



Front Cover:
1938 Photograph of children from Bell County,
Kentucky supplied by Judie Gudger.

Left to right:
Henry Smith
Sonja Shreve nee Smith
Audrey Aline Ratcliff nee Smith
Pearl Painter nee Smith
Deloris Lunsford nee Smith

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Column Editors

Grandma's Kitchen

Rita Redd

Good Old Days

Jennifer Thompson

Wartime Memories

Dr. Zoe Simmons

Genealogy Corner

Connie Sychowski

Cartoonist

Nicholas Johnson

Layouts

Sharon Romine

Linda Marshall

Connie Sychowski

Jay Lebonville

Proofreaders

Rebecca Munoz

Ethel Geary

Sarah Caston

Virginia Jones

Typist

Anthony Bautista

Interviewers

California: Tim Fosskett

Florida: Marie Cammock

Georgia: Rita Redd

Illinois: Sarah Lamb

North Carolina: Elwood K. Tutt

Photographer

California: Hoyen Tsang

Web Designers

Franklin T. Wike, Jr.

Eric Hutchinson

Elliot Mina

Sharon Romine

Linda Marshall

Connie Sychowski

Anisha Sajeev

Linda Zdziarek

Interpreters

Ben Bloomgren

Muhammad Amajd

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U.S. Legacies is a monthly publication produced entirely by non-paid volunteers. All of the stories and articles contained in this magazine are submitted by our readers. Copies of all stories, photographs, questions and comments submitted to this magazine are also posted on our website.

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Letter From The Editor
Christmas Memories Can Be Valuable



When I was in the prime of my adult life, it was easier to keep track of the years, because I would simply try to remember what woman I was dating, or what state I was living in during the Christmas season. As the number of years that I have been around continue to add up, combined with the fact that I am no longer living in a different location every couple of years or concentrating on a "social life", it becomes more difficult for me to remember where I was or what I was doing during any particular year of my life. However, there are still a few years that stand out, primarily because of my

Christmas Memories, such as the year I was living in Tennessee and my teenage son decided to spend the holidays with me. It was the first time in 10 years that we were going to spend Christmas Day together. We went out into the woods behind my house and cut down our own Christmas Tree and decorated it together. Then on Christmas morning, I remember waking up and seeing about an inch of snow on the ground. The area I was living in, only received a total of Three inches of snow per year, so the odds of having snow on the ground on Christmas day were very slim. Therefore, I was

very grateful to be able to see the ground blanketed with white powder on that one special holiday.

I also remember the last Christmas I spent with my mother, before she passed away. I spent Christmas day at the hospital, by her side. I delivered a variety of gifts, combined with lots of hand holding, kisses and conversation. My main goal was to make sure she knew that she was loved and would not die alone.

Over the years, there were many other memories created and as I reflect back on them, I realize the most important memories revolve around the people we love and the

sharing of our time and attention. So this year, as you sit back and watch your favorite Christmas movie and reflect back on the special moments in your life, you might also want to consider what type of favorite memories you are helping to create for your loved ones. For as quickly as time passes, it will be only the blink of an eye until you are gone and your grandchildren will be the ones sitting in an easy chair and reflecting back on the favorite Christmas memories of their life.

I hope this holiday becomes a treasured memory within the hearts and minds of all your loved ones.

Franklin T. Wike, Jr.

Volunteers Needed

We are desperately in need of volunteers to help us. If you have a computer and would like to help with layouts, editing, proofreading, research, scanning images and text, data entry, writing letters, promotions, outside sales or any other area, please contact us.

Experience is not required and we will be happy to train you in any of the fields mentioned above.

Please keep in mind that none of our volunteers receive any financial compensation for their time, however the emotional and mental rewards are fantastic.

This is an excellent method for retired or home bound individuals to stay productive and help others.

Questions and Comments

Thank You

From William H. Wike, Ssg A. Ret Browns Mills, New Jersey.

Thank You to CSM Thomas Fitzpatrick (USA Retired)

On the behalf of my nephew Franklin T Wike Jr., his father and my brother the late Franklin T. Wike Sr., my younger brother, Harvy A. Wike SFC(Army) retired and myself William H. Wike SSG (Army Retired. I wish to thank, CSM Thomas Fitzpatrick (USA Retired.) for his donation and letter (page 43 of September Issue) urging readers to donate towards a heavy duty, paper cutter.

I made my donation, to help U.S. Legacies keep putting out good magazines.

[Editors note: We would like to thank everyone that has made a financial contribution towards the purchase of a paper cutter. The full amount we need is \$400 and so far we have raised \$210.]

Old Photos

From Mariann E. Arbuckle nee Hostetter, Riverside, California.

You certainly are full of surprises. I couldn't believe what I found when I opened your envelope. You have no idea how grateful I am to receive the copies of my 1943 graduation

You have no idea how grateful I am to receive the copies of my 1943 graduation picture.

Speaking of me go to **page 19 in the June issue**. In the right upper corner...**that's me**.

My father bought that doll for me while he was on a trip.



I remember the doll while we lived on Lehman Street in Lebanon, PA.

As for stories on my family, I can tell you this one. At first it doesn't seem funny, but after you think about it, it is funny. When my father, Harvey Herman Hostetter, and his brother, Warren David Hostetter were very young boys, they wore dresses, just like girls. They lived on

a farm and their mother Lizzie wore full length aprons.

Lizzie went to the chicken house to gather eggs, leaving the two boys in the house. She would gather up the bottom of her apron to put the eggs in.

When she walked back in the kitchen Warren's dress was on fire. Yes my father did the damage. When she walked back into the kitchen and saw what was going on, she let go of her apron and had eggs everywhere. Just what happened to my father, I am unsure. My father was no angel.

Something else my father did. He got a butcher knife, went to the chicken yard, caught a chicken, cut off its head and stuck it in the haystack. Can you believe all the nonsense?

My father, Harvey Herman, also helped with the construction of the Hershey Sports Arena in Hershey, PA. This was in about 1936.

On Page 8 of the June Issue, you have a recipe for **Sand Tarts** with no directions. I can help you, with the directions and am including them with this letter.
Mariann

Editors Note: The complete recipe with Mariann's directions are in *Grandma's Kitchen* section of this issue.

Also, we want to thank Mariann for identifying the photo from our June issue and will be sending her

Questions and Comments

the photo so that she can pass it on to her children and grandchildren.



Pedal Power

This photo of Ruthie Leeper was taken in the late 1940s or early 1950s and helps to preserve the memories of the days before the invention of battery powered plastic cars. Pedaling those cars through the grass, sure did help build up the leg muscles.

VFW Magazine 1976

From Bill Long

I am searching for a VFW magazine from 1976. It contains picture of my great uncle on the front cover.

Heavenly Hash

From Joyce McCann, Colorado Springs, Colorado

My mother made this in the 1940's and 1950's. It contained vanilla wafers, pineapple, walnuts and butter. The strange thing was that

the butter was in small chunks with the wafers. Once it was put together the mixture was put in the refrigerator to set for a day. Does this ring a bell with anyone?

Fruit and Feather Cake

*Marylen Connor
Alton, Illinois*

I am looking for an old southern recipe called "Fruit and Feather Cake". My mother talks about her grandmother making it back in the 1930's.

Honey made from boiled parsley

Lee Smith

I am hoping someone out there can pass on the secret of making honey from boiled parsley. I hear it was made by, Mrs. Patton during WWII. I have searched everywhere, with no luck.



1947 Harley 62 Overhead..

I'm Al Cantrell. I was aboard the USS Bremerton CA130 and off the coast of Japan when WW2

ended. Did 24 years between Navy and Army.

Remembering The Farm

*From James Bullington
Birdseye, Indiana*

Edith "Beaty" Bullington, bought a farm of 160 acres in the mid 1950's. I believe the barn was built in the 1800's. The farmhouse had a wood kitchen stove, like the one you have in your magazine. I think it was light green and white.

In the 1960's I drove the cows in from the pasture. We milked some by cows by hand the rest by machine. We put the milk in a freezer then a big truck came and picked it up. That was between 1960 and 1966.

We moved from the farm November, Thanksgiving Day 1970. It had a smoke house a cellar under the house where we put canned food. It also had an outhouse, and a cornerib. There was one other building, but I can't remember what it was called. It did have some rail fence before we left. Plus it had a spring where the cows and mules could go get a drink.

It was called the Little George Holiday Farm. There was also a Big Little George Holiday.

The Liberty Bell

From Sandy Siple

Does anyone know anything about John Stow, whose name appears on the Liberty Bell?

Wagaman

From Paula Metzler

I was checking your recipes on your web site. I happened to see where you have photo's. I am curious about family history. I just had to click into the photographs. I really enjoyed them. I came across one I believe is most likely related to me. Shirley Wagaman in Uniform taken around 1963. I believe she is most likely related because my Grandpa said "If you come across someone with Wagaman you can bet they are related." I would like her address so I can write to her.

Reply:

Since you sent us your postal mailing address, we will forward your request to Shirley Wagaman



Leo and Ada

From Franklin T. Wike, Jr.

The photo above has the names Emma Wike nee Feaster, Bill Wike, Leo and Ada. Does anyone recognize Leo and Ada or know what their last name is?

Potatoe Wine Recipe

From Terry Tuttle

Could you please send me your recipe for Potatoe Wine. It sounds very interesting. Thank you.

Williams Family Photographs

*From Peggy Edwards
Richmond, VA*

Hello, I am wondering, do you purchase old photographs and family info, by any chance?

Let me know if you do this, as I have a box of over 600 photos of the former Williams family of South Richmond, mostly things belonging to the mother; letters, receipts, drivers licenses, uncashed 1944 paycheck, newspaper clippings, etc.

The lady is now deceased, & younger brother bought her house from her children who have on several occasions refused these family items. In fact, they did not want anything from her house at all. I am not sure why, but all of the children(now grown) made it clear they did not want these things.

All that I have dates from 1938 onward through 1940's up into the late 1950's. I currently have this for sale at \$300.00 in the local paper. Thank you for your time.

Reply from U.S. Legacies

Yes we do purchase old photographs, letters and legal documents in hopes of one day

finding a family member that would like to have them. We are posting your letter in our magazine and on our website, to see if we can locate any distant relatives that would be interested in obtaining them. If we can not find any relatives that want them now, we will take up a collection, to see if we can raise the funds needed to buy them from you. Then we will place them in storage until they can be returned to a present or future family member.



Unknown Woman

This unmarked photo belonged to Myra Wagaman Riley of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania prior to her death. If anyone can help us to identify the woman in this photograph, please let us know.

Wedding Question

From David Miller

I recently attended a wedding and was surprised to discover that you are not supposed to throw rice anymore. It has something to do with

birds eating the rice and getting sick or dying, so now they are throwing bird seed instead.

This change made me think of some of the other "old" customs that don't seem to be around anymore. I don't remember the name of it, but their used to be a custom where friends of the bride or groom would play tricks on the newlywed couples such as placing the groom in a wheel barrow and parading him up and down main street, or tying tin cans to the springs of their honeymoon bed, etc. I was wondering if any of your readers know the name of this custom. Also, I think it would be interesting to find out if any of your older readers have any funny stories they would share about things that happened to them when they got married.

Thanks.

Wedding Traditions, REVEILED

From Jennifer Thompson

Good Old Days Column Editor

David, thanks for your question. Although I could not find a name for the custom that you inquired about, the tricks played on newlyweds. I know that I have attended several weddings where that does happen, even if it is simply decorating the car. Hopefully some of our readers will have an answer for you, and perhaps stories of their own to share. I did however, appreciate your question and decide to do some research on old wedding customs.

The veil was symbolic of a woman's sub ordinance to a man. In ancient times, a woman would be shrouded from head to toe, and in ancient Greece the veil was yellow and in Rome red. The man lifting the veil was also a display of dominance. This ties into the tradition of the father giving the bride away. In times not so long ago, it was literally so, sometimes even in bartering or for business purposes. In very old times, brides were sometimes taken by means of capture. This brought forth two other traditions. The honeymoon originated when an unwilling woman was taken captive and hidden for thirty days, as the moon went through its phases, ample time for her relatives not to find her. During that time, the couple would drink a brew made from honey. Hence, the term "honeymoon" came to be. Also, when women were taken captive, the man did not want the spirits of her family to follow, so she was carried across the threshold of the home upon her first entrance, and the spirits could not enter with her.

The purpose of the bouquet has more than one origin. In more primitive wedding ceremonies, to ward off demons the bride carried garlands of herbs and spices that bore an intense odor. It has also been said that around the 1500s brides began to carry fragrant flowers on their wedding day to smell nice, as people seldom bathed then. Of course in modern times, brides carry flowers for decorative purposes, to add

beauty and elegance to the ceremony.

The rice thrown at weddings was for good luck and prosperity. In Asia, the wish was "May you always have a full pantry." The wedding cake was initially a wish for fertility, as in early Rome, a thin loaf was broken over the bride's head. During the middle ages, the bride and groom would kiss over a small bunch of cakes, which later a baker thought to group the cakes together and frost them, thus creating the wedding cake that we are accustomed to seeing today.

Thanks again for you question David!

Jennifer Thompson,

Shivery

From Steve Whooten

The name of the old wedding custom that you were talking about is Shivery. I remember my brother and a friend of his, coming to my house on our wedding day and keeping my bride and me up all night playing cards. He was bound and determined that we would not spend our wedding night in our honeymoon bed.

We need your letters, questions, comments, photographs and stories.

The information you send us today, will help educate the children of tomorrow.

Welcome To



Grandma's Kitchen

From Rita Redd

Remember the things your Grandmother, family member, or friend did in the kitchen? Share your memories of these times, recipes, pictures, and a note. Make a great tribute for future generations to see.

Memories are lost each day. Some people may never realize how important their grandmother, mother or others were to them. A letter sent to U.S. Legacies can be used and preserved in our magazine and on our web site.

Your memories also serve to educate different cultures and students of what life was like years ago.

Realizing that many of you who read the magazine do not have

computers, I would like to explain more about how to preserve and share your memories.

U.S. Legacies Magazine is printed for people who do not have computers.

While there are readers who receive the magazine that do have computers, the printed magazine also provides a history in a collectable form of written material that can be handed down.

If you send recipes, stories and pictures, they are first printed in our magazine. After a few months the material is added to our web site, and these tributes can be read years from now.

The Web site is free for anyone to read. Those of you that don't use computers, a trip to your local library will enable you to see our web site.

The Librarian can help with the computer. Take your magazine and ask them to find uslegacies.org for you.

In this issue I am paying tribute to my Grandmother. Lisa Redd has also written about her Grandmother.

Our grandchildren can read these years from now. It will tell them something about the special women they never knew.

I invite you to write U.S. Legacies; send in your recipes, memories and pictures.

