

**Ruth Arlene and Me**

**by**

**Bardolf**

**IN LOVING MEMORY**



Ruth Arlene Killion Angell at Age 15

March 5, 1932-August 26, 1993

## ACKNOWLEDGING WITH GRATITUDE . . . .

This manuscript started as *my* project; I would do it all. That soon changed. Virginia Killion Mary sent the picture of the six cousins. I then started thinking about pictures. I asked Bud Angell to search Arlene's papers for appropriate pictures. He did, with wonderful results. I know this was a painful process for him. Nancy Killion Schoenfelder sent the picture that includes her sisters and coerced Roseann and Jean Killion Schenkel to make contact with me after so many years. My son, Steven, edited the manuscript, wrestled with a word-processing conversion program and printed the master copy. Daughter-in-law Nancy Killion experimented with computer scanning of pictures and advised that we use a photo process. Wife Anita scurried back and forth to the photographer and then to our daughter, Terry Killion Hess, who made numerous trips across Charlotte to accomplish the reproduction of the booklet. Terry's negotiating skills kept the costs reasonable. A huge measure of thanks to each of them.

She has left this life now; I have lost, for a time, the person whom I have known longer than any other. Her earthly life was much too short, but the end has been expected for a while, and it may have come none too soon. For, you see, her physical condition was making the quality of her life unacceptable to her. Yet she resisted death with great valor, almost certainly for the sake of us who were so dependent upon her.

I have spent hours trying to recall my earliest memories of Arlene. This has been, and is, a mostly pleasant undertaking. It often ends, however, with a tear or two. I realize again and again how much I didn't understand, or ignored, or just didn't appreciate as those times and events passed me by. All of those opportunities are now departed with her, so I will write of the memories that I do manage to retain. I will do this for the benefit of just myself and, perhaps, for a few others.

## **BEGINNINGS**

We have played out our lives on simple stages, but the earliest settings were the plainest and simplest of all. Our total circumstances were by no means "good". But they were not nearly as debilitating as our current values would cause us to think. There was enough strength and energy in most families, drawn from their basic beliefs, to overcome adversity. It was seldom really necessary to be rescued. Faith, work and the assumption of personal responsibility would surely lead to better lives. But times were hard, and there was little hope for quick economic improvement. Even so, our parents and some others didn't trust the Roosevelt Administration's attempts to fight the Great Depression. They feared a loss of personal freedom and, it turns out, they were right.

Dad was Oral Lewis Killion, born in Table Grove, Illinois, on March 12, 1891 to Robert and Nancy Hood Killion. He died on November 9, 1957 and is buried in the Evergreen Cemetery at Fairfield, Iowa. He served in the 109th Engineers in Mexico and France during the First World War. Mother was Ruth Massey Killion, born in Birmingham, Iowa, on September 18, 1899 to Frank S. and Mary Groff Massey. She died on July 28, 1983 and is buried beside Dad.

Ruth Arlene and I were born and raised in Fairfield, Iowa; a small (7,500?) rural town with a college, two railroads and more-than-the-usual manufacturing industry. Let me guess that my earliest memories go back to 1934, when I was four years old and she but two. We lived at 305 W. Jackson Street, the address of a little house of four rooms with basement on a dusty, graveled, sometimes oiled street. The exterior of the house was not well maintained nor was the yard a thing of beauty.

We did not live in the "best" part of our town, but most of our neighbors were somewhat more affluent than we. Many owned their homes while we were but renters. Those breadwinners tended to have regular employment, or operated small businesses, or were retired. This was not bad for mid-depression, mid-drought, small-town Iowa. But work was scarce for Dad who tried to be self-employed as a



Oral at Table Grove, Illinois, Prior to 1911



Oral Lewis Killion, age 18, 1909



Ruth Massey Killion, 1920 (?)

carpenter. He was a skilled, slow-working perfectionist who excelled at "finish" work. During the Great Depression he took whatever work he could get whenever he could get it. That meant that there was little income during the winter months when our living expenses were highest.

Our typical fiscal year began in January when Dad made the dreaded trip to the Garmoe Insurance Agency for a small loan from Carl Garmoe. Coal and groceries were the main needs. I don't think Mr. Garmoe ever refused Dad, and I think the interest rates were reasonable, but there was some humiliation tied to this annual experience. (Is this difficult for you of the credit-card generation to understand?) . Repayment then became the first order of business, to be accomplished by midsummer. Fall was for back-to-school expenses: supplies, shoes and some clothes. A little money was set aside for a start on winter provisions with some left for Christmas. Then the cycle would begin again.

We never went hungry. Our parents sacrificed to provide whole milk, eggs, butter and meat for us. (These foods were thought necessary for a healthy diet in those days.) We were never cold in our home. We always had electricity and water and an inside toilet. We had a telephone for the last year or two of this period.

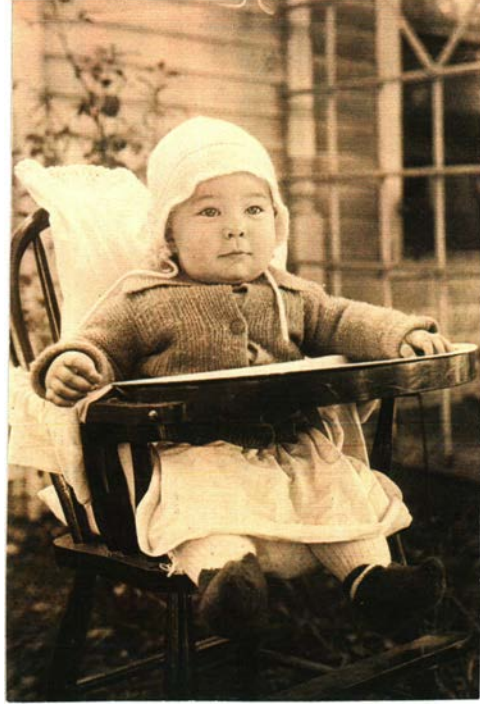
Mother washed with an old Voss washing machine, with wringer, or in the kitchen sink. Irons were heated on the coal-burning cook stove, which also had a role in heating the house. There was a kerosene stove and an icebox for summer use. A screened back porch provided refrigeration for about seven months of the year. Bath and laundry water were heated on the stove and then carried to the bathing or washing place. Winter baths were in a galvanized laundry tub on the kitchen floor beside the cook stove. We had a Zenith table-model radio. A little later Mother received an electric iron and a side-door electric toaster as Christmas gifts from her brother. Dad owned a 1930 Chevrolet coupe, which only he drove, and then only to the job or for our visits to his parents who farmed about three miles from town. All things considered, we did not think ourselves deprived.

To be as honest and accurate as possible, I must report some deficiencies. Dad was just too meticulously honest; I don't think he was capable of dishonesty in material matters, especially if business ethics were involved. It was easy for people to take advantage of him, although I think there was little of this. He was well known in the community, but his circle of friends was very limited and did include a few surprising characters. He had the financially near-fatal affliction of being a dreamer who was also a perfectionist. He resisted action until the plans for his dream were nearly perfect--which never came about. So we were always short of real solutions to the continuing problems. He was frequently depressed, and it seemed that only renewed dreams would fire him up again. The emotion he expressed well was anger; any display of affection was very difficult for him. He was never physically abusive, but he was frequently angry over family events and with family members. My friends and family would certainly believe that this apple (me) fell close to that complex tree.

Mother was not a good housekeeper. Arlene and I were required to be neat and clean, but the standards for maintaining the house were somewhat lower. Nor was



Ralph, 1930, about 9 months



Arlene, 1933, Shortly after First Birthday



Ralph and Arlene, probably 1935, ages 3 and 5

Mother, by any standard, a good cook. Food volume was ample and variety was adequate, but it didn't go much beyond that. She just wasn't greatly interested. She was more interested in her children, doing something for others, relatives or friends, or something for the church. She could establish a friendship with a minute's opportunity. She was the hopeful, optimistic member of the family, always the first to bounce back. But she seemed to have a rather narrow view of life and was blinded by prejudices. In later years, especially, she enjoyed being seen as something of a

martyr. She was totally devoted to her children and would sacrifice anything to enhance their wellbeing. She dismissed our shortcomings and tended to blame circumstances or other people for our failures.

You can see that Mother and Dad were totally different people trying to deal with common problems during troubled times. Yet they shared some important attitudes, and perhaps these were more significant than the differences.

Both valued education, and they were active in making certain we agreed. Mother was the first in her family with a college education. Dad was an avid reader of technical books covering a wide variety of subjects. History and geography interested him. When I was in high school he bought and then read, page by page, a set of *The Encyclopedia Americana*. Whenever he faced a project, he studied everything available before undertaking it. Both were big on personal responsibility as it applied to themselves although they (especially Mother) were more charitable toward others.

Both had high expectations for Arlene and me, but their expectations were limited by their view of the universe. We were expected to contribute to the family, to stay out of trouble, to foster peace at home, to do well at school and to execute every task as well as we could, all the while gaining in ability to do it better at the next opportunity. Personal integrity was the shared family keystone, and Mother added the Presbyterian view of Christian relationships.

I'll point out now, and probably will again and again, that Arlene, while not attaining perfection, managed to profit greatly from her less-than-perfect background and experiences. She, more than I, adopted standards, attitudes and ideals that she used in daily living. She, more than I, retained and refined the good influences and somehow grew from those less-than-good. She was what you saw, and what you saw was good.

## **RELATIVES**

Mother's closest relatives lived in California. Her father and mother, Frank and Mary Groff Massey, moved from their Iowa farm to the Los Angeles area. They moved sometime during the year 1921. Her sisters, Alma and Martha, and brother, Byrkit G., went with them. Mother stayed behind, teaching in a rural school. Aunt Alma Swindells and Uncle Bud (Byrkit) Massey remained childless, but Martha had a daughter, Sherry Jacobs, who became blind and then, as a young adult, died of diabetes. Grandfather Massey died before I can remember. Arlene and I (with Mother) visited the others over Christmas, 1936. Later (summer? 1948) Mother and



Arlene visited again, but Grandmother had, by then, been dead for several years. Uncle Bud visited in Iowa two or three times, the first instance during the summer of

1952. We just were not close, in any sense, to these relatives, none of whom now survive, and they left no survivors.

Mother's ancestors had lived in and around Fairfield for several generations, so she surely had some aunts, uncles and cousins about. The sad thing is that I didn't really know many of them, nor can I identify the relationships accurately. With some help I am working on this project and will have more information soon. Clyde Hall and Bertha Hall Hetrick were cousins of Mother, and she had Massey and Snook cousins. There are records around which will clarify some of this, but my point is that our Mother's extended family was of small influence on Arlene and me because of limited contact.

What contact we had was mostly with Clyde Hall and his sister, Bertha, who was married, while he lived, to Andy Hetrick. We called Bertha and Andy "aunt" and "uncle" although they were cousins, somewhat removed. They lived on a small farm with a large house about a mile south of Fairfield on Iowa Highway 1. Bertha and Andy were childless. I have no idea how Andy made a living on that small farm.

Arlene and I loved to visit Bertha and Andy when we were small. The visits were always by day and in good weather because we walked. When we were very small Mother hauled us in the coaster wagon. We had the free run of the barn and the barnyard. They always had a batch of kittens, which enchanted Arlene.

Andy processed his own meat, much of it ending up in the smokehouse. He also made souse and head cheese, all of which was new stuff to Arlene and me. I loved it, but Arlene was a little reluctant. Andy chewed Horseshoe cut plug and saved, for me, the little red metallic horseshoes that came with the plugs. These were good for trades at school. Andy had a large wooden wheelbarrow, and I was allowed to rush it around the yard with Arlene as a passenger. This stopped when I dumped Arlene down a steep embankment toward Highway 1.

I don't remember exactly when Andy died, but we were fairly young. Bertha lived on in the big house, renting part of it to tenants in later years. Her brother, Clyde Hall, extended support and care as she got older. During one late period she was quite dependent on Arlene for errands and transportation. Bertha was a very old-fashioned lady. I am sorry that I know so little about her and her husband.

Clyde Hall lived further south on Highway 1, across Cedar Creek. It was too far for us to walk. He outlived four (I think) wives, but was childless. One of those wives had children, so he did have stepchildren. He was married when he died. I don't have the date, but it was after Arlene and I became adults.

Clyde was reputed to hold considerable wealth, although you wouldn't suspect from his style of living. Mother often said he started on his way by digging coal from a hillside mine. He hauled it by horse-drawn wagon to Fairfield for sale. Then back to



Cousins  
Back: Virginia, Dwight, Robert  
Front: Arlene, Carol, Ralph  
1936 (?) at Grampa's Farm



Arlene and Ralph, 1937  
Ages 5 and 7  
305 West Jackson



Bertha Hall Hetrick and Mother, 1956



Dwight, Nina, Arlene, Helen and Sandy  
at Helen's Farm Prior to 1966



Cousins Nancy, Jean and Roseann  
Ages 12, 15 and 8

the farm to dig another load. When we knew him he was a pioneer in the mass production of turkeys for the Thanksgiving and Christmas markets. Unlike the present practice of confining those stupid birds in specialized houses, his were raised out on the range. He had a squad of herders who had to watch over them, night and day. Otherwise, something would spook them and hundreds would end up dead against the first fence they encountered. It was a risky business, but Clyde made it profitable and was prominent in turkey-farmer affairs.

Arlene came to know Clyde much better than I ever did. When she became an adult, she and Mother often visited him and whichever wife happened to be there. They thus gained a supply of experimental turkey products, like smoked turkey, pressed turkey steaks, ground turkey meat and turkey sausage. I think Arlene really went to ride one of his horses, which both Clyde and she loved to do. Neither Arlene nor Mother appreciated his last wife, so their visits slowed considerably, but both experienced a great loss with his death at an advanced age.

Dad's immediate family was closer to us, at least in a physical sense. They had moved to a farm near Fairfield from west-central Illinois sometime during the year 1911. I don't know the reason for the migration. There have been some hints of a long-term decline in economic fortunes. Grampa and Grandma Killion owned items of furniture and equipment that just wouldn't be associated with their existing, limited economic circumstances, but it was all old. They rented a small and (in terms of Iowa farms) rather poor farm that hardly supported them and two adult sons. They certainly were not affluent at the time of my knowledge.

Grampa Robert Killion married Grandma Nancy Hood of Platte County, Missouri. The family legend is that she was a cousin of Jessie and Frank James and had an American Indian somewhere in her ancestry. I have no idea how the two of them got together. Six sons and a daughter lived to adulthood. One boy died at an early age, and twin boys died at birth or soon after. I believe all were born in Illinois.

Two brothers, Dwight and Ray, went to Michigan, married, and raised families. Uncle Dwight (Dan) had a daughter, Virginia, and a son, Dwight. Uncle Ray had three daughters, Jean, Nancy and Roseann. Two brothers, Oral (Rube) and Herbert (Blake), married and had families in Fairfield. Oral was the father of Arlene and me. Uncle Herb was the father of Robert and Carol. Uncles Clarence (Pat) and Harold (Ted) never married and stayed with the parents until Grandma's death (1939) finally broke up the household. Aunt Clara Helen married Ray Flinspach of rural Fairfield in April, 1932. He was a hard-working, progressive and prosperous (even in depression times) farmer. This Uncle Ray was killed in a farm accident after just a few years of marriage. Ray and Helen had no children. Sometime after Grandma's death Uncle Ted was drafted into the military, Uncle Pat went to Washington to work for the Treasury Department and Grampa lived his remaining years with Aunt Helen.

The best way to describe this family relationship is that it was loose. I don't know why. From my experience, each individual was an interesting, friendly person and everybody seemed to enjoy themselves when they were together. Maybe there just weren't extroverts in the Fairfield group; Uncle Pat was the possible exception. At

any rate we did not get together frequently. The Michigan people tried to make annual visits, but I don't remember the two families coming at the same time, and they couldn't come during the gas-rationing years.

