

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

L. STROUTS

To Our Children's Children



The Story Of Lawrence Russell Strouts

Foreward

The following is being written in the spring of 1999, starting at our winter home in Donna, Texas. I have no idea when, if ever, I'll get finished. It is the result of my having received a book, TO OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN, as a gift from my sister, Margie. This book is written as a series of questions and I am endeavoring to answer them in sequence, skipping some now and then. It is my hope that the persons who someday read this will have a better understanding of what life was like growing up in Kansas in the middle of the 20th century.

Thanks to Julie for proofreading and organizing.

Respectfully Submitted,

LAWRENCE RUSSELL STROUTS, Male

1326 S. 1800 Road, Wilsey, Kansas 66873 (summer home)
525 N. Walnut, Solomon, Kansas 67480 (where I taught)
RV 3214 Victoria Palms, 602 N. Victoria Rd, Donna TX 78537 (winter home)

Chapter 1. Facts and Figures

I was born in the Council Grove Hospital, Council Grove, Kansas on February 20, 1928, to William Howard Strouts and Linnie Elizabeth (Good).

I am a Pisces, right-handed, brown hair, blue eyes, a bit farsighted and some astigmatism, wearing glasses only for reading. My weight of 175 pounds (80 kg) is _____ about right for my 5', 10" (1.78m) height. My Social Security Number **XXX-XX-XXXX** I was married to Betty Lou Stover on June 5, 1949.

We have 5 children:

Dana Lawrence Strouts, born January 29, 1952

Myrna Lou Strouts, born December 18, 1954

Brian Lee Strouts, born July 24, 1958

Daryl Lynn Strouts, born October 11, 1960

Julie Marie Strouts, born October 1, 1963

I grew up as a farmer, then graduated from Kansas State College in 1949, certified to teach grades K-12 and did so for 39 years. The first 5 years were in Dorrance, Kansas followed by 34 years in Solomon, Kansas. I am also reasonably skilled in construction by working for a contractor and building my parents new house in Wilsey. I have also done a lot of radio and television repair work. For many years, I was licensed to drive a school bus. At this writing, in addition to farming, I am a Category One Certified Seed grower in Kansas.

I was baptized in the Wilsey, Kansas Methodist Church and am now a member of Presbyterian churches in Solomon, KS and Weslaco, TX. My race is Caucasian, ancestry being all from Europe. My political leanings are not strong, but tend toward the Republican party.

I have no known allergies and am blood type 0, RH +. I have never really had a nickname, but am occasionally addressed as 'Larry'.

Chapter 2. Family History

My father, William Howard, was born to Herbert Woodman Strouts and Mary Acasta Howard in North Tonawanda, New York. Herb was a conductor on the streetcar that ran from Buffalo to Niagara Falls. Mary was a schoolteacher. Her sister (Alice) was married to T.W. Whiting, a successful rancher in Parkerville, Kansas. He enticed Herb and Mary to come to Kansas, possibly as some sort of partner, however, Herb wound up being more of a hired man. He had a good sense of humor, even a bit of a 'rounder'. Mary was very 'straight-laced' and would put him in place by saying loudly "Oh, Herb!" They frequently moved from farm to farm in the Wilsey area.

My mother was named Olinda, but always known as Linnie Elizabeth Good, the daughter of Peter W. Good and Sarepta Lillian Varner. P.W. Good was a livestock buyer who traveled from Illinois to Texas and returned to his home in Illinois with some kind of disease, maybe diphtheria. His family all became sick and died. He continued to travel and the MKT train brought him to Parkerville, where he met Sarepta. Her family had come to Parkerville from Ohio. My only recollection of my grandfather Good was his funeral when I was age 3. Grandma Good lived with us during her final years. As she declined, she showed symptoms of what we now call Alzheimer's disease.

My father was an only child, his sister Stella having died at age three from an accidental scalding. It seems that she was sick and the doctor said to give her a warm bath. Mary heated the water in the tub to boiling, then Herb (failing to realize that the water had not been tempered) placed the little girl in the tub. She died of burns in a few days. Shortly after that, around 1900, they came by train to Sylvan Park, just east of Parkerville and near the Whiting Ranch.

So, my aunts and uncles were all on my mother's side:

Furrel married Lillie Chapman and worked for General Motors in Flint, Michigan. I never knew him, because he died there, then his widow and my cousins came back to Kansas. *Golda* married Frank Leonard, but didn't socialize much with us.

Dale married Arlie Henning and moved to a farm north of Wilsey after he retired as a fireman in Wichita. He had a way of hiding his money, burying some in the yard and also putting it under stair treads. I would guess some of his money remains to be found. I farmed some of his land for a few years.

Pete stayed with us for a while after his first wife died, then he drifted off to Texas and finally ended up in New Mexico, where he married Louise Matheson, a most pleasant teacher. Pete was accidentally shot through the chest with a rifle and survived, but was crippled from an accidental shotgun blast through the left arm. He was influential in convincing me to join the Masonic lodge.

Cecil married Helen Edwards. He was my favorite. They lived in Wichita where he was a mechanic. His first two children were daughters, so he treated me as son and showed

me a lot about machines. He gave me a transformer-electric motor kit, which I played with for hours, and no doubt this whetted my interest in science.

All of the Good children displayed a hooked or hump nose, as did my father. Somehow the genes bypassed me. The above were all quite near-sighted and I missed that too!

Chapter 3. Early Childhood Years

I was named Lawrence after the city in Kansas where my father was stationed during World War I, and named Russell after his good friend, Russell Burton, who was his classmate. I was four years old when sister Marjorie Lois was born. At the time, we were living as a tenant on the Schultz place, 2 and 1/4 miles north of Wilsey. I do not know how Marjorie's name was chosen. I understand there was a child stillborn to my parents, circa 1926, but my father only mentioned this to me once, and I doubt there are any records.

When any of the relatives came to visit, my parents would try to "put on a better front" and we would have cereal from the store instead of oatmeal and so forth. We perceived them as better off than we were. We were very poor. My dad had signed up for WPA work one time, but never did work at it, as this was considered welfare. I remember the cousins got government commodities and ate better than we did. However, we were never hungry. We had milk, a garden, and the meat that we raised. My dad would take the rifle and shoot a rabbit quite often for our table. One year, my parents spent 25 cents each for Margie and me for Christmas and nothing for each other. They would buy us warm clothes in the fall, expecting them to be gifts, then it would turn cold and they would have to give them to us before Christmas.

No doubt, being poor caused stress that I failed to perceive. My parents quarreled a lot, usually about spending what little money there was. I'm sure some of their frustrations were vented on Margie and me, as any misbehavior was likely to result in a switching with a peach tree branch. It would leave welts. Spankings were also considered normal, but I do not ever recall being hit or shaken. No doubt, I was defiant at times. I remember that my dad would try to get me to work and when I refused, would say plaintively, "Lawrence, don't you ever want to amount to anything?"

Margie was very gullible, and our mother would admonish her by saying, "You should know by now that you can't believe him (Lawrence)."

Meals at the farm were a matter of the four of us sitting around a round oak table, it was usually covered with Kansas City Star newspapers, I suppose to avoid washing a tablecloth. I ate many meals reading about the latest happenings. Grace was rarely said unless we had company.

Even though we were very poor, we didn't think much about it because everyone else was in the same situation. I wanted a new bicycle and a five-cell flashlight. Twice a year, the Sears catalog arrived and I would fill out an order for a bike and flashlight but there was never any money for such things. Finally, when I was about 10 years old, I fed and watered all the chickens for 50 cents a day and at the end of the summer, I had enough to buy a shiny new red bicycle which was my pride and joy. I never did get the five-cell flashlight.

There was never much money for clothes. I would get new overalls to wear to school, then finish wearing them out the next summer. Shoes were well cared for and re-soled as needed. I did have 'hand me down' clothes from a cousin in military school and I hated them.

When Dad and I were working in the summer, Mother would appear with a pitcher of lemonade and he would call out (as a baseball vendor might) "Get your ice-cold lemonade! Don't you ever get thirsty!"

We had chickens all over the place. There were about seven brooder houses for baby chicks and laying hens upstairs and downstairs in the barn, plus the expanded chicken house and the 20x20 building. The brooder stoves had to be filled and checked, they had to have food and water and the buildings had to be cleaned. Then the young ones had to be moved and sold, and the eggs had to be graded and sold. I had eggs for breakfast, fried chicken for lunch and road kill (no kidding) for supper. It was dirty, hard work, but it did pay the bills. I later dug, by hand, 300 ft. of water lines and that helped.

Chapter 4. Life on the Farm

From the hospital where I was born, I came home to a two-story farmhouse known as the Schultz place. I do not remember a lot about it, but have been told that, when I was about two, I pulled out the stick holding up a window sash and it fell, trapping my left hand between the sash and sill. It took two grown men to lift the sash and free my hand. There do not seem to be any lasting injuries. I remember my sister coming home there, where the chicken house was and a little bit about other buildings. It was a very special day when my dad drove home a new Oliver Row Crop tractor, painted bright green with red wheels.

Circa 1935, we bought the farm two miles north (see Mother Linnie's account for details). My father was not optimistic about finding money (\$5,000), but neighbor Bill Tischhauser told him "Oh hell, Howard, you can do it!" Before we moved, the roof caught on fire from chimney sparks. A line ring went out and neighbors rushed in, formed a line from the big stock tank and doused the fire using a bucket brigade. You can still see damage in the upstairs bedroom.

I had that bedroom to myself. It was cold enough in winter to freeze water by the bed and so hot in summer I would go sleep out on the porch, or even in the yard. After we got electricity, I spent \$1.09 and bought a fan that helped. I had a little bench on the east wall and built many model airplanes from balsa wood and tissue paper. They were powered by rubber bands, but never flew. I always hoped for a tiny gasoline airplane engine when Dad came back from taking cattle to market, but it never happened. Five dollars was too much for things like that.

The mail arrived at 10:30 each morning. The RFD carrier was LeRoy Hudson, who bought used model A Fords and finished wearing them out on the route. He would even deliver baby chickens by mail!

Not too many people came to visit. We would have salesmen from Watkins selling spices and stuff, and magazine salesmen. If we didn't have money, they would take old car radiators, batteries, or even chickens. The iceman arrived about twice a week and we would put a card in the window telling him how much to deliver in multiples of 25 pounds. We bought groceries at Riegel's store in Wilsey. You handed the list to the clerk and waited for them to scurry around and get what you wanted. Shopping carts had not yet been invented. For every dollar you spent, you got a free pass to the movie theatre, also owned by Mr. Riegel.