Merry Christmas
Rita Redd

The Single Man's Fruitcake Recipe

Ingredients:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| *One cup water | *One teaspoon salt |
| *One cup sugar | *One cup brown sugar |
| *Four large eggs | *Lemon juice |
| *Two cups of dried fruit | *Nuts |
| *One teaspoon baking soda | *Two bottles of whisky |

Sample the whisky to check for quality. Take a large bowl. Check the whisky again. To be sure it is the highest quality, pour one level cup and drink. *Repeat test by drinking another cup of whisky.*

Turn on the electric mixer, beat one cup of butter in a large fluffy bowl. Add one teaspoon of sugar and beat again. *Make sure the whisky is still okay. Cry another cup. Turn off the mixer.*

Break two eggs and add to the bowl and chuck in the cup of dried fruit. Mix on the turner. If the dried fruit gets stuck in the beaters pry it loose with a drawseriver.

Sample the whisky to check for consistency. Next, sift two cups of salt. Or something. Who cares? *Check the whisky.* Now sift the lemon juice and strain your nuts. Add one table. Spoon. Of sugar or something. Whatever you can find.

Grease the oven. Turn the cake tin to 350 degrees. Don't forget to beat off the turner. Throw the bowl out of the window, *check the whisky again, and go to bed.*

Coconut and Raisin Cake

Loma Chadwick Redd, 1906 to 1988, Smyrna, GA.

Contributed by: Granddaughter, Rita Redd

Bake 2 cake layers using Duncan Hines cake mix

2 packages frozen coconut $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar

2 cups raisins ground 2 tablespoons flour

using food grinder or blender $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water

Place coconut, ground raisins, sugar, flour and water into boiler. Bring to a slow boil, adding more water if needed. Reduce heat to medium cook stirring constantly until medium thickness.

Remove from heat allow mixture to cool slightly. Pour $\frac{1}{2}$ mixture on first cake layer, use toothpick to pierce cake layer to allow frosting to soak in. Repeat with remaining frosting after adding second layer.

Cake must be refrigerated after cooling.

**Sweet Potato Pie**

Mary Bates ~ Feb. 18, 1915 to July 31, 1998

Contributed by Granddaughter: Lisa Redd

Boil and peel one large sweet potato.

Cut up potato and work in $\frac{1}{2}$ stick butter.

Add sprinkle of salt, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.Nutmeg and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar.

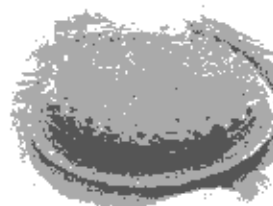
Stir together.

Add about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk to soften.

Should have a runny texture.

Pour into shell and

bake for 30 minutes at 400 degrees.

**Ella Ault's Sandtarts**

(Original spelling on hand written recipe.)

Ella Ault from Lebanon County PA.

Instructions contributed by: Mariann E. Arbuckle nee Hostetter

 $\frac{1}{4}$ pound butter

1 pound sugar

4 eggs

flour to stiffen

Cream butter and sugar well. Stir in eggs blend well. Sift flour to make a stiffer batter. Add 1 tsp. Vanilla. Refrigerate overnight to chill.

Next day break off portions of dough and roll out very thin on a board sprinkled with powdered sugar. If you like you can use flour instead.

Cut with cookie cutters. Bake at 325-degree oven for 8 to 10 minutes

just until edges start to turn color. Optional: Brush cookies with egg

white, sprinkle with cinnamon sugar, top with peanut or walnut halves

before baking.

The above recipe was printed in June 2003 U.S. Legacies. It is being repeated due to requests for the instructions. Thank you to Mariann E. Arbuckle nee Hostetter of Riverside CA, who mailed the directions to us.

The following recipe was torn from a book or paper. I am unsure as to the original origin of printing.

Glazed Baked Ham

Mayme Maples ~ New Hope Alabama

1 3 to 4 lb canned ham

Whole cloves

 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup honey1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp. Cornstarch $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. Allspice $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. Ground cloves

Red food coloring

1 No. 2 can sour pitted cherries drained

Stud ham with cloves: drizzle with honey. Bake at 325 degrees for 45 minutes, basting often with additional honey, combine cherry juice, cornstarch, sugar and spices; cook until thick and clear, stirring constantly. Blend in a few drops of food coloring and cherries. Serve hot over ham.

Soldiers Kisses

Mary Bates ~ Feb. 18, 1915 to July 31, 1998

Contributed by: Granddaughter Lisa Redd

1 egg white 1 cup brown sugar
 2 cups chopped pecans 1/8 tsp. Salt
 1/2 tsp. Vanilla

Beat egg white until stiff. Beat in sugar. Add nuts, salt and vanilla. Drop by spoonful onto greased cookie sheet and bake at 250 degree, oven until lightly browned (about 25 min.) Makes 2 dozen.

Thanks to Polly Mazariegos of Gettysburg, PA for the following recipe. We have had many requests for this recipe.

Mock Apple Pie or Ritz Cracker Pie

Legacy of Myra C. Riley ~

Submitted by daughter: Polly Mazariegos

1&1/2 cups sugar 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
 2 cups water 30 Ritz crackers
 1 pie shell Cinnamon
 Butter

Mix sugar and cream of tartar, add water and bring to boil, boil for 2 minutes. Add 30 Ritz crackers stir to dissolve, pour into 9-inch pie shell, dot with butter, Sprinkle with cinnamon. Bake for 40 minutes at 325 degrees.

Molasses Taffy

Mary Bates ~ Feb. 18, 1915 to July 31, 1998

Contributed by: Granddaughter: Lisa Redd

2 cups molasses 1 cup sugar
 Butter the size of an egg 1/4 tsp. Soda
 1 or 2 cups nuts

Add molasses, sugar and butter together. Boil nearly to brittle point. Add nuts and then soda. Boil until brittle in water.

Looking through the old recipes on U.S. Legacies web site, I found the following recipe. What a great glaze this would make for basting your Christmas turkey or ham. Then have some of the recipe left over to serve with your meal.

Pineapple Honey

Lizzie Fink Hostetter nee Long ~ South Annville, PA., Born 1881

Contributed by: Great grandson Franklin T. Wike Jr.



1 Pt. Water
 1 1/2 Pineapples large
 3 pts. Sugar
 Juice of 1/2 lemon

Boil water and sugar, skim-add pineapple and boil 25 minutes

Loma Chadwick Redd

1906 to 1988

Smyrna, GA.

This picture was probably taken in the early 1950's. My grandmother (Mama Redd) never had a grand kitchen, but what she lacked in material things, she made up for in survival skills. It seemed she could take empty cabinets and create a great meal.



She managed every year to give each family member and many friends Christmas gifts. People used to tease her that she started on Christmas gifts the day after Christmas. She gathered and washed what was trash to many, orange juice cans, magazines, cigarette packs and many other items.

She always had family members saving for her crafts. My grandfather (Papaw) was often sent on collecting missions.

There were always many presents under her tree. Sock monkeys, yo-yo dolls, pocket books made out of cigarette packs, dish towels and crocheted items.

The list goes on and on. She created wonderful gifts from glue, thread, material and trash, carefully working and planning so that all could

have a gift. Selling some of her crafts provided money for material to make all her own clothes.

She is the only person I have ever known to make a coconut and raisin cake. We all looked forward to this cake at Christmas. As a child I remember her making the cake layers from scratch, later years she used Duncan Hines cake mix. I don't know where the recipe came from.

She dug out an old hand grinder, and hooked it to the counter. The coconut juice was drained into a bowl, the coconut cracked and the coconut peeled out. She ground the raisins and coconut together. I have added her later version in making the



cake in this issue.

A woman of modest means, her patience with me was endless. She taught me to sew, crochet and allowed me to help with her crafts. I can still hear her laugh as she untangled the crochet thread so I could try again.

There were handmade quilts and crocheted items through out her house. Each pillowcase she owned was gently embroidered. Her hands were never idle, even watching television she worked on a craft or a puzzle.

I remember her cooking three meals a day. Between all the cooking and crafts she had a garden and

Grandma's Kitchen

canned.

I think of the things she did when people say "Women didn't use to work." Mama Redd worked all day everyday. She even managed to work at a nursing home as nursing assistant for a few years. Even during the time she worked, she maintained all the other things she did.

I am very thankful for the time I had with her, though it was

not nearly enough. She would have been thrilled to meet my grand children and the other children born since her death. Each grandchild and great grandchild was a grand event for her.

As did many women of earlier years, she took what life dealt and made the best of it. I don't think I ever heard her complain. Maybe when Papaw spilled his snuff!

If I can be one-third the grandmother to my grand children as she was to me, I will be happy.

Author Rita Redd
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Mary Marticia Sullivan Bates ~ Feb. 18, 1915 to July 31, 1998,
Submitted by Granddaughter; Lisa Redd



Mary grew up in Alpharetta, Georgia and married Talmage Bates during WWII. She was a good cook in her own right, but Talmage cooked also for his fellow Navy crew members.

As a child some of my earliest memories are of waking up to the delicious aromas coming from the kitchen. They were cooking my favorite breakfast, which included country ham with red-eye gravy and homemade biscuits. My grandmother (Mary) would roll up a big wad of dough, because I loved "big biscuits." I never acquired a taste for coffee, but I loved the smell that came from my grandparent's kitchen. Coffee was the secret ingredient of their red-eye gravy.

Mary always worked after she and Talmage were married. The longest job was at the Lovable Bra Company sewing "brassieres." She handmade all her clothes and also taught me to sew. She learned to sew and crochet from her Mother, Susan Lanier Sullivan.

Mary was a very strong woman. She

worked hard and bought some property and had a home built for her parents on Pine Street in Roswell, Georgia. She took care of Talmage in that house until his death in 1988. She took care of the house and yard until she was in her 80s. She always laughed when she told the story about having the lawn mower in the yard whenever the meter reader was coming by, so she could get him to crank it for her.

She was always helping one of her friends or neighbors by driving them to the grocery store or to doctor appointments.

She developed Parkinson's disease and died in 1998.



Lessons In Foundations

Copyright Feb 1993, By: Sharon Romine

The lamp at the end of the couch casts a soft glow of light over Grandma's hands as she crochets. "Tiny," she says, "your loops must be very tiny." Looking at her neat chain of loops, then at mine, I felt like giving up, but once again, I tore them apart and started over.

I crocheted foot after foot of those tiny loops before she would teach me any other stitch. "You must have a good foundation before you start or you're just wasting your time," she'd say.

The subject of strong foundations came up often during our lessons. I didn't realize it back then, but now I see that many of her lessons had subtle lessons within them that were more valuable than the act at hand. Be it making the bed or getting the garden ready for planting, she always stressed the importance of taking your time and laying a strong foundation.

Many of these lessons on foundations were also learned at the kitchen table. It was here that I came at the end of a hard day at school. Resting my chin in my hands, I'd sit

and watch while she made biscuits. "The flour has got to have just the right mixture of salt, grease and milk or they won't roll up right," she'd say. Then, as her tiny hands moved around in the bowl blending and rolling the dough, she'd ask me about my day and current problems.

As I learned about strong foundations and the importance of a job well done, I also learned to crochet and even learned to make biscuits, eventually, although mine never have come out a smooth and light as hers.

More important than this, I learned to take time and think about what I'm doing. Her basic

principle of laying a strong foundation for all things has guided me through many a tricky minute when I've wanted to rush into the heart of something.

Whatever you're building, be it a house, a marriage, or the morals of a child, take time and care. They'll need a strong foundation to fall back on when the going gets bad. Give them something that can withstand the winds of time.





Christmas Past

Connie Sychowski
Editor Genealogy Corner

In 1928 at the age of 5, my grandfather was building a table and chairs for my mother for Christmas. On Christmas Eve when he was bringing it down from the attic, my mother who was to be sleeping there on the day bed (sofa), wasn't. She didn't dare let on that she was lying there awake, he would have been so angry! He had painted it a beautiful bright red. They would also get a new pair of shoes and a new dress. Hence the old story "when I was your age I had to walk a mile to school in the snow with holes in my shoes!" I think we have all heard that story told.

In those days she told me toys weren't bought from the store like they are now, her daddy always made them for her and her sister. During her bout with Diphtheria she was playing with the table and pencil

box, she tapped on it like it was a (money box) cash register. The Doc came and said she must have been feeling pretty well to be playing, she said "yes sir; would like to put some money in my box?" Times have changed since those days... though to my mother's account I will say that like her father she also took great care making furniture for a Barbie Doll house she had made for me. She was so creative using frozen orange juice containers and empty tuna fish cans making tables, foot stools and chairs. It was the best dressed doll house anywhere.

Make wonderful memories that will be handed down through the generations this holiday season. May you all have a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

Connie Sychowski

Online Forum:

For our readers, who have Internet access, please take some time to visit and participate on the many message boards available. It is a great and easy tool to use and a wonderful way to share. As a side note; in trying to assist you along in your search, our goal is to have the largest free listing of names on the Internet. So let me encourage you to become active participants with us to reach our goal. By sending in obituaries, cemetery, census, ship passenger listings, and engagement, wedding and birth announcements, you can help us to reach our goal. If you haven't already done so, send in your genealogy information in GED format so it may be added to the database.

If you do not have Internet access, send your family information to us here at U S Legacies Magazine and one of our volunteers will enter the information for you.

Genealogy How To #7 – Using Pedigree Charts for an Overview of Your Family

Ok, so now you have your family information recorded, grouped together in an organized fashion. This is a very good time to take a look at your ancestors in a Family Pedigree Chart.

Pedigree Charts only record your **direct-line** ancestors i.e. you, your parents, your grandparents, great grandparents and so forth. You will find the range from 4 to 6 generation formats.

Surname Requests, Comments and Photographs

Editor's Note: We would love to hear from you, the reader. If you see a request, comment or photograph that you can share information on, please contact us here at the magazine.

Inscriptions at CHESLEY CEMETERY, Chester Maine

CHESLEY, Sameul ESQ. Died in Chester Oct 19 1869 ae 81 yrs.

Martha ESQ died Jan 23 1859 ae 67 yrs.

WYMAN, Cora P. died Feb 27 1878 ae 20 yrs 10 mos 12 dys.

d/o Raymond L and Cynthia W. Wyman.

CHESLEY, William F. died Feb 15 1868 ae 24 yrs 4 mos 15 dys.

Flora A, died Nov 24 1861 ae 6 yrs 3 mos 4 dys.

Children of William and Lovina Chesley.

You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do.
—Henry Ford

Senior Class of 1942 Lebanon PA, High School

**Eileen G. Gingrich**

College Preparatory – Leenie
Smiles love to live on her lovely face;
They haunt her eyes; they gloom
erase.

