert), in extracting splinters out of workers' hands as he laughingly told me one time that Doctor Estes told him that if he (Dad) would quit trying to dig splinters out of people's hands with his pocket knife, it would make his (Dr. Estes) job a lot easier.



13 May 1958: The foreman checks his operation: Daddy, with some of his crew and machines at the Oak Flooring Mill. In background are Columbus Thomas and S. B. Davis.

HE USED HIS POCKET KNIFE TO SAVE ONE OF HIS MEN

The pocket knife came in exceedingly helpful one other time, however. Irving Bigford, a close friend of Dad's, recounted to me the story of how Dad had, with the knife, saved the life of one of his workers.

Apparently one of the men who was feeding lumber into one of the planing machines had a piece of lumber go in the machine wrong and he had climbed up on the table to try to pull it out and feed it back in correctly. He was, as did most workers then, wearing a pair of overalls. When he climbed up on the table one of the shoulder straps came loose and somehow caught in the chain pulling the lumber into the saw.

As it was extremely noisy in the mill, while the worker was yelling for help apparently no one could hear him. Irving said the first he knew something was happening was when he saw Dad running across the mill floor where he jumped up on the table where the worker was. Dad caught the worker and tried to pull him back out of the machine but the overall strap was too tough and the machine was too strong for them to stop.

Irving said he and some others started running toward them and he was afraid the machine was going to pull both Dad and the worker into it before anyone else could get there but Dad finally, after several tries while holding onto the worker, got his pocket knife out and cut the overall strap off just as it was going into the saw.

A RATHER UNEVENTFUL TIME. MOSTLY.

In looking back, my high school years seem to have been a rather uneventful time although at the time I, no doubt, probably looked at it quite differently.

Studies, and grades, were of relative unimportance to me except for the need to maintain the level required to avoid the wrath of the teachers and ultimately, Helen

and Dad. Dick, a year ahead of me, had always set a standard that I knew was unapproachable by me and of which several of the teachers were constantly reminding me.

Don Hillman, one of my classmates had somewhat the same problem as he wrote in my Senior Annual, "We may not be as smart as our brothers, but I bet we had more fun." Not really sure about that though as I never had the excitement of being shot at while throwing fire crackers on people's front porches. (The story that was told---by George Rogers, primarily---and made the rounds in school after this event was that Dick was in the back seat and when the rear window blew out, Dick yelled, "Duck, he's shooting rock salt at us". No, Dick, it's called Double-O buckshot.)

Did, however, do the normal high school things for those days. Managed to letter two years in football, getting the coveted jackets which most high school students would die for. We had a rather ignominious team record, though. The low point of the season in my senior year was the second game, when we played Little Rock Central High. The final score was their 65 to our 6. This almost approached one of the scores Helen always laughed about when she recalled playing basketball for Fordyce High in 1929. They were playing Sparkman High School and lost by a score of 66-2. Several of the girls on that team (Sparkman Sparklers) went on to form a semi-professional team which toured the country in the 1930s.

In addition to football, I played trumpet in the band for four years and was elected Band President in my senior year.

I also served as Class President in my Freshman (1947) and Junior (1949) year. As class president of the Junior Class, it was the standard that such be the Toastmaster at the annual Junior-Senior Banquet. This was held in the Kilgore Hotel, the social center of town in those days, and I can still recall the trepidation and fright at which I approached the event.

OFF TO COLLEGE

Prior to graduation from high school, I had made no plans for what I might do upon graduation. I had just assumed that I would continue on at a college somewhere, although I had no idea where, or what, I would take when I got there (wherever that might be), or how it was going to be paid for. Think it was just a given by Helen and Dad that we all would continue in college.

As it turned out, one of my best friends, Troy Henderson, was to enroll at (then) Arkansas A&M College at Monticello and major in Forestry, primarily because his father was a District Forester with the Arkansas Forestry Commission. As that sounded good enough for me, I decided to just go with him, therefore enrolled there in the fall of 1950. Ironically, he quit after one year while I, essentially, spent the next 40 years in that profession, retiring as Deputy Director of the Arkansas Forestry Commission in September of 1993.

While I didn't realize it at the time, probably the primary reason I was able to attend college was the NROTC scholarship that Dick got from the Navy. I had no money, little likelihood of a job, and under the circumstances, it would have been impossible for Dad to be able to pay for both Dick and me to attend college at the same time.

THE FIRST OUT-OF-STATE TRIP

My first real out-of-state trip occurred in the summer of 1952, after my second year of college. A group of us decided to go west to work for the U. S. Forest Service during that summer.

Consequently, in May of that year, six of us loaded up in one of the group's 1949 Chevrolet and left for Idaho, touring Yellowstone Park on the way. We arrived in St. Jo, Idaho, headquarters of the St. Maries National Forest in early June and were assigned to a BRC camp near Boville, Idaho for work. The camp consisted of ten or so, four-man tents, plus a cook tent and shower tent in what was called Bronson Meadows, some 10 miles from Boville.



1952: BRC camp, Idaho, with the Confederate Flag displayed

The work consisted of digging up and destroying gooseberry plants, a shrub normally about two to three feet tall. Gooseberry plants are the alternate host plant for white pine blister rust, a fungus which can kill the native white pine. By destroying the gooseberry plant, it breaks the life cycle of the blister rust fungus and prevents its spread. All summer was spent in camp either working, playing cards or just resting. Every two or so weeks, trucks would come to get us to go into Boville for a Saturday outing.

This provided me with my first experience at a slot machine. On one of my first attempts, I won some \$60 on a quarter machine and before leading town that evening spent it all on a pair of hobnailed boots. After wearing them for about six weeks, they completely fell apart, so was unable to bring them home with me at the end of summer.

One highlight of the trip occurred about three weeks after we arrived at the camp. As we lived in, and everything was stored in, tents, one of the local black bears decided to raid the food storage tent. The first few times it happened we were able to frighten it off with no problems. After a while, though, it began to slip in late at night and steal food, usually meat, from the storage tent. Finally, the Camp Boss had enough and shot it late one evening. Needless to say, we had no further troubles with bears.

MOVING THE ROCKS OF IDAHO

That summer also provided me with the first hand experience of what is called governmental "make work." In the last week at Bronson Meadows before the camp was to be disbanded, and as we had worked all the area which the Forest Service had determined needed it, we essentially had nothing to do, as far as planned work was concerned. So, in order to justify our pay for that week, we would get up each morning and line up across the road coming into the camp and walk down it

throwing rocks out of the road. After a mile or so of that we would turn around and walk back, this time off the road throwing those same rocks back onto the road. Think we almost wore those rocks out before the week was over.

Upon returning to college at the end of that summer, I had continuous school then for two and one half years until graduation. Each forestry student was required to spend one summer in classes related to outside forestry work, primarily in forest measurement and land surveying. While in college as there were no washing machines or Laundromats, such as now available, I had to either mail, or carry, my clothes home for washing.

Also, as practically no one had cars, most of our travel to and from home was by hitch-hiking. This was an accepted practice by everyone in those days and it was usually no trouble getting a ride. Helen would occasionally come over and pick me up and in the last part of my senior year, Dad would let me take the car back for a few days at a time.

‘DO YOU HAVE YOUR MILITARY OBLIGATION OVER WITH?’

As a contrast to my pre-high school graduation, prior to graduation from College I did begin to think about the future and what I was going to do. The primary consideration at the time was the military obligation each of us faced. As World War 2 had been over only some nine years and the shooting war in Korea had just ended the previous year, I, like all other young men, faced the requirements of the Universal Military Training and Service Act in effect at the time. This Act required that all young men between the ages of 18 and 28 (I believe) serve a minimum of eight years in the military. This eight years could either be on active service, in the National Guard, a Reserve Unit, or a combination thereof.

I had received a college deferment while attending college, but that would end with graduation and I would soon be required to commence my military obligation. Prior to graduation, when I applied for forestry jobs, one of the first questions asked was, “Do you have your military obligation over with?” When I answered, “No,” that pretty well ended the interview, as they and I knew that it was just a matter of time before the draft caught up with me.