We did have a wind-up Victrola 78rpm record player and about a dozen records. My favorite was "The Whistler And His Dog". The radio was a big battery contraption and Dad would have to charge the battery on the tractor while doing fieldwork so we could listen to "Lum and Abner" or "Fibber McGee and Molly" that evening. After we got REA power, circa 1939, radios got a lot better. Electric power also allowed us to have a refrigerator, lights in the outbuildings, an electric iron and a water pump.

Basically, we lived in the west (dining) room, especially in the wintertime. There would be a wood-burning stove against the east wall, a table in the northwest corner, my parents' bed in the southwest corner, and the rest of the house was closed off. There was no bathroom at first and a trip to the outhouse was made as quickly as possible. The Saturday night bath was taken in a washtub.

The 'magneto type' telephone was on the south wall. We owned the phone and the lines to town, paying a small fee to 'central' to connect our calls. Our number was 'two on eighty' which meant two long rings on line 80. This was a party line shared with the Youngs, Edwards and Tischhausers.

Later on, we obtained a bathtub, which was placed in the northeast corner of the kitchen under a fold-down table. Then a wood-burning stove with water jacket was added and a hot water storage tank. This was all filled with water from the cistern, using a hand pump. There was also an outside bucket pump from the cistern and this soft water was the source for drinking, bathing and washing.

Our fuel was wood obtained by going to the timber, sawing down trees, hauling them home, cutting them up with a buzz saw on the tractor, then splitting them by hand. It was my job to haul them to the house from the woodpile on my little red wagon and keep a good supply on the west porch.

The only light was from a kerosene lamp. It was later replaced with an Aladdin lamp, which was brighter. Kids were in bed at 8 p.m., and parents went to bed at 9 p.m. Parents arose at 4 a.m. to do chores, and the kids got up a bit later. My mother first washed on a washboard, then she got a Maytag gasoline-powered washer. The motor was started by stomping on a foot pedal. Whether or not it would start was always doubtful.

My parents' first car was a model T Ford that I barely remember. After that, they bought a used 1928 Chevy, which would run at times. Then, circa 1938, we got a used 1934 tan Ford V-8. It even had a heater and a radio! I learned to drive the Chevy when I was 8 years old, propping up the seat so I could see over the windshield. This way I could haul cream to the neighbors.

We didn't have any books but did receive Capper's Weekly by mail, and got the Kansas City Star second-hand from my grandparents. Of course, there were books at school and I had read all of them by the time I graduated.

The road past the house was dirt and mud when it rained. Whether or not we went anywhere depended entirely on the condition of the road. Later it was graveled and continues to be so at this writing.

Some of my most vivid memories were those of frogs croaking to herald spring, the smell of peat moss used as litter for baby chickens, the beauty of fields of ripe wheat, the smell of wild plums and roses, the beauty of blooming flax or sunflowers, the smell of earth when it started to rain, the scent of freshly plowed ground and holding baby

kittens. There was also the odor of dead chickens, skunk, burned stubble or pasture, manure and of a wet cow being milked. The sound of hail on the roof and trees breaking during a storm was also a concern.

Most of the possessions at the farmhouse have been divided up now. I do have a purple china peacock that had always frightened me as a child.

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Chapter 5. Grade School Years

Since I attended a small, one-room school, friends were those who gathered there. I had cousins, the Goods, that I was allowed to go see each Monday morning and we played together, then they returned later in the week. Most playtime was pretty much by myself. I made stilts to walk around on and played with the dogs. My first dog was a terrier named Fluffy, then I inherited Spunky, a toy terrier, from my second cousin, Helen Kelly. Spunky had two illegitimate pups, Pete and Sport. I spent a lot of time bouncing a ball off the roof of the house for the dogs to catch. Many more hours were filled with my Radio Flyer wagon and riding my bicycle.

In addition to taking care of chickens, I mowed the lawn with a push mower, but it was a fairly small area. For several years, I mowed the Highland cemetery for \$20 a month.

The childhood diseases made their rounds and I had whooping cough and chicken pox. The county health officer came around and put a quarantine sign on the house so we couldn't leave and nobody could come visit. During my sophomore year, I contracted pneumonia. This was often fatal but antibiotics were just coming into use and sulfanilamide came to my rescue. When we had colds, they were treated with a laxative (castor oil) and Vicks Vapor Rub smeared on my chest, then covered with a wool cloth. The treatment was as bad as the disease. I also took a lot of Fletcher's Castoria, but don't know why. Injuries were just wrapped up in a rag. We didn't have Band-Aids.

We couldn't afford Kleenex either.

There were frequent thunderstorms and snowstorms. I wanted to be in the chicken business, so borrowed \$125 and bought a brooder house. A big storm just blew it all to pieces one night and put me out of business. My parents were scared of storms and we always went to the cave during threatening weather.

We were not allowed to play cards because it was considered sinful. There were jacks, dominos, checkers, Chinese checkers and pickup-sticks. I spent many, many hours playing with Tinkertoys and I wore out several sets, finally having the largest set made.

I was able to go to 4-H Camp Wood for a week and it was great. It was the only time that I got to paddle a canoe. Our Central Busy Bees 4-H club met once a month and my first political experience came as President of that group.

All of my grade school days were at Central District #1. This one-room school was 3/4- mile south and 16 mile west of the farm. It was an 8-month session, as students were needed in the spring for farm work. We would start about September 1st and finish in April. I skipped second grade, as I would have been the only one in that grade and Miss Anderson thought I could handle third grade work. So I only had 56 months of grade school compared to 72 for the town kids.

I walked to school at first. Dad would take me in a car if the weather was bad or a dust storm coming. I would be taken in a box wagon pulled by horses when the snow was deep. Later, I had my bicycle to ride and sometimes rode a Shetland pony named

Buster Brown but referred to him as "Bus." This pony was very headstrong and took considerable goading to get to school. He would gallop back home though. I just rode bareback but had to be

careful as he would shy and dump me off.

We had separate desks and would go to the front of the room to recite and do board work. As a result, the little kids were exposed to the big kids' work all day. There would be competition in spelling bees, arithmetic and geography matches, etc.

We got drinking water from an outside pump and lunch consisted of ketchup or mustard sandwiches, maybe fruit and often a chunk of comb honey. Then we would chew the wax from the honey as nobody could afford chewing gum. In the spring, we would dig up some kind of root in the schoolyard and eat it. We also dug up wild onions to eat (they were strong). There was no playground equipment, so we played blackman, hide- and-seeK, fox and geese in the snow, andy-over and baseball. I would always be the last one chosen for any team (I think they were trying to tell me something).

Everybody played together, all eight grades.

My first teacher was Erma Anderson who instilled in me a love of reading. Then the teacher was Erma Kahle. She had a temper and threw a book at Clair King one day. I don't remember if she hit him or not. I took my brand new pocket watch (with a sweep second hand) to school one day. She informed me pointedly that school would be run according to her time.

The school's Central Beil is preserved in the Wilsey park. The building had two front entrances, one for boys and one for girls, but I don't know why. During my years there, another door was cut in the northeast corner for some reason. There was a coal shed just north of the school, separate outhouses and a barn for the horses. The barn was off limits during the day, but the boys would gather there anyhow and exchange deep dark secrets. The last teacher I had was Blanche Louise Munsell. She was a nice lady, friendly and helpful.

My Central grade school teachers were all fine educators and pretty serious that we should learn our lessons. We always started with the Flag Salute, had a morning recess, noon hour and an afternoon recess. My first primer was by Bobbs-Merrill and had some story about a gingerbread man as I recall. There was also a story about little Black Sambo and a tiger.

When it would get close to 4 p.m., the teacher would spread red or green sweeping compound on the wooden floor so she could sweep immediately when we left. I still associate the odor of that stuff with getting out of school. Each year, all the parents would bring a covered dish and gather in for the last day of school dinner and program. We also had community meetings on the last Thursday of each month. Students would provide the program and there would be dessert. A carnival cake-walk-box-lunch was held each fall.

The county school superintendent came to visit once a year and this was a serious matter. I suppose the teacher's job depended upon what he reported. In order to graduate, I had to go to Council Grove and take the county tests in spelling, math, reading, geography etc. I made it OK but not everyone passed. Graduation was also in Council Grove and Frank Manning gave the commencement address, telling about how blackbirds migrated. I was impressed!

There were a couple of occasions worth mentioning. We got to watch the construction on the REA power lines and it was a thrill to have electric lights in school. I also remember at a community meeting in 1939, the old men shook their heads and talked about Hitler invading

Poland. We later listened to the Selective Service numbers being drawn from a fishbowl to start military conscription. I only got hurt once--Bert Good pushed me out from behind the barn so I'd get caught at hide-and-seek. I stepped back and swung at him and ripped my wrist open on the barbed wire fence. I still have the scar.

Country grade school was a good experience-I have no regrets.

Chapter 6. Special Occasions

I always looked forward to birthdays. There would be modest gifts with ice cream and birthday cake. I only had one party circa age 10 when my mother invited in the neighbor kids. One year, we started to my grandparents in a blizzard, but only got about 100 yards and had to turn back. Big disappointment!

As Christmas approached, we would start making gifts at school from the wood in orange crates. The crate ends had heavy wood ends, the sides were thin and we made all sorts of craft things. Of course, we had no money for store-bought gifts.

I would fill a one-gallon pail with sand, cut a branch off the cedar tree, jam it in the sand and that was our tree. We had one ornament, a beautiful blue-green-pink thing, and then decorated with popcorn strings, cranberries and paper chains. There were no candles or lights. Santa would visit the little kids in Wilsey on Saturday afternoon and we would get peanuts and hard candy at church and maybe an orange, which was very special!

My paternal grandparents would arrive very early on Christmas morning and somehow, they had money for small gifts. My parents didn't have much-one year I received an ink pen and Margie got a little toy cook stove. Each of these cost about 25 cents. I do not recall hanging stockings and am not sure that Santa even came to visit. Dinner was at Herb and Mary's house. She had small table gifts for everyone, arranged down the table and covered with greenery. A ribbon went to each person's plate and, after Herb gave the blessing, we pulled the ribbon for our little gift. I have no idea how the tradition got started but we continue it. I inherited the Bangs family bible from my great-grandmother and read the story from Luke at our gatherings prior to the blessing.

Of course, there was no Halloween trick-or-treating in a rural community, but when I got to high school, there were some challenges to be met. We never did destroy any property but I was present when some things got moved around. It was accepted and the next day, adults just put things back in place.

Valentines were made from red paper and hand lettered. The first candy I was involved with was when I sent a lollipop-Valentine to Betty when she was a freshman. This continued with heart-shaped boxes from Russell Stover's Chocolates for a long time.

New Year's Eve was no big deal and I didn't even stay up that late until I was in high school.

Easter was mostly a church thing with maybe some new clothes.

