Too often children never know of their parents early years; what they did as children and as young adults; what they endured while growing up and what made them develop into the parents with whom they (the children) became familiar at some later time.

One of you suggested some time ago that we write down our recollections of the past so that you can understand what caused us to be as we are, and indirectly, what carries over into your own make-up from our past.

Our grandparents: I have very few recollections of my paternal grandparents. They lived in a second floor apartment on Chester Avenue in West Philadelphia and I do recall our many visits to see them on Sundays, after Church. We'd always go to the Upper Dublin Lutheran Church in Ambler as it was very close to our home on Butler Avenue. Mother taught Sunday School (The Christomathean Class), Dad played the organ and we children all sang in the choir at one time or another, as well as participate in Luther League and other activities.

Anyway, after Church we'd usually go out to eat our Sunday Dinner. Mother would save enough from her weekly food allowance of $25 to make this possible. I believe that a full course dinner in those days cost about $1.65. We'd eat at Niblock's in Ambler, William Penn Inn in Gwynedd, Spring Mountain House in Schwenksville and many other places, including Churches in the country that were noted for their family style meals. Occasionally Dad would take us to the Poconos to places like the Tannersville Inn.

Thus it would be that, following a Sunday meal at one of the nearby restaurants we'd be off to see the paternal grandparents. I was prone to car sickness if I rode in the back seat so I usually got to ride in the front after proving to Mother and Dad that I really was capable of throwing up if left in the back too long.

Grandmother always kept a small round tin can, about seven inches across, striped in black and white with red roses on it on the small side table in her living room. In it were little squares of Nestles' chocolate. Since we were usually very good at Grandfather's (under penalty of death) we were nearly always allowed to have a piece or two to relieve the boredom of adult discussion.

Mother and Dad went to Bermuda when I was eight or ten years old and it was decreed that I would stay at the grandparent's apartment. I don't think they were particularly fond of grandchildren or any children, but somehow they agreed to care for me during the absence of Mother and Dad.

My only recollection of that visit was that Aunt Carrie was assigned to take me to Willow Grove Park one day during my stay. I don't remember how many rides I was permitted to go on but my one recurring memory was of Aunt Carrie's packed brown bag lunch. She had made tomato sandwiches but the tomato was slightly overripe, causing a taste I still can't stand to this day. I must have bravely finished the sandwich out of consideration for Aunt Carrie and avoided gagging somehow. We rode the Philadelphia Rapid Transit (PRT) trolley from Philadelphia to Willow Grove that, in those days, used tokens that cost 7½ cents, so the total transportation cost 15 cents each.

Grandfather was a fine organist, having studied here and abroad (Paris). He gave many recitals and played for several churches in Philadelphia over the years as their principal organist, among them was the First Baptist Church and the Swedenborgian Church. Dad was an organist also, but more as an avocation. He would substitute at various churches while the regular organists were absent or on vacation, and even substituted for his father at times. Pop liked to show us what an organ could do and would try all the stops on us so we could hear the tremendous range of these instruments. Both Dad and Grandfather were perfectionists at the keyboard, putting feeling into the music that many musicians could never do. Dad became the regular organist at Upper Dublin when Edna Hilleman resigned, and he remained such for many years. In his last years he played at a church in Dunedin, Florida.

It's funny what sticks in your mind. I don't recall what caused it or to whom it was said but Grandfather told one of us who must have been doing something he felt was non productive, "If you can't help, don't hinder."

Sometimes Mother would walk us to a park near the Chester Avenue apartment. The park was located next to a fire company and we loved to look at the fire engines, some of which were still horse drawn.

On the maternal side we only had Grandma Vollers. She had been a nurse at hospitals in Philadelphia and environs. When she stopped work she came to live with us in Ambler. She did the sewing and baby sitting when needed and occupied a center room in Barnacre. My only recollection of her is that she was always there.