Mixed Chorus 3; Girls Chorus 2;
Girls' Athletic Club 2, 3;
Intramural Basketball 2; Volley Ball
2; Varsity Basketball 2.

**Gladys Mae Good**

Secretarial - Goodie

"She was ever fair and ever proud,
Had tongue at will and yet never
loud."

Mixed Chorus 3; Girls' Chorus 2;
Girls Guard 3;
Intramural Ping Pong 2.

**Robert A. Gollman**

General – Bob

Ice-cream magnate; chuck full of
fun;

He never shirks when there's work
to be done (?).

Hi-Y 2, 3 (Treasurer)

**Nancy Marie Good**

Vocational - Nan

"Those move most easily who learn
to dance."

Girls' Athletic Club 1, 2, 3; Intramural
Basketball 1, 2, 3;
Volley Ball 1, 2.

**Ruthe Louise Good**

College Preparatory – Snooks

"She has charm than Circe's more
prevailing,

this lovely nymph resources
unfailing"

A Cappella Choir 2; Mixed Chorus
1, 2;

"The Student Prince"; The Adorable
Spendthrift";

"The Bat"; Tri-Hi-Y 2, 3.

**Richard Grimes**

Vocational – Dick

Likes the girls as you may know;

Loves them all, then lets them go..

"China Blue Eyes"; Senate 1, 2; Hi-
Y 1;

Intramural Basketball 1, 2, 3.

**Marian Louise Greider**

College Preparatory

Charm strikes the sight, but merit strikes
the soul.

Girls' Chorus 1; Band 2, 3; French Club
3; Senate 3;

Tri-Hi-Y 1, 2, 3; Girls Athletic Club 1, 2.

**John Alfred Grostefon**

General - Johnny

Print or play baseball?

Sure! School? Well..

"Only a life lived for others is worth living." - Albert Einstein

U. S. Legacies is in need of obituaries from ALL local newspapers for use on our website. We are asking that each subscriber forward this information to us. If you have a computer and can email the information to us that would be wonderful. Otherwise, just cut them out and mail them. Be sure to tell us the city and state they are from and the date they were listed.

**Harold Weldon Grubb**

Vocational – Grubby
Future electrician likes all sports;
“A lad who’s never out of sorts”.
Varsity Cross Country 3; Track 2.

**Dorothy Mary Haig**

General – Dot
While her jaws chew gum at a
terrible pace,
Her tongue wags on in a lively race.
A Cappella Choir 2, 3; Girl Guards 2
(Treasurer), 3
(Secretary); Girls Athletic Club 1, 2;
Intramural Basketball 1;
Ping Pong 1, 2.

**Betty Lou Haag**

General – Betz
Lover of outdoor sports, with eyes
of blue;
No one could find a friend more
true.
Girls Chorus 2, 3; Girls Athletic
Club 1.

**Vonda Ruth Hamilton**

Commercial – Dully
Azure eyed lass, who favor sports;
With an aversion for giving reports.

Your help is needed!

We are in need of people to go to their local libraries once a month and get copies of old newspaper items or advertisements. The article should contain either the name of some local resident and/or have some historical value.



Photo: This photo was taken around 1904. Fern McCoskey is the little girl standing in the front row. Her father Robert Benton McCoskey is standing on her left. Her grandfather Alexander is sitting in the chair next to his wife. Fern’s great aunt, Mary is standing in the back row in the far left, next to Fern’s mother Sarah McCoskey nee Tatlock.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF SENIOR CLASS**MAY 22, 1914**

(by Fern McCoskey)

We, the Seniors of the Town of Salem, County of Washington, State of Indiana, being aware that our days in school are numbered and being seriously afflicted with spring fever but of sound and disposing mind and memory, do make, publish and declare this to be our last will and testament, in manner following, to wit:

“absence only makes the heart grow fonder.”

Item 2. We give, devise and bequeath to our principal, George H. Lelle, our youth and gaiety, requesting that he turn two hand-springs a day, as a preventative against wrinkles and old age.

Item 1. We give, devise and bequeath unto our superintendent, R. E. Cavanaugh, our everlasting love, our eternal gratitude, our enduring respect and our unchangeable devotion, which proves that

Item 3. We give, devise and bequeath to our Physiology and Chemistry teacher, Clem O. Thompson our appreciation for the short easy tests of the past week, it was truly a great pleasure to take them.

Item 4. We give, devise and bequeath to John Davis all our chewing gum money, for the purpose of buying a mourning ring and a band of crepe for his hat.

Item 5. We give, devise and bequeath to Flora Williams and Mary Mitchell, our patience and sweet tempers, sincerely hoping that they will not be too sorely tried.

Item 6. To Lola Parker, we give, devise and bequeath, the crumbs left in the classrooms by the dinner kids, also a recipe for using the said crumbs.

Item 7. We give, devise and bequeath to Lera Berkey, a strong junior boy to carry her papers and money bags.

Item 8. To Hilda Morris, we give, devise and bequeath our Celebrated Physiological drawings, valued from a grade of 37 1/2 percent to 100+.

Item 9. We give, devise and bequeath to Ethel Shultz, instructor of music, our melodious voices, also the thirty minute rests which we have added to musical terms.

Item 10. Howard Batt bequeaths his purest most original slang and his expressions about other people, to Laurence Bundy, on one condition, namely, that the said remarks be kept in their accustomed

use. Clare Allen gives her flaxen hair and fair complexion to Ellen Vellem, while Anice Nicholas desires that her gold tooth be given to Estis Fairbush. To George Faulkner, Wilbur Natts bequeaths his pompador. Frances Coombs gives her ever-ready smiles to Narda Boling.

Item 11. Hazel Callahan bequeaths her surplus knowledge to Clara Davis. To Paul Alexander, Rowena Baner gives a perfumed handkerchief and six flowers to wear in his buttonhole. Frank Elrod gives, devise, and bequeaths unto Herman Sand, his favorite sleeping hour, the first period of the afternoon. Norma Denny, bequeaths unto her sisters Stella and Zella, the good example which she has set before them. To Arthur Hancock is given, devised and bequeathed a valuable legacy by Helen Parr, namely, one tenth of her affections.

Item 12. To Gladys McDonald, Lottie Hughes gives her time that she spends in arguing chemistry with Mr. Thompson. Carl Shanks bequeaths one fourth of his avoirdupois to Hobart Brown. Bertha Mayfield bequeaths her small feet to Cora Johnson. Mable McClellan reluctantly, bequeaths her place before the looking glass to Helen Schlagal. Russell Mitchell says that his heart is already gone, but he desires to bequeath the key to it to Ellen Wright.

Item 13. To Oville Lynn, Alva Mull gives his great eloquence and Gladys Reyman and Mary Mitchell give their dignified manners to Lois Cavanaugh and Esther Welcher. Joseph Eleanor gives, devises and bequeaths his love to Flossie Davis. Audrey Kelly gives her back seat and inability to hear well to Mary Thompson. To Flora Bowers, Alice Higgins, bequeaths her C in department.

Item 14. Durnard Oliver bequeaths his daily walks with three girls to Ferrel Pollock. (May he be faithful to his charge.) Mattie Davis gives her studious mind to Luther Brown, while Mattie Linton bequeaths all her love affairs to Simon Spurgon. Jessie Cavanaugh and Ruth Fulmer bequeath their loud voices to Glenn Carter and Camilla Mitchell. To Flossie Richardson, is bequeathed Lillian Wright's laughter.

Item 15. John Blunt declares that he has nothing to spare, but that he will make an even swap, exchanging his name for the hand and heart of Mary Bush. Mayme Warren gives her winning ways to Stella Bowers. Fern Callaway gives her trials and troubles with bookkeeping to Lenna Smith. Margie Davis desires that Elmo Motsinger and Freeman Hinds shall have jewels for their wives, so she gives, devises and bequeaths to them her sister Ruby Davis and her friend Opal

Gould. Evert McClellan gives his remedy for flunks to Charles Pitts. Polly Roberts bequeaths her tact, of saying the right thing at the right time to Lois Morris. Cecil Grimes and LaRue Paynter give, devise and bequeath their admiration for tall girls to Maysel Barksdale.

Item 16. To Luther Baynes, is bequeathed Herbert Simpson's power to fool the teachers. Elva Cain and Polline Payne bequeath their liking for books to Ruby Graves. To Raymond Martin, Blanch Smith gives one fond farewell, and to Wayne Douglas, Olive Nichols bequeaths a parting word, namely, that she, "regards him with an eye of favor." Mable Davis and Mable Parker give their ardent love for flirting to Lillian Purlee and Mary E. Thompson. Sidney Pitts and Garrett Thompson bequeath their good behavior and extra credits to Russel Stone. Cletus Trublood says that he has nothing to bequeath except advice, this he gives to Archie Brewer, the said advice being, "distinguish yourself in the world in some way, one early way of distinguishment, is to marry at least once before you graduate."

Lastly, We the Seniors nominate and appoint as executors of this our last will and testament, our president, Howard Batt and our secretary, Gladys Reyman.

In witness whereof, we the

Seniors, to this our last will and testament have hereunto set our hands and seals, this twenty first day of May, one thousand nine hundred and fourteen.

Signed, sealed and declared by the Seniors as and for their last will and testament, in the presence of us, who at their request, and in their presence, and in the presence of each other, have subscribed our names hereunto as witnesses thereof.

Sidney Summers
Salem, Indiana

Harrill Chaney
Camelsburg, Indiana

CODICIL

Whereas we, the Seniors, did on the twenty first day of May, one thousand nine hundred and fourteen make our last will and testament, we do now, by this writing add this Codicil to our said will, to be taken as a part thereof.

Whereas by the dispensation of Providence, Mr. Thompson has seen

fit to give us such grades that were not so delightful and pleasing as the tests, we do renounce our former valuable legacy of appreciation, bequeathing instead Miss Flora Williams' appreciation for his great kindness in acting as her escort on very dark as well as moonlight nights. This legacy though of far less value to us, will no doubt be of far greater value to him.

In all other respects, we reaffirm the provisions contained in our said last will and testament. Witness our hand and seal this twenty second day of May, one thousand nine hundred fourteen, at Salem, Indiana.

Seniors (SEAL)

Signed, sealed and acknowledged by said Seniors as a codicil to their last will and testament, in our presence, who at their request, in their presence, and in the presence of each other, have subscribed our names as witness thereto this twenty second day of May, one thousand nine hundred fourteen.

Sidney Summers
Harrill Chaney

NOTE*

Old School documents, class papers or newsletters, such as the one listed above can be a priceless source of information and help display the personalities of someone's ancestor. If you run across any such documentation from your family or town, please send us a copy. We assure you the relatives of individuals mentioned in these papers will be grateful.

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year



When someone shares memories of their family and of times past, you can almost always count on stories from holidays, and often about Christmas. Of course, this is one of the happiest and most carefree time to gather; a feeling of peace and of cheer fill the air and our hearts.

I recall many happy holiday seasons from my childhood. A trip to the city to spend Christmas Eve with my grandparents and family on my father's side first, where we all enjoyed a fine meal and caught up with the events in each other's lives, as relatives lived from coast to coast.

There were so many aunts and uncles that when young I could barely remember everyone's name, most lived so far away I saw them

but a time or two a year. As "Santa's Helpers," my sister and I got to pass out all of the gifts from beneath the colorfully decorated tree.

One year, I showed my father a tag and as kid who the gift should go to, and he told me to give it to Uncle Danny, and pointed him out to me. My uncle Daniel always wore one red sock and one green at Christmas, and I whispered to my father, loud enough for everyone to hear,

"You mean the man with the funny socks?"

The family found it to be equally humorous when I identified my Aunt Raphael, who had waist length hair, as "the lady with the big hair."

My parents made sure I was well enough acquainted with everyone before I would be handing out gifts again.

Christmas morning was spent at home with Mom and Dad opening gifts, then the remainder of the day at my grandparents house on my mother's side, where there was also a gathering of relatives that weren't seen nearly enough.

There we had traditions as well, a massive midday dinner served by my grandmother who showed her love through her many delicious dishes and deserts and generous helpings, followed by the opening of gifts that we all wrapped in newspaper comic pages. Then all of the cousins went outside to sled in the fields and creek beds on the farm.

No matter where the gathering, Christmas to me always feels magical, although now the excitement comes mostly from watching children open gifts from me, listening to Mom's favorite albums of Christmas music, and making special dishes and deserts for those I love.

I've found that it is important to maintain traditions passed down to us, but to also form new traditions of our own to pass down to the next generation.

May your Christmas be filled with the shared memories of old stories as well as the telling of new ones, laughter, love and peace.

A Note to the Readers of US Legacies:

To conclude 2003, I would like to thank all of our loyal readers and supporters, and welcome those of you who may have just discovered us. Our magazine is designed to publish the memories of days gone by, and we thank all of you who send in stories, questions or comments.

We do what we do each month to tell your stories, and I would like to request more be sent. Please send recollections of your New Years memories, I'd love to read them and share them with the other readers, as well as anything you would like to share about times past and about your loved ones. Do you have a question about our country's history? Please send that as well! Challenge me to find the answer, and we will publish that as well. We look forward to hearing from you!

Jennifer Thompson, Column Editor

I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve.

— Albert Schweitzer

I have learned from experience that the greater part of our happiness or misery depends on our dispositions and not on our circumstances.

— Martha Washington

"It Happened This Month"

By Jennifer Thompson



Nostradamus

500 years ago - December 1503 River from Mexico for \$10 million. Area is now southern Arizona and New Mexico.

December 14- Birthday of Nostradamus, [Michel de Nostredam], French astrologist/prophet.

100 years ago - December 1903

300 years ago - December 1703

December 13- Italo Marcioni of New Jersey patents ice cream cone, and the Wright Brothers make first flight at Kittyhawk.

December 30- Tokyo hit by Earthquake; about 37,000 die.

December 14 - Death of William Ennis, first policeman to die in electric chair.

150 years ago - December 1853

December 30 - Gadsden Purchase 45,000 mi (120,000 km) by Gila

December 16- Majestic Theater in New York City, becomes the first



in the U.S. to employ women ushers.

December 19 - Williamsburg suspension bridge opens between Brooklyn & Manhattan.

December 22- Birthday of Dr. Barbara Moore, who walked across the U.S. in 86 days in 1960.
December 27- "Sweet Adaline," a barbershop quartet favorite, is 1st sung.

December 30- Electric lamp sets fire to Iroquois theater in Chicago; 602 die.

