

CLAUDE LESTER HOWELL
And
MAUDE EVA CARTER
FAMILY HISTORY

Prepared by:

Frederick D. Howell

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HOWELL - CARTER FAMILY HISTORY

Introduction

The older we get the more we wonder about our antecedents. I do not know how widespread this idea is but it reflects my thoughts. So, here I am, nearly 70, preparing this document.

The primary intent of this history is to provide my descendants, presently three children and three grandchildren, with some idea of who their family was. But there may be a few beyond that also have some interest. Consequently, I have included considerable detail so as to provide as many clues and starting points as possible for the serious researcher. The casual reader will perhaps be impeded by the number of full names, dates and places.

Wherever possible I have relied upon documents from my parents' papers, my brother's papers and my own. In some cases I have recorded "guesstimates" based on my memory and my interpretation of existing facts. The reader is advised to verify any information used for research purposes.

The Early Years

Kinmundy has been the home of “Howell’s” for a long time. Several area cemeteries hold a large number of people with that name. The name “Kinmundy” is rather unique. According to Marla Shirley at the Kinmundy Historical Society, there is in Scotland a train flag stop named Kinmundy somewhere in the countryside. Apparently, Kinmundy, IL is named after that Scottish location. Other than these two places the name reportedly appears nowhere else in the world.

Dad’s paternal grandparents were James Franklin and Isabel Robb Howell, who were married in 1858. They had eight children. Isabel Jane died in 1907 in Sanford, FL, where she went the fall before to deal with health problems. She was 66 years old at her death.



Dad’s paternal grandparents, the J. Frank Howell’s

His father, Samuel Eli (S. E.), was born on a farm near Kinmundy, IL, January 12, 1871, and at age 31 married Dad's mother, Katie Green, 28, on August 24, 1902. Three children were born to this couple:

- Freda Mildred was born June 5, 1905 and died March 25, 1912. At the time of her death she was in the first grade at Prairie Grove rural school in Meacham Township. Dad was not quite 2 when she died.
- Freddie Everett was born February 1, 1909 and died August 12 of that year.
- Dad was born May 11, 1910 on the family farm in Meacham Township. His mother was 36 and his father, 39.



1911. Freda, 6, about a year before her death, and Dad, in his first year

Described in his obituary as quiet and reserved, S. E. was a member of the Kinmundy Methodist Church and served on the Board of Trustees and the Board of Stewards. According to Dad, our roots are Welsh, “with a little Cherokee”.

The Green family history has been traced back to 1770 beginning with Thomas Greene in Virginia, who relocated to Tennessee and died there in 1842, possibly on the Greene Farm, which is now part of the Tennessee Valley Authority near Kingston. His son, Theodorick, as a Confederate soldier in the Civil War, died in battle in 1865.



Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Green

Theodorick Greene's son, Thomas (1824-1853), had a son, Phillip (1849-1908). Phillip Green married Sarah Peters (1841-1877) in 1871 and their second child, Katie, was

born in 1874. Katie was my paternal grandmother. A detailed history of the entire Green line exists in a separate document.



Dad, with parents Katie Green and S. E., c. 1912

Katie Green died of cancer December 27, 1916, when Dad was 6 1/2. Katie, born November 22, 1874, was 42 years old at her death.

Little is specifically known about the 1920's, when Dad would have been in his pre-teen and teen years. Dad appears in a number of Green family photographs and it is possible he spent considerable time with extended members of that family during his motherless years.

Dad was without a mother from 1916 until 1923, when his father married Florence See. Dad was 13 then. During part of his motherless years Dad was cared for by Carrie See--"Aunt Carrie", of Alma. Aunt Carrie was one of Florence's four sisters. Aunt Carrie died in 1960. Dad was Executor of her estate.



Dad and S. E., c. 1920

After seven years as a widower, S. E. married Florence See March 28, 1923. Born October 2, 1882, Florence's parents were Orcelas and Mary Jane McCullough See. Florence died March 21, 1931 at the age of 48 years. Dad was 21.

Dad attended Orm (Sp?) Prairie School in Fayette County in 1922. Later he attended Kinmundy schools. Based on his 5th, 6th and 8th grade report cards he was an A- to B+ student in most subjects. Of interest is the fact that his earlier two cards were signed by Charles F. Augustine in the parent space. The 8th grade card was signed by his father.

He graduated from Kinmundy High School in 1928. Based on his senior autograph register there appears to have been about 22 in his class. He lettered in basketball all four years. Other high school extracurricular activities included baseball and class plays.

S. E. farmed until retiring in 1937 at age 66, when he moved into Kinmundy.

He sold the farm to his brother, Charles, who later sold it to his son, Harold Howell. In town S. E. apparently purchased the home across from the funeral home, where he lived until his death.



S. E.'s retirement home in Kinmundy until his death in 1942;
And our home during 1948-51

S. E. died February 3, 1942 in Effingham's St. Anthony Hospital, having apparently contracted a severe rash. He was sent to St. Anthony, and then on to a St. Louis

hospital. He then returned to St. Anthony where his last days were spent. Dad was 31 at the time of his father's death. I was born in December of that year.

The 1930's: College and Beyond

In the fall of 1928 Dad enrolled at Drake University at Des Moines and spent a year there, earning 33 hours of credits.



Dad as a freshman at Drake University, 1928

He transferred to Southern Illinois University at Carbondale for the fall term of 1929. College was a challenge for him. He failed his first term of German and also struggled with organic chemistry and algebra.

After two years at SIU he had earned a total of 87 semester credit hours. He transferred to the University of Illinois, carrying a full academic load for the two semesters of 1931-32. At that point he suspended his full-time academics and obtained his first full-time teaching position (see below). He attended the 1934 summer session, taking three courses. He also attended the 1935 summer session, also taking three courses.

His college extracurricular activities included Glee Club at Drake, Chamber of Commerce at SIU, YMCA and intramural basketball at Illinois.