We did play dirty tricks on her at times. I remember a tapping device we'd attach to her window. Then, by means of a long thread we'd tap on the window with the nail or washer fastened to the end of the thread. This would get her attention. When she went to the window to see what was making the noise we'd pull the thread hard and the tapper

would fall away, leaving her baffled.

Grandma always kept a chamber pot under her bed that she used at night instead of going down the hall to the bathroom. One time we put Bromo Seltzer or some other quick foaming powder in her pot. We never did see or hear of the result, of course, but my guess is that the foam must have been spectacular.

Grandma had been divorced, but in those days it was forbidden to discuss such things so we knew nothing of the circumstances and even less about the errant Grandpa Vollers. They did have four children: Uncle Lud, Uncle John, Mother and Aunt Dutch. I don't know what happened to the boys after the divorce but the girls were farmed out to Uncle Tobe's in Staunton, Virginia. Uncle Tobe was a Prufer, and was Grandma's brother. There they lived until Grandma brought them North to Philadelphia.

My parents: I remember Mama. She was the disciplinarian. I don't recall Dad ever punishing us. Mother also controlled the family finances with an envelope for each expense: Church, food, vacation, new cars, etc. I never heard her complain of any lack of money, even during the great depression of the thirties.

Mother was also deeply religious. We had prayers at mealtimes. We tried Bible readings also, but that didn't last long. As children we'd say our bedtime prayers at Mother's knee. We went to Church and Sunday School every Sunday, at least once; not only because of our participation in the various functions as mentioned before, but because of her deep seated religious convictions. She was noted for her Sunday School lessons, particularly the Christmas Story.

In the early days I remember Mother's hair that hung below her waist. During the day she wore it in a bun at the back of her head but at night she'd let it down and comb it out.

Mother was not a great driver. She's the only person I know who had a car lie down and roll over for her. However, she was able to get by with only a few accidents - none major. I don't think she really ever enjoyed driving.

Other than making us sit on a chair in a corner for punishment or withholding permission to do something we wanted to do, I only recall one other punishment that Mother later denied she ever used - but it was effective. Apparently I was being particularly annoying one time and would not quiet down. She filled the bathtub with water and dunked

my head in it long enough for me get the idea that my behaviour required adjustment. She never had to use that method again. I was a fast learner where fear was concerned.

One time all three of us (befor Gordy) were being particularly demanding of Mother's time and attention because she announced that she would only respond when addressed as "Agnes", so if we wanted something we had to ask Agnes for whatever it was for the rest of the day.

Mother always managed to have household help and for many years we had black Lucy living with us at Barnacre. She was named Lucy Anna Mosey Jackson Woods after two husbands. Lucy did some of the cooking and all of the washing and cleaning. Later we had Mrs. Hahn, wife of the Church sexton, clean at least once a week. This was after Lucy had left.

Mother was an excellent cook and her meals were always tasty and hearty. We had one rule, however: We must eat everything on our plate. "Think of the starving Armenians", Mother would say. On Christmas morning, following the six a.m. Service at Church we'd have Swartleys and Browns join us for breakfast,at which time we usually had Gorton's Fish Roe, eggs and bacon.

We always ate well at home, even during the depression. One reason was that we always had a large garden with tomatoes, sweet potatoes, lettuce, carrots, asparagus, beets, onions, cabbage, kohl rabi, corn, peas, squash, lima beans, etc. We'd all work together to keep it reasonably free of weeds. Dad also raised chickens for their eggs and for food. I recall collecting the eggs from the hen house, but don't remember killing any of the birds. I think Crawford did most of that dirty work. Thus I learned that a chicken neither sits or sets when she lays an egg. Rather she stands. Dad had two chicken houses. One was later converted into a private "residence" for Crawford. We always had egg layers and a rooster to look out for the girls. We usually had Rhode Island Reds or White Leghorns.

We originally bought our staple goods from the American Stores store in Ambler. It was not self service, and I remember the clerk using one of those long poles with a claw on the end to remove items from the upper shelves. I don't think there were paper bags in those days so you'd go the market with a market basket in which to carry your purchases. American Stores later became Acme Markets, a large Supermarket chain that still exists today.