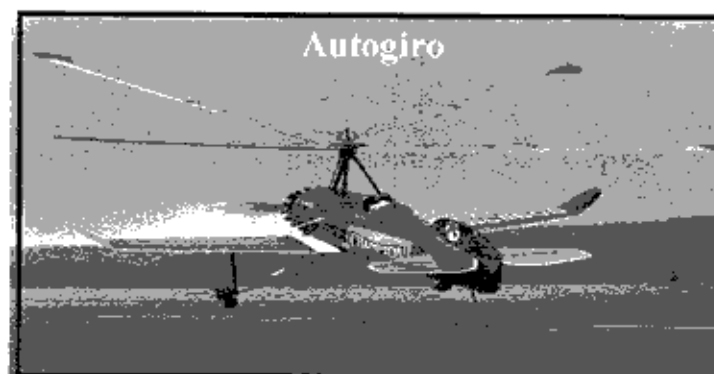
75 years ago - December 1928

December 9- K Reinmuth discovers asteroid #1104 Syringa.

December 13 - George Gershwin's "An American In Paris" premieres in New York City.

December 19- 1st autogiro (the predecessor of the helicopter) flight in U.S.

December 23- NBC sets up a permanent, coast-to-coast network.



Sometimes I wonder whether the world is being run by smart people who are putting us on or by imbeciles who really mean it.

Mark Twain

For every minute you are angry,
you lose sixty seconds of happiness.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

We judge ourselves by what we feel capable of doing, while others
judge us by what we have already done.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Favorite Christmas Memories

Bag of Toys

My favorite memory of Christmas is when my children were small, someone left a bag of toys at my mother's house for them. Mother would not say who did it. To this day, I still don't know but I have a good idea. "Thanks Rosie"

Hazel Hollen nee Garriott

Fruit and Candy

My favorite memory of Christmas was that every Christmas there would be a box of candy, oranges and apples left at the general store at Harristown, Indiana and we never knew where it came from. The owner of the store would call and tell us that Santa Clause had been there and left us something.

Rosemary Hollen nee Garriott

Oranges

My favorite memory of Christmas was the smell of Oranges. We never had oranges and the school teacher gave us all a treat bag with Oranges and nuts. To this day, I still buy Oranges just for the smell.

Virginia Spurgeon nee Garriott

Hand Made Gifts

One of my favorite Christmas Memories was given to me one year when I could not be at home to spend Christmas with my family. My wife sent me a piece of posterboard with a large Christmas tree drawn on it. On the end of the branches, were photographs of my family displayed as ornaments. That inexpensive hand made gift was very



special to me because it took more time, thought and creativity than simply buying a gift, plus it allowed me to spend Christmas Day surrounded with images of the family I could not be with in person.

Franklin T. Wike, Jr.

Being With Family

I have a couple favorite Christmas memories; the first one I remember was at age 3. My parents gave me a little ukulele, and I laughed so hard watching my father playing it for me. I just remember a very special feeling in the air, and it's strange that I can remember something from such a young age. The other favorite memory is the year my Mother's

family all gathered together the year after my Grandmother passed away. It snowed heavily that year but everyone made it, from the nearby city, and then all the way from California. It meant so much that everyone did what they could, out of the need to just be together that year.

Jennifer

Cherries, Family and a Doll

As a young child I searched for the box of Chocolate covered Cherries among the toys and presents. My father would pour himself and me a cup of black coffee. We would sit as my mother prepared breakfast sipping coffee and eating the candy. As the oldest of six children I remember the sparkle of their eyes and the excitement of my younger brothers and sisters. My mother and father worked hard to make each year special. I still have the last doll I received. Thinking at the age of twelve I was probably too old for toys. I was thrilled with the doll under the tree. I believe the year was 1961.

Rita Redd

My Favorite Christmas Toy

One year for Christmas, Santa Clause left a wonderful ballerina doll for me. She wore a fluffy pink tutu, and a sparkling pick crown. When you pushed on the crown, she performed pirouettes. You could pose her arms and legs like a real ballerina. I thought she was the most

beautiful doll in the world. I would turn on my record player and listened to Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite." I would create an entire stage for my ballerina to perform on, and I would invite my parents to come and watch the "ballet."

Kim Justesen

My Most Memorable Christmas

It was the first year I spent in Africa on a missionary trip. It was 120 degrees in the shade. They don't have pine trees in Africa, so we cut down an Eucalyptus tree instead. We didn't have much money, so I could only get one toy for each of my young children.

It was also the first time I was away from my oldest children. While I was in Kenya, my oldest son got married and my daughter gave birth to my first grandchild. I never considered living without running water or electricity a sacrifice, but missing the birth of my first grandchild, and the marriage of my eldest son bothered me so much that I sat on the ground under a tree and cried.

Then one of my children came and sat down beside me. We talked about other Christmases that we had shared together in the past. By the time our conversation ended, we got around to thinking about why we were in Africa and the fact that we were there doing God's work. That was not my favorite Christmas, but it was definitely my most memorable one.

Gene Throop

Christmas Memories From Times Past



Loren and Ruth Ahlrichs of Overland Park, Kansas, were very kind in sharing with me some of their Christmas memories and traditions passed down from their families.

Loren is of German descent and grew up in North Central Iowa. He recalls many traditions from his childhood. Throughout the year, the children would collect pennies and store them in paper banks, and on Christmas Eve they would present the pennies to the church as an offering. In return the children were given hard candy, peanuts and an apple for their efforts, and that was a big highlight of the evening. Of course the excitement grew as the annual Christmas play was recited, and every year Loren would say a part in the play. He attributes much of his public speaking abilities that proved useful later in life to these plays, and from the encouragement and influence of his mother.



Christmas Eve was then spent with the family gathered at Grandma and Grandpa's house.

Later in the night, after everyone had gone to their own

homes, the children would go to bed and then the Christmas tree was set up and decorated, and the children would not see it until Christmas Day. The tree was decorated with paper chains, and strings of cranberries and popcorn. The family then exchanged home made gifts to each member.

Loren remembers that the special food was the unique part of Christmas. He mentioned so many special holiday treats, both German foods prepared by his family, as well as those Scandinavian introduced to him by the family of his late wife, Rebecca. Sugar cookies are a

Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love.

—Hamilton Wright Mabi



traditionally German, and a popular Norwegian doughy sugar cookie is called "Cringla." The Norwegians also enjoy a cookie called "Crumkake," which is prepared one week in advance. Then there are Rosettes, made by dropping batter in hot oil in the shape of a rose or a star. These are covered in powdered sugar, similar to a funnel cake, and often devoured by the children as quickly as they are produced. "Lefse" is a Norwegian potato pancake traditional to the holiday season, as well as oyster stew. Oysters had to be ordered early, or they could not be had in time for Christmas. Norwegians also prepare a thick fruit soup, often enjoyed with whipped cream on top or ice cream.

The Ahlrichs still serve these foods each year during Christmas, and Loren always has assorted nuts such as shelled walnuts and Brazilian walnuts that everyone can crack and enjoy.

Cookies were so popular, Loren said, because they were needed during the season for entertaining. People went visiting more in those days, as they had more

time. Friends would drop by after the cows were milked and the chores were done, and cookies would be served with coffee. Ruth has started a new family tradition, a cookie exchange. Each person brings a dozen (or more) of one type of cookie they have baked. Each person leaves with a mixed assortment of cookies sampled from each of the bakers.

Ruth shared an old Dutch tradition; each Christmas Eve the children would set out their shoes.

If they had been bad, they would find coal in their shoe,

but if they were good they would instead find a nice gift. Also, each family had a nativity scene that would be displayed during the season, and on Christmas Eve candles would be placed in the windows. Ruth has observed some changes over the years. For instance, people used to religiously send cards to everyone they knew. It doesn't seem to be that way so much anymore, and often cards these days are sent via email. Cards were hand written in the past with personal notes, and now often copied letters are included.

Thanks again to the Ahlrichs family, for your special effort and for sharing with me your treasured family memories.

What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus? Claustrophobic.
—Unknown

Robert and Georgia Thompson of Kidder, MO shared their childhood Christmas memories with me. As my parents, they had no choice. However, they enjoyed it, as it gave them yet again another opportunity to tell me how



"Remember, peace is not a season, but a way of life. Live it."
--- Unknown

spoiled I was as a child in comparison.

Robert came from a large Catholic family, including seven children other than himself. As a family they attended mass on Christmas morning, and as he got older he instead chose to attend midnight mass on Christmas Eve, a tradition I have found enjoyable myself. Often gifts were made as well as purchased, but he reminded me that in those days they were toys such as plastic guitars, never video games or televisions as children often receive now. There were always clothes given as gifts, both purchased or made by Grandma.

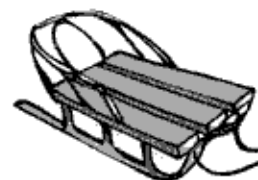
My mother, Georgia, also from a large Catholic family (four children aside from herself) routinely attended mass at Christmas. Her family did not have much money, she recalled, and often received a gift basket from the church. She said that it was very exciting to have foods at Christmas that could not be had at other times of the year, such as oranges. Every year her grandmother would always send

each child a dollar, and tell them to buy themselves some new underwear.

Most gifts were homemade in their family, both clothes and toys. One of her fondest Christmas

memories was the year that her father made a wooden sled for the children, from which they had endless hours of fun. She says to this day it is still the best sled she has ever seen, one that had handles that could turn the sled, and smooth runners. My mother has instilled in me one of my most treasured values; holidays, as well as any time that we have, are most treasured because of the family and friends who surround you, not because of the material possessions that we may have. I always love to hear her stories, which she tells with such happiness and love.

Jennifer Thompson, Column Editor



The merry family gatherings— The old, the very young; The strangely lovely way they Harmonize in carols sung. For Christmas is tradition time— Traditions that recall The precious memories down the years, The sameness of them all.

—Helen Lowrie Marshall

To Evonne: My First Baby

By Fay Oxley
Birdseye, Indiana

She is a grown woman now with a husband and children of her own.

I remember the Christmas in 1960 when she was ten days old. She came to us when misfortune and worry seemed to follow us. Her father had been injured early in the summer and had been unable to work for many months.

We had very little money and bills were long over due. We had saved enough money to pay the hospital and buy only the things most needed for our baby. We brought her home to the small three room house where we lived. We had no tree or decorations, only our baby to remind us it was Christmas time.

My sister and her husband came by in the late afternoon. They had other plans and left us feeling lost and alone. I had always been used to happy times at Christmas with my brothers and sisters, gathering around the organ to sing old songs. As I looked at our bare little house, I could no longer hold back the tears. I sat down on our sofa and began to cry.



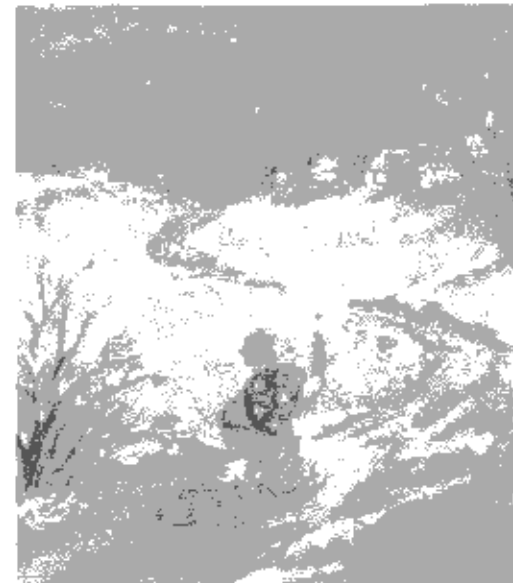
I don't know when I became aware that, my husband was sitting beside me holding our baby. He sat quietly for a while then, placed her in my arms. It seemed as if he was saying, "this is my gift to you, this precious baby and all my love." As I

looked up at him, I knew he was also afraid of what the future held for us and he did not need my tears. He needed only my love and a quiet time to enjoy our new baby.

We folded back her blanket and looked at the tiny hands and feet. We marveled at her long black hair. We talked about her name and wondered if she would like it. We talked quietly and softly. Our fears slipped away and we were happy and at peace and it was Christmas Eve.

We have been together, twenty eight years. Five more babies have joined our little girl.

The years have been good to us our house is safe and warm. Our tree is bright and shining and there are many gifts beneath its branches. But we remember another home when we learned that love is the greatest gift of all.



Remembering Christmas At Mamaw's

By Sandy Siple

When I started having grandchildren ten years ago, I wanted to give them something special that no one could ever take away. The cherished memories of Christmas loved and shared at Grandma's.

Christmas at Mamaw's is like no other that my grandchildren have seen. There are no electric lights or ornaments from the store on our Christmas tree. We all live in different states miles apart, so when we come together the visit is short and most enjoyed by children young and old, boys and girls.

First, we have to find a special tree, just the right size for the little ones to reach and decorate with homemade goodies to enjoy

throughout their stay. This is a trip to nature and cold if we are lucky enough to have snow. The stay is short and we make the most out of every minute spent together. We hang stockings from the mantle to be filled with fruit and nuts. The children and I spend a few hours singing Christmas songs, with baking homemade cookies, pretzels and stringing popcorn and cranberry garlands. We make Gingerbread men and Santa Claus that come to life when decorated with their little hands of love. Tiny trees that light your eyes with colorful bulbs and strands of garland rolled out like worms. We make red and white pretzels, candy canes, Popcorn balls

and Chocolate Santa Claus's. We string them with a piece of yarn through a hole made with a toothpick prior to baking. We place the paper mache angel, made by an older son, when he was young like them. This is no tree for looks, although everyone enjoys the goodies made with love. They come and go by the tree to grab a goodie during their stay.

Now it is almost time for Santa in his red and white suit to arrive on Christmas Eve to their surprise. They always ask where the reindeers are and Santa tells them, "At the watering hole, getting ready for the long ride ahead." So he comes and sits a spell to enjoy the goodies with the little ones. Receiving one present of just what they desired. The children don't tell anyone but Mrs. Claus, what they've asked for, (via phone calls just to see if there is a real Santa Claus.) He arrives every year, and I tell them, "When you stop believing in Santa Claus, he doesn't bring that one special gift you been wanting, anymore." When Christmas

is all over, the tree is taken outside for the birds to enjoy the remnants of love and survive the cold. They sing a pretty song.

I enjoy the people who lived back in the yesteryears without all the commercialized decorations that

have no meaning to life or love. It's not being poor, it's just showing children to be thankful for [the] love and time we get to spend together on this special day. When my children grew up, Christmas vacation was a time for making and giving presents of love. We would make

boxes of candies, homemade jellies and canned jars of goodies made during garden season, and homemade cocoa with jars of marshmallows. The pleasures of love that went into the making. Thus, with Christmas around the corner, I thought this might be an inspiration to bring love into your home and hearts. This is a special day, after all, it was the love and birth of a child, that gave us an everlasting life. So Enjoy the Holidays with your loved ones.



Bertha's Gift

by Craig Clyde

Article written and printed in the Deseret News
Winner—"The Christmas I Remember Best"



She was a small, wizened woman with snow white hair and snapping eyes.