Our family visited the grandparents, and thus Uncles Pat and Ted, on frequent Sunday afternoons. Before his death, Uncle Ray and Aunt Helen sometimes joined us, but Aunt Helen was not there as much later. I just don't remember Uncle Herb and Aunt Hattie, with Robert and Carol, ever being there except when the Michigan relatives came. Also, I don't remember this family being in our house until I was fourteen. They then brought Carol's intended for introductions. Cousin Robert was then in the Army Air Force. Likewise, I remember being in their house only a few times, just for casual visits, never with Dad, and I don't remember the two families having a meal together.

Surely I am mistaken about this because there never was a hint of any sort of animosity. Aunt Hattie seemed to be a very social person, and Mother may have been somewhat intimidated, but Aunt Hattie was always gracious to me. Uncle Herb, who was shop foreman for the Chevrolet dealer, was later helpful to me with my automotive lemons.

None of this demonstrates a close-knit relationship within the extended Killion family. That was and is true, and I am ashamed that it is so. Arlene and I missed so much because of it. I have done nothing to try to correct the condition, and I have allowed several opportunities to pass. I can't speak for the Michigan people (Nancy is the one who has done the genealogical research), but I think the Fairfield people (including me) had a very self-centered approach to life.

There was one exception: an exception that perhaps started by accident, was fostered by circumstances, and profoundly affected me--and Arlene, too, but maybe less directly.

I am not sure how it started, but I began to spend the summer vacations with Aunt Helen at her farm. This practice started, I believe, in 1940 when I was 10 years old. Aunt Helen always maintained that I invited myself for a week and then stayed all summer. The following summers were by mutual agreement.

She lived in a large farm house and managed a 420-acre farm that she inherited at the death of her husband, Ray Flinspach. She depended heavily upon a salaried farm hand, Rex Dallner, for management expertise, and he worked the farm and supervised other workers. On my first visit Kenny Wagner also helped with the farm and Ruth Ross was a live-in maid--five days a week--and helped with the cooking. This was a busy place, and I was in total awe of the activity. Ruth and Kenny were just out of high school, and they flattered me with much attention. I ate like a pig and began to learn some simple farm chores. Aunt Helen paid me a token wage, but made certain I earned it all.

By the next summer Kenny had been drafted into the army, and Ruth had a job with better pay. Russell Norton had come to live on the farm. Rex planned to marry, so Aunt Helen hired Dad to build a small house for him. Thus Dad was driving out to the

farm each day, and Arlene began coming with him on occasion. Later, with Ruth gone and Rex moved across the lane, a bedroom was available, and Arlene began to stay a week or so each summer. A few times Carol would come to stay also. Arlene never took to country life to the extent I did, nor was she as close to Aunt Helen in those days, but in later years Aunt Helen became very dependent upon Arlene and trusted her completely.

I became interested in farming and thought that I would adopt it as a career. Beyond this, there were real lessons in self-sufficiency, and both of us gained some basic knowledge of plants and animals. There is much more I could report about those wonderful weeks and months which occurred during my early teen years, but I will simply observe that Aunt Helen Flinspach had a profound effect on my development and, perhaps less directly, on Arlene's.

## **HOLIDAYS**

Holidays were important events in our lives, some by reason of personal considerations and others because of community emphasis. The contrast between some of the holidays and "regular" days was much sharper in those times than it is now. This was true for me, and it was even more true for Arlene. Some of her fascination with holidays stayed with her throughout her life.

**New Years.** In contrast to many of the others, this holiday was of little importance to Arlene and me. I don't remember making many resolutions, and if we did make a few, we paid scant attention to them. I don't remember a single party prior to our college years. We usually ate boiled cabbage and roast pork on New Years Day--because Mother respected a tradition--but that was about it as far as New Years was concerned.

**Valentines Day.** We observed this holiday with some vigor. It would start at school with the making of valentines for the parents. Miss Hazel Kellogg, Fairfield's school art instructor, would come up with the designs and the construction paper and plenty of criticism directed at the quality of our work. Arlene and I would continue this manufacturing activity at home. The usual materials included paper from wallpaper sample books, "lace" from paper doilies and paste made from flour and water. We mailed the products to California and delivered the rest to friends and family. Exchanges at school were discouraged, but I don't recall that they were totally prohibited.

**Easter.** With Easter we increased the scope and pace of our holiday observations. It would start at about the time of the Palm Sunday services at our church. Arlene and I would get out our china rabbits, chickens, ducks and geese for intensive play. They were very small, about an inch high or long and less for the babies. We designed and then outlined spaces ("houses") for these animals using dominoes. I don't remember the continuing play nearly as well. I think the real pleasure was in the planning and construction stages. As to the rest of it, the anticipation seemed better than the result.



1938, Ages 6 and 8

Yes, this insight is probably a severe stretch, but I think those early games were the beginnings of a life-long interest in construction by both Arlene and me. (This was Dad's business, of course, but I don't think that was of much influence.) As we grew we had orange crates and apple boxes of wood available for the asking from neighborhood stores. We learned to draw plans for things we hoped to build. The truth is that we drew many more plans than were ever executed. But the interest was there. I wanted to build while Arlene tended toward decorating and remodeling. So it remained for the rest of our lives.

Colored Easter eggs played a large role in our celebration, but our eggs were a little different. Our parents didn't want to risk wasting eggs, so we colored empty eggshells. This was accomplished by pecking small holes in both ends of the egg and then blowing the contents (white and yolk) out into a dish. The holes

would be very small, pecked with a nut pick or knife point, so it required much lungpower and a sustained effort to evacuate the shell. I did this while Arlene mixed the dyes, which included vinegar. I don't remember that hiding and hunting these eggs were a big deal, but we did play with them inside the house. Subsequent supper menus featured scrambled eggs for a time.

We (the kids) usually had upgraded wardrobes for Easter. Mother would make a new dress for Arlene and later (at a surprisingly early age) Arlene began to make her own. Arlene became an excellent seamstress. I usually gained a new pair of pants, which were often (to my distress) knickers. New pants were necessary because I tended to outgrow my "good" clothes, which were reserved for church and like activities. Both of us tended to outgrow our best clothes for this reason. Other clothes, including shoes, were used until worn out.

If shoes wore out too soon, that is, before they were outgrown or too long before Easter, the soles were supplemented with pasteboard insoles, which lasted about a day each. These weren't too good in cold or wet weather. An exception: after I started to school I applied annual pressure for a pair of high-top, laced, leather boots. These were considered high fashion for winter by me and my peers. My first success was at about the second-grade level, and this success continued for four or five years. These boots were expensive, but they reduced dress-shoe cost because if they were sized right, boots would last two winters. They also made knickers acceptable. An aside: the best of these boots included a knife pocket on the side of one boot which, of course, required a knife. Thus armed, we were not considered a menace by either teachers or fellow students. The only cutting happened when an

inept kid attempted to open and/or use the knife. The potential for such self-inflicted damage was not considered adequate grounds for weapons seizure by school authorities. Arlene was not pleased with my expensive boots, but I suspect that they netted out in more new shoes for her.

Arlene, Mother and I attended Sunday School and Church at the First Presbyterian Church of Fairfield on a fairly regular basis. Dad did not attend. The Easter services were very beautiful and stirring, as you might expect of a Calvinist church. Of them all, these were the services I remember best, and Arlene loved them too. I never had to resort to counting the pipes of the large organ on Easter Sunday.

**May Day.** Unless you are some sort of communist, this probably will not strike you as being one of the significant holidays. I am not even certain that it was widely observed when we were kids, but we certainly observed it. This holiday was another that required advance preparation. We made May baskets. These were small paper baskets to be filled with flowers and then secretly delivered to friends. Remembering the valentine-construction fiascoes, Arlene was assigned the task of making baskets from the samples of flowered wallpaper. I was sent out to find suitable flowers, which could be scarce in Iowa on May 1. Mother usually had some pansies and violets, and some fruit trees would be in bloom. When I was really lucky, our two large cherry trees would have beautiful bloom.

We filled the baskets with flowers and delivered them after school. The preferred delivery method was to sneak up to the front door, hang the basket on the doorknob, ring the bell and then run like the devil was after us. Mother made sure we took a few to some of her older invalids, some to family friends and a few to our friends. I don't remember that we received many baskets. Nor do I remember when and why we stopped the activity. We discontinued this observance just as it seems to have disappeared from modern life. But it had some importance for us because in Iowa, it usually marked the first outdoor spring social activity

Parsons College had May-Day Festivals. Even though the campus was about as far across town as it could be, Mother, Arlene and I did attend one or two. Various singing groups and the orchestra presented an outdoor concert; they had lawn games and a collegiate baseball game. The outstanding attraction, as far as we were concerned, was the Maypole. A group of college coeds, clad in filmy veils, and attached to the pole with ribbons, cavorted around the May pole and gradually wound the ribbons around the pole. Then they would crown the Queen of May. I don't know the purpose of all of this, but it was quite a sight.

**Memorial (Decoration) Day.** This day, or the day it was observed, marked the last day of school. We went to school long enough to get our report cards, and then the middle and higher grades marched (raced, rambled or roamed) to Central Park. Here a larger procession assembled for a more formal march to the Fairfield/Evergreen cemeteries for a brief ceremony, including a rifle salute, honoring the war dead. Whatever kids remained were then dismissed so we could watch the National Guard Band, Rifle Company and Medics as well as the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars members march back to Central Park. Summer vacation was now an

official fact for kids!

Mother had a long list of graves to decorate, for she had many dead relatives dating back to the very beginning of the oldest cemetery. I couldn't begin to locate most of these graves now, but we visited them annually for many years. We tried to accomplish the decorating the afternoon or evening before so the graves would look nice for the next day. Our flowers were homegrown irises and peonies, both of which tended to be in bloom at the end of May in Iowa. If the flowering season was out of phase, mother would really work to find something suitable. All of this was a duty she gladly assumed, and she gained much satisfaction from it. Even though Arlene later lived some distance from Fairfield, she continued this tradition as well as she could. But she, like me, couldn't possibly have known the names and locations of all the older relatives. Something will be missing now in Fairfield on Memorial Day. But I will retain these memories with measures of both fondness and regret.

**Independence Day.** This was not counted among the major holidays in our family. Before fireworks became illegal for individuals in Iowa, Arlene and I were allowed sparklers and caps, but Arlene had no interest in cap guns. Dad would get some Roman candles and maybe some rockets and fire them for us out at Grampa's farm. I don't recall civic observances like many communities now hold.

**Labor Day.** Again, a holiday of small importance to us EXCEPT it was usually the last day of summer vacation from school. However much we pretended to dislike school, this was a day of excited anticipation over the adventures of the coming school year.

**Halloween.** With this event we began to swing into the fall/winter holiday period. Actually, Halloween was more of a short season for us, rather than just an evening. By this time of the year most people had been raking and burning their fallen leaves. The air over the neighborhoods became a fragrant haze. (In those days it was legal to burn leaves, but if you were to publicly desecrate the flag by burning it you would need a good lawyer. Our society has now progressed to the reverse position.)

The Grandfather of Glenn Ruby, one of my young friends, raised cane sorghum on his farm and cooked down some molasses each fall. He delighted in bringing some jugs of it to town so that the neighborhood kids could mess up the environment with a taffy pull. Well, the environment wasn't as messy as the kids. But it was a wonderful activity, and the candy wasn't too bad, either. We expected this event during the Halloween period until the Ruby family up and moved to Ottumwa.

Every kid had a carved jack-o-lantern, illuminated at night by a burning candle. Pumpkins were very cheap, often as cheap as being free. Dad did our masterpieces for a few years, but after I gained competence with my boot knife, I assumed this responsibility. Arlene was the designer. We had frequent disagreements over the elements of design, but she usually won. I had to dispose of the smelly mess after Jack deteriorated.

We were not nearly as creative with our Halloween costumes. Cheap masks could be purchased, but otherwise everything was put together from stuff at home. The



PTA sometimes sponsored a party at school on Halloween night in the mistaken hope that it would reduce the mischief, and we used our costumes for that. But, otherwise, we shed our costumes in favor of comfort (it was often cold) and mobility.

In our town trick-or-treat extended over two or even three evenings; there was enough time to cover the whole town. Actually we would cover the few really lucrative houses two or three times. Small kids weren't out, and high-school kids were too sophisticated, so the field was left to us. Arlene went with me and my friends a few times, but she was never a big participant. I guess that every kid who goes out for an hour these days comes home with much more than we gleaned over two or three evenings. We could hope for a popcorn ball or a candied apple or a stick of gum. One prime target was good for a candy bar and another for a nickel in cash. I still honor the memory of those fine people.

Tricks were somewhat more important than treats, anyway. My folks wouldn't permit anything really destructive, but soaped house and auto windows were expected. Many garbage cans were dumped. Produce (frosted tomatoes, peppers, melons) thrown on the porch was common. We weren't allowed to use eggs. Our most brilliant trick failed the one time we tried it. We visited a pigpen and sacked up some moist manure. We had trouble with the paper sacks failing. With this solved we placed a sack at the front door of a teacher and lit, with some difficulty, the top of the sack. We rang the doorbell and hid. We expected the joy of seeing the teacher race out and stomp out the fire. Unfortunately, the fire went out, and then a girl answered the door. She poured a glass of water on the smoldering mess. Disappointed, we went on to other, more-rewarding activities. Can you imagine Arlene taking part in something like this?

**Thanksgiving.** In retrospect, this holiday was something of a double-barreled celebration. Perhaps people living through hard times are deeply thankful for the good things they experience and thus more focused in their celebration. Also, this holiday served as the gateway to Christmas.

We always had a big dinner, but I don't remember either having or being guests for the occasion. Dad liked to stop by the local produce station to purchase either a capon or guinea for dinner. These birds are not at all similar in either taste or texture, but both are wonderful in their roasted state. He would kill and dress the bird the night before. Mother loved mincemeat pie, so she would bake one of these and a pumpkin pie. From my earliest memory, Arlene would be involved with the baking and cooking. You can guess at the helpfulness of a four- or five-year old kid. But from this beginning she grew to doing most of it and doing it very well.

As we ate, each of us tried to give thanks for some good event (experience, deed, person, whatever) from the year past. This was slow to get started, but once underway the words flowed. We had many reasons to be thankful. Mother would close with a prayer of thanksgiving. Sometimes we just observed a period of silence.

The day after Thanksgiving exploded into the Christmas merchandising season. I am not really certain that the Sears and Montgomery Ward Christmas catalogs arrived on this day, but they never missed by much. Of more importance, the local variety

stores opened their toy-land displays. Gamble's, Brown Lynch and Scott, and Penney's were the most spectacular, but Spurgeon's also opened new departments. Woolworth's and E. C. Leber expanded their usual displays. Friday and Saturday were very busy days for every kid in town. Arlene and I were overwhelmed annually for years. At first she wanted to go with me and my friends, and I pitched a fit because she wanted to look at only doll stuff. Sometimes I was forced; sometimes mother took her, but it wasn't long before she was old enough to go with her friends. Fairfield was safe, then, for little kids on the street, and the town square was within easy walking distance of every house.

In later years, when Arlene and I were more manageable and the family a little more affluent, Mother, Arlene and I took the Trailways bus to Ottumwa for Christmas shopping on one of those two days. Ottumwa was grand because there was a couple of larger hardware stores as well as Kress, Kresge, W. T. Grant and, I believe, Newberry stores in addition to anything Fairfield had. And we would actually eat a meal at a lunch counter!

Back in Fairfield, the municipal decorations would be going up, and individuals would begin decorating their homes. All stores with display windows would do something in the way of Christmas adornment. If we were really lucky it would begin to snow.

**Christmas.** No matter what I write I will not be able to give justice to Arlene in the context of this holiday. As far as our family was concerned, it belonged to her. One of my friends, years later, observed that Arlene enjoyed the preparation more than the holiday itself. He also told me that Arlene was the first person he knew who truly enjoyed giving gifts more than receiving them. He was a young man of action and few words, so his observations stunned me. But, you know, he was right, and I gained a real-life insight that has enriched my life.