Dad was the mild sort, especially around Mama. He

was nailing something to the chicken house one time and hit his thumb with the hammer. A "hell" came out of his mouth inadvertently and I felt obliged to inform Mother of this indiscretion. Pop got chewed out for swearing in front of one of the children.

Dad was a stockbroker and worked for several companies: National City Bank, Reynolds and Co., Hopper-Solliday, to name a few. At one time he had offices in Trenton, New Jersey and Philadelphia. He was on the road a lot and we children liked to go with him when invited. We'd always have a nice ride in the country and a good lunch at some restaurant that he had discovered. He did like to eat well. I'd go to his office in Philadelphia at times and throw paper airplanes out the window high up in the building. The planes would always soar around and around, buoyed by the air currents swirling about the tall buildings. We'd always eat at Stouffer's Restaurant on Chestnut Street where Dad would meet several of his cronies. They always had a table and a favorite waitress near the rear of the room, on the Sansome Street side. It must have been held just for them as they always ate at that same table.

In 1938 Dad bought a fully furnished cabin at Cedarcroft on the Metedeconk River near Point Pleasant, N.J. that they called "Rawilki" for Raymond, Wilhelmina and kids, and we'd go there for vacations. It was there that Dad also bought an inboard boat of doubtful vintage and proven incompetence. Full out it might have made six knots per hour but the tides were, unfortunately, also six knots. The propeller was apparently not suited for the boat and we hooked up the steering rope backwards so, on our first venture, we ran under the dock rather than pulling gracefully away from it.

My generation: I came into the world at 7:45 p.m. on February 4, 1920. I am told I was born in the middle of a blizzard in our home, a tenant house on the Seaver Estate on Montgomery Avenue in Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania. I spent the first night of my life sleeping between the Doctor and the Nurse, who were unable to get to their homes due to the drifting snow. Lest it be misunderstood I hasten to add that the Doctor was a woman, Faith Fetterman, and the nurse was Aunt Dutch (Carolina Brown). My sister, Faith, was later named for Dr. Fetterman, a personal friend of the family.

As mentioned before, my father was a stock broker and organist. My Mother was a secretary with Hutchison Ravinus, before she and Dad were married.

I either remember, or recall through others telling the story, that Crawford, who was 16 months older than I,

decided to run away from home one time (of course he talked me into going along). We had a grey metal pedal car. Mother, who was probably glad to see us go, had packed us a lunch and admonished us that we should not cross any of the streets. We didn't realize the limitation that this put on us when we started out but we couldn't have gotten very far. Of course Crawford was riding and I was pushing. We probably returned when the food was gone, but I don't really remember.

From Seaver's we moved to a house at 160 West Durham Street, a home on a hilly street in Chestnut Hill. It was the only home on that street with a garage. I believe this was in 1924. It was here that I started my first Engineering project of major proportions - a hole through the center of the Earth to China. I have a photograph to prove it.

Here Crawford started his interests in the opposite sex. He was exchanging views of his private parts (such as they were in those days) with a neighbor's daughter in the sandbox, when he was caught by Mother. Although this cut off the exploration phase in this instance, Crawford has more than made up for it in later years.

It was from this location that, in September 1925, I was entered in Elementary School. Scared, I ran back home right away, only to be brought back by Mother, who knew a good thing when she saw it.

I remember Schlacterly's candy store on Germantown Avenue, around the corner from 160 West Durham, where an abundance of penny candies were always available. We particularly liked the little pastel colored candy dots on the paper strips.

In 1926 we moved to Ambler in what is now the Club house for "The Woods"; on Butler Pike, North of Susquehanna Road. This building had been an old barn, covered with poison ivy. The 24" walls were sound but the old doors were replaced by ground to roof bay windows. I recall a happy childhood at "Barnacre", as the place was called. Dad paid $5000 for "Barnacre". The total tract of land consisted of 14 acres, half that we owned and half that the Walter Browns owned. Mr. Brown had been a patient of Aunt Dutch's and they had one child, Walter P. Brown, Jr., a.k.a. Bunny. Bunny and I were very close and grew up together.