Her demeanor was usually adversarial and when she straightened up to her full height of four feet ten inches she could be a formidable foe indeed. Bertha Davis was my neighbor—in fact the only neighbor of our ranch in 1955. We never had a telephone nor television set while I was growing up, so neighbors, no matter how argumentative, were meaningful. My mother and father's Christmas tradition of caroling always included Bertha's place because she was a widow of nearly twenty years and, as my mother said, she needed some cheer on Christmas. I couldn't imagine anyone that cantankerous deserved cheering up.

I always dreaded going to her musty old house full of Yakima Indian relics because she would squeeze my cheek with a gnarled fist of "iron" and request I sing her a special solo—"Oh Come All Ye

Faithful." I was the singer in our family and Bertha Davis said about the only two things worth a "hill-of-beans" in this world was a good Hereford bull and my boy-soprano voice singing that carol.

That year I was seven years old and having grave

misgivings about the existence of Santa Claus. My older brother had spared no effort in describing exactly how he'd seen our parents, well after midnight on Christmas Eve, filling our stockings and laying presents under the tree. I desperately still wanted to believe.

That particular Christmas Eve in Toppenish, Washington was one for the record books. Two feet of snow and still falling. It had been a difficult financial year for my father, a cattle rancher with a small spread in Eastern Washington State. He had lost a great deal of money the preceding spring on feedlot steers, and hadn't been able to withstand the crushing debt. The three children had been told—in a loving way that left

no doubt—Santa wouldn't be visiting our home this year. Mother said he was too busy with children who really needed his visit more than we did, but we all knew it was because we just didn't have the money.

We drove up Bertha's driveway in the driving snowstorm. The whole family crammed into that ancient Chevrolet truck which was my father's only vehicle to feed the cattle. After our obligatory carols outside, her door opened and she invited us in, offering us what she offered every year: hot apple cider of her own vintage and toll house cookies.

I slumped back in the corner of the darkened room. Bertha was a notorious tightwad in the tight knit farming community. She never burned more than one light bulb at a time. The story was that she was wealthy and kept all her money in the mattress. I never got to see the mattress.

Dad used to tease me saying, "You are the only one she likes maybe she'll leave all her money to you?" I labored under that childlike belief for years figuring a song could be worth all that money. The old rambling ranch house was dark and musty. I had always associated the smell with old people — she was in her eighties — but this Christmas Eve I was grateful for the dark, because with her eyesight I thought perhaps I would escape the obligatory solo. It was not to be.

"Come here!", She commanded. I slunk over to her. "Are you going to sing my favorite?" Here it came, the stinging pinch of the cheek. "Well, are you?" She repeated. "Yes," I said in a voice just barely above a whisper. She settled herself

on the couch as the rest of my family moved back. Mother nodded to me, with that "sing or die" look on her face. I gulped, steadied myself and sang... (Oh Come All Ye Faithful) ...

At seven years old I couldn't really tell if it was good. Bertha cried a little, as she always did—and usually she never cried. I always figured she cried when I sang because I was off-key so badly. Mother said it was because she didn't have any children.

That wasn't exactly true, though. There were stories I had heard about Bertha's daughter. A daughter who had married a man Bertha didn't approve of and the diminutive firebrand had disowned her only child. I never got the courage to ask if that was true. But it was the consensus of nearly everyone in town that it was.

My last note still hung in the air, as she dabbed her eyes. In a moment she was the shrew again, telling my father that he shouldn't have invested in feeder steers as she'd warned and various other opinions about his managing of money, his family and generally his whole life's work. I was more than ready to leave when she pulled me over to her, hugged me mightily for such a small frail soul and asked, "What are you going to get for Christmas, tomorrow?"

"Nothing," I said glancing at my embarrassed mother, "Santa can't come to our house this year."

"You still believe in Santa Clause?" She demanded. "You are too old for that fiddle-faddle." I nodded dumbly that I did. She looked at me for a long time. "He's not coming to your house? Why not?"

"Oh, we just told the children that there are others who are in need more than we are...and Santa will be going there...uh, instead," my mother said quickly, chagrined at having to explain it at all.

"Fiddlesticks! Santa doesn't miss anyone." Bertha barked. With that, she "shooed" all of us toward the door. As the rest of the family got in the truck for the snowy ride home, she stopped me, pinched my sore cheek again and did something I had only seen her do once before — she smiled.

The next day, Christmas morning, there under the tree were three presents. One for my brother, my sister...and one for me. I don't recall what my brother and sister received, but I got a small red toy cash register. It was the best toy I ever received. That little toy cash register became all sorts of wonderful things to my childish imagination — a space ship control board — a typewriter — a radio to talk with the world—anything and everything a small boy could think of. I asked my mother that morning where it had come from. She just shook her head and said, "Santa decided that maybe you should get something, I guess..." We never really spoke of it again.

Years later, long after Bertha had gone to her reward — a reward many in town said would be a shovel and hot coals — I asked mother about the small cash register. "I really don't know," she told me, "when your father got up to feed the cattle

Christmas morning those presents were on the step. No note. Nothing. Just those three presents."

It was the Christmas I'll always remember best. Bertha, if you're up there listening...and I'm pretty sure you are...tell Santa, thanks.

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Craig Clyde is a freelance writer for hire from Salt Lake City, Utah. To contact him e-mail:

screenrtr@uslegacies.org

Biography

A native of Washington State, Craig Clyde has been in television and film most of his adult life. After a stint as an English teacher, Clyde began his professional media career in Montana, later moving to Utah.

In 1989 he co-formed the film production company, Majestic Entertainment, a Utah-based film corporation. He has written over thirty feature film motion picture scripts and has directed for both features and television — as well as the eleven films which he has written and directed for his own company. The most recent being "Miracle Dogs" which will premiere this fall. Clyde's first novel was *Wind Dancer* based his original screenplay. His second is *First We Dance* a psychological thriller.

He has written many magazine and freelance articles as well. He is married and lives with his family in Salt Lake City, Utah.



Christmas Away From Home

By Melinda Long

Author's note:

Every Christmas is special, but one in particular stands out in my memory.

Alma Brown is my father's stepmother, but she is the only Grandma Brown I have ever known.

The year we spent Christmas Eve in her home is one I'll never forget. Pardon me while I reminisce.



waking up on Christmas morning, only to find a bare floor in Grandma's living room, while all of my stuff sat lonely and unused at our house.

"What if he doesn't know where we are?" I asked for the fourth time. My brother, Mark, who was two years older than I, just rolled his

eyes and covered his ears.

"Just shut up," he told me.

"He'll find us."

I couldn't understand why Mark wasn't worried. He stood to lose as much as I did. But for some reason he had changed his attitude about Christmas altogether. He hadn't wanted to sit and flip through the Sears wish book with me as we had done every other year. He had even refused a chance to sit on Santa's lap at the store. I couldn't figure him out.

Mama reassured me, once again, that Santa would have no trouble finding Grandma's house. I was skeptical. Mama had never lied to

me, but she could have been mistaken.

The sand hills of Columbia finally gave way to the peach orchards of Spartanburg County and the familiar foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. We dropped off our clothes at Grandma Brown's house and then drove to my other grandmother's house for Christmas Eve dinner.

Christmas Eve dinner at the Husky house was not your traditional celebration. Everyone brought covered dishes. We had everything from Aunt Alice's macaroni and cheese, to Aunt Bobby's specialty (and one of my personal favorites), pigs-in-a-blanket. They were made from little wieners wrapped in bacon and biscuit dough and baked with just a touch of mustard.

Grandma and Grandpa Husky had four children, two sons and two daughters. All were married and among the four of them, had 13 children of their own, many of whom were also married. In addition to them, several assorted aunts, uncles and cousins (including Helga and Lila all the way from Alabama), also attended the Christmas Eve celebration. Imagine the entire congregation of a small Baptist Church all crowded into a three room frame house. That's about what it was like. There was always a lot of hugging and kissing and more than enough of "My, haven't you grown!" and "You're getting so big I hardly recognized you!"

Christmas Away From Home

We ate our dinner on paper plates perched on our laps. The small children, including Mark and I, were made to sit on the floor so we wouldn't spill as much. This tradition of celebrating Christmas with the entire extended Husky clan, much in the style of a family reunion, continued up until a few years ago when my Grandpa Husky died. One year, my husband, finding himself unable to tell which cousin was which, accused my grandparent's of hiring actors every year just to confuse him.

After dinner we passed out presents. Each grandchild was given a small present, usually socks, and we all sat and watched as Grandma and Grandpa opened what looked like a mountain of gifts. We waited anxiously to see if they would like the presents we had given them. Sometimes, I wonder how they kept up that smiling and nodding through every gift as if each one were the treasure they had always dreamed of.

We eventually made it back to Grandma Brown's house. She greeted us with a hug and a kiss. Then, crouching down so as to be on eye level with us, she delivered the big news.

"The man on TV just said that the Air Force had spotted a sleigh being pulled by eight tiny reindeer... In our area!"

"Oh no! Grandma!" I grabbed her hand and pulled her toward the bedroom.

"But how will Santa find us?" At seven years old, on Christmas Eve, that was my biggest worry. We were traveling from Columbia to Spartanburg, South Carolina, in our black 1958 Chevy Bel-Air. The two-hour trip seemed like an eternity.

My parents had explained that by spending Christmas Eve at Grandma Brown's house, we could avoid having to make the long drive on Christmas morning. To them, it made perfect sense. To me, it was craziness! Why spend every night of the year in the same house, only to change houses on Christmas Eve? It was sure to confuse Santa and upset his schedule. I had visions of

"We've got to get to bed!"

Before we could do that, however, there is a small bit of business we had to attend to. Mark and I distracted Grandma while Mama filled the stocking which hung on the wall with apples, oranges, nuts and a hand sized baby doll. In this small act, we saw ourselves as Santa's helpers.

That night, I slept with Grandma in her room, surrounded by her collection of dolls. Surprisingly enough, I didn't have much trouble falling asleep. Just before I dozed off, I was pretty sure I could hear sleigh bells.

Mark wasn't as lucky. He slept in the room that had once been shared by my father and Uncle Buddy. He lay there, staring into space, trying to fall asleep. He was unable to do so for two reasons. First of all, there was the "Victorian Lady," an enormous painting that hung right beside the bed. Mark couldn't get over the feeling that he was being watched. Second, there was Grandma's cactus. It was a huge saguaro that she kept outside in the summer, but moved into the corner of the front bedroom in the winter. It stood about 6 ft. tall at that time, and kept getting bigger until Grandma finally had to stop bringing it inside. That night, however, it stood in the corner, arms stretched upward, almost human and more than a little frightening.

At about 3:00 in the morning, I awoke to the soft tones of

Grandma's snoring. I got up, walked toward the bathroom and ran into Mark, who was also restless. We wanted to go and see if Santa had come, but knew better than to step foot in the living room without first checking with Mama and Daddy. We were sure about the time, but after much debate, agreed that it had to be close to time to get up, so we slipped into Aunt Judy's room where our parents slept.

Whereas Grandma's snores were sort of like the purrs of a large cat, Daddy's were more like the grunts of an angry wart hog. I had heard them before, of course, but in the dark, in this different environment, I was taken by surprise. I almost ran back to my bed and under the covers, but Mark stopped the snores by shaking Daddy's shoulder to wake him. As usual, Mark was the spokesperson for the two of us. "Is it time to get up yet?"

Daddy peered at the clock, trying to focus. He sputtered for a few seconds and then did the best imitation of an exploding grenade I've ever heard. We were told to return to bed and not get up again before 7:30 A.M.

I couldn't understand why Daddy was so upset, but I went. To pass the time, I counted to 60 over and over again, clicking off the minutes as I went. I made it around four and a half times before I fell back asleep. Morning finally arrived, and with it the assurance that Santa

had, indeed, found us. For Mark, he brought a race set with one car that raced against a clock. For me, there was a two-story doll house with magnetic wands that moved the dolls around inside the house. Of course, both of us received books, fruit, candy and lots of "surprises."

I ran to hug my mother, who was standing behind us. "He came!"

"I told you he would." She sat down on the floor and watched as both of us showed her our treasures, one by one.

Grandma, pretending to be very excited, told us that Santa had filled her stocking as well. Mark and I stopped playing long enough to share a conspiratorial grin.

Later that day, Aunt Judy and Uncle Sonny came, bringing our younger cousin, Jan, who I especially loved because his presence meant that I was no longer the baby of the family. Uncle Buddy came, too. While the women prepared lunch, we amused ourselves by finding ways to get near the Christmas tree and peek at the packages. Grandma always caught us and made us leave before we could get close enough to start shaking them. At noon, we sat down at the table and gave thanks. We ate turkey and dressing and all the trimmings, including Grandma's green beans (the only kind I would

eat because she made them with Grandma Magic).

After lunch, we passed out presents and tore into them. My uncles and aunt always gave wonderful gifts. Then, the women did the dishes and Uncle Buddy helped us play with our new toys, while Daddy and Uncle Sonny slept in the big arm chairs. We took advantage of that time to occasionally sneak into our mouths one of the Hershey's miniatures or "silver bells" Grandma kept in the candy dishes all over the house. Later on, we all walked next door to visit with great Aunt Ellie and Uncle C.P.. It was late afternoon before we loaded up the car and headed back to Colombia.

I remember that year so well because it was the last Christmas for many years that I would spend listening for sleigh bells. Yet, Christmas has never lost its charm and mystery for me, and after my children were born, I began to experience all those special times once again through their young eyes. Whether you are celebrating old traditions or beginning new ones, may you have a joyous holiday season that you will be able to remember with a warm smile for years to come. Merry Christmas and God bless, from the Long family.

We invite you to share special memories of your grandparents. When submitting your story, please include their full names and photographs.

The Replacement Soldier:

Pfc. Dalton F. Williams

By: Sandy Williams Driver

His Honorable Discharge states his military occupation as a Trooper (Expert: M-1 rifle). To Merrill's Marauders in Burma during World War II, he was known as a replacement soldier, a member of the "Mars Task Force." To me, he was just Daddy.

Dalton Franklin Williams was born in Dekalb County in Alabama on March 9, 1925 to Frank and Martha Williams. The family owned a small farm and struggled daily

with nature to provide food and clothing for their twelve children.

In 1944, on Dalton's 19th birthday, he made a decision that would affect him for the rest of his life: he joined thousands of other young men and became a soldier to do his part for his country in the ongoing conflict, World War II. After he joined, he passed his physical examination at Fort McPherson, Georgia and on March 30 was officially inducted into the United States Army. He soon boarded a train and headed for a Cavalry recruiting center in Fort

Riley, Kansas where he underwent a vigorous basic training over the next several weeks.