Father's Day became significant after son Dana was born and all the children have remembered me very faithfully through the years.

The Fourth of July usually brought the family together for watermelon and homemade ice cream. As a kid, we had sparklers, Roman candles and Firecrackers. I picked up a firecracker too soon once and it went off in my hand. This was very painful and so was the tetanus shot that followed. I also put a firecracker in a glass bottle once and ran (but not fast enough). Shards of glass slashed both ears and I bled a lot!

Thanksgiving was a matter of having turkey with the trimmings at my grandparents' house.

Our family has always considered holidays as a very special occasion and if someone is unable to be present, they are called by phone for a nice visit.

Chapter 7. High School and College Years

In the fall of 1941, I started to Wilsey Rural High School. I would guess the enrollment for all 4 grades was about 50 or so. There was no mascot, and the school colors were green and white. The principal was P.J. Isaacson and he also taught the science classes. He was a wonderful person with a great sense of humor and did a lot of counseling and morality teaching right along with the classwork. P.J. was certainly a role model and mentor to me and was a big factor in my choosing to be a science teacher.

I had little interest in sports but did go out for basketball during my sophomore year. The coach kept me on the far end of the bench (enough said!). I did serve as class president and was editor of the 1945 annual yearbook. I was honored by receiving the first-place gold medal in the Schrammel State Scholarship Contest for my knowledge of human physiology.

We didn't have lockers, just kept our books under our study hall chair. Coats were hung on hooks in the hallway. The boys wore overalls and it was not uncommon to sometimes see a hapless freshman hanging by his overall straps from the coat hooks.

It was also common practice to sit someone on the fountain and turn on the water. A very few smoked, and there was no drinking.

During my junior year, I purchased a solid gold class ring for \$11.12. I wore it for a while, then gave it to my steady girlfriend and she wore it until we became formally engaged. There wasn't much of any place to hang out in Wilsey, but late in the evening after the boys had taken their girls home, the night marshal would open the market.

The boys would gather in, drink pop, eat a candy bar and lie to each other.

I do not remember schoolwork being a problem for me, but I am sure I could have done better. I played trumpet (cost \$25) in the band, sang in chorus, had a part in the school play, etc. I usually drove the car to school or else rode with a neighbor or my parents took me.

I took my lunch in a pail or sack and ate in the manual training room. I do not recall ever being in trouble or being sent to the office. I always had to hurry home right after school to do chores. There was little, if any, homework. Weekends were spent working, especially cleaning out the manure in the chicken house. I am grateful that I learned to type and got a good foundation in math and science. I have no regrets about attending a small school. Graduation was a big night. The speaker used a theme of "the 4 C's" I do not have any recollection of what they stood for. I have attended many reunions, including my 50th.

Following my graduation in 1945, my parents were determined that their son would go to college and Kansas State College was the logical choice, as Manhattan was just 50 miles away. World War II was over and my friend, Vince Hudson, was just home from the Air Force. He wanted to be a Chemical Engineer and I figured that was good enough for me, too, as I had no idea as to what else I wanted to be. So, one day in

September 1945, my parents took my suitcase and me to an apartment at 1110 Vattier in Manhattan, a place that Vince and I had rented. I felt totally abandoned and wished I was somewhere else. I really didn't like any part of college, but was scared to quit and go home. I just lived for the weekends back in Morris County. I survived my freshman year with mediocre grades.

The next fall, I bravely returned, but found the apartments all taken by returning veterans, so my friend Bob Pollom and I stayed in an old army barracks placed on campus. It was called Splinterville. I continued as a chemical engineer, but failed phys ed. I passed engineering physics with a "D" in the upper third of my class but had less than a "C" average overall. This put me on academic probation. The following summer, while waiting for a load of oats in the field east of the house, it occurred to me I could get out of engineering and be a math teacher. So I switched to math major, staying at 1110 Bertrand. My roommates —Leonard Lutters, Jake Roets, and Bill Miller -- were a partying bunch from western Kansas. We played cards (pinochle) a lot. I then failed calculus, repeated it and passed, but was then facing the dreaded course in differential equations. I also repeated phys ed, taking beginners swimming (I already knew how to swim). My roommates all flunked out. Then, starting my senior year, it occurred to me that, from having been an engineer, I already had lots of science and could be a science teacher. So I switched again, made lots of A's and B's and got my needed credits to graduate. My senior roommates were Harold Schump, a Wilsey High classmate, plus brothers Mark and Cecil Hiatt. As you can see from the above and my transcript, I just wanted to get out of college any way possible. I insisted on coming home from college every weekend for four years. Someone picked me up every Friday and returned me to Manhattan every Monday morning. Graduation was May 29, 1949. I had a degree, a fiancée and a wedding date, but no job in sight!

Looking back, I suppose my parents were reasonably happy. They started with nothing, put together the farm, paid for the farm and finally their new home in Wilsey. Starting in 1946, they were able to drive a new car. They were adamant about wanting their children to have college degrees and this was accomplished, no doubt with much greater sacrifice than any of us realized.

Chapter 8. Recollections of the War

As a grade schooler, I was very concerned when Mussolini invaded Ethiopia, but my mother told me not to worry about it. Then Hitler invaded Poland in 1939 and young men began to join the military, partly to have a job and also to have a choice other than being drafted.

On December 7, 1941, we returned from visiting my grandparents and I went to the barn to milk the cows. I turned on the radio as usual and all of the stations were carrying the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor! The next morning, the principal called us into the auditorium to listen to the radio and we heard President Roosevelt's "This is the day that shall live in infamy" speech.

As a high school freshman, I was very concerned. Lots of things happened very quickly. People were very patriotic and did not complain about the war effort. Many young men enlisted in the service of their choice. New car sales were stopped and dealers sent their stock back to be painted olive drab. Fort Riley conducted maneuvers, with tanks and jeeps going past our house. We needed ration books and coupons for many things such as meat, sugar, shoes, and tires. We were allowed four gallons of gasoline per week. Even if you had a coupon and money, it was hard to find certain items.

When Dad came in at noon, he would say "Linnie, how's the war going?" and she would relate what she had heard. Unnecessary traveling was frowned upon, so I would get a load of chicken feed, then stop to see a movie on the way home, as you weren't supposed to go to town just to see a show.

The military came in and took over about two square miles just west of us. They told the landowners that they had one week to take what they could move and be gone from their land. Herington Army Air Field was started in October of 1942 and planes were flying by January. This was a staging base where trained crews picked up brand new planes flown in from the factory and immediately headed overseas. Betty's mother worked in the hospital. We got used to the sound of B-17, B24, and B-29 bombers flying overhead. One day, I was plowing and looked up to see a B-29 fly over with an engine on fire and parachutes popping out one after another. We went over to a pasture north of us and picked up two scared airmen and their parachutes.

My cousin George Good was drafted and came home with malaria, which bothered him the rest of his life. Carl Good was sent to Europe and we got word that he was "missing in action". He broke out of prison and spent the winter hiding in the Alps. He lost about 60 pounds before our forces came through and rescued him.

We needed a pickup but could not find one to buy. We then found a 1938 Ford that was badly wrecked with a damaged frame. Dad dragged it home with the tractor. We got a used frame and set up a stove in the shop. I spent all my spare time moving the engine, running gear, cab, bed etc. from the wreck to the frame, essentially reassembling the whole truck. I started in November and finished in March. It was a thrill when Mother pulled me up the road behind the car and I got it running. We later called it "Rackety Boom" and it served us well for many years.

We managed quite well because, being farmers, we had our own meat and vegetables. We used honey in place of sugar and got all the gasoline we needed for the truck and tractor to grow grain

for the war effort. We followed the war very closely, getting letters from servicemen, newsreels at the movies and daily radio reports.

Roosevelt died in the spring of 1945 and Truman became President. My uncle, Pete Good, came to visit in the summer of that year and told a story about seeing a bright flash and explosion in the east from the ranch where he worked in New Mexico.

Nobody had even heard of an atomic bomb but a few weeks later, we found out what my uncle had witnessed.

I had finished high school at just over age 17 and was painting the chicken house when word came over my radio that Japan had surrendered. We did not celebrate in any way, just gave thanks.

After that, since I had enrolled in a land grant college, I had to enlist in the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC). We had ugly uniforms with purple lapels. We had Springfield bolt action rifles, classes, military books and many hours of drill instruction. When I came back as a sophomore, I was promoted to corporal in charge of the platoon and got to give the orders. I was not required to continue my last two years. I then joined the Council Grove National Guard, Battery A, 127th Field Artillery Battalion and trained with them evenings and weekends, going to military camp one summer at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. When I started teaching in Dorrance, there was no unit nearby, so I was given an honorable discharge. I did not have enough time or credits to qualify for any veteran's benefits.

Chapter 9. Growing Up with New Inventions & Technology

I started going to movies as a small child. My first movie recollection was being outside on main street in Wilsey, where a projector, focused on the side of a building, was showing a steam locomotive coming around the bend right at us. Mr. Riegel, the grocery store owner, then put in a theater right across the street and we went to almost every show he presented. It cost 5 cents for admission, 5 cents for popcorn and 5 cents for a bottle of pop. The high school kids sat in the back and, after drinking the pop, would roll the bottles down the sloping, wooden aisle to make noise. This would bring the manager, Celestie Nelson, back to chastise us but with little effect.

The first color movie I saw was "Jesse James" in about 1940. Back then, the movie format always started with advertising slides, a cartoon, the Movietone Newsreel, previews and finally the feature film. On Saturday nights, there might be a sing-a-long and also a serial that would entice you back the next Saturday to see what happened to the hero. All movies would have been what is now "G" rated. There was no profanity, no sex and the only violence was just the cowboys shooting at the bad guys in black hats.

As I have already written, I grew up with radios. As soon as REA power came on, Dad went to town and bought the best radio he could afford. It was a table model with push buttons. The '34 Ford car had a space where the radio had been removed by the dealer, so we went back and he said if we could send him someone who would buy a car, he would give us the radio. We did and he did. It was a huge thing that took up all the space under the dashboard. Of course it was AM only. We always had a radio in the barn to listen to while milking the cows. I would hear the Green Hornet, Jack Armstrong, and then the Saturday Night Hit Parade.

I also had a small portable in my room and later bought a short-wave receiver to listen around the world. Of course now I have AM/FM/cassette or CD players in everything and listen mostly to country western or talk radio, especially during the long boring days in the tractor cab.

In about 1954, television signals were available in Kansas, so we borrowed \$500 and were one of the first to have TV in Dorrance. We got one station, KTVH, from Hutchinson. It was nothing more than a snowy, black and white picture. They broadcast the test pattern all day, then started programming at 5 p.m. There was no tape, so everything was live. After the 10 p.m. news, they played the national anthem and we all went to bed. Of course, we now have color TV sets in various rooms of our house, a camcorder and a VCR. We were one of the first families to get color TV, then a VCR, then a satellite receiver.