"Barnacre" was a fun place. We worked hard at 40 cents an hour on the lawn and in the gardens. Dad had a big old Toro lawnmower with which we cut the grass. There was always weeding to be done in the large vegetable garden. In addition I loved to reclaim land so we cleared the area behind the barnyard wall to the little stream and beyond. We also hand dug a pool that was fed by the stream.

Summer time brought picnics with the Fausts, the Warren Maxsons, the Studenmunds, or the Swartleys and various Church groups. We'd cleared the "back forty" so had a nice place by the creek under the large maple, where we'd built a fireplace. It was there that we cooked out hot dogs and hamburgers. There was always croquet and badminton for the children, while the grown-ups sat around in those ubiquitous home made wooden kit chairs and talked. Mother's birthday (September 5) was the same as Henry Faust's so that was cause for a picnic each year. There was always home made German potato salad, wilted lettuce salad, baked beans, corn on the cob and other picnic goodies, including various pies and cakes.

One of my favorite pastimes was burning the fields each Fall and we'd have fun planning how to set the fires so that they wouldn't get away from us. We'd watch the fires, standing with our brooms nearby to beat them out if they progressed too far too fast and became a threat to the neighboring fields.

Bunny and I spent many hours together as we were growing up. We experienced much together. He had a goat that he kept in a goat house on their property, named "Brownlea" (adjacent to "Barnacre".) Aunt Dutch had bought a goat cart, too, with the idea that the children could ride behind the goat. The goat had other ideas, however, and refused to be harnessed to the cart. He'd get all tangled up in the harness and finally had to be released, kicking and squealing. It is impossible to forget the odor from that goat house.

All the children were taught to swim by Aunt Dutch in their pond that we'd watched being dug by horse and scoop. We had a kayak that I'd built at Camp Miller at Shawnee on the Delaware and a raft made of old fence rails. Gold fish were numerous in the pond and had grown to great size. One time Bunny and I built a diving helmet from a five gallon can and an old air pump of Dad's. We took turns using it and I can still remember the water rising and falling at about chin level inside the helmet with each stroke of the tire pump. Since the helmet was not weighted someone had to hold the diver down while someone else pumped.

One day Bunny and I were playing near Butler Pike. I forget the reason why the old tulip poplar had to be climbed but Bunny began the ascent. About twenty feet up in that tree he reached for another limb but made contact with a high voltage power line. Fortunately the shock jarred him loose from the tree and he fell to the ground, breaking contact. He actually hit the ground running, heading for home and his Mother. The only damage, fortunately, was a scar on his hand where he had touched the wire.

In the 'Olden days' there were no school buses and in good weather we'd ride our bikes the mile and a half to Matthias Sheeleigh Elementary School in Upper Dublin. In inclement weather Mother would drive us to school in the car. When we got to Ambler High School we rode our bikes until we became licensed drivers at age sixteen. Then, sometimes, we could get one of the cars and drive ourselves there. I took the Academic course of study for College preparation. I was never an outstanding student but made my share of the honor roll. I was never interested in sports of any kind so played nothing. With my height (6'-1" and my weight 130#) in those days I might have been a basketball player had I desired to run that much.

Matthias Sheeleigh covered grades 1 through 8 and Ambler High, grades 9 through 12. I graduated from High School in June, 1937.

Next door to us at Barnacre was a farm with milk cows. Crawford and I went there one day to watch Vern Taylor milk the cows. There were kittens around the barn who knew what fresh milk tasted like and would hurry to the cow shed when Vern was milking. He would shoot a squirt of fresh milk in each of their faces from about eight feet away. His aim was good and the kittens loved it.