The call came in early that summer from Burma that a group of

men known as Merrill's Marauders was in dire need of fresh recruits. The American Long Range Penetration Unit commanded by Brigadier General Frank Marauder had been formed the year before in August 1943 by three thousand volunteer soldiers. Their

mission was to traverse behind enemy lines in Burma and destroy Japanese supply lines and communications while the attempt was made to re-open the Burma Road. After months of heavy combat, the surviving Marauders needed replacements due to the overwhelming number lost to combat wounds and disease.

Dalton, along with thousands of other dismounted cavalymen, answered the call. His orders to "ship out" were the beginning of a combat career he could have never imagined in his wildest dreams. He probably



traveled to California by train and there he boarded the SS George M. Randall and set sail for the Asiatic-Pacific. After brief stops in the Fiji Islands and Melbourne, Australia, the eager recruits arrived in Bombay in September, just over a month later. An expert trooper, Dalton joined the other replacement soldiers who had recently formed the 475th Infantry Brigade. These naïve, brave young men underwent a hasty, intense jungle training in India before beginning their march through extremely dense jungles to reach Burma and join forces with the surviving Marauders to become known as the "Mars Task Force," a Ranger-type unit. The dismounted cavalry unit still wore their high-top cavalry boots as they began their march into combat.

On November 17, 1944, the soldiers began another killing hike. Dalton was in Company E of the 2nd Battalion. They marched ninety-eight miles only at night and dug fox holes to hide in during the sultry daylight hours. On December 8, at Tonkwa, in North Burma, they raided a Japanese out-post. On December 15, with their communications cut by raids and ambushes, the Japanese evacuated Burma. On that day, casualties were light, but at 1200 hours, Private Dalton F. Williams was struck by a .25 caliber Japanese bullet during the final hours of enemy action. The bullet entered his left hand at the index finger, traumatically amputating it, and then traversed through the 3rd and 4th fingers, where it exited, taking the tip of the pinkie with it.

His hand was hastily bandaged as he was carried on a make-shift

stretcher, probably made by his comrades from bamboo and field jackets, to an evacuation point in a small nearby village. He was then carried to the 48th Evacuation Hospital where he was stabilized. Five days later, he was flown to the 20th General Hospital in India where he underwent two surgeries over the next eight weeks to try and repair the damage to his hand. He was then transferred to the 181st General Hospital for about a month.

Dalton arrived back in the good old USA in March 1945 with a promotion to Private First Class. He spent a short time in the State Hospital in New York, and then a month at Finney General Hospital in Georgia before being transferred to Northington General Hospital in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He spent several months there where he underwent more painful, unsuccessful surgeries. In one attempt to graft skin onto the injured fingers, his left hand was surgically sewn to his stomach for several weeks. One doctor that year even suggested in his report that the entire left hand should be amputated. It was noted the patient adamantly refused.

In those hospital rooms, I'm sure my father relived the weary hours of moving through the Burmese jungles. His nightmares were probably filled with leeches, stinging insects, poisonous snakes, rain, mud, chattering baboons, the unbearable heat, hastily dug fox-holes and the stench of dead Japanese bodies. Finally on October 12, 1945, Pfc. Dalton F. Williams was given an Honorable Discharge from the United States Army and sent home to his waiting family.

Daddy was a quiet man and never spoke a word to anyone about his military career. I have been amazed this past year as I began to discover the horrific trauma my father suffered when he was just a young man. I'm sure my research only touched the surface of the shocking realities and horrors he witnessed during World War II. Even though he was only in combat a few short months, he most likely suffered a silent Hell plagued with those terrible memories until the day he died on May 28, 1999.

I was taken aback when I began my research of reconstructing his military career to discover that Dad's discharge papers stated "no wounds received in action." I have learned this was a common error in the post-war times of 1945 when overworked Army clerks filled out thousands of forms each day. By working with the Department of Veteran's Affairs, I learned the truth when I received copies of Dad's entire medical file.

Hundreds of hours searching for information on the Internet and

numerous telephone calls and several letters to surviving Veteran's have also helped me greatly in my quest. With the assistance of Congressman Robert Aderholt, my mother and I were recently issued the long overdue and much deserved medals my father earned so long ago, but never received. They include the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, a Good Conduct Medal, an American Campaign Medal, an Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, a WWII Victory Medal, a Combat Infantryman Badge, an Honorable Service Lapel Button, and an Expert Badge with Rifle Bar.

I love my father deeply and still miss him so much. Now that his great accomplishments and sacrifices to our great country have been recognized at last, I have never been more proud to call Private First Class Dalton F. Williams, my daddy. Copyright 2003 © Sandy Driver

Sandy is a freelance writer from Albertville, Alabama that specializes in conducting interviews and preserving family memories.



April 1942: Crew of 37mm. anti-tank gun, in training at Fort Benning, Georgia, clean and adjust their weapon.

"My Story"

By: Ex POW Robert M. Abrahamson



My brothers and I were all drafted into the United States Army. The oldest, Frederick, was in the first draft lottery drawn personally by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1940. The next year, Fred went on

the first troop ship to England, the Queen Mary. George's draft number followed and he was called to service in 1944. He left a wife and a 3-year old baby at home.

I was not yet married when I was called into service. (Joyce and I met after the war. We married on October 20, 1946.) I was 19 years old when I was drafted into the army infantry. Most of us were about 18 or 19 years old and had never been away from home before.

I went overseas on the Empress of Scotland in September of 1943. The ship off loaded us in Casablanca, Morocco on the continent of Africa. We trained there for a few weeks before being transferred in boxcars to Oran, Algeria. After a few more weeks

of further training, we were shipped off to Naples, Italy. Traveling via boxcar we went to the deserted Count Ciano's Dairy Farm, previously owned by Mussolini's nephew, and then onward to meet up with the 36th

Division of the 5th Army. We slept in eight-man tents.

I was assigned to the 141st Regiment, 2nd Battalion, Company G, 3rd Platoon, and Mortar Section as an ammunitions carrier. I became a "yardbird" and a "dog-face." A Yardbird meaning the bottom rung off the ladder. The term dogfaces referred to infantrymen serving in Italy who were coming off the line. One newsman has said they they looked like dog faces because they were so tired and expressionless. The name stuck and became a proud symbol of what kind of men we were.

At the time out Front was on Mount Rotando where pack mules delivered supplies and carries away our dead. One supply we received

daily was a pack of cigarettes i.e., Lucky Strikes, Camels. (Many of the servicemen didn't smoke prior to the war. By the end of their service, smoking became a lifetime habit.) A black wire designated the pathway for travel to us during the dark hours.

Of the battles themselves, I don't want to write. They were horrific! One day was a lifetime.

We spent time at the battle of the Rapido River. We made a river crossing. Right after everyone got across the Germans shelled the bridge. That meant there was no going back. Out of food and ammo, that night our officers surrendered. Very few of our guards spoke English. The day I was captured was one such day. I lost a great deal; my best friend in the Army was killed next to me in the drainage ditch we were using as a foxhole.

(Foxholes were dug if time permitted; however, even then one could only dig approximately two feet before water filled the hole. Stone mini-fortress was built in the mountainous area where digging through the stony ground was impossible. The stones would tumble down when assaulted.)

On that day, January 22, 1944, I also lost my freedom. Captured by the Germans, I was sent to Germany in a "40 & 8" boxcar. (Boxcars were referred to as 40 & 8 as description of being able to hold 40 men or 8 horses.) Approximately 50 men

were crammed into our boxcar. We were unable to all sit down at the same time; we rotated positions. Our train stopped only twice in 5 days; once in Austria and once during a bombing raid in Berlin. We had no sanitary facilities and no food. Many men became ill with dysentery. The stench was unbearable; yet, we survived.

Six days later we arrived at Stalag 4b. Ordered to strip off our clothes, we were given delousing showers while our clothes were similarly treated. I managed to get my own clothes back after spending five hours in the cold. We were given a little turnip soup at that time. It was terrible, but it was hot.

Three weeks later another boxcar trip took us to Stalag 2b in what is now Poland. I stayed there two weeks and until I was sent with 38 other men to work on a large potato farm.

On the farm we were guarded by German soldiers. (Thank God it was not the Waffen SS!) Fortunately, we were secretly informed as to who the Gestapo members were in the town. We got along quite well with our guards at the farm. Every now and then we had a problem with one but our leader/arbitrator usually got it straightened out with no bloodshed. As far as informants...there were some at the main Stalag; however, none on the farm. We worked with the German civilians in the fields. They were not too friendly at first, but after a time they came to realize

we were not the gangsters the propaganda had portrayed us as. The civilians were mostly old people; all the young men had been drafted into the army. Most were peasants and had never been out of their village. A few of them spoke English. The town was very small, perhaps fifteen houses and a small church. (The church was only

opened for weddings and funerals. I saw it open only twice; once for a wedding and once a funeral. I often wonder if the Church could have made a difference.) Prior to the arrival of us U.S. POWs, French and Russian soldiers had been interned in this village. We were never afforded the opportunity to associate with the other captives. We did note, however, that they were granted more leniencies than we experienced.

Living conditions were terrible. All of us thirty-nine men lived in one-half of a small barn. An outhouse was located nearby; however, we were locked in the barn at night.



1941 New York City Boys organize tin club. These patriotic young men not only collected but also processed more than half the amount of tin needed to build an Army fighting plane - and all in one day.

washing our one set of clothes; we soon smelled pretty bad. I guess we did not realize how bad we smelled because we smelled just as bad as the next guy. Imagine, one set of clothes for eighteen months. The toes of my socks eventually wore completely out to halfway up my foot. We did get to shave on occasion; we splashed water on our faces. One time we were given the blessing of a swim in a local pond.

We had very little food. Getting enough food was our main concern. We were given barely soup with milk for breakfast. We stole potatoes on a daily basis. The Germans knew we were taking the

During the fall and winter months, it became dark outside as early as 3:30 in the afternoon. We slept in wooden-slat bunks with straw mattresses. Since the barn had previously stored grain, varmints were present. Often field mice would sneak under our covers and crawl over our legs. We had no way of taking showers or

potatoes. Evidently it was a quiet agreement; actually "stealing" was considered to be a serious offense. We all became weak from lack of food or nutritional quality. I decided that after the war I would never go hungry again.... conversations always seemed to turn to food.

We did whatever farm work was required of us. "Wood's Detail" cutting wood, was a favored job. The guard treated us as if we were his own children. We cultivated and planted potatoes, barley, and turnips. Occasionally, we were required to dig the drainage/irrigation ditches. Two of our men worked in the carpenter's shop making parts for the wagons. The worst work detail was the shoveling and spreading of manure. The two men in our group who wore glasses spent 95% of their time in the manure pile. (This work detail assignment came as a result of the imperfection; the need to wear glasses.) We were "paid" once a month for our work. The pay was in the form of five cigarettes, five razor blades, a box of matches, and a rationing of marmalade.

In addition to the physical exercise gained from working, our group actively worked to keep our minds sharp. We didn't have any books to read, no playing cards. The evenings were long and boring. Everyone seemed to be lost in his thoughts. I know I thought mostly of home and what my parents were doing. We created games; silly contests challenged our spirits.

During Wood's Detail, the favorite game was "Break the Wind". (Being without established game props such as playing cards and game boards, we had to use the environment in which we lived; therefore, even bodily functions such as faring became worthy of a challenge.) The "Last Look" game, in retrospect, speaks a great deal about the true danger we always knew existed. To win this game, you merely had to be the last one to sit up and look at the guys in the group. A Last Look....One of our guys, we called him "Little Joe", had a wonderful comic sense. His interpretations of Hitler giving a speech brought us laughter that lasted through many hours. (Joe combed his hair forward over his head and face until the hair reached his upper lip, thereby creating his unique Hitler look). We tried to make alcohol from potatoes; however, it was still fermenting when they evacuated us. It didn't matter to me because I didn't drink anyway.

About escape plans...When we arrived on the farm, a German Colonel told us that we could escape at any time; however, for each one who escaped, two would be shot. Could we put our buddies' lives in jeopardy to save our own skins? I don't think so. The thirty-nine men who were with me were the greatest group of men I have ever had the honor of serving with. I love them like brothers. Our whole survival was the strong helping the weak. We were a diverse ethnic and



1942: U.S. soldiers begin to uncover a comrade who has been buried in the debris of a building hit by a bomb during a Nazi air attack in the Cerasuolo area, Italy.

religious group yet, everybody was treated the same; share and share alike. There was never a fight amongst us.

I was carried as missing in action until May 1944 when the government notified my parents that I was a POW. We were allowed to write one letter a month. The next month we were allowed one postcard. They alternated this way every month. All our mail was closely censored. We could tell our parents that we were working on a farm and feeling good. Needless to say, we would not tell them we were hurt. My parents had enough to worry about. My two brothers were in combat, one in the Infantry and the

other as a combat medic. While I was a POW, I received a letter from George's wife telling me he had been drafted. My mother had three of the blue stars hanging in the window. (The gold star banner meant killed in action and the blue star meant that person was in the service). My family eventually received most of my mail. A significant portion of their mail to me was returned to them. I hadn't received any mail since I had left the States from November 1943 until July 1944. I received only one parcel in all the time I was there. It contained mostly canned food that would not spoil.

In review, I am certain that my overall treatment and chances for

survival were greater with my placement on the farm instead of Stalag. The daily physical exertion, although difficult in our weakened state, served as stimulus for both our bodies and minds. Our separation and containment meant reduced risk of communicable disease. Unfortunately, being isolated also meant that we had little opportunity to hear correct or encouraging news of the war. We did hear some news from a friendly German farmer who listened illegally to BBC from London. (Later, I realized that he had not been in the fields for several days. I questioned one of the other farmers. He told me that the man had been listening to the BBC late one night. When his daughter woke and discovered her father's betrayal, she had turned him in to the Gestapo).

How we survived.....As a POW you learn to accept things as they come. We realized we were at the mercy of our captors every day. Whatever they decided to do, we had no control over it. We just lived from day to day. I had a good buddy who was from Alabama. We shared everything. He was quite feisty, so I often had to keep him from getting in trouble with the Germans. We had become good friends while serving together in the same squad in the 36th Division. (Sadly, I lost track of him and have been trying to find him for fifteen years. He could have died by now. He would be seventy- six years old).

The hardest thing to accept was

not being able to speak to your parents and assure them that you are okay. And, letters don't do it. I did not know if they had been notified of my capture. As far as thinking about home...most of the time I tried to figure what my folks would be doing at that time. I also had my brothers to worry about. At the same time my own life was quite precarious from day to day. It could do quite a job on a man's mind.