I suppose my all-time favorite movies would be "White Christmas" with Bing Crosby, "Dr. Zhivago" (where they played Laura's Theme) and "The Sound of Music" with Julie Andrews. Another favorite would have been whatever was showing at the Ritz in Council Grove on April 3, 1943 where I took Betty Stover on our first date.

I am not impressed with present day movies and TV programming, considering most of it to be pornographic trash. The old Ed Sullivan shows, The Honeymooners, Jackie Gleason, Tim Conway, Garry Moore, Carol Burnett, and Johnny Carson were much more entertaining in my opinion.

I now watch mostly news, history and documentary offerings. I do enjoy shows like "Home Improvement" and "Bill Cosby" and sometimes watch "Married With Children" just to see how sleazy TV can be.

Since I wasn't much of an athlete, sports don't do much for me. I try to see a K-State football game or basketball game about once a year, but go mostly to enjoy the pageantry.

I wish I had the background and education to appreciate opera and classical music. I did enjoy "Fiddler on the Roof", which I saw on Broadway and have seen several times since.

I truly enjoy reading, covering daily events in five newspapers, and read Newsweek, Reader's Digest, Flying, and various farm publications from cover to cover. There is no doubt but that I should give much credit to my first-grade teacher, who started me reading. I haven't had much exposure to poetry, but have memorized "The Bridge Builder".

Chapter 10. Teaching

I have already covered the details of my college training to be a teacher, but will add some details of what teaching was like.

When I graduated, there was little job placement and we were mostly on our own. I interviewed three places, but they didn't hire me (Dad thought I should wear a hat to look older). Then, about July 1, 1949, I was notified of an opening in Dorrance, where the school board had just "cleaned house" and fired everybody. Betty and I drove to Sylvan Grove and I was interviewed by the new superintendent-to-be. He wrote a recommendation, let me read it and sealed it in an envelope. He told me to take it to Dorrance to see the board members. I talked to Chuck White and he was non-committal, but said if I was interested, come back in the morning. We hadn't expected to stay overnight, so went to the filling station and wrote a check for \$5 to get money to go to Russell and stay in a hotel. The next morning, I met with White and Barney Thielen. They asked what salary I expected and I replied that "being a married man, \$3,000 per year." White hesitated, but Thielen said "Oh, hell, let's hire him." So, I went home with a contract and had to pay the teacher placement bureau \$120 for informing me about it.

It was great to be newly married and salaried. We rented an apartment upstairs in White's mother-in-law's (Mrs. Hubbs) house. We borrowed Tischhauser's 4-wheel hay wagon, loaded all our earthly goods, and pulled it behind our new '49 Ford car to start my career as a math & science teacher.

Of course, I wore a suit and tie to school, even though it was very hot in the classroom. We had some seven teachers and I was assigned Algebra, Geometry, General Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Drivers' Education (our program was one of the first in the state), plus a study hall and extra class stuff. There were no school buses, so teachers hauled athletes to the games. I was scorekeeper and a class sponsor. The principal was Glenn Wyckoff, a nice old gentlemen, who wanted to avoid any controversy. After two years, he was replaced by Cecil Smith, who was one of the best administrators I ever had. If you didn't greet him every morning, he would soon come by to see what the problem was.

After five years in Dorrance, I heard about the opening in Solomon. I called, interviewed and signed a contract for \$3500/year. We took Tischhauser's new straight truck and moved everything to Solomon, where we rented a new house for \$40 a month. The Superintendent was Edgar Reed and I had all the science plus some math classes. Dorrance was 128 miles from Wilsey, but Solomon cut the distance to 58 miles. It was also nice to be close to Salina.

My first superintendent at Solomon was Edgar Reed, followed by Francis Stanley, with Clyde Venneberg as principal. That was followed by superintendent Joe Gray, principal Bob Veach, superintendent Mike Barriclew, and finally superintendent John McFarland. Since I was a member of the professional teacher's association (K-NEA), I was considered "union"¹. I also was very involved with professional negotiation and was harassed a lot by the administrators, who no doubt hoped I would give up and leave. I never did, but had no second thoughts when full retirement was offered in 1988 as I turned age 60. During my 34 years in Solomon, there was never a time when an administrator came by to ask how things were going or inquire as to what could be done to improve the teaching/learning situation. I did get a lot of criticism and was "written up" for every imaginable offense. During my final few years, I spent more time on paperwork and damn-fool reports than I did teaching. I'm told it is even worse now.

I do not intend for the above to be negative, just factual.

There was never a day when I wished I didn't have to go to work. The big majority of the students were wonderful young people and I worked with some of the finest professional teachers who ever walked into a classroom. We were truly "family" and an insult to any of us was an affront to all of us.

My days were generally a matter of being at school by 7:45 AM, meeting five or six classes, a home room, a planning period, 20 minutes for lunch and home by about 4:00 p.m. I served as Senior Class sponsor for about the last 15 years and truly enjoyed it.

I was chosen to chair the North Central evaluation circa 1969. We teachers spent a lot of time and effort and money. Nothing came of it. Then we went through a big School Improvement process in about 1985. Nothing came of that either. I did serve a couple of terms as president of the Teacher's Association and was honored by being chosen as Teacher of the Year. Teaching was the most fatiguing thing I ever did--much more so than construction work or farming.

During all the years in Solomon, it seemed prudent to enroll in graduate school to meet advancing certification requirements and advance on the salary schedule. I enrolled in the masters program at K-State with Dr. Harvey Littrell as my advisor. He was one of the very few college professors who understood what it was like in the classroom. I also did a lot of graduate work at Emporia State during the "Sputnik" days because they offered many government subsidized study programs. I finished my Master's degree in Education in 1965. It was great to complete the report and pass the orals! I continued to go to Emporia and Manhattan and finally got to 198 college hours on my transcripts. At one time, I had enough hours and years in schooling such that I brought in more money in state aid than they paid me in Solomon. The extra dollars were given to administrators.

In retrospect, I have no regrets about having taught. It was one of very few occupations where I could do my farming during the unemployment periods in the summer. I am sure that I was a mentor to some young teachers, but never thought much about it. The pay was pathetic, considering the level of training required. Many only stay a few years and move on to something more lucrative.

Working conditions were not good. I did a lot of my own janitor work and often bought supplies with my own money. There was no air conditioning and I often started in the morning with a classroom temperature of 90° F as they closed the building tight at night. The furnace was turned off sometimes on weekends and I would be met with freezing room temps on Monday morning in the wintertime.

In the early years, the administrators socialized with the teachers and we were all in education for the good of the students. Later, they became aloof and even antagonistic, not even speaking when you would greet them in the hallway. The status and respect shown teachers dropped tremendously during my years in the classroom - I'm not sure why.

I was paid once a month in 12 payments, even though I worked nine months. I know of no other job where they hold back part of what you have earned, then dole it out after you have completed your contract.

During this time in Solomon, I did part-time work repairing radios and television sets, also installing many TV antennas. It was generally gratifying work as my accomplishments were well received by my customers. The profits were enough to cover the monthly house payments of \$120. I only fell once with an antenna. It didn't hurt me much but ruined the antenna. I also worked with Chuck Wilson building houses, mostly framing and setting ceramic tile in kitchens and bathrooms.

Chapter 11. Love, Marriage and Children

My first recollection of Betty Lou Stover would be when I stopped by a cafe/filling station in Wilsey where she worked and she fried a hamburger for me. This was in the summer of 1942. I was ready to be a high school sophomore and she was a freshman. We would often sit together before school and maybe visit a bit after school. We went steady after that first date in 1943 and most everything focused on getting married as soon as I finished college. We became engaged on December 20, 1947 after choosing a 25-point diamond for her to wear. We agreed that we would live on my earnings and that she would be a mother to our children. I still believe that was a good choice although there were times when we were down to the last dollar and not much credit. One year, we ordered Christmas gifts for everyone from Sears on Easy Payments. Sears returned the order. Another time, we went to the State Fair with absolutely no money to spend. When I got paid each month, we would splurge and split a pint of ice cream between us. If we wanted to go to the movies, we'd have to scrounge around the house looking for change.

We were delighted at the prospect of parenthood. With our first child, we were visiting at the neighbor's house one evening when Betty determined it was time to head for the hospital. We took cards to play, expecting a long labor, but our baby boy was born well before the dawn of a cold winter morning on January 29, 1952, being delivered by Dr. Dlabal. The doctor was very short and had to stand on a stool at the delivery table. We chose the name Dana after a college friend, a bishop and a movie actor. The middle (Lawrence) was obvious.

Betty was pregnant when we moved to Solomon and expected our second child around Christmas. Dr. Simpson made us promise to choose another date to celebrate her birthday if she was born close to that holiday. Betty awoke early on Dec 18, 1954, ready to go to the hospital, and we called the Reeds to stay with Dana. We quickly headed to St. John's in Salina. The nurses took her and I went to check her in. By the time I got the paperwork done, we had a daughter. We chose Myrna from a girl I had as a student and Lou after her mother's middle name.

We did not expect #3 until about September of 1958. One July day, I was just exhausted from fighting wheat stubble fires and said that absolutely nothing would get me out of bed that night. In the wee hours of the morning of July 24, 1958, Betty said it was time to go. We called my folks to come to the little farmhouse, hastily packed a makeshift delivery kit and blasted off for Salina. My dad wanted to call the highway patrol to escort us but we declined. We had a son, Brian Lee before sunrise. I do not know where his name came from. We just agreed on it.

Then, one October morning in 1960, we called Helen Paul to baby-sit and we made another hurried trip to St. John's in Salina. In just a few hours on Oct 11, we had a baby boy named Daryl Lynn. I am uncertain as to the origin of his given names, they just seemed to fit.

By the fall of 1963, we had moved to our new home on North Walnut Street. One Saturday night, there were labor pains, so we called Pat Wilson to baby-sit and headed for the hospital. It was a long night and false alarm. The following Wednesday, Oct. 1, I hurried home from school, expecting to head on to my college class. Betty thought otherwise, so we were off to St John's and Julie Marie arrived before I could finish reading a magazine article. Again, no precedent for toe name, it just seemed to be right.

I would observe that I was determined that our children should have short, easy to sign names that would be unlikely to be nicknamed. I am comfortable that goal was achieved.

As parents of Five, we were pretty well occupied. We have more photos and better baby books of the Firstborns than of their later siblings. Betty did find time to read to the children at length and sang many, many lullabies. I played numerous games such as 'London Bridge' etc. when they were little. We always made an extra special effort to have everyone around the table for the evening meal. In later years, as each left for college, the others would all advance one notch around the table, then when the collegiate came home, everyone just slid back down. Nothing was ever said, it was just understood.