Another pleasant memory is that of hot summer nights after cutting the grass, when Dad would suggest we get Darlene Ice Cream Molds. These were made by Dolly Madison and resembled spumoni. We'd sit in our parents bedroom and enjoy these special treats.

In 1934 I had a route and delivered the Literary Digest by bicycle to about two dozen customers. Shortly thereafter the Digest went out of business although I don't believe I was the direct cause. I never really enjoyed salesmanship and hated to sell tickets of any kind, especially those to High School stage productions.

As youngsters we'd occasionally be invited to go fishing with some of Dad's friends on a boat out of Love Point on the Chesapeake Bay. We'd usually catch Croakers and they were good eating. Unfortunately pollution has made them virtually extinct in recent years. Later Uncle Warren had a boat named the Kay Bee II after Aunt Beatrice, which he kept on the Choptank River, also on the Chesapeake Bay. We'd be invited to spend a weekend on the boat occasionally.

Snow time was a good time for the children. We'd hitch a train of sleds behind a car and be towed over the snow-packed roads by Dad. We used to use Mother's metal trays as sleds and slide down the banks at Brownlea. We built

snow forts and igloos and occasionally went to the Pennsylvania Society for the Deaf or the Manufacturer's Country Club to sled on the steep hills. Summer activities included work around the place, the digging of the pool on the stream, croquet, badminton, swimming and kayaking in our homemade vessel. The bottom of the kayak was rounded, made of barrel staves so it was difficult to balance unless you knew the secret of keeping your knees tight against the sides of the boat. We liked to offer rides in the boat to unsuspecting guests who would nearly always end up soaking wet. Ambler Theater movies were 25 cents. With a box of Jujubees for a nickel you could have a great afternoon.

It was at Barnacre that we learned to operate stick shift cars (that was all there was in those days). This was a ritual that took place as we neared the magic legal driving age of 16. We always had two cars, mostly purchased new, but I remember one used Cadillac that Dad had obtained somewhere for the princely sum of $400. That should have told him something. It was so big that the first time I got in the back I forgot its size, missed the seat and sat down on the floor. This was the car that had three flat tires in one day on a trip to the Poconos. It was also the car that I succeeded in tearing off the left front fender when I turned a corner too sharply at Idell's cottage at Scot Run and didn't see a rock concealed by ferns.

Then there was the Plymouth with which I encountered the battery powered warning light on Butler Pike near Bethlehem Pike. I was proud of my newly acquired driving skills so as I proceeded toward Ambler one day I noticed Pauline Haff in her yard. Since she was one of my favorites at the time I leaned far out to the right and waved to her. Unfortunately the car also leaned far out to the right and made contact with the side of this blinking light structure, which perversely collapsed on the right side of the car. There it lay, blinking lts baleful eye. Embarrassment ran rampant. I had to get out of there. So I drove away leaving the structure listing toward the road. I never did see Pauline's reaction to this. I guess the insurance company paid for the damage because I reported the incident to the folks when I got home because the car had a few scratches along the side. I still can't drive past that spot without recalling the incident.

In the summer of 1937 Al Drager and I received parental permission to drive to Niagara Falls in his 1927 Chevy. I had just graduated from High School. Al was a good friend from Church and an excellent mechanic. We packed food and clothing in the car and took a spare can of gasoline fastened to the fender, just in case we should run short on the trip. Gas stations weren't as numerous in those days as they are

today. Anyway, off we went and we reached Niagara Falls without any incident that I recall. I no longer remember how long we were gone but when we arrived back home we decided to put the spare gasoline in the car's tank. Imagine our surprise to discover that the can was completely empty!

The Idells let us use their Scot Run cottage in the Poconos the Summer of 1936 for a three week family vacation. It had a pool fed by a mountain stream by means of a hydraulic ram. I never saw the pool with more than a few feet of water in one end of it. We used to invite friends to join with us while we were at the cottage, so it was that Carol and Ruth Swartley were there one time. It must have been the era of unisex bathing suits because Dad apparently couldn't find his and thought Carol was wearing it. Much to her embarrassment he went to her, standing in the pool, pulled out the front of her suit to check the manufacturer's label to prove that the suit was his. It was not. Carol was mortified and Dad got chewed out by Mother for looking at Carol's chest.