As soon after Thanksgiving as Sunday weather permitted, Dad would get our Christmas tree from Grampa's farm. It was the top cut out of a mature pine tree. As modern standards go, it wasn't much but we thought it was wonderful. Part of the thrill lay in pulling for Dad not to fall from the heights of the pine tree.

The next concern would be for the safety of the house, so Dad would stall as long as possible before putting up the Christmas tree. Arlene had difficulty with the wait, so she would get out the decorations and play with them. This was not as dumb as it seems because we had a few small toy buildings (houses, a church, a store) covered with fake snow. We put these on an unrolled bat of cotton, pretended we had a snow-covered street, and enacted a Christmas visit by Santa every night. As a young adult Arlene continued to love these miniature villages, especially if the buildings had provision for inserting a string of Christmas light bulbs.

Our tree decorations were rather sparse. Mother had some old-colored balls and some nativity figures to hang on the tree. After Thanksgiving Arlene and I would start stringing popcorn and cranberries for roping around the tree. I remember the sore fingers! We also made chains from small loops of construction paper stuck together with flour and water paste.

Originally, our lights were small candles pushed into a few holders clipped on tree branches. Dad would let us burn these for about five minutes and only on Christmas Eve. I expect he was standing by with a bucket of water. A little later, Mrs. E. C. Leber of the Leber Variety Store gave us a string of electric lights. These served for years and then Arlene, with some of the first money she earned, bought a set of bubble lights. What wonders we beheld! She always loved Christmas lights.

Arlene and I could expect one significant gift each, to be credited to Santa Claus, and we could hope that it would be something other than clothes. A gift from our parents, selected by Mother, almost certainly would be something to wear. The family exchanged small gifts with some of our relatives, especially those in California. We often received books. As he could, Mother's brother would send her nice gifts and they, generally, were of benefit to the whole family. Arlene and I were very curious, and we snooped about the house through the whole season. We did once discover our major gifts early. The gifts were nice, but the season was ruined. I totally reformed; nothing to be weighed, probed, shook or viewed before Christmas morning. Arlene, alas, did not give up this sport, although she may have just pretended. Even worse, she extended her influence, with my wife's help, to all members of my immediate family.

I can hardly remember when I didn't have a few coins of my own to be used for gifts. Feverous activity at school would produce something for the parents, but I would try to buy something small for each of them and for Arlene. Arlene, however, would save almost every cent she could earn or beg in order to buy some nice gifts. She would make me a little ashamed, just a little and also briefly, of my efforts.

In truth, Mother should have made us all ashamed in the matter of Christmas giving, especially over those years when there was very little to give. Her preparation started in October with the help of all of us. Grampa Killion had a grove of mature hickory trees, and they produced nuts. Dad and Mother would select one or two nice Sunday afternoons, and we would gather nuts from the ground under the trees. In good years we would pick up a couple of large feed sacks full of nuts. Dad would dry them on the back porch for about a month and feed a few to his squirrel. Mother would crack the nuts with a hammer against a sad iron. We would all pick out the nutmeats, trying for perfect halves--a not-so-easy trick. The perfect halves could be sold to one of the local bakeries for Christmas cash. She used the broken pieces in Christmas cookies and some batches of fudge. We ate more than enough of all of this, but the real purpose was to send something to each person on mother's list of shut-ins. Some weren't really "shut in," but there would be some reason their names appeared on her list. Keep in mind that she didn't really enjoy cooking and baking, but she truly loved meeting this adopted responsibility.

And now some truth from the writer: I didn't greatly enjoy the work with the harvested nuts, nor did I really appreciate delivering the gifts. But I do remember, with a grand, warm feeling, those bright, crisp afternoons in the open woods, searching out the trees with the best nuts and watching those deep bags fill with bounty. That, and seeing the family work together while knowing Mother and others would be pleased with the results.

The main-line churches in Fairfield competed with Christmas programs, the public cordially invited. They had, of course, a spiritual emphasis with plenty of Christmas music. They usually also had bags of candy and nuts for the children, which might be considered as the bait. The churches were thoughtful enough to schedule their programs on different evenings, so a careful kid could manage to be uplifted several times during the season. One thing for sure, the Lutherans always had the best candy, so their programs were well attended.

As Christmas Eve arrived, the local merchants would stage a small parade, featuring Santa and his sleigh, which was sometimes drawn by the milk-wagon horses. Santa didn't have time for conversation, but he did have some more of that healthful candy and nuts. Those nuts used to be bigger at Christmas than they are now. I guess they have become too common, but I used to treasure them.

Christmas Eve would finally come, and we would have a small celebration at home in the evening. Dad would usually just observe, but once or twice he read the poem, "The Night Before Christmas," and I think he enjoyed the evenings. Mother would read the Christmas Story from The Gospel of Luke, and I took up this duty after I learned to read. She then added Isaiah's prophecy. We would then try to sing a carol or two with sad results. This improved somewhat [much later] after Arlene learned a little piano. From the earliest Christmas Eves of my memory, these were warm evenings of thanksgiving and excited anticipation, and Arlene led the joy.

Several Christmas celebrations stand out in my memory. The earliest was probably the frigid morning when Arlene backed, bare bottomed, into the heating stove while trying to get dressed as she eyed the presents under the tree. Another was the Christmas Eve when we had a perfect snowfall; heavy, large flakes, calm winds. We stood on the front porch and watched the flakes drift past the streetlight. Another was when I had made enough money from my paper route to buy gifts for Mother, Dad and Arlene that I thought each might really appreciate.

Two or three times Dad made his Christmas wish come true by bringing home a goose for dinner. Killing and plucking a goose is an event to be long remembered by amateurs. But that roasted goose was mighty good. Nevertheless, from the earliest days, it was Arlene that added a dimension to our celebrations. I remember her delight as a young child, her enthusiasm as she grew to join in the preparations and, finally, her spirit as she searched for just the right gift for each of us.

As I think of all of this, I conclude that Arlene's spirited embrace of the Christmas season and its significance is one of the ways that she continues to be with us.

**Birthdays.** These were not major events in our home. From my earliest memory there was some exchange of small gifts within the immediate family and perhaps some coins or small gifts from California. Mother usually tried to have a favorite meal. We had birthday cakes, but they weren't really significant until Arlene took over the baking.

Neither she nor I ever had a "birthday party" at our house and, for that matter, I don't remember attending more than two or three for friends. Arlene's friends did have

more parties, especially as they moved to higher grades in the elementary school. At about our respective ages ten, a family friend, Della Marie Liblin, started taking me and Arlene to a restaurant dinner on our personal birthdays. I think these few celebrations were our first restaurant meals.

## **ENTERTAINMENT**

Entertainment, in our family, was strictly for kids, and it had a lot of do-it-yourself involved. Mother, when she could, tried to select toys and games with both educational and entertainment value. Of equal consideration was something to keep Arlene and me quiet while in the house. Dad did not like a lot of bedlam, especially if he was reading or working on some invention.

My earliest amusement of memory was a cheap picture hanging on the wall. It was called, I think, *The Lone Wolf*. Whatever the title, it was a picture of a wolf on the crest of a snowy hill overlooking a few lighted buildings below. It fascinated me, and Dad delighted in holding me up to examine the picture. "See the dig, see the dig!" I would command, or Dad would make the offer. Arlene, later, couldn't understand why I thought a wolf was a dog was a dig.

The first toys I remember were dolls for Arlene and building blocks, toy soldiers and a toy dump truck for me. Arlene began with sewing cards and then sewing clothes for her dolls before she started to school. For my part, there were wooden orange crates and apple boxes, available from the local neighborhood grocery stores. Bill Neibert and, later, the Quigley family operated the nearest and the McCumbers had the store closest to our school. These boxes were wonderful sources of building materials. For instance, Arlene and I easily made two-story doll houses out of orange crates, completed with papered walls, painted floors and cellophane windows.

From very early days I could use Dad's tools as long as I returned them to their place and did not abuse them. He showed me some basic skills, nothing beyond, but this was important to me.

We had a Bingo game that we played frequently. Our two card games were Old Maid and Authors. Arlene hated Old Maid, perhaps because I could contrive to leave her with it. She hated it so much that she tore the corner from the old- maid card, which required tearing the corner from other cards, but the game was never the same. The Authors game did teach us something, especially after we learned to read. We had Finance (similar to Monopoly), Chinese checkers and regular checkers, but Arlene liked only the Chinese checkers. Finance took too long, and she was a little young. She had Pick-Up Sticks and Jacks, but I didn't go for them because I couldn't beat her. I had not the patience, dexterity nor the practice.

We had another game of great significance although I don't remember playing it often nor do I remember that either of us developed much skill. I probably can't even spell its name. Have you heard of Tiddlywinks? At any rate, Dad assigned Arlene a nickname because of this game. As the years went by he boiled it down to "Tid". Incidentally, he called me Bardolf, but I don't know why. He persisted with these names for years, probably until we finished high school.

We always had books. Mother had some old ones from her teaching days, and books were always high on family gift lists. Also, Fairfield had a good public library that was just a short walk away. Both Dad and Mother read frequently; Dad with technical books addressing his current interest and Mother read religious and literary magazines--some given us by friends. We were encouraged to read these as soon as we could or, at least, look at pictures. Our home and, later, school environments certainly encouraged a lot of reading, and both of us responded eagerly.

While we lived at the Jackson Street address, I had plenty of friends right in the neighborhood. Arlene was not so lucky. All of the girls were older, except for one; Joanne Dimmitt, who might have been a year or so younger. The result is that Arlene frequently played with us neighborhood thugs. One thug, Pete Wickliff, continued as a friend to both of us for years. He was a great help to us when Mother died.

My major outdoor toy was a red Radio Flyer coaster wagon. Arlene had clamp-on roller skates. We shared a sled for winter, at first a sled that Dad made and later a Flexible Flyer. It is impossible to describe the value represented by the wagon. There can be few purchases in all history that provided more in relation to the cost. I raced in it; I coasted in it; I hauled with it; I used it as a platform or as a barricade, whatever was needed, over several years. And this is to say nothing of the utilitarian uses, which I will probably mention later.

Hide and seek, cops and robbers, cowboys and Indians (all with local variations) were the main active outdoor games, and we all played hop scotch and various marble games, usually in the spring. We often tried to fly kites, but nobody in our neighborhood was very good at this.

At some point, when we were still at the West Jackson Street address, Dad built a swing installation for Arlene and me. It was big. I think he made it from two utility poles, one planted in the ground and the other fastened horizontally from the top of the vertical pole over to the house. These were SOLID. Then he hung a tire swing for Arlene and a rope and board swing for me. (He thought I would want to swing in a wilder arc.) The truth was that I liked the tire swing better, which was a constant aggravation to Arlene, and by extension, to Mother.

I remember chasing Arlene around the house and running into my swing with the board removed. The rope slipped up around my neck, and I went flying before slipping off and landing on my back. With no breath. Arlene thought I was dead and I agreed, but all that resulted was a rope burn on my neck. The rope bum did generate some respect in the neighborhood because we all knew, from the movies, that hanging, by rope, was severe treatment.

Radio was a major source of indoor entertainment to both of us. My programs, in the main, were 15-minute continuing-adventure segments late in weekday afternoons. Jack Armstrong (The All-American Boy), Little Orphan Annie, Captain Midnight, Buck Jones and a few other assorted heroes came to life at this time. All owed their existence to breakfast foods or drinks or the like, and all offered bounty through the mail in exchange for proofs of purchase from the appropriate life-giving products. I can only imagine the stalwart Jack's scorn of the recently introduced Honey Frosted

Wheaties and Crispy Wheaties 'n Raisins. The orphan, however, is probably delighted at the late resurgence of Ovaltine.

I don't recall that Arlene was much interested in these dramatic productions. A little later she generated some interest in a few afternoon adult soap operas. She liked Stella Dallas whose daughter was a continuing problem, and I remember something about Just Plain Bill (not Clinton). Arlene liked shows featuring people with problems that could be solved within the limits of human capability.

The night programming was also more in keeping with Arlene's style. There were some great comedy shows: Jack Benney, Fred Allen, Amos and Andy, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, Fibber McGee and Molly. Bob Hope had more of a variety show. There were dramas including *One Man's Family*, *I Love A Mystery*, *Mr. District Attorney*, *The Shadow*, and *The Lone Ranger*. *Dr. I. Q.*, *the Mental Banker* (who banked with candy bars, as I remember), used a quiz format. Then there were the music shows, including the one that later Arlene would never, under any circumstance, miss: *The Hit Parade*. At about this same time, perhaps at age 11 or 12, she became addicted to the movie-star gossip shows.

Dad never missed a news broadcast, which lasted only 15 minutes, I think, even though there was much going on in the world. He also liked to listen to the Sunday afternoon broadcasts of the Chicago White Sox baseball games, which we could just barely receive from a Chicago station. Arlene and I were impatient, waiting for the game to end, so we all could be off to Grampa's. I think I can still recite the 1939 White Sox batting order, but Arlene never developed interest in baseball. Ronald "Dutch" Reagan was the WHO (Des Moines) sports guy, and he was very popular. I don't recall any of his famous re-creations of games from the Western Union wire. I did, however, listen to another re-creator on the Tall Corn Baseball Network. His name was Mason Dixon. These names will give you some idea of the quality of the entertainment product, but I wasn't sophisticated in my taste.

Movies became important to us as we grew a little older. One theater (the Rex) had a Saturday afternoon matinee for a dime, I think. It was always a western feature, but much more came with it. There were thrilling previews of coming attractions (we knew we would never be fortunate enough to see those features), a cartoon strip, some news footage, and, gasp, an ongoing, hair-raising, heart-stopping, don't-you-dare-miss-the-next-episode serial. Popcorn was a nickel as were, I think, Holloway suckers.

Arlene was a little slow to get interested in these Saturday afternoon wonders, but she did go with me occasionally. We had minimal difficulty with the refreshments, but Arlene always wanted to be thoroughly informed as to what was going on. With every change of scene, I would get an elbow to the ribs with the query, "Is this the real show?" I thought it was all real. This unfortunate practice continued even after we graduated to better movies at the deluxe (Orpheum, later Co-Ed) theater, and I thought Arlene should be reading for herself. Through all of this, she did begin to build a love affair with movies.

I don't recall that a circus ever came to town. I guess the population was too small. A

carnival or two would come each year with rides and various tests of skill. Arlene liked the rides, much more than I did. She was very pleased when she grew old enough to do some of these things without me. Each fall, early October, I think, the Chamber of Commerce sponsored similar activity around the city square. They called it by various names: Old Settlers' Days, Fall Festival, one year it was the Centennial. Mother was heavily involved with the VFW Auxiliary who established a food tent each year to make a little money. She would be there to close up the place, so Arlene and I would be running amuck through the exhibits, rides and concessions. Our problem, of course, was money, but we could make some in the fall with leaf-raking and burning projects.

Somewhat along this same line was the annual visit of the tent theater, usually in the early summer, right after Bible School. Originally, the show arrived under the name of Hyla Morgan, but something happened to Hyla, so Toby and Suzy took over. The stage plays were scheduled for one week, a different one each night. The shows were mostly melodramas with some comedy. Up close, we could see that most of the players were older than our parents (which was disappointing), but some were very young, and there were local dreams of going into show business. Looking back, I think the shows were just an excuse to sell a numbered box with a few pieces of taffy. The number just might be the winner of a great prize. The boxed candy was hawked with vigor at any lapse in the stage action. Both of us were eager to avail ourselves of these cultural events. We went as often as we could get a sponsor.

The summer band concerts in Central Park were important social events. The concerts were weekly unless weather interfered and except when the National Guard Band was away for training. Our high-school marching band substituted during the time of war. The music was loud, often patriotic, and--to my untrained ear--very good. Arlene really liked the music. I think she had more appreciation of music than the rest of us. At one time or another she had lessons on the violin, piano and clarinet. When she attained enough maturity to attend with her friends, they all seemed more attentive to the music than the rest of us. The adults came mostly to visit, which they could do without overwhelming the music. The kids raced about until one had a minor accident and the parents calmed them down. The best sedative was a box of Mrs. Barton's popped corn, with a little extra butter, which she would gladly provide on request. Sometimes a parent or other responsible adult could be led to drop by the Rimae Dairy for ice-cream cones as we headed home.