Consequently, as Dick was in the Navy and I had always liked airplanes, a friend (Allen Taylor) from El Dorado, and I, decided to apply for the Naval Aviator Program. We subsequently drove to New Orleans in March of 1954 to take the physical examination for the program.

This was in the same building that Dick had taken the NROTC test some four years earlier. In April, I received notice that I had passed the physical and to continue would be to take the written exam to be given at the Naval Air Station in Memphis, Tenn. The Navy, some two weeks later, then scheduled a plane to pick me up at the airfield in Pine Bluff and fly me to Memphis for the exam. I arrived at the Memphis base on a Thursday and the exam was to be given the next day, Friday.

For some reason, I never knew why, they were unable to give me the exam on Friday, so it was rescheduled for Saturday, and then they were to fly me back to Pine Bluff on Sunday. I had previously made a date with Betty for that Saturday night, and youth being what it is, I told them to forget it and take me back to Pine Bluff that day. They did this without comment and consequently flew me back to

Pine Bluff in a four-motor bomber that (Friday) afternoon. Have always wondered how things would have turned out had I gone ahead and taken that exam.



The U. S. Army gains a new Volunteer

After graduation, as it was difficult for me to get a “real” job, Daddy had gotten me a job with the Tri State Mill Supply. This was a small supply house that was located on the Fordyce Lumber Company property and primarily furnished parts needed for the operations of the lumber company’s various departments.

After a couple of months at that, I realized I was simply marking time doing what I was doing, so I went to the Draft Board in early August and volunteered for the draft. I was told that as I was the first to volunteer in August, I would be the first to be called in September (the Draft Board had a specific quota to be filled each month, either of volunteers or draftees.) So, on September 2, I was given a travel voucher, got on a Trailways bus and went to Little Rock where, that afternoon, I was inducted as a member of the U. S. Army and for my services was to be paid at the rate of \$78 per month.

From this, I had deducted \$18.75 (for a \$25 savings bond), leaving me with some \$59 a month to spend any way I wished. As I was to later find out, though, we were not allowed to leave the base during basic training so there was nowhere to spend it anyway.

After spending that night in Little Rock, I and some 40 others, at 6:30 the next morning were put on a bus headed for Fort Jackson in Columbia, South Carolina, for Army basic training. Upon arrival at Fort Jackson, I was assigned to Battery B, 81 Airborne Field Artillery Battalion, 101st Airborne Division for basic training.

After eight weeks of basic infantry training, I was, on 5 November, re-assigned to the Company C, 516 Airborne Infantry, 101st Airborne Division for assigned MOS training which, to my relief, turned out to be clerk-typist and not, as I had feared, advanced infantry training.

While in Fort Jackson, we lived in six-man huts which consisted of wooden floors and wood walls about four feet high, and then canvas for another two feet, making the walls six feet high, and a canvas roof. As it was cold weather for the entire time while I was there, we had a small heater in the center of the hut. It burned coal for heat.

My most vivid recollection of the place is getting up on the cold winter mornings and walking outside where the coal smoke, from our and hundreds of other tents, obscured practically everything. It was, at time, difficult to breathe because of it. I still seem at times to be able to taste the coal smoke as I did then.

ONLY 2 OPTIONS: KOREA OR EUROPE

As we neared the completion of MOS training, the big question was where

would be assigned for permanent duty. There were, at the time, only two options---and they were not our options. One was Korea. The other was Europe. It was a given that permanent duty for practically all draftees at the time would be outside the continental U. S.

We found out on 10 January 1955 what option had been selected for each of us. My orders dated that date relieved me from my present assignment, and assigned me to 1264 CS Repl Sta, Camp Kilmer, New Jersey----so that meant Europe. These orders called for me to report to Camp Kilmer no later than 1700 on 23 January 1955.

While at Camp Kilmer, there was little to do other than the normal processing we all had to go through. Several of us did go to New York City one day; however, as it was cold and snowing, I had little opportunity to see or do much. My one recollection of New York was the rows of dingy tenement houses with hundreds of clothes lines hanging between them with the day's washing hanging out to "dry."

After some three days at Camp Kilmer, we were assigned our transport to Europe. It was the troopship USNS Darby (named for a WW 2 soldier from near Fort Smith). Some 800-900 of us boarded the Darby on 29 January and set sail for Europe. At the time, we didn't know or really care where. Eight or so days later, after a brief stop in Liverpool, England, we docked in Bremerhaven, Germany.

On 8 February, our final destination orders were issued and mine read essentially: *"rel from asg Hq & Hq Det (Pipeline) 3rd Repl Bn, APO 872 and asg to 515 Engr Topo Det, APO 403, Schwetzingen, Ger."* I still had no idea where it was, other than somewhere in Germany. The next day I found out when a truck carried a number of us to Tompkins Barracks near the little town of Schwetzingen, which was approximately 8 miles from Heidelberg.



1955: Heidelberg: Overlooking the city with Rosenberg; and on the old bridge

THE GOOD LIFE NEAR HEIDELBERG

Tompkins Barracks, named for an American soldier killed near there during World War 2, had been built and used prior to and during much of World War 2 as a German (Nazi) Army tank Battalion training facility. Shortly before the ending of WW 2, it had been used as a German army hospital. The large red crosses painted on the roofs of the building to alert Allied bombers were still visible at the time I was there. The unit to which I was ultimately assigned was Intelligence & Mapping Branch, 515 Engr Topo Det, and was involved in processing intelligence material and issuing individual security clearances for Engineer Division, US Army, Europe. This detachment consisted of two civilian secretaries, five (sometimes six) of us privates, two sergeants, two Captains, two Majors and one full Colonel.

I could not have picked a better assignment had I had my choice of any in Europe. We lived in Tompkins Barracks and ate two of our meals there, worked at (Patton Barracks) USAREUR (U. S. Army Headquarters, Europe) in Heidelberg, ate our noon meal at another barracks in Heidelberg, and we (the privates) had a staff car we used to commute to and from Swetzingen to Heidelberg.

What it essentially amounted to was that, except for being at work by 8 and putting in our (sometime) 8 hours per day, nobody really knew what we (the privates) did, where we were supposed to be at any time, or knew whom, if anybody, we reported to (normally we didn't). In short, we did pretty well what we wanted to do much of the time.

As Patton Barracks was the U. S. Army European Headquarters, there was an overabundance of field grade officers, Generals, full Colonels, etc. Naturally, as they would want to go first class, they had a huge and elaborate dining room in one of the buildings. This also was used for their mid-morning and afternoon coffee breaks. We (the privates) started, and got into the habit of, taking our coffee breaks there also.

That was quite nice. Nice, that is, until several of the Generals objected to sitting next to a group of privates while they had their coffee; therefore, the order went out that the area was off-limits for enlisted men. We had made it last over a year, though, but thereafter we had to send someone over to pick up coffee and donuts, and eat them at our office.

NO SENSE BOTHERING THE CAPTAIN TOO MUCH

As occupation troops, we were not subject to any German laws, and we pretty much did as we chose, and went where we wanted. We enlisted personnel were required, however, not to be away from the barracks overnight without an authorized "overnight pass." As I was responsible for maintaining the necessary forms, typing up overnight passes and getting them signed by the Captain in charge, this presented no problem: If the Captain wasn't available, I would sign his (or some other unidentifiable) name for him, even though there may have been times when I neglected to tell him about it.

I obtained my first car while stationed here in August 1955. It was a 1950 Anglia, a Ford made in England. Dad loaned me \$300 to get it, and it was used on many occasions by Howard (Rosie) Rosenberg (from the Bronx in New York City, and my best friend there) and myself in touring most of western Europe.