We invented sibling rivalry; sometimes our children fought like animals. They would often squabble in the back seat of the station wagon, which I found to be very distracting. I am sure some siblings were 'set up'. I would threaten to set the offender out by a telephone pole, then pick them up on the way home, but that was not very successful. What worked better was to make the offending party hold their nose against the car window looking out. It also helped to slow the car and start lowering the electric rear window of the station wagon. That would usually lead to a truce. Fortunately, they all grew up, relatively unscathed. I'm also sure that there are some things I'll never know and that is for the best.

As a strong believer in the importance of reading, each child had a plethora of reading books and we did purchase a set of encyclopedias for reference. Betty read a lot to all of them, even as babies. Some of the books were used so much that they just disintegrated. They also had record players and some records just plain wore out.

Misbehavior generally resulted in a loss of privileges, but a swat on the bottom was sometimes necessary to ensure compliance with parental desires and standards.

The little ones had playpens and the high chair purchased for the firstborn also served the next three. Julie got a new one and it remains in service for grandchildren. A series of rockers were used. I recall one was so low to the floor that it was difficult to get up while cradling a sleeping toddler. We encouraged them to stay home and play in their own yard, but there were unsupervised excursions to the neighbors' homes. During summers at the farm, they stayed close to the house and played in the catalpa trees, spending time in swings and platform "tree houses".

We had television from the beginning and the shows were things like "Winky Dink and You", "Captain Kangaroo", "Howdy Doody Time", cowboy shows and the usual children's shows.

There were no life-threatening injuries, but there were some trips to the emergency room. Myrna got hit above the eye with a hoe and had stitches, Dana dislocated a shoulder in football, Brian fell on the TV and split a lip, Daryl broke a bone in his hand, Julie had a fingertip nearly severed in a closing door. I made a very quick trip to Council Grove one night as Brian wasn't breathing right. He was OK when I got to the hospital; we never did know what the problem was. They had the usual childhood diseases but their shots protected them from the bad stuff like measles. We did not have to deal with congenital problems or allergies.

There was a series of baby sitters, but it was usually the Greene girls and then Kathy Wilson. They were paid 50 cents an hour. Sister Margie and parents were great to help when we were gone to Lions Club conventions.

I had daily contact with teen-agers in school, so it was no big surprise that we had some disagreements over the appropriate length of hair and skirts. To save money, I cut the boys' hair until they were teen-agers and ashamed to be seen in public with a home hair cut. Raising teen-

agers during Vietnam days was a challenge to any parent.

We went to many ball games, music concerts, school plays, etc. The children were all talented enough that they were in almost every school program in some capacity. As senior sponsor, I had the honor of handing them their high school diploma. In their own way, each of them has often made us very proud to be their parents'

Each year, we tried to take some sort of a family vacation trip, but were not always able to work it out. In the early 60's, we borrowed a pickup camper and loaded it in the back of the 1959 Chevy. We camped out to Colorado and back. We could see the kids through the back window of the cab but had no communication with them. We stopped at the pool in Garden City. Brian had taken lessons in shallow water, so he just jumped in, but it was the deep end. I caught him! We even drove up the Canon City skyline drive. It is a wonder the camper didn't slide out. Another time, we rented a tent on wheels and towed it behind the station wagon. We intended that Julie would sleep on the floor. She didn't go for that. We pulled that tent camper all the way to the Grand Canyon and back. One time we drove to Salt Lake City and flew to Spokane to attend the Worlds Fair, staying in a motorhome. Other trips were less adventuresome, but we tried to show the children a bit of the country, how to check in to motels, order in restaurants, board airplanes, read maps and so forth.

We bought a good ski boat and the younger boys learned to water-ski. Betty made many trips taking them to swimming lessons. We didn't expect them to be champion swimmers, but wanted them to be comfortable around deep water.

I'm sure that every parent, looking back, wishes that they had spent more time with their children, but there is only so much one can do. I have very few regrets and am very pleased that they all finished college, married wonderful people, and we have some of the smartest, good-looking grandchildren any grandparent could ever hope for. I would observe that when they go off to college, a parent kind of feels that they'll come back. When they marry, you know they won't. When the grandchildren are born, you suddenly feel a whole generation older.

Chapter 12. Homes

As newlyweds, we spent the first summer on the little two-room house on the farm. (This was later moved to the 80 acres we bought). Then we lived in Mrs. Hubb's apartment in Dorrance, followed by a country schoolhouse that was moved to town and remodeled into a home. The first home in Solomon was a new house that the builder had expected to live in but decided to rent. After living there, I was helping contractor Chuck Wilson build houses part-time and he called one evening and said "Lawrence, it is time to build a house for you". We didn't have any money at all to put in it. I went to the banker for a loan and he thought it was a poor idea -- so my parents loaned us \$500 (later forgiven). We refinanced our 80-acre farm, borrowed on life insurance, and had the down payment. The contract was for \$12,800. An unemployed bricklayer convinced us to spend another \$700 to brick it and we did.

It was built in the winter of 1962 and we moved in during Easter break. It has 1100 square feet, attached garage and carport. There is a full, finished basement. I drew the plans and planned construction so that we were able to provide a room of their own for each child. There is a bathroom upstairs and also one downstairs, which certainly helped everyone getting away in the morning. It is on a dead-end street in a quiet neighborhood with great neighbors. I also tore down the little farmhouse and used the lumber to build a storage barn in the back yard. The house is heated with natural gas, and total utilities run about \$100 per month. We have remodeled the kitchen/bathroom a bit, and in recent years we tore out a wall (Julie's idea) to make one of the bedrooms into a much-needed dining room. The house was financed for a period of 15 years. The payments were about \$125 per month. It has been a good solid house, a wonderful home, and the best investment I ever made.

The house is heated with a natural gas forced air furnace and also a 'gas log' fireplace in the basement. There is also a small overhead gas heater in the garage/shop. The kitchen range and oven are both electric. The kitchen still has the original inlaid vinyl floor covering. The bedrooms have oak floors that have since been covered with carpet.

When we moved in, the basement was unfinished and we just completed it as needed and as money became available. Eventually, the floor was covered with vinyl/asbestos tile, the ceiling was tiled, and the walls were covered with walnut paneling. A bath with shower were early additions. At one time, Dana had a room in the southwest corner, Myrna in the southeast corner, Brian in the northwest corner (with his bed under the steps), a laundry room on the west side and a family rec room on the east side. As the older kids left home, Daryl gradually progressed to the basement, but Julie never did.

At this writing, only the southwest bedroom remains. I worried some about fire, but there was an outside entrance and a window in each room. I was one of the first to buy a smoke detector when they came on the market.

The kitchen was always the family room and headquarters where the mail was taken, phone calls answered, conferences held, etc. On the wall is a hanging that states "Life's riches other rooms adorn, but in a kitchen, home is born". It has been there for many

years and shows stains from a water fight that (we were later told) happened during a time of parental absence.

In many ways, the kitchen is still the same, with island cook top and birch cupboards. The recessed oven has been moved, a cupboard added over the stove, and birch paneling added around the walls. The floor covering is still in good shape 40 years later and the wallpaper has lasted about 30 years. The telephone is in a recessed opening between the kitchen and living room, there is also one in the basement.

What we called the "little farm house" was a much different place. When the old settlers/homesteaders settled on the land, the first thing they did was dig a well. If they got water, the next thing was to dig a storm cellar and build a small wash house above the cellar to live in while they built the main house and barn. This is what happened on the farm, with the wash house being a small 12' x 14' framed structure. When my Grandma Good came to stay with us in the late '30s, my Uncle Cecil came up from Wichita and finished the inside, added a chimney and a small 8' x 10' kitchen. This is where we spent the first five summers on the farm. Its legal description was NE 1/4, 5- 16-7E.

In 1954, we bought the Garretson's 80 acres, (N 1/2, NE 1/4, 17-16-7E) and moved the house to a grove of trees there. Mr. Garretson had planted catalpa trees and grass. He had built a small barn and drilled a well, but never got around to building a house. So, we moved the little house (in two pieces) up there. At first we had no electricity. My parents thought we should have a storm cave, so we had a bulldozer dig a hole, then my Dad and I moved a cave from Rocky Acres (legal W 1/2, SW 1/4, 32-15-7) to the newly dug hole. We would back a pickup into the old cave, roll in the rocks and pull it out with a tractor. We then drove to the new cave, backed in the loaded truck, rolled out the rocks, and pulled the truck out with a tractor. These rocks were very heavy, approximately 150 pounds each, and had been very carefully sized and dressed by unknown masons who had built the original cave. (Most of them are now at Brian and Daryl's homes in Manhattan, as landscaping.) We then poured a concrete deck over the top, making a very nice patio. We sat, as a family, out there most nights before bedtime, watching the stars, meteors and thunderstorms.

As the babies were born, it was necessary to add "lean-to's" on the south and north. These were 6' x 12' and had large windows that would swing in and hook to the ceiling, providing great summertime ventilation. The well would supply only a minimum of water, so I put up a windmill tower along the north side of the kitchen and laid two 30-gallon tanks high upon it. This was filled from the well and provided water under gravity pressure. There were pressure relief holes drilled in the top of the tanks and water would spurt high in the air when they were full. There was a small electric water heater under the kitchen sink, so we had hot and cold running water. We rarely needed heat, but there was a small gas heater in the living room. For a telephone, we had a German army field telephone that Betty's brother had brought home from the war. The above-mentioned windmill tower also had the TV antenna on top of it and was enclosed around the bottom, forming a shower. The tanks were painted black, heating the water very efficiently with solar energy.

I also salvaged some used grain elevator doors and built a small, two-car garage. I put up some gas barrels and three grain bins. When it was all finished, we had a tiny, four-room house, a water system, outbuildings, a tire swing, treehouses, TV, phone and mail service.

Over the years, I recall killing at least six pygmy rattlesnakes (massaguas) on the premises, but fortunately, no one was ever bitten. One night, one got caught in a mousetrap in the kitchen.

Our first dog was a stray, red (apparently full-blooded) cocker spaniel named Elmer. He lost both eyes in dogfights while tethered to the clothesline in Solomon and is buried there.

One day when Julie was two or three years old, she came out of the kitchen door and stepped on our cocker spaniel dog, Dido. She was bitten in the face and still has the scar. The dog is buried behind the grain bins.

During thunderstorms, we worried about the baby in a crib, just inches from a catalpa tree. We would try to move the crib into the front room, but it would catch on the door and wake the baby. We tried to treat storms casually and not make the children afraid.