The other significant, recurring social event for Fairfield was Saturday Night Live, Downtown. That is, everybody in the county who claimed to be alive tried to be found around the square on Saturday night. The stores were open for business.

When Arlene and I were small we didn't make it--which meant that Mother didn't make it either. Dad did. He would meet his brothers, Pat and Ted, and perhaps other assorted friends for an evening of visiting. Pat and Ted walked to town on the CB&Q railroad tracks. They usually gathered at Chiney Long's News Stand, where Uncle Pat's purpose was to purchase the Sunday Chicago Herald- Examiner. This meant they had to wait there until the train from Chicago arrived. As I grew older, I began to suspect that Chiney dispensed something other than just the news. However, I never



did see Dad intoxicated, and in those days all that was available in Iowa was 3.2 beer. Dad would bring Arlene and me a small bag of chocolate candy unless money was very tight. It would be there on Sunday morning, and the *Herald Examiner* comics would be at Grampa's on Sunday afternoon.

In later years I would come to town from Aunt Helen's with Rex and Mildred Dallner. They would visit with their friends on the sidewalks, and I made the rounds looking at the stores and running into my friends. I don't remember that Arlene did much of this until she was old enough to go out with people (boys) who commanded an auto. She did a lot of baby-sitting Saturday night.

Hobbies had significant roles in our lives from a fairly early time. It started with reading for pleasure, which stayed with us through the years. The family friend that I mentioned earlier, Della Marie Liblin, visited our home almost every Sunday evening. She worked as a live-in maid for the Jordan family, but had Sundays off. She would bring several sections of the Jordan's Sunday Chicago *Tribune* for us to read. Dad loved the Trib which was about as reactionary as a newspaper could be. Arlene and I had the comics, often the third dose of the day--with the *Trib*, the *Herald-Examiner* and the Des Moines *Register* there was hardly a comic character Arlene and I didn't know. I came to appreciate these "toons" as a valuable source of inspiration and wisdom. I also gained an interest in collecting stamps from articles in the feature section. Arlene was becoming interested in movies so she grabbed the movie reviews and the movie-star gossip columns.

She soon knew more about movies and the stars than anybody I have known since. Of course, the reviews appeared months before any movie made it down to Fairfield, which gave her time to save money to attend. Until she was older, I had to go with her. She liked musicals, but I never did learn to appreciate them. You can guess the level of groaning I could produce whenever she blackmailed me into going with her at my personal expense. She didn't seem to like the big animated Disney movies as much. I now think she was more interested in the acting people than in the movies, themselves. She made scrapbooks of photographs from magazines and newspapers. As she earned some money she bought every possible movie-fan magazine, which were popular at the time. She learned how to get autographed pictures from studio publicity departments, and these were her real prizes.

She did like music, but neither she nor I was as crazy about the then popular music as later-generation young folks are with theirs. There was some overlap between movie stardom and music performance, so Arlene did gain an awareness of popular music.

Her practical hobby was sewing--at least it started out as practical. She learned to sew very early, at first by hand and then using the foot-powered Singer sewing machine. I think the newspaper fashion pages helped excite her interest. She became very good at making her own clothes, perhaps as early as age ten or eleven. She started with simple things, perhaps adding something or modifying an existing dress. As she gained skill she undertook some complicated projects. One of our neighbors helped her learn. Years later, Arlene could get carried away--a trait that

seems to be in our family's genes. She would visualize projects and obtain materials, and then the project would be deferred. Indefinitely. She did however, develop and retain a sense of style and the ability to create with different mediums and in many different modes.

She might have said in later years that a hobby was cooking, but in the time period of my emphasis, this was an activity that was more forced upon her. She did begin to learn the basic skills, which were largely self-taught. Those short visits with Aunt Helen, who collected cookbooks, may have been an influence. There will be more about this later.

Those newspaper articles about stamp collecting interested me, and soon I was demanding the necessary equipment. It was easy to get started. For just a little money I could send for a simple album, several hundred foreign stamps, tweezers, a perforation gauge and a water-mark detector. The album had representative pictures of each country's common stamps, some information about the country, and a picture of the country's flag. To aid in identifying a stamp's country of origin, the album had a glossary of words that appear on stamps with identification of the country. You can understand that as I worked diligently with this hobby I soaked up some knowledge about the countries of the world. The beginnings of World War II were underway in Asia, Africa and Europe, and these events involved some of the countries of my fledgling acquaintance. The result is a lifetime interest in geography and geo-political influences on world events.

Before long, however, my interest narrowed to stamps of the United States. I didn't have the resources to deal with the products of the whole world, but I could hope to be aware of, and keep up with, the new U. S. issues. (That was before the U. S. Postmaster General realized that new-stamp issues generate a lot of passive revenue.) At about the same time I became acquainted with Mrs. Mollie Hollis who was a friend of Mother and Dad through the VFW. Mrs. Hollis was an avid stamp collector, and she seemed pleased to bestow her expertise upon me. She did teach me a great deal and gave me many of her duplicate stamps. Before she would hand me one of the commemoratives, I had to be able to tell her something of the event or person being recognized. From this, I think, came my abiding interest in history, and I know that this activity had a positive influence on my scholastic work.

My other developing interest during this early period was with small animals of any kind, but especially useful animals. Dad had books about poultry and animal husbandry from the days when he and Mother were buying a small acreage just south of Fairfield. I read and reread these fine books and dreamed of the day when I could participate. Fueling my feeling of envy were a few friends who lived right there in town and had animals. The first was John Archibald (my barber and former neighbor) who had in his garage, across the street from the Jefferson County Hospital, several New Zealand Red rabbits which he raised for meat. Bob Adams, one of my playmates, had a shed full of fancy pigeons, which he and his dad raised for squabs. Another playmate, Charles Kepler, had a garage and fenced run housing exotic bantam chickens, which provided some eggs and meat. By coincidence, I guess, the fathers of both of these friends were barbers, too. Since my Dad would not agree to

this kind of activity, I wondered why barbers had so much more good sense than carpenters.

Arlene liked animals, but she had no interest in any that were raised to be killed. She liked kittens and pups. Dad would not permit such pets until much later when we joined in a conspiracy to break his will. So why, you might ask, do I recall these interests of mine, as well as my interest in stamp collecting, as I write remembrances of Arlene? Patience! All will be revealed.

## **SCHOOL DAYS**

We were boys and girls of Logan School, and whether you have heard of us or not, that fact was and is valuable to us Logan alumni. The school, kindergarten through eighth grade, was located at the corner of 4th and Madison Streets. It served the children of what was then (generally) the southwest quadrant of Fairfield. The students walked to school and left the grounds for lunch. The building was, I believe, the oldest of the four elementary schools of our town. It was razed several years ago.

The old building did have its problems, but Jake Horton, janitor and friend to all kids, managed to keep it going. The school had absolutely the best and most extensive playground of the Fairfield schools. The equipment was the gift of the Loudon family, who were local industrialists. I guess somebody of that family once attended Logan. Later, as I worked for Loudon's as a writer of farm-equipment fabrication specifications, I came to realize that the marvelous playground equipment was largely made from standard Loudon pipe and fittings. In the present day it would require either a courageous or foolish school board to accept those grand swings, slides, merry-go-round, parallel bars and teeter boards. I doubt any present school board would be willing to buy enough liability insurance.

In addition to the large playground, the school had an extensive campus. This permitted several softball diamonds and basketball courts. The playground and courts were generously surfaced with small, washed gravel. Basically, the smaller children and the girls used the playground, while the boys dominated the courts and the best of the diamonds. There were a few girls who could stay with the best of the boys in softball, and they were greatly admired. Incidentally, basketball was not a really popular activity. The courts were used mostly when the open spaces were frozen or muddy.

The playground gravel was interesting in itself. Every year or two an "agate" craze would sweep the boys of the school. Many of the guys would spend the recess periods and time before and after school crawling over the playground, examining each pebble for the pattern of veining and colored layers that we called "agates". We would lose interest after a time, and the craze would go dormant. This is when Arlene would inherit my stash. She liked the small, colorful stones, but no girl would dare to be caught searching for them.

The grounds were good, especially in the early spring, for our version of a marble game we called "chase". It was exactly that; two players took turns trying to pick off the other's marble by plinking it with the shooter's marble. The trick was to either hit it

or bounce far enough away to avoid being a sitting duck when it was the turn of the target to be the shooter. If the target marble was hit, it became the property of the shooter. The girls thought most of this was pretty silly, but many of them liked to watch and make remarks about our ability--or lack of it. Arlene was always pleased to make report at home of any marble loss I experienced.

Friendly as they might have been, the building and grounds of Logan School were not the critical elements of the school's unusual success. The success was wholly a product of community interest, wisdom and effort. And as I credit "community" I must identify four participating groups of people, all with their feet firmly planted in the town of Fairfield, state of Iowa, during the fourth and fifth decades of this century. There was trouble in the land, and it was difficult to see ahead to better times, but most local people believed in God and the Highway Patrol. As the coming war threatened, there was a burst of patriotism and renewed faith in the goodness of our society and the national government. Community was solid.

Who were those four groups that I mentioned? Well, one was the teachers, obviously. Another was the students, although some were frequently reluctant. The parents were vitally important. And these three groups of players were given active and positive support--intellectual, moral, financial and social support--by the people and the institutions of our neighborhood, especially, and by those of our town. Nearly everybody believed the children to be worth everything that could be invested in them. Performance expectations were high, and people believed that the children, in spite of themselves, would turn out well. Thus the people of the community were a fine support group, and they assumed some policing responsibilities, too. A young person knew it not wise to stumble badly in public.

Arlene and I and others were lucky to be in a time and place when and where these diverse influences combined to push, pull, and drag us to a higher plane. Anita and I have raised three kids who attended elementary and high schools in a total of six states, and I have yet to see those same forces combined to the same degree, and I don't expect to see it in the future.

The teachers led the way. Our school was blessed. No, not all of the teachers were outstanding, and not all of them were able to reach every child. But the mix of our teachers--their experiences, abilities and outlooks--resulted in an unusually powerful force. They did not whine about their pay or class sizes or the hours of work or even the unfair performance evaluations by their ignorant and prejudiced administrative superiors. They dedicated themselves to their profession. They somehow, by some magic, began the process of educating the minds and bodies of frequently reluctant kids. The National Education Association was not yet a powerful poison there. Maybe it never came to be.

Many of the teachers made their home in our town. Our parents were likely to know most of them personally, if not through the school, then by reason of church, social or community activities. There was a basic attitude of confidence and respect extended to teachers by our parents, and many of the teachers reciprocated. As far as we kids were concerned, we absolutely knew, in advance, the "side" to be adopted by our

parents should a student-teacher dispute erupt. The teachers ruled. Compare that atmosphere with what seems to exist today!

I want to say this, before I overlook an important matter--not that it is important to anyone other than me. Two teachers appeared at exactly the right time and with exactly the right outlook and skills to push me toward a higher level. The first was Miss Margaret Hurdlika of the seventh grade, and the other was Miss Ada Edwards of the eighth grade. They had whatever it took to catch my attention and stimulate my abilities toward some positive educational achievements. They caused me to remodel my attitudes. Arlene told me that there were two who did much the same for her, except it happened earlier in Arlene's elementary career. My two heroines are among my four Teacher All Stars of all time. Another is Mrs. Ardith Johnson who was my home-bound teacher a year or so later. I can't measure my gratitude toward these fine teachers, and I hope something similar happened to each of you, whoever you are.

Classroom discipline was not a major problem, and that fact, alone, enhanced the students' learning opportunities. A very few teachers ruled through fear. One was known to whack wayward hands with a ruler, and she had a paddle on display. (Here, in North Carolina, she would now need a good lawyer.) Some others used ridicule as a stimulus, but they chose their deserving targets with care. There was an occasional fight on the playground, but I know of no shootings or other assaults involving either teachers or students. Whispering, talking too much, straying attention, distracting others--these were the main student infractions--and I have to admit that I was not only one of the usual suspects, but I was generally a perpetrator.

You may now have some idea of Arlene's challenge as she followed me through the school, two years behind. We had several of the same teachers, so she had elements of a prejudiced reputation to overcome. She managed this quite well and, in fact, she was something of a civilizing influence on me. I, like most students, was anxious to be accepted, even esteemed, by my peers. My problem was a feeling of inferiority, mostly because I was a fat boy, with no great athletic talent, and no obvious appeal to the girls. I compensated by trying to adopt a role of the class clown as well as pretending to be something of a rebel. I did not execute these roles well, probably because they just didn't fit. Arlene seemed to understand this dilemma of mine, and she would criticize or support my behavior, depending on the nature of the foul.

Which brings me to considering our fellow students. They tended toward being a force for good, but not always. I continue to remember an unfortunate classmate, probably first or second grade, who had some physical and, likely, learning disabilities. Somebody in the group had grabbed his mittens, and we were playing keep-away and, yes, I was participating. I will never forget that one of our tougher fellows stopped this cruel game. He helped Paul with his mittens and sent him on his way home. I respected this guy forevermore, and he became a good friend, even when he occasionally beat the stuffing out of me.

I recall another example from several years later, but in this instance I don't

remember my infraction. But I do remember lining up to re-enter school after recess. I was aware that Miss Wilda McDowell was in line behind me. It was hard not to be aware of Wilda; she was a pretty, petite, sweet, compassionate girl, and every guy thought himself in love with her. Wilda tapped my arm, and my heart leaped. She then unloaded disapproval of the way I had been acting on the playground. It turned out that she expected much better from me. I shrunk to half her size. She was very effective because I still recall that blustery, damp day in the line, and I remember the sense of her words. I learned then that there can be more than just appearance to consider when admiring girls. I retain Wilda's autograph in my wallet. She signed my draft card some years later.

The point I am making is that the students were a part of the partnership that resulted in the really sound educational base we gained from the Logan Grade School. Not many would have freely admitted to be in the relentless pursuit of knowledge, but reasonable attempts to do well were not necessarily cause for peer disrespect. If somebody accomplished something remarkable, the other students did not hesitate to cheer. But I won't pretend that we were all acutely aware of what we were achieving. It was more a matter of being products of times and circumstances that were grounded in decency, civility and personal responsibility.

I have told you of my stamp-collecting hobby and of the Logan environment with purpose. I want to adequately describe an important facet of Arlene's being that I could have, and nearly did, overlook. Recall, if you will, my developing interest in history and geography because of my hobby, this interest being sharpened by the current war news. Also keep in mind how my immediate teachers had miraculously awakened me from an intellectual daze. Now it happened that the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution sponsored an annual American history examination to be taken by all of the eighth-grade students in town. It was a competition in that the name of the student with the best score would be added to a traveling plaque, the plaque to be retired when one of the elementary schools produced the winner for three consecutive years.

The inconsequential news is that I won the competition in 1944. I accomplished this feat without unusual preparation. It was not one of my objectives; in fact, I don't remember that our students were greatly aware of the exercise. Nobody was more surprised than I when my name was announced, but I tried to pretend that it was no big deal. Well, in truth, the award was hardly the Nobel or the Pulitzer, but it was the first competition I had won. (Forget Old Maid, which could not compare, and those wins weren't totally honest, anyway.) I enjoyed the acclamation at school and the laud and honor at home and from relatives.

This also presented an opportunity to needle Arlene a little. In general, she earned better marks at school than I managed. She was an intelligent kid, and she was willing to do the studying and assignments needed to excel. In fact, she did everything necessary, including behaving in class, to qualify as a teacher's pet. I was proud of her but, on occasion, I could generate a small resentment. Thus I couldn't resist the challenge, "I did it. Let's see you do as well!" As soon as I said it, I forgot the challenge, for a while, and turned to more exciting matters.

A year later another Logan student won the competition, giving our school two legs on the traveling plaque. By this time I would become a home-bound sophomore, and soon Arlene would be in the eighth grade. I renewed the challenge, but the spirit of it was radically changed. I even offered to help her, but neither of us thought there was much substance in my offer.