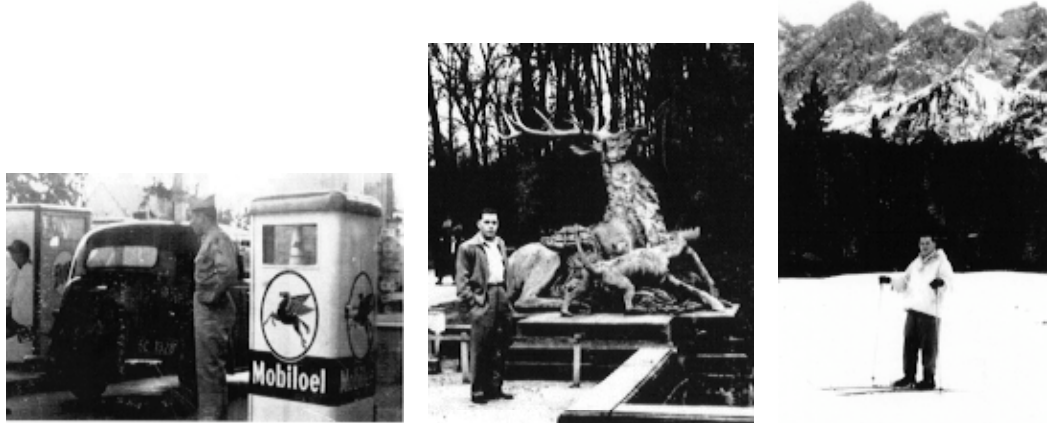
We made our first real trip in it in early September 1955 to Paris; later we took many trips through Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, France, Spain, England, Luxembourg, Austria, and throughout most of (then) Western Germany.

In February 1956, "Rosie" and I went, by train through the Russian Zone of East Germany and visited Berlin. While there we took a tour through East (the Russian Sector) Berlin. I was amazed at the difference: While West Berlin had recovered and had been rebuilt to a large degree after the war, East Berlin was still seemingly just one huge pile of rubble.

The only real development was basically one street which had been rebuilt with apartment buildings and aptly named Stalin Strasse. I saw people going in

and out of, and presume they were living in, what were essentially holes in the ground. In April 1956, Rosenberg and I took our last trip together, this time to England. We drove to and left the car in Ostend, Belgium, and then took the ferry across the English Channel to Dover and then train to London.

As his tour of duty was nearing completion, Rosenberg returned to the States shortly after our return from England. In May 1956, as my return to the States and ultimate discharge date from the army was approaching, I began sending out letters of inquiry regarding job availability after my separation from the army. The only positive response I received indicated that a job might be available from Jim Talley, with the Arkansas Forestry Commission.



1955: Heidelberg: A photo for Chet, with the Anglia; Schwetzingen and a statue at the old hunting lodge; and on the slopes at Garmisch/Partinkirchen

FAREWELL TO GERMANY AND THE WELL-USED ANGLIA

In early July, I took my last leave while in Germany. This time, by train and ferry, to Sweden and Denmark, where I stayed several days in Copenhagen. In mid-July, shortly before leaving Germany, I had contemplated having my car shipped back with me; however, as I didn't feel it was reliable enough to make the trip from New York back to Arkansas, I sold it for \$50.

On 17 July 1956, I received the order relieving me from assignment at my current unit and reassigning me, effective 4 August 1956, to 7802 Embarkee Transit Det., Bremerhaven, Germany, for processing and movement to the U. S. on surface ship USNS Randall and for further assignments to Fort Hamilton, New York and then to Camp Chaffee, Ark., for the purpose of being released from military service.

I reported to Bremerhaven on 4 August and boarded the Randall the next morning. We left Bremerhaven late that afternoon. As I never suffered any ill effects from seasickness, as did some, I enjoyed the ocean trip back from Germany, as I had the trip going over.

I did learn, though, that you never stand downwind from someone who is deathly seasick leaning over the deck railing. Some three days out of Bremerhaven we encountered a storm which made the ship pitch and roll considerably, and I got the uncomfortable feeling that it was going to make me seasick. As it turned out, it fortunately didn't. A merchant ship which was in the same storm had an engine go out, and had sent out a distress signal which the Randall answered, as we were the

nearest ship. We consequently located the merchant ship, and stood nearby for almost a full day, until they resolved their engine problem before we proceeded.

Upon entering New York harbor, I got my first look at the Statue of Liberty, as I had not seen it on my trip out some 18 months earlier. Events moved rapidly for us from that point on. After off loading from the Randall, we were processed through Fort Hamilton and late the next day, I was put on a train destined for Camp Chaffee, Ark., (near Fort Smith) for separation from the Army. After a two-day train trip, I arrived at Camp Chaffee on August 15.

The next morning we went through the necessary procession, and I was officially taken off active duty around noon. I then caught a bus and proceeded to Little Rock. As I got to Little Rock too late to catch a bus to Fordyce that day, I spent the night at the YMCA, and then proceeded to Fordyce on the first bus the next morning.

NEW JOB: ARKANSAS FORESTRY COMMISSION

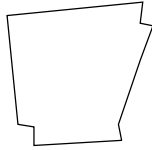
The next week I went back to Little Rock for an interview with the Arkansas Forestry Commission, and was subsequently hired to begin work as Asst. District Forester under Herbert Henderson (who I learned later had essentially had the job for me before I left Germany) at Fordyce. So began work with the Forestry Commission on September 4, 1956 at a salary of \$300 per month.

The first purchase I made after this was a car. As Dad was always a "Ford" man, I, with his guarantee of a bank payment, bought the top of the line Ford model at the time, a Fairlane 500, at a price of \$2,995. As my car payment was to be \$105 per month and my take-home pay (after taxes, insurance, etc.) was \$210, I had some \$25 per week to live on for all other expenses. Early the next month (October),

Mr. Henderson was talking on the phone in the office one day and after hanging up, turned to me and asked if I wanted to go to Dierks as District Forester. I had only a general idea of where Dierks was, but said, yes. So, on about October 25, 1956, I loaded my car with all my possessions, which consisted of a road map, a suitcase of clothes, an army cot, an electric hot plate and assorted pans, plates and eating utensils, and headed for Dierks.

I left early in the morning from Fordyce, and although the distance to Dierks was only some 120 miles, as many of the roads were gravel and still unpaved, it was mid-afternoon before I arrived. After finding the Forestry Commission office, and briefly talking with the soon-to-depart District Forester, I made arrangements at the Westbook Hotel (the only place to stay in town) for lodging until the State Forestry District Forester residence was vacated, and I could move in.

The Hotel was owned and operated by an old man and his two daughters, and the rate for the Hotel was \$25 per week for a room with all meals furnished. Meals were served "family style." That is, all lodgers sat at the same table and served themselves from all dishes put on the table. The food was the standard country fare which was served at most homes. It was not only very good, but quantities were not limited.



Life in Arkansas on \$20 per week

On November 1, as Ralph Raines, the District Forester I was replacing, had moved from the State-owned residence the previous day, I moved in. He had a TV and as he didn't want to take it with him, I took up the payments (from a furniture store in Nashville) at \$10 per month. Rent for the State-owned residence was to be \$15 per month, so with the car payment, TV payment and house rent, all my other spending was limited to \$20 per week. I had received no increase in salary upon my promotion from Asst. District Forester to District Forester, and would not receive one until early the next year when my salary went up by \$25 per month.

Dierks, at the time, was a Fordyce in miniature. That is, it was a family (Dierks) owned lumber company town of some 1,200 people, probably 98 plus percent of whom were dependent directly on the company for their livelihood. Without too much exaggeration, about the only two people in town who did not depend solely, or mostly, on the Company was the Postmaster and myself. Most of the housing and much of the commercial property was owned by the Company and rented to their employees or to merchants. Their "Big Store," where the employees were expected to purchase most of their and families' daily needs, was essentially the same as the Fordyce Lumber Company's "Commissary" in Fordyce.

THE COMPANY LINE IN COMPANY TOWN

There was a little coffee shop in the front of the "Big Store," where some of us would go for mid-morning coffee and watch, on Fridays, the Dierks employees being paid for the week. The Company would set up a table with several people seated behind it and the employees would line up to be paid. Each employee was paid by check by the first Company official who, after verifying the identity, would pass the check down to the second, where the employee would endorse it. After endorsement, the second official would then take the check and pay the employee that amount in cash.

The employee would then next meet another official where he paid his house rent, if any, or other direct debt to the Company, then to a representative of the "Big Store," where he would pay his bill for food, clothes, etc., that he had charged during that week. Then the employee would meet the next "Big Store" representative where he would make his weekly payment, if any, on any loans received for large items such as furniture, tires, etc. (purchased from the "Big Store," naturally). No one was allowed to leave the line until his obligations to the Company were met, in cash, and many employees, after having gone through this line, arrive at the end with zero funds left for the week's work.