The 1930's saw Dad get his college education and begin his professional career. Where he lived when not in college is not clear. The years of the late 1930's and up to my parents' marriage in 1941, it is possible that Dad lived with his father, at least for awhile, first on the farm until it was sold in 1937, then in the Kinmundy house. This, although Irene Gammon recalled that Dad lived "with an aunt" around 1940.



S. E. and Dad at the Kinmundy home, c. 1940

Dad worked two years as a full-time teacher, and then left teaching for three years. He clerked in a grocery store during that time, also part-time for a finance company. One wonders whether money had become a problem, this period being Depression years.

In September of 1935 Dad and three relatives took a vacation in the form of an extended driving trip. The editor of the Kinmundy Express invited Dad to prepare an article describing the trip for the newspaper. The article, "Our Trip through the East", 55 column-inches in length, appeared on the third page of the Thursday, September 26, 1935 issue. It described the nine-day journey in some detail. Travel companions were Dad's father, S. E., his Uncle Charlie and his Uncle Sell.

The journey took the adventurers through nine states, the District of Columbia and Ontario, Canada. The article concluded:

We covered about 2400 miles and did not as much as have a flat tire. All pronounced it a worthwhile, enjoyable and educational trip.

Then Dad took a full academic load in the first semester of 1935-36, graduating in February 1936 from the University of Illinois with a BS degree in education. Over the years after he took courses toward a master's degree, earning enough credit hours but not writing the required dissertation.

Early Career Years

Dad's first teaching job was at Shriver School, a rural (one room) school in southern Kinmundy Township, in 1933. His pension statements for 1933 record him authorizing a salary deduction of two dollars each month toward retirement. He worked at Shriver two years.

THE EARLY PROFESSIONAL YEARS

School	Dates	Highest Salary	Duties
Shriver School (Rural)	1933-35	\$400	Teaching
Rockhold School (Rural)	1938-40	\$520	Teaching
Farina Grade School	1940-42	\$810	Principal, Teach 7th & 8th
LaGrove High (Farina)	1942-43	\$1125	Science, Civics
Greenup High	1943-48	\$1800	Biology, History, Geography
Kinmundy Grade School	1948-51	\$2425	7th & 8th

In 1938, with Dad at Rockhold, the salary deduction for pension was ten dollars monthly. By joining the Farina system in 1940 Dad took on administrative duties along with teaching grades seven and eight. He also assisted in coaching basketball and baseball.

Throughout this period some of Dad's community service included teaching Methodist Sunday School classes, Church Treasurer, Church Men's Fellowship, Lions Club, and Chamber of Commerce.

Mom

Maude Eva Carter was born April 17, 1912 near Patoka, IL and died August 27, 2003, at the age of 91, in Grand Rapids, MI. She was the fourth of eight children born to Fred Milburn Carter (born June 7, 1880, in Clinton County), and Susie Eva Towler Carter (born September 22, 1884, in Fayette County). The elder Carter's were married September 20, 1904. Grandpa Carter died September 10, 1957 and Grandma Carter died June 12, 1974. At her death, Grandma Carter had 17 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

Grandpa Carter's parents were Philip Carter (1852-1924) and Lucy Frances Walden (1854-1932). Grandma's parents were William Henry Towler (1860-1900) and Margaret Lufary Oats (1861-?).

The Carter's lived on a farm outside Patoka, IL. All eight of the Carter children lived into adulthood.



The Carter family, c. 1957. Back row, L. to R.: Myrna, Henry, Grandma & Grandpa Carter, Maude, John. Front row, L. to R.: Teck, Bruce, Ruth, Midge

THE EIGHT CARTER CHILDREN

In birth order:

Ruth Elizabeth, 1905-1992, age 87
Amsy Bruce, 1907-1976, 68
Milburn Fred (Teck), 1909-1985, 75
Maude Eva, 1912-2003, 91

Myrna Marie, 1914-2004, 89

Henry O'Dell, 1916-1999, 83

Leta Mildred (Midge), 1918-2004, 85
John Dean, 1922-1995, 73

Spouses

John Nattier, 1905-1965
Ida Suntken Iorger, 1909-1977
Jewell Wilderman, 1918-2010
Lester Howell, 1910-1968
Clarence Brockman, c. 1912-1996

Ralph Elliott, 1909-1977
Russell A. Miller, 1908-1997

Mary Evelyn Spears, 1922-1947
Irene

Ray Frederick Denny, 1915-1982
Eula Maxine Riley, 1923-2008

Upon retirement from farming the elder Carters moved to town, where Grandpa worked for a time at the grain elevator.

Mom's formal education ended with the ninth grade. She worked for a time for Charlie Hill in his grocery store in Patoka. She spent some time in the Chicago area, working as a housekeeper. She enjoyed dancing and went to activities at the popular Trianon and Aragon ballrooms. This was apparently during the late '20's or early '30's.

The 16 Acres

In 1939 Dad, as the grandson, inherited a 16 acre share of the Green family farm.

Grantors of the Warranty Deed to Dad were the heirs of Philip and Sarah Green, Katie Green's parents.

The farm was located along Vermundy Road, across from Sandy Branch School, cemetery and picnic pavilion. The 16 acre parcel was split equally between timber and cultivation. Every year Dad would receive a check at the end of the growing season for his share of the crop income. The amount was typically around \$150.

The family farmhouse was later occupied into the early 2000's by Carl, Sr. and Marie Green.

Mom (Maude Howell), in 1980, placed the title to the 16 acres in joint tenancy with Dick and me. She sold this parcel back to Carl Green, Sr. around 1990-1995. Carl was attempting to reconsolidate the family farm acreage. According to Carl Jr, with whom I spoke in early 2012, about 80 percent, some sixty percent of the original farm acreage had been obtained by his dad at his death in 2004 and is held in the Green Farm Trust.

The mineral rights were conveyed by Mae Green in 1939 to Dad (and his heirs) in a separate Oil and Gas Deed as a 10 percent interest in 160 acres. Mae may have been a daughter of Phillip and Nancy (Phillips second wife), and the half-sister of Katie.