It is difficult to say what were the best days of our early married life, but summers in the little farmhouse would rank high. We have always been surprised (and pleased) that none of our children ever complained about the move to spend summers on the farm. Betty says she is the only woman in Kansas that has moved over 100 times. It has been a bit complicated maintaining two or three households. However, the upside has been that when we return, people are glad to welcome us back.

In 1972, my parents decided to build a house in Wilsey and move off their farm in the countryside. I felt I had enough construction experience to handle it. Wayne Evans laid up the foundation, then the kids and I, along with Betty's dad and her brother-in-law, John Peterson, built it. It took all summer and turned out very well, providing my parents a very nice and secure home for the rest of their lives.

Chapter 13. Favorite Things

I am now to the book section entitled FAVORITES, so I suspect this may get personal and funny.

While in high school, Wilmer Tischhauser and I would buy Snickers candy bars by the carton. They were 5 cents each, but we could buy a box of 24 for \$1.00. While I was in college, Hershey bars were scarce, but Betty was working at Duckwall's, so she could intercept them for me. We now have a Russell Stovers factory outlet close by our house in Solomon, and visit them, but I limit myself to one chocolate after each meal. (Sometimes, during a crisis, more are needed). After a trip to the dentist, I always treat myself to a chocolate malt at the Dairy Queen.

I prefer angel food cake and butter brickie or cherry pecan ice cream. They make a good combination.

I have several favorite sayings:

"It's as cold as a well digger's ass."

"It's as black as the inside of a coal miner's lunch bucket."

"It's as old as dirt."

"It's as dark as the inside of a cow."

"It's wetter than sop."

"Quick as a flash"

"Dumb as a post"

"Crazy as hell"

"Hotter than the hinges of hell"

"Raining like a cow pissing on a flat rock"

"Pretty as a picture"

"Green as grass"

"Hotter than fire"

and many more. I am not much for profanity and so I hope the above doesn't offend those who read this. Sometimes, a cuss word just seems appropriate.

I do not have a favorite perfume or cologne. Betty used to wear something called Desert Flower, but it is no longer available. I think Old Spice and English Leather are just disgusting.

My favorite book is the one I am reading at the time and I do not have any favorites.

Laura's Theme from the movie "Dr. Zhivago" would be my favorite song and I have copies by several artists. We first saw this movie in Salina when we went with Pat and Chuck Wilson in the mid-70s.

I enjoy a Diet Pepsi every afternoon, almost without fail. I do not like the taste of beer at all but will sometimes indulge. When it comes to hard liquor, I like the fruity stuff

such as a Tequila Sunrise or Fuzzy Navel. Wine is so-so, and the closer it is to grape juice, the better I like it. I probably average about 3 drinks a week. Of course I tried smoking as a teen-ager, but never got to where I could tolerate it. It is gratifying that none of the family smokes. I should

add that my parents bribed me with \$100 if I would not become a smoker by age 21.

My favorite season is spring, as I like to be optimistic and see tilings come to life again. Winter is very depressing and I am always anxious to head south to the Rio Grande Valley. Christmas is my favorite holiday—it is also the most stressful. I try to always have fresh cut flowers on the table, preferring tulips, gladiolus, and iris, and grow them myself when possible. Blue is my favorite color and has been the choice for almost all of my pickups and several cars. Tim Allen in "Home Improvement" was my favorite show on TV. I repeat that I consider the talk shows and soap operas, without exception, to be pornographic trash not fit to watch. To me, most TV is great and I am grateful that there are choices.

My best time of day is sunrise. I am usually awake and in the field, or reading the paper, or taking a walk. I am not a night owl, just watch the news and go to bed.

The best day of my life was my wedding day.

Chapter 14. Favorite Foods

I am not picky about food, except that sweet potatoes would be a distant final choice.

Prime Rib, medium, at the Hays House in Council Grove, Kansas is my choice of the best meal possible in a restaurant. Betty, starting with that first hamburger in 1943, has been a super cook and served many great meals. I truly enjoy oyster soup (which she doesn't like at all). She is famous for her potato salad and that is what we usually take to a potluck.

For fast food, Arby's Roast Beef ranks high, as does the meal at Burger King. Since I grew up on a chicken farm, I try to avoid that choice, but have been seen in a Kentucky Fried Chicken. Tomato would be my choice of Campbell's Soups.

My cholesterol is borderline high, so I endeavor to limit fats.

Thousand Island is my choice of salad dressings. I am sure we are very brand loyal and rarely buy generic anything. I sometimes eat TV dinners when I'm alone and find them OK.

Since I am an early riser, I fix my own breakfast of 1/2 grapefruit, a glass of orange juice and raisin bran in 2% milk. Strawberries, pears, nectarines and peaches are my choice of fruits. Small peas and green beans would be the vegetable pick. Oysters in any form, clam chowder and shrimp would make the list for seafood. Most fish is OK, but I do not care for crab or lobster. Almost all pizza is very good (except for green peppers). More often than not, I drink tea at room temperature, with my meals. I eat corn-on-the-cob left to right, typewriter style.

My most memorable meals would have been at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, Japan where each table had its own team of waiters and also at Mama Leona's in New York City, where the waiter quickly perceived that we were from out of town and treated us most graciously.

I have fond memories of a meal served on a plane returning from Japan in 1969. We had linen tablecloths, real silverware, crystal and a several course meal while flying along at 35,000 feet!

We have no concerns with water quality in Solomon, but use filters in Texas and at the farm in Wilsey.

I would observe that food is better in quality and quantity than ever before. To me, the choices are just unbelievable in a supermarket. It is also the cheapest I have ever seen in terms of the percentage of a person's income that goes for food.

Chapter 15. Friends, Activities and Associations

Dancing was never much a part of our early married years, as a lot of liquor was involved and teachers were expected to be sober. However, after retirement, we have stayed at Victoria Palms Resort in Donna Texas, which has a beautiful ballroom. Free lessons were offered by Neil and Aletha Campbell, and we learned most of the modern steps and how to dance gracefully. Then, free square dance lessons were offered at McAllen and we got up to most of the mainstream calls. We met many really great people at square dances.

When we first came to Solomon, we were invited to play Pinochle with a group of locals. We generally met every other Saturday night, nobody took it very seriously, and we just had a good time.

The friends we have now are almost all people we met as neighbors to our place in Texas. They are grandparents like us and we have sort of formed our own little community on Downing Street. Our only close neighbors at the farm would be the Tischhausers and the Parkers. In Solomon, we frequently see Arnold and Donna Richards who live across the alley. They do a super job of watching the property while we are gone.

At age 23, I became a Master Mason at the Masonic Lodge in Wilsey, then transferred to Solomon City Lodge #105 and have gone through the chairs. I was Master in the '70s and had the pleasure of helping initiate sons Brian and Daryl and also son-in-law Kerry into the fraternity. I have also coached about ten people as they learned the work and am currently Chaplain. I think that it was in 1972 that I went through the Scottish Rite and also became a member of the Shrine at the Isis Temple in Salina. I spent about five years as a Shrine Clown, then took a demit.

I had only been in Solomon a few days when Howard Phillips invited me to join the Solomon Lions Club. I soon became Tailtwister, then President, and moved into zone and district offices. Betty and I went to Toronto in 1964 to the international convention. I was honored by being elected District Governor in 1968. This involved a trip to the Dallas convention for instruction. Then, the District sent us to Tokyo as outgoing governor. As convention chairman, there were also trips to Atlantic City and Phoenix. I have continued to hold local, district and state offices, probably having the most years of service of any of the 13,000 Lions in Kansas at the district state level. I keep hoping for some recognition for all of these years from the International level. I do hold the 100% District Governors Key, a Key award for recruiting 35 new members, the Rebuilding Award, several Extension Awards, nearly 45 years of perfect attendance, etc. The Lions organization has been very good to us and I hope I have helped us to fulfill our motto, "We Serve."

I ran successfully for city councilman in Solomon in about 1969. The only people who came to the meetings were those who had complaints. Most everything we wanted to do for the community was either illegal or unfundable.

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*■ I have been a member of the Kansas Crop Improvement Association for many years and was honored a few years ago by receiving the Kansas Premier Seed Grower Award. This, no doubt, led to my "15 minutes of fame" when I was invited to fly to Washington, DC to testify before a House Ag committee in regard to legislation concerning changes to certified seed laws.
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I am just finishing my 9th year as a District Director and Board Member for the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers. They are a fine bunch of farmers from all over the state.

While doing construction work building a farm elevator in 1951, I was removing a v-scaffold when it collapsed. I fell about thirty feet, broke my left arm and cracked some ribs. It was some time before I was able to climb again. I have been in surgery a few times, experiencing a tonsillectomy and a hemorrhoidectomy. Neither was any fun!

My experience with the courts is limited to being a witness when supplies were stolen from my high school science lab. I was harassed and felt like it was me who was on trial. I have been called for jury duty but the case was settled before trial. I have no desire to be a juror! We consult with an attorney in Salina once a year. His name is Ken Wasserman and he does a super job of advising us. We have recently placed
v- assets in our trusts. We also have wills covering all contingencies.

i
4- Betty takes care of the checkbook in our home and pays the bills. We have made several efforts to establish an office of some sort but it always gravitates back to the kitchen table. I keep all of the farm books and records. She does corporation books for Strouts Seeds Inc. and Strouts Enterprises Inc. Clyde Beck, a CPA who has an office in Salina, prepares the tax returns and financial statements.
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Instead of just grumbling, I almost always write complaint letters to a manufacturer, vendor, merchant or server when I am disappointed in a product or service. I have a very high success rate of resolving the problems. I have often written a "letter to the editor" and they have always been published.

U
U- I have an interest in photography, which dates back to my first Brownie box camera in the late 1930s. I currently have a Canon AE-1 and a Canon APS plus a camcorder. For about 15 years, I have been seriously collecting baseball caps. There are currently about 1700. I have only bought a very few, most being obtained from business deals, shows and friends scrounging for special caps. I belong to the National Cap Association.

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Chapter 16. Politics & History

I suppose my most admired president would be Eisenhower because he was from Kansas, and because of his efforts to provide the interstate highway system. I had a brief glimpse of Ike when he went through Solomon.

I vote mostly in Morris county now, either by absentee ballot or at the polling place in Wilsey. Few seem to realize it, but I think the most pressing problem today is the farm price situation. I feel that sooner or later, the nation's food supply will have problems if something isn't done now to help farm prices.

I am not impressed with the welfare system and have seen much abuse, especially in south Texas. A few years ago, I was invited to Washington to testify before an agriculture committee in regard to the Plant Variety Protection Act. I came home believing that the people who represent us truly listen and try to do their best. When in Texas, I observe that politicians there are no more elected than they are involved in a scandal.