While I was staying in the Westbrook Hotel, prior to my move into the State house, I went to the local theater (The Pines Theater) one night to see the movie. While I don't recall the movie that was showing at the time, I do remember that

there were only some three or four other people there beside me, and that there was a small pot-bellied stove down at the front. It was used for heat during cold weather. The most vivid recollection I have, though, is that during the movie somehow a dog and cat got in the theater, and they got in a big fight down front under the screen.

The Forestry Commission Headquarters site at Dierks was a result of Franklin Roosevelt's Depression-fighting program, the Civilian Conservation Corps, or as more widely known, the CCC. The site was a CCC camp for a number of years during the 1930s, and consisted of some 20 acres of land. Several hundred CCC "boys" were stationed there and were involved in forest fire suppression, rural road building, installation of telephone lines and other activities related to forestry projects.

When the Camp was closed about 1938, some of the land was turned over to the State Forestry Commission and the area, consisting of all or parts of Howard, Sevier, Polk and Pike counties were incorporated into the State Forestry Commission as District number 2. District 1, in the Crossett area, had been organized a short time earlier. Except for the Camp buildings themselves (which, by then had been removed), most of the facilities that the CCC had constructed were turned over to the State Forestry Commission for their forestry conservation and protection activities. This included fire towers, telephone lines, and one building which had been used as the dispensary.

This building was used as the District Headquarters until the mid 1960s, when a new office was built.

The District Forester house was built in 1938, and, after several renovations, is still in use at the present time. It was into this house I moved in 1956. While there was running water in the house, like all others in town that had it, it could only be used for general purposes, as it was just pumped, by the Dierks Company, directly from a large pond east of town into the houses and for which we paid \$5 per month. While it could be used for bathing and washing clothes, there were times, especially after heavy rains or during the summer when the pond got low, that the water would get so muddy that it was useless to try to do either. All water used for cooking or drinking had to be hauled from a deep well (also operated by the Dierks Company) on the south side of town.

TELEPHONE SYSTEM HANDLED MORE THAN MERE BUSINESS

As the Forestry Commission had received from the CCC, several hundred miles of telephone lines, to which were connected some 200-300 old-style crank telephones, this system was our, and much of the local populace's, primary means of communication. These lines connected our (at the time) seven fire towers scattered over four counties and all personnel employed by the District.

There were no commercial telephones available to any of our facilities, not even the District office, or for that matter, to most of the area in general. We did have a connecting line going into the local telephone company office and anyone who had a telephone on our system could be connected through the local "central" operator to the commercial telephone system. Consequently, our phone lines were probably

used more by the local populace for ordering groceries, feed, etc., than we ever used them in our work. Years later, during the 1970s, when we discontinued these phone lines and started pulling them out, we created more controversy than anything we, or anyone else, had done. As, at that time for most people in those areas, those with telephones, or those with access to these phones on our lines, our system was their only means of communication with the outside world, they felt that they would be, and to some extent were, isolated without those telephone lines.

It would not be for several years that local commercial telephone systems were introduced into the area. Removing these telephone lines were a result of the advent of the initiation of our use of radio communications and economics.

Maintaining and repairing these 200 miles of telephone lines had reached the point where it was taking probably half or more of our work time just to keep the system operational. As most of it had been built in the early 1930s, the system was essentially falling apart.

Most of the people who used and had telephones on the system had no connection with the Forestry Commission, or its operation. They had simply been given the telephones, and connected to the lines when the CCC originally built it. None either had to pay anything for the use or it or help in maintaining any of the lines. It was to them a free service, and if they had a problem with their telephone, they would just call us to come and repair it. We continued to do this for a while, but in 1965, I, at least officially, stopped the practice.

Thereafter, if a telephone developed trouble, we pulled it out, and brought it into the office for storage or for use of parts on our own telephones. While it did not materially reduce the number of telephones on our system as some of our employees would occasionally “unofficially” help an individual get a phone back into operation, it did reduce the constant use by those people for their daily “chats,” which many times prevented us from using the lines in our operations. I certainly made no friends by doing this, though.

Our primary responsibility was detection and suppression of forest fires on all private lands in the roughly four-county area of responsibility and, additionally, the maintenance of communication systems and structures (residences, office, barns, etc.) associated with this. Fire suppression was a year-round occupation. In normal year, we would suppress several hundred forest fires, of which probably 90% were intentionally started by local people.

As the Dierks Lumber Company owned a large amount of area, and local people were allowed free range to run their hogs, cattle or other stock on it, many of the locals would start these fires to “make the grass green up sooner in the Spring,” “open the woods up” or for many other “reasons,” or for apparently at times no reason other than it was just something to do.

CO-EXISTING WITH THE BOOTLEGGERS

Arkansas at the time was pretty much a dry state. In very few areas was it legal to sell whiskey and so bootleggers were fairly common in all the counties. There were many such small operations that we knew of, and on a clear day from one of our fire towers, we could see the smoke from whiskey stills scattered everywhere.

As these stills were fired with wood, many times these fires would escape and set surrounding forests on fire. We would then be called to come in and extinguish the fires. The still operators would usually be there in the area to guide us so that we wouldn't learn where the illegal operation was, and to insure, especially at night, that we wouldn't run over it with our tractors and damage it. We never reported these operations to the law enforcement authorities and consequently never had any problems with any of the operators of them.

APRIL 1966: THE REALLY BIG ONE

After years of seeing and fighting these fires we reached the point where they didn't seem, as least to us involved, to be any more dangerous or hazardous than any other occupations. The one exception to this, however, was in the first week of April in 1966.

I had at the time been working for some 10 years and had begun to feel I had, in effect, seen just about everything as far as wild fire occurrence was concerned. It had been an extremely dry spring with essentially no rainfall for several weeks and beginning in the last week of March had already extinguished many fires, several of which were in the hundreds of acres.

On the last of March, we had just completed extinguishing a fire which had burned almost 2,000 acres near the Oklahoma border when we were advised of a number of fires being started north of Dierks. By the time we had arrived back in Dierks, many of these fires had burned together, creating, in effect, one huge fire. As we had had no sleep or anything to eat since leaving for the fire near the Oklahoma border some 24 hours earlier, we ate breakfast, and started to this other fire.

By the time we arrived, it was beyond control, and any action would be of little avail. At the same time, someone started new fires in the forests east of Dierks. As we had no one free to send to this fire, it burned without any possibility of action all that day and into the night. It was not until the next day when it started to rain that the fires were finally extinguished. I saw flames reaching almost 100 feet high along the front of the fire. The heat could be felt a quarter of a mile away from it.

In all, over 10,000 acres of forest land burned in these fires. I learned then that, regardless of how long you work at anything, there is always something new to learn.

It was a fun job

It was, though, rewarding work, as opposed to many jobs, in that after extinguishing such a fire, we could look back and see something which we had accomplished and could say "we did that," as opposed to some jobs where after a day's work an individual cannot really point to any actual accomplishment.

It was, in great degree, a fun job, and I continued in it until July of 1984 when, after 28 years as District Forester, I accepted a promotion to the State Office as Deputy State Forester where I was employed for nine years more until my retirement on September 1, 1993.

.....By Bobby Dale Buzbee, Maumelle, Ark., February-March 1997, and February 1998



55 Years of Travels: 1940 in Louisiana to 1995 in Germany, again

31 March 1940: Dick and Bobby Dale traveled to Rayville, La., with Dale and Pauline Darling to visit Don and Myrtle Darling and Phyllis, shown here. We posed in front of a tree with a huge growth of Spanish moss, and brought some of the moss back to Fordyce to see if it would grow there. It didn't. The photo was saved by Pauline, and provided in 1998 by Terry Dale, who wrote that "She remembered her and Daddy taking you and Bobby down there."

1995: Bobby Dale returns to Germany to re-visit Heidelberg and other sites, with Jean, Rick and Martha. Here, Jean takes a photo of him, Martha and Rick at the Heidelberg bridge.