We hoped and prayed that every day went well. (A wise man once said, and I quote, "There is no such thing as an atheist in a fox hole." I agree with him). We all feel that some one was watching over us. The guard that was so good to us was a Lutheran. One day, out in the forest miles from nowhere, he saw my bible. He looked around carefully and pulled his own bible out of his coat. He said, "I also believe." We came so close to being killed so many times...someone must have been watching over us. It was so difficult not knowing when it would end. We survived because of our faith in God and in our country.

As far as the invasion, we heard nothing about it until it happened. A German civilian told us about it. We said the war was over for him. He scoffed at that. He said Hitler had a plan to let the Allies come in at first then to surround and annihilate them. (Talk about never say die.) We thought that we might get to go home soon. Too much hope; it took 12 months more. And, the worst

was yet to come.

As the Allies pushed forward on both European fronts, the news impacted more heavily on the village, eventually causing a complete evacuation. On January 29th, 1945, we had to leave the farm because the Russian troops were very near. We were leery of the Russians. We had heard rumors of things they had done

to the Germans during the advance. And, we assumed they had never seen American uniforms; therefore, we could be mistaken for Germans. The German civilians left on the march the same night we did. (After the war they could not return to their homes, since the land was reestablished to Poland.) The night we left our farm in Poland was a cold snowy night. We were all weak, suffering from malnutrition. After trudging through the snow for a few hours three or four men fell out and said they were quitting. Three of the bigger men carried their belongings all night. The next day they were able to continue and made with a little help.

Our "Death March" ended on March 10th in Hamburg, Germany, after a distance of 470 miles. It was



WWII: Europe: Germany; "U.S. soldiers take cover under fire somewhere in Germany"

the coldest winter on record in Europe. Below zero most of the time. The combination cold and hunger took its toll. Some men didn't make it. For supplies we had the clothes on our backs and some German bread we had been able to steal. Things were quite chaotic with the German civilians leaving with us. They had all their belongings tied to a horse and wagon. One cow tied behind for milk. I would think they soon ate them. Afterwards I learned that twenty million people were on the road at that time.

One day I saw what I looked like an old folk's nursing home, but outside there were all young girls. I asked the guard what it was. He called it a baby factory. These pregnant girls had been impregnated by German soldiers and received

royal treatment. If the babies were boys, they were taken and cared for by the German government. No one seemed to know what happened to baby girls.

At the end of our march, our group was separated. As tough as the entire experience was, we now lost the companionship of our "brothers." I was sent to a sawmill to work. Same conditions...very little food and no sanitary facilities to speak of. We were bombed everyday by our own air force. (They had no way of knowing we were there. How ironic if after all this we had been killed by our air force.) Our guards finally allowed us to paint "U.S. POWs" on the roof of the barn. One pilot came down low and waved to us to let us know they knew we were there. After that they stayed away from our quarters.

Our German guards left the sawmill one-week before the Allies arrived. On May 8th, we were finally liberated. We headed home to the greatest country in the world, bar none! Thirty-eight of us (one had developed mental difficulties. We had to practically direct every move of the one who lost his mind, even reminding him to eat. No one had realized that his feet were turning black. Finally, he was taken away by the guards. We never heard anything more about him)...thirty-eight had survived until our liberation. Three of our guys later committed suicide. Of the others.....I'm uncertain how many could still be

alive today. With every day we lose an estimated 1,500 U.S. WWII veterans!

As far as the Nuremberg Trials of the Germans...it was designated to be fair and impartial. I believe it was. Goering...(I am not a violent person but I think I could have done him in myself). Not one word of regret or apology. He seemed convinced that Hitler, in exterminating the Jews, was doing the right thing. And, nothing was said about the killing of the Gypsies or the Jehovah witnesses. The Germans choose which rules of the Geneva Convention they abided by.

I received great treatment when I was released. I was rushed home very quickly, arriving on June 12, 1945. I had been a seventy-five furlough. I was then sent to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia for recuperation for three months. We got the best of food. And, we were allowed to come and go as we pleased. (I could not believe I was in the Army!) My brothers also made it home safely. Frederick, the medic, was in two invasions and had been awarded five campaign ribbons. He is one of the real heroes of the war. What a cross my mother and father had to bear! My father held up well but my mother was never the same, she had given away most of my personal belongings...perhaps a sign of her despair.

I still don't regret the days I spent in Germany. I think it made a better man out of me. I think it taught me

to have more compassion for others. People would ask about my experiences during the war. At first I would explain some of the events; however, the listener was always too shocked to believe that such horrifying evil was being committed. Even less believable was that someone like myself could survive through it. I recall one incident that deeply touched me. The man across the street from us had a son killed in the war. When I got home he hugged me and cried like a baby. I have always felt guilty about coming home when so many others died. That is foolish I know. Many of us feel that way. That doesn't change anything.

In 1944 for the anniversary of D-Day, I went back to Poland. I contacted a Polish Priest in my hometown to get some help. He went back to Poland quite often. He had a brother who was in the Polish army. The day after we arrived in Poland, we found the town, Burzen, and the farm. The Germans had burned everything the night we left there. The town and some of the barns had been rebuilt. We found the ruins of our barn. There was nothing left. The church was

beautifully remodeled. The town was just as rural as when we were there. The roads were still not paved. It was almost as though we had never left. The next day we went to Stalag. It is now a Polish army camp and prison. We found hundreds of Russian graves at the Stalag. Locals told us that there was an American cemetery in the woods. We searched the woods all afternoon but could not find it. We also searched for a girl named "Stefania," who had occasionally smuggled food for us. We learned that she had returned and lived in Burzen for years after the war.

We had had annual Ex-POW reunions since 1981. What a great group of guys! This is the only time I can easily discuss what happened. I know they will understand. When I try to tell other people. They look at me as if to say, "That could not have happened!" The conversations usually ends there. We started with ten men and are down to four now. Some can't travel anymore. This is the best part of my year! This is, I think, what kept me alive for seventy-six years.

Character is doing the right thing when nobody's looking.
There are too many people who think that the only thing that's right is to get by, and the only thing that's wrong is to get caught.

J.C. Watts

My riches consist not in the extent of my possessions,
but in the fewness of my wants.

J. Brotherton

RELUCTANT SOLDIER:

THE WORLD WAR II MEMORIES OF
JOHN FRANK MATZKO
(1912-1991)

The following story is the final installment of a series of chapters we began presenting in our May issue. It traces the life of an American who served the U.S. as a soldier in World War II.

May 15, 1945

We could see the Alps, with snow near the peaks, and went through Trento and between mountains and dangerous looking cliffs. Engineers had to repair many of the places before we could go through. Within fifty miles of the Austrian border we saw miles of German vehicles loaded with supplies heading south almost without guard. With each convoy there were a few GIs and Germans MPs to take care of their own men. The further we went, the more Germans we saw. It was strange to see German and American MPs working together as if they had always been friendly. It seemed like a horrible joke after all the years of bloody fighting.

After many hours of riding we arrived at Bolzano, where our units were located. After many greetings, I was made comfortable in one of the rooms in a big house that had been taken over. It was wonderful to live in a fine house with good food and little to do. Bolzano had been German before the last war, so most of the people still spoke German, and the signs were in German. Bolzano was clean, fresh and neat, in contrast to the dirty Italian towns.

We had lectures on occupation duties and some calisthenics. Our job was [simply] to occupy and keep order. There was some light guard duty to enforce the curfew, and we locked up a few drunks in a small building for the night for breaking it. Some of my squad was in St. Jacobs near Bologna, and [they] sent for me because I could understand German. My first experience was talking to German guards, [but] I had a hard time making myself understood. The sergeant in charge was drunk most of the time and so were many of the others. I was uncomfortable here in the former school house. The bed was good but the constant noise made it hard to sleep at night.

On May 19, a messenger came to take me to my lieutenant to act as an interpreter [when he delivered] a convoy of German WACs to Verona. We rode in a small Fiat with a German driving. A German First Sergeant, knew how to handle the three buses full of girls, but he said that he would rather handle a bushel of fleas than a dozen girls. It was a hard trip for all of us, [with] heavy traffic and frequent breakdowns of the vehicles. We also had to keep

the buses in sight at all times as we didn't want to lose a bus full of girls. Every time we stopped, people mobbed the buses to see the girls. After many hours of riding toward Verona, we couldn't find the proper POW camp and arrived at the wrong one at three in the morning. There was nothing else to do but to stay. The girls lay on the ground, and we dozed in the car.

We started back early for Verona, but [it was difficult to find] gas and oil for the vehicles. Lieutenant Jackson gave the German driver permission to have his girl friend ride with us, so she sat in the back seat and kept me company. In German she told me of the many places that she had been with the German army. I felt sorry for some of the girls as they were so young and good looking.

We were all tired when we finally got to the POW camp. Here the girls were deloused, searched, and kept under the discipline of German woman leaders. I got a meal at the mess hall and then we returned with the empty buses. The German First Sergeant sat with me and talked about his many experiences, how they were terrorized by our planes, etc. The girl left him with a basket of cherries, which I helped eat. We also stopped at the Red Cross at Verona for coffee and doughnuts. The roads were filled with vehicles taking POWs south. There were also a lot of people with bags walking to the places they had come from.

At St. Jacobs we lived in a house, and the food was brought in to us from the company. What was left we gave to the people upstairs who spoke German and were friendly to us. We had nothing to do

but walk and try to enforce the curfew, which was almost hopeless. I did take a few nude sunbaths in an orchard in the afternoons. Daily we walked guard and checked suspicious characters. There were problems with partisans robbing and beating other Italians and with GIs stealing bicycles. Our squad leader was drunk most of the time, so anything important was referred the lieutenant in Laives.

[Eventually] we were packed up and sent back to the company at Laives, a beautiful town, and [were] quartered in an old school house. Every morning we had calisthenics and a short hike. There were lectures, etc., nothing hard. It was beautiful country, and the trees were full of fruit. I enjoyed talking to a native in German, and I went to a Catholic Church in which the sermon was in German.

On June 5, we were taken back to Bolzano and, with the proper ceremony, turned the city and area back to Italian troops. It was a colorful ceremony, and the people cheered and waved. Three days later we packed up and, after six hours of riding, pitched our pup tents along Lake Garda. We were no more than settled when three of us were issued passes. After hours of waiting we went on the wildest, fastest ride imaginable. We were going to have a good time if it killed us. We went through Milan and Genoa, cities of tall buildings and apartments, very modern. Even the people looked better.

After twelve hours of riding, we arrived at Alassio, a resort town only a few miles from the French border. The people spoke Italian but looked

French. We were given a five-day pass, a food card, a brief talk, and then our freedom to have a good time. We couldn't go near the water because of the barbed wire. The evidences of war were everywhere: emplacements, pillboxes, and foxholes. I spent most of the time at the Red Cross where they had a coffee bar and a form of ice cream. The meals were small but good and we enjoyed being served by waiters. [I bought] a marcasite pin for Evelyn. In the town were many displaced persons trying to find a ride home. We felt sorry for these unfortunates.

I found it most comfortable at Lake Garda. The routine was easy and the food good, so time went fast. We swam, bathed, washed clothes and lay in the sun. Some fellows fished with grenades.

On June 17, we moved to a farm on the outskirts of Modena. There were many tents in neat rows, six of to a tent, with cots and mosquito bars to keep away the insects. It annoyed me to see so many natives wandering around in our area. There was no running water, so we used a helmet as a basin again. While I was wondering what we were doing here, I got a notice that I was on a detail to take a convoy of Russians to Austria.

On June 18, we started for Austria with three trucks and C-rations for four days and picked up a large convoy of Russians dressed in GI uniforms. They had been part of the German Army, had been captured, and now were being sent back to the Russians in Austria. We rode through Verona, Vicenza, San

Pietro in Gù through British Italy, British Austria, and then into Russian Austria near Leaben where our trip ended. We rode day and night with a stop every hour for rest. We had orders not to use our weapons if any of them tried to escape; we were only there for their protection. The further we got into Austria, the prettier it got.

At the Russian sector of Austria, we had to wait for hours before they would let us in. The Russians [seemed] old and fierce, and they looked holes through us. After a few miles, they took their men away. We felt sorry for them because we heard that most of them would be shot if they didn't have the right answers.

The Inn in the town was the Russian headquarters. They had a meal for us there of soup and bread, which didn't fill us, so we also used our C-rations. The Russians then sent us out to the brewery for some barrels of beer. One of their non-coms ordered the people of the town to billet us in their homes. So we were all in different homes. One Austrian, when he found that I understood German, took me around and showed me how the Russians had stripped all of their factories. I could see unhappiness everywhere as people obeyed but didn't like it. I had quite a talk with an Austrian girl about billeting and the Russian officers. Bradley and I shared a fine bed in a fine room even if someone had no place to sleep because of us. The people did seem to like us and tried to be friendly. I think each one of us felt thankful that we were not under Russian domination. The people seemed so full of fear as they had to accept the fact that they were

losers. The Russians were busy driving horses and cattle toward their camps. We heard many stories of terrorism.

On the way back we made a tour of Udine just to see it. Then near town we stopped and bedded down in a field. We left in the morning after killing much time and came back to Modena looking pretty rough and dirty.

On June 22, I got a pass and went into town to the Red Cross, where I visited an enlisted man's club and heard a German POW band play. There was drinking and dancing, but the Italian girls didn't seem in too much of a hurry to get friendly with the GIs. Every time I went into Modena, there were hundreds of people in groups waiting for a pickup to other points. They seemed so sad and tired.

Later I had to guard a couple of German prisoners on a detail; they seemed meek and willing to work. We were forbidden to talk to them, but from their conversation they talked as if the Americans were treating them well. There was a large cage for prisoners in Modena where thousands of prisoners lived under all sorts of tents. There was no privacy or comfort for them; but the war was over. The temperature now

Reluctant Soldier

became too hot, and time hung heavy on our hands. I sent some souvenirs home: a helmet, a dagger, etc.

At the end of June, fifty of us were moved to an ordinance place in town. We lived in a large stone building and served as guards for several hundred German POWs who were repairing captured weapons. I have never seen so many thousands of machine guns and perhaps a hundred thousand rifles stacked like cord wood. The area was several acres wide and was surrounded by a large stone wall. At each corner was a machine gun. There was guard duty every night, but the Germans had no desire to run away. Some wanted news of the area where I

had recently been to deliver the Russian prisoners to Austria. There were hot showers, the food was far superior to the Army mess, and it was close to town. We had much freedom, and we began to enjoy our stay. Meanwhile, Evelyn wrote that we should not get married until the war with Japan was over. I had tried to get her to marry me on furlough before I went to the Far East.

On July 10, a new friend, Kilby, and I hitchhiked to Bologna. We visited a super Red Cross, had our



Photo taken in 1943 of unknown sniper in the town of Cupa, Italy

picture taken on the roof of a garden, and we ate at a free GI restaurant. When we got back we found much confusion as we were getting ready to move. Our company was divided into six parts.