I believe the space program was some of the best money we ever spent for national standing and the many spin-offs. I was watching TV at the farm on July 20, 1969 when Armstrong walked on the moon and felt very proud.

We fly both the U.S. and Kansas flags almost all the time at the farm and in Texas. I am comfortable that the country is in good shape and am very optimistic about the future.

Chapter 17. Community Life

Most of the time, I live in a rural area. On the farm, it is miles to the nearest neighbor. Basically, this is in the high plains of the west. The biggest business is the school system followed by the Rural Electric Power companies. In Solomon, we are right on Interstate 70 and have certainly benefited from it. We do have an airport in Salina, but mostly go to Wichita or Kansas City for commercial flights. Either is a drive of 100 miles and we park our car there while gone.

I receive newspapers from Salina, Herington, Council Grove and White City and have been mentioned in all of them at one time or another. I was the photo/feature story on the front page of the High Plains Journal once while promoting white wheat.

I have had contact with local police following robbery and vandalism problems and have not been overly impressed.

I have been in many parades as a Lions Club member or as a Shrine clown and find it to be fun. Solomon had a Lions Club "Fall Festival" for many years on the first Saturday after Labor Day. This was about the most important thing to happen, especially for kids. There were contests, races, games and so forth. In 1976, it became more of a community-sponsored affair, held in late July.

The towns of Wilsey and Solomon have very limited shopping options, so we generally go to Salina. The big stores used to be downtown but are now in the malls. Our nearest big cities are Wichita and Kansas City. We only go there to catch a plane or for special medical problems. We have also been to the outdoor Starlight Theatre in KC.

We have tried to go to the fair every year. When first married, we went to the fair in Hutchinson once with absolutely no money to spend, just looked at things and came home.

There are three churches in Solomon and the activities are very well supported, as is the Lions Club. I am an ordained Presbyterian elder. We have dinners, soup suppers, pancake feeds and the like.

Every town has a cemetery. My relatives going back two or three generations are buried in Wilsey, Parkerville or Council Grove. The sites are well maintained and decorated by us on Memorial Day and at Christmas time. I think that plastic flowers are tacky and just plain ugly and never even consider using them!

Chapter 18. Everyday Life

It is hard to say which of our four houses (if you include the motor home) I like the best. The farmhouse where I grew up is a great summer home, the Solomon house is the nicest and has fond memories of the kids growing up, the park model mobile home in the Rio Grande Valley is the only place to spend the winter, and the motor home is the neatest way to see the country and visit people.

This lifestyle takes lots of "stuff"! We have seven color-TVs, four refrigerators, five divans, numerous radios and all the stuff to live in 4 different places. Most items are duplicated but we do move clothes, jewelry and personal things. Obviously, 3/4 of it is unattended at any one time and we are fortunate to have had only a few cases of theft and vandalism.

The farmhouse is an old, two-story, hip roof, framed house, painted white. The house in Solomon is a ranch-style home, with brick veneer and a full basement. The Texas house is a one-bedroom mobile home. The motor home is 34' long and has a rear bedroom. In addition, the granary and metal building at the farm and the barn in Solomon are full of stuff, as is the basement in Solomon.

We still use the kitchen table/chairs and bedroom suite we started with 50 years ago, generally furnishing the farm house with items as they are replaced in the house in Solomon.

All of the houses are quite comfortable and have a couch or easy chair facing the TV, which is also just right for reading the morning paper or a magazine. The places have two or more phones with most of the calling being done from the kitchen. The kitchen table or counter seems to be where billfolds and pocket contents land. There are key hooks, which help avoid searches for keys. We do have trees and a fair amount of wildlife at each place. The garage in Solomon is attached to the house and also serves as a shop.

The neighborhood is fairly secure, but we have always locked the doors at night.

I am usually up by 6:00 AM and fix breakfast, take a coffee break about 10:00, lunch at noon and a Pepsi break at 2:30. Supper is at 6:00 and sometimes there's an evening snack. I usually watch the news at mealtime. The usual pattern is to watch the 10 PM news, take a shower and go to bed. If it has been a long, hard day, I truly enjoy a long soak in a hot tub of water. I usually try to walk a mile or more each morning and frequently swim 10 laps before lunch when we're in Texas. At the farm, we end the day by usually sitting outside during the evening, watching the sun go down, the stars come out and the satellites pass overhead.

I typically carry a chapstick and pocketknife. I have always worn the same wedding band and wear a wristwatch during the day. I carry my glasses in my shirt pocket, except when reading. I have always shaved with an electric razor.

I see three different family physicians: Dr. Bossemeyer in Salina, KS; Dr. Frese in Council Grove, KS; and Dr. Fuentes in Weslaco, TX. My dentist is Dr. Schaulis in Salina.

As a creature of habit, I check any machinery or vehicle before I leave it and also any heaters, appliances, stoves etc. My final routine is to lock doors, check that I have taken any medications,

then go to bed. I rarely need to double check.

I take pride in being on time or even a bit early and am really frustrated when I am late. I spent years talking to people in the classroom, but am only a bit uncomfortable speaking to a large audience. I enjoy writing letters, both personal and business, and I like the idea of putting thoughts on paper in a rational form. I am very comfortable while making phone calls and am usually successful at getting people to meet my desires.

I am amused by superstitions and rely on scientific explanations.

There is little recollection of my parents reading to me, but I did read to our children and am pleased that the tradition continues.

My gardens at the farm consist of potatoes, tomatoes, green beans, radishes, lettuce and a row of gladiolus plants. There is a large lawn and I have worn out several lawn mowers.

When I get home from work, this first thing I do is read the mail and check phone calls. Lottery tickets look like a losing deal to me and have only bought a few. On a trip, I may play the 25-cent slot machines and limit myself to losing \$20. I have come out ahead a few times and consider my losses to be the cost of entertainment. I do not attempt any table games.

There is music in the house as I type this. I get annoyed by a great deal of the TV shows--they are just trash.

My most comfortable outfit is overalls or coveralls. Jeans are OK.

Most every kid tries cigarettes and I am no exception; however, I never could stand the burning nose and eyes and the bad taste in my mouth, so I have had no desire to smoke. I am very pleased that none of our family has the habit, either, I rarely doodle, but when I'm bored, I will find a small piece of paper and fold it every way possible. I do make lists and use them. I try to put coming events on the calendar. For about 35 years, I have kept a pocket diary, always buying the same kind. I have all of them and often use them for reference.

I usually read the newspaper straight through, skipping the sports and classifieds. I enjoy the columnists, comics, and editorial page. I read Newsweek, Flying, Farm Journal, Reader's Digest and Successful Farming.

I try to keep things where they belong, sort the bills in my billfold and dislike carrying change. When the mail comes, I get it as soon as possible, read personal letters first, then business mail and finally periodicals.

I only make New Year's Resolutions in a frivolous manner.

I am comfortable with the way I look. I tend to gain weight in the winter, then lose it the next summer and only weigh about 10 pounds more than when I got married. As a young man, I wore my hair parted on the left, but I had problems maintaining a healthy scalp, so I have had a flat top since 1954. I grew chin whiskers for the bicentennial and they looked ridiculous, coming in red, white and black. It only lasted a few weeks. I tan nicely, but watch for skin cancer and had several

spots removed, including facial surgery for basal cell carcinoma.

As a teenager, I owned a hat but rarely wore it, then went bareheaded for many years to improve scalp health. Now, with ant-fungal shampoos available, I can wear baseball caps outdoors. I also collect them, having 1700 at this writing. I have worn many pairs of Hush-Puppies shoes and now wear Nike walking shoes most of the time. I have worn complete uniforms, both for ROTC and National Guard drills. I am not too excited about wearing a necktie, but am comfortable doing so when the occasion demands.

As a teen-ager, I had severe acne on my face and back. Fortunately, it didn't scar.

There are heredity character trails apparent in each of our children, but I do not see that any of them favor either of us great deal.

The arrival of grandchildren has been a pleasure. They are each very special in their own way and have been very loving and respectful to me. Their parents have sometimes trusted us to baby-sit and we have tried not to corrupt them. It is always fun to visit with them, especially one-on-one. I find it tiring trying to keep up to them.

We seldom bring gifts for no reason at all, but try to remember them well on birthdays, Christmas and graduation. They are good to favor us with photos, drawings etc., which promptly go on the door of the fridge.

I am impressed with the activities they participate in - musicals, plays, sports, Scouts etc.

Betty and I have had many memorable trips and vacations. We drove to Grand Lake in Oklahoma for our honeymoon. We took \$100, stayed a week and had money to bring home. We have been to most of the states (except far upper New England) and seen most of the tourist attractions and national parks. We attended World Fairs in Spokane and Knoxville. We have been to Tokyo, Canada and Mexico and do not have any great desire to visit other foreign countries. We have yet to try a cruise -- I'm not sure about that! I think the Hawaiian Islands are the most beautiful place I have ever been.

There are many slides and photos of many things -- some organized, some not.

Chapter 19. Cars & Trucks & Things That Go

I have had the pleasure of driving home about 20 new vehicles. Cars were hard to find right after WWII. We had our name on a waiting list in Herington in 1946 and my grandfather found out about a load going through Council Grove to Herington. He called us and we went right over and saw a black '46 Ford sedan unloaded. It was the DeLux, with radio and heater and cost \$1425.

When we got married in 1949, Betty had her Ford Model A but we took my folks' car when we wanted to go someplace. After the 1949 wheat harvest, we found a brand new Ford sedan in Council Grove. It was a two-door model in metallic maroon, with a radio, heater, V-8, 3 speed with automatic overdrive and cost \$2120. Of course we had to borrow the money and the bank required my parents to co-sign the note. As I recall, they didn't like to co-sign, but finally did and we had a nice new car to drive. We promptly took my folks and Margie on a trip to Colorado. Gasoline generally cost .19/gal back then.

The next car was a two-tone blue '52 Ford 4-door. It had overhead valves in the V-8 and a Fordomatic transmission. It came with fancy seat covers and cost \$1100 to trade. Betty's folks bought the '49 we traded in.

Our next car, a two-tone aqua and white 1954 Ford, came from Abilene. It is the only vehicle we ever had that saw both coasts.

Next was a green and white '58 Chevy. I recall it had a 327 engine and would really go. The transmission sequence on GM Hydramatic transmissions was P N D L R and you had to be careful after driving a Ford (P R N D L).

By 1963, we had need for more space, so joined the station wagon crowd with a new Oldsmobile station wagon. The third seat faced the rear, so you had to lower the rear window, then pull down the tailgate to enter. It was our first car with air conditioning. I recall a list price of about \$6500 and it even had a roof rack. It came from Waddells in Salina and was light blue.