ARKANSAS TRAVELER

Charles Allbright

The Redbug brouhaha of '49



OUT OF RESPECT for Mike Trimble's acclaimed *Memoirs of a Miner* (Bauxite football), make this the *Recollection of a Redbug*. Bob Buzbee lives in Maumelle. But back before that community was born, Bob strapped on the Friday night armor of a Fordyce High School griddier. "Those winless Fighting Bunnies of 1954 — Stuttgart Junior High went 0 and Whatever — brought back memories of 1949."

Redbug practices in late August just wilted everybody. Many soggy pads were turned in before the first football got kicked off in anger.

Bob Buzbee recalls, "We only had enough in scrimmage for the right side to play the left side, offense vs. defense, and there was no pass defense period."

That traditional first road game took the Redbugs to Quigly Stadium. "In our game with Little Rock Central, they managed to eke out a 65-6 win. We were to find out later that this was one of our better games."

That evening did not improve. "On the way home our bus broke down near Sheridan, and we had to ride the rest of the way in the back of a dump truck."

Oh, yeah. "We had a quarterback, name of Houston Nutt. Heard later that he did pretty well playing basketball and raising kids."

Like somebody said, hurtin' can't last forever. Two Nutt kids will bring a football team to Little Rock this weekend.

KEN PARKER SAYS somebody posted the notice on the bulletin board at Riviera Apartments:

FOR SALE BY OWNER: Complete Set Encyclopedia Britannica. Excellent Condition. Not Needed. Wife Knows Everything.

GOOD VIBES FLOW from the spiritual community in England, Ark. Our correspondent does not identify himself or the congregation, saying only that ETHOD-IS separates the first and last letters. Here is a vibe:

"In preparation of the weekly bulletin the choir di-

rector jots down the necessary information and leaves it with the church secretary. Not knowing how many choir members would be present on the Labor Day weekend, the director filled in the *Anthem* space with 'Up in the air.'"

That's how the bulletin read Sunday. No, "Up in the Air" didn't get sung. Anybody, if you'd hum a few bars maybe we could all get started ...

ANYBODY WHO THINKS the ordinary chicken is chicken, you haven't scratched the surface of the truth. Listen to Sharon Watson of Pleasant Valley.

"Chickens, chickens, more chickens, and hardly a place to walk. Bobby bought too many chickens and they won't stay in their pens. Hope he sells most of them at the fair."

No, not *this* Pleasant Valley. The real one, from where Sharon Watson sends in community news to the *Petit Jean Country Headlight*.

Whoever calls the chicken a birdbrain has not dealt with one.

Sharon goes on, "I had a nice tomato patch in front of my shop. The hens decided the dirt made a

good cool dusting area. I got tired of chasing them, so I put a little fence around it."

End of chicken problem.

TELL THAT TO the chickens.

"After a few days of going round and round looking for a hole, they decided to fly over the fence. I then put a wire over the top." It worked for almost three weeks. Then two hens got in and stomped Sharon's tomatoes flat.

"I wired every possible hole. Then the mama guinea took her babies for a stroll through my tomatoes and couldn't find a way out. If you have any good hints on how to keep chickens out of a garden, besides ringing their necks, let me know."

Charles Allbright's *Arkansas Traveler* column appears Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and alternate Sundays. E-mail him at:

charles_allbright@adg.ardemgaz.com

BOBBY DALE put the travails of the 1949 Redbugs into the archives of *The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* by reporting what happened to the team not only on the field at Little Rock, but on the dismal return that night to Fordyce, back in 1949. The report ran 15 September 1999.



Fordyce News-Advocate

Wednesday, 15 September 1999

A DISMAL END TO THE OLD KILGORE HOTEL

Fordyce's landmark Kilgore Hotel was the town's only 3-story building, and was the social center of the community from the time of its construction in 1928 until the mid-1950s. All the family attended social functions there. Dick delivered telegrams from the Western Union office in the corner of the lobby of the hotel in the early 1940s. He parked his (Chet's old) bicycle out front until he used it to deliver the telegrams.

Bobby Dale was toastmaster of the FHS Junior- Senior Banquet on 30 April 1949.....and six years later, in 1955, Helen held a reception in honor of Marie, after Dick and Marie's wedding plans were announced. Soon thereafter, the old building started a swift decline into oblivion, first as a nursing home, where Uncle Clint Darling lived in his 90s, and then, as an empty eyesore that lurked for decades. Demolition finally began in mid-September 1999, not quite 71 years since its gala opening on 2 November 1928.



29 March 1944: Harriette Jane is 2

Helping, Running & Other Exercises

REMEMBERING the '40s, '50s, and '60s, in FORDYCE, ARKANSAS

BY HARRIETTE JANE BUZBEE REAP

I can always remember helping.....standing on the couch looking out the window watching for the school bus to go down.....running to wake Dick and Bob so they could run and catch it on the way back.....helping Bob and Dad plant the pine trees out in the front four acres (but they always sent me after something to bring them). I found short cuts for Daddy in his carpentry by placing the nails in his paint so he wouldn't have to paint them after he used them. Somehow, I got the impression that really wasn't what he wanted especially after the infamous words of "Dad blame the dad blame thunder".

All I knew was to run. I ran often...away from the old gander that would chase us with his wing spread open. I never knew whether he was protecting his family or he just hated me. (Uncle Dale gave us some geese that lived below the vegetable shed).

All during junior high and high school and in to college before Mother Darling moved into the front bedroom at the house, Joy and I would carry Mother Darling drinking water in those big mustard jars (like pickles come in today) two or three times a week. And every night Joy and I would take Mother Darling her supper on the tray that Mom fixed. Later, we would go after her each night, and she would spend the night. Mom should have been in the catering service, because she fixed not only Mother Darling supper meals but also in the summer time, she would drive and Joy would run my tray up to the top floor of the old Court House where I worked in the library after school and during the summer. Then she would pick up Dad at the mill. Daddy would then pick me up at 5 after he got off work.

I can always remember one of Dickie's hobbies---photography. I was always fascinated by the "dark room" Dickie had made out of cardboard boxes that Bobby had helped him find. (I was too little to help collect, or that is what they told me). Then, later the slides that he had taken during his summer trips, especially the ones to Rio de Janerio, Sugarloaf Mountain, crossing the equator, and all of the close ups of flowers. When Bob and Dickie returned home after a trip overseas, it was like Christmas....shoes from Japan, Holland...dolls from Spain, Japan...tea sets from Japan...fans from Madrid and Japan...raw silk tablecloths and napkins from Japan, and tons and tons of souvenirs.



Early 1949: Harriette Jane and Joy pose with some of the newest arrivals at home, and at the dog house.

Somehow, strays always found me (even though I had to drag some of them). I just couldn't let them go without a home. I can remember all of the home remedies that Mom tried on one little dog to cure him of the mange. She would wash and wash him in some type of concoction in the old wash tub. I don't think any of it ever worked.

Beyond the barn and then on what seemed like a little hill, Dad had a vegetable shed near where Mom had her black washing pot. I can remember

helping Mom carry water for the pots and helping collect the onions and potatoes to put under the shed.

We also had chickens. When Dad would bring in the boxes of little chicks, I always wanted to help Mom dunk their beaks in the solution of Epson salt water. I can remember trying to get them back in their boxes, so they wouldn't get cold. I can also remember the little feeders and light bulbs used for heat and set up on the back porch.

During the summers, Mom would teach classes in Vacation Bible School and we all attended regularly. I can remember all of the Kool-Aid in little paper cups being passed around to all of us, as we cut and glued pictures on construction paper.

I remember the playhouse that Dad built under the big oak by the Word's fence (where all of the daylilies are now) with the two windows. Mom made the curtains. Dad had roofed it with shingles he had roofed the house with. Mom supplied the broom and cups and saucers and pot plants. It stood until the high school years.

I can remember combing and plaiting Mother Darling's hair and placing the hair pins in her plaits after I wound them on top of her head. She often had to take the roll down to secure it a little better. I also remember Aunt May coming to visit her, and we would all go down to the bus station to pick her up. I spent hours watching them playing checkers, and we would watch TV. Mother Darling taught me how to knit with the needles that Dad made for me by cutting the bottom part out of wire coat hangers. Mama and Mother D worked with me on crocheting. I know I got better results from my crocheting than my knitting. When we would go visit Mama Buzbee, I was always fascinated by her pet turtles. She had a dish with pebbles and rocks and the tiniest turtles I have ever seen.