Marriage and Life Together

The folks probably met at least three years prior to their marriage. They dated for about 2 1/2 years and became engaged about a year prior. In those days the draft was in effect for men and Dad was required to sign a statement that the marriage was not intended as a way to avoid the draft. World War II started four months after their marriage and it turned out that Dad was 4-F for the draft anyway.

Mom and Dad were married in Vandalia, IL on August 9, 1941. The ceremony was held at the Methodist parsonage. The minister was the father of Juanita Kaiser, wife of the Kinmundy high school coach. Standing up with the couple were Fred and Irene Gammon, friends of my parents. At this writing, June 2012, Irene is alive and well at 92, living in Kinmundy.



The wedding party, L. to R.: Fred & Irene Gammon, Dad, Mom and the minister, the Reverend W. E. Bush

Prior to the wedding the couple purchased a new car, a black 1941 Ford two-door. It provided the transportation for honeymoon travel through northern Illinois and Iowa, and for ten years thereafter. The purchase was made from Harry Howell's Farina dealership. Harry was Dad's cousin.

The first letter the newlyweds received was from Dad's Uncle Frank and Aunt Hazel, of Des Moines. Hazel wrote, "...the Howell men, with a little early training, make fine husbands...It's all how you start out, you know."

The Gammon's were married in 1940. Dad and Fred Gammon were friends. Irene grew up in the Zion (rural) school area east of Patoka. As Mom was from the west side of Patoka and Irene was from the east side, and Irene was a little younger (about seven years), they were not well acquainted.

In fact, Irene was about the same age as my Aunt Midge. Irene's third grade teacher at Zion was Mom's sister, my Aunt Ruth Carter Nattier. She sometimes brought Midge to school with her and Midge and Irene became acquainted. When Irene was to enter the second year of high school the family moved to Kinmundy and it was during that time that Irene and Fred Gammon met.



The newlyweds' getaway car

Mom and Irene first met on the Kinmundy scene somewhat before 1935. Mom knew very few in Kinmundy then, and both had the Patoka connection so they began to pal around together.

Having served in the Army in World War II, Fred Gammon had worked at a number of jobs before and after. Then he became a teacher in the 1950's, later getting into the building and loan business. In the late '30's, the two couples sometimes double dated, movies and concerts being the most popular forms of entertainment, and driving considerable distances to see a highly desired event. Irene recalled them once driving to Tuscola for a big band concert, a distance of nearly ninety miles.

Farina. With the marriage the Lester Howell's took up residence in Farina, where Dad had a teaching job. But events were unfolding. Four months after the wedding Pearl

Harbor was attacked and World War II was on. S. E. became ill and died two months later, in February 1942. Then I was born near the end of that year.

The folks were living in their Farina home when I was born December 7, 1942, the first anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack--full name Frederick Duane Howell. Age 32 at the time, Dad was 4-F for the draft (high blood pressure) and continued teaching while World War II raged. Indeed, my first Christmas as a newborn arrived during my first month.



Farina Grade School, Grades 7 & 8, 1941-42

Mom made a star cut out from cardboard and covered it with tinfoil from either a cigarette or chewing gum wrapper. A precious keepsake, I kept that ornament all my life, and a few years ago gave it to our first grandchild, Benjamin Duane.

Greenup. The stay in Farina lasted three years, with Dad at the grade school for two years and at the high school for the third. In the summer of 1943 we relocated to Greenup where Dad was to spend four years at the high school. This is where my direct memories begin.

We lived in a small two story rental two or three blocks east of the business district. For awhile I was afraid of the upstairs. Adjoining our home on the west was a small apple orchard--a great place to play. The first spring there my brother, Richard Lee, was born April 11, 1944, at St. Anthony Hospital in Effingham. Dad was 33 and Mom, 31.

In the early days, we, as Freddie and Dickie, were sometimes thought to be twins, as we were only 16 months apart. As an adult Dick preferred to be known as Richard, but he was always Dick to me.

My folks were friends with the Kaufman's in Greenup and Paul Kaufman was a photographer. We have a two-minute film, originally shot in eight millimeter and presently in a DVD, the first half of which was shot at Fox Ridge State Park, north of town, when Dick was a baby. The second half was shot around 1960 on a visit to the

Kaufman's, then living in Ohio. Dick and I were teens then and the film was shot with our 1959 black Ford Fairlane as a backdrop.



Freddie & Dickie: "The Twins", c. 1946

Dad coached basketball at the high school during his tenure at Greenup High. For away games Mom and Dick and I joined him and the players for the bus ride. This was one of my first great adventures, to travel in a bus at night in the winter with parents and the big boys! To this day I cannot often step on an indoor basketball court without thinking of those early trips.

One time, a group of us were playing cowboys and Indians. During one of the “battles”, Dick struck me rather hard on the top of the head with his pistol. Bleeding profusely, my wound caused a certain amount of consternation to the parents but no real damage.

When our sandbox ran low on sand (several exuberant kids could not play without tossing copious amounts overboard) Dad would load Dick and me and a large empty laundry tub into the old black Ford. We would drive to the creek near Fox Ridge. Returning with a fresh load of sand more hours of sandbox play could be anticipated.

The folks were friends with the Hosapple’s. One of them was a teacher. Their son, Larry, a Down’s syndrome child, was a playmate of ours. It was on visits to their home that I first became familiar with the Dahlia flower, and the Giant Dahlia has long been my favorite bloom.

During this period and for many years thereafter Mom made many of our clothes. We were nattily dressed, usually in identical outfits, reinforcing the idea that Dick and I might be twins. Dick, as the younger, benefitted (or was burdened) by receiving the hand-me-downs as I outgrew my clothes.

Kinmundy. The Greenup era lasted four years and in the summer of 1948 we relocated back to Dad’s hometown of Kinmundy, where Dad was to be employed for the next

three years teaching seventh and eighth-graders. He also coached baseball and basketball.