We left our ideal location for the quiet town of Marmirola near Mantua. We relocated in a theater building. The food was fair, cooked by two drunken cooks. The area was filled with beautiful, cemented irrigation ditches filled with clear, sparkling water. We took advantage of it to bathe and wash. Kilby was badly bruised when he was sucked into one of the culverts. Someone had a radio that blared so-called music while we tried to sleep. Some men spent their time drinking. Our cooks traded food to women for favors.

I had guard duty at a large ammunition dump and was able to have long talks with some of the German prisoners. We took six hours of guard duty at a time so as not to be bothered so often. A German driver would come and get us and then would come back for us. In this area the prisoners were kept busy sorting, repairing, and shipping shells. We were here to guard the Germans from the Italians because they hated each other.

July 15 was [the anniversary] of the day I gave the engagement ring to Evelyn. I went to an Italian movie but couldn't understand it. I met Clarquist, the Christian who tried to preach to the Italians, and one day he had a service for us. The German driver who took us swimming was such a nice fellow that we let him swim with us. Only yesterday we were out to kill each other.

On July 27, I was transferred to Mantova Ordinance, where some of my squad had been for some time. We had it pretty good most of the time. There were good showers and sanitary conditions, and the food was extra good. The men here ate like kings. There was ice cream and watermelon at every meal. I was sorry I couldn't eat more. I had always wanted to see an opera, so I walked into the castle courtyard where Rigoletto was being performed. There was room for thousands, a big orchestra and soft lights. It was like a circus for the Italians, but I got tired of it and left early.

One Sunday morning I [was assigned to] a convoy of tanks and trailer trucks to deliver a couple of broken tanks to a repair center in Milan. There were six trailer trucks, each with a German driver and a guard. The trip took all day because of the narrow roads and because of an accident [that occurred] when one of the drivers, watching a girl by the side of the road, ran into a large object. In Milan we stopped at a large ordinance depot that had once been an aircraft factory. The Germans were put up with the prisoner workers and we were put up in one of the shops. A couple of the trucks needed repair so we had a whole day with nothing to do. I rode on a trolley and saw much of the beautiful city.

After much trouble they loaded each trailer with an American tank and we started back. There were many breakdowns as the tanks got loose and shifted around and had to be retied. It took five hours of combined effort get [the convoy] over a small bridge and hill. We got

back into camp in the morning after a dirty, tiring job. One of the Germans had an accordion, and he entertained us.

On August 2 we moved to the other end of town near a hospital, into a place that looked like it might have been a factory. We ate at the hospital. The food was super, but the barracks were crowded and noisy. There were Italian children hanging around, so we had to watch our belongings. However, we found that our own men are worse and will steal anything to finance their good times. All we had to do was a little guard duty. I once tried to talk to an Italian guard in Italian while he tried to talk to me in German. It was a total failure.

On August 4, we were sent to Verona. Here we waited for hours in a bomb-shattered station until a train came [to take us to Naples.] It was a surprisingly easy trip, and we were in good spirits. The further South we got, the worse the destruction, and below Bologna

the people looked so much poorer. We saw Rimini as we passed along the shore of the Adriatic. It looked green and clear. There were a few bathers and sailboats. In southern Italy there was not a single

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undamaged bridge or road to be seen. The train stopped often, and candy, cigarettes, and clothing changed hands. The Italians would buy anything.

In Naples thousands of GIs waited for shipping lists. We were processed quickly and put into different buildings. There was a buzz of excitement at the thought of being so close to going home. We lived in style and had all kinds of things to keep us busy: movies, books, schools. We turned in all of our extra equipment and were given a new address, a shot in the arm, and a physical.

On August 12, I went to the Protestant chapel for a service, and after dinner we exchanged our scrip for American money. Now that I was ready to leave, I began to fear the day when I would have to meet Evelyn's friends. I had no job to come back to and faced a completely new life.

The next day, with great

joy, we boarded the boat that was to take us home. We were packed like sardines but were free from fear. The Red Cross gave out games and books to keep us busy. I wasn't seasick at all this time and enjoyed



In 1942, Mrs. Alene Green, of Deland, Fla., with two sons in the Army and one in the Navy, still felt she wasn't doing enough. So she enrolled in the Deland vocational school to learn how to put fabric on airplane wings.

the trip more. The sea was blue and calm as we sailed past Africa. The Atlantic also was calm with ideal weather. We spent hours just looking into the sea and dreaming of the future. Then came news of the end of the war with Japan, and our hearts were so much lighter.

On August 20 we landed near Boston amid the cheers of the people and the whistles of the boats. My eyes teared as I saw America again, not having been sure of ever returning. We were cheered as if we were heroes and were taken to clean roomy trains, given ice cream, milk, newspapers and made comfortable. Then at Camp Miles Standish, we were given detailed instructions on what was being done to get us out of there in a hurry. In the morning, we were put on another train for Indiantown Gap. I passed right through Frankford but could not get off.

It took hours until we were separated and checked in at Indiantown Gap. [There were] more clean sheets and blankets and replacements for old clothes but no discipline. Everyone was impatient for orders to go on furlough.

On August 26, after receiving orders to report to Fort Jackson after my furlough, I took a bus to a nearby town and from there took a train to Philadelphia and from there, an elevated and trolley. It felt so strange to be on the way home. My folks were at church, so I left my duffle bag at home and took a trolley there and met them as they came out of church.

After dinner I called Hartleys to see if Evelyn was home. She wasn't,

so I made a date to meet her at the apartment after supper. It took a long time to find 412 Grove St., Haddonfield, [New Jersey] because the numbers confused me. The ice cream that I was carrying started to melt. I was excited but not as much as Evelyn. Her mother said that she never saw her carry on so. After this we saw each other daily and made plans to get married [even though] we didn't know when I would be discharged.

In September, Evelyn and I went to Harvey Cedars [Bible Conference] one Saturday, and one Sunday I went to her church, the Bible Presbyterian Church of Collingswood. When I began to meet her friends, I was scared silly and ill at ease. It seemed that everyone was waiting to see the perfect man that she had been waiting for. After thirty days I had to go to Fort Jackson but was given another fifteen day furlough. It was foolish to have to come back, but we had to do so and pay our own way as well. I still didn't know my discharge date.

After reporting to Fort Jackson on October 17, I killed time at camp between the PX, the library, the movies and the service club. I had three teeth filled by the first woman dentist that I had ever seen. Columbia, South Carolina was a nice town, full of GIs, and had a fine USO. I also went to an evening service at Columbia Bible College. On October 20, I had KP and picked eyes out of potatoes as I had done when I first entered the Army. Points were still the main topic, the more points the quicker [the discharge]. The officers and non coms were so kind to us that it didn't seem like the Army anymore. I remember how we were

kicked around during training.

On October 24, we received instructions about GI benefits and all kinds of records were made. Orders were put in for new clothes and a discharge emblem sewn on. Finally, on October 27, we were given our new clothes and a jacket with the emblem on it. A band played, and we were given that coveted paper. It was hard to believe that we were civilians again and facing a new life.

On October 28 I arrived home and, with great reluctance, put on my civilian clothes. Evelyn and I made plans to get married. There was much to do, and I ran back and forth with Dad's Studebaker.

On November 24, 1945 at 4 p.m., Evelyn and I were married in the Bible Presbyterian Church of Collingswood by Dr. Carl McIntire. The reception at Haddon House, Kings Highway and Potter Street, Haddonfield, was for close relatives only and for Pastor Herrman of my Immanuel Lutheran Church of Frankford.

Reluctant Soldier

John Matzko and Evelyn Austin were married for almost forty-six years and raised three sons who became, respectively, a history teacher, an engineer, and a chemist. John briefly managed a corner grocery and then for many years worked as a supermarket meat cutter in Collingswood, New Jersey. He continued to enjoy simple pleasures and tinkered with mechanical and carpentry projects in his spare time. Although he often displayed his ironic sense of humor within the family, he was rarely at ease among strangers. Shortly after his marriage, John joined the Bible Presbyterian Church of Collingswood, founded by fundamentalist radio preacher Carl McIntire. His Christian faith was sincere and never affected. In 1983, John and Evelyn Matzko moved to Greenville, South Carolina, and John died there on August 17, 1991 from complications of chronic asthma and Parkinson's disease. He is buried in Bala-Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, beside his mother.

Untold Stories

The greatest loss in a persons life are the untold stories.

Every soldier has a story worth telling and every life deserves to be remembered.

So, please pick up a pen, pencil, tape recorder, or computer and record your story now, for if you wait until tomorrow, it may never get told. And if your story never gets told, it is your children and grandchildren, or the children of the men and women you served with, that will pay the price of never knowing.

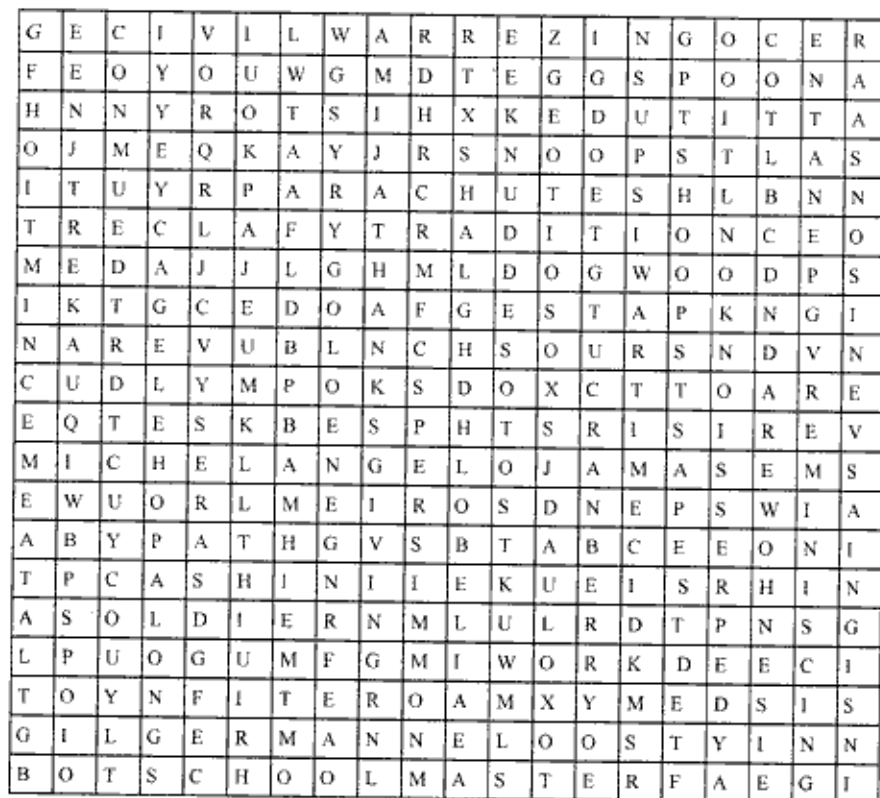
December 2003 Wordsearch

Words used in this Wordsearch, were taken from the November 2003 issue of U.S. Legacies Magazine.

Words can be found across, up, down, diagonally and backwards.

The answer to this puzzle will be published in the January 2004 issue of our magazine.

ATTITUDE	MEMORIES
BYPATH	MICHELANGELO
CATALPA	MINCEMEAT
CIVIL WAR	PARACHUTE
CRANBERRY	PASTS
DEPRESSION	PERSIMMON
DESOTOS	QUAKER
DOGWOOD	RECOGNIZE
EGGSPOON	REMINISCING
EISENHOWER	SALTSPoon
GENEOLOGY	SCHOOLMASTER
GENERAL	SOLDIER
GERMAN	TEACUP
HISTORY	THANKSGIVING
HOPALONG	TRADITION
INSIGNIAS	TURKEY
LEGACY	VENISON
LOBELIA	WARTIME



Personal Memories For December

My Name _____

Childhood memories relating to Pearl Harbor _____

Favorite Christmas Present _____

Favorite Christmas Memory _____

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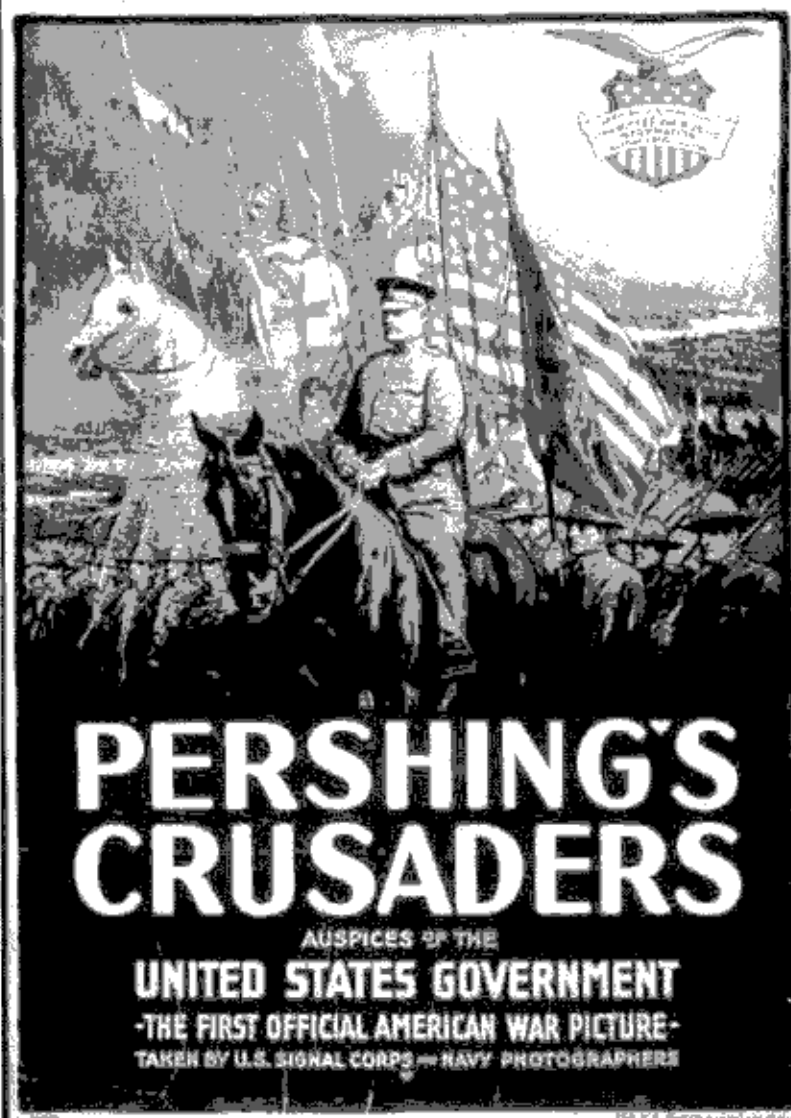
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