Every time we would pass Uncle Chet's Mobil station, we would have to stop and get a nickel coke. If we didn't get a coke at Chet's, we would go to Hunt's drug store (the first store that I remember having air conditioning) and sit at the drug counter on the twistie stool and get a vanilla soda. In elementary school, Uncle Chet coached the elementary football teams...the little "Bugs". I was a cheerleader for the Chiggers and very proud of my cheerleading skirt that Mom made for me. It was in that same year, that I had all of my curls (like Shirley Temple) cut off, and I then sported the fashion haircut---the poodle.

My favorite times were when we could go to the movies. I still love the movies. We would go to Sterlings and get a huge bag of popcorn and then go to the movies all for under a quarter. I would sit and watch the movies as long as I could.

Mom says that my birthmarks came when she was watching the news reels at the movies. (The news story showed thousands of paratroopers floating down from hundreds of planes over a battlefield in World War II.) My two birthmarks are just like paratroopers. You can see the definite shape of the man carrying his rifle and

dangling from a huge open parachute.

Then, the drive-in movies opened and we would all pile in the car and head to the drive-in. I still can smell the pic that we would light and place on the dashboard to get rid of all of the mosquitoes.

Later, TV came into our lives. After school, several of us would go to Susie Atwood's house to watch the serials. On Saturdays, we would all go out to Dale's to watch the shows. Later we got our first TV and the famous send off for the plastic film that would magically make your set a color TV. So, I sent off for the magical film. Well, the film was green on the bottom and blue on the top. I got a set of markers that I could color in "whatever" on the film. Of course...I used it.

Summers meant playing, and often my cousins spent a week or two at Mother Darling's and we would invent all sorts of games. Every day, Terry Dale would be at Mother D's and when he was ready to come down to play with us, he would give his blood curdling Tarzan yell. We would then know that he was on his way.



CHRISTMAS TIME was always the best.



Even now when I smell oranges, apples, walnuts and pecans, I remember the mesh bags of Christmas fruit that Dad brought home from the mill. Every child got a bag at Christmas time.

Christmas was the ribbon candy, the chocolate drops, Mom's Christmas bread ring with red and green cherries and white icing, and hot cross buns. We would hang our stocking on the door facing of the French doors, and I would sit on the other side of the kitchen door reading, doing homework, etc., and listen to Mom and Dad wrap presents and wondering what it could be that was being wrapped.

The only time I didn't enjoy Christmas was when I had the measles and felt terrible. Once I went with Dad, Bob, and Dick out to the old place and I left my doll that I had just gotten for Christmas on a stump. We never could find that stump again.

I can still see the Commissary, and I still smell the sawdust, and I can still see Dad rolling his cigarettes using Prince Albert tobacco and cigarette paper. Every time I see Juicy Fruit gum, I think of Dad. When Dad went on a trip to Broken Bow, Okla., he took all of us with him. I don't remember too much about the trip, but I do remember coming back with a puppy...Pluto. I think that he was the best of the best. And the really big thing during those years was to write for 8x10 glossy pictures of movie stars and see who could collect the most.

In elementary school, Mrs. Patterson always had projects for us. The school's yearly pageant with costumes made mostly out of crepe paper was always an event

for every grade. I could never understand how we would look so different even though our moms cut patterns out of newspaper for the same costumes. I can remember being various flowers, and the last time (sixth grade) when we got speaking parts, I was a nurse.

In first grade, I always wanted to play the triangles in our little music group, and when I got to play those I think that was the highlight of my first year. In the white building behind the elementary school, I remember a lady coming and presenting stories to our classes, and she used a felt board with all different types of cutouts as she told the stories.

We did our homework in the kitchen or on the dining room table and Dad would sharpen our pencils with his pocket knife. Later, we graduated to the fountain pen and had ink over everything. Joy and I had to catch the school bus on the other side of the front four acres. Mom would walk us down in the mornings and wait with us for the bus to come.

Sometimes, tent shows would come to town---the circus and the roller skating rink with the hardwood floors.

We had Halloween games and contests in the high school gym and various rooms. I always loved the cake walk. We had Christmas parades down Main Street and for a few years, the Girl Scouts that we were in went caroling during the holidays.

During high school, the fashion for girls included full skirts and lots and lots of ruffled petticoats to make the skirts stand out, sweaters, penny loafers, oxfords, and scarves. One year a group of us got the bright ideas to sew those little tiny bells on the bottom of one of our petticoats. When we walked down the hall at school, it did sound quite festive, but we were asked not to wear them again. Mom made the majority of our clothes. Some we ordered from the Sears Roebuck's or Montgomery Ward's catalogs after Joy and I looked for hours and hours to select just the right ones. Since there was no perma press materials in those days, ironing those starched dresses with the yards and yards of skirt material was a hot job even in winter.

I can also remember the wash days---from the big black pot that Mom used on the little hill by the barn---to the washing machines on the back porch. I can still see Mom poking down the clothes in the black pot steaming with the hot water and the other black pot with the rinse water. Later, the wringer washing machine with the rinse tub with the bluing in it. (Never could understand why the clothes didn't come out blue).

I would always help Mom empty the water from the washer and put it on the hydrangeas bushes growing on the side of the house. I would get to keep all of the change that Bob, Dick, and Dad would leave in their pockets, and it would fall to the bottom of the washing machine. I hated washing in the winter time. We would go out to the clothes lines, and Mom would stack all of the frozen clothes in Joy's and my arms. She would put the pants that had those stretcher bars in them on our

arms first and then stack the rest of the clothes on top of the pants. Even the clothes pins were cold and frozen.

I can still see the white lawn chairs that Bob made. We would sit under the pecan trees near the fireplace, drink tea, read or listen to the radio and listen to the train as it passed. I loved the radio shows, especially "Our Miss Brooks," "Helen Trent," "Amos and Andy," "The Green Hornet," "The Lone Ranger," and on and on and on. Later at night, we would see how many lightning bug we could catch.

When Dad discovered how to play canasta, our get together changed. As soon as we came in the door, he would pull out the cards and our marathon games began. Several times during the games, players and partners would change but the intensity never faltered.

I can still see Bob and his metal detector going over the drive and around the house. I was really fascinated by that. It reminded me of when Jimmie Lee Hammonds used the "witching" rod to find water. I couldn't believe it when the rod starting shaking and went down where he said there was water.

Mom and Dad never missed one of our piano recitals. Mom always made our recital dresses, and we always had our recitals in the high school auditorium. Somehow, I always managed to do ok, but I know I probably put Mom, Dad and Miss Mary through some horrible times with my erratic and innovative practicing.

Birthdays were always special---even the parties that we went to---and even when Mom drove around the corner taking me to Nancy Bell's birthday party and I fell out of the car. I can still see the yellow and white cake Marie made for my birthday when she and Bob were staying with us.

I will always remember the special days of Girl Scouts, Girls' State, Church Summer Camps, football games, band, booster clubs, class plays, hayrides, selling Girl Scout cookies, camping by the lake, and all of the wonderful times before and after school in front of the high school.

By Harriette Jane Buzbee Reap, Katy, Texas, September 1997

Ode to the Bowling Fiend

BY HARRIETTE JANE BUZBEE REAP, 27 JULY 1963---on HELEN'S 53rd BIRTHDAY

53 years ago on this date, A little girl was thought to be late;
But she decided that she was on time, When they said, "Maybe she's worth a Yankee dime."

Now we must give her a name, Not too mousy, wild or tame;
How about Mary, Jane or Joan? But no one liked any of those tones.

When her Uncle Clint suggested, Helen, That's fine she tried to tell 'em;
But only a howl was all she could do, So to make the name complete, they added Kester, too.

Now this young lady grew to five feet four, But she could grow no more.
When she married Edgar at the age of 18, She thought life was a wonderful dream.

Now two years later they had two sons, And she realized her troubles had just begun.
Years went by and they grew older, Even more daring and so much more bolder.

Two daughters had they as years went by. "More troubles" was all she sighed.
Three children had left---leaving only one to display the honors that she had won.

To Hickory they moved in sixty-three, Back to the origin of the family tree.
Now she found a sport that she adores, When she bowls that NINETY-FOUR.