Church, in those days, was the center of activities for the community. We had Church suppers (ham or chicken salad), hobby shows, minstrel shows, strawberry festivals and plays, such as Julius Caesar, in which I took the part of Portia, wearing a long yellow wig.

Everyone worked at the Church Suppers. Mother was usually in charge of the dining room, Mrs. Swartley was usually in charge of the food. Grant Swartley would carve the hams, the girls would wait on the tables and the boys would clear the tables and do the dishes. The men would also serve the coffee. It's a shame that those suppers are virtually non-existent today because they engendered a spirit of cooperation and togetherness that seems to have disappeared.

Bunny was always the star of the hobby shows, with kayaks, dinghys, paddles and other beautifully made items. It was interesting to see the great variety of hobbies that the people of the church could produce.

Dr. Luther P. Hocker was pastor at Upper Dublin when we joined In 1927. He was followed by Martin L. Tozer, a much younger man. One time at Luther League Bunny, Al and I decided to lock the pastor out of the Parish House. We discovered the Mr. Tozer had a low humor threshold because when we arrived home word had already arrived concerning our indiscretion. I had to go back and apologize to the good Reverend that same evening.

I recall Sunday School classes on the lawn during the Summer months. Each class would select a tree where they could sit in the shade for the lesson. We'd bring our chairs out of the Parish House and return them after the lesson.

I was president of Luther League for a short spell. We had to work up the programs for each Sunday evening session. One time I asked Ruth to play her violin for the assembled audience, which she agreed to do. Apparently she was nervous because she made a false start, but she began again and completed the piece successfully. Luther League was never well attended so was disbanded after a few years.

I was always an average student - I got by. I was able to make the honor roll occasionally but most often the teachers' comments said something like, "Could do better" or "Annoys others". However, time came for me to go to college. I had always wanted to be an airline pilot and the accepted way to achieve that lofty goal in those days was to be trained by the Army Air Corps or the Navy. To get into their training programs one required two years of college. The question was, which college should I attend?

Mother and Dad were going to Clearwater Beach, Florida each winter by that time, so on one of those trips, probably in 1935 or 1936, they stopped by Pensacola, the Navy Flight Training Station and inquired as to a good college to get the best chance of admission to the flying school program. Apparently two officers told them that VMI was the place to go. This delighted Mother because she had been born in Covington, Virginia and had been raised in Staunton prior to her moving to Philadelphia. So the die was cast - it was to be VMI. I was accepted and in September, 1937 matriculated there. The Rat Line was in full force and the Rat Year (Freshman) was anything other than a picnic but VMI did several things for its Cadets. It turned the boys into men; it provided an excellent military (ROTC) training; it offered a superior education and developed a strong sense of honor in its graduates. I chose Civil Engineering as my degree course since it was supposed to be easier than Chemistry or Electrical and I didn't want Liberal Arts.

I also chose horse Cavalry as my military specialty since I didn't want to walk with the Infantry and didn't think the Field Artillery had as much glamour. The Cavalry selection turned out to be a tactical error since I soon discovered that horses didn't care for me, but we'll get into that later.

As mentioned before, when I matriculated at VMI the Rat Line was in full sway, lasting from the very first day until Easter. My trunk with all my possessions sat out in the Jackson Arch for several days before I could get

it up to my room on the fourth stoop. Every time I'd try to get it some upper classman would get me to go to the Post Exchange for him or get me in his room to see who won the Civil War. Being a Damnyankee (One word) had its drawbacks since I'd always believed the North was victorious. I never was able to convince the Southern cadets of that fact.