I didn't understand the depth of the commitment she developed to win that upcoming competition. She began, early in the year, to read some history books, and she started consulting our encyclopedias as to specific subjects. As examination day approached, she allowed me to ask questions of the type she might expect. (As if my memory was all that good.) I knew from her answers that she had accumulated a store of knowledge, but she didn't seem to have confidence. And I knew that, in competitions of this sort, the winner would have to be confident enough to perform well and, also, enjoy a little luck. I would not have bet much on Arlene's chance to win. After all, she was nothing but a little sister! But she did win, and the plaque was retired to Logan School.

The earth failed to shake, but I learned something about my sister. I learned to never underestimate her. Especially when she felt challenged. I knew she was persistent (this was often an aggravation to me), but I hadn't understood her willingness to pay a significant price to accomplish something she truly wanted. Her example was of immediate value to me when time came to spring from my wheelchair to crutches and then to discard them. I started my junior year in high school almost immediately, after enjoying a leisurely sophomore year as a home-bound student. I remembered her example many times over as I struggled through those few challenging months. And, from time to time, I remember it now.

Arlene developed and retained a life-long interest in American history, continuing right up to her last few months. She came to see more and know more than I, and to understand it better, which is not bad for a little sister.

So there is my poor description of the collective legacy we gained from Logan School, an unusual school in an unusual place at an unusual time. Scores of us, I guess, went out from there during that era. A sophisticated stranger would look back on all of that, sniff and fail to see much remarkable about it. But, I am now persuaded that the world is better, by a wee bit, because of it all.

## **VENUES**

I started these ramblings with the setting at our little house at 305 W. Jackson Street, and I left you there as I tried to develop some of the themes that worked to define our lives. Actually, I carried these themes well beyond the time that we remained at that house. Our address of record didn't seem to affect those matters. There are other subjects, however, that are closely tied to the place where we lived. So, I will now set up the home bases for whatever is to follow.

I hardly expect that this information will spark pilgrimages to our old locations, although I once liked to drive through the neighborhoods of my memory. Each of our family's moves now seems to serve as a hinge allowing the relationship between

Arlene and me to pivot several degrees. The moves were significant to the direction of our lives. Yes, there were other factors at work: we were growing older, the family's economic situation was slowly improving, and the world around us was changing--most noticeably because of the Second World War.

At the original location, 305 West Jackson Street, Arlene and I were very young, so we were highly dependent upon each other and our parents for all things. We moved to a larger house at 206 W. Jefferson Street on or about March 1, 1939. I know March 1 was involved because farm people tended to move on March 1, and Dad thought the same rules applied in town. I was in the third grade, so Arlene was winding up her first grade. We rented (of course) this house from Roy Taggart who was also our mailman. It was at the corner of Jefferson and Third, one long block from the Logan School playground. The house had two additional rooms, the rooms were bigger, the basement better and there was a large floored, but unfinished, attic for storage and play. Yes, I now had a room of my own! The neighborhood was just slightly better; we were closer to school, church, downtown and the library. Arlene now had a few friends living just a block or two away.

We lived in this house until September 1, 1944, when our parents made my dreams come true by moving to a small acreage just outside the south city limits on State Highway 1, an extension of South Main Street. This location caused problems for Arlene who was entering the seventh grade. She not only now lived a long way from Logan School and her friends, but she actually was in a rural school district. Our parents made some sort of a deal with the city school board, which may have involved a tuition payment, and Dad drove her to school frequently. This was a two-story house with one additional room, but it really was no larger than the one we left. It was owned by a Mr. Baker who bought it, I think, as a home for his father. The father then built a small shack away from the house. He kept some sheep on the pastures. Thus the larger house was available to rent, and we had use of a chicken house, a barn, a large garden and a small orchard. I think Mr. Baker gave us a good deal so there would be trustworthy people about in case his elderly father had problems.



1943, ages 11 and 13

We did not live long at this place. We moved to 600 South Main Street sometime in 1945. I was a home-bound sophomore and Arlene in eighth grade at this time. I am not sure why we moved because, I guess, I had my mind on other matters. The house was much larger and much closer to downtown and to Arlene's school. It was owned by a Mr. "Chick" Clark who lived in California. He had once operated a chicken hatchery in a large and well-maintained two-story building (we called it a barn) that was behind the house. There was a large garden behind the barn. This



house was located in one of the better neighborhoods in the town. I think part of the deal was that Dad was to do some extensive maintenance work on the house and building in lieu of part of the rent. I do remember that there was frequent friction between Dad and Chick, with Mother typing heated correspondence on the massive, battered Remington typewriter.

We did not stay at this address for an extended period, either. We returned to the acreage in the late autumn of 1947, when I was a senior and Arlene a sophomore in high school. I believe that the Reverend Sam Williamson, one of Dad's friends, had bought the place as a future retirement home. The elder Mr. Baker stayed in his shack, and I think Dad was to undertake some remodeling of the house while we occupied it. Very little of this happened, probably because the Rev. Sam's health began to decline soon after the deal (whatever it was) was struck.

## **WORKING OUR WAY**

Earning the day-to-day living was the overriding challenge for our family through most of our childhood. This was especially true through the years we lived at the West Jackson Street address. Dad was often unemployed or underemployed, and Mother was a stay-at-home mom. Well, she did do occasional cleaning and ironing for a distant relative who lived on East Burlington Street. She also undertook a large garden each year. It was two or three blocks from our house on a large vacant lot at the corner of Third and Harrison Streets. She managed to get the garden plowed each year, and she tended it and harvested the crops herself. We either ate it at once, or she canned it for winter.

She pulled Arlene and me and the tools to the garden site in my wagon. Arlene and I played in the dirt under a tree at the corner of the lot. Mother worked like the storied sharecropper. It is hot and dry in Iowa during the growing season. Water had to be hauled, so it was used only to drink and for new transplants. Whatever she harvested (carrots, beets, corn, beans, tomatoes, parsnips, potatoes, onions, lettuce, radishes, cabbage, squash, cucumbers) she hauled home in the wagon. This garden made a big difference, and I don't recall that Dad did much to help. It is possible that he worked in it during some evenings.

I don't remember that either Arlene or I were burdened with many regular chores during these days, and we certainly had no concept of an allowance. We really had no need for money, at least until we started to school and were exposed to those alluring neighborhood grocery stores.

We did, however, understand the worth of the Fairfield Dairy milk-bottle caps. For the benefit of the young and otherwise uninformed, milk was once sold (and could be home-delivered) in glass bottles. These were capped with a pasteboard cap, the shape and about the size of a pog. When Arlene and I managed to acquire twenty of these, we marched to the New Chicago district (nine or ten blocks) and exchanged them at the dairy for an ice-cream cone, two dips. We had one quart of milk delivered each day, so it required right at three weeks to gain a cone. With two people, the cones could be six weeks apart. We decided to share in order to step up the frequency. This messy process was later alleviated when the dairy introduced a

"twin" cone.

This is not to say that I didn't begin to covet a little pocket money. The earliest productive activity involved the collection of old magazines and newspapers, which we sold by weight at the local junkyard. A friend or two would join in this occasional undertaking. We hauled them in my red wagon. In those days magazines were more valuable than newspapers, but it made little difference since, either way, we earned just a few pennies for the biggest load the wagon could carry.

I also launched a career in sales at about this time. I responded to a stimulating advertisement by the Lancaster Seed Company, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. They sent a batch of seeds on credit, and I planned to sell them to friends, relatives and neighbors. When I sold half of the seeds, I was expected to send the money to the seed company. The proceeds of additional sales were to be mine. The problem was, of course, that only about half of the seeds were readily saleable. The remaining half were flowers (mostly) and vegetables that were beyond the knowledge of the simple people of our acquaintance. Dad finally bought enough to retire my debt at the seed company, and I scratched for a very few dimes through the rest of the spring.

You may remember that our family moved to 206 West Jefferson when I was in third grade and Arlene in first. With the move, Arlene and I began the process of breaking the limitations of age and economics. Opportunities came to open up for us, but I will first describe the changes in the family workings.

Dad was probably finding more employment by this time. Full employment would have been forty-eight hours weekly. I don't know his hourly wage but later, during the war years, he was able to raise it to \$1.00. There was a large garden at the rear of this lot, so it was no longer necessary to cultivate a remote spot.

With this change Dad took over complete control of the gardening enterprise. The variety of crops diminished. Tomatoes, potatoes, sweet potatoes, beans, turnips, carrots, beets, cabbage and onions were just about the sum of it. No corn, melons or cucumbers. He didn't feel those vegetables made good use of the space. For the first two or three years Arlene and I were awarded a small space between the two rows of grape vines for early crops like lettuce, radishes and green onions. We were hot to garden in the early spring, but as the season wore on we lost some enthusiasm. Dad then took over our space for fall crops.

It was during the Jefferson Street period that the fertilized-tomato conflict arose between Arlene and Dad. Following his usual procedure, Dad undertook the gardening enterprise by first studying everything in print that he could find. The Agriculture Department's "Farmers Bulletins", which were free, supplied much of his store of knowledge.

As to the tomatoes, he became convinced that they should be staked erect. Since Iowa summers often feature dry periods, the tomatoes had to be irrigated on occasion. The water came from a well, which meant pumping and carrying the water to the tomatoes. It was not to be wasted. So Dad devised the strategy of staking his tomatoes in short, adjacent rows and sinking an upright clay drainage tile between

each of the rowed plants. The tiles were sunk to what he judged to be the depth of the tomato roots so the tile ends rose a few inches above the soil surface. On any dry evening he would fill each tile with water and allow the water to slowly sink down around the tomato roots. Meanwhile, he was studying literature on the use of chemical fertilizers to enhance tomato production.

Once educated, he cleared out the end of his closet, installed some shelves, and filled it with dry chemicals, most of them purchased from a local drug store. He then mixed his own fertilizers. Before watering he would place some fertilizer in the bottom of each tile, fill it with water and let nature take over. I am sure he experimented a lot, but in the end he was producing great quantities of really wonderful tomatoes.

Arlene, though, was not pleased. She may have been one of the first of the organic advocates because she loudly proclaimed that the good taste of the tomatoes was destroyed. She would have nothing to do with "fertilized tomatoes". In subsequent years Dad defused this problem by buying one plant of a different variety (usually a "beefsteak" type), planting it at the end of a row, and assuring Arlene that the chemicals would never touch its roots. I suspected that there was a little deception here, but Arlene was satisfied.

This address was also the scene of the great new-potato caper. Dad noticed that his seed potatoes sprouted in the very early spring, well before they could be planted in the garden. He knew about burying the long sprouts to give the new plants a head start, but he reasoned that if the sprouts had roots, the new plants would be off and running. So he built some shallow wood frames in the basement, carried the dirt from the garden and planted his potatoes there during February. Then, at the very earliest opportunity, he transplanted the seed potatoes with rooted sprouts into the garden. He had to protect them from freezes, but he did easily have the earliest new potatoes around. The first year he advertised locally-grown new potatoes and sold them all at premium prices. He never had to advertise again.

Unfortunately for Arlene and me, we were engaged-at no salary--to become part of the delivery operation. So we and the red wagon ranged over the streets of the nearby neighborhoods delivering bags of potatoes. I pulled the wagon, and she handled the money, although she needed a little help with making change at first. Neither she nor I ever became a fan of new potatoes.

With Arlene and me in school all day, and relieved from the demands of gardening, Mother began to think about earning some income. She didn't like housework at home, so any kind of domestic work was unattractive and didn't pay well, either. Thus she became the Fairfield distributor of Zanol household products. Profit or not, this was an ideal opportunity for her because she could get out and talk with people.

I don't know exactly how she operated, but I can make some close guesses. I know she called on friends and family first and obtained some orders. She then sent an order to the company in Cincinnati. She would anticipate some of her profits by ordering a few extra of the popular items. In this way she built a small inventory of items that turned over rapidly. This was critical to her business because payday didn't come with an order; it came when the goods were delivered.

As her business expanded she made the initial sales visits through the day and telephoned for repeat orders during the evening. The company shipped the boxes of products by Railway Express and, since she knew the drivers, they delivered directly into our living room. After school, Arlene and I opened the boxes and called off the products while Mother checked them in. Then the customer orders were segregated into individual sacks while Mother made up the sales tickets. The additions to inventory were stored in an already inadequate closet. Later, I was allowed to make up the tickets, which required me to add columns of figures in my head and calculate the 2% sales tax.

Her main competition was from the Jewel Tea and Raleigh route salesmen. Those companies were somewhat more weighted toward groceries and medicinal products, respectively, than was Zanol. Those people had route trucks and spent considerable time on the rural roads. Mother, of course, had the red wagon with me pulling on occasion. But she did most of it through the week, and it was all inside the town. Avon was similar in strategy, but was much heavier in cosmetics. So there was some overlap in products but not keen competition. Mother's hottest product was laundry starch at \$.39 a box. Many people in Fairfield swore they could not wash and iron without it but, of course, they would. Her pure vanilla, for some reason, was in big demand, too.

Mother sold these products for perhaps three years. I have no idea about her profits, but I doubt they were commensurate with the work and risk. There can't be much profit in a \$.39 box of laundry starch. This undertaking did allow her to be home most of the time that Arlene and I were there, except during the summer. I think Arlene often went with her at such times.

Perhaps the Second World War eased Mother away from Zanol. Many women took jobs in the local industries or at the ordinance plant near Burlington. Some were very active at volunteer work. They (the customer base) weren't at home as much and had little time for the niceties of housework. Also, I think, Mother saw the opportunity for better pay and more security with a salaried job.

After one or two false starts, Mother was employed again by the Iowa State Telephone Company as a telephone operator. She had once worked at the company switchboard when it was in the manager's house and telephones were few. By 1942--this employment date is my guess--telephones were common but every call required the assistance of an operator. She remained at this job until she retired at age 65. It would be difficult to overstate the importance of this job to Mother's long-term health, happiness and security.

When she first started the job, she, like the other operators, rotated through the various shifts at two-week intervals. It wasn't long, however, before she struck a deal with the other operators (and the manager) to take the despised evening shift as a permanent assignment. Her workweek started Monday with a day off. Tuesday through Thursday she worked a split shift, 2:00 to 6:00PM and 7:00 to 11:00 PM. Friday was a day off, but she went on duty alone at 11:00 PM and worked straight through to 7:00 AM. So, in effect, she had Monday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday

daytime at home, although she obviously had to do some sleeping. She was also home until after lunch on the other three days.

I bore you with this much detail because of its significance to Arlene. Mother's job led to Arlene preparing the evening meal for several days of each week. At first Mother would sprint home to cook the meal, eat and race back to the job. This didn't work out well, so gradually Arlene took over these duties until she was finally doing the whole undertaking. She did a very good job, and I think she came to enjoy it. She cooked, so there was great pressure on me to clean up, but I was very good at evasion.

This call to meal preparation developed when Arlene was about ten years old. She had already started some babysitting for the next-door neighbor, the Knedler family. The earliest rule was that she could do this only when Mother was home. Arlene earned about \$.20 an hour, which was pretty good at the time. When mother became a telephone company employee, Arlene's babysitting time was curtailed. This resulted in a serious blow to Arlene's income. For this reason, some kind of pay arrangement was worked out for the cooking. This was the closest either of us came to having an "allowance".

My economic opportunity was considerably broader, and it came a little earlier. When I started the fourth grade at age nine, I obtained a job selling the Ottumwa Courier (newspaper) after school on the square, downtown Fairfield. (I think the minimum was age ten, but I was big for my age.) The price of the paper was \$.03 of which \$.02 went to the company. However, this price encouraged a \$.02 tip, so by positioning myself on the corner with the most affluent traffic--eastbound from the banks, law offices and courthouse--I did reasonably well. Two sales with two tips covered the cost of a Coney-Island hot dog from Bill's, and that was living. It was until I discovered that one of Bill's hot dogs had turned green in the steamer.