Following S. E.'s death in 1942 it is likely that Dad inherited the house in Kinmundy across from the Linton Funeral Home. In any event, it was to that home we moved in 1948. The next three years, as Dick and I began our elementary school careers, were full of fun and excitement. B. F. (Dutch) and Ruby Linton had two sons, David and Bob. Next street over was Quentin (Quenny) Robnett and Jerry Gray. Bob Bundy was one of the group. Judy Robb was a nearby neighbor.

The boys roamed in a daily pack. Dutch had a pair of ponies and a buggy. He would harness up the ponies, load up the boys with their sack lunches and off to the woods we would go. A great life.

Crawling on a dare through the culvert along the street in front of our house was another act. Being mildly claustrophobic, I was always terrified to do this but no way would I refuse a dare.

Our garage was a convert from a stable and had a second level which was built originally to hold hay for horses. For us it was the platform from which we launched make-believe parachute strikes. To make our parachute "drops", Mom gave us some old bed sheets but they held no air for a nine foot jump.

Armed with a new pocket knife, I tried it out by trying to throw it to stick in the wood siding of the church next door. It worked, but also broke off the tip of the blade. I did not tell my parents.

We had a dog for a time. Aptly named Inky, he was a coal black Cocker Spaniel. We loved Inky but his stay in Kinmundy with our family was short. Every day the Illinois Central streamliner passed through town a short distance away. In those days the high speed train, running between Chicago and New Orleans, blew the whistle continuously without interruption for its mile and a half passage through town. Inky howled with pain to his ears.

So we gave Inky to Aunt Ruth and Uncle John Nattier, Mom's sister, who lived in the country near Patoka. They had three children, Bob, Karl and Myrna Sue. Inky ran away shortly thereafter.

Being farm-raised my parents knew all about eating off the land. In those days the Sunday fried chicken dinner started out as a live hen on Saturday. Dad would grasp the doomed fowl by the head and swing it around in a circle several times. In this manner, the body separated from the head in the hand and flew through the air. A few flops and it was all over. Then dip the body in hot water, pluck, clean and fry.

One winter our first bicycles appeared next to the Christmas tree. They were identical Shelby bikes, red with 18-inch wheels and a passenger carrier over the rear fender. We couldn't wait until spring. When the weather became favorable Dad took us into the yard and gave us our training. When we got the hang of it he then showed us the next step, where we would take off by standing upon the seat of the small child-sized picnic table and shoving off from there.

With those bikes our roaming range increased tremendously. In fact, I recall riding my bike to school as a first or second grader. School was across town, and the trek involved crossing the state highway, passing nearing the business district, crossing the Illinois Central railroad tracks (remember the streamliner!) and on to the school grounds. What independence we had!

Mom was a wonderful mother to Dick and me. Even so, she would also have liked to have had a daughter. In Kinmundy, Mom would occasionally invite neighbor Judy Robb for lunch, which would feature girl talk and Mom would paint Judy's fingernails. A few years older than me, Judy became my first crush when she taught me to ride my Shelby bicycle with a passenger on the rear seat.

During the three years, 1948-51, we lived in Kinmundy I was age 5-7 and went through grades K-2. Dad sometimes took Dick and me to the 16 acres for outings. We hiked

around, cut wood, hunted squirrels and mushrooms. Dad had a very old .22 cal. rifle and a single shot 12 gauge shotgun.

Ogden. In July 1951 we left Kinmundy to relocate north all the way to Ogden, in Champaign County. The family would remain located there 14 years, until the summer of 1965. At 130 miles, this was going to be a big change.

A new car, a 1951 blue Ford two-door, was purchased from Harry Howell's Farina dealership. Total purchase price was \$1800 and the ten year old 1941 Ford was worth \$400 on trade-in. A twelve-month note at six percent interest financed two-thirds of the purchase. Quenny Robinett gave us a watermelon from his family's ice plant as a going away present.

During the family's 14-year tenure in Ogden we lived in three different homes. The first two were rentals and the third was a purchase. The first, less than one block from the school, was owned by R. Robert Webb. The Webb's had just completed construction of a new home. The location and configuration of this smallish but comfortable structure was ideal.

The Webb's were of course to become family as Sharon and I were married in 1963, 12 years later. Later on, I would tease Sharon about how I had got into her bedroom at an early age! And, Bob Webb, now Grampy to our children and grandchildren, is 95 at this

writing and living in Bellingham, WA, near his son and daughter-in-law, Mike and Barb Webb.

Dad was appointed Principal at Ogden Community Consolidated Grade School District No. 212 beginning with the academic year 1951-52. The assignment also included teaching grades seven and eight. He occupied that position for 13 years, and his highest salary was \$6000. He supervised seven teachers and two staff, with enrollment of 140 in eight grades.

In 1951 Ogden elementary education was in transition. Three rural one-room schools were being closed with the creation of the new consolidated district, with the students to be bused into Ogden. An early task for Dad that first summer of 1951, soon after we arrived, was to clean out the old rural buildings and salvage whatever educational materials might have some use left in them. For that purpose Dad and Fern Silkey (always "Mr. Silkey"), the school custodian/bus driver, took the brand new school bus around and filled it up with stuff. Dick and I rode along for a wonderful adventure.

In the early '50's television was heading for mass acceptance. In 1950, only nine percent of homes had TVs. By 1970, that number was ninety-six percent. For awhile we had only the radio. Most weekdays at six pm a program would be broadcast which was of interest to us boys. Usually we had dinner (called supper then) just before. After listening to The Lone Ranger, Gunsmoke, The Green Hornet or Tarzan, among others, it would be outside to play until dark.

Mom had only a ninth grade education but one experience proves that she was an expert child psychologist. One summer day when I was about eight, playmate Johnny Bensyl produced a pack of his father's cigarettes. A small group of boys, Dick and I included, climbed a tree that bordered the school grounds on the far north side--empty school grounds on one side and a corn field on the other. We proceeded to smoke the whole pack.