Now to keep her up in this sport, And to keep rolling these ninety-fours,
Her child number three Is giving her fifteen games free.

So when you hear those bowling pins fall, You will know Grandma Helen made another haul.
So may you have as many days after as before, And to you, heaven has an open door.



1945: With Mother Darling: In the background is a young oak tree (on the fence line with the Word's). Years later, the large oak tree became a favorite spot for an exuberant mockingbird, who liked to perch at the top. (Center) Harriette is about 7, in a formal pose at Alexander's. (Right) Harriette, about 1952.



Helen's Tiger Lilies Keep Blooming

It took awhile, but Harriette Jane kept Helen's old tiger lilies blooming.....this time in Texas, as she reported by email 26 May 2011:

"I got the plants from mom's about 10-12 years ago. These were in the bed that she made where Daddy and Bobby built the playhouse for Joy and me. When the playhouse was demolished mom planted the Lilly bed (these are the double bloom lilies from the Buzbee old place)

"The lily bed was there on the left side of the oak tree when John, Tracey and Martha built the tree house. For years after I planted the bulbs, the plants multiplied and always stayed green but never would bloom. This year I have 26 bloom stalks with 6-8 buds on each stalk. I guess the plants got tired of my whining or lecturing them.

"Also they produce baby plants on the bloom stalks like an airplane plant. This if I remember correctly will happen after all blooms. Hope I can get some of the babies to grow for everyone who would like some.

"Love
HARRIETTE JANE



March 1949: Joy smells one of Helen's climbing roses outside the home.

Kamikaze Buzzards & Other Life Forms

A RECOLLECTION OF LIFE in a SMALL TOWN, during the 1950s through the 1990s

BY JOY DARLING BUZBEE AYER

I Remember:

Eating the persimmons out in the parking lot of the Fordyce Lumber Company with Paul Osborne, while we were waiting for Daddy and his dad to get off from work. We'd sit out there and eat the persimmons and then throw them at each other.

Riding in a flatbed or other kind of huge truck someone made available to Mom at Christmas time for the Girl Scouts to go all over town and sing Christmas Carols to people and then go back to the Methodist Church for hot cocoa. We did that for years and years.

Christmas carols the radio station would play for us when we had Christmas in July.

H.J. winning a pair of skates but giving them to me because she knew she wouldn't use them and I would. Many, many hours skating when the skating rink was kind of portable and was the only entertainment in town.

Bobby running through the backyard with a knife in his mouth and yelling like Tarzan, while the picnic table was covered with watermelon rinds.

Many times saying, "What did you bring me," when Dick would come home from the service with a bag loaded down like Santa Claus and having my first remote control toy.

"Dad-blame the dad-blame thunder!!!"

Kamikaze buzzards on the highway to Warren.

YES, I really did hit a buzzard, not a tree as daddy suggested.

I went to A&M to visit one morning after dropping mom off at work and was trying to get home in time to pick mom up at noon so no one would know I had gone to A&M. (This was during exam time or Christmas break or something.)

I was in just a bit of a hurry coming down Moro bottoms and this buzzard was on my side of the road having a bite to eat. I moved over to the left side and the blamed thing decided to fly - over to the left side of the road.

Fortunately, he just hit the front of the car and flipped over the car into the ditch on the left. Just a little higher and he would have been through the windshield and both of us would have been in the ditch.

I did manage to keep mom from seeing it, but when daddy came home from work he accused mom of, "What did you hit, a tree?"

Of course, I had to say, "Well, no. Would you believe a buzzard?" That's how that old Ford got the name of Buzzard, and H.J. keeps sending me stuffed buzzards and birthday buzzard cookies, and anything else buzzard she can find. I thought I could get it fixed before anybody found out about it, but life is not that easy.

How awful the corner in Fordyce looks now without the Fordyce High School there and with a convenience store in its place.

Shirl Faye and I would "play" tennis, or what we used to assume was tennis, every January 1st, no matter what the weather, even in ice and snow.

Fordyce being safe enough for me to walk to and from school, even when I was in grammar school, and ride my little bicycle over to Ronald and Suzanne's. Is it that way now?

Our first telephone number, 858J2, and feeling inferior because all my town friends only had three numbers to give to Central when she asked what number we wanted to call. Mrs. Word listening in on phone conversations.

Making forts in the pine trees out of pine straw.

Playing in the playhouse Daddy built us out in the back yard and all the club meetings we had there.

Swinging on the tire swing in the big oak tree by the front bedroom over mom's daylilies, and getting wet when I'd hit the tree and the tire would be full of water.

The fact that doctors were alerted when the Kansas crew was about to arrive because something usually happened. Two that come to mind right off: (1) The year Bob's finger got caught in the door and was cut very, very badly, and (2) Bob getting snake bitten out in the potato shed when you all were down for my wedding, I didn't have a car at the house, and I couldn't find anybody home. I think you all were at Aunt Ruth's and finally tracked you down or you just came home during my hysteria.

Harriette Jane and Terry and Butch yelling at each other from the trees in our yard to the trees in Mama Darling's yard and playing cards all through the summer. They all taught me how to play cards.

Putting Bob, Bill and Jim in the back of daddy's truck and taking them for little rides when y'all would come in the summer.

Bob (your Bob) using a bow and arrow to shoot an arrow with a rope attached to it over a big limb in one of the oak trees to attach a tire swing.

The Wonder bread man coming to our rescue in Missouri after our old black Ford burned up in the middle of nowhere on the way to Dick and Marie's wedding. The wrecker towed us in to some town and we bought the "new" used '53 beige Ford. From that day on the only bread mom would buy was Wonder bread.

Spending lazy days with Mama Darling working jigsaw puzzles. Standing on a box in her front hall to use the new telephone hanging on the wall, the big old black one that had a big mouth piece and an ear piece on a long cord.

Lying in bed at night and hearing the deer eat the acorns in the yard. They sounded like little pigs.

Piano lessons with Miss Mary and not really wanting to practice unless there was a contest coming up that I wanted to win. (At least I practiced with my hands, as opposed to HJ using her toes.) Being terrified of recitals because I had to get up in front of people, a fear I still have.

Being scared of the scorpions that used to appear in the house and the daddy long legs that would sometimes get in; sitting in the garden eating tomatoes fresh off the plant, plants that I had taken my little bucket of water and a dipper and watered every night at daddy's direction; good fresh vegetables from daddy's garden; trying never to get sick because I knew if I did, mom would stand me on the back steps and I would have an enormous tablespoon of castor oil poured down me - I can still taste that stuff just thinking about it. We were a healthy bunch, though.

CHRISTMAS: THE BIG STORY

As "little kids" we used to get in Sunday School special fruit bags for Christmas and I was so disappointed when I grew up and moved upstairs with the big kids and didn't get the fruit any more.

The Storybook dolls HJ and I got every Christmas were dressed in costumes from different lands, but my favorite Christmas of all arrived with my hammer and tacks and a board to pound the tacks into.

I also remember standing on the front porch (where the front bedroom is now) being taught by Bobby and Dick during Christmas to actually throw the firecrackers and not just hold them and watch them while they sizzled in my hand. Even though we had Christmas in July a couple of years, Mom always had

stockings and little gifts for HJ and me at Christmas. Christmas has always been my favorite time of the year.

No matter how bad the year has been, Christmas is always big.

One summer Mr. Holt advertised to buy acorns at ten cents a gallon for his pigs, and I made quite a bit of money (relatively speaking, for a kid) picking up the acorns all over the yard and selling them to him.

I have always loved horses, but two occasions were not good experiences. One day Terry, HJ and I were at Dale's and I was on a rather frisky horse who decided to go for a run. I was hanging on for dear life as we came up to a barbed wire fence. The horse made an abrupt turn, I slid out of the saddle and was dragged along the barbed wire fence. I can remember standing up and then falling back down as Dale came driving into the driveway, and then having to go to the doctor to repair the scars on my back.

Fortunately, my feet came out of the stirrups or I would have been dragged through the pasture. Unfortunately, I had on a blouse of HJ's and the back of the blouse ended up in bloody shreds from the barbed wire.

Later on when Dale had horses at Mama Darling's, he would let me ride down there in the pear trees where he had the horses. One day I went down there, and thinking he was so nice to have already saddled up a horse for me, I hopped on.