My downtown newspaper career lasted three years, September through May of each year, with the *Courier*, at first, and later with the *Fairfield Daily Ledger*. This was a highly competitive game with three evening newspapers being hawked on the four corners of the square. To survive, a guy had to learn some tricks, which generally involved timing, positioning and building a customer base by means of a little-extra service. I spent the summers, of course, at Aunt Helen's farm.

In the fall of 1942, having attained age 12, I became eligible to be a route salesman, which was, of course, a genuine paperboy. I secured a position with the *Des Moines Register*, a morning paper, and gained the longest route with the most customers. I didn't know it then, but no other kid wanted it. The route went out South Main Street to the city limits and beyond, and then back up South Second Street. Not only was this a long distance, with abundant customers, but many of the houses sat well back from the street, requiring side trips to get within throwing range of the porch. The route took time to complete.

This large opportunity presented a large problem, a bicycle. I didn't have one and, because of the war, no new bicycles were available. Many people were now able to afford more than just food and shelter, and this, coupled with gasoline rationing,

spurred demand and made used bicycles almost impossible to buy. Mother found the answer (that was almost no answer at all) at the Fix-It Shop in the New Chicago district. The old gentleman who owned the shop had found an ancient bike in an attic. He repaired it as best he could, repainted it and sold it to me for about twice what a new bike would cost, if one could be found. Rotting tires on obsolete-sized wheels were the main problem, and there were others. But, I was in business with the potential for significant weekly income.

The paper route made it necessary to spring from bed at 4:00 AM, get to the paper office by 5:00, fold the papers and be on the street by 6:00 and finish the route by 7:00. The finish time was a requirement, so I had to do better on the other times because of the length of the route. Mary Harris, who owned a cafe above the paper office, employed me to pick up her supply of sweet rolls from the bakery on my way to the office. In return she gave me a roll and cocoa for breakfast. Saturdays were largely devoted to weekly collections, which weren't difficult in my area, but they required a lot of time.

The management held frequent contests aimed at obtaining new customers. If we worked at it, this wasn't too difficult because the war was raging and people were hungry for news. But solicitation took time, and time was precious to a person of many interests, including naps. Sometimes, just to round out the contest results, we would turn in fake "starts." Since we had to pay for the papers, this meant we had to sell them, especially if the expensive Sunday paper was involved. As a result, I was usually carrying an extra paper or two. When I had unsold papers, in order to avoid waste, I would make a short detour and throw one on the porch of a young lady in my class. This anonymous generosity accomplished nothing for me except in my head and heart.

The paper route wasn't my only enterprise, although it demanded the most time. Mrs. Orpha Turner, an older widow lady who lived across Jefferson Street, was a frequent employer. Her cat required a clean litter box and new sand (this was before kitty litter) each week. Her sidewalks needed snow removal in the winter. I picked her cherries on the shares in the spring, selling my share in the neighborhood. I spaded her vegetable garden, divided it in half, planted what she wanted on one half and my crops on the other. I sold onions, radishes, carrots, beets and popping corn to the neighborhood Quigley Grocery. Mrs. Turner was the news reporter for at least two out-of-town papers, the Ottumwa *Courier* and the Burlington *Hawkeye Gazette*. I was engaged to rush her dispatches to the post office at 8:00 PM each evening at a dime a trip. I also cleaned snow from about one and a half blocks of sidewalk for Mr. Chet Carnes who lived diagonally across from our house. This stimulating account of my early work history illustrates and may help explain the weakened relationship between Arlene and me that began at about ages ten and twelve, respectively. She was stuck close to home, for the most part, while my time and interests were spread over a wider area. And, as we grew older, we developed outside friendships so we were not nearly so dependent upon each other. In addition, our interests started to diverge like those of boys and girls typically do.

My several commercial enterprises kept me away from home a good deal of the time,

so I avoided some of the home-based conflict and my fair share of household duties. Although it troubled me not at the time, I am now sure that Arlene resented this and I think she envied the spending money I was earning. I know she coveted a bicycle because many of her friends had wheels, and there was me with my two-wheeled lemon. I don't want to imply that there was animosity; we just drifted apart, and we did little to close the gap for a few years. Then a set of circumstances caused us to change the course of our relationship and to lay the foundation for the mutual love and respect that continued to grow over the span of our lives.

But before I undertake what are to be the final installments of this account, I will mention another job that had Arlene's enthusiastic approval.

You will remember that I finished the course at Logan Grade School in the spring of 1944, while Arlene was finishing the sixth grade. I then enrolled as a freshman at Fairfield High School, with classes to start in early September. I decided I would like to play football, so I took part in a couple of unofficial and, I think, illicit practices and a scrimmage-type game. I had little idea of what I was doing and even less ability. I soon discovered a decreased desire to play football.

At about this same time my best friend, Jim Glasgow, told me of a job opening at the grocery where he had been working through the summer. I was hired to work as a stock boy, grocery bagger, egg candler and general flunky at the Benteco (Benner Tea Company) "Supermarket" for \$.30 an hour. Arlene regarded this as a genuine job, which included an employer who expected me to perform according to the employer's rules. No sloughing off!

There were benefits beyond the meager salary. Because of the work hours required, I now had an excuse to sneak away from the football players before I had to obtain parental permission and a physical exam to become a certified candidate for the team. I gained the chance to learn some of the skills and tricks of the retail grocery trade. I was working with some people (including adults) whom I really liked and respected. In turn, they assigned responsibilities to Jim and me and trusted us to do them well. I don't think we let them down. I now had a market for the eggs from my flock of hens. (More about this later.)

One of the check-out ladies, Roberta Pickard, was everybody's favorite because she treated each person, customer or employee, as if each was a very-important person. Jim and I contested for the privilege of bagging groceries at her station. I watched customers line up for her when other checkout stations had few customers. I have often wondered how this young lady, in from a farm or very small community, and with just a high-school diploma, learned the secret of winning cooperation, respect and, from her customers, affection. Roberta, by her example, taught me much about customer relations--as much, perhaps, as I later learned in college courses and countless business seminars.

But, for the purposes of this account, Ms. Pickard played more-important roles. After a few weeks, I decided I was worth as much to the Benteco as was Jim. (Jim earned \$.35 and I earned \$.30 per hour.) I called this matter to the attention of the store manager. To my great relief, he resisted firing me on the spot, telling me he would

think it over. He consulted with Roberta, who evidently explained my great value. The manager then disappointed me and enraged Jim by creating parity at \$.325 per hour for each of us. Another lesson learned at an early age!

The United States was heavily involved in both the European and Pacific fronts of World War II. Meat, butter, canned goods and sugar were rationed. This was not a major problem for us, but we did run short of sugar occasionally. Although unrationed, shortages of other essentials like bananas, Jello, marshmallows, chewing gum and honest candy bars plagued the land. And nobody was more plagued than Arlene.

The Benteco, like the other larger groceries, usually received a small shipment of such treasure each week. Had it been up to the employees, none of this stuff would have left the store in the hands of a customer, but the manager thought otherwise. Roberta controlled the candy, gum, Jello and marshmallows. We could buy two boxes of Jello, two packs of gum and two candy bars each. Even though the impact on my princely wage was heavy, I always bought the maximum allotment and carried it home to that provider of suppers, Arlene (keeping, of course, a candy bar and a pack of gum for personal use). Roberta's extraordinary role in this? Well, because of school, I was never in the store at the magic moment of delivery. She saved my allotment for me, and if there was a choice, she saved Dentyne and a Milky Way or Mounds bar. Roberta knew how to keep her ace sacker happy.

Roberta had an equally charming and attractive younger sister, Bonnie, who was a member of my freshman class. Bonnie, in turn, had a close friend, Marcene Wyckoff, who exceeded, in every way, my visions of female perfection. Bonnie and Marcene customarily attended Saturday Night Live, Downtown, and toward the end of the evening came to the store to await a ride home with Roberta. I thus became acquainted with Marcene under fairly favorable circumstances. I am here to tell you that in those days I didn't easily become acquainted with new girls, favorable circumstances or not. I doubt that Marty (as she came to be called) remembers me, but because she talked, listened, and seemed interested for a few minutes at a time, over a period of weeks, I began to build a little confidence in myself.

For all these reasons and more, I counted it a tragedy when it became necessary to resign this job at the end of November. In Arlene's words, it was my first "real" job, and I loved it, notwithstanding its lack of importance and the wage deficiency. I understand, however, that my departure allowed Jim to regain his salary loss and more.

I'll wind up our employment history with 1947-1948, my senior year in high school and Arlene's sophomore year. At some point late in my junior year I took a job at the Fairfield News Agency. It was owned by Chester and Virginia Frakes. Their not-so-bright dog, Battlin' Nelson Frakes, was in constant attendance. Chet, Battlin' and I pretty well danced to Virginia's tune.

This establishment dealt in magazines, newspapers, paperback books, a fine array of tobacco and related products, and it had an old-fashioned soda fountain. After training by Chet, I was given the fountain to operate. (I think I brought in more high-



school customers than Virginia wanted in the place.) With some experience gained, the management of the periodicals and paperbacks was delegated to me, and I worked at this during the slow hours. Actually, the newspapers were no problem, and all the paperbacks needed was ordering and stocking the racks.

The periodicals required this, and there was also the matter of returns. Any magazine unsold at the end of a designated period had to be removed from the shelves. I then removed the covers, which were returned to the distributor for credit. I bundled the stripped magazines, and they were sold (I think) at the junkyard.

Included in all of this was a peculiar group of almost magazines that we called "the pulps." They were about the size of a thick *National Geographic*, but printed on cheap (pulp) paper. These were highly specialized purveyors of fictional but enlightened entertainment in print. Westerns, sports (mostly baseball) and romance dominated the selection.

I loved baseball, so Chet allowed me to keep a defrocked copy of each sports pulp. I read every word. I soon became convinced that I could write something at least as good as the published stuff and get paid for it, too.

You deserve to know that I knew absolutely nothing about what I was attempting.

I counted the words in a typical story and set out to put at least that many words to paper. I knew nothing of developing plots, or characterizations, or climatic endings. I didn't know how to use dialog. My spelling and punctuation were not up to any challenge. My typing was poor. I didn't even know to double space the manuscript.

But I worked at it and produced a baseball story of sorts. After much pestering, Arlene was allowed to read it. She liked it! She liked it even though she had no interest in sports and knew little of baseball. But she was at least half bright, enjoyed stories and, as a bonus, she could spell and had some knowledge of punctuation stuff. She helped me correct the obvious errors--which required much laborious hunt-and-peck retyping on my portable typewriter.

This and another story came to nothing of immediate value. The publishers were probably a little more receptive to unsolicited manuscripts in those days, especially the pulp publishers, but I received only one response that was remotely encouraging along with unanimous rejections. So my pulp-fiction career was mercifully short, but I did learn that I liked to put words and ideas to paper. Arlene demonstrated that I had much to learn about the basic writing skills. And, for the first time, I think, Arlene voluntarily and, yes, enthusiastically supported me in an activity I thought to be important.

Arlene entered Fairfield High School as I started my junior year. She became anxious to earn more income and, perhaps, to spend less time at home. She never entered a bakery that she didn't love, so it was no surprise when she came up with a Saturday job at one of the local bakeries. I don't remember when it started and, as I remember it, the job didn't last many months. It ended suddenly. It was unthinkable that Arlene would mess up a good situation, so I kept asking her about what went

wrong. She was not forthcoming in her answers, so I suspected that the owner had been putting sexual pressure on her. Later, as I became aware of the ways of the world, and learned something of the owner's reputation, I believed my suspicions probably represented the best of what really happened. I am sure she would have told me the full story as we grew older, but I never remembered to ask.

At some point after this Mother got Arlene an operator-trainee job at the telephone company. Mother must have applied some magic because Arlene surely was under any minimum-age requirement for telephone operators. But she learned the business and was often used for vacation relief during the summers and occasional emergency help at other times. Later, she was a full-time operator for a brief period. The telephone job moved Arlene ever so slightly away from her confining duties at home and was a part of the process of becoming free of overwhelming family influence.

### PAUSE FOR REPAIRS



Arlene, 1947, age 15

But before that process could start there was a two-year period of increasing home responsibilities for Arlene. For several months I was heavily dependent upon Arlene, both physically and emotionally. And she delivered in a wonderful way. But after a time I could detect some resentment beginning to develop and, in all honesty, I was beginning to resent being so dependent upon her. There were some conflicts. But I think we came out of the experience with a stronger relationship and the foundation for the love and trust that continued to grow until Arlene departed from us. This is how it went.

The second half of 1944 promised to be the best time of my life. I had departed grade school with a bit of triumph. I was about to experience the relative freedoms of high school. I gave football a very casual shot and then found an easy way out. Our family moved to a nice little house on an acreage just south of Fairfield, so I could begin to keep some of the animals I wanted. Then I landed my first real job, the part-time job just described, and I loved it. Those early-fall months were about the happiest of my life--happy in fact and happy in anticipation.

Dad was excited about taking up his bee-keeping hobby again. Mother had a long walk to work, but the weather was generally nice, and she claimed that the walk was good for her and she enjoyed it. Arlene was not so pleased. We were well away from her friends and, while Dad drove her to school, she either had to walk home or wait at a friend's house. Then she had supper responsibilities three nights (at least) each week. She did finally get a bicycle out of it, but the move was not so good for the seventh grader.

During October and early November I began to experience some occasional pain in my lower left thigh. Our gym teacher looked it over and decided I had a charlie horse, so I spent several gym periods under the heat lamp. It didn't bother me greatly, and it certainly didn't hinder my activities. Then Mother, Arlene and I made our annual bus trip to Ottumwa for Christmas shopping on the Friday following Thanksgiving. It was standing room only on the return trip, and that leg started to hurt to the extent that I couldn't use it. I made it off the bus and sat on the curb until Dad could come with the car. By the time I got to the bed I couldn't make myself even move the leg.

An ambulance hauled me to the local hospital for an X ray, and it was discovered that my left hip was badly out of joint and there was some associated damage. The decision was made that I go to the University Hospital in Iowa City for surgery. That hospital sent an ambulance to pick up several patients in southeastern Iowa, including me, and the surgery was done on December 7, 1943.

We were housed in a long ward full of boys, all of them with fairly serious orthopedic conditions. Many were in worse shape than I, but it was not a dull place. I woke up with an extensive cast, which captured about 80% of my body from the waist down.

Mother thought I would be badly scared, so she took a leave from work, caught a bus to Iowa City, rented a room and took a part-time job at the hospital cafeteria to cover her expenses. I won't pretend that I wasn't glad to see her, but the visiting hours were very limited. One of the student nurses explained that they didn't intend hospitalization to be a social experience. This very appealing Indian girl from the Tama Reservation could tell us anything, and we accepted it with hearts aflutter. But, in fact, it was very much a socializing experience for me.

Arlene was left with the home responsibilities. A neighbor, Mrs. Anderson, helped with the laundry and some food, but Arlene did most of it. And she was out of circulation for the three weeks just prior to her favorite holiday.

Mother and I made it home two or three days before Christmas. Dad set up a bed in the living room so I could see through the windows. He put plywood between the springs and mattress and bought a bedpan and urinal. Mother arranged for the telephone to be moved to the bed, and Arlene gave up control of the radio. I remember little of that Christmas, but I do remember very bad thoughts about the cast, the thoughts continuing until April.

I was home alone on Mother's workdays from 1:00 PM until Arlene made it home from school. Should a real problem have developed, Mrs. Anderson would have galloped over, and she was strong enough to wrestle a bear. I had company with our very first cat--one that, gasp, Dad adopted. Actually she belonged to the former residents, and she stayed when they left. She somehow captured Dad's affection, so we had a cat. She liked to lie on the bed with loud purring and then off to sleep. We called her Purrin' Bercat, her name a credit to the Bergs who had abandoned her.