Upon arriving home Mom met us at the front door, saying,

I know you boys have been smoking. Let me tell you, it is not necessary for you to hide if you want to smoke. In fact, right now let's go down to Alsip's (grocery store). I will buy you each a pack of cigarettes and you can smoke the whole pack at the kitchen table.

By then I was terrified and declined the opportunity. But Dick, somewhat stubbornly, agreed to it. So Mom and I watched him smoke several from the pack she bought him. From that day forward, neither Dick nor I had any interest in smoking.

We lived in the Webb house for two or three years. Our second home was a structure owned by Ralph Sadler. Ralph was a farmer who raised cash crops along with a few beef cattle, and a couple of horses. He seemed to fancy himself as sort of a cowboy but this cowboy went on to become the Ogden bank president. Childless, Ralph and his wife, Hazel, seemed to take a liking to our entire family.

The Sadler farm was sited adjacent to the city limits and stretched out east and north. Our house, a rental, stood adjacent to the Sadler farmhouse. This location was the ideal base of operations for a couple of boys. To the north and east we could get out into the fields. A short distance south the town dump awaited exploration. A pond nearby presented frozen surface in winter, the scene of hockey games played with brooms and cans. And westward lay the town, with all its opportunities.

Both Dick and I had paper delivery routes at this time. His was the Chicago Daily News and mine was the Danville Commercial News. One wintry Sunday morning Dick was due to get up early to deliver the Sunday edition of the Daily News. He did not feel well, having soreness in his neck. The parents quickly (and correctly) diagnosed mumps.

Dick was immediately confined to bed and I was appointed to emergency newspaper delivery. In a special concession, Dad drove me on the route--we were seldom granted such benefits. Returning home upon completion of the newspaper route, I entered the house complaining of a sore neck, and thereby joined Dick as a co-patient for a few days of mumps.

We had a television by then. It came in handy as a distraction while we were sick with the mumps. In general, I remember being big on watching Disney, especially Davy Crockett, starring Fess Parker.

Probably Dad's crowning achievement during the 1950's was to preside over the construction of a new school building. The old, two-story gray stucco structure that had served for over 50 years with four classrooms, high ceilings and no gymnasium was demolished and replaced by the sleek modern '50's design which included six classrooms of four instructional spaces (two grades to a room), a music room, an art room, a tiny gymnasium complete with a stage and locker rooms, all on one floor. Dedicated in 1955, that structure is already nearly 60 years old.



Dad (L.) with school board members at dedication of
the new Ogden Grade School, 1955

And then in 1956 we moved into the house that I consider being where I "grew up". I was 13 when we moved there, and was still based there (away at college) when Sharon and I were married in 1963. The folks remained there until moving to Wilmington in 1965.

The value of the property in 1956 was appraised at \$7000, \$500 for the land and \$6500 for the structures. The previous owners were apparently in the process of defaulting on their mortgage, due probably to both unpaid taxes and behind on payments. A deal was created whereby my parents could acquire the place via a contract assignment--take over payments and taxes--for the sum of three thousand dollars. This was accomplished via a bank loan. Terms of the loan called for a five percent interest rate with payments of fifty dollars per month for five years.

The home was smallish but well located at 203 West Main. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), one of three Ogden churches, was two doors west with the parsonage between the church and us. The Methodist Church, which we attended, was in the next block east, with the village hall (which contained the library) and the business district just beyond. The schools, both high and grade were two blocks north.

There was no basement and Dick and I became well acquainted with the crawl space over time as frozen water pipes in the winter often needed attention there and we were assigned the duty. A floor furnace provided heat. An unheated utility room had been added a few years before our arrival and it was there that Mom did the laundry. The water heater, electric, was a console type and placed in the kitchen.

The bathroom contained no tub, only a shower. In the original bedroom Dick and I shared a double bed. That bed got smaller over time as we grew. The folks' bedroom

was in the front of the house, occupying the space that had surely been built as the parlor. A small dining room, usually used for Mom's sewing projects, completed the layout. The house was destroyed in the tornado of 1996.

Dad enjoyed outdoor work in his off-duty time. Most summers he cultivated two good-sized gardens. One was at our house; the other at Mrs. Miller's, a widow who lived a block away. Most summer days Dick and I were required to assist in the gardening as well as other household chores. We usually grumbled about it because it delayed play time. But Dad was fair about it and there was always plenty of time for boy stuff.

We received early instruction in sports from Dad, who had been a high school athlete. One unusual point about him was pitching a softball. A right-hander in all other respects, he threw both softballs and baseballs overhanded with his right. But he always pitched the softball (underhand) with his left. He had no explanation for doing so--he just had always done it that way.

We had several traveling vacations during these years. They included Yellowstone, Mt. Rushmore and the Black Hills, as well as Niagara Falls and Springfield, IL. Everywhere we went, long trip or short, we usually received history lessons from Dad. Of course, living in the Land of Lincoln, Dad had a wealth of material on him.

Dad occasionally had business with the Champaign County Superintendent of Schools. On those occasions Dick and I would ride into Urbana with him. While business was transacted we explored the big old courthouse building on our own.

With two doors and a three speed manual transmission, the 1951 Ford served us well for eight years. I drove it for my driver's license test. Sharon and I were dating then and all of her driving experience had been with an automatic transmission. Sensing an opportunity, I convinced her she should learn to use the manual transmission. And so there were many occasions when I gave instruction, it being necessary to sit very close to supervise the shifting practice.

As a comfortable middle class family we wanted for nothing we needed but did not have a lot of luxuries. The first television arrived probably around 1953, while we were still in the Webb house. Mom was still making nice clothes for us. We had great bicycles and sporting equipment. I later acquired a portable radio, which I treasured for some time. As a young teen I desperately wanted a motor scooter but that was never to happen.

I was surprised to learn one day in 1959 that the folks had purchased a new car. I was expecting that the old '51 job would be around for ten years or so. The new one, a Ford Fairlane, a black four-door, featured an automatic transmission. Being a driver now myself, (age 17), and knowing there was no way I would have a car of my own, this one was going to be my dating and cruising machine.

The folks created an environment of enrichment in all that Dick and I did. We were encouraged to try new things and to stretch our participation in our activities. Almost every summer we went to a camp. I remember several church camps. Also, I attended music camp on the University of Illinois campus. Then there was a six week camp, also at the university, engineering campus this time, sponsored by the National Science Foundation. Several times Dad took us to the annual Engineering Open House at the university in the spring. One summer we took instrumental music lessons--Dick on his baritone horn and I on the trumpet. Agony!

About once a season Dad, sometimes with Mom joining, too, took us to an Illinois football game. How impressive to be with a crowd of 75,000 when you are a kid! And there were occasional outings to other campus events, mostly sports. I recall indoor track, outdoor track, wrestling and basketball.

Over the years Dick and I worked at a succession of summer jobs and I came to realize later that the parents had perhaps more involvement in some of those than I had realized at the time. Early on, we learned to use the lawn mower and our starter model was the old-fashioned reel unit. And it was an old one, with steel wheels. But Dad maintained it in pristine condition, as he did with all his tools.

Then one day a motorized rotary mower, a Lawn Boy, appeared. Soon, first I, and later Dick, too, went into the lawn mowing business. Summer days we could be seen riding around town on a bike holding the handle bar with one hand and towing the mower with

the other as we commuted to one customer site after another. During this phase of our work life we wore out that first mower and were working with the second Lawn Boy by the time we moved on.

One day I absent-mindedly prepared to mow our own lawn by filling the mower's gasoline tank. We kept a five-gallon can of gas at the ready, stored in the garage. In those days it was customary to switch out the antifreeze solution at the end of the winter and to store it in a five-gallon container, as well, until needed again for the next winter. The two containers sat side by side in the garage.

While filling the mower tank I noted that the "gasoline" had an unusual orange color, but, with my mind elsewhere, probably either on sports or love, I paid no further attention. And I was perplexed and puzzled when the engine would not start. It took either Dick or Dad (I do not remember which) to determine the problem and break the news to me.

Dad did not reprimand me--he rarely lost his temper with us--he simply instructed me to take the mower to Molt's Service Shop, explain to Mr. Molt what had happened (that was embarrassing) and request that he service it. This was a good lesson on the need to concentrate on the work at hand.

At some point we expanded to include farm work. We cut corn out of beans, mainly for Ralph Sadler, and some for Ralph Fenters. Each morning day after day we would enter the bean field to start the day's work. It required continuous walking from one end of

the field to the other, then return. In the early morning the bean plants were wet with the morning dew. In minutes our jeans were soaked from the waist down. By late morning the pants were once again dry.

One summer I was the only male member of an eight person detasseling team. It was wonderful! Two of the members were the Bradley girls, Sandra and Karen. Both, older than I, were good-looking and personable. Their mother, who drove the machine, was the crew chief. Come to think of it, all of the girls were good-looking and personable.

One day, cruising along in the corn field, the machine came to an abrupt halt. Uh, oh-- the foreman, the company man, had hopped on the back. He had been following us on foot for awhile and he was very upset that we were having so much fun singing and carrying on that we were failing to pull all the tassels. We received a severe tongue-lashing. Mrs. Bradley was embarrassed.

I spent several summers doing general farm work for the Sadler's. Terrific experiences for a townie.

I learned, several years after the fact, that Ralph Sadler had approached my parents with the proposal to hire us. He planned to pay us one dollar per hour (this, in the mid-1950's). My parents protested that we were not worth that much and so our starting pay began at fifty cents per hour.

Then came my introduction to business. The parents may have had some involvement but one day we were sitting in the car parked in an Ogden business district slot, to be approached by R. Robert Webb (Grampy, later). He offered to employ me for summers and Saturdays at the Hunter Lumber Company, later Hunter-Webb Lumber Company. My pay started out at \$1.25 per hour. And several years of wonderful work experiences ensued. Not to mention, that in 1963 I was permitted to marry the boss's daughter!

Dad suffered a heart attack in the spring of 1961. It turned out to be mild but gave us a scare at the time. I was called out of class to drive Mom and him to Mercy Hospital in Urbana. After a stay of a few days he came home to recuperate and soon went back to work. A former smoker (he had quit a few years prior), he was overweight. Following the illness he went on a diet, dropping 20 pounds from 190 to 170. He kept that weight off for the rest of his life.

In 1963 the folks purchased a new car. Former neighbor Bill Freeman, who had relocated to Rantoul and was working for Rogers Chevrolet there, handled the sale. The new one was a green two-door Chevrolet Biscayne. Total cost was \$2700.

This event was not nearly as exciting for me as the previous car purchase, as I was away at college and my wedding was scheduled for the summer. Indeed, Sharon and I purchased our first car that same summer, a Volkswagen beetle, blue. Complete with a radio, the purchase price was \$1600. The typical cost to fill the ten-gallon gas tank was \$2.30.



Twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, 1966

Dad's Ogden career ended with the end of the academic year 1963-64. After one year (1964-65) of teaching in grades 7-9 in the Homer system, Dad joined the Wilmington system (District No 209-U) in the summer of 1965. Wilmington, at 110 miles north of Ogden, took the folks even farther from their roots. His last contract, signed in February 1968, was for a salary of \$9060.

The devastating tornado of 1996 destroyed much of Ogden and effectively eliminated many of the spots that live in my memory. In the two-block stretch of West Main that included my homesite only the United Methodist Church remains and it had been severely damaged. Wiped out, west to east, were the Christian Church, its parsonage, our home, Mrs. Turner's home next door, the Methodist parsonage, the home on the east side of the church and the village hall.

To the north and damaged then but repaired, the grade school building of which Dad was the constructing principal, remains.

Wilmington. The folks moved to Wilmington in the summer of 1965, renting an apartment there in a building at 200 South Kankakee. At first they rented out the Ogden house but sold it when the renters did not stay long. Lost were belongings that the folks had left in storage in the attic at Ogden. The renters had taken everything from the attic, including our childhood toys that my parents had been saving for their grandchildren.



Dick & Dad, September 1967, about a year before Dad's death

Dad was preparing to enter his 36th year as an educator when he died July 31, 1968. Suffering his second heart attack, he collapsed in the shower and passed away immediately. The rescue squad responded quickly but nothing could be done. At the time of his passing Dad was 58, Mom was 56, Dick was 24 and I was 25. Daughter Melissa, my parents' first grandchild, had been born the previous January.



Dad, a few days before his death in July 1968

Both Dick and I were in the Army at the time, Dick stationed at Fort Sill, OK and I at Fort Carson, CO. We both were granted special leave to come home. A visitation was held at the Wilmington Funeral Home with the funeral service conducted at the Freese Funeral Home in St. Joseph--Ogden had no in-town funeral service. Interment was at Evergreen Cemetery in Kinmundy, following a graveside service conducted by the Masons. Dad had returned home.



The brothers in uniform, c. 1968-69

Mom's Later Years

Mom remained in the Wilmington apartment for the next 12 years. She kept herself busy with clerking at the Walgreens store, church, and friendships. For some of that time Dick lived with her when he returned home from the Army. Then he went on to graduate school.

My military service ended in September of 1969. Returning from Colorado to our townhouse in Villa Park, IL meant we were close by--50 miles. And that December Tim was born. Mom spent some time with us to help welcome Tim home and assist Sharon.

That proximity lasted until 1972, when we moved to Hilton Head Island, SC, then later to Grand Rapids.

The Ogden home was sold in 1973, and the selling price was \$10,500. This effectively ended the Howell presence in Ogden.

In August of 1977 Mom purchased a new car. This was a gray two-door Oldsmobile Cutlass, purchased from Community Olds-Pontiac in Wilmington. She paid \$5900 for it. She held on to this car for several years, eventually giving it to her grandchildren. Tim and Missy dubbed it “the Rhino”.

On January 12th, 1980, Mom and Clarence Brockman were married in the Wilmington United Methodist Church. It was Clarence’s third marriage. He was 68 and Mom, 67. A long-time Wilmington resident, Clarence was a retired custodian from many years with Kimberly Clark. He was an astute money manager and was comfortably well off. He told Mom that he would provide all of the couple’s financial support and if Mom wanted to continue to work she should use all her earnings for whatever she wanted.



Clarence & Mom wedding, 1980

Mom and Clarence lived in Clarence's home along the Kankakee River at the south edge of Wilmington. As it turned out, Mom was financially astute also, saving most of her income. The couple enjoyed each other, spending time with friends, church activities and traveling. Their trips included the Holy Land, Egypt, Japan and Caribbean cruises. Two of Clarence's three children lived in and near Wilmington, and his third, George, was in Wisconsin.

When Clarence's health began to fail they relocated to a retirement community, Westwood Oaks, in Kankakee. It was a new, very modern and well equipped place and they were comfortable there. They moved into an independent living unit and later transferred to assisted living. Clarence died in 1993.

Mom continued to live at Westwood Oaks and fell ill in the spring of 1999--a stroke and a broken hip. The discharge diagnosis was "dementia with a touch of Alzheimer's". With that, Mom's mind was gone. That summer I traveled between Grand Rapids and Kankakee 14 out of 16 weekends to see after her care. By late summer we had arranged for her to be transferred to Clark Retirement home in Grand Rapids, a half-mile from us.

Mom lived four more years, at Clark. The advent of the Alzheimer's changed her personality. She had always been friendly in an introverted, reserved kind of way. But now she was charming and cheerful, with a ready smile for everyone. She became a staff favorite at Clark. Confined to a wheelchair, she insisted that we wheel her around the place whenever we visited. She enjoyed being on the move.

She surprised us one day as she recalled a poem that she had memorized and recited while in the first grade.

Roses on my shoulders,
Petals on my feet,
I'm my daddy's darling,
Don't you think I'm sweet?

Mom was 90 at the time.

Mom died August 27, 2003 at the age of 91. I was 60 at that time and Dick was 59.

Mom's funeral was held at the Neal-Linton Funeral Home in Kinmundy, across the street from where we had lived for three years over 50 years ago. She is buried beside Dad in the Kinmundy Evergreen Cemetery and after 35 years apart they are together again forever.

Dick

Graduating from Ogden High School in 1962, Dick enrolled in the fall at Northern Illinois University at DeKalb. With a major in history and a minor in political science, he graduated in the spring of 1967 with a BS degree.

In June of 1968 Dick entered the Army for a two year term of service. He joined the Artillery branch, trained as an artillery surveyor (MOS 82C20). Assigned to Fort Sill, OK, most of his military career was spent as an office clerk.

Upon discharge from the Army Dick returned home to live with Mom. Home was Wilmington by then, and Mom had been a widow for two years. He stayed with her for a period of time then entered graduate school. In 1973 he obtained his Master's degree in American Studies at the University of Maryland in College Park. This major was comprised of a combination of history, literature and English.

He stayed on at Maryland for two more years of graduate study before transferring to Michigan State University. where he graduated in 1987 with a PhD in American Studies. Very frugal, he took his time with the studies and the dissertation, living off the GI Bill.

Dick's dissertation was an achievement of which he was deservedly very proud. Its title was:

Harvard University and the Indochina War: From the Takeover of University Hall in the Spring of 1969 Through the Aftermath of the Invasion of Cambodia and the Kent State Killings in the Spring of 1970

The work was completed in 1987 and Dick was later thrilled to learn that a copy was on file in the Harvard Library. Later still he was gratified to learn it was in use in Harvard history classes as one of the earliest studies of the impact of the Vietnam War on American life.

At some point he met Mary Ann Pilger. Born September 3, 1941 and a resident of Lansing, Mary Ann came from a well-to-do background. Her father had been an executive with General Motors. Mary Ann grew up in a neighborhood at 2823 N. Cambridge, a couple of blocks from the governor's residence. She had trained as a teacher and apparently worked in that profession for a time. The couple married December 7, 1979.



Dick & Mary Ann, 1979

Mary Ann suffered from severe emotional illnesses, which worsened as time went on. Dick eventually became her *de facto* guardian and assumed responsibility for his wife's daily welfare. For awhile, prescriptions helped her maintain a near normal lifestyle. But when she went off her medications, there was no telling what she might do.

One night in Lansing Dick was awakened by the police and informed that Mary Ann had been pulled over by the Indiana State Police on the I-80 Indiana Tollway. She was driving in the wrong direction in the fog. Dick was not aware she had left the house.

A later time, while they lived in Lake Forest, IL, Dick awakened from a sound sleep to see police officers staring at him in the bed. Mary Ann had called them, saying there was a strange man in her bed with a knife.

While living in Lansing Dick handled most of the everyday chores and errands. Mary Ann seldom went out, especially on her own. They owned a few residential rental properties in the area and Dick managed those rentals. They also owned some commercial properties. A safety deposit box contained silver table services, a number of rings and other jewelry items, along with a few gold coins.

In addition to Lansing and Lake Forest, the couple lived in Boston for a time. They occupied a townhouse on Beacon Hill not far from the Boston Common and the State Capitol.

While in Illinois Dick obtained his teachers certificate for high school teaching. Somewhat hampered by Mary Ann's unpredictable mental health, his work experience in that field was scarce and infrequent, consisting mostly of temporary assignments and substituting.

Their last relocation together was to Williams Bay, WI. The home, at 75 Dartmouth, has an interesting history. It had been designed and built by the first director of the Yerkes Observatory. The observatory was across the street on a wooded parcel of about forty

acres. Built of stone, the observatory building resembles a castle. For many years it enjoyed the reputation for having the largest refracting telescope in the world.

A prized possession of Dick's was a photograph of Albert Einstein found in the house. Einstein's first visit to America occurred in 1921 and Yerkes, operated by the University of Chicago, was one of the stops on his tour of the country. The photograph includes the distinguished visitor along with observatory staff and the telescope in the background. That photograph hangs in our house at present.

Dick was active in the American Legion, in the Elkhorn (Walworth County), WI chapter, serving as county commander at one point. Dick was proud of his military service and his Legion service. A major task for the Legion each year was to put flags on the graves of deceased servicepeople at cemeteries throughout Walworth County. Afterward, Dick reported to us the number that his group had placed.

Mary Ann died unexpectedly in 1998 of a heart attack. For awhile thereafter Dick was rather rootless. He took a factory job with Motorola in Harvard, IL, which is where he met Sandra Duncan. In 2006, Dick sold the Williams Bay house. A large estate sale liquidated the extensive furniture holdings, including a number of valuable antiques that had remained from Mary Ann's holdings.

Dick moved in with Sandra, who was living in a Delavan, WI townhouse at the time, to be with her for the rest of his life. After a short time they moved to a home in Janesville and it was there that Dick spent his final years.



Dick & Sandra, April 2010, about one month prior to his death

Sandra offers this reminiscence of their time together:

We met at Motorola in 1999. I was attracted to him almost immediately, but, of course, he was very aloof. We would talk occasionally. His job was eliminated and I continued to work there. Eventually, I'm sorry to say, I forgot all about him.

Soon after the announcement (this was January 1, 2001) that Motorola was moving to China and Mexico, Richard called me. Needless to say, I was very surprised by his call--I don't know how or why he would have even remembered me. There was quite a time span there--almost a year and maybe even more--since he had left Motorola!

We talked for a few minutes on the phone. He never did like to chat over the phone and we agreed to meet at a local establishment for a glass of wine. We talked about Motorola closing its facilities in Harvard, IL; where we both had

worked, said our goodbyes and I just figured that was that and I would never hear from him again.

I was once again surprised when Richard called about a week later and asked me out for dinner. Naturally, the answer was yes. We had a lovely dinner at the Duck Inn, a nice restaurant in the area and we both enjoyed our evening. He called again to go out for Valentine's Day and of course, I said yes. He brought me flowers, a lovely mixed bouquet with lilies and carnations and we again went to the Duck Inn for dinner and that's where we went every year after that for Valentine's Day. In his own way, Dick was very sentimental.

In our time together we traveled a lot. Richard loved to go out for a drive, so we often traveled to places within an hour or two of our home. Galena, IL was a favorite destination for both of us; Monroe, WI was at least a monthly destination for cheese and a stop at Baumgardner's for a sandwich and beer. There were so many day trips that I couldn't possibly remember them all, except to recall how Dick enjoyed being out and about, going here and there. He loved Mackinac Island and he really seemed to enjoy Madeline Island in the Apostle Islands group, in Lake Superior.

Our trip to London was one of the most enjoyable experiences we shared; he loved the history and visiting Churchill's war offices and visiting Westminster Abbey. One thing we always wanted to do again was visit England; sadly, it was not to be.

Of course he was most proud of his dissertation "Harvard and the Indochina War".

There are so many things that Richard and I shared and I wish I could remember them all. Even the bad times, i.e., when he broke his leg slipping on the ice while in Monroe, and the devastation of hearing his prognosis, all the trips to Madison, his calm demeanor through all his pain, he never once complained. Above all, he was always a gentleman.

In September of 2007 Dick was diagnosed with renal cancer and a large tumor, along with one kidney was surgically removed. But the cancer was well advanced and the prognosis was pessimistic. He enjoyed his final years with Sandra's loving support and care. Dick died May 7, 2010. His ashes are buried next to Mary Ann's in lovely rural Cobblestone Cemetery near Walworth, WI.