My first roommates were from Richmond, Virginia, known as "The Holy City". They were Tom Thrasher and Eddie Stumpf. Later we added Zeke Cann, also of Richmond. I roomed with these three with minimum conflict until my Second Class (Junior) year when I moved in with Leo Rashkin of New York and Gordon Bennett of Maryland.

But back to the Cavalry and the horses. On a march from the corral one afternoon I found myself last in the column of troopers. We went way out into the country and everything went well until the troop turned around to return to the stables. As we turned my horse sat down in the middle of the road, like a big dog, and refused to get up. After pleading with and kicking him to no avail I got out of the saddle and pulled the horse to his feet by the reins. Then the S.O.B. wouldn't let me get aboard again. Every time I'd put my foot in the stirrup and try to swing into the saddle he'd turn at just the critical moment and I'd find myself still on the ground. Fortunately someone from the receding troop noticed my plight and returned to hold the beast while I climbed aboard. I think they call the Cavalry horses quarter horses because they are three quarters non-cooperative.

Another time we had troop maneuvers at Summer Camp held at Fort Belvoir, near Alexandria, Virginia. My horse (Helen Lee) had developed a sore fetlock so I was assigned the only spare they had, Frankenstein by name (and temperament). I soon found out why old "Frank" was left until last - no one wanted him. He'd been in a railroad accident that had scrambled his brains. He had delusions of leadership. He had a barrel chest and a hard mouth. Anyway, Frankenstein and I found ourselves in the middle of the second platoon when the order was given to form platoon front and charge. As we galloped across the open field from our concealment in the woods we were in the fourth rank. Frankenstein had other ideas. He took the bit in his teeth and we were off to the races. Soon we'd passed the third wave and were closing fast on the first platoon. Everyone was yelling for me to stay in ranks. Next we passed the second rank, then the first and I was fast catching up with the Colonel, who also saw fit to say a few words, none of which appeared complimentary. Finally, when the charge was over and Frankenstein had won he settled down and we got back in place.

While at VMI I wrote a column for the weekly newspaper, "The Cadet", called "Platter Chatter". This was a much sought after job because three or four record companies would send the writer new releases to play for the students and then write about in the column. For my writing I received a journalism key as an award plus a nice collection of records.

One of the outstanding traditions at VMI was the Ring Figure Dance. This took place at Thanksgiving of the Second Class year. That is the time when the Second Classmen are authorized to wear the Class Ring for the first time. Each class designed its own ring and the design consisted of a Class side and a School side. The Class side to be worn toward the heart while still a Cadet and the School side toward the heart after graduation.

It was at the Ring Figure that each date, dressed all in white and carrying a bouquet of red roses, placed the ring on the finger of her Cadet escort and received a kiss under the rose-covered arch in Cocke Hall. This little ceremony followed the military figure led by the Class President and his date. Ruth was my Ring Figure date - five years younger than I and written up in "The Cadet" as, "Maxson robbed the cradle". Mother, Faith and Dad had escorted Ruth to Lexington to be sure she had plenty of chaperones.

In my Senior year I became Commandant's Clerk by dint of my typing ability. I applied for the job mostly to get out of parades and calisthentics. My job was mostly to type up the demerits meted out by the Commandant, then Colonel Henry B. Holmes.

I graduated from VMI with a degree in Civil Engineering and a Commission as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Cavalry.

Just prior to graduation in 1941, having been bitten, kicked at, thrown and otherwise humiliated by the horses, I applied for transfer to the Army Air Corps and was accepted. Although I had required only two years of college to meet my goal of becoming an airline pilot via the military I decided to finish at VMI and get my Commission as a Second Lieutenant and my Bachelor of Science Degree. I graduated from VMI on June 13, 1941 near the middle of the class. (Those of you who have done better must give credit to your Mother.)

Mother and Dad had sold Barnacre in March, 1941. In the process they cleared house, including disposal of some of my childhood treasures. "Shorty", the puppy went, as did my collection of Big Little Books, the Buddy "L" truck

and the bread and milk wagons. These latter items were to become priceless antiques for someone, for example Big Little Books cