

## CHAPTER III

### A FAMILY LOSES ITS MOTHER

At five years of age and with seven brothers and sisters, there are lots of things to do. I was big enough to start riding the horses and to learn how to guide them by pulling on the reins. My older brothers would let me shift the gears in the car when they pushed in the clutch and said "now". I helped by pushing in the choke and pulling down the spark control when they cranked the motor to the car and it started. In those days, most cars did not have a starter to start the motor, a crank was turned which spun the motor as I now do by pulling the rope on the boat motor. We milked the cows by hand to get milk to drink and for the oatmeal and I was allowed to help my brother milk the cows. Sometimes when I squeezed the teat, the cow would swing her tail and hit me in the face or kick and spill the milk in the bucket. Gradually, I learned to press my head in her side to hold the tail and to use my arm to block her leg against kicking the bucket.

Ben and George trapped and hunted skunks, opossums, coons, foxes, weasels and rabbits. They would carry a rifle on their rounds of the trapline to shoot the animals. The rifle was especially handy for killing a trapped skunk because he had a shooting range of about ten feet and somehow by instinct was able to obtain perfect aim without the benefit of his eyes — he shot backwards.

A country school room often had the smell of skunk from a boy hit by a skunk. Occasionally, Ben and George would take me with them on inspection of the trapline and let me carry the catch. Skunks were carried in a gunny bag and held at arms-length to avoid contact with the odor on the skunk. I still remember the location and appearance of the best dens and how to place the traps and cover them with grass and leaves to improve the chance of a catch.

The James Brothers, Minor and Tut, of Waterford, loved to fish in the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers. The Potomac was closest at White's Ferry, which was about three miles north of Leesburg and just off of Route 15. They had two choices for fishing the Shenandoah River, which was at the western foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains. One fishing place was the point at which Route 7 crossed the river between Bluemont and Berryville; the other was at Big Eddy just below Route 9 between Hillsboro and Charles Town, West Virginia. In order to get bait for their fishing expeditions, they would seine the creek on our farm for minnows, crayfish, and frogs. I followed them along the bank with high expectations, for occasionally they could catch a six-inch sucker in the net and toss it to me.

With so many exciting things going on and the family so well, it seemed that we were on top of the world. Dad had two cars — a 1923 Buick and a 1924 Overland — and my older brothers were learning to drive in those days before a driving license was required. Inus had married Dave Fletcher and they had a baby girl named Emma, and I was an uncle at five years of age only to be surpassed by Glenn who was an uncle at two. Cecil was in his second year of college at Washington and Lee. Wright was a senior in high school. Ben was in the first year of high school. George was in the fifth grade and Mildred was in the second grade. They attended the Waterford High and Grade School which was one and the same — only the outhouses were



separate buildings located one hundred feet from the front entrance and marked "Girls" and "Boys". The boys' outhouse was a two-holer plus a trough. I never knew what was in the girls.

Across the road from the school was a shed with a dozen horse stalls. The country children used the stalls for their horses which they rode or which pulled the buggies. Although we lived two-and-one-half miles away, transportation to school was still the responsibility of the parents. Walking was a frequent means of getting to school. Next to the horse stalls, aligned side by side on the street were the Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian churches. Our family belonged to the Presbyterian Church, as did the Carrs, the Steeles, and the Grahams. At the bottom of the steep hill was Cooley's Store, James Brothers' Meat Market, the Post Office and Buck's Barbershop. On the left at the bottom of the hill was the blacksmiths' shop with the bellows and charcoal fire for heating horseshoes red hot so he could bend them to fit the horses hoofs. I still remember his fitting the hot shoe to the horse's foot by holding it along side the foot and occasionally touching the hoof and getting a foul odor of burning feet. I never understood how he could drive nails into the horse's hoof when attaching the shoes, without hurting the horse.

I had just turned five when Mother started having headaches. The intensity of the headaches increased and she was taken to the hospital at Leesburg. In 1925 few medical diagnostic tools were available to the doctors and no cause could be identified for her headaches.

Since Glenn was only two years old and I was five and the others, except Dad, were attending school, it became necessary for Dad to find someone to take care of us two. We were taken to live with the Duff family. The Duffs were friends of Dad and Mother on Wallen's Creek and had moved to Leesburg. The Duffs had a large family of six children, and I recall it was fun playing with them and I felt at home with the cows on their dairy farm. The farm was south of Leesburg and off of old Route 15. If one continued south out of Leesburg past the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Station, the Hurst Lumbermill (the one that was moved in the Leesburg 1984 restoration of a shopping center off Route 7 east), to where old Route 15 curved to the right at the edge of town and at the curve continued straight on the takeoff dirt road, crossed the bridge over the creek, and immediately turned right up the bluff one would arrive at the Duff home. The home can be seen today from the new Route 7 bypass at the intersection of Route 15.

Mother's condition at the Hospital continued to worsen. I wanted to go see her, but children were not allowed in the hospital. Little did I realize that I would never see her alive again, nor would the entire family ever be together again. Mother died on October 30, 1924. Cecil was in pre-medical studies at W. & L. and requested an autopsy. The autopsy revealed that Mother had a very large brain tumor — a condition totally unexpected, but which explained her suffering. Her death was to change the rest of my life and that of my brothers and sisters.

In retrospect, I believe that the principles she lived and taught and the life objectives she demonstrated and which I experienced in those first five years of my life remained with me throughout my life and served me well. Those five years under Mother's guidance made up the entirety of my life to that time — a child-raising task to which Mother gave her undivided attention. Although short, the total time I spent with Mother may well exceed the child-mother relationship time available in many families today.



Mother was returned to the parlor at the farm prior to her burial at the Leesburg Cemetery. It was in the parlor in the casket that I retain my second memory of seeing Mother. I went in with my father and brothers and sisters; she lay in the casket with her feet toward the kitchen and her head toward the barn. I am thankful they let me see her as she lay there free of pain. I did not go to the cemetery for the burial at which the Rev. Fountain of the Waterford Presbyterian Church officiated.

The grave remained unmarked until 1946 when I arranged with Mr. Lawrence Muse of Leesburg to have a stone erected with a supplied inscription. A letter was written to all my brothers and sisters informing them of the cost and designating their share. They all were pleased that I took care of this long-neglected remembrance of Mother. Dad's name was placed on a matching marker at the time of his death in April, 1967.

Mother must have been the "super glue" that held our family together over the years. At the time of her death, the national economy was depressed and Dad was in debt to numerous people and institutions for the balance of the payments on the two farms, the cattle, and farm machinery. Dad had expected that the prosperity of 1919-1923 would continue forever and had acted accordingly. Immediately following Mother's burial, the division of our family began. Uncle Raymond Richmond, Mother's brother from Norton, Virginia, took Glenn and me to live with them. And so Glenn and I were the only children at their house. I remember that Uncle Raymond, his son, and Glenn and I took a sleeper train at the Paeonian Springs Station on the Washington and Old Dominion to Washington. Actually, the line ended at the Rosslyn Station in Virginia. On the train, I slept with Uncle Raymond in the upper berth and Glenn slept with Uncle Raymond's son in the lower berth; both of us were next to the train walls so we wouldn't fall out. In Washington, the sleeping car was transferred to the train for Roanoke; from there we traveled on to Norton, our future home for six to nine months; it was also Glenn's home through all of his school years.

Uncle Raymond and Aunt Martha had a house up several steps from the sidewalk on the street. A concrete wall ran along the street and at its top was the grassed front yard. The wall had a door behind which was a room for coal storage. Glenn and I, even at that young age, carried buckets of coal up the steps for use in the stoves which heated the house.

Uncle Raymond owned and operated a coal mine in the mountain outside of Norton and that was the source of the coal. Once he took Glenn and me to the coal mine. I recall the herd of small Shetland ponies which were used to pull the coal cars into, through, and out of the cave entrance to the mine. The miners would ride the cars into the mine and drive the ponies. The coal was dug and loaded by hand into the pony-pulled cars. Uncle Raymond promised me a Shetland pony, but our early separation kept him from keeping his promise. However, when I was ten years old, I had a Shetland pony given to me by someone else.

Uncle Raymond had one brother, Uncle Oscar Richmond, who we called Uncle Os. Uncle Os was an undertaker in Norton and lived down the street about two blocks in a red brick house. He and his wife did not have any children. I always thought he was rich (as are "all undertakers") until his death. His estate when to Uncle Raymond and my Mother. Since Mother was dead, her share of the estate was divided among the children. I received one eighth of Mother's share — a grand sum of two hundred and fifty dollars.



Glenn and I spent six months with Uncle Raymond and Aunt Martha. They were kind and took us to see our relatives at Pennington Gap and Wallen's Creek below Stickleyleville. It was not too far to where Inus and Mildred lived and I saw them once or twice. Aunt Martha and Uncle Raymond were strict and taught us to do many chores around the house. She believed in cleanliness and I can remember her bathing Glenn and me and scrubbing us with soap and a wash rag. I never understood why their faucets were reversed in the bathroom sink and the hot water came out of the cold water spigot on the right and the cold came out of the left spigot. This crazy plumbing was ingrained in my memory by the numerous times I nearly burned my hands using the hot water spigot mistakenly for the cold water.

Glenn and I adjusted to our new home as all kids adjust to satisfy a need; after all, we had each other. Although this was my first stay away from "home", it was far from my last until I found a permanent home with the VanDeventers. Little did I realize that the six months with Glenn at Uncle Raymond's was the last time that I would spend any time with him except for a get-together at a family reunion at Cecil's house and a couple of visits with him at his Aurora, Illinois, home when he was the Medical Director for the Bell Laboratories at Naperville.

Mildred's and Inus' lives were also drastically changed by Mother's death. In a family of six boys and two girls, the relationship of the two girls must have been very close in spite of the difference in age of fifteen years. Sometimes I conclude that Inus had promised Mother just before her death that she would care for Mildred.

Inus and David took Mildred to raise immediately following Mother's death. They lived on a farm on Wallen's Creek, a few miles downstream from Stickleyleville where Dad and Mother had lived before going to Richmond. Inus and Dave had been married three years and had a little daughter, Emma, of less than one year. Without hesitation they accepted the responsibility of making a home for a second child of eight. Inus and Dave later had another child, David, and so there were three children in their family. Even today I notice a brother-sister relationship between David, Emma, and Mildred — increasing from seven to nine the number of her live-in brothers and sisters.

Some six months after Mother's death, Dad had recovered sufficiently to want to reunite the family. In the middle of the winter in 1926, he and Ben drove four hundred miles from Waterford to Norton in the 1924 Overland to pick us up and take us back to the farm at Waterford. The winter trip back was cold with the is-inglass snap-on car curtains and no car heater. For warmth, separate blankets were available in the front and rear seats.



## CHAPTER IV

### AN ALL-MALE FARM FAMILY

Farm life was not the same without Mother, Inus, Mildred and with Cecil away at Washington and Lee and planning to enter the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia to study medicine. This left an all-male family consisting of Dad, Wright, Ben, George, Glenn and me. Wright, Ben and George went to school in Waterford and Glenn and I stayed at home. As best as I can remember, Wright did most of the cooking, cleaning house, and washing clothes. However, I think we all pitched in for there was never a Hickam man in the family, except Cecil, who didn't know how to cook and clean the house. Ben was always the best to help Dad with the farming, and he tried to prevent Dad's loss of the farm. Ben's love for farming resulted in keeping a hand in part-time farming all his life.

One learned to do chores at an early age, particularly in an all-male family. At six years of age, I was milking our only cow and sole source of milk for the table. Cows are known to object to being milked. I often laugh at a sign I saw on a milk truck — "Milk the Complete Food — an UDDER Delight." One day when I was milking the cow and had a half bucket of milk, she kicked the bucket and the milk spilled over me and the ground like a milk shower. I cried and went to the house with a bent, empty bucket knowing that we would have no milk to drink until the next milking.

I don't know whether my milking was self-taught or I learned it from watching my brothers. I was always good at learning to do things by imitating others. Often people have credited me with being an expert when all I was doing was imitating an expert. Doers are among the best teachers that you will ever have and non-doers are among the worst.

Dad took Glenn and me on trips in the car when our older brothers were in school in 1925. We would go up the mountain to the Cross home on the road to Stumptown. The Cross home was surrounded by wild huckleberry bushes and we would pick them to eat over corn flakes and use in huckleberry cobbler. Huckleberry vines grow in the ground covered with moss and the moss appears whitish rather than green. I suppose they require a high acid soil.

Mr. Cross was a carpenter and had built one of Dad's barns. His house was different from most houses in that it reflected only his trade. The house was built completely of plain boards without the use of mortar, bricks, rock or paint. The chimney was a steel pipe supported by wires. Mr. Cross' house was the old weather board type. I suspect the weather boarding was poplar planks, as it was for some of the barns he built. Poplar is one of the best weathering boards when left unprotected.

We had poplar lumber on the farm and, because of its light weight, it is an excellent wood for kids to build with. It is also soft and a single light stroke of the hammer will drive a six-penny nail halfway in. It is a good wood for learning to whittle and on which to test the working of a two-handle draw knife of the type used by carpenters. Being strong and light, it is a wood of choice for a tree house.

Some times we would go just past Stumptown and turn right at the store, drive



a quarter mile to the picnic area in the woods for a camp meeting gathering. These were big church picnic gatherings of families and children with a little bit of gospel preaching and singing and men gathering for farm talk. It was fun having other kids to pay with, new trees to climb, and to eat that memorable fried chicken that Virginia country people pride themselves for. I always thought that the Kentucky Colonel used a Virginia recipe for his friend chicken. It has to be the best.

Ben and George were thrifty and did several things to earn spending money. 'Coon hunting at night was big in those days of the twenties for 'coon skin coats were in fad for those who could afford them. Ben and George used to night-hunt 'coons with Willard and Raymond McKimmey who lived on the adjoining farm and had 'coon dogs. The dogs would smell the 'coon scent and trail it to the source. 'Coon dogs bay a lot and especially when on the trail of a 'coon. On hearing the dogs bay, the hunters would strike out in a run through the woods and brush to catch up with the dogs and the 'coon. The 'coon escapes the dogs by climbing a tree. My brothers had one of those six-cell flashlights especially made for 'coon hunting. With it they could spot a 'coon in the tallest tree and, with the rifle, shoot it down. It must have been a good trick to sight a rifle at a 'coon in the dark with only the light from the flashlight and hit it with the bullet. The dogs would set up a howl in anticipation of the falling 'coon and pounce on it when it hit the ground. The hunters grabbed the dogs to be sure that they didn't bite holes in the pelt and cheapen it so it wouldn't bring top price. A gunny bag was used to carry the caught 'coons.

Unlike skunk pelts, 'coon pelts were graded by size only; big 'coons brought ten dollars and small 'coons five dollars. Skunks were graded by both size and number. A #1 skunk was nearly pure black with a small white stripe down its back. A #4 skunk was nearly one half white and #2 and #3 were in between in their relative amount of black and white. A large #1 skunk pelt would bring as much as three dollars and a large #4 skunk pelt would sell for one dollar. Some trappers were accused of dyeing the white of a #4 skunk to black and selling it as a #1 skunk for more money. The skunk coat manufacturers must have dyed them all, for I only remember seeing #1 coats. Since all skunk furs were sold for the same use, I never fully understood the large price difference between a #1 and #4 skunk pelt. There was no difference in the odor.

The 'coon and skunk pelts had to be stretched and dried inside-out before they were sold. Ben and George would skin the 'coons and skunks and stretch them inside-out on boards with a pointed V at one end to fit the nose and head. The body of the pelt was not split open but left as a cylinder. The stretch boards had to be the right width to stretch the pelt. Tacks were used to hold the pelt stretched for drying. It was important to remove all the flesh from the pelt for flies would go for the flesh and that could ruin the pelt. Some hunters used salt to help cure the pelt but we depended on only air and sunlight.

In the 1920's, magazines were full of all kinds of get-rich-fast advertisements. The advertising load in magazines was large because radios and televisions were unheard of. To enhance your hunting luck, there were advertisements of smoke bombs which would force the animals to leave their dens and run into a gunny bag held over the den. Close the gunny bag at the right time and you had your animal for skinning. Furthermore, smoke bombs worked in the daytime. Since skunks were nocturnal animals, the smoke bombs made it possible to trap skunks twenty-four hours a day. This was a lot easier than digging them out of the den. Ben and George were quickly tempted and sent in their money. Shortly, a box of twelve one-inch



smoke bombs arrived. They tried them on the best dens by lighting one and dropping it down the den to force the animal up and out. The smoke was yellow and stunk like a sulfur-containing gas. A bag was placed over the hole to the den and held with rocks as we waited in anticipation for the bag to move. It never happened; we concluded there were no animals in the den and would go to the next den. Never did we suspect that the approach didn't work; dishonesty in advertisement was unheard of in our innocent minds. Later, when I got big enough to trap alone and lived at the Van Deventer Farm, I tried the same smoke bombs — without success.

Ben used to take me with him into town at night. I remember his inviting me to hear the Jack Sharkey and Gene Tunney championship fight in 1926. The broadcast was at the Leesburg Theater across from White's old clothing store on Market Street. Normally, the theater ran black-and-white silent movies with the typed words at the bottom of the picture. I got tired of listening to the fight and the yelling and smoking. Ben took me out for some fresh air a couple of times. I finally fell asleep on Ben's lap. Ben had a lot of patience. He looked after me and often did things with me although he was eight years older than I.

In addition to earning spending money by selling 'coon and skunk pelts, Ben and George sold bean poles in Waterford. In those days, everyone in town and the country had gardens. Favorite garden vegetables included Kentucky wonder climbing beans and climbing lima beans (bush limas hadn't been invented). In order to support the bean vines, people would plant the hills of beans in rows so that four hills made a square of two feet by two feet. The same planting geometry (checking) was used in the corn fields so that the corn could be plowed both east/west and north/south to remove all the weeds. One pole was shoved in the ground at each of the four hills forming the square. The four poles were tied together at the top. The four poles looked like they were the support poles of an Indian tepee. The wood used for the poles was dogwood, which was strong and long-lived. Ben and George would cut the dogwood poles in the woods, point the ends with a hatchet, and clear off the branches. Typically, the poles were seven feet long, two inches in diameter at the large end and one inch in diameter at the small end. The large end was pointed so it could be driven into the ground. The bean vines would climb to the top and bear beans along the entire length. The poles were covered with bean vines and they reminded me of the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. Ben and George would load the poles in a wagon pulled by two horses or mules and go to town to peddle the poles house-to-house. It took a good while to sell the poles, for some people had to sort through the old poles, decide how many beans they were going to plant, and then count exactly how many poles were needed. In 1926 the throw-away economy was unknown and people would not waste money by buying extra poles. I think the going price in 1926 for bean poles was five cents each.

Shoeing horses was an important task in those days when most farm work and much transportation depended on horses. Even though dad had a tractor and car, they were too expensive to use all the time because they used non-home-grown fuel. I used to take the horses to Waterford to get them shod by the blacksmith. It was too and one-half miles to the school and the blacksmith's shop was one-half mile further. It was straight down the road past the Catoctin Presbyterian Church and on the left where three roads came together as one approached Waterford from Paeonian Springs. Just beyond the blacksmith's shop was the Virts House and across the street was the home of Leslie Myers, a painter. Dad would not send me off alone to the



blacksmith shop on horseback to get the horse shod. Rather, he would have the neighbor's little six-year-old girl ride behind me bareback. Riding bareback keeps one warm in winter but it is sure hot and slippery in summer when the horse sweats. The little girl would put her arms around me to hold on and nothing is worse than being hugged around the stomach at that age. I think Dad had the girl go along so the blacksmith would take us first rather than having to wait our turn. The work horse was so big and we so small that the blacksmith would have to help us down off the horse. Either he helped us back on or we led the horse beside a wooden fence, crawled up the fence and jumped on the horse's back. I don't know why someone didn't think to build a set of steps near where kids had to mount and dismount horses. Sometimes the fences were wire fences with a strand of barb wire on the top. It was a little tricky to mount a horse from this type of fence. Rather than squad for a spring because of the barb wire, you learned to balance and push off the top of the locust fence post.

Until one has lived in an all-male family, one does not realize how much the female family members contribute to making a house a home. A unisex family is never a family of choice. The lady folks do so many good things that never get done without them. They are much needed to maintain a stable condition when things aren't going well. They seem to have a human touch for which males cannot substitute and money cannot buy. In times of sickness, the absence of a female family member is much felt. Glenn came down with pneumonia in 1925 when he was four years old. It is a wonder we males didn't lose him and probably would have without Dr. Heaton, the country doctor from Waterford. Dr. Heaton came and lived at the house for one to two days until the pneumonia broke and Glenn started breathing more easily. The only medicine the doctor had for pneumonia was bootleg whiskey. He kept giving Glenn a few drops every hour to keep open his breathing and making him cough up the mucous that interfered with his breathing. Finally, on the second day, Glenn's temperature started to stop and he gradually improved.



## CHAPTER V

### THE FAMILY BREAKUP

In the spring of 1926, Wright graduated from high school and probably could see little or no future housekeeping for a bunch of boys. Glenn was only four and in need of a better home. We had cousins by the name of Hickam who had a dairy farm on the Williamsburg Road just behind the Richmond city limits. Wright was good at farming but did not have the love for it that Ben had. The Hickams needed help to run the dairy farm and going there meant that Glenn would have the good guidance of women relatives. In the summer of 1926 Wright and Glenn left for their new home near Richmond. Although I maintained contact with them over the years, future visits with them were few.

This left a family of Dad, Ben, George, and me. One might wonder why at six I was not in school in the spring of 1926. In those days one had to be a full seven on opening school day to go to school. You started in the first grade; kindergarten was not introduced until several years later.

When I was six, Ben was fourteen and George was eleven, and Dad was forty-five. I suppose the Catoctin Presbyterian Church continued to hold an influence on our lives, although our church life was not as regular as when Mother was alive.

Churches in those days had an annual rally for new members. Somehow Ben, George, and I got swept up in this revival meeting. I recall vividly when Ben, George, and I joined the Catoctin Presbyterian Church in 1926 and how unusual it was to have three brothers standing in front of the congregation and being sprinkled by the same minister as had officiated at Mother's interment services. Few things were as significant throughout my life as joining the Catoctin Presbyterian Church.

The choir singing at the Catoctin Presbyterian Church was memorable, even to a six-year-old, because of the Myers brothers who lived near the Blacksmith Shop. Leslie and Doug sang duets for years in the church and were good at Gospel songs. They later sang on Sundays on the radio out of the Frederick station. I think they were the first radio celebrities I ever knew and to see two small town boys make good in radio was most inspiring. Doug's wife, Freda, played the organ and led the church choir. When I revisited the church in 1979, her daughter, Ellen Faith Myers Donaldson, was playing the organ and leading the choir.

In the fall of 1926 I started school at Waterford. One room had the first and second grade. Miss Minniebelle Arnold was the teacher. She was of the Arnold Family who lived on a farm near Lovettsville. She boarded in Waterford and went home on weekends. One weekend when I was in the first grade, she took me home with her; to be taken home by a teacher as a great honor.

I was always left-handed for things I did with one hand and right-handed for things I did with two hands, such as batting a ball and swinging an axe. In those days no one was allowed to write left-handed. Miss Arnold must have changed my pencil from my left hand hundreds of times. I even remember her hitting my left hand with a ruler in her attempts to break me of a "bad" writing habit. I persevered and she finally gave in and let me write left-handed, provided I would hold my pen-



cil correctly and keep my hand below the line, unlike many left-handers who write upside down. Incidentally, I later found out I was right-eyed, which made shooting a gun from the left shoulder and sighting with the right eye a difficult task. Many times the gun stock of the shotgun jarred my cheek bone when fired. I often wonder if being left-handed and right-eyed influenced my batting average in that great American sport, baseball.

The first grade was not difficult, for school lessons always came easy, or I put forth the effort to learn when required. Miss Arnold was a good teacher whom I liked and who liked me. First grade was all day so that the country kids could go home at the end of school with their older brothers and sisters. I either walked or rode horseback the two-and-one-half miles to school. The McKinney girls drove a buggy and sometimes they would pick me up and put me between them. They left Ben and George to walk, for it was a one-seated buggy.

During the first grade, packing lunch often consisted of gathering a half dozen eggs and taking them to school. At noon, Ben, George, and I would walk down the hill to Cooley's store. We would sell the eggs to Mr. Cooley and use the money to buy cheese and crackers for lunch. Sometimes there was enough money to get a few cookies out of the big cookie boxes with the glass doors.

The Edgar Steele family lived outside of Waterford on a dairy farm that straddled the creek. The farm was on the north side of the bridge as one entered Waterford from Paeonian Springs. The Steeles came to Loudoun from near Abingdon in southwest Virginia. They had five girls and one boy and belonged to the Catoctin Presbyterian Church. Their family was about the same age as the six youngest in our family. There was Edgar (the oldest), Louise, Katherine, Wanda, Virginia, and Margaret (the youngest). With an almost all-girl family I suppose they needed help milking. They also knew that conditions at the Hickam home were far from ideal. In the summer of 1926, George went to live with the Steele family, leaving only Dad, Ben, and me. The old Hickam homeplace was soon to come to an end.

The Carr and the VanDeventer families provided future homes away from home for Ben and me. Mrs. Josephine Carr and Mr. Lee VanDeventer were brother and sister and grew up on a farm known as Valley View. Mr. and Mrs. Lee VanDeventer lived at Valley View, which was about two miles east of Hamilton and to the south of Route 7 just past Swamp Poodle. The VanDeventers had a baby girl, Jean, who was one year old. Ben went to live with them and changed to Lincoln High School, where he entered the second year of high school.

The Carrs lived in a brick house with a porch at the edge of the sidewalk in Waterford. It was two houses toward town from the Ed Beans' house and some six houses removed from the Waterford Insurance Company building.

The Carrs had two children — Albert, who was one year older than I, and Emma, who was seven years older than I. I think Emma was kind of sweet on Ben but I don't know for certain. However, in later years he was the first one she always asked about.

After Ben left to live with the VanDeventers, I was taken in by the Carr family. In 1927 I attended the second grade at Waterford with Albert and Emma. Mr. Jimmy Carr had a bachelor brother, Ernie, who lived with them. The two brothers owned and operated a dairy farm about a mile from Waterford. It is today owned by Albert, who bought Emma's share. The farm is on the road that passed behind the old Quaker Meeting House. The road in front of the old Quaker Meeting House was the one to our old home.



I had Miss Arnold for a teacher in the second grade. I recently heard from Miss Arnold's sister that Dad asked her to adopt me; since she was single, that would have been unheard of.

Mr. and Mrs. Carr were very generous and kind to me. Albert and I slept together, and Mrs. Carr used to pin us in with horse blanket safety pins every night. She was afraid that we would kick the covers off and get cold.

Christmas was a memorable occasion at the Carrs. Mrs. Carr would bake cakes and cookies and make candies and lock them in the room opposite the parlor and hide the key. Presents were stored there, too, and it caused our imaginations to work overtime in December. I got my first bicycle for Christmas the year I was with the Carrs. Albert got one just like it. Emma told me in later years that her mother had bought Albert's bicycle for Christmas before I came to live with them, and she couldn't stand to think how sad Christmas would be for me with no bicycle. She saved up until she had enough money and went out and bought an identical one for me. The bike made for a memorable Christmas, and Albert and I spent many pleasant hours riding the bikes on the sidewalks of Waterford.

The Carrs must have been among the first to have a radio in their home. It was located in the combination living-dining room. The set was equipped with six earphones which were attached by wires about eight feet long. We would sit around in a circle with earphones on and listen to the radio. This was my first exposure to radio. The stations were limited to a few. There was the Frederick Station over which the Waterford Myers brothers sang on Sunday afternoon. Pittsburgh Westinghouse KDKA had been on the air only three years and on clear nights it could be heard. Washington had a station and there was probably WRVA in Richmond. Although it was before Arthur Godfrey, ukelele and guitar music was popular.

Christmas plays at the Catoctin Presbyterian Church were important in 1927. The story of Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus was put on by the children of the congregation and all the children got boxes of hard candy and animal crackers as presents. The Christmas play of 1927 was a memorable occasion because of the teapot that was used by Mary to pour tea for Joseph. Some boys, and I won't name them, unknown to everyone else, mixed a half of a bottle of castor oil with the tea. Joseph, one of the nice but sissy boys, took a big swig of the tea and burst out laughing, spitting tea and castor oil all over the altar. This was too much for such a solemn occasion in front of a packed church. Some boys were scared by the reactions of the audience and the ministers but all kept their mouths shut in accordance with the oath taken. To this day, no one except those involved know the names of those responsible for adding the castor oil to the tea.

The adjustment to a new home at the Carrs was eased by my continued attendance at the same church and having the same teacher in the second grade as the first. In the second grade Miss Arnold had reading class and students were called on to stand in front of the class and read a part of the day's assignments. Memory work came easy for me and so, when called on to read, I would leave my book at the desk and stand up and recite. Miss Arnold never scolded me for reciting instead of reading, but I imagine she got a laugh out of my reading without a book.

In the spring of 1928, I completed the second grade. The farm was gone and Dad had married a young girl whose father had worked for him on the farm. Dad and his new wife moved into the second floor of the house next to Cooley's Store in Waterford. The house is now a fancy rental honeymoon suite called The Pink



House Suite. Dad and his new bride may have been the first honeymooners. The original site of the Cooley's Store is now the yard to The Pink House Suite. I suppose I wanted to go home with Dad, and so I left the Carrs to live with him. I was there about one or two months.

There are two things I remember vividly during those two months with Dad. They gave me little or no supervision, and I used to follow people who were smoking and walking along the sidewalk. When they threw their cigarettes away I would pick them up for a smoke. The second thing I remember was that Mr. Cooley would let me have ice cream cones on credit to Dad's account. One day he told me I could have no more ice cream until Dad paid his bill. I'm not sure I remember this because I could get no more ice cream or because I was shocked that someone would question Dad's paying his bills.

Dad and his new wife, who was only about eighteen years old, lived together for about one year before they broke up. At that time Dad went to live with his sister, my Aunt Maud Glass. They had a farm near Emmittsburg, Maryland, and raised and bought and sold large numbers of ducks and chickens. It was in sight of the mountains and may have been only a few miles from President Eisenhower's later weekend White House, Camp David. My Dad and his brother-in-law would go around the country in a pickup truck loaded with chicken coops and buy chickens and ducks from the farmers for resale at the Baltimore market.

In July of 1928, I had left Dad and his young wife and had gone to live with the Edgar Steele family, who already had taken my brother George. I helped at the dairy barn and played with the two youngest Steele girls, Virginia and Margaret. They had a pair of roller skates that you clipped on your shoes and a sidewalk from the house to the garage. After many falls, I learned to navigate the sidewalk on their roller skates, a skill that permitted me in later years (1835-37) to whirl around the skating rink with the girls at the old fair grounds in Purcellville.

The Steeles were first or second cousins of the Graham family, who lived near Hamilton. Mrs. VanDeventer, with whom Ben had gone to live, was a daughter of Mrs. Graham. The Graham dairy farm bordered on the VanDeventer Valley View Farm and Mr. Lee VanDeventer (I always called him "Boss" and her "Mrs.") operated the Graham dairy farm on shares.

In August of 1928, after church on Sunday, Mrs. Graham stopped by the Steeles, who had packed my clothes, and took me to live with them at a new home near Hamilton, some six miles from Waterford. Travel to the Grahams was by their 1925 Overland sedan. My new home on the Graham dairy farm meant going to a new school in the third grade at Hamilton. Hamilton was on Route 7, the main road to the Blue Ridge and some seven miles closer to those beautiful mountains than Waterford. One could also reach the Blue Ridge by Route 9 through Wheatland and Hillsboro. The blue haze of the Blue Ridge was visible from my new home on clear days.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE GRAHAM HOMESTEAD

The Graham family came to Loudoun from southwest Virginia. Mrs. Graham (maiden name, Margaret Jane Correll) was born in Tazewell, Virginia, May 28, 1871. I am not sure if she had any brothers, but she had one sister whom she used to visit every winter and with the help of their mother the three would make quilts. On Christmas of 1930, she laid out on the sofa and chairs eight quilts of different patterns she had made, as Christmas presents — one for each of her eight children. The quilts were numbered one to eight and she had a hat with numbers one to eight. Each child drew a number and the quilt of that number was the Christmas present for that child. Her fairness in doing things was a quality of life I have tried to imitate. The children were allowed to exchange the quilts with each other if they wished another pattern or color. Later, when I went to college and even to Pittsburgh to work in 1942, I brought along one of Mother Graham's quilts.

Margaret Jane Correll was the daughter of Mr. James Oscar Correll, a Civil War veteran, who was born in 1843 and lived to the ripe old age of 97. He was the only Civil War veteran, and the only Confederate soldier, I ever knew. He visited the farm at Hamilton to see his daughter twice during the early thirties. He truly was of the school that one so often sees in the pictures of Robert E. Lee. His only dress was the stiff white collar with black bow tie, the long black coat with split tail, and the black pants. He had white greying hair and a beard to match it. Truly, he was a distinguished looking southern gentleman and always got the respect of all without demanding it. He must have been self-educated and well-read for he could extemporaneously talk about a subject in a fascinating manner.

He was a devout Christian; each morning after breakfast everyone would gather in the parlor for his reading of a selected Bible passage and prayer. No one questioned the gathering when he was there, although the hay may have awaited cutting, or the corn needed plowing, or the garden hoed, or the chicken killed, picked and cleaned for dinner. To me they were impressive and memorable gatherings. It was only when Granddaddy Correll was there that we had such family prayer sessions.

His daughter, Mrs. Graham (and the older folks called her "Maggie"), carried on the tradition in her private life by reading the Bible every night in bed and getting on her knees to pray beside the bed. Many times I tip-toed through her bedroom and found her saying her prayers.

William Robert Graham, her husband who had died twelve years (1916) before I came to live with them, was born in Buchanan, Virginia, on May 3, 1856. He was the youngest of one sister and two brothers. The brothers were some ten to twelve years older than he. At the start of the Civil War many families were split over the question of rights and wrongs of slavery. The Graham family was torn apart by the war and never reunited. The two older boys ran off to the North to join the Union Army. Mr. Graham, their father, joined the Confederate Army,



and William Robert Graham, being only ten years of age, stayed home to help his mother run the farm. The two older Graham brothers were never found after the war and what happened to them remains a mystery to the family. W. R. Graham spent many days and trips following leads in search of his two brothers; and he died in 1916 without ever finding out what happened to them.

Margaret Correll grew up in Tazewell and attended the Female Academy in Tazewell. It was on May 1, 1893, at the age of twenty-one, that she married William Robert Graham who had lost his first wife and was thirty-six years old.

The Graham family settled on a farm in Tazewell and there they had six children. There was Mary (born in 1894), Anne (1896), Charlie (1897), Ollie (1900), Sam (1902), and Osa (1904), who later changed her name to Ocie. Over the years Anne grew into being my adopted mother. After leaving Tazewell and moving to the farm in Loudoun, which was now my new home, the family added Margaret in 1907 and Wade in 1909.

Mr. Graham's visit to Loudoun in search of a farm to buy is best described in a copy of a letter which he wrote to his wife on November 4, 1903.

Hamilton, Loudoun Co. Va.  
Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> 1903

My Dear Maggie:-

I expected to be able to report to you yesterday that I had bought a farm, but I have looked at so many farms that I have not been able to make up my mind which one to buy. I have been looking at some fine land in Diggs valley to day 1 mile from R.R. station at Hamilton. I would like to buy near Hamilton or Freonia on account of good schools. The people here have all treated me so clever that



I have formed a very high opinion of them. I have not had to lay out a cent since I commenced looking for a farm.

I want to put in about 2 more days looking and then I think I will buy. I have had the land fever so bad since I have been out here that I have not slept any hardly. I am still using Mr. Gray's horse & buggy, and making that headquarters, but I am staying all night to night at the Mercer farm below Hamilton. I guess the children think Papa is staying a long time, and I want to see all of you so bad that I don't think I can stay here over 2 or 3 days longer. I expect to buy in a day or two. They don't hoe any corn here. They make it all with plows like they do in the west. How is Mr. Cole getting along? I send you a check for \$15.00 for fear you may need



money. You can send it to town  
or some one & get it cashed.

The weather has been fine since I came  
here - not a drop of rain. We can  
make a good deal more money here  
than we can in Taywell. I have  
about decided where we will buy, but  
want to look at 3 or 4 places yet,  
before I make a final decision. I  
went to Middleburg Monday & looked at  
2 farms. You must kiss Sammie  
and Osa for Papa and tell Mary and  
Aunie & Charles & Ollie that they must  
get ready to take a good long ride on  
the train about some time in Feby.

I sincerely hope you have all been  
well, as I couldn't stand to be away so  
much better if I knew you were all  
well. Kiss all the babies again for  
Papa.

Affectionately  
Your Husband  
W.R. Graham



The letter reflects his love for his family, his desire to improve their position in life, and a recognition of the necessity of good schooling for his children. The Grahams bought the Mercer Farm referred to in his letter. The farm is about one and one-half miles east of Hamilton and borders on Swamp Poodle (now known as Brownsville). It was a farm of one hundred and sixty-six acres of mostly tillable land, about ten acres of locust woods (used for fence posts), and five acres of mostly oak woods (used for stove wood), and a one-acre front yard.

The Graham home was my permanent home from 1928 until 1942. It remains to me a Loudoun historical landmark — an anchor during those formative years of my life.

The house is a beautiful white frame house with black tin roof and a porch across one end of the front with one-half of the length supported by round white pillars. The soothing sound of rain falling on a tin roof is beyond description and fosters sound sleep as nothing else can. There was a side porch used to stack wood for the non-cooking stoves and its roof was outside my bedroom window. It also provided the pathway to the cellar door. A screened back porch contained a table for the ripening of fruits and vegetables, a bench for sitting, wood for the cook stove, and a pump equipped with both a handle for hand pumping water and a gasoline one-cylinder engine used for pumping water into a tank located in the attic over the bathroom. The tank was made of tongue-and-groove two-inch-thick boards, set on a metal sheet with bent up edges, and held together by iron hoops. It resembled a miniature silo. The tank had an overflow pipe leading to the back



*The Graham home near Hamilton, Virginia*



porch tin roof. When the overflow hit the tin roof, it made a recognizable sound and all knew to shut down the engine and to reconnect the pump for hand operations. I learned to crank the engine at the age of ten and to always keep my thumb on the same side of the crank handle as my fingers. If the engine should kick-backfire (resulting in the flywheel turning backwards), the crank would fly out of your hand without breaking your thumb. The pump engine was my first contact with a gasoline engine — a love that lasted a life-time.

The well water was excellent for drinking but a little rusty for washing clothes. When pumping water to boil work clothes coated with milk, manure, and dirt, you needed to tie a rag over the pump pipe to filter out the rust particles. The cloths were boiled outdoors in a big copper pot supported on a three-legged stand and heated by an open log fire. It was the same copper pot that was used for making lard, soap, and apple and pear butter.

The kitchen stove provided a limited quantity of heated water for bathing and washing dishes. I still conserve hot water when taking a shower or washing the dishes by hand for fear the hot water will run out.

The Graham house was a large one. The upstairs was on two levels differing by three steps. The first floor was all on one level except for the kitchen and pantry which were down one step. The three-step difference between floors in the front of the house allowed the ceiling of the sitting room and parlor to be two feet higher than the other rooms and made them a little more spacious.

The back of the house was the original part; the front half had been added later. One would never know that the house had been added on to except by going into the crawl space under the back half and comparing the foundation to that seen in the cellar of the front half. The back half was built on ten-by-ten-inch cross section axe-hewn logs and showed that this part predated the front, which was built using conventional two-inch thick lumber.

On the first floor of the house was a large kitchen containing a wood stove with an attached hot water tank, a sink for washing dishes, two kitchen cabinets of the type with the floor sifter and flour container at the top on the left side; a large kitchen table was on the far side from the stove; against one wall was a cabinet for dishes and left over foods not requiring refrigeration, and on the opposite side was a built-in closet with three large wooden barrels with lids — one for sugar, one for corn meal, and one for flour. The barrels' wooden lids fit tight to assure that mice could not enter. The flour and corn meal were bought in hundred-pound bags at the Rogers' Mill near Hamilton and located on the tracks of the Washington and Old Dominion. The sugar was bought in one-hundred pound bags from the Hamilton Mercantile Store operated for years by Mr. Beaver and Mr. Winekoop. The top of the cupboard contained miscellaneous tools, including an iron shoe-stand fitted with three different size irons for holding small, medium, and large shoes while nailing on new leather half soles or heels. The kitchen also had a kerosene four-burner stove and a portable oven which fitted over two burners for baking bread, pies, and cakes. The kerosene stove was used on hot Virginia summer days rather than the wood stove. Although the tractor started on gasoline, it ran on kerosene and thus fuel for the stove was available.

Off the kitchen was a pantry, six feet by fourteen feet. It was unheated and usually cooler than the rest of the house. It contained two glass-door cabinets for food storage such as cooked hams half eaten, jellies, left-over beans and gravy, apple sauce and apple butter, and loaf bread and rolls. Gravy and bread was the most



stable farm food and a lot was eaten.

Home-made rolls and loaves of bread were baked once a week. Nothing is better than a hot roll coming from the oven and saturated with good home-made churned butter. During the week the rolls were reheated by placing them in the steam over boiling water. These were nearly as tasty as the fresh rolls. Corn bread was made fresh for the day except for leftovers that were broken into pieces and put in a glass of milk and eaten with a spoon.

Breakfast on the farm usually including either flour pancakes or corn meal pancakes. The corn meal pancakes were the better of the two and gave more strength for farm work. Mrs. Graham said corn bread stayed on the bones better than flour bread.

The pantry also contained an icebox, and every few days in the summer ice would be put in. The ice came from the ice house filled from a pond on the farm in winter; if that had been used up (as it usually was, by the first of August), the ice man would come in a truck and leave a fifty-pound cake of ice for the refrigerator. The spring house at the dairy was also used for refrigeration by setting crocks of food in the cool water.

Next to the kitchen and pantry was the dining room. It had two doors, one connecting to the kitchen through the pantry and a second connecting to the back hall which had doors to the kitchen, living room, side porch, and steps leading upstairs. The dining room would seat ten at the table. Special china dishes, glassware, and silverware were stored in the china cabinet and the sideboard. A serving table occupied one corner and a stove another. The wood stove was installed each fall, using the same chimney as the fireplace in the adjoining living room. Stoves were set up in the fall and then stored in the spring. On special occasions the dining room table would only accommodate the grown-up folks. Until I was fourteen and did farm work, instead of women's housework, I had to eat with all the grandchildren at the kitchen table. At fourteen, I moved from the kitchen table to the dining room table and ate with the grown-ups. This was a real achievement and made me feel like I had cheated manhood by sitting there when still a boy.

The back hall had a closet for rifle and gun storage where I used to keep my twenty-two rifle. There was a second closet under the steps for hanging coats and keeping boots. Steps from the back hall spiralled upstairs to the three back bedrooms, the storage room, and the bathroom.

A large living room extended the entire width of the house. It had a pipeless coal furnace with a grate in the floor for heating. The room also had a fireplace which was equipped with a tin cover plate so that a stove could be installed using the fireplace chimney. Geranium and ivy-type plants were abundant in the living room. A goldfish tank was located along the south wall in front of the window. It froze solid one winter and when the ice melted the fish swam about. A desk of antique vintage occupied a corner of the room with the party line telephone on top. The desk had a front that opened for writing and raised to close when not in use. It contained many drawers and slots for papers and letters. One of the drawers, when removed, revealed a secret drawer for hiding valuables. A rocking chair and a sofa were arranged to take advantage of the heat from the stove in winter and the fireplace in the early spring and fall. The living room had a door leading to the parlor and another leading to the front porch on the side of the house.

The parlor, as at the old Hickam farm, was used only on special occasions such as Christmas, meetings of the VanDeventer four-table bridge club, meetings



of the Daughters of the United Confederacy. The parlor had some old oval authentic pictures on the wall and a full size upright piano. It also had a fireplace and a floor grate from a second pipeless furnace located in the cellar. The furniture consisted of a sofa, two upholstered chairs, two said-to-be antique, black straight back wooden chairs and two or three tables. One of the tables located at the foot of the stairs was a three-legged Duncan Phyfe with a four-foot-in-diameter circular top which tilted to the vertical. It only fitted there in the tilted position and was a beautiful piece of furniture. A huge cedar tree reaching to the high ceiling was decorated at Christmas and stood in the corner beside the fireplace. The tree was installed and decorated by the adults after the children went to bed on Christmas Eve.

The parlor had a door leading to the front porch at the end of the house. Since the room was seldom used, the door tended to swell and stick. It required a jerk on the handle or sometimes a kick from the outside to open.

The front porch was a haven for play and the Graham grandchildren and I spent many an hour playing there on rainy and snowy days.

The stairway to the front bedrooms was on the side of the parlor and had a beautiful white bannister and stained bare steps. Sliding down the bannister was much faster than using the steps. At the top of the steps was a full-length mirror which was about six feet wide. Its scrolled gold frame made it look like it was of the "Julius Caesar period" and straight from Latin Rome. A quick turn at the top of the steps was required to avoid running into yourself.

The Graham house had six bedrooms, plus two other rooms and a bath on the second floor. One of the other rooms was a sewing area which contained stairs leading to the front attic; the other was a plain storage or junk room. Both of these spaces were big enough to serve as bedrooms in today's homes. The front bedrooms were used less than the back ones and were saved for guests. This arrangement made it possible to shut off the front bedrooms from the back bedrooms in winter and have that part of the house left unheated. Usually during Christmas/New Years' week both pipeless furnaces were fired with coal and the whole house heated to accommodate all the relatives.

Mrs. Graham's room was at the top of the back stairs, as was mine. The other back-stairs bedroom was occupied by Ben, my brother, after the VanDeventers moved to the Graham farm. Ocie used a middle bedroom abutting my room and Margaret had the room next to her Mother. When Wade was home he used the room later used by Ben.

The only stove on the second floor was in the bathroom. In winter it was used while undressing for bed and one headed straight there in the cold mornings to dress.

The fire in the bathroom would last all night. The last to bed would put logs into all of the stoves (known as banking the stove) and turn off the drafts. The first up in the morning would open the drafts a little and refire with logs to get the house warm for the others. Only the kitchen stove fire burned out over night and had to be restarted with kindling wood each day. The pipeless furnaces easily kept all night since they were fired with slower burning coal. Both furnaces had chains leading upstairs which controlled the drafts so that the firing could be adjusted without going outdoors to the basement.

The basement in the house was a real food storage cellar and contained the two pipeless furnaces, a large coal bin that could be filled from the front yard using



a shoot under the front porch. There were shelves for more than a thousand glass Mason jars. In addition to glass Mason jars filled with all the canned vegetables, there were canned fruits, berries, jellies, watermelon and cucumber pickles, pork, beef, sausage, pork pudding, scrapple, and bright red pickled crab apples. There were two bins (four feet by eight feet and one foot deep), One bin was filled with potatoes, mostly Irish potatoes (those are the white ones) and a lesser number of sweet potatoes or yams. I never understood why yams and sweet potatoes had to be grown in rows with the soil hilled up to about one foot high and Irish potatoes grew in flat rows. It seemed that white potatoes knew to grow underground but sweet potatoes would grow on top of the ground if one didn't pull the soil over the plants. The second bin was filled in the winter with apples and pears. Every other week the apples and pears had to be sorted to remove the rotten ones. Good fruit contacted by rotten fruit will cause the good fruit to rotten rapidly (the saying that one rotten apple will spoil a whole barrel is true). Green tomatoes were wrapped in paper and stored in the bins for ripening.

There was a barrel filled with vinegar in the cellar which was used for making salad dressing and for seasoning coleslaw. Carrots, turnips, salsify, parsnips, and cabbage were left in the garden under after frost. Before the ground froze they were brought to the cellar for storage in buckets of dirt.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE GRAHAM FAMILY IN 1928

When I came to the Graham Family in 1928 at the age of nine, Mrs. Graham was fifty-seven years old, and her husband had been dead for twelve years. At Mr. Graham's death their eight children ranged in age from twenty-two to seven. Only the three youngest children were at home when I arrived. Ocie and Margaret were elementary teachers at Hamilton. Margaret had attended Harrisonburg State Teachers College. Ocie went to Fredericksburg State Teachers College for her Bachelor's Degree and the University of Virginia for her Master's Degree. She was a Phi Beta Kappa and always called me her Little Phi Beta Kappa - an honor I later received at Randolph-Macon College. Wade was in first year college at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, from which I later obtained a Master's Degree in Physics in 1942. Wade was home only on holidays and during the summer when he got summer jobs off the farm. One summer he drove the ice truck and delivered ice made at the Purcellville Ice Plant in Purcellville and Hamilton and to the surrounding farms.

The other Graham children, except Sam, had married and set up their own homes. Charlie, who helped his mother run the farm immediately after graduating from high school at his fathers' death in 1916, was the only one of the eight who had not attended college. Sam had completed his degree work at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, where he was tackle of the football team and was selected for the All-South Atlantic Team; he coached football at a high school in North Carolina before going on to Rollins College in Florida as the football coach.

Ollie had married John Monroe, a pharmacist at the Purcellville Pharmacy on the corner of the main street and across from the successful restaurant operated by three brothers from Greece. (This family still owns restaurants in Purcellville today). Ollie and John lived in a house in Purcellville on the opposite side of the street from the Catholic Church and about two houses down the street toward Hamilton. John was the brother of Julia, who never married and was called "Miss Julia", and Mrs. Ambrose Warmer who lived on a dairy farm near the Hamilton Roger Mill. Ollie went to Harrisonburg State Teachers College and one summer to the University of Virginia. At one time, Ollie, Ocie, and Margaret made up the entire teaching staff at the three-room Hamilton Elementary School. The three were outstanding teachers, and I doubt if there was ever a better staffed school. Ollie and John had only one child, a son named Douglas. He was the oldest of the Graham grandchildren and six years old. Being close to my age, he and I often played together. Flying was in his blood at an early age, and he learned to fly a plane before learning to drive a car.

Charlie had married Kathleen Arnold, the sister of my first and second grade teacher at Waterford. When he married, Charlie left the farm and opened an auto body repair and paint shop in Baltimore and later in Purcellville. It was the only shop of this type around, and Charlie made it a successful lifetime business. They lived in Hamilton on the main street between Schooley's Hardware and Laycock's Grocery but on the south side of the street. They had one daughter,



Bonnie, who was five years younger than I. They later had a boy, Charles Mac, who grew up to become a medical doctor in Radford, Virginia. Bonnie was a graduate nurse and retired in 1987 from the staff of a hospital in Falls Church.

Anne, as I mentioned earlier, married A. Lee VanDeventer and lived at Valley View Farm adjoining the Graham Farm. They had taken Ben in 1928 to live with them. Jean, their only child, was only two years old when I came to the Grahams. Anne had a teacher's certificate from summer school attendance at Harrisonburg Teachers College. In the twenties, tennis was big and the VanDeventers had a clay tennis court. Anne had a fantastic memory. Once I caught her telling a story about the time she went to a church picnic that took place two years before she was born. If today's computer inventors could have reproduced her mind, I'm sure they would have had initially a nanobyte ( $10^9$ ) of storage instead of a megabyte ( $10^6$ ). Lee had attended Virginia Polytechnic Institute majoring in Agriculture. He was among the best practicing mechanics I ever knew and taught me many of my mechanical skills. The only machine he ever failed to make work was a sock-knitting machine which he bought during World War I to knot socks for the soldiers. It dropped stitches, and he could never get it to work. I always thought it was a bad design rather than a reflection on his mechanical abilities.

Mary, the oldest Graham girl, married Joe Spring and they lived on a dairy farm two miles southeast of Leesburg. Mary had attended Harrisonburg Teachers College and later taught school for many years at Lovettsville Elementary School. In stature and disposition and speech, she was much like Mrs. Graham.

The Springs had a two-seated 1924 Model T Ford which had three pedals on the floor. The left pedal, when pushed all the way down, was low gear; the middle position was "neutral", and "all the way out" was high gear. The emergency brake was connected to the pedal so that when it was on, the pedal was in the neutral position — a necessity for hand cranking to start the engine. Putting it in reverse required both feet. The left foot pushed the left pedal halfway in for neutral and the right foot pushed the middle pedal all the way in for reverse. The right pedal was the brake. The gas accelerator was on the right of the steering wheel and operated by hand. A lever on the left of the steering wheel was the spark advance and retard.

The Springs had the only home-produced, direct-current electrical system I can remember seeing. A gasoline engine turned a generator to charge the batteries and the batteries supplied electricity for lighting the house. It was all manually operated and when the lights got dim, Joe would go down and start the engine to the generator. They had two children — Graham, who was the second oldest grandchild, and Margaret, who was the fifth oldest.

At first, I looked upon the eight Graham grandchildren as being my sisters and brothers. After I grew up, I thought of the Graham children more as brothers and sisters, except for Anne who looked upon me as a son, and the grandchildren as nieces and nephews. Counting the Hickams, the Carrs, the Steeles, and the Grahams, I had seven real brothers and sisters and sixteen others I've since looked upon as my brothers and sisters.

I suppose Dad still missed his family and, once or twice that first summer when I was at the Grahams, he took me with him to Emmitsburg to visit his sister, Aunt Maud Glass. I remember Mrs. Graham saying that Dad would have to stop picking me up and taking me away if she was to raise me. Both Dad and I knew



that the Grahams' was a fine home for me, and he never took me to Emmitsburg after that. Once or twice afterwards, on his chicken-and-duck-buying trips through Loudoun, he stopped by to see me for a few minutes.

My first summer at the Grahams saw Ocie busy selling subscriptions for the LOUDOUN TIMES MIRROR, the local Leesburg newspaper. The newspaper had sponsored a subscription contest with several large prizes for the contest winners. It was said that Ocie wore out the Graham's 1926 Overland that summer selling subscriptions to the paper all over Loudoun County. Ocie was a good teacher but the campaign showed she could have been equally successful as a saleswoman. Ocie won first prize, a 1928 six-cylinder Overland Whippet Convertible with rumble seat (in a light cream color and with an electric starter). It was the car for the 1928 Big Apple, Charleston and mini-skirts. Ocie was the age for it; she loved to dance, was good looking and was the top girl swimmer in the county. She would swim the Potomac River at White's Ferry round trip — an unheard of achievement for a girl and few boys. Ocie owned the first one-piece Jantzen bathing suit in Loudoun County in 1926 and there was fear that the people's talk might cost her the Hamilton teaching job. The 1928 mini-skirt dress fad must have been difficult for Mrs. Graham, who never wore a dress revealing her ankles. Remembering that period made it much easier for me to accept the mini-skirts and hot pants worn by my daughters and nieces in the mid sixties.

My first year at Hamilton in the third grade was eased by the fact that Margaret taught first and second grade and Ocie taught sixth and seventh grades and was principal. My teacher was Miss Ruby Trussell, and she taught third, fourth, and fifth grades. Miss Trussell was of the Trussell Family that lived in the big yellow house at the top of the hill above Paeonian Springs. She was pretty and a good teacher. Her brother, Harry, later married Miss Arnold, my first and second grade teacher at Waterford.

At Hamilton, I met many new kids and made friends with them. There was Sarah and Jimmy Love, who drove a buggy to and from school and left it at their grandparents across the road from the school. Little did I realize the later importance of this association for Jimmy was to be my roommate at Randolph-Macon College for three years and Mr. Love was to loan me money so I could stay in college. Sarah was very smart and, throughout elementary and high school, set a scholastic level that was hard for me to top. Occasionally, I would go home with them in the buggy and spend the night at their house on a farm out past Ivandale. Little did I realize that, except for Sarah, the Love family (the father, mother, and Jimmy) would be murdered on their farm some fourteen years later. Bob Tribby was in the class, and he was a good ball player, as were his two brothers. Howard Mossburg, another student, was a fine baseball catcher. Jane Rogers, of the Rogers' Mill, was a year ahead of me and in the fourth grade. Betty Beaver, of the Hamilton Mercantile Beaver Family, was two years ahead of me and in the fifth grade and her sister, Janet, was in the second grade. Vivian and Evelyn Martz were girls who lived out past the mill and were about my age. Billy Utterback was in the class, as was Mary Virginia Laycock of the Frank Laycock Grocery. Dorothy and Virginia Wolf were about the same age. Reynolds Welsh was in the third grade for the first half of the year when Miss Trussell moved him to the fourth grade (known as "jumping a grade"). This method was used to advance smart kids faster and/or to try to correct misbehavior of kids by making them work harder. I think Reynolds' move was motivated by a little of both.



Playing marbles for keeps was a big game at Hamilton Graded School in my first year there. A circle was drawn on the ground and each kid would put a designated number of marbles in the center of the circle. Kids all had a favorite agate, or shooter, with which to knock the marbles out of the circle. Those knocked out were won by the shooter. Some kids, on losing their marbles, would go crying to the teacher telling her that "so and so took all my marbles". A few got so good at marbles that they won all the marbles and the kids cried so much over lost marbles that the teachers had to stop letting the kids play for keeps. It was stopped on the moral grounds that it was "like stealing"; but I knew it was so the kids wouldn't bother the teachers with crying.

In the third grade, I started a practice that would remain with me the rest of my life. During the entire year, I never missed a day of school and for that Miss Trussell gave me a story book as a prize. This recognition for not missing a day lasted until my senior year in college. I went almost thirteen years without missing a class or a day at school. It was only when I was a senior at Randolph-Macon and Wright died that I missed classes to attend his funeral. This habit of regular attendance remained with me throughout my forty-two years at Westinghouse Research and Development.



## CHAPTER VIII

### A BOY'S CHORES AND JOYS

I never knew what happened to the small street bike given to me by the Carrs for Christmas. My first Christmas at the Grahams was a happy one. I got a wagon from Santa Claus and could haul stove wood rather than having to carry it up the hill from the woodpile. The hill sloped and I lost many wagon loads when the wood shifted. Doug Monroe asked me who gave me the wagon, and I said "Santa Claus". He replied "No he didn't; it was at our house all week." At my first Graham Christmas the family members totaled about twenty-five (including those married five grandchildren, the three single Graham children, Mrs. Graham, Ben, and me).

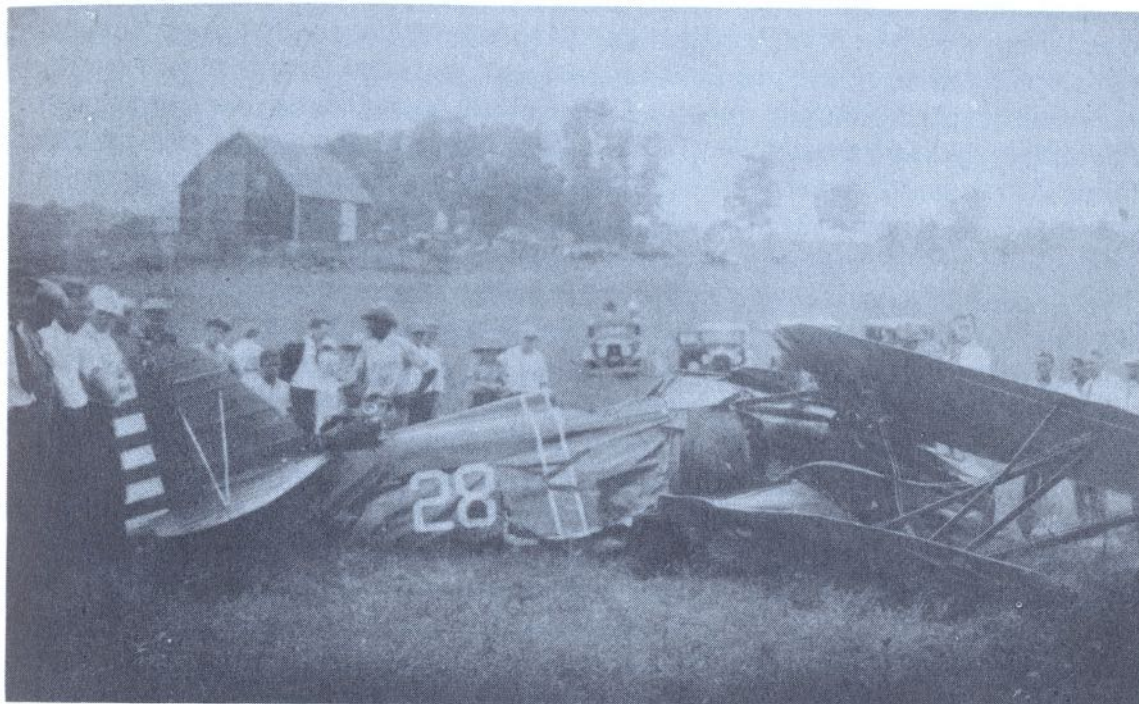
It was about ten o'clock Christmas morning that the phone rang for me (our ring on the party line was "three longs"). Charlie Graham said he had a Christmas present for me if I would come to Hamilton and pick it up. I ran the one-and-one-half miles to Hamilton, as I would do many times later in going to and from school (in those days the necessity of walking and running for getting places left little need for "jogging" for exercise). I arrived at Charlie's and Kathleen's out of breath, but excited. Charlie rolled out a beautiful black twenty-eight-inch wheel English racer bike as my Christmas present. It was second-hand but Charlie had painted it in his auto body shop and it looked brand new. It had the small racer tires and the pedals were directly coupled to the back wheel and continued turning whenever the bike was moving. In downhill coasting, I would put my feet on the top of the front wheel fork and let the pedals fly. You braked it either by pumping backwards on the pedals or sticking your shoe between the top of the front wheel fork and the tire. Continuous braking with the shoe would give you a hot foot.

With my new means of transportation, I became mobile without the benefit of fuel expense. I would make trips of six and eight miles one way. I recalled one week riding to Waterford each day, a distance of five miles, to attend summer Bible School at the Waterford Presbyterian Church.

The Loudoun County Fair at Purcellville was another big get together to which I pedaled. It was a great place to see farm animals and canned foods and all the kids from Hamilton and Waterford. One day, as I was coming thru Hamilton returning from the fair, I heard that Bobby VanDeventer had crashed on the farm in his airplane and was killed. Bobby was Boss's nephew, and he had joined the Air Force and was the only Army pilot in uniform I knew at that time. He used to idle his motor and glide in toward the house; when he was right over the house, he'd give it full throttle. He would then put on a show of loops and climbs before taking off for Langley Air Base or the Washington Airport (on the present site of the Pentagon Building just off of Fourteenth Street). Bobby and his companion plane had started to leave and were making a last pass over the house when his plane's engine failed. He was only about thirty feet off the ground and coming in toward an unplowed grass pasture field which would have likely supported the



plane during a landing run. While approaching the field without engine power, his engine started again and he pulled up only to have it fail a second time. He glided in a half circle above an alfalfa field; the plane hit the rain-soaked ground and traveled about five feet before burying itself in the ground and buckling badly. Boss ran out to the plane and pulled Bobby out — afraid that if still alive, he would be burned to death. Bobbie had died on impact. The other plane pilot radioed the accident in and flew to Fredrick, the closest airport.



*Plane crash of Bob VanDeventer on Graham farm in 1929*

My new bicycle opened lots of doors for new adventures. I could ride to Catoctin Creek on Route Nine for fishing and a swim with other boys. I could go to the stores in Hamilton and get things for the Grahams. I had also started to notice girls with their cute dresses and long curls. A new family had moved into Hamilton and opened a dry cleaning establishment. They lived in the stucco house next to the Howard Thomas Auto Garage on the east end of Hamilton. They had two children, a boy, and a cute little girl who was nine years old. After eyeing her, I planned a strategy to get to know her better. I acquired a bicycle seat and mounted it on the cross bar between my seat and the handle bars. I drilled and bent a couple of pieces of flat iron and mounted them on the front wheel axle bolt for use as foot rests for the front seat passenger. Commercial carrier seats were available which fitted the back wheel, but I preferred the front seat for her. I rode by the house several times and finally she came out. My ingenuity and inventiveness were too much for her to refuse a ride on my new two-seater bike. After that, I shared many rides with her and liked her long beautiful curls blowing in my face. I never knew whether someone saw us and went on to invent the two-passenger bikes, which are rented at ocean resorts.

As I mentioned in an earlier story, get-rich-fast schemes were found in all the magazines. One of these was to raise and breed guinea pigs and sell them to hospitals for medical research. Mr. VanDeventer built two pens with wire-



covered doors and supported three feet above the ground by two-by-two legs. Two pairs of guinea pigs were ordered — one pair for each pen. The pigs arrived with feeding instructions, but no instructions on marketing. Guinea pigs are said to be vegetarians and it became my chore to gather grass, weeds, and vegetable tops to feed them and to refill their water containers. The pens contained straw bedding which had to be replaced once a week. In a short time, we had a litter of guinea pigs in each house. The young pigs soon became parents and a mathematical pyramid started to grow just as the advertisement said. There were then two unexpected events. As Mr. VanDeventer started to inquire about prices for guinea pigs and hospitals to buy them, he found there was no market for the pigs. Although the advertisement said the guinea pigs were strictly vegetarians, we found that the anticipated pyramid growth in numbers did not occur: the parent pigs ate their young. Inquiries to the original supplier revealed that this was due to the lack of iron in their diets and for two dollars they would ship iron pills to correct their dietary needs. The iron pills did not influence their habit of eating their young. There was another problem with the guinea pigs. If you picked them up by their tails their eyes would drop out. About half of the pigs were blind from this cause. I was glad when we finally went out of the guinea pig business, for it was cold in barefeet to pick frost-covered grass for them to eat in the late fall. The guinea pigs taught me a good marketing lesson that a product must be in demand if it is to sell.

On the farm we had our own chickens, turkeys, guineas, and bantam chickens. The chickens were raised from eggs, hatched, and raised to frying size. In general they reached frying size during June and July. In those days frying chickens were only available about two months out of the entire year. All eggs were set in the spring. When they were about three months old, we started killing the roosters for frying. The wildest and most uncatchable roosters that escaped were left to carry on the species. It was fun watching the young roosters spread their wings and stretch their heads up to crow before they had developed a crow box. The first real crow was as exciting for the watchers as for the roosters. Roosters woke at sunrise and their crow was a reliable alarm clock. I fed the chickens, gathered the eggs from the hen house nests, and cleaned the chicken houses. The setting hens would pick your hand; but, if they were allowed to sit on the eggs, the eggs would be unfit to eat. Keeping the setting hens in a coop for a week would break up their setting and soon they would return to egg production. In the spring, eggs would be placed under the setting hens; when the eggs hatched the hens would take care of the chicks and keep them warm by letting them gather under their wings. During this period the hen developed unique clucking voices that served to call the chicks in times of feeding or danger.

The turkeys were different from the chickens in that they roosted in the trees and made their nests along fence rows or in the woods. It was my chore to follow the turkey hens and locate the nests. I would sneak from tree to tree so they would not know I was watching. When one saw a turkey hen separate from the flock and quicken her steps, it was a signal she was heading for her nest to lay an egg. The turkeys were smart and would try to avoid your finding the location of their nests. If they saw you watching them, they would head off in the opposite direction of the nest and at the opportune time strike out in a half circular run to their nest. The nest sites were usually hidden amid honeysuckle vines or in a depression at the side of a half-rotten stump. Once the nest was located, I had to gather the egg each day. A plaster-cast dummy egg was put in the nest so that the turkey wouldn't know her



egg had been taken. Since only one dummy egg was put in a nest, it was obvious to me that turkeys could not count to higher than one. The eggs were used to hatch young turkeys and the cycle repeated itself.

I loved school and desired to maintain my perfect attendance record. This plagued me for many years because they would threaten to keep me home from school if I didn't complete my weekend chores before Monday. One weekend I was told to find a turkey nest. A neighbor told Mrs. Graham that they saw me cross the highway in a run with a hand full of turkey tail feathers. I found the nest in Brown's field and was allowed to go to school Monday.

During my first two years at the Grahams, the VanDeventers and Ben lived at the adjoining Valley View Farm. The houses were separated by two thirty-five acre fields and hidden from each other by a hill. I never minded being left at home alone as a nine-year-old during the day, but was a little afraid when left alone at night. One evening, darkness was approaching without any signs of the Grahams returning home. As the clock struck eight, I started out running the distance of three quarters of a mile over the hill to the VanDeventers. I arrived there on the run just as their clock was striking eight. Everything else being equal, it was the first demonstration of having exceeded the speed of light on foot — a violation of the Einstein Theory on motion which clearly states that this is impossible. I only know that I ran so fast that darkness could not catch me.

Few things are as memorable to a ten-year-old as a play house. I was given an old cleaner's truck to use for a playhouse and it was placed along the hedge just off the side porch. The two back doors swung open for entry. The driver's and passengers' doors were on rollers and rolled to open. The windshield consisted of two glasses which could be turned open like jalousy windows and the glass in the door could be lowered and raised. The seat had been removed, allowing room enough for a cot. A canvas army cot and covers were put in the playhouse. A one-burner kerosene stove was used for cooking. I got headlights and a switch out of a wrecked car junked in the woods. The lights were hard-wired to the switch, and for power a discarded battery from the well pump was used. I was the first on the entire farm to have electric light. Doug Monroe and I spent many summer nights sleeping on the cot in the truck and cooking eggs for breakfast on the one-burner stove. We later hung curtains over the windows to gain more privacy. Few things are as memorable to a ten-year-old as a private playhouse and friends with which to share it.

I had another connection at Hamilton with Waterford. Buck Levenberry was an old colored barber at Waterford and Dad took us there to get haircuts. Buck kept a bag of peanuts in his shop and, on completing the haircut, he would give me a hand full of unshelled peanuts. I looked forward to the peanuts as the kids do today for bubble gum passed out by Augie, my present barber. When I came to the Grahams I found that, Buck, our barber, lived in a house in Swamp Poodle which bordered the Graham farm. Half of the time he drove a horse and buggy five miles to his Waterford shop. The other time he walked the mile to Hamilton and barbered there. I continued getting my hair cut at Buck's in Hamilton. Buck had a beautiful garden and a small field for grazing the horse. I used to stop by his house and talk with him and his wife on many occasions. His house was on the south side of Route Seven and the last house going east.

Gardening and canning were important chores on the farm and provided suitable work for a boy of ten. We had two gardens on the farm, plus a melon



patch put in on shares by Noble Murray of Swamp Poodle. One garden was in the apple orchard field to the left of the road when going toward the house. The second and older garden was behind the back porch. It also had a large grape arbor that one could walk under and pick grapes. At the edge of the garden were black raspberry bushes, some currant bushes, and an asparagus bed. The wood ashes from the stoves were scattered over this garden. Both gardens got covered with cow manure (using the two-horse spreader) each winter and were plowed in the spring. In that part of Virginia, plowing and gardening started about the first of March. The vegetables raised included almost all of the common varieties: lettuce, white and red radishes, beets, carrots, salsify, turnips, parsnips, potatoes, tomatoes, lima beans, bush beans, cabbage, pole beans, corn, cucumbers, cantalopes, and watermelons. In addition to the continuous chores of weeding and hoeing, I helped cut the seed potatoes into pieces with one eye, made holes for the cabbage and tomato plants and carried water used in planting them and then covered them with dirt. Gathering the vegetables was a job I always enjoyed, for it represented the harvest of one's labor and fresh farm vegetables are good eating. Corn on and off the cob was gotten both from the garden corn such as Golden Bantam and Stowers Evergreen and also from the corn field. Field corn was cooked with a little added sugar since it was not as sweet as the garden varieties. Sometimes the Kentucky Wonder pole beans were planted in the corn field and allowed to grow up the corn stalks. Kentucky Wonders grew bigger than most green beans and a bushel could be picked in a short time. For single meals Irish and sweet potatoes were dug by hand early in the season. At the end of the potato season, a single horse pulled a single-bladed plow to turn the potatoes out of the ground. They were picked up by hand, laid out to dry, and then moved to the basement bins for winter storage. Sweet potato vines has to be cut and removed before plowing.

Wild blackberry picking was another chore and done all day long by five or six of us. The Grahams had a second farm down on the mountain to which we went to pick wild blackberries. The farm was off the road to Waterford just past the Peacock Farm. One continued past what was later Arthur Godfrey's home; at the fork in the road you turned right and went about a mile. The farm was directly across the road from the farm of Arthur Godfrey when he came to Loudoun to live and from which he broadcast many of his radio and television shows. A day of blackberry picking often provided twenty gallons of blackberries. When we got home all the pickers rubbed themselves with a kerosene-soaked rag to kill any chiggers picked up in the berry patch. I usually went over the dogs' ears and pulled off the ticks. The berries were stored in the pantry overnight and the next day made into jelly, jam, and canned for winter pies. Some were eaten fresh with sugar and thick hand-ladeled dairy cream from the top of milk cans.

Country kids and city kids didn't see much of each other in those days. City kids were thought to know more than country kids but this didn't make the country kids look up to them. I remember this cute little city girl, a relative of the VanDeventers, who came to the farm on a visit. We were playing together at the barn one day and she dared me to kiss her. I laid a smacker on her cheek. The dummy struck out running to the house and told her folks I kissed her. I was so embarrassed I didn't go to the house for several hours. However, that night I got even with her. Doug and I got her interested in a snipe hunt. We got a gunny bag and the three of us went across the field to the edge of the woods. Well, she was left



to hold the bag while Doug and I went out to drive in the snipes. Finally she came back to the house with the empty bag and we told her that the snipes weren't out but we would try again another night. And city kids are supposed to be smarter than country kids!



## CHAPTER IX

### THE GRAHAM FARM

The Graham farm had many out-buildings. A narrow concrete walk connected the back porch to a chicken house and the buggy house, under which was the ice house. The "chicken house" likely was entirely a chicken house when first built, but by the time I was there it performed many functions. The first section contained chicken feed storage, including cracked oyster shells which the hens ate so their eggs would have hard shells. The middle section had been converted into a car garage. The third section was the chicken house. It accommodated about forty Plymouth Rock hens and two roosters, plus some bantam hens and a bantam rooster. The chicken house contained an eight-by-twenty platform about three feet off the ground; above, spaced lengthwise one foot apart, were one-inch by one-inch square timbers. The timbers served as chicken roosts, and each night the chickens would all fly up and sit on the timbers and sleep. The platform caught the chicken manure, which later was spread on the garden. At the front, under the roost platform, were sixteen nests about one-foot square and half filled with straw. The nests were open in the back and had closed doors that raised up in the front. The hens entered the nest from the back and laid their eggs in privacy. Hens always cackled after laying eggs and strutted around like proud mothers. Raising the front doors simplified the gathering of the eggs and the cleaning of the nest. Nicotine or lice dusting powders were used on the roosts and nests to kill lice, which could bother the hens and roosters and cause egg production to be reduced. We used to call the big double yolk eggs "rooster eggs". A good hen laid one egg each day. The bantam eggs were small and about the size of a bobwhite egg.

A roof had been added at the end of the hen house and it served to cover the wash house, which had a hand-turned clothes washing machine. Turning the handle made the three-paddle agitator go forward and backward. I turned the handle when the ladies washed clothes and it took fifteen minutes per load. Finely sliced soap was used in the washer. The soap was made at hog killing time from lard and lye. On one side of the washer was a hand-turned wringer. To loosen and tighten the wringer, one turned a wing-nut at the top. The water removed on wringing ran back into the washing machine and the clothes fell into the rinse water tub. A second hand-turned wringer was used to remove the rinse water and readied the clothes for hanging out on the clothes lines for drying. The wringer wing-nuts had to be loosened at the end of washing so the rubber rollers wouldn't stick together. In winter a wondrous thing happened in clothes drying. First, the wet clothes would freeze stiff and then the ice would evaporate, leaving the clothes dry. Few people realize that both water and ice evaporate into the air and contribute water vapor to form the beautiful clouds over the Blue Ridge.

Beyond the wash shed (and largely underground with a solid six-inch-thick concrete roof) was the gas plant for lighting the big farm house. This underground building contained the carbide plant which made the acetylene gas piped throughout the house. Each room had a lamp connected through a valve to the acetylene supply line and an associated flint lighter, like a Ronson cigarette lighter



flint. On entering the room, one turned the valve and flipped the flint to turn on the lamp. Calcium carbide, a white powder, was bought in five gallon cans. The cans were dumped into the carbide tank and the water tank filled. The water would drip into the carbide and carbide/water reacted to make the acetylene gas. When the gas pressure reached a given level, the water would stop dripping and the reaction would stop. As the gas was used up, the water would start dripping and the reaction would automatically start to replenish the used gas to the reaction cutoff pressure. When all the carbide had reacted, one had to wash out the white lime reaction product and refill the system. This was the only acetylene plumbed house I ever knew of. The light is the same as used in miners' caps lamps and the pressure control reaction works the same to provide a continuous supply of acetylene. In 1974, I described the use of the same reaction in a published paper which analyzed the moisture content of sealed microelectric packages. Measurement of the quantity of acetylene gas evolved from carbide reacted with the moisture in the package atmosphere making possible the calculation of its water content.

The buggy house was across the narrow sidewalk from the chicken house and near the end of the sidewalk. It had two sets of double doors, each of which could accommodate one buggy with horses. Although it contained old harnesses and bridles hung on wooden pegs, its present use was for storage. The floor in the buggy house was supported by big, closely-spaced beams which spanned the twenty-by-twenty-foot hole beneath the floor. The space under the floor was the ice house. Ice gathered from a pond in the winter was stored there with a heavy covering of straw insulation. In spite of the hot summers, ice could be kept for the refrigerator and ice-cream-making until about the first of August.

After electricity and electric refrigeration arrived under the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), the intended purpose of the ice house disappeared. I used it one winter for turnip storage. It was a good year for turnips, and I raised about fifty bushels to sell and "make a killing". I gathered and carried fifty bushels of turnips down the ladder for storage in the ice house. My full expectation was to sell them to the grocery stores in Hamilton, Purcellville, and Leesburg. Spring came and I had forty-nine bushels left. As the weather warmed, the turnips started to rot and I had to carry the stinking turnips up the ladder and scatter them in the garden. Another financial failure lesson had been learned.

Attached to the buggy house was a garage. In addition to the car, the garage served as storage for two camping tents and an outboard motor used in fishing on the Potomac. There was also a kerosene storage tank for supplying the kitchen stove; during the winter, a quarter of home-killed and dressed beef hung from the rafters. When the ladies wanted a sirloin steak for dinner, a butcher knife and saw provided one of the specified thickness (after scraping off a little mold). Attached to the back of the garage was an outhouse for use by workers on the farm (in full compliance with the Chestnut Farms Dairy — Washington, D.C. requirement for operation of a dairy farm and shipping milk to the District of Columbia. Since it was subject to inspection by an inspector from the United States Health Department, it was always kept clean and limed).

Off the southern side of the kitchen and removed about thirty feet was a tool shed, with mostly garden and lawn tools and a work bench that was handy for building things.

Next to the tool shed was a stone building of two stories. The first floor was



the smoke house. It contained home-killed and cured hams and bacon which hung on wires from the rafters. Cured Virginia hams take one day of soaking for softening (after which the mold is removed), and one day of cooking; then comes a feast. A few slices of uncooked ham were usually saved for frying for breakfast and from which was obtained "redeye gravy" for use over hot biscuits.

The top floor of the building was reached by an outside ladder-like step unit. It had a bed, dresser, wash basin, and kerosene lamp. As long as I can remember, it was the room for Frank Greenleaf, a large colored bachelor who worked on the farm many years and ate at the house. Frank was big and strong and good hearted. He had that disease that causes one to fall asleep unknowingly. Many times I saw him doze off with a fork of food half way to his mouth. The food would remain suspended in space until he awoke and then continued its journey to his mouth. Frank was so big that we had to put a hinged steering wheel on the Overland truck to facilitate his getting in and out.

Beyond the smoke house, the Grahams had built a turkey house to raise the young turkeys, which were usually hatched by putting the turkey eggs under chicken hens. One spring when the turkeys were about the size of a robin, a weasel got in and killed nineteen of the thirty-one turkeys. Weasels are blood suckers and kill for the joy of killing. They would grab the turkey by the neck and cut its throat with their sharp teeth, then move on to the next turkey.

After that the folks would not use it as a turkey house, and I took it over for the fur pelts which I got by trapping and hunting. Stretching boards were stacked in the corner along with a hatchet to modify the size of the board to fit the pelt. A hunting knife for skinning the animals and a twenty-two rifle and shells were hung on the wall in winter. Overalls and gloves for trapping and hunting hung there because of the skunk odor. Feed bags on the floor were used to carry the trapped animals. No hunting or trapping license was required to hunt on your own farm or the adjoining farms. At one time, I had over a hundred traps and inspected the trapline for the catch each morning between six and seven after milking the cows and before going to school.

The skunk house also contained a bottle of Sloan's Liniment and a bottle of wintergreen oil. Either was good for killing skunk odor so you wouldn't get sent home from school. The wintergreen oil served a dual purpose because chewing gum was now allowed in school. The wintergreen oil both killed the skunk odor and smelled like wintergreen chewing gum. It gave the teacher "positive information" that someone was chewing gum and made her scan the pupils all day in search of the culprit (which we knew did not exist). By using these skunk deodorants, I never got sent home from school because of skunk odor as did many of the other farm-boy trappers.

Across the grass-grazing field, which was never plowed, was an old run-down barn. There was hay and straw in the mow, some wet and some dry, depending on the condition of the tin roof. There was a ladder nailed to one of the supporting posts for climbing to the mow. Holes in the loft floor provided many other points used for entry. It was a good place to play on a rainy day. An ancient manure spreader and wagon occupied part of the bare ground floor. The rest was available for the pigs and hogs to use to get in and out of the sun on hot summer days. The barn had a fenced-in lot for the pigs to run in and its far end had a spring-fed branch to provide water to drink and mud for them in which to wallow. The branch flowed through Mr. Grubb's barn yard, and supplied his stock with drink-



ing water. I spent many pleasant winter hours with our neighbor, Mr. Grubb, in his stove-heated shop.

All the buildings I have described so far were what a farmer would call out-buildings. The real farm buildings were associated with the active animals and their feed, from which the family income was derived. Down the hill from the house and bordering on the old garden was the horse barn and the associated corn crib, the dairy barn and associated dairy. The horse barn had four stalls for our work horses: Grace, Peach, Jim, and Heck. Grace and Peach were mares and worked as a team. Grace may have been a lot younger than Peach, for once or twice the stud horse came by and bred her and she had a colt. This never happened to Peach. Jim was a big, white castrated work horse that fully understood the mechanics and physics of pull forces. When he was hooked to something that wouldn't move, he kept reducing the angle between his legs and his body. Eventually, the load moved or the single tree broke. Heck was a lot smaller, higher strung, and a load snatcher. He also knew it was easier to walk without pulling than when pulling. I don't think he was lazy but just smarter, or less dedicated, than some of the other horses. When we drove the four horses to pull a single wagon using one line to drive them, it was Heck who was the lead horse and responded to a steady line pull by turning left, and to several short jabs of the line by turning right.

I, and even my kids, may owe our lives to Heck and his calm response in a real emergency. When I was too small to pitch hay on the wagon, I was used on the hay wagon as a loader. As a loader, I would tell the hay pitchers where on the wagon to put the fork of hay, tramp on it and tie it together so it wouldn't slide off, and drive the horses to the next hay pile. One day I had on a full load of hay except for one pile up on the side of the hill. Boss (Mr. VanDeventer) told me to wait and he would carry the pile down so I wouldn't have to turn up the hill with a full load and an unmatched larger rear wheel on the uphill side (the matched regular wheel had broken). Not heeding his advice, I turned uphill on the way to the last pile. The entire load and three pitch forks slid downhill and upset the wagon, and I made a quick decision to jump uphill and forward. I ended up with a single tree hook through the crotch of my pants, suspended about a foot above the ground, and at the heels of Heck. Fortunately, Heck stood still and Boss came and lifted me off the hook. I went home crying but no worse for a near miss.

The corn crib was the drive-through type and had two sides. The lower side was used for storage of ear corn. It had a hand-turned corn sheller. Ears of corn were fed in and the corn came out the bottom in a half-bushel and the cobs came out the far end. The shelled corn was used as chicken and turkey feed and the cob for kindling wood to start fires. The corn sheller was also used to remove the hull from black walnuts gathered in the fall. It was said that before I came to the Grahams that the corn crib had a broken slat on the side and someone kept stealing corn at night through the slat opening. One night a steel bear trap was set inside the opening and the next morning they had caught the robber by the hand. That ended the corn stealing problem. Barley and wheat were stored in bags in the upper crib.

The dairy barn was a beautiful structure. It was a bank barn with one side underground so a wagon could be driven into the second floor. It contained eighteen cow stalls with stanchions on each side and a cow birthing pen or a bull pen at each end, enclosed with closely spaced one-and-one-half inch iron pipes. The cow



entrance to the barn was provided by a door on each side at the barnyard end. The other end had two doors and a walkway leading to the dairy. Behind the cows the barn ceiling supported a track which ran the length of the barn on both sides. A manure carrier could be pushed along the track and the manure in the trench behind the cows shoveled into the carrier. Through December, January, and February the cows never left their stanchions. The cows faced each other when fastened in their stanchions and were separated by a raised ten-foot-wide concrete platform running the length of the barn. The feed carts and hay carts were pushed down this platform and feed distributed on both sides to the cows. Every other stanchion had a drinking cup supplied with water from a wooden silo-like tank mounted on the mow floor. The drinking cups contained a metal, circular structure with holes. It was supported above the bottom and hinged to a water valve. When wanting a drink, the cow would press the lever down and water would come out for her to drink. Cows have to drink a lot of water when giving six to eight gallons of milk a day, for milk is almost all water and cows have other functions that require water. The barn had a silo at each end which was filled in August. Silage is chopped-up slightly fermented green corn widely used as dairy cow feed.

Unlike turkeys, cows can count at least up to eighteen. The cows had their assigned stalls and, on entering the barn, each cow would count the stalls until coming to hers. Seldom did a cow ever enter the wrong stall; if she did, she would be driven out by the rightful owner. All cows had assigned names and they differed in disposition and quantity and quality of milk. The Holstein cows gave the most milk, but it had the lowest butter fat content. The Gurnseys and Jerseys gave milk of over four percent butterfat but of less quantity than the Holstein. The size of the udders varied and was not a good measure of the quantity of milk a cow would give per milking. The best milkers would give three to four gallons per milking soon after having a calf. This tapered off over the next eight months to less than a gallon and then they were allowed to dry up by leaving some milk in their udders. Usually they had a month off before giving birth to a calf and starting the cycle over. Twice I remember a cow having twin calves. Sometimes the cows would have trouble giving birth to a calf and we would help or call the veterinarian.

The top of the barn was mostly haymow. The high double doors made it possible to pull a wagon-load of hay into the top of the barn for unloading. The peak of the barn had a track for the horse-pulled hay fork. One stuck the two pronged fork about three feet deep into the load of hay and snapped up two levers which extended arms out of the fork into the hay. The two levers had a light rope which could be pulled from the wagon once the hay reached the mow. A one-inch diameter manila rope ran from the fork to the peak of the barn and through a series of wooden pulleys to the single tree attached to the horses' harness. I led the horse and, on command, we would go with the fork load of hay moving up to the peak of the barn and then run horizontal on the track into the mow. A snatch on the small rope by the man on the wagon released the holding levers and dumped the hay. A two-horse load of hay could be unloaded in about six fork loads — a lot easier than handing pitching it off.

The loft also contained a feed grinder for grinding corn, oats and barley into cow, pig and horse feed. The 15-30 International tractor was used to turn the feed grinder, using a thirty-foot long six-inch wide leather belt. The belt connected a pulley driven by the tractor engine to a pulley on the feed grinder. The belt was



always given a half twist when placed on the pulley. I never fully understood why the half twist kept the belt running on the cylindrical pulleys because it always seemed it should run off.

The first summer I was with the Grahams, a wheat thrashing machine came to thrash the wheat. It was pulled by a big steam engine with a wood fire box. It had a three-foot-in-diameter fly wheel which drove the belt connected to the thrashing machine. Straw was blown directly into the mow and wheat came out the side into bags. That must have been the last time the steam engine was used; after that its function was taken over by the combustion engine tractor.

The dairy where the milk was processed and stored for shipping was connected to the barn by a concrete sidewalk. It had two wash tubs for washing and rinsing all the milk utensils. Steam was piped from a wood-fired steam boiler to each of the washing tubs for heating the spring water. The boiler room also contained a one cylinder gasoline engine for pumping water from the spring; a series of valves transported it to the boiler, to the wash tub, through the milk cooler, into the ice box, and into the tank in the barn, providing drinking water for the cows in the winter. A pipe connected the steam closet to the boiler. All utensils and milk cans after washing were placed in the steam closet, the steam turned on and the closet temperature maintained at 212 °F for ten minutes to sterilize all the utensils (per the United States Health Department specifications). Sterilization once a day was required, so at night we washed the buckets with cold water. A track-and-carrier with a chain hoist and ice tongs ran from the ice box to the milk truck milk loading area. Every other day the milk truck, on returning from Washington, would drop off a three-hundred-pound cake of ice for the ice box to keep the milk cold. All milk stored at the dairy for shipping had to be maintained below 40 °F to reduce the growth rate of bacteria. Water from the spring was piped to a drinking trough in the barn yard for the cows and horses.

In addition to the main house, the farm had a tenant house for a hired family who worked on the farm. The tenant house had a kitchen/dining room, a living room, and two bedrooms. It had a well with a hand-operated pump, an outhouse, a garden, a chicken house, a pig pen, and a yard. During the Depression, the monthly salary for a tenant helper was twenty-five dollars plus two butchered hogs, plus two hundred pounds of corn meal, one hundred pounds of flour, and a house with land for a garden. On a dairy farm, the help got two Sunday afternoons off from milking per month and no vacation except a few days at Christmas between the morning and evening milkings.

Machinery on the farm was an important asset and sometimes big machinery would be used on several farms to help pay off its cost. Our farm machinery included a three-horse walking plow, a two-horse riding corn cultivator, a two-horse corn planter, a two-horse lime and seed spreader, a two-horse manure spreader, a two-horse wagon for hauling wood and grain, a two-horse hay rake, a two-horse hay wagon, a two-horse hay mowing machine, a tractor-pulled binder for cutting and tying the wheat, oats and barley into sheaves, a tractor-pulled disc harrow for making the dirt fine after plowing, a two-horse tedder for kicking up wet cut hay so it would dry after being rained on, a tractor-drawn two-bladed plow, a two-horse road scraper for smoothing the road, a tractor-operated ensilage cutter for chopping the green corn and blowing it into the silo, a tractor-operated thrashing machine, a Dodge one and one-half ton truck, milking machines (after we got electricity in the barn). Learning the operation of and operating all this machinery



under the guidance of Boss, a patient and excellent teacher, was an invaluable and rare experience for a boy. By the time I reached sixteen, I was fully capable of operating and repairing all the machinery under the Boss' supervision and guiding hand. In those days before the service society, the farmers had to maintain, operate, and repair all machinery.



## CHAPTER X

### THE HAMILTON SCHOOL DAYS

Miss Trussel taught me in the third, fourth and fifth grades. We had reading, spelling, arithmetic, writing and drawing lessons. Of all the lessons, arithmetic was my easiest and best subject. I soon learned all the multiplication tables up to twelve and invariably would win when we chose sides and had a contest. The three multiplication tables were my favorite and when I count things, I mostly count by threes. Losing in an academic contest was as bad as losing in an athletic contest. I never fully accepted the saying, "It's not whether you won or lost, but how you played the game." I always found winning more fun and had it as my goal in every game — whether academic, athletic, or work.

Spelling was a good subject and made easy because in those days spelling and reading were taught by phonetics or sound. The teacher would pronounce a new word and go around the class and the pupils would take a guess at the next letter. Three or four repetitions of the same word within a single lesson and one knew how to spell it, its meaning, and how to use it in a sentence. Words like "trapeze" were difficult in the ending part but easy in the starting part for all us trappers. We learned the spelling of all the colors and how to identify them. Miss Trussel was good at teaching by association to help the kids remember better. For example, "pink" was associated with pinkeye, a common childhood disease in those days. "Orange" was the color of the autumn moon and pumpkins, and "brown" was the color of the soil that grew the crops. Things that country kids needed to now were introduced as a part of the class lessons.

In drawing, at which I never excelled, we drew the leaves and learned the names and identity of all the common trees that grew in the woods. The names of vegetables, fruits, and animals were learned in drawing class, too. Sex was learned from watching the cows, horse and chickens and was not a part of classroom teaching. Writing class (with the Locker writing books) was held everyday. Excelling in handwriting was not my forte but being of a competitive nature, I always entered the writing contests put on by Locker with the full expectation of winning. Frequently, I would write and copy the words six to eight times to get every letter perfect and with no erasures. Every contest was won by Sarah Love; even to this day, she has beautiful Locker-style handwriting. For the sake of legibility for the Secretary, I later resorted to printing in writing my four hundred papers, reports, and patients issued at the Westinghouse Research and Development Laboratories during my forty-two year career there. Even the stories in this book are being hand printed for the most part.

Baseball was a big part of going to Hamilton School. We had a first team that played scheduled games with other elementary schools in the county, including Lucketts, Purcellville, Lincoln, Round Hill, and Waterford. Only sixth-and-seventh grade boys were big enough to make the first team or be substitutes on the first team. The younger boys and girls would play on a diamond located in the right field of the main diamond (which had bag bases). The younger boys and girls



had to use rocks for bases and had little or no equipment except a bat and a ball. One day, I was catching hard ball on the young team without a mask and the batter hit a foul tip. It headed straight for my nose and I ducked too late. Blood ran out of my nose, I cried, and the kids called one of the teachers for fear my nose was broken. Miss Trussell took me to Dr. Claggett's house, which bordered on the school ground. He stopped the bleeding and my crying, and said the nose was not broken. I've never known whether my turned-up nose was from birth or that baseball. Anyway, that accident was enough to convert me to a hardball pitcher, and I never caught again until years later when I played on the Westinghouse softball teams in the 1940's. I found that was a mistake, too, after becoming entangled with sliding base runners and having my knee knocked out of joint twice. When the Doctor told me if it happened again he would have to operate, I gave up softball catching at that early age of twenty-seven and played golf instead.

The school or the school teachers bought the bat and ball for baseball and, after we knocked the cover off the ball, it would be tar-taped. I think I played more with a tape-covered ball than cowhide-covered ball. Some of the boys didn't know to hold the trademark up on the bat when batting and would break the bat by hitting gross-grained. The bats were taped together and the game continued.

Most boys had sixty-nine-cent baseball gloves and they were right handed. I was left-handed and never saw a left-handed glove until I was in the fifth grade. The cheap gloves had little or no padding and growing farm boys can throw a baseball hard. I remember Howard Tribby was playing first base and somebody hit a ball to short. Billy Utterback was at short and threw hard to first on a close play. Howard caught the ball for an out but it split the flesh between his thumb and forefinger to almost an inch in depth. Dr. Claggett stitched it up and Howard had to milk cows with one hand for the next month.

Boss recognized my love and capability for baseball and my need for a good left-handed glove. He told me he would buy me a glove, if I would thin his five-acre corn field. In those days, corn was planted in hills three feet on the square using three to four seeds per hill. After the corn came up and got to about three inches tall, only the two strongest stalks were left to mature per hill. Pulling out all but two stalks per hill was known as thinning corn, and it was a back-breaking job. Usually the thinner carried a stick with a metal blade on one end which was used for digging out the corn roots if the pulled stalk broke off. I worked from daylight to dark for four days thinning the field. An acre contains 5,000 hills of corn; so, in four days, I bent over 25,000 times.

Boss, true to his word, took me to Leesburg to buy a glove. It was the best glove to be found in a country town and my first glove for a lefty. I still have the glove, fifty-five years later, and used it last year catching baseball. I suppose I repaid my debts by loaning it to right-handed players who needed a glove, for its little finger is about the same size as the thumb. It was nice having a regular fielding glove, but in all my catching days, I never had a left-handed catchers' mitt.

I was in the fifth grade and fear hit every bone in my body over the possibility of breaking my continuous attendance record at school. It was cold and we had a big ice storm which coated everything with about an inch of ice. To get to the barn for milking, I went through the garden to avoid the falling trees. Telephone and electric lines and poles snapped like twigs. Limbs broke off trees and came crashing to the ground. The woods sounded as if there were a war. The folks tried



to convince me there would be no school, but I cried and had to go see. Boss saddled up Grace, the work horse, put me on her and wrapped me in a blanket. I rode the one and one-half miles to Hamilton without seeing a soul. I rode around the school and found no one there. This satisfied me there was no morning school, and I rode home. After lunch, Boss put me on Grace again and I rode to school to be sure there were no afternoon classes.

The fifth grade class never fully appreciated how much they liked Miss Trussell until we moved into the sixth grade under Miss White. Miss White was a pretty redhead, and she had a temper to go with her hair. I never had a teacher so strict and one that scared the kids so much. Failure to do the assignments was unforgiveable and there was only one way to do them — correctly. Miss White had no sympathy for the kids who didn't catch on fast. In her opinion, if you didn't learn you were lazy and that would not be tolerated. If a kid was bad or didn't have an assignment, she drew a circle on the blackboard and he or she had to stand at the blackboard with his or her nose in the circle and pressed against the blackboard. If you laughed or moved your nose out of the circle, you got a swat on the back end with a ruler. Because a few misbehaved, we all had to sit in our desk during lunch hour for several months and were not allowed to talk during lunch period. Discipline was learned, but communication was missing.

Annie Bidgood, one of the girls in my class, did her mathematics assignment but left it home one day. As soon as she realized she had forgotten the assignment papers, she got sick and threw up. She stayed upstairs on the sick cot in the library all day until her mother came to pick her up rather than stand at the board with her nose in a circle.

We used to bring Miss White apples and candy and cookies, trying to soften her up, but it was the same as trying to change the melting temperature of ice. Our only desire in the sixth grade was to advance to the seventh and not have to repeat. There were no repeaters that year.

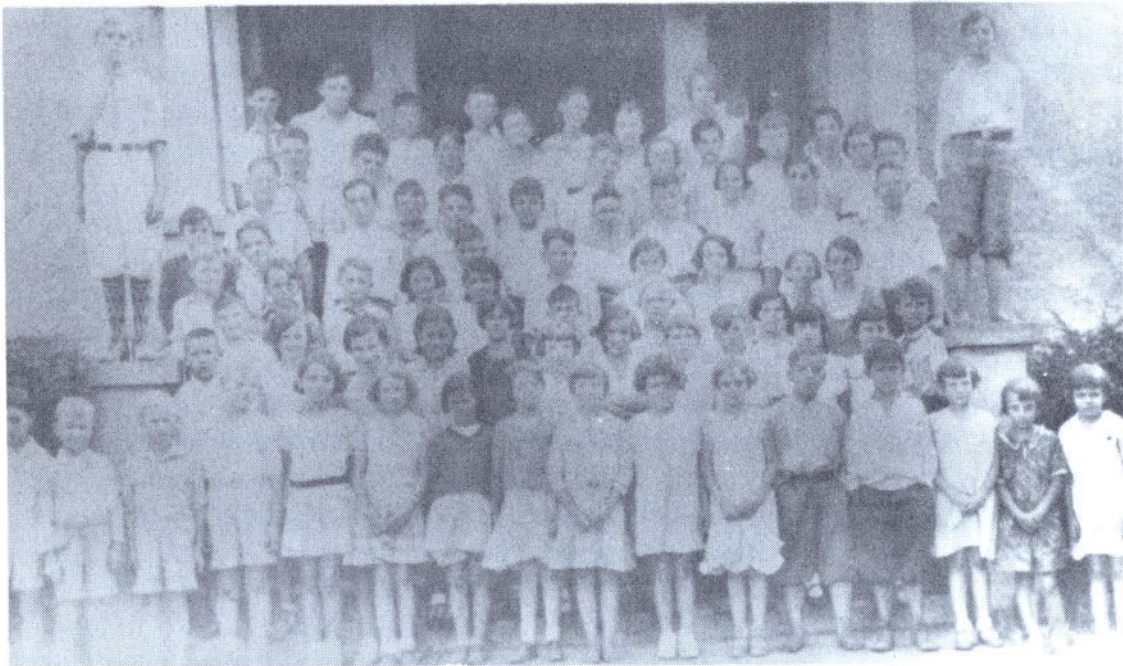
Halloween parties were an annual affair at the Hamilton School. The school had a basement which took up the entire building except for space taken out by the furnace room and the boys' and girls' rest rooms. The basement was decorated with streamers and the teachers set up games such as dunking for apples and pinning the tail on the donkey. Apples were hung on strings and we would try to bite them. On one side of the basement a haunted house was set up and it would scare the kids. Cornstalks and pumpkins decorated all the supporting posts. There were prizes for best costumes and sometimes they were won by a teacher. The bigger boys in town always played pranks, such as spinning a spool wrapped with thread on the window. Moving the outdoor furniture was a favorite trick as was taking off the yard gates. Once a gate was pulled up to the top of the flag pole at school using the flag rope. Another time a buggy straddled the peak of the roof at Buck Trssel's Garage on the day after Halloween night. The day after Halloween was unfortunate for the boys caught smoking at school on Halloween night. Ocie ("Miss Graham") would make them stay in for smoking and never did anybody dream that she smoked.

It was in the sixth grade that the VanDeventers got me a Shetland pony and that Boss got me a pure bred white English Bulldog. The pony gave me a new means of transportation and horseback riding was in style. Whoever had trained the pony did a good job, but never removed a stubborn streak she had. I built a jump in the orchard and we used to practice jumping. I quickly found there were



two ways to go over the jump — over her head and on her back. She would run at the jump at full speed and I never knew whether she was going to plant her front feet at the jump or up and over. When I went over the jump alone, you could almost see the grin on the pony's face.

The white bullog was a lifetime friend of mine. We named him King Tut. He had the big droopy jaws of a real bulldog, but we never cut his tail like they do with a lot of bulldogs. Once I had King Tut, I didn't worry about the Grahams' getting home at night. One night I was alone and it was bedtime so I took King Tut up to my room and closed the door. The folks were concerned about me when they were unable to get home as scheduled. They were relieved to find me in bed and sound asleep with King Tut guarding my room. Unlike today, the doors of the house were never locked, and I never heard of keys to fit the locks. Later I developed King Tut into a night-hunting dog for skunks and opossums. He would be fat in the fall at the start of the hunting season but by the end of the season, you could count every rib in his body. I never saw a dog that loved to hunt and run more. He was delighted whenever I called him to go night hunting.



*Hamilton grade school students 1932. The author is on the left post, Jimmy Love is on right post*

Trapeze-type gym sets were popular when I was in grade school. We had one for climbing and two or three chinning bars of different heights. Most of the farm boys could chin with both hands twenty to thirty times without stopping. For diversion and a new challenge, we started chinning with one hand. At first we would hold on to the bar with one hand and grab that wrist with the other hand. This let us hold on with one hand and pull up with both arm muscles. Afterward, some of us learned to chin with one arm alone. Even today, at sixty-seven, I can still chin several times with both hands and a few times with one hand when grabbing my wrist with the other hand.

Ocie Graham was our teacher in the seventh grade. She not only was good at teaching the lessons but she was one of the best baseball players in school. The cap-



tain of one team would catch the bat; the other captain would place his hand above the first one's hand. The person who got the grip on the end of the bat had first choice and it was always "Miss Graham" who was chosen. Since I lived with "Miss Graham", I had a ride to and from school each day in the Overland Whippet convertible that she won in the paper subscription sales contest. Each morning I would go down to the corncrib drive-through, where we kept the car, and drive it up to the house for Ocie. Living with Ocie, I knew a lot about her but I knew not to mention such things with the kids. Ocie smoked, which was strictly against an unwritten rule for teachers. I never told on her and that was our secret. Ocie had lots of boyfriends, and I never talked about her love life. Ocie would take half the team in the Whippet to play baseball at other grade schools. On graduating from the seventh grade, we all had to bid Ocie goodbye and move on to high school. I knew Ocie had to move on too, for she had secretly married Carter Anderson, who worked for Westinghouse in Pittsburgh. In those days, if teachers got married they had to stop teaching, and so Ocie kept it a secret so she could finish out the year. She and Carter went to Rockville, Maryland one Saturday and got married; Rockville was known for its quickie weddings. In the summer of 1933, Ocie moved to Pittsburgh to join Carter Anderson, a mechanical engineer out of V.P.I., who was from a dairy farm near Aldie, Virginia.



## CHAPTER XI

### FARM LIFE OF A TEENAGER

When I was fourteen years old, I had learned how to do many chores on the farm and the home folks started to think of me as a man rather than a child. Howard, our colored tenant farmer, and I were hand milking (morning and night) thirty-two cows. Howard would milk the cows on one side of the barn, and I would milk them on the other side. In the winter time, we would only ship thirty gallons a day but in the summer time, on grass feed, the cows would give as much as one hundred and twenty gallons per day. Non-milkers can never understand how a person could milk by hand thirty gallons in a milking. In general, milking in the summer time would only take one hour because I could milk a gallon every two minutes. Typically, the milk hours were five to six o'clock, both morning and evening, summer and winter, without benefit of the unheard-of daylight saving time. Milking provided two hours of daily conversation with Howard and so we became close friends. At times, our conversation got pretty wild and reminded me of a quotation I once saw: "Cows may come and cows may go, but the bull in this place goes on forever."

One hot summer afternoon, Howard and I were milking and a thunderstorm came up. There was a big flash of lightning and a ball of fire lightning started at one end of the metal litter carrier track, ran the entire length of the barn just above us, and disappeared out toward the manure pile. It was about one foot in diameter and the first ball of fire I ever saw. I saw a second in 1945 on the top of an oil rig in the ship channel when I was driving across the bridge from Humble at Baytown to Monsanto at Texas City, Texas, to check out the Westinghouse mass spectrometer. It was about the same size but remained stationary and visible for about three seconds. Howard was not one to panic easily but he appeared superstitious of the ball of fire and acted as though it were a supernatural omen. He left the barn and would not return to complete milking until the storm was over. It was nearly seven o'clock when we finished milking and washed up the dairy utensils that night.

One of the dreaded things about being a milker was the annual blood test. Chestnut Farms Dairy required an annual certified blood test for each milker. Dr. Claggett, the same doctor who straightened my nose and stopped the bleeding when I was hit by a baseball, gave me my first blood test at age fourteen. I was scared as he assembled the needle and syringe and not quite sure of what he was going to do. My uncertainty was erased as he inserted the needle in my arm the first time. When he pulled the plunger out of the syringe, all he got was a vacuum, and no blood. Knowing he had missed my vein, he pulled the needle out to try again, and blood gushed out of the puncture. Knowing he had hit blood, he reinserted the needle and repeated the process, without success. He then concluded that the needle must be stopped up and removed it the second time (with blood again gushing out the puncture). He ran a wire down the needle and rinsed it in water and alcohol in preparation for a third entry. The third attempt was a success



and blood filled the syringe as he pulled out the plunger. Finally, after a little alcohol swab and a band aid, he was through. In all my future blood tests, success was achieved on the first attempt. Since most of those samples were taken by nurses, I concluded nurses are better "leeches" than doctors. Leeches can puncture the skin and fill up with blood without your knowing anything has happened.

With approximately fifty head of cows and horses on the farm, one grew to expect to lose at least one a year by death; to replenish the stock, we raised a few heifer calves and colts. When an animal died, all the grown up folks would sit around the breakfast table and talk for days about the great loss of Joe the cow or Maud the horse. It seemed that I was the only one with a smile on my face on those sad occasions. I would ask Boss if I could have the horsehide and cowhide and, invariably, he would agree. With my six-inch hunting knife and backed by the experience of skinning numerous skunks, opossums, weasels, rabbits, and one mink, I would tackle the horse — or cow-skinning operation. The hardest part was to get the skin out from under the carcass. The best approach was to roll the animal all the way on its side and wedge it there with two-by-four boards. The loosened hide was rolled up as far under the back as possible, the two-by-fours were removed, and the animal rolled on its opposite side — freeing the hide. The hide, which would weigh twenty to thirty pounds, was folded into a nice package and fitted into a feed bag. Unlike the trapped and hunted pelts which were shipped to Herskowitz in New York for sale, the cow and horsehides were taken to Max Davis in Leesburg and sold for about ten dollars. Max Davis also bought skunks and opossum pelts; but, based on price listings, Herskowitz paid a lot more for the pelts, even taking into account the extra shipping costs.

The 1930's were the start of experimentation and research on seeds for farm crops, and much progress had been made. Furthermore, in the middle of the Depression, as I've already mentioned, people were vulnerable to money-saving and get-rich schemes. Hybrid corn was first reported in the 1930's and a very early variety grew so large that less than five acres could fill an entire silo and feed thirty cows for two months. I suspect that the Virginia Polytechnic Institute Agriculture Bulletin was encouraging farmers to try the new and more productive seed grains. Boss ordered the hybrid silage seed for planting ten acres. The new corn freed ten acres for planting in barley that year. By August, we had corn sixteen feet tall with stalks three inches in diameter. The corn cutting binder couldn't hold and tie the tall stalks, so we had to hire extra workers to cut and tie it by hand. The green corn was loaded crosswise on the wagon for hauling to the silo but it was so long that the horses couldn't pull the loaded wagon through the twelve-foot wide gates and the gate posts had to be taken down. The ensilage cutter pipe would stop up from the overload of the big stalks and the inability of the blower to blow it up the pipe to the top of the silo. The only solution was to feed the ensilage cutter with a few stalks at a time and this doubled the time required to fill the two silos. Boss dropped the big hybrid corn from his seed orders the next spring. The hybrid corn plagued us all winter, for the cows would not eat the tough chopped stalks and we had to clean them out of the feed troughs. Another get-rich scheme had failed, but it showed that the pioneer spirit still existed.

In 1934, a major step was taken that would have a lasting effect on our farm life and bring about irreversible changes in the way things were done. Under the Rural Electrification Administration Government Program, electricity was scheduled to be installed along Route Seven. In order to get it put into the farm,



we installed chestnut creosoted telephone poles from the barn to Route Seven, following the lane through the orchard and the woods. Getting electricity into the barn was of higher priority than the house. The higher priority was because replacing kerosene lantern light with electric lights in the barn and dairy gave an automatic five points increase in score by the inspector and for each five points in score above seventy-five, the shipper got an extra penny a gallon for milk shipped. Chestnut Farms Dairy was paying twenty cents a gallon for milk, and it was selling on the street for ten cents a quart at the time. The ratio of the farmer's price to the market price was about the same as it is today, when the farmers get about one dollar per gallon and it retails for two dollars per gallon. Having electric lights in the barn was an unbelievable change after working for years with only the light from two or three kerosene lanterns with partly blackened globes. This new energy source led to a number of other changes. The hand-turned cow hair clippers were replaced by electric clippers and thus allowed the clipping to be a one-man job. The ice box was equipped with an electronically driven compressor and cooling coils containing freon. The gasoline combustion engine for pumping water was replaced with an electric motor. The hand milking was replaced with milking machines. With all these labor-saving devices, one had a few minutes of extra time for leisure. To utilize this time, we strung an extension cord two hundred feet from the barn to the house for operation of a newly acquired radio. Arthur Godfrey, out of Washington, was a real hit at that time, and he was on from six until seven o'clock in the mornings. We would have leisurely breakfasts and listen to Arthur every morning. It was a real change for farm folks to become better educated in state, national and world current events and to be able to hear real music while it was being played. In two years we wired the house for electricity and got rid of the acetylene plant. I still cannot believe that, only a relatively few years later, I saw the first man walk on the moon.

Growing up on a farm with lots of animals gave me valuable training in taking care of the sick and injured animals. I remember a horse that had a broken leg and we devised a lift around its stomach using a block and tackle attached to the roof beams to help it up and down. During the birthing of calves, we often had to provide assistance to the mother. Occasionally, the cow would step on her teat and split it open, and we would have to salve and wrap it and insert a tube in her sore teat at milk time to drain the milk from that quarter of the udder. Once, a cow got weed poisoning in one side of her udder and gangrene took over in that half. She was so sick out in the field that she couldn't stand. I watched over her and milked her two good teats and two bad ones which were almost rotten and carried water and feed to her and salved her sore udder with pine salve. One day when I went to care for her, the sick half of the udder had separated and dropped off. I continued to milk and care for her and finally she regained her health but with only the two teats. We fattened her up with lots of feed and later sold her for beef. Being given full responsibility for caring for a sick cow at the age of fourteen and bringing her back to health is one of those wonderful accomplishments which only a farm kid can experience.

Crows were plentiful on the farm and crow shooting was a good pastime. In the winter the crows would congregate around the manure pile and scratch out pieces of grain, either that which the cows had missed or that which they did not digest. At fifteen, I used the double-barrel sixteen-gauge shotgun regularly. One afternoon I arrived home from school, changed into my milking clothes and hur-



ried out the kitchen door headed for the barn. Boss yelled to me "Dub, there is a crow on the fence behind the barn." (He called me "Dub" which was short for "W"). I whirled around, ran back into the house, grabbed the shotgun, loaded a couple of shells, placed the gun on safety, and headed for the barn. I entered the left door on the dairy side, went through the barn and out the door toward the manure pile using the silo as a shield from the crow. Sneaking around the silo, I spotted the crow on the fence post with his wings spread as though he was ready to take off. I raised the gun, sighted, and pulled the trigger. I couldn't believe what happened — the crow didn't move. In order to get a closer, second shot I sneaked through the open barnyard and gave the crow the second barrel. He didn't move, but the folks in the barn erupted with a big laugh. They had shot the crow earlier in the day, wired it on the post, and had been waiting for me to come home so they could have a good laugh. I have to admit that sneaking up on a crow for a second shot shows a lot of ignorance of the habits of a crow, but a super concentration on getting the job done.

Building and maintaining fires was a lesson learned early on the farm. At times, learning is painful. One day, when I was washing the dairy utensils, I went over to check the steam pressure on the boiler. The boiler fire had just about died out and the steam pressure was near zero. I threw in some corn cobs and a little coal on top and filled a small can from the five five gallon gasoline can. Opening the door to the firebox, I threw in the gasoline; immediately, the room filled with flame. Since I had on short pants and was barefooted, I was burned from the toes to the upper parts of my legs. The skin was blistered and it hurt. I was too scared to let the folks know what had happened and finishing washing and steaming the dairy utensils and cleaning the dairy houses. Fortunately for me, Cecil was visiting the Grahams and by then was a full fledged practicing physician. He coated the legs with Unguentine and wrapped them in gauze bandages. About a week later, when the bandages were removed, the skin came off; but, in time my legs healed, with no burn scars.

Few things thrill a boy of sixteen as much as driving a truck. We had a 1932 Dodge ton-and-a-half truck on the farm in 1935. It had six cylinders and dual back wheels. It had four speeds forward and, since those were the days before synchronous transmissions, double clutching was helpful in shifting gears. In double clutching, you push in the clutch and shift out of gear into neutral and let out on the clutch, speed the engine a little, push the clutch in and shift into the next gear with ease. It was all a question of having the same engine speed that matched the gear being shifted into. If you got a perfect match with the engine speed, you could shift out of gear and into another gear without using the clutch. I started driving the cars and trucks on the farm when I was about ten and by the time I was fourteen, I could drive with a full truck load of wheat or wood. We used the truck in the summer time to follow the thrashing machine and the 15-30 International tractor with spade lugs on the wheels. About a year after we had been moving the thrashing machine over macadam roads, we found that we could no longer run on macadam roads with spade lugs on the steel wheels because of damage to the roads. So that we could still travel from farm to farm, we made circular inserts of oak which fit between the spades on the tractor wheel. It took a total of eighteen oak circular pieces to go around each wheel. Anytime we went on the macadam road, we had to get these from the truck and bolt them on the tractor wheel so it wouldn't damage the road. Without the spade lugs to dig in, the tractor couldn't



pull very well and so on steep hills we would pull with both the tractor and truck and hope that we could make it.

Our neighboring farmer, Mr. Grubb, raised mostly sheep and hogs. He had several brood sows and both sold and raised a lot of pigs. In my junior year in high school, I bought five pigs from him for five dollars each. I raised them to two hundred pounds and sold them for ten cents per pound, for a total of one hundred dollars, to Cornwell Slaughter House in Purcellville. This represented an appreciable fraction of the money I had when I started to college in 1937.

Mr. Grubb had a shop which was the dream of every teenage farm boy. It had a stove, and comfortable chairs covered with feed bag upholstery and shaped by hours of sitting. To the right was a barrel of hard cider and to the left a bin of good winter eating apples and beyond that a supply of raw onions. He had two or three boards with nails and scores painted on them which were homemade pin ball machines that used marbles. He and I would shoot to see who could win with the best score as we sipped the cider. When time approached to go home, I would reach into the onion bin, pull out an onion, peel it, and eat it on the way home. On arriving home, the folks would ask "You been eating onions at Mr. Grubb's?" I would reply "Yes, and Mr. Grubb has the best onions I ever tasted." Little did they realize that the onions were to camouflage the odor of hard cider.

I was so thrilled with Mr. Grubb's pin ball machine that I proceeded to make a super fancy one of my own. It stood on four legs like the professional ones. It had a laid-out board for shooting and scoring and, beneath, a second sliding board which could be moved to return all the balls for the next game. The third or bottom board was tilted toward one corner so that the balls all rolled into a box. The shooting plunger and spring were from a junk car. The shot ball was guided by metal strips so that it had to go around the board one and a half times before entering the playing board. The top of the pin ball machine was covered with the glass from the windshield of a junk car. In those days the windshield glass was both rectangular and flat. All wooden parts were stained and varnished, giving the machine a real professional look. I never know how much it looked like a professional pin ball machine, which was illegal in those days, until one day the county sheriff, a friend of the VanDeventers, stopped in. He sat there at the kitchen table talking to Boss for five minutes with this expression of total misbelief on his face for it was impossible for him to believe that the VanDeventers were operating a gambling house. Afraid of dishonoring his badge if he ignored the machine, he finally asked Boss what that was "on the four legs." I never saw a man so relieved when he found it was a family fun pin ball machine that I had built and he was invited to try his hand at a game.



## CHAPTER XII

### LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL

I graduated from the Hamilton seventh grade to high school in May, 1933. It had been five years since I had seen any of my brothers and sisters, except Ben. Mr. and Mrs. VanDeventer had lost the Valley View Farm and moved across the hill to the Graham farm. They brought all their furniture and the house took on a new look with half Graham and half VanDeventer furniture. In addition to furniture, farm machinery and animals were brought from the VanDeventer to the Graham farm. George had left the Edgar Steeles in Waterford and gone to live with Mr. Steele's brother's family on Jamestown Road in Williamsburg, Virginia. Mr. and Mrs. Estell Stelle had a son, Brock, and a daughter, Betty, who were a little younger than George. When George went to live there, Mr. Steele had a thirty-year lease on the entire Jamestown Island. He divided the island into trapping zones and would lease it out in the winter time for trapping muskrats. In the summer, he grazed it with cattle. George policed the trappers and went to high school at Williamsburg. When he graduated, he got a job as clerk at the Rexall Drug Store. When Jamestown Island became a national shrine, the United States Government bought this island lease from Mr. Steele. Mr. Steele operated a hardware store in Williamsburg.

Glenn had stayed in Richmond only about one year with Wright. When Uncle Raymond and Aunt Martha of Norton took him to raise, he was only six years old. Uncle Raymond Richmond later adopted him and changed his name to Richmond, Mother's maiden name. When Glenn later set up practice in medicine in Aurora, Illinois, and then became Medical Director for Bell Laboratories at Napiersville, few people there knew he was part of the Hickam family. When I visited Glenn in 1984, I was amazed at how much we looked alike. His friends asked if we were twins; and Glen responded "yes," but that I was the older.

By 1933, Wright had left the dairy farm outside Richmond and had gotten a job operating a feed store on Brook Road in Richmond. It was shortly after that time he married. When I went to Randolph-Macon College (near Richmond) in 1937 I saw him for the first time since 1925, and met his wife, and their two-year old son, Ronnie.

Ben had finished high school at Lincoln in 1930 and had gone to the University of Virginia for one semester. On leaving the University of Virginia, he went across the mountain to Waynesboro and got a job at Dupont's new rayon factory (from which he retired in 1976).

Mildred had lived with Inus and David since mother's death and in 1933 had graduated into her junior year at the Pennington Gap High School. She would stay with Dave's brother, Roy Fletcher, and his wife Bertie during the week and Dave or Inus would pick her up and take her home with them for the weekend.

Inus and Dave lived on the farm at Wallen's Creek about three miles below Stickleyville on the left side of the road. They raised cattle and tobacco and did some truck farming. Cattle grazed on the side of the steep mountain were said to



have longer left legs than right legs so they wouldn't roll down the mountain. When buying a quarter of local beef everyone preferred the left leg. The farm was previously owned by my namesake, Granddad Hickam. He, Grandmother, and Uncle Josh are the only graves in a private cemetery on the farm. Their tombstones contain the following: W. M. Hickam, Feb. 10, 1852-April 22, 1925; Nancy S. Hickam, Oct. 22, 1855-July 19, 1937; Joshua H. Hickam, Feb. 12, 1881-April 19, 1922.

Cecil had completed his medical degree at the University of Pennsylvania and was interning at the Hamilton County Tuberculosis Sanitarium, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Mr. and Mrs. VanDeventer knew I had done well in grade school, and I had been a big help on the farm, so they wanted to bive me a graduation present. In spite of the Depression, the found enough money to buy me a round-trip train and bus ticket to visit Inus and Mildred. This was my first trip away from home alone and it was a big occasion for a farm boy of fourteen to travel over three hundred miles alone. The folks took me by car over the Blue Ridge to Berryville and put me on the Norfolk and Western Train bound for Roanoke with my suitcase of clean clothes. In Roanoke, I had to change trains to the south-bound for Bluefield. The Roanoke station was big but the train conductors helped me to get to the southern train. In Bluefield, I asked directions and walked from the train station to the bus station and waited for the bus to Pennington Gap. While I was waiting for the bus word came in over the radio that Will Rogers and Wylie Post had crashed in a plane and were killed in Alaska. I felt bad over the loss of Will Rogers for he was my movie superstar in *Country Fair*, which I saw in black and white with sound at the Tally-Ho Theater in Leesburg. The bus took me to Pennington Gap, and Inus and Dave met me with Mildred and Emma.

It was a happy two weeks I spent with the Fletchers. I got to know my two sisters again after being away for eight years, and we went to Norton for a day so I could see Glenn, Aunt Martha, and Uncle Raymond. Dave, Inus' husband, was over six feet tall and had a mild disposition like Boss. I don't think either ever raised his voice, but people listened when they talked because they had something to say. The first week I was with Inus and Dave, they were harvesting the tobacco and hanging the stalks in the barn to cure. The cut stalks were stuck on long, pointed wooden poles. The poled stalks were laid flat on a one-horse wooden sled and dragged from the field to the barn. In the barn, they were passed up to the mow racks and hung between the beams to dry. One learned to handle the fragile tobacco leaves with care to avoid breaking or tearing them. Tobacco leaves at harvest time are covered with sticky gum. The dry field and the sled provided dust for layers of dirt, and one builtup alternate layers of gum and dirt. I had never worked in anything where I gotten so dirty. At the end of the day, all the workers went to the creek for a swim and to wash both their skin and clothes. Since we raised no tobacco in northern Virginia, this was my one and only experience harvesting tobacco.

By the time I had ridden the bus and train back to Berryville, I felt that I had become a solo world traveler at the young age of fourteen. Little did I realize that this would be the start of millions of miles of business and pleasure travel including four trips to Europe, one to Japan, and numerous trips across the U.S.A. and Canada.

To get to Lincoln High School, I would walk or run one and one-half miles to



Hamilton to catch the school bus to Lincoln. The bus went to Purcellville on Route Seven and then turned left to the south and went about two miles on a narrow macadam road. The school was on the left before one got to the town of Lincoln. The total distance from home to school was about seven and one-half miles. I mention that because teachers thought nothing of making the kids stay in after school for misbehaving and they had to walk home, regardless of the mileage.

I was lucky to have eight others in my grade at Hamilton going to Lincoln; I also knew the other students from Hamilton who were in the second, third and fourth year of high school. I was small in stature and had real friends in Tom Payne and Betty Beaver. They went together all through high school and were two years ahead of me. Betty and Tom were what you might call today “my big brother and big sister”. They looked after me and a real closeness developed between the three of us. In those days, the graduating class announcements always contained a class will. Tom willed his love for Betty to me. Tom and Betty got married after high school, and Tom operated the Hamilton Mercantile Store when Betty’s father retired as its manager. Betty still lives on the street next to the Hamilton grade school.

In grade school, I had all the classes in one room with one teacher. In high school, I had five teachers in five rooms. There were seven rooms total but I never took agriculture and industrial arts. Behind the stage was Miss Whaley’s room. Miss Whaley taught General Science and Home Economics. I took General Science my freshman year — one of two science classes I had in high school. This classroom was the only one with right-handed arm chairs — and gave me training in writing which prove useful throughout college where all desks were right-handed armed chairs. I never understood why they could make left-handed baseball gloves and not left-handed desk chairs. Since Miss Whaley taught four classes of Home Economics, she spent most of her time at the Home Economics Cottage — a fully equipped house for training girls to be mothers and good homekeepers.



*Lincoln High School, Lincoln, Virginia 1932*



Miss Bridges taught English Composition and Literature. I think she went to Randolph-Macon Woman's College at Lynchburg, and she was more knowledgeable of her subject than most teachers and loved the beautiful early literature of well-known poets and authors. I took four years of English under Miss Bridges. She certainly had a favorable influence on my writing and enjoyment of literature and she was a positive factor in my successful completion of the two years of English and Composition at Randolph-Macon College under Dr. Webb and Dr. Grellette Simpson (who later became President of Mary Washington College at Fredericksburg).

The mathematics teacher at Lincoln was Miss Thomas, who lived on a farm between Round Hill and Bluemont to the north of Route Seven and at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Miss Thomas was probably the best teacher at Lincoln, and Mathematics was my favorite class. I took four years of Mathematics in high school. The excellent preparation of Miss Thomas was evident at Randolph-Macon where I took mathematics all four years and had no trouble competing with the boys from the big New York and New Jersey high schools with a graduating class many times the size of our entire high school (140 students total). The fact that on graduation from Randolph-Macon College, I received the Smithey Mathematics Award, the top mathematics award given by the College (in honor of Dr. Smithey the past head of the department), was a tribute to the excellent teaching of Miss Thomas and my elementary teachers. This mathematics capability helped me to earn money in college as I shall relate in a later chapter.

Mrs. Kephart was my History teacher. She never had disciplinary problems and spent 100% of class time teaching. In her class, you never sat waiting for the bell to ring for the next class because she never stopped teaching until the bell rang and she started as soon as the students arrived in her room. Her class on the history of Loudoun County, a required course, was invaluable and is one of the reasons I am so familiar today with Loudoun County, Virginia, which I left forty-four years ago when moving to Pittsburgh to work at Westinghouse. To this day, I do not understand why local history and civics is of such little importance in our public education systems and the students minds are crammed with the history of mostly empty vacuum space, uninhabited planets, and the need to find living cells on the planets other than Earth. It amazes me that kids know so much about the planets and have no idea of the composition of the air we breathe, drive a car unaware of centripetal and centrifugal forces operating on curves, and cannot identify the trees they play in, nor the flowers they pick.

Sports were a memorable part of my freshman year at high school. The school had three dirt tennis courts, and I signed up for tennis in the fall. Those taking tennis first had to clear the summer-grown weeds from the courts. For the first two weeks, hoes, shovels, and wheelbarrows were the tools of the tennis players. Finally, one by one we got the courts in shape and would play during recess and lunch periods. Other high schools in the county (and there were six — Waterford, Round Hill, Aldie, Leesburg, Lucketts and Lincoln) had tennis teams and matches were arranged. There were women's and men's singles, men's doubles, women's doubles, and mixed doubles matches. I played singles, men's doubles with Francis Mock and mixed doubles with Mary Joe Eppes. She was the sister of Jane Eppes whom Wade Graham dated when he was in college. The Eppes wanted a boy and their first three children were girls. After Jane, there was Mary Joe, Luci Tom, Frank Gibson, and Sally Charles. I won a high school letter in ten-



nis my freshman year and Mrs. VanDeventer was real pleased that I carried on the family tennis tradition. She had won the Lincoln High School tennis championship in 1914 and was an active tennis player throughout the twenties and early thirties. Wade, her brother, was one of the best singles tennis players in the county and he and Mrs. Stabler won the annual Chamberlain Tennis Tournament held at their court on the road to Waterford one year. Little did I realize that my learning to care for the tennis courts at Lincoln would be important in my first real job after high school graduation at the Loudoun Golf and Country Club.

Basketball was a boys' and girls' winter sport at Lincoln. The girls also played basketball in the fall and spring on the outdoor dirt court. I signed up for basketball my freshman year and made the second team my sophomore year and substituted on the first team. Mr. Hutton, the Principal, was the basketball coach. In addition to practicing at recess and lunch every other day (the girls got the court half the time), we would practice after school on Monday and Wednesday in preparation for the Friday night game. On Friday night, the girls' game was first and the boys' game second. Parents of all the players came to the games, and I still have a fondness for basketball. I made the first team my junior and senior years. The boys' and girls' teams both made the finals my junior year. The girls won the playoff and were county champions. The boys lost the finals and you can imagine the ribbing we got from the girls. The next year, 1936-37, both the Lincoln boys and girls won the championship and got their pictures in the paper.

Sports are important for building and strengthening relationships with people. Those friends on the sports teams are among my best memories of high school and even at high school reunions more than forty years later, members of the various tennis, basketball and baseball teams tend to gather and recall important sports events. We often talk about having to walk all the way home after basketball practice in total darkness. Sometimes Hubert McArtor, who had a car, would drive us most of the way home from practice. He was a fast driver, and I used to worry about an accident. One day he proved that the car would go faster with the windows closed than open. At a maximum of sixty-five with the windows down, he yelled "up" and we closed all the windows and the Model "A" rolled up to seventy miles per hour right through the flat stretch of Route Seven at Swamp Poodle. I hate to think what would have happened had Buck, the barber, pulled out in the road with his horse and buggy headed for his Waterford shop.

In those days of the early thirties, the Graham family felt that every educated person should study Latin. Mr. Hutton, the Principal and Basketball Coach, was known to be an outstanding Latin teacher who had taken Latin courses from Dr. Bowen at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia. My sophomore year, I signed up for Latin I along with Sarah Love, Jimmy Love, Annie Bidgood, Mary Joe Eppes, Margaret Duncan, Pomp Pearson, and others. Little did I realize the effect those years of Latin in high school under Mr. Hutton (Dr. Hutton, for he later got his Ph.D. at the University of Virginia) would have on my life. On entrance into college in 1937, my goal was to become a Latin teacher like Mr. Hutton, and so I took four years of Latin at Randolph-Macon under Dr. Bowen, Mr. Hutton's teacher. It was not until my junior and senior years at college that I realized I wanted to be a scientist and not a Latin teacher. However, it was fun to go to church with a Catholic girlfriend and translate the sermon for her.

There were many important things that went on in and out of high school



during my high school day. Jimmy Love got a model T Ford and we put a radio in it. We used to get dates by telling the girls that they could listen to the radio music. We didn't tell them that there was no noise suppressor on the radio and that one could only hear the radio when the car engine was shut off and the car parked.

The high school got its first radio when I was a junior and it was placed on the stage of the auditorium. Lincoln was a Quaker town and they made many of the high school policies. All modern music and dancing were forbidden. Only classical music and current events were allowed on the radio. Many kids stayed in after school for turning the radio dial to modern music and then dancing.

Alcoholic drinking was not a problem in high school but we were frequently reminded of the evils and body harm of the use of alcohol. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.) was an active organization in Loudoun County and Lincoln High School. A W.C.T.U. speaker would talk to us regularly and showed us the effect of alcohol on a chicken egg. Some alcohol (must have been "bootleg," for prohibition was in) was placed in a bowl and an egg was broken into the alcohol. They would show that the egg became very hard after a few minutes' exposure to the alcohol and inferred that was what would happen to our stomachs. I later realized that the alcohol had dehydrated the egg and in effect they had been the first powdered eggs — a product of great future importance.

So that we could better appreciate Shakespearean plays, the faculty had us stage them in the high school auditorium. Kids hated these assemblies except for the time that Macbeth drank some of the "wine" which was mercuriochrome-colored water. One year the teachers arranged for us to go to Washington, D.C., on the bus to see *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Three or four of the kids went to a movie rather than the play. The movie was longer than the play, the bus had to wait for them and, therefore, the teachers caught them in the act. The moviegoers all had to stay in after school for several days and write "I won't go to the movie again" a thousand times. Staying after school meant they missed the bus and had to walk home — except for the girls with boyfriends who had cars.

I got my car-driving license without taking a test when I was sixteen. Boss and I went to Leesburg for the driver's test. The State Police knew Boss and asked him who was going to sign for me and he said he was. The policeman said that if he was willing to sign for me, he knew I could drive and issued a license without the test.

In 1935 Ocie and Carter moved into an unfurnished apartment on North Avenue in Wilkesburg, Pennsylvania, and had started to acquire furniture to furnish it. Ocie had a bedroom set at home she had bought when teaching at Hamilton and we had extra furniture since the Graham and VanDeventer households had combined. Boss and I loaded up the Dodge truck with furniture and headed for Pittsburgh, a two-hundred-and-twenty-five mile trip over the Allegheny Mountains. We made it in one day, got the furniture unloaded, and spent the night with Ocie and Carter. Little did I realize that seven years later, when I accepted the job with Westinghouse, I would be walking those same streets in Wilkesburg. The next morning we had an early breakfast in order to get an early start home. When ready to leave, Boss held out the keys and asked if I would like to drive. I grabbed the keys and headed into a twelve-hour drive for Hamilton. Route 30 over the Allegheny Mountains was steep and the day hot. I dropped it into low, set the throttle for five miles an hour, opened the door and stood outside on the running board and for one hour we climbed the mountain.



Going down the other side in second gear was a little faster because in those days, you used the engine to brake. We went by way of Romney, West Virginia, and loaded on a ton and a half of coal there. With the weight of the coal load, driving became a more cautious chore. Uphill was often in fourth gear at three to four miles per hour and downhill was in third gear to maintain a speed below eight miles per hour. Many times during the trip Boss would ask if I would like for him to drive. At eight o'clock that night we pulled into the Graham farm, and I had been behind the wheel the entire twelve hours, and Boss had not raised his voice once for correcting my driving. I still love the sound of a sweet purring truck engine and being behind the wheel of a truck and will always marvel at the backing precision of the drivers of large trailer trucks.

I remember that awful 1935 Christmas. It wasn't at all like the 1934 Christmas when I was delighted with the five bushels of barley Boss gave me for feed for the hogs I was raising. On Christmas Eve in 1935, I had taken the car and gone to William and Currell Piggott's home near Silcott Springs for a Christmas Eve party. About eleven o'clock, we decided we should go to see another classmate. I was in the lead with Boss' car and Currell was right behind me in the Piggott's car. I topped a hill on the narrow dirt road and there was a cow lengthwise across the road. I hit the brakes and got stopped about two feet short of the cow. Currell did the same but he got stopped on my back bumper. The collision only bent the brackets on my bumper. Currell's car had two broken head lights and a broken radiator. It was my worst Christmas, for Christmas morning I had to show Boss the damage. He got it fixed and never told Mrs. VanDeventer, who would have scolded me.

The years at Lincoln were memorable because of the students, the teachers, the classes, the sports, and the fact that I maintained my perfect attendance record. Graduation consisted of a baccalaureate program, a class program, and a graduation program. The students wrote a class song, wills for each of the students, and skits (with the help of Miss Bridges and Mr. Hutton). Three of the top four in the class were from Hamilton Graded School. I was Valedictorian, Annie Bidgood was Historian, and Sarah Love was fourth by one-tenth of a point average for the four years. Margaret Duncan was Salutatorian. The graduation speaker was Dr. Canter, the Dean of Randolph-Macon College and an outstanding organic chemist in the state of Virginia. Little did I realize that I would regularly see Dr. Canter for the next four years at Randolph-Macon College.



## CHAPTER XIII

### MY FIRST JOB

My first job offer came from Mr. Jennings Potts, the Agriculture teacher at Lincoln High School, and a member of the Board of Directors of Loudoun Golf and Country Club. The club had been organized in the late twenties by selling shares of stock. Boss and Mrs. VanDeventer had one share for many years. It was the last day of high school and Mr. Potts stopped me to inquire what I was going to do that summer. I replied that I was going to help Boss on the farm until I found a job. He asked if I would like to have a job as lifeguard at the Loudoun Golf and Country Club, since the guard for the last two years had notified him that he would not be available. I had caddied some at the golf courses for Boss and was familiar with the club layout. I asked about the lifeguard duties and the pay. The pay was ten dollars a week, less social security deductions. In 1937, there were no deductions from pay checks for state and federal income taxes. Since social security was one percent when it started in 1937 (one-half percent from the employer and one-half percent from the employee), they took a nickel a week out of my check, leaving a pay of nine dollars and ninety-five cents.

Mr. Potts' description of the work to be done was brief and to the point. The job included: (1) Open the pool at nine o'clock in the morning and close it at nine o'clock at night; (2) clean the bathhouses and pool grounds daily; (3) drain, scrub and fill the pool each Monday; (4) test and chlorinate the pool daily; (5) collect daily tickets and check on those holding memberships; (6) sprinkle, sweep, roll and line the two sand and clay tennis courts before opening the pool. Thrilled with the chance for a first job which had a regular salary check, I accepted the job and reported for work the next day.

On my first day at work, Mr. Potts showed me how to operate the valves to drain and fill the pool and how to tie powder chlorine, really calcium hypochlorite, into a towel on the end of a long stick and go around the pool letting it dissolve in the water. A little copper sulphate was put in the pool to help keep the algae from growing on the bottom between the weekly fillings. The instructions on the chlorine test set were clear. Cleaning the bathhouses required little instruction, for I had washed the kitchen floors at home and cleaned the dairy and dairy barn. We went to the two tennis courts and he showed me the hose and water valves for sprinkling the courts, the three-foot wide brush for sweeping to smooth the sand, the three-hundred-pound hand roller, the liner machine, and how to mix lime and water to fill it. Performing all the tasks reviewed seemed simple and straightforward except for rolling the straight lines on the court. With a few days practice, I soon learned to make a straight line rolling the liner.

There were other things I had to work at and practice in order to satisfactorily perform the job. Mr. Potts had not asked me (and I did not volunteer to tell him) that I didn't know how to swim. I was fully confident that I could learn in a few days. I watched the other boys and girls diving in, swimming under water, and swimming on top of the water and started imitating them. It never occurred to me



how big the newspaper headlines would have been "Lifeguard at Pool Drowns" if I had gotten into trouble in deep water. In a few days, I was able to swim a length (75 feet) and a half under water and dive with the rest of the boys and girls. Since most people drown under water, I was fast gaining confidence and the tan to look the part of a life guard. In order to better dress the roll, I took my first weeks' pay check and bought a shiny black pair of new swimming trunks. In time, my skin matched the bathing suit and the chlorine bleached my hair snow white.

The long hours gave me plenty of time to get my work done since I arrived at the pool each morning at seven o'clock and left at night between nine and ten. The early arrival was dictated by my free morning transportation on Hindman's milk pickup truck. His schedule called for picking up milk at our farm at 6:15 A.M. and then going straight to downtown Purcellville for reloading the milk on a bigger truck for the trip to Washington. This required that I rise about 5:45 A.M., eat breakfast, fix my lunch of a sandwich and a quart Mason jar of whole milk, and be ready to leave on the truck at 6:15 A.M. I may have missed breakfast and fixing my lunch, but I never missed the six-mile ride on the milk truck during the four summers I worked at the pool. The Hindman truck arrived in Purcellville at 6:40 A.M., and I walked or ran the mile to the golf course. I had never "eaten out", so it didn't occur to me that I could have stopped at the Greek restaurant for breakfast.

A day at the pool usually started with the tennis courts. I took one and a half hours to sprinkle, sweep, roll, and line the two courts. I found by experience that the courts only had to be done about every other day — depending on the amount of play and the weather. Testing the pool, cleaning the bathhouses, straightening the benches, and picking up the paper took an hour each day. Part of this work (except for the ladies' bathhouse) I could usually do at night.

I collected the tickets, which were sold at the clubhouse for fifteen cents for children under sixteen and twenty-five cents for adults. The season tickets cost five dollars each for children and eight dollars each for adults. There were no family rates, since the golf course had no responsibility for the size of your family. Although the admission prices were low, we paid off the cost of the pool at about sixteen percent per year. The total cost of the thirty-five by seventy-five foot poured concrete pool (which had a diving board, and bathhouses with hot and cold running water) when built in 1935 was twenty-four hundred dollars. The identical size pool at the Blackridge Civic Club in Pittsburgh (with smaller bathhouses, but including a circulating pump, filter, and an automatic chlorinator system,) cost eighty thousand dollars in 1970. Its operational staff from twelve noon until eight o'clock requires three full-time lifeguards, one of which is a pool manager. The staff cost for operating our local pool in 1986 is about seventy-two hundred dollars, compared to the one hundred and twenty dollars I got as the only staff member for the entire season. However, in my second year, when I became a certified lifeguard, my salary was raised to twelve dollars per week and raised the seasonal staff cost to one hundred and forty-four dollars plus one half percent social security.

The pool was located in the middle of a grassed, unfenced area and surrounded by big red oak trees. To the back of the diving board, and removed about one hundred feet, was the #7 green. Some of the poor golfers complained that the pool noise caused them to miss their putts. However, they missed the putts before and after swimming season, the same as during the season. The diving board was



made of tapered oak two-by-fours bolted together on edge and anchored one foot above the pool's concrete apron and one-and-a-half feet above the water. It had a good spring, and I got so I could reach a height of eight feet in a swan dive (and jack knife) and could do a one-and-a-half flip with the greatest of ease. By the end of the summer, I was swimming both on top and under the water with the best of the swimmers.

Getting home at the end of the day was a problem but not one to worry about. I had no scheduled means of transportation, except walking and thumbing, to get the seven miles home at night. Many nights my boy and girl friends would swim until pool closing time and give me a ride home. Sometimes, after closing the pool, we would drive to the Shenandoah River across the Blue Ridge for a good river swim before heading home. People were good in those days about picking up hitchhikers and almost every passing car would stop and give me a ride. Never once can I remember the home folks coming to pick me up, for getting home was my responsibility. Only once in four summers did I have to walk the entire distance home. Arriving home between ten and eleven, I would be greeted by King Tut, the white bulldog, and find the leftovers from supper waiting in the kitchen cabinet and have a quick supper before retiring to bed.

A few weeks after starting the new job, I found that people came to the pool without a towel and needed to rent one. I ordered three dozen towels at ten cents each from Sears Roebuck and put up a "Towels for Rent Five Cents" sign. In a short time, I had collected the cost of my original investment and was making money with the rentals. Since the folks at home washed and dried the towels for nothing, I had a real money maker and a new successful business venture. Many of the towels lasted the four summers I lifeguarded and so I had no capital costs the second, third, and fourth years.

It took me a while to realize why I found so many boys chinning on the ten-foot-high exposed two-by-four rafters of the boys' bathhouse. At first, I thought it was just horse play, but the expression on the boys' faces let me know I had some detective work to do. One day, when either they didn't have a watchman at the door or he was sleeping on the watch, I came in to get a towel for rent and there was a boy half way down off the ceiling of the girls' side of the bathhouse. The boys had used the open beams for entry to the ceiling of the girls' bathhouse and had cut peep holes in the ceiling. This explained why the boys spent more time in the bathhouse than the pool. I reported the findings and the golf course crew installed a fence and closed the usual access ports between the boys' and girls' bathhouses. The girls never let on that they knew about the barrier installations, but the boys complained bitterly and threatened to drop their pool membership. None did.

Since the pool was unfenced, there was always a problem of swimmers after hours. Of course, I had the keys to the golf course roadgate and I would lock it every night on the way home. However, the seventeenth fairway and green bordered both on Highway Seven and the lane to a house. Using the lane, cars could drive in the lane, down number seven fairway, cross the tractor bridge, fairway eighteen, and be on the macadam road to the clubhouse. All the young folks knew about it and regularly used the golf course for night parking or an after-hours' swim. A one-hundred-foot fence along the lane would have eliminated the problem, but I think everyone enjoyed talking about it. Sometimes, the Purcellville cops would catch someone and fine them for trespassing. However, in



general, it was an accepted practice as long as no damage to the fairway and greens resulted. Occasionally, I would return at night after closing time and check to see if there were any illegal swimmers. One of those nights, I heard a real party going on at the pool. In the darkness, I sneaked to the door of the bathhouse, silently unlocked the lock, and flipped on the pool lights and ran to the pool. On arriving at the pool, not a swimmer was in sight and my first thought was they had escaped down the fairway. After about forty-five seconds, they started popping up out of the water. In spite of the fact they were all my friends, I collected a quarter from each of them. I couldn't believe that all of the six boys had on bathing trunks, for I fully expected that they were all "skinny dipping."

On rainy and cold days, people would not come to the pool, and I could leave the pool unwatched. I had golf privileges and would play golf on some of the rainy days, thus adding another sport to my athletic activities. I got to know the play schedules of many of the golfers and whether or not they tipped the caddies. If my friends were scheduled to play on one of those cold and/or rainy days, I would hang around the clubhouse and try to get a job caddying. In those days, a caddy got a nickel a hole, forty-five cents for nine holes, eighty cents for eighteen holes for a single, sixty-five cents for nine holes, and one dollar and twenty-five cents for eighteen holes for a double. A single is when you carry one bag for one golfer and a double is when you carry two bags for two golfers. In those days before golf carts, both the golfer and the caddy walked. Since walking and conversational time were so much a part of the golf game, I still can't believe the success of the golf cart business. Another way of making money at the golf course was to hunt lost golf balls, clean them in the ball washers, and sell them to the golfers.

Lifeguarding is a stressful job for one who accepts the responsibility for the safety of all the swimmers. Many nights I would wake up sitting on the side of the bed and collecting tickets. The fourth of July holiday was the worst day of the entire season for the lifeguard. In general, the holiday brought to the pool over four hundred ticketed swimmers, plus those with membership. Most of the swimmers were strangers, and it was difficult to know their swimming capabilities. Many were children of golfers from Washington who used the pool and lifeguard as a babysitter while they enjoyed thirty-six holes of golf and had dinner at the Fairway Inn, which bordered the #6 fairway. The only good thing about the fourth of July was the many family picnics held at the golf course. I would either get invitations to the picnics or plates of fried chicken and potato salad and ice tea drinks would be delivered to me at the pool. Most times the food was from Loudoun County families that I knew; other times, visiting teenage girls would show up at the pool with a plate of food for me. There is no better way for a teenage girl to become friends with a hungry lifeguard than using a plate of food. The approach resulted in many lasting friendships — some because I knew there would be future picnics with food and others because of attraction for the girls. One of the visiting cute little girls from West Palm Beach I dated all summer. Little did I realize that it would result in my longest-ever hitchhiking trip on a Christmas vacation (about which, more later).

By the middle of August I still had made no plans for the next year. Having a job and spending money made me a little complacent when most of the boys, in the midst of the Depression, had neither. Then one day I had one of the most important conversations in my life. Mr. Ambrose Warner, father of Paul (with whom I played basketball at Lincoln), visited me at the pool. This was the only oc-



casion I can ever remember his visiting the pool for he neither swam nor played golf. Mr. Warner's wife was John Monroe's sister. (As you may remember, John was the pharmacist in Purcellville who had married Ollie Grahm). Mr. Warner asked me what I was going to do next year. I said I planned to see if Mr. Terry Hirst would give me a job at the lumber mill in Leesburg so I could make enough money to go to college the following year. Mr. Warner asked me how much money I had. I told him I had the hundred dollars from selling the five pigs and about another hundred dollars out of the one hundred and twenty dollars I got for lifeguarding that summer. He said he wanted me to go to see Mr. Hutton at Lincoln and get him to sign me up to enter Randolph-Macon College; he said I should then call Mr. Love who would be taking Jimmy there and ask if I could ride with him to Randolph-Macon College. I responded: "But, Mr. Warner, that isn't near enough money to go to college." He simply replied "Do as I say, and don't tell me your problems." Since I had the deepest respect for adults, I had to follow his directions, and did. Mr. Hutton, an alumnus of Randolph-Macon, made arrangements for my acceptance at Randolph-Macon, and, just as Mr. Warner said, I rode with Jimmy Love when Mr. Love took him to enter college. Mr. Love was also an alumnus of Randolph-Macon College, and I suspected that he had requested that Jimmy and I room together. On arriving at Randolph-Macon, we found we were assigned to be roommates — a relationship that lasted for three years.



## CHAPTER XIV

### A RANDOLPH-MACON COLLEGE FRESHMAN

The stress of my first day at Randolph-Macon was eased a little because of my roommate and Lincoln High classmate, Jimmy Love. In addition, Albert White of Leesburg was there and was assigned a room in one of the cottages which also served as the infirmary. Jimmy and I were assigned the corner room, #129, in the old dorm. When the college went coeducational about 1978, that dormitory became the girls' dormitory. On the first day of college, we went to Mr. McNeal's office for registration. He looked at my record and recommended that I take English Literature from Dr. Webb, Economics from Dr. McConnel, Latin from Dr. Bowen, Trigonometry and Algebra from Dr. T. McNider Simpson, and Physics from Dr. W. H. Keeble. I was surprised to find that I had only five classes and that there were no afternoon classes, except for Physics laboratory two afternoons a week. There was a physical education class, two hours a week, but that was playing sports and I couldn't count it as a class although it was required and we got one credit for it. Randolph-Macon was a Methodist college, and regular attendance at Tuesday chapel was expected; one year of Bible was required for graduation. The Dean of the College and Head of the Chemistry Department was Dr. Canter, who had been the speaker at our Lincoln High School graduation exercises. Other professors I took classes from in my later years included Dr. Tarry (Bible), Dr. Ira Updyke (General and Inorganic Microchemistry), Dr. Bullington (Hygiene), Dr. Hailey (German), Dr. Fox (History), Dr. G. Simpson (English Composition) and Dr. Early Smith (Educational Psychology). Dr. Blackwell was President and nearly eighty years old. He, like Mr. Correll, was truly of the old school and a brilliant scholar. Dr. Blackwell was the second person that I knew whose only dress was the long-tail black coat, black pants and stiff white shirt with black bow tie. He had a long beard and physically resembled Mr. Correll. Another very important person at Randolph-Macon College was Dr. Hatcher, the Treasurer. He was tight with money, but fair, and had heard every excuse in the world as to why a student did not wish to depart with his money.

Jimmy and I made a smart decision, although I don't know that we deserve credit for it, when we signed up for meals at Mrs. Terrell's house, on the corner of England and Taylor Streets. We could have signed up for meals at Miss Black's or Mrs. Luck's boarding house which were across the street from the Library and the old gym. The old gym was used as a fine arts classroom for Bible, German, and Educational Psychology. Little did I realize that forty-three years in the future, the site of Luck's house would be the Randolph-Macon College Auditorium, and that I would be on its stage in full academic dress to receive an Honorary Doctor of Science Degree. Mrs. Terrell provided the best meals in town and the price for three meals a day for seven days a week was twenty-five dollars per month. Milk was extra. There were no refunds for meals missed. Breakfast included juice, hot and cold cereal, eggs, bacon, and toast. Lunch was one of those sit-down meals and, as in most of the south at that time, it was "dinner". The evening meal was "supper" with meat, two vegetables, maybe a salad, and dessert.



The cook was a colored lady named Virginia, with straight red hair and freckles. She lived on Maple Street beyond the football field and across from the present soccer field. At the time, that entire area was occupied by colored families living in small, neat, private homes. She and her husband made blackberry wine and, a couple of times, she invited me out for a visit and a glass. Her wine was on a par with Mr. Grubb's hard cider. I still don't know why hard cider is not known as apple wine since it and wine have about the same kick.

Mrs. Terrell had two dining rooms and at times fed as many as twenty-four students plus her two daughters, Martha and Frances, and Mr. Terrell. The Terrells had two older sons, Emmitt (who was a salesman for a baby food company in Richmond) and Early (who was on the staff of the State Hospital in Williamsburg). Mr. Terrell was an insurance salesman, Frances was a dental technician in Ashland for Dr. Webb, and Martha was a student at William and Mary extension on Broad Street near Byrd Park in Richmond.

Coming from a small country high school to a large college of three hundred and seventy-six students was a trying experience, as I fully realized when the first six weeks' report cards came out. I received three B's and two C's. The C's were in English Literature under Dr. Webb and Economics with Dr. McConnel. The B's were in Latin (Dr. Bowen), Mathematics (Dr. Simpson), and Physics (Dr. Keeble). Up to that time, I had never received a "C" in any class and rarely had I ever received a "B". Through bull session, of which there are many in college, I found my grades (relatively speaking) were not bad for a freshman. Out of some sixty students taking first-year Physics, of which fifty percent were upper classmen, I was one of the two freshmen physics students who had passed the course the first six weeks. Both of us later became laboratory instructors for Physics I and II. However, I could not rest on relative merits for justifying my low grades and then and there decided that the number one priority was to study to improve those grade by the end of the semester.

In order to spend more time on the books, I had to give up some things and take up other things. On entering Randolph-Macon, I had signed up for the diving team, under coach Pat Bynum. The coach was good, and I had learned a lot about diving in the six weeks. I had become capable of doing the back jackknife, the half and full gainer, the front jackknife, the one and a half flip in tuck and pike positions, and the half and full twists. Without a doubt, I would be the best diver at the pool next summer. Since diving each day for one to two hours left me totally exhausted and unfit for study, I dropped the diving from my schedule in order to concentrate on academics. In the meantime, I found it would be a politically favorable move to take up tennis. Dr. Bowen was in his seventies and still loved to play tennis but was starting to have trouble finding a partner and opponents. Since Jimmy and I were both taking Latin, we decided to take "Latin Laboratory," as playing tennis with Dr. Bowen was known around the campus. My second six weeks' grade report for Latin improved from a "B" to an "A", because of the extra time I devoted to Latin studies and the excellent Latin foundation I had received at Lincoln from Mr. Hutton's Latin courses for three years (not really because of "Latin Laboratory"). I knew that to become a successful Latin teacher, I would have to take all the Latin that Randolph-Macon offered and achieve a grade of "A" in the courses. At that time, my career goal was to be a Latin teacher.

In the fall of 1937, a new form of student work aid, and maybe the original



student work aid, appeared on campus under the federal program known as the National Youth Administration (N.Y.A.). The job paid fifty cents an hour and required thirty hours per month for the fifteen-dollars-per-month compensation. I applied in late October and was successful in getting one of the jobs, which typically meant raking leaves on campus. After about three weeks of raking leaves, I was asked by Dr. T. McNider Simpson if I would like to work for him grading freshmen mathematics problems rather than raking leaves. To have this opportunity and with pay was more than I could expect and was the first of many breaks which would come my way because of those wonderful Randolph-Macon College professors.

When money is a commodity in short supply, it is a real cause for ingenuity and invention in a financially struggling student who never spent a deprived day in his whole life. I arrived at college with a pants presser and the only one of its type I ever saw. It was flat, about twelve inches wide and thirty-six inches long. A heating pad was placed between the pant legs, sprinkled with a little water, the two sides clamped, and the heater plugged in. Steam would come out of the presser, when the steam disappeared, one knew the pressing job was complete. At times I made friends by letting the other boys press their pants. In those days clothes didn't have to be fancy, but of greater importance was that they be neat and clean and complement the gentlemanly character expected of every male student. I had inherited some fifteen dress shirts from an uncle of Frances Graham (Sam Graham's wife) who was head of the Cross Oil Company. The shirts were checked white and purple, linen shirts in the big stripes, all colors of the rainbow and of the best quality money could buy. However, I never had a white shirt to wear like other boys. I washed them in the wash basin of the shower room; and only the collars and cuffs were ironed on the desk table with a towel as an ironing pad, since, with a sweater, nothing else showed. The colored shirts lasted me for five years of college (four at Randolph-Macon and one at Virginia Polytechnic Institute).

I pledged to myself that if I ever got a job, I would only buy and wear white dress shirts. In my forty-two-year career at Westinghouse R&D Center, I always showed up each day with a clean, white shirt. Since Marie, my wife, always washed and ironed my shirts, they maintained a whiteness admired by others. After our marriage, she washed and ironed twelve thousand white shirts for me, and the original Ironrite still operates like new today.

I forgot to tell you about my dormitory room at college. It had two cots, two tables for desks equipped with bookshelf, two straight wooden chairs, and two closets. The first night we were scared and afraid to turn on the lights. We had heard what the upper classmen did to freshmen and were very gullible. As soon as it got dark, the upper classmen came pounding on the door to let them in. Jimmy and I kept quiet, stretched out on the cots. We hoped they would go away and wished we had closed the transom over the door. Everything got real quiet and we were silently rejoicing when two water bags came in through the transom and landed on our beds. Our yells gave us away. Sleeping in a wet strange cot your first night in college was no thrill and tended to make you feel a little homesick for the farm.

Another problem with being a freshman was that we had to wear a Randolph-Macon freshman or "Rat" cap all the time. Everybody could recognize a freshman and make it tough for him. The freshmen had to work the week before the Hampden-Sydney College Football game gathering material for the big bon-



fire, at which Hampden-Sydney was burned in effigy. The night before the scheduled bonfire, some Hampden-Sydney fellow sneaked into town in disguise and set fire to the pile which had been prepared for the big bonfire. The town had been cleaned of all trash, and we still had to rebuild the pile for the bonfire in one day and then guard the campus from the sneaky Hampden-Sydney students. We patrolled the campus in shifts all night with billies (obtained by snapping them out of the stairway railings). The next morning the banister was free standing as if levitating, the campus secure, and the bonfire pile unburnt.

By the first of November, it was obvious that I had to spend less money or find a source of additional income to remain in college until Christmas. I approached Mrs. Terrell at the boarding house about the cost for only breakfast and supper and no lunch. She asked me why, and I told her that I didn't have enough money for three meals a day. She responded that every growing boy needs three meals a day and offered me a job of waiting tables which would reduce my meal cost from twenty-five dollars a month to twelve dollars and fifty cents. She was pleased with my work, and I kept the job for the remaining four years at Randolph-Macon. I even earned extra money by shopping for her groceries when she was incapacitated, and by mowing her yard. The job made it possible for me to stop by the Terrell house at night and rob the refrigerator when I was hungry. The job also provided the opportunity of knowing better and becoming closer friends with twenty-five of the outstanding students who ate there.

The second report card at the end of November was viewed with high expectations for I could feel that I was learning and fitting into the college routine by then; furthermore, the freshmen students were coming to me for help in mathematics and physics. Since satisfactory completion of one year of mathematics was a requirement for entering medical and dental colleges, the passing of the mathematics course had particular significance for these students. It appeared that students pursuing a medical career, in general, were poor mathematicians or lacked motivation in the subject. I recognized that most of those students were well-to-do, some had cars, most belonged to fraternities, and they went home on weekends if they desired. In order to better assure their acceptance at medical and dentistry college and additional funding for my expenses, I scheduled mathematics and physics tutoring classes at night in the classroom for fifty cents per hour per student. Some nights I would have ten students and make five dollars an hour — an unheard-of pay rate in those days. When the grades were passed out on the last day before Thanksgiving holiday, I had succeeded in raising each grade by one letter with a B in English Literature, B in Economics, and A's in Latin, Mathematics and Physics. This made for a great Thanksgiving Holiday at home, and the Graham family was proud of how well I was doing in college.

College life was truly under control by Christmas, and I felt quite comfortable with it. I knew almost every student on campus by name. The boys in the north wing of the old dorm were close and did lots of things to enhance our image. During the time when all the fraternities decorated their houses to try to win the decoration contest, we "festooned" the entire outside of the north wing as a part of the contest and sat on the steps like fraternity boys. When girls came by, we would invite them in to view the non-existent decorations on the inside. Of course they knew, and we knew, that no girls were permitted inside the boys' dormitories except girl relatives. We had lots of newly-adopted girl relatives.

Randolph-Macon operated on a two-semester system in 1937, with examina-



tions in January and May. During much of the Christmas holidays that first year at home, I studied for my final exams. This made it possible for me to hold tutoring classes for freshmen mathematics and physics classes in the afternoons and evenings. I recall I earned approximately an extra fifty dollars the week before examinations. The fifty dollars was enough to cover four months of meals at Terrell's since I waited tables and therefore got the meals at half price. My reputation as a tutor was spreading. I had as many students as I could handle and still maintain other important college activities.

The typical exam period at college was three hours. The morning midterm examinations started at eight and ended at eleven o'clock and the afternoon examinations started at two o'clock and ended at five o'clock. However, the three-hour examination schedule only applied to the fine arts courses and not the science courses. I recalled the freshmen physics examination which started at eight; I turned in my paper at one-thirty. I went to the drugstore for a milkshake and started the math examination at two in the afternoon. Dr. Simpson told us he would pick the papers up at midnight. I finished at ten o'clock and turned in my paper. Over half the class was still in the examination when I left. Randolph-Macon had the honor system, like the University of Virginia, and professors did not monitor the examination. They passed out the typed examination sheet and returned later to pick up the completed papers. Examination grades, class grades, and final semester grades for the entire class were posted on the classroom door for all to see about two days after the examination. Examination counted one third and classwork two thirds for the semester grade. Grades were kept in numeric form except for the final letter grade (A - 92-100, B - 85-91, C - 80-84, D - 75-79, E - less than 75). Graduation required one hundred and twenty completed class hours and counted all classes completed with a D grade or better. In addition, a graduation requirement was one hundred and twenty quality points. Classes completed with an A grade counted three quality credits per class hour, a B was two, a C was one, and a D was zero. At the end of the first semester, I had successfully completed seventeen class hours with grades of A in Physics, Mathematics, and Latin and grades of B in Economics and English Literature, for a total of forty-five quality credits. Dr. Bowen gave me a ninety-nine on the Latin semester examination and this achievement was reported in the *Loudoun Times Mirror* (our local newspaper).

The spring semester at Randolph-Macon continued along a successful path and everything went well. Class preparation took less time. I continued grading papers for Dr. Simpson and waiting tables for Mrs. Terrell as a means of paying my college tuition and reducing the cost of meals. As best I can recall, I borrowed one hundred dollars from Mr. Grubb during my Freshman year. He loaned me the money in two fifty-dollar loans — one at Christmas and one at Easter. I signed notes for each loan, which he wrote on a yellow manila paper page from a tablet. Boss recommended that I take out a thousand-dollar life insurance policy to protect Mr. Grubb in the event anything happened to me. I took out the thousand-dollar policy with Massachusetts Life Insurance Company. It was a paid-up policy at sixty, and when I reached sixty I received a check for the paid-up policy.

In the spring of 1936, I received a letter from the local Loudoun Red Cross chapter, of which Mrs. Mary Stabler of Waterford was president. She said the Red Cross had signed me for a life saving class the first two weeks of June at Annapolis, Maryland, and that the golf course management approved my taking the



class. In preparation for this class, I started swimming every day in the college pool. By the first of May, I was swimming laps (using the crawl stroke) equivalent to a mile with the greatest of ease. It was during May that a girlfriend dared me to have my head shaved. I went to the barber and came out with no hair. Little did I realize the problems this would cause me and my assigned bald-headed swim partner at Annapolis in practicing the life-saving hair carry. Each would have to hold a curved finger on the top of his head for the hair carry tow. I left Randolph-Macon early one morning of the afternoon I was to sign in at Annapolis for life saving classes. I hitchhiked to Annapolis and down to the Severna River, where Camp Letts was located, wearing my Randolph-Macon "Rat" cap. The "Rat" cap identified me as a college student and few drivers could pass me up. Even seniors wore "Rat" caps when hitchhiking, because it was a sure ticket for a free ride.



## CHAPTER XV

### LIFE AT THE LOUDOUN GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

As a young non-swimmer in grade school, I had a couple of swimming experiences which made me realize the importance of swimming. One day, I rode my bike to Catoctin Creek on Route Nine for a swim with the boys. I got in a hole over my head and was in the process of drowning by splashing when I relaxed, went to the bottom, and push off hard enough to reach shallow water.

The second time I had a narrow escape was when Bobby VanDeventer and Wade Graham took me swimming in the Potomac at White's Ferry, which is off Route Fifteen about three miles north of Leesburg. Bobby and Wade were both good swimmers, and they had towed me across the Potomac from the Virginia to the Maryland side on an inner tube. When I was floating near the Maryland side, a bumble bee landed on the side of the tube and must have inserted his stinger. The tube burst with a bang and dumped me in the deep water. Fortunately, Wade was close and grabbed me as I was splashing and taking in water. Even today I do not like the use of air-inflated swimming devices by non-swimmers except when employed as a teaching aid in shallow water.

I arrived at Camp Letts on the Severna River in the afternoon after hitchhiking from Randolph-Macon for my Red Cross Swimming and Life Saving lessons. There was no real fear of hitchhiking in those days. No hitchhiker had ever done anything to a driver that picked him up except to thank him and fully acknowledge his appreciation for the ride. The ride ended with an "I'll see you later," which I never did. Ladies would stop and give a ride as readily as gentlemen. I once was picked up and asked to drive so the driver could take a nap.

Camp Letts was a large Red Cross camp, and we had about one hundred students studying to become swimming and life-saving instructors. We were assigned cabins which slept four (the girls in one area and the boys in another). Sleeping was the only segregated part of the camp. The boys and girls ate together, swam together, boated together and studied together. Both the boys and girls noticed they had lost interest in each other after the first day, and we knew the food was being doctored with a chemical for this purpose. To overcome this handicap, we would decide that the chemical was added to the mashed potatoes and nobody would eat mashed potatoes that day. The next day it was reported to be in the apple sauce and all the apple sauce was returned to the kitchen untouched. We tried this system for the full two weeks without success. I think they were using the additive in more than one of the food dishes; or, maybe it was in the iced tea.

The curriculum at Camp Letts was tough for even the young college students for it included nine hours of classes per day, not counting time for meals and study. There were two hours of swimming, from eight until ten. The next class was two hours of first aid followed by lunch (from twelve until one). Beginning at one o'clock we had two hours of life-saving during which time we learned to swim with one arm and with only the legs for the head and hair carries. The one-arm swim was for the cross-chest carry. Breaking holds was taught in case the drown-



ing swimmer grabbed you around the neck. Resuscitation was taught in first aid. Following life-saving, we had two hours of boating, canoeing, and paddle board classes. The paddle boards were big wooden surf boards and one could travel long distances by hand paddling. Later at Westinghouse I wrote up a patent disclosure on a battery-driven, one-man paddle board. It was circulated to the business units and evaluated as a potential new Westinghouse product, but it failed to make the product line. I am sure there were too many non-swimmers on the decision team. Following dinner, we had a one-hour seminar each evening on water safety.

One of the hazards of swimming early in the swim season is sunburn, followed by sun poisoning. Few, if any, of the students had tanned before coming to camp. Tanning lamps and tanning salons were unheard of in the thirties. The Red Cross had a simple and cheap fix to protect us from the sun. A gallon jar of tannic acid with a dish mop was supplied. We would mop each other down with the brown tannic acid and avoid getting burned. Occasionally, it would get on the bathing suit and leave a stain, but that was better than being burned. It must have been a good block for the ultraviolet rays for none of us burned.

Many of the students came to camp less prepared for swimming than I. I had practiced swimming at Randolph-Macon just prior to camp and was in good condition for swimming. Many of the poorly conditioned students became ill, just like unconditioned football players in their first scrimmage.

One of the unpleasant things we had to do was to dive off of an eight-foot-high diving board into twenty feet of water and bring up a handful of mud from the bottom. At about eight feet below the water's surface, it became pitch black and the water got cold. I tended to lose my direction swimming those last twelve feet to the bottom. Since the bottom was soft mud, I feared getting a hand or foot stuck in the mud and had to approach the bottom slowly and leave without pushing off. On the way up, I thought I would never reach the top and started to question whether I was swimming in a horizontal direction or a vertical direction. Breaking the surface and gasping for air with a hand full of mud was a significant achievement. Holding the mud was a handicap, for it reduced the effectiveness of one hand for swimming.

Another part of the class and important in my future teaching of swimming and life-saving was training to put on a water show. We had excellent teachers and a first-class water show resulted. One of the teachers was a past Olympic swimmer from the Y.M.C.A. pool at Wilmerding, Pennsylvania. This was the same teacher that taught my future wife and her brother and sister to swim, for they lived less than a mile from the Wilmerding Y.M.C.A. building. My three daughters also learned to swim at the Wilmerding Y.M.C.A. and received their life-saving certification there. The well-organized and carefully practiced water show was put on our last night in camp. It included all the various dives; demonstration of the swimming strokes in two hundred foot swims; demonstrations of the life-saving carries; demonstrations of breaking holds; resuscitation demonstrations; first-aid demonstrations for cuts, bruises, sunburn, and broken bones; demonstrations of proper and improper use of canoes, boats, and paddle boats; it concluded with a talk on the importance of being a good lifeguard who enforced all safety rules at your assigned pool. At the end of the swim show, the teachers called out our names and we went forward to receive our certificate and Red Cross Swimming and Life-Saving Instructors' patch to wear on our bathing suit. I felt a little proud for reaching this level of accomplishment in swimming and knew it assured my job for



at least three summers as a lifeguard. With all this training in swimming, plus the diving instructions at Randolph-Macon, I felt I could now demonstrate that expected role of a lifeguard, namely, being the best diver and swimmer at the pool. It was fun to return to the pool that second summer with my new credentials and having achieved them without going through all the swimming ranks of today from tadpole to minnow to bass, etc.

When I arrived at the Loudoun Golf and Country Club pool on my first day back, I was greeted by all the young kids, the teenagers, and the mothers. There were the Brower twins, Bill and Bob, whom I could not tell apart, and their brother, Buddy, and sister, Eleanor. One of the twins later became the golf professional at the club and both of them certified for senior life-saving in my classes. The Balls' home bordered on the golf course and Anna, Gertie, Ida Mae, Mac, and Lee all swam and had memberships at the pool. David, Sylvia, and Barbara Crooker were regular swimmers and David would take care of the pool on those rare occasions when I would take an evening off. Sylvia later married Bill Tribby, Mrs. VanDeventer's nephew, who got his Ph.D. degree at Iowa in Drama. Dr. Crooker invented and patented a golf club driver shaped like a torpedo and had them displayed at the Club House. The new clubs gave longer distance on drives than the conventional club, but accuracy was difficult to achieve, even by Mr. Hirst, the golf pro at the Club. There were many other swimmers including the Cornwells, the Hatchers, the Dillons, the Yakeys, the Hirsts, the Grahams (Charles Mac, and Bonnie), the Pancoasts, the Eppes, the Tribbys, the Stablers, etc.

With my new teaching skills, I was in demand for both private and group swim lessons. Private lessons were twenty-five cents an hour and group lessons were ten cents an hour per person. Particularly memorable was a set of boy twins I taught to swim. Their parents were avid golfers and they would leave the eighteen-month-old twins with me for lessons while they played eighteen holes of golf. I taught them to do the doggie paddle and they both learned to swim with motions which resembled a baby crawling. People were amazed to see them swimming; they were nearly as good at it as they were at walking.

One of the fun classes I taught was a group of ladies in the 30-40 age group. They were mostly mothers of the kids that swam at the pool who wanted to learn to swim but were ashamed to let people know they couldn't swim. A few of them approached me about teaching them to swim. A class was organized and scheduled from six until seven o'clock during the dinner hour, so that the pool would likely be empty of other people. I had about eight in the class and some days I think they went to the hairdressers in preparation for the swim class. If you don't put your head under water before you reach thirty, you never will. I found that most middle-age ladies could float easily with hands and legs stationary and sink on movement of their hands and legs. In Physics terms this is difficult to reconcile for a body is buoyed up by the difference in its weight and that of the displaced water, whether stationary or moving. I concluded that they were swimming toward the bottom and tried having them swim on their backs so they would be swimming up. I found that they would sink, whether swimming on their backs or stomachs. I could never float in fresh water since for me the weight of displaced water was less than my body weight. I concluded that Archimedes' principle worked better in salt water, for I could float in the ocean. I often thought it would be fun to swim in



mercury with only one-thirteenth of your body below the surface and twelve-thirteenths above the liquid surface, for mercury is thirteen times more dense than water.

Some evenings when there were no swimmers at eight thirty, I would close the pool and take off with the boys for a swim in Big Eddy on the Shenandoah River. Big Eddy was by way of Hillsboro on Route 9 after crossing the Blue Ridge Mountains. The middle of the eddy was about eight feet deep and had an anchored float with a diving board. Bath houses for changing clothes were available for a fee; but, rather than pay, we always changed to our bathing suits in the cars or in the bushes. If one used the bushes, one soon learned to avoid the plentiful sting weeds which grew on the river bank. Following an hour or two of swimming and diving, we would head back across the mountains for home. One night Hugh Grubb, Jimmy Love and I reached the top of the Blue Ridge near the West Virginia-Virginia line and noticed that the gas gauge was on "E" and pulled into a one-pump service station on the mountain. Between the three of us, we were able to raise twenty-five cents in change. The service station operator came to the car window and asked "How much?" I replied "A gallon." He asked: "A gallon of what?" We were tempted, but knew we couldn't afford it, and replied: "A gallon of gas."

Frequently, it was dark by the time I closed the pool and got rid of all the swimmers. One night I had made plans to be picked up by the boys after closing time. Since they were late and I had already had a long day, I laid down on the grass of the practice fairway by the tennis courts to wait. The caddies had a late blackjack game on the table in the woods that night. They blew out the lantern and the game broke up a little after I laid down on the grass. Ten or fifteen of them headed across the practice fairway directly toward me. Suddenly one screamed "There's a dead man up there." The entire dozen headed for the woods in a run. Gradually, one by one, they regained their courage and were curious to find out who the dead man was. Cautiously and almost in single file, they approached within ten feet as I lay motionless. When I rolled over laughing, they must have jumped back a good ten feet. Caddies loved to play jokes on each other to help fill up the idle time between rounds of caddying.

The life of a lifeguard in those days was never boring. A frequent problem was the "walking" benches. There were several green wooden benches with steel supports and legs on the grass surrounding the pool apron. Although it was an understood pool rule that the benches were not to be moved, they had a way of moving to the pool apron. Some of the boys loved to aggravate me and played games moving the benches. They would move the benches two feet each time my back was turned and then sat on them looking innocent as though nothing had happened. Through a series of fifteen timed moves, the benches would cover the thirty-foot distance to the pool apron. At that point, I would make them return the benches to their original spots as they complained of their innocence and started their next move.

The Loudoun Golf and Country Club pool was of poured unpainted concrete and the bottom had been left rough so that it would not be slippery when wet. Another frequently broken rule was diving into the shallow end, which was no more than two feet deep. The boys would line up on the shallow end and wait for my back to be turned and then came the diving splash. It was always the same reply: "John (or Tom or Harry) pushed me and to keep from hitting the bottom I had



to dive." One day proved the rule and me right about diving it the shallow end and eliminated the problem. I think it was Jack VanSickler who dove in the shallow end a fraction of an inch too deep. He left some skin from his nose on the rough concrete bottom and came up with blood streaming over his face. I kept a straight face as I wiped away the blood, applied iodine with its "good" sting, and placed a couple of Band Aids across his nose. This eliminated the diving horse play at the shallow end for that year.

Only once in four years at the pool did I experience a dangerous situation which required my life-saving training. The pool was crowded and fortunately I was keeping a close watch for anyone in distress. I spotted Francis Mock in the deep end in a vertical position and splashing with his hands. At first I thought it was horseplay, but the expression on his face told me he was in real trouble. Francis was not a very good swimmer and was unable to get from a vertical position to the horizontal swimming position. I dove across the pool, grabbed him by the arm and towed him to the side while holding his head above water. Boys on the apron pulled him out and we laid him on the walk. He was breathing, but nearly unconscious. I covered him with towels and kept him quiet for several minutes. At my suggestion, he did not return to the pool that day.

A real plus for being a lifeguard was the opportunity it provided to meet the new girls visiting relatives in town for the summer. At such times it seemed that the new girls had fascinated us to the extent that the local girls took second place. Somehow, the local girls knew this change in rank automatically and reacted by disliking any new cute girl visitor. Of course, to attract the attention of the new girls, the boys would put on their fanciest dives, swim under water one and a half lengths, and demonstrate the up-and-coming crawl stroke without raising their head. Usually, one of these would win a subtle "hello" and, once the ice was broken, "goodby" local girls. After my certification, the Red Cross held a two-week swimming course each summer which Mrs. Stabler helped organize and advertise. I was the only teacher, and some years I had as many as sixty students in the class. The classes started at eight o'clock and there were two hours of swimming. From ten until twelve, I taught junior and senior life-saving classes. All students were in the swim show held Friday night of the second week. More than fifty percent of the starting non-swimmers could swim the width of the pool by the end of the second week. Group lessons were more effective for teaching swimming than the private lessons, which lacked the competitive spirit developed in a group of children. The swim show was a real hit with the parents and the class members. There is nothing which pleases parents as much as seeing the progress of their children. The last act of the swim show was a four-by-four float of sixteen girls. I chose girls because they float easier than boys. The girls formed the float at the shallow end of the pool; I took my position as "pusher", using the breast stroke, and two girls put their feet on my shoulders. After about ten seconds of my stroking, the float started to move slowly and the crowd broke out in unbelievable applause. The applause and cheering continued for the five minutes it took me to push the seventeen of us from one end of the pool to the other — a distance of seventy-five feet or, in today's terms, a little less than twenty-five meters. I then passed out certificates to all students and for nearly a half hour parents came up to shake my hand and thank me. It gave me a real good feeling for having taught so many to swim and life-save without benefit of additional pay. In those Depression



days, it was an understood obligation of people to use their talents to help others for other than monetary benefits. I saw it as a marketing opportunity to gain more pool members and to know more families for fried chicken picnic invitations in the future.



*The Red Cross Swim and Life Saving Class at Lowdoun Golf and Country Club, Purcellville, Virginia 1939. The author is on the left end of third row.*