My happiest memory from this bad period is of Arlene coming in after school. She literally lit up those dreary late afternoons of winter. It was something good to anticipate each day. Aside from her and news from the outside world, I always

needed something--a sharpened pencil, a book from the floor, the urinal emptied. She never complained by word or frown, but I knew there had to be a limit. I was very careful to complete my bedpan work each morning. I can also smile while remembering us share, for the first time, the Lucky Strike Hit Parade on Saturday-night radio. She somehow knew, in advance, the relative popularity order of the hit songs. I was pretty dumb about this, but then I was paying attention for the first time.

One emergency stands out in my memory. A very pregnant Purrin' Bercat decided her time had come in the middle of an afternoon. She conducted a frantic search for a birthing site and decided on the floor of Arlene's closet. It wasn't long before I began hearing a chorus of very small meows. Arlene was delighted with the kittens until she discovered that a skirt or blouse had fallen from its hanger and was serving as the maternity bed. But soon all the bad feelings were forgotten and Bercat forgiven.

We suddenly moved from the acreage to a larger house at 600 South Main Street. It happened so quickly, and I am so vague about the details that I am inclined to think it happened while I was in Iowa City for my sixty-day checkup. At any rate, in the early spring of 1945 we were much closer to Mother's work, Arlene was just a four blocks from her school, and I and my bed were established in the dining room. Arrangements were completed for me to have a homebound teacher, Mrs. Ardith Johnson, who proved to be marvelous. She incited me to actually study. I found an interest in our language and the literature, including poetry. She is one of my teaching All Stars.

This situation also created a relationship with a young man who was to become my personal hero. David Axthelm was new to Fairfield, but he was in my algebra and mechanical drawing classes. He lived a couple of blocks up Main Street. Mrs. Johnson didn't feel competent to teach these subjects, so David was drafted to bring my lessons to me daily and to take back my completed work. More than that, he helped me considerably with both subjects. He did this without reward and at some sacrifice. He was the quarterback for the football team and, as such, was required to run track events in the spring. In addition he was a handsome young man, modest, and with an honest sense of humor. He was very popular with the other students and active socially. Arlene made it a point to be about whenever he was due to arrive but to no avail. David attracted more females than he could manage.

David became a certified hero several years later when he made certain his disabled jet fighter would not crash in a populated area near Detroit. He ejected too late for his parachute to function. Both he and his plane found the Detroit River.

My cast was to be removed in April, so I really anticipated my return to Iowa City. While I was there, the doctors discovered that the other hip was also out of its joint, but not badly. So they pinned it into its place with some quick surgery. This was done on the day President Roosevelt died. The rest of the bad news was that I would have to remain bedfast for a few weeks and make use of a wheel chair for the better part of a year. (You can see that treatment methods were much different in those unenlightened days.) The good news was that they didn't feel it necessary to reapply

a cast.

Incidentally, all of this was not quite as bad as it might seem. You should remember that I loved baseball and, as for me, baseball was the Chicago Cubs. Every Cub game was broadcast live on WIND or WJJD, Chicago. (I can't remember which station carried the broadcasts that year, but it didn't really matter since reception was marginal for either station.) Dad wired the antenna to my bedsprings so I could hear most of it. That was the grand season that the Cubs last won the National League Pennant and then went off to do unsuccessful battle with the Detroit Tigers in the World Series. It was also the year that the famed Billy-Goat Curse was cast, so I was experiencing a unique happening and I heard most of it.

This period of about fourteen months included the only extended strained relationship between Arlene and me. With the passage of time my condition had to be taking on the characteristics of old news. I think Arlene began to resent the special treatment that I continued to receive, with much of it required from her. I know that I was jealous of her ability to be out and about. But, as usual, it was the little things that caused problems. I demanded help that I didn't really need, and she withheld or delayed assistance if she saw no urgency or importance. There was no open warfare, but the spirit of closeness and mutual dependency was tested.

It was also the time of arm bopping, I am ashamed to admit. This was an aggressive technique I developed after I became skilled in the use of the wheel chair. If Arlene displeased me, and if I could catch her, she would be paid with a sharp rap to the muscle of her upper arm. I intended that it be felt, but I didn't try for permanent damage. I do remember some bruises, but not nearly as many as Arlene seemed to remember in later years. However, there was some basis for her complaints.

It should be remembered that Arlene was not without defensive ability. She had the advantage of mobility. She could chase me through the lower floor of the house, out the back door and down the ramp that Dad had built to give me access to the outdoors. One bright day she chased me out the back door (totally unprovoked, I am sure) intending to anoint me with a pan of cold dishwater.

I hit the ramp at full speed, but the chair's wheel caught on the side rail about halfway down the ramp. I went flying through space, landing on my elbows and knees in the back yard. Arlene was frightened--for me (I think) and for herself, certainly. She knew who would get the blame. Fortunately there was no serious damage, and we took care of the minor stuff. This little episode became one of our secrets, and perhaps it marked the beginning of permanent changes in our long-term relationship.

I came out of the wheelchair during the summer between my sophomore and junior years in high school. I was through with crutches by the time school started.

## **ANIMAL CRACKERS**

You may remember that Arlene and I shared a love of animals, but there were fundamental differences in the nature of our affections. She liked pets, the most favored being a kitten or, perhaps, a puppy. I thought more in terms of animals of

utility although, of course, I liked the idea of pets, too. But Dad was a formidable barrier, so we just enjoyed the pets of our neighbors, while jealousy tormented me.

The first break in Dad's hopeless position came shortly after we moved to 206 W. Jefferson Street. The clouds of World War II were gathering, and one of our old neighbors, Frank Dimmit, hoped he could qualify for active duty with his National-Guard unit. He set about getting his affairs in order. His young son, Frankie, had a white rabbit and wooden cage, but Mrs. Dimmitt wouldn't accept responsibility. I suspect Frankie wasn't all that interested. At any rate, Mr. Dimmitt gave me the rabbit and cage, and I faced the problem of gaining agreement at home.

This proved to be not so difficult. The cage was not weather tight, so it had to be housed in a building. The Dimmitts used a screened back porch, and we had one, but I knew better than to ask. Our near neighbors, the Knedler family, had a small barn, serving as a garage, and there was an unused lean-to attached. They agreed to allow the rabbit, cage, feed, hay and straw in this building. I was to spread the rabbit manure and bedding on their small garden and spade the garden for them in the spring.

I enjoyed Nosy for a few months, as did the Knedler youngsters. Arlene, who frequently watched these children while the Knedlers shopped and on summer croquet nights, took the boys to visit Nosy and, perhaps, feed him some greens. Nosy fit Arlene's definition of a pet, and that is all he was. Unfortunately, Nosy chose to chew his way out of his cage, dug under the shed's door and was off to see the world. We searched for him over several days without success. This chapter was finally closed when a rather distant neighbor mentioned that some dogs killed a large white rabbit before they could be stopped. Well, not quite closed. Come spring, Dad insisted that I spade the Knedlers' entire garden even though Nosy had been only a short-term tenant.

But my passion for animal ownership had been fanned to life and, whether Dad knew it or not, he was in full retreat. I still had the idea that bantam chickens wouldn't require much food or space and they would provide some benefit. By late spring I had drawn up plans for a small chicken coop and gained reluctant permission to build it whenever I could afford the material. Ha! No Problem! One of Mother's former rural-school students operated a used-lumber business, and I noticed his ad in the local paper for a going-out-of-business sale.

(I knew of the relationship because whenever his name was mentioned Mother would recall telling him, her student, that if her was any greener the cows would eat hi,. This scared poor little Earl to the extent that she gave his special attention throughout the rest of the year.)

I prevailed upon Mother to trek to Fifth and Madison with me for an introduction and some negotiating support. What a brilliant ploy! Mr. Earl Henness gave me enough material for the coop, except the roofing. Dad did solve that little problem when the roofing was needed. All I had to do was haul the stuff home in the red wagon, which required only three or four trips. I worked on this building project on and off through the summer because I spent most of the time at Aunt Helen's farm, secretly gaining

and storing chicken knowledge.

I don't remember where and how I obtained the four bantam pullets later that fall. Arlene surprised me years later by remembering the names we gave three of them. She did like watching them run around the yard, especially since she knew them to be too small to eat. I could even get her to feed them so she could watch them come running. I allowed them to roam over the neighborhood through the fall and winter, but Dad warned me that this would have to change when the neighbors became interested in flower and vegetable gardens in the spring. Thoughts of his own vegetable garden brought this to his attention, I am sure.

But on to new experiences! The problems could be solved later. I bought a black cochin rooster by mail and great was the excitement when he arrived via Raliway Express. He was a handsome little devil, and he knew it. When introduced to his hens, he immediately assumed the role of master, provider and protector, and it was great fun to watch this little band forage when the snow cover allowed.

Unfortunately, this happy arrangement was not to last. First, one of the hens disappeared. Arlene and I searched the neighborhood and could find no trace. We were afraid that she had met Nosy's fate, so I made plans to fence a small part of the yard that was behind a rose arbor. The ground was frozen solid, so this project had to wait and, while it waited, I did lose the roster to some dogs. I am sure he went down fighting, and we grieved.

Meanwhile, Arlene spotted the missing hen and traced her to under our back porch, where she was setting on a clutch of eggs. We waited and waited and waited some more for those eggs to hatch until it was two weeks beyond when we expected them to hatch, based on the hen's disappearance date. We were curious, so at Arlene's urging I opened an egg, and we found a partially developed chick, which immediately expired. The hen did finally hatch three or four chicks, which was quite a feat, considering that her nest was on Iowa's frozen February ground. We moved the chicks to a box near the kitchen stove, and Arlene took over their care for several weeks. And she did a good job of it.

The chicken run was fenced as soon as I could do it, and the survivors scratched happily and safely on. We ate bantam eggs aplenty, but the excitement had gone out of the enterprise. We moved to the acreage at the end of the summer, and the bantams ultimately joined a flock of Rhode Island Red pullets that Dad bought for me to manage.

On my last trip to the Henness lumber emporium, I spotted a young lady playing catch by herself. She was able to throw the ball rather high for a girl, and she had remarkable success catching it. This much stimulated my interest, so I looked her over very carefully as I went by with my lumber. She was a stranger to me but, I discovered, a very attractive stranger. An attractive female with ball and glove and a measure of skill was worth noting, which I did. I also said, "Hi," followed by as rapid a retreat as my load of lumber would allow.

You can guess my excitement when she appeared in my class at the first day of

school! I lured her to a desk next to mine at the back of the room, but the teacher sensed a potential problem and soon changed this arrangement.

But I retained an advantage because I knew her new address--a temporary one, it turned out. I had a casual friend, Bob Kurka, who lived about a block from her, and we sometimes played softball on some vacant land situated immediately between his and her houses. I figured that a good softball game on Saturday afternoon might attract her attention. It did.

We came to have fairly regular games in the late afternoons and on Saturdays and Sundays during the fall, and Vivian often participated. She could hit the ball a mile, as we said, and she fielded fairly well, too. I was in love, but too shy to do anything but strike out whenever she pitched. Unfortunately this memorable period was not to last long. Vivian's family was living in the Henness house only temporarily, and they soon moved to Nebraska or some similar, previously God-forsaken place. I experienced my first broken heart and nobody knew, least of all the breaker. I do hope, however, that the Rodibaugh family appreciated the daily gift of the Des Moines Register, delivered to their door, a door about three blocks from my regular route.

This whole adventure was worthwhile. We had fun. And I had high hopes for more pleasure in the future. But, truthfully, I had no idea where that path would lead. In the beginning I became acquainted with the Kurka family. I knew Bob, my friend, to be an honest, dependable guy. Our dads were both carpenters and Mr. Kurka, together with his brother, had achieved some measure of success. What I didn't know was that the whole family, father, mother, sister and four brothers, made up one of the nicest family groups that I have known before or since.

The Kurkas kept some domestic rabbits, and Bob knew some others in town that had more than just an occasional pet. Remember that these were the years of World War II and meat, among other things, was rationed. Domestic rabbit meat was an attractive substitute for the rationed kinds. Rabbits are easy to keep; much easier, inside the town, than chickens. Bob and I toured those backyard rabbitries, and I visited the Kurka rabbitry often. What I was seeing only increased my excitement. I could see commercial possibilities! I began to think of the Knedler lean-to shed, and I started collecting Agriculture Department Bulletins and finding library books dealing with raising rabbits for fur, food and profit.

In the midst of my grand planning we moved to the acreage just south of the Fairfield city limits. This opened up all kinds of possibilities. Dad bought a flock of pullets for my care, and I did it, but my excitement had switched to rabbits. I built a rabbit hutch from USDA plans which, it turned out, were not up to the state of the art. The hutch was built for outside use, but Dad suggested I use the barn for protection. By placing the hutch just inside the barn door I gained the advantage of fresh air and the winter sun. Bob sold me a young Checkered Giant doe and my enterprise was under way.

Just then the incident with my hip struck me. Arlene would have nothing to do with the rabbit because she was aware of my goals. Dad gave it some minimal care and when I returned from the hospital, there was a great surprise. I had a doe and a litter. There was no way I could deal with a litter so, as I recall, I gave mother and family



back to Bob.

I still had the hutch and the desire. Within a few weeks we had moved to 600 South Main, and the hutch came along. It was set up (empty) in front of the old hatchery building that we called "the barn." Incidentally, while I had been plunging into the rabbit business, Dad was getting established with his honeybees. He moved them, too. The hives were on the second floor of the old building. The bees used the second floor windows, and their flight paths were above the heads of the unknowing neighbors.

Bob had acquainted me with *Small Stock* magazine, a monthly published out of Lamoni, Iowa, and mostly devoted to the raising of domestic rabbits. I learned of the American Rabbit and Cavy Breeders' Association, and I joined immediately. They provided a guidebook for rabbit raising and descriptions (standards of perfection) for the many recognized breeds. Oh, how I studied this material over the months of bed confinement! I learned of the "fancy" side of the business, that is, the breeding and exhibiting of pure-bred rabbits with the aim of improving the breed and, not so incidentally, selling breeding stock.

World War II was now winding down, and travel restrictions were being eased. The war-spawned rabbit boom lingered and was now being bolstered by an increasing number of highly competitive shows. These shows were usually held on two-day weekends through the fall, winter and spring.

My attraction to those beautiful black and white Checkered Giants continued, but I wasn't certain that this was the breed I should select. Then I learned of the local rabbit club and that it would be sponsoring a show the following March. I had now graduated to a wheelchair, and I figured I could get to the show and would make a decision about the breed at a place where most could be seen and compared.

Arlene helped me wheel to the show, some seven or eight blocks from our house. I spent the whole day there, looking carefully at each rabbit in its cage and watching as much judging as I could. Arlene brought me some lunch and helped me get home at the end of the long day. I don't know how I avoided restroom activity.

I decided upon Champagne D'Argents, a medium-sized meat and fur breed with a silvery coat color. I admired all of this, and I was impressed with the level of competition evident at the show. I identified two or three breeders, and I knew I had to get back on Sunday morning to talk with them.

Sunday was a day of snow, rain and cold, but I was so excited that I don't remember how I made it back to the show. As I think of it, Dad must have driven me, figuring out how to get the wheelchair into the back seat. After a morning of talking, I bought a doe from Harry Wagner of Burlington, Iowa, and a buck from Jim and Veva Roberts of Galesburg, Illinois. A local breeder, Bill Neibert, who had known me for years from his neighborhood grocery, was hurt that I bought nothing from him, but I saw little likelihood of beating him with stock purchased from him. As a matter of fact, I never won much of anything with stock resulting from these two original animals, but those four breeders remained staunch friends for the years I was active.

Depending upon the weather, I used the back porch or kitchen to build hutches from my wheel chair. The lumberyard delivered small quantities of material, probably because of Dad's connection. He gave me some simple tools and let me borrow whatever else I needed. (We had nothing electric--it was all by hand.) Arlene helped--when there--with handing and holding. Dad lined up the two or three finished hutches with the one already in the back yard and built the ramp down from the back porch. Mother fed the animals and cleaned the pens whenever the weather made it difficult for me to get out. With all of the family support my biggest problem was money because I had, by now, almost exhausted my savings.