The next station wagon we ordered was a 1969 Pontiac from Pioneer in Abilene. It was blue and the third seat faced forward. The tailgate would either swing out or lay down.

By 1974, kids were leaving home and after a good milo crop, we ordered a Pontiac Grandville Hard Top 4-door. It was blue and had a white vinyl top plus an 8-track tape player. It was "plush". A car like this would get about 15 miles per gallon and gas cost about .39/gal. In order to have an

extra car, we found a 4-door 1975 Grandville that was similar to the '74 but had electric windows and locks. Eventually, the '74 went to Myrna and Randy and the '75 got traded for a 1984 Olds 98 sedan we found in Council Grove. It was tan with a brown vinyl top and a beautiful brown plush interior. It served us well for over 12 years.

We needed a car to tow behind the motorhome, so I found a used Chevy Sprint hatchback. It was a tiny 3 cylinder, but served the purpose. This was followed by a new 1991 red Ford Escort hatchback. Later we traded the Escort for a '96 tan, Pontiac Grand Am which Daryl's family now has. The Grand Am was automatic and it was towed on a dolly behind the motor home.

While on a trip to Albuquerque in 1997, we found a shale-colored Cadillac DeVille. We were in the motor home and had not expected to buy a car, so we didn't even have a checkbook. The dealer discounted the \$40,500 price by over \$7,000 and told us we could send him a check when we got home. Betty followed me and it had several hundred miles on the odometer before I ever got to drive it. It is a very nice automobile.

There have been many pickup trucks as well! Our first pickup was a dark blue 1952 Chevy short, narrow half ton I bought used in 1954. It was a 6-cylinder, 3-speed. Then came a fancy new '59 Chevy short wide-side, deluxe with radio. There followed an ugly green GMC pickup that was a 4 speed, long and wide that I bought in 1969. This was traded for the dark blue '74 GMC which was followed by a blue '78 GMC that had fancy paint with wide stripes down the hood. It got traded for a blue '84 GMC that Julie and I brought back from Great Bend in a snowstorm.

Next, there was a 1988 blue Chevy that was purchased in Council Grove but came from Osage City. By then, they had aluminum rims, tape players, cruise control and so forth. It was traded for a gray/blue '91 GMC, then came a bright blue '94 GMC. I am currently driving a two-tone blue/silver 1997 GMC that came from an Emporia dealer. It is loaded, with a CD player and so forth. All the pickups have been half ton, 2WD's.

Our first motor home was purchased very quickly. Art White had bought a new 1978 Coachmen Leprechaun mini-home, then had a heart attack and decided to turn it back to the dealer. My neighbor, Wilmer Tischhauser, stopped at the farm as he was taking it back to the dealer to see if we were interested. We were and bought it on the spot for \$10,000. We took it to Georgia one summer and another trip was all the way to Oregon. It was on a Chevy chassis with a rear dinette. The bed was over the cab and was awkward to get in and out of.

In 1982, we ordered a Class A Coachmen from a dealer in Ulysses. It was very comfortable except there was no bed and we had to fold out and sleep on the divan.

We took Margie, Julie, Daryl and DeAdre with us to the Worlds Fair in Knoxville. It was our Texas home for the first couple of years. We then ordered a 1990 Pace Arrow 34L which had everything and we used it often, making a trip to Colorado each summer and Texas each winter. Currently, it spends most of the time in storage, but does make a nice guest house when needed.

My first farm tractor was a new 1947 Oliver 70 Row Crop. I wore it out and traded it, then many years later, found it in a junkyard. I bought it back and restored it. I also bought a new John Deere 2510 in 1968 (s/n 100001) and still have it. There has also been a series of large, 100+ horsepower John Deere tractors purchased new. We

bought a new Gleaner A combine in 1961. This was followed by a series of used Gleaners. The straight trucks are rebuilt from a 1969 GMC and a 1984 IHC.

I have always taken a lot of pride in my transportation and done almost all of the maintenance work. This included oil changers, lube jobs, tire rotation and of course, washing and waxing. I probably traded more often than really necessary and no doubt replaced some tires that still had a few miles left. As a result, it was rare to have a flat on the road and I do not recall ever being stranded in the million or so miles I have driven.

My first bike was a red Hiawatha (Gambles) with balloon tires, coaster brake, tank and headlight. I had to learn on a brand new bike, which was hard on it. (No one had invented training wheels yet.) I would prop it up by the chicken house and push off downhill. I wrecked many times before I caught on about balance. Sister Margie never did want a bike but rode on the carrier on the back of mine, meaning I had to haul her to school. Once, her long flowing scarf caught in the spokes and she was quickly dumped off. Another time, a student named Kenny Miller was after me because I had tied his jacket sleeves in knots and she had to jump off so I could pedal faster to get away from him.

I did buy a new motorcycle in 1972. It was a blue Honda 175 and was big enough to ride in traffic. It was also big enough to hurt you. All three boys learned to ride it. I never did "lay it over" but am not sure about the boys. If they did, I never found out.

The only vanity license plate I ever had was CAMPER on the mini-home. I have saved all my license plates since 1952 and have them nailed up in my shop on the farm. I also have many from my parents and Betty's folks.

I learned to drive on my own, but as a Driver's Ed teacher, I taught many others how to drive and currently take the AARP course every two years. For many years, I was licensed to drive anything that had wheels.

I usually have a bumper sticker of some sort, identifying my membership in an organization. I play a radio or tapes about half of the time. I have the windows down on rural roads but close them when on the highway.

The trunk and glove box are usually orderly. I am sure there is a flashlight and in cold weather, there are heavy coats, blankets and emergency supplies in the trunk. I almost always carry a cell phone.

I am comfortable that, at 71, I am still a capable driver. My vision and hearing are good, I have taken the AARP course a number of times, which emphasizes allowing for the mistakes of others. This course tends to curb aggressive tendencies.

I am quite comfortable with either a standard or automatic transmission. I tend to buy discount fuel at the quick trip. I do belong to AAA but rarely call them.

I have only been in one accident. As a teen-age passenger on the way home from a 4H meeting, we were hit head-on, totaling the car. I hit the windshield and got a big knot on my forehead. As a driver, I have been bumped from behind five times, usually by drivers who do not expect me to

observe stop signs.

There haven't been any lemons in the vehicles I have purchased but there have been a few recalls. I used to go see the new models the day they came out, but not anymore.

I have been busted for speeding three times, the last being about 15 years ago. I try to stay within the tolerance on speed limits. I have never pushed any of the vehicles to their limit, but have seen 100 mph.

I'm not sure if drivers these days are less courteous or not, but I hope that there are fewer "under the influence". I have left the road twice to avoid a head-on collision and once had the favor returned. The freeways and Interstates help a lot and I observe that you had "better get up and run with them!"

Probably the most beautiful drive I have ever taken is down the coast of California on Highway 101.

Chapter 20. What I think...

On rainy days, I usually fix things or read.

I find computers fascinating, but not enough so to buy one (yet?). Procrastination is not for me -- I want to get it done! I do not believe I am lucky and doubt there is any such thing as "luck". I don't get angry in traffic, honk, gesture or shout, but I am a bit impatient. I try to avoid the worst of it.

I'm not much for instinct and prefer to rely on facts and past experience. I am most irritated by carelessness and stupidity on the part of others. I usually confront them at the time and then write letters to their superiors.

I enjoy going to the doctor and dentist because I admire their skill and knowledge and believe that they are there to help me. I am a bit apprehensive about surgery and have no desire to deal with a closed MRI.

My pet peeve is people talking when they should be listening!!! I try to be upbeat and rarely suffer depression. Anyone who has farmed has seen enough disasters that you are no longer surprised. I subscribe to the philosophy of "carpe diem" (seize the day).

I enjoy living in Kansas, but am fascinated by the ocean. I am comfortable with the beliefs of the church and am sure that astrology is a bunch of baloney. Sometimes, I bend the rules, but not flagrantly. I am definitely a realist.

To me, a necessary evil is all the rules and regulation we have to put up with. It gets worse every day.

I believe that a person's traits are 90% nature and 10% nurture. Sometimes, the only way to manage big purchases is on credit. I think that the use of credit for routine, daily expenses is just ludicrous, unless the borrower pays them off each month. We use credit cards a lot — and pay them off every month.

I truly enjoy having people come by to visit. I have listened to many, many troubles. Rarely, if ever, do I "cry on someone's shoulder".

I'm not sure I have any favorite age, preferring to subscribe to "This time, like all times, is the best if you but know what to do with it". Probably my most important date was May 29, 1949 when I graduated from college.

Other people tell me how lucky I am. I have trouble understanding why they think so.

Prices have changed a lot since I have been a consumer but it still takes about the same amount of time working to buy a given item. The exception is groceries—they get cheaper relative to earnings every year!

Having been a pallbearer many, many times, I am rather detached at funerals, except of course

those for family members.

My primary goals have been to see that our children were educated and on their own. Then it's been to see material things like our house, farms, machinery and vehicles paid for. Then it's been to build savings of \$100,000 or so. I am comfortable this has been accomplished.

No one who lived through the depression, World War II, or raised children during Vietnam years had many carefree days. Again I say "Carpe diem". My main observation about growing older is that I care less and less about what others think of my actions or acquisitions.

My worst medical scare has been being hospitalized with heart arrhythmias.

On a medical note, I should relate the following medical history:

Whooping cough (pertussis) as a child
Chicken pox as a child
Possibly rubella or roseola as a child
Recurring tonsillitis as a teen-ager and young adult.
Pneumonia at age 14 (saved by sulfanilamide)
Severe acne as a teenagers
Mangy scalp as teen-ager and young adult
Scarlet fever at age 22 (saved by penicillin)
Tonsillectomy at age 34 (Dr. Eaton in Salina)
Hemorrhoidectomy circa age 42 (Dr. Mowery in Salina)
Atrial fibrillation at age 50 (this runs in the family)*
Premature atrial contractions age 68*
Total cholesterol runs marginally high, ratio is OK
Triglycerides sometimes run high.
Other blood chemistry is good

◆Controlled by .50 mg Lanoxin daily and 25 mg Atenolol daily

Chapter 21. Some Closing Thoughts...

Life has been very good to me-good family, a devoted wife, great children and their spouses and their offspring.

I have many loyal friends in Kansas and Texas.

I have all the material things anyone could possibly want.

The experience with Masons, Scottish Rite, and Shrine has been most enjoyable.

The work and friendships with Lions has been most rewarding.

My experiences in the classroom have been very good.

Participating in choir and church activities has been uplifting, especially singing in choir. It is nice to be a farmer once again and I like to see things grow.

And retired when I feel like it!

If I had it all to do over, would I change anything? Not really.