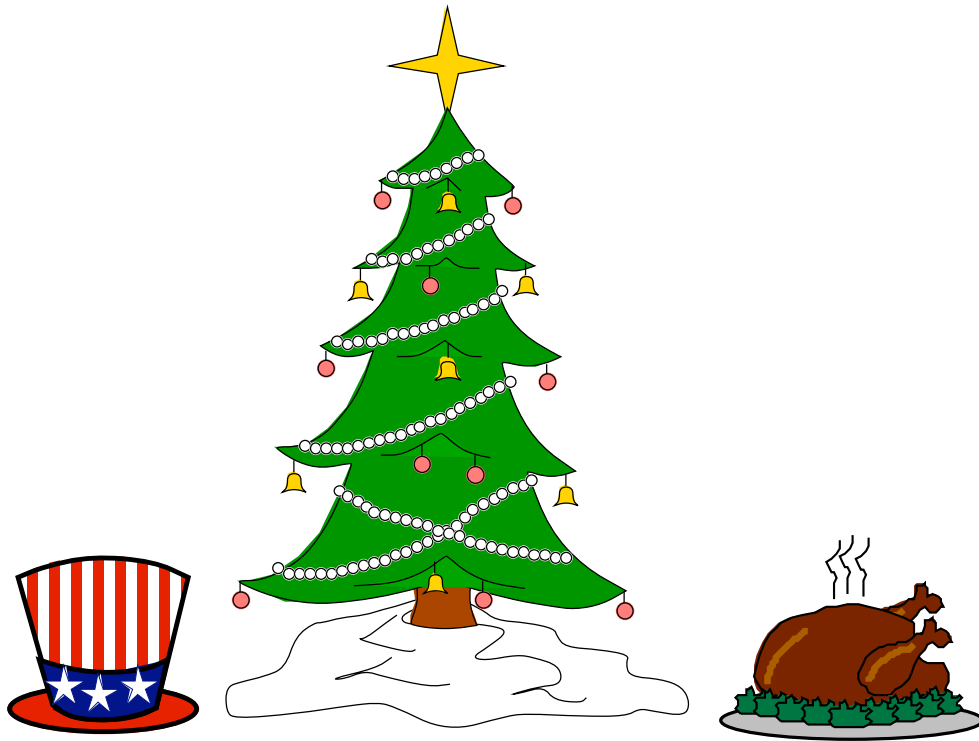
I couldn't understand why the horse just stood there and wouldn't move no matter what I did, kick, talk, stroke, pull - until Dale came running down through the trees with a look of terror on his face. It seems the horse had never been ridden before and he had just put the saddle on it to get it used to a saddle. Obviously, I was not good for Dale's nerves.

I don't know if HJ and Mama remember, but Ginger and I were riding around one night and happened to drive by the jail off of Main Street. Lo and behold, Mama and HJ were in the jail. Ginger and I kept on going.

I guess climbing on the fireplace and then up on the roof of the barn was a rite of passage for all the grandkids. We probably have pictures of everybody on the roof at one time or another.

While watching kids ride the streets yesterday, it dawned on me how I learned to ride my bicycle -- with Dick running countless miles between our house and Mama D's, holding me on and putting me back on my new Christmas bicycle. Eventually I did learn, so thanks a bunch!!

....By Joy Darling Buzbee Ayer, Baton Rouge, La.,
March 1997 and January 1998



CHRISTMAS in JULY, DECEMBER, and at THANKSGIVING

Christmas was always the big event of the year for all of us growing up and we would prepare for it by going down in the woods and collecting a cedar tree to decorate and holly limbs with berries and mistletoe to decorate the house.

When I went in the Army and Dick in the Navy, it was the first time in our lives we had to miss Christmas at home. I spent Christmas 1954 in Fort Jackson, South Carolina and Christmas 1955 in Heidelberg; Dick was in the South China Sea in 1954 and 1955, and California in 1956.

As we had missed being at Fordyce those years, Helen planned for us to have Christmas there as soon as we both were discharged from the military. I believe this was started in the summer of 1958 when we were able to all be back together for the first time.

Helen, Daddy, Joy and Harriette had put up and decorated a Christmas tree and we all bought and wrapped Christmas presents. Helen had called the local radio station and asked them to play Christmas music for an hour on the air for us. They did this and, later had calls from the newspapers in Little Rock asking them why they were playing this music, so we got some notoriety from it.

We continued to follow this tradition for several years until it was decided that

- (1) it was too hot in July and
- (2) it was getting more difficult for us all to be together then, so it was changed to Thanksgiving, where it continued.

.....By Bobby Dale Buzbee, Maumelle, Ark., April 1998



Recordings of various family activities have been retained in audio only format, and are included in the electronic version of the book.

Many of those recordings are of the Christmas in July/Christmas at Thanksgiving reunions. Go to the “**VOICES**” section for:

TAPE 3: 1983: CHRISTMAS in Fordyce: HARRIETTE JANE can be heard in this opening excerpt, as she and the Thanksgiving crowd urge Bobby Dale to deliver an encore, just before the Thanksgiving (Christmas) Dinner. Later on, in Tape 4, Helen will hand out the Santa assignments, and then, in Tape 5, the entire 26-minute tape will be heard.

TAPE 4: 1983: CHRISTMAS in Fordyce: HELEN gives the Santa assignments, and receives some helpful suggestions from the rest of the family in this short excerpt.

TAPE 5: 1983: CHRISTMAS in Fordyce: THE ENTIRE 26-minute tape: Dick had brought along a small cassette tape recorder to Fordyce, and set it down to record the excitement. Joy is heard first, and later, Harriette Jane tells Joy everyone is ready for Joy to go to the piano to accompany Bobby Dale as he sings to open the dinner. Everyone else chimes in later as the gifts were handed out, the wrappings shredded, and the thank-yous delivered.

TAPE 8: 1984: IT’S CHRISTMAS /THANKSGIVING in Fordyce, and Helen gathers the clan, with the opening song, “My Country Tis of Thee,” and she accompanies everyone on the piano. This tape is 20 minutes 56 seconds, and comprises most of the tape originally made by Helen.

TAPE 9: ca. 1985: THE GANG has gathered again in Fordyce, for Thanksgiving/Christmas. Scott agrees to play the piano to start the session, and Kevin joins in, too, before the presents are opened. The gang sings, “Silent Night.” PART 1

TAPE 10: ca. 1985: PART 2, CHRISTMAS at Fordyce. The presents are opened.

TAPE 11: ca. 1985: IT’S THE DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS/THANKSGIVING in Fordyce, and Bob first provides a harmonica solo, and then he and Harriette Jane end the concert with a piano-harmonica duet. The tape is 8 minutes 45 seconds. The date is not known, but it may have been 1985.

TAPE 12: 1986: CHRISTMAS in Fordyce. The gang sings, “Jingle Bells,” once Helen starts the tape recorder. PART 1.

TAPE 13: 1986: CHRISTMAS in Fordyce. PART 2. Harriette Jane and Joy discuss quilt tops, etc.

TAPE 15: 1988: “OKAY, HERE WE ARE in 1988 celebrating Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s,” HELEN announces. Dick asks the blessing briefly, gives the instructions about the turkey, etc., and the party begins. PART 1

TAPE 16: 1988: PART 2, CHRISTMAS in Fordyce. Bob reads the label carefully on his Christmas present, and everyone opens presents.

TAPE 17: 2003: CHRISTMAS, 2003. Helen gets to talk, and explain what has been going on, which is a lot, since even Helen runs out of breath. Once again, Dick has brought the portable cassette recorder to the Christmas gathering, but this time, it’s the day after the presents are opened, and the report is about what has gone on.

GO TO “**VOICES**” SECTION ALSO TO HEAR:

Bob, in a solo concert for Helen, and in individual harmonica performances; Helen, practicing on the piano; Helen whistling to her birds (and the birds whistling back); John reporting on Iraq in a radio interview in Hutchinson; and a memorable Rush Limbaugh national radio program of 2005, in which he takes issue with one of Sally’s AP stories from Iraq.....and, in the process, Limbaugh provides a new pronunciation of “Buzbee.”