As I evaluated my first litters that fall, two problems became evident. Although both of my original animals came from good lines, they did not match up to produce show-quality stock. At the same time, I had difficulty disposing of the rabbitry's production. Arlene, who loved the little black bunnies (babies of this breed are born black), absolutely refused to even consider eating one. The truth was that I agreed to a great degree, but I never admitted it. The only solution I could find was to sell them alive to a local broker at a price much less than production costs. Something had to change if I was to achieve any of my objectives!

I spent that fall and winter studying the show reports and absorbing the available written material. I decided that I wanted my foundation sire to come from the line of Robert Wilmot of Stamford, Connecticut. I wrote him, telling him in great detail what I wanted. He replied that he had exactly what I described and would ship the buck to me on approval. He sent me a very good buck, much better than my original purchase, but his coloration was too dark for my purpose. I had read enough to know that the trend favored a paler coloration, and I had stressed this need in my original letter. I wrote Mr. Wilmot that I was shipping the young buck back and explained why. He wired a request that I hold the animal while he sent a youngster that he thought would please me. When the little fellow arrived, I knew he was exactly what I wanted. I paid for the second buck, and Mr. Wilmot asked me to keep the other, show him when convenient, and if I could sell him, he would be happy to split the proceeds. He explained that he wanted his line to become better known in the Midwest.

I was now in the unfortunate position of maintaining three herd sires and only one doe, and she did not meet my newly-raised standards. I was also out of money. After much begging on my part, Arlene came through with a loan, which was a substantial part of her savings. I wrote a Mr. Rickard of Salida, Colorado, and described the young doe I hoped to find. His reply was a doe, three months old, by Railway Express, and a letter telling me that if I wanted her I should send what I thought she was worth. He would then send her papers. She was beautiful. I sent Mr. Rickard \$15.00 of the \$20.00 I had and told him that she was probably worth more but that was all I could afford. He graciously accepted the money, sent me her papers, asked me to show her when I could, and to let him know how she did.

After graduating from the wheelchair during August, 1946, I had been able to attend several shows in Iowa, Illinois and Missouri, courtesy of friends in the local rabbit club. I doubt that men like Earl Lyon, Ted Liggett, Ted Scherer, Bill Neibert and Robert Morgan ever had a glimmer of how much they influenced my life. I had no

automobile, of course, so one or another of them, most often Earl Lyon, would pick me up with my rabbits, get me to the show, make sure I had a place to eat and sleep, and then get me home. They taught me everything they knew about breeding, conditioning and showing rabbits and would never let me pay a full share of the expenses. As I attended a few shows, I became acquainted with a few of my competitors, breeders who also worked with Champagne D'Argents. There never was even a hint of condescension toward this sixteen-year-old kid who was trying to play in a man's game. I received nothing but encouragement.

I tried using Railway Express to ship to a couple of shows that fall, and this went well, yet the truth was that my young rabbits were not up to serious competition. But I was gaining experience at surprisingly little cost.

The Jefferson County Rabbit Club was planning their annual show for March of 1947. We gained sanction for it to be a Champagne D'Argent Sweepstakes Show, that is, a show whose competition points would count toward the breed's annual national exhibiting championship. Our local objective was to build up the entry, for in those days most of the Champagnes were within reasonable traveling and/or shipping distance from Fairfield. The entry for the breed went well over one hundred, which was probably one of the largest entries in history for the breed in this country.

When I looked at the number of entries I was sure I had been too enthusiastic. But I went home and worked with my two young bucks and the young doe, as well as with the senior buck I had purchased the year earlier. I had become convinced that the odds of a good animal winning could be greatly improved if coat and flesh were in top condition and if the animal was easy to handle--which was not always true of Champagnes.

I could not have dreamed of the outcome! The little doe was first in a large class, the junior buck first in a somewhat smaller class, and both the intermediate and senior buck placed in the top five of their classes. Between them, they won the most competition points by a large margin. As a result of this one show, my tiny rabbitry was the country's competition-points leader for my breed.

This amounted to very little for me, personally, for I was showing the results of other breeders' work. All I had added was condition and training. But I knew that the foundation was in place.

Jim Roberts advised me to make a serious bid for the national championship, since most of the larger shows would be in Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin. The grand finale, the National Convention Show, with an almost-certain huge entry, was to be in Milwaukee that year. The geography seemed favorable, so I agreed to try. But I knew that I would be competing against experienced breeders with much larger rabbitries. The bucks would have to carry the load until fall because I could show the doe just a few times before she was bred. If I was to win I was determined to have some animals of my breeding involved.

I continued to exhibit through the spring, limiting my entries to sweepstakes shows. There were some triumphs and some disappointments and a disaster when my young

buck returned from Kansas City with a "cold". This was considered incurable in rabbits and, although our local veterinarian experimented with forerunners of "wonder drugs," it remained uncured. I could no longer show him.

There were no major shows during the summer because of problems with animal condition and, also, shipping in hot weather. I decided to breed my young doe so I could have something of my own breeding to show in the late fall. So she, too, was withdrawn from the show string. I went into the fall season with a very slim lead in the points standing, but with my best animals out of competition. I still had two senior bucks and a litter of decent juniors out of my original doe. There was an obvious problem. With only one blue ribbon per class, I would be defeating myself frequently. I decided to split my weakened string, exhibiting at two shows on the same or consecutive weekends. This worked fairly well and as the National Convention show loomed, I remained within striking distance of first place in the standings.

Meanwhile, my prize doe had produced a very small litter in July. The youngsters would be just a few days beyond the minimum age for the Convention show. A young doe looked very promising, the young buck just average. I continued to work with what I had, and I had hopes for the young doe, but not at such a young age.

I shipped four animals, and I don't remember how three of them fared. Two, I think, slipped into the top five in their large classes. The young doe, however, was first in her class of forty or so, Best Junior (beating the junior bucks), and Best of Breed, defeating an entry of over one hundred fifty, and ended up third in the colored-fur class. All were and are unbelievable wins for a minimum-age junior at a major show with a nationwide entry of the best. Her points clinched the 1947 national championship for my rabbitry. I floated in the air! A more practical consideration: my sales of young breeding and show stock soared instantly from a base of nothing. This made the financing of my early college years a little easier.

While all of this was developing other matters of more lasting importance were brewing. When I squirmed into the national rabbit scene, there was a raging controversy over the wording of the Champagne standard of perfection as it related to coat color.

Many of the established breeders favored the existing wording, which allowed a darker color because, I think, they had been breeding darker animals. I was interested, of course, but I had no real knowledge of the issue. I thought the paler animals more attractive, but then I talked to a furrier from Detroit who was trying to develop a market for natural Champagne pelts. He believed that a pale top coat with a strong slate-blue undercoat was essential to commercial success with natural Champagne pelts.

I understood that future breeding-stock sales would require a strong commercial base for the breed. Profits from rabbit-meat production were marginal at best. But with enhanced income from furs a commercial rabbitry could be profitable. A true believer was created.

Over the months I sent a few letters to the Champagne D'Argent Federation

Newsletter, and they were published. The editor was probably happy to get anything for publication. But a lively discussion of the issue was stirred up in the newsletter. The revised standard was later approved by the membership, and this was a good thing because I had already started down this road with my breeding program.

After reading my letters, the Federation President asked me to become the Publicity Committee Chairman. Actually, I was to be the committee. My duty was to gather as much positive news as possible and weave it into a monthly promotional piece to appear in *Small Stock* magazine. This invitation came during the season of rejections born of my pulp baseball stories. My writing spirit was bruised, so I declined. President Larry Miller, who claimed to be on the editorial staff of the *Toledo (Ohio) Blade*, responded that my enthusiasm and viewpoint fitted me for the job. Arlene, once again, volunteered to help with grammar and spelling, so I agreed to give it a try for the balance of the year. Larry could not have known how unqualified I was for this assignment. But I kept at it for the better part of two years. There were no Pulitzer nominations, but the last columns were better than the first, and none were rejected.

Later that same summer, 1947, Jim Roberts decided to run for the position of Secretary of the Federation. This was the most influential of the elected offices because all of the day-to-day business was conducted by the secretary. He was very familiar with my lack of qualifications, but in trying to put together a balanced slate of candidates, he asked me to run for one of the director positions. I had now built up a little confidence so I agreed. I actually led the winning ticket by a small margin, demonstrating the advantage of name recognition.

So 1947 was the year I became a magazine columnist, a director of a national club, I led a successful fight to change the standard of perfection, won the national sweepstakes championship and bred the Best-of-Breed winner at the National Convention show.

The first meeting of the newly elected officers was on New Years Day, 1948, in Champaign, Illinois. There were officers from Texas, California, Kansas, Indiana and Michigan who did not know me. You can imagine they were surprised when I walked in, and you can guess that I was scared. But they all treated me with friendly respect, even when I said dumb things--just as any high-school student might do. When our business was concluded, I had my first taste of white lightning, straight from the Kentucky hills. One taste was adequate.

Except for the experiences, most of my rabbit-related activities were for naught. Naturally colored rabbit furs of any pattern or hue never did become a factor in the fur market. Then I had to make a decision about college during the spring of 1948. I could stay in Fairfield, attend Parsons College, and keep my rabbit business, or I could enroll at an out-of-town college. Most of my friends were going away and, also, I was convinced that engineering was my field. So I enrolled at Iowa State College in Ames, Iowa. Which meant that I would have to dispose of my rabbitry.

Mother agreed to take care of the rabbits through the fall quarter while I made sure I could stick at State. I did, barely. So over Christmas vacation I disposed of the

rabbits and hutches at fire-sale prices. I did not run for re-election, and I resigned my publicity job as of December 31. Since I ended up at Parsons College for a degree in Economics/Business Administration, I have often wondered about the course of my life had I made a different decision as I finished high school. As much regret as I sometimes feel, I never think that I made a mistake.

I recorded all of this because I wanted to brag a little. Yes, that is true. But I had other reasons in keeping with the greater purpose of this account.

My junior and senior years in high school were coincident with Arlene's freshman and sophomore years. You can understand that I was very busy--not just busy, but enthusiastically and totally wrapped up with my rabbit activities, my job, and to some extent, school. Arlene gained a new set of friends and, to say the least, operated in different social circles. Arlene and friends dated older boys, boys who had automobiles and tended to live in the small towns around Fairfield. A couple of them had suspect reputations, and the bunch was regarded by us local guys, with some envy, as a "fast" crowd. I must hasten to add that Arlene was never directly associated with the wildest of these guys, although they were frequently in the same car or caravan. Arlene's closest male friends were acceptable to me, even though they pretty much ignored my existence. But they were very nice to Mother, frequently transporting her to and from work, especially in bad weather.

The point I have been trying to illustrate is that for a variety of reasons Arlene's universe and my universe were moving apart at an accelerating rate. Perhaps this process got under way as I was making recovery from my injuries. On the whole (there were exceptions) we paid little attention to each other from the time I left home for college (1948) until my family moved to Houston, Texas (sometime after 1958). I regret this ten-year gap in our close relationship, but it certainly helped bring us closer together in the years following. However this may be, I do elect to close out any report of incidents and activities with the year 1948. From that point on there are others who know much more of Arlene and her life.

## **CLOSURE**

Conclusions are difficult. Although coming out of the same ancestry and environment, Arlene and I emerged as vastly different people. I am not certain that we always understood each other, not even during the later years as our mutual love and respect grew. But with long periods of reflection spread over recent months I now think that I understand more than I once did.

It is obvious that I gained much more in the way of outside stimulation and support and, yes, achievement, while Arlene was largely confined to home responsibilities. If our home environment had been more positive, these inside forces could have been more useful to her. Then there was the general thrust of small-town, midwestern social forces in the forties and fifties. Girls, even bright and active girls, were generally considered as future homemakers, teachers, nurses or, perhaps occasionally, secretaries. There was little working to broaden Arlene's horizons or to raise the level of her dreams. However, there was nothing wrong with the depth of her perceptions.

Although I did not fully realize it at the time, home was not a happy place for Arlene. There was almost no expression of love or concern in the absence of a disaster. There was very little communication except of the most superficial kind. Both Mother and Dad lacked social skills in mixed company. While they did not argue excessively or fight, there was very little basic agreement. Duty was the most important consideration as all of our activities were defined. I escaped more of this than did the others because, without knowing what I was doing, or the why of it, I swerved somewhat away from the family at an early age.

Arlene's role, on the other hand, was grounded in responsibility to the family. We were grateful, but I doubt that any of us truly appreciated what she did for us.

I have little wonder, now, that her main goal, as she finished high school, was to get away from home. With some delay, she was able to accomplish this. After experiencing some starts and stops and restarts, the world became a better place for her.

Was all of this evil? Did it work to produce a rotten, devious, selfish person? Not at all! Arlene was not a perfect human being, but she came as close as most of us can hope to come. She had one great attribute that just overwhelmed whatever might have been her shortcomings. She was simply, basically, fundamentally, a very kind person. I never knew her to hurt another intentionally, and her good was done with no attempt to gain credit. She was not above criticizing another, especially me, but she would always close her comments with some counterpoint praise, making the criticized person into something of a hero.

Second only to kindness was her patience. She was not a patient child, but I gained a shadowed view of her patience over the last years of her life. Coupled with patience was a generally optimistic outlook, which was very rare in our family; only Mother could manage this to some extent. And then there is the matter of her personal courage as she fought her consuming disease. I am convinced that she fought not for herself but, rather, for those of us who depended upon her.

Other accurate, but sometimes inadequate, Arlene adjectives: honest, sincere, moral, concerned, sensitive, faithful, dependable. You could add others, which would almost certainly include loving. These are wonderful attributes for a sister, and I did come to appreciate all of them. In fact, as I write this, I appreciate them even more. Was she a perfect human being? No! Absolutely not! Had she been flawless, she would not have been lovable, and she was certainly loved by several people.

She was an opinionated person, and while I might help shape her opinions, was never able to change one. Her opinions were sometimes based on little more than prejudices, a practice she probably learned from Mother. But, then, Arlene's prejudices, like mine, were based on very sound principles. It was only when we disagreed that Arlene was wrong.

I'll close this work of love with a simple little story that may well sum up all I have tried to record. It was a bitterly cold New Year's Eve, closing out either 1951 or 1952. My date had succumbed to some form of the plague, an excuse I experienced rather

frequently, it seemed. Arlene and I had nothing to do, so we decided to drive to the Fairfield Square to observe the action. Of which, as usual, there was none. We had no other promising destination, and it was so cold that I could hardly shift gears, and the defroster almost completely failed its job. We decided to just sit and talk. Arlene produced a bottle of illegal (in Iowa) champagne, which made our decision very sound, indeed.

As we stayed alert for Oliver "One Gun" Gohn, Fairfield's one-man patrol and SWAT team, we talked about what we would do with our lives. After we got past piles of money and powerful (and warm) cars, we approached some serious possibilities. In the end we agreed that we would seek to make a serious contribution to those concentric circles making up the world around us. That we would provide more than we used, that we would raise up more than we destroyed, that we would contribute more than we required. And all of this to be measured in human, rather than material terms.

Before many months expired I left for a career in what came to be called financial services. I enjoyed some success; at least I gained a savings account and a reliable automobile. I developed some wild ideas about our work and the way we allowed our people to it. I pursued visionary strategies with vigor and fought passionate battles with great cunning: I even won some temporary victories. Having left the workplace seven years ago, I can hope that some few remember my name, but I truly doubt that anybody both remembers and understands my concepts of work and service.

Arlene ventured into public education. Over the years she was exposed to hundreds of children at an impressionable stage of their lives. I am certain that she "reached" many of these children, and I have heard evidence that she profoundly affected at least a few in a highly positive way.

I'll leave it to you. Which of us best achieved that early objective? Which of us did the most with the least? ' And yet, perhaps, these are not appropriate measures of the worth of a life. Arlene was a competent, compassionate, caring, sustaining human being, and that is pretty much the sum of it. Who could possibly hope for anything more?

And now she has found the beauty of that hoped for, and she gained it through faith, but her achievements did serve others in a profound way.

Ralph Killion  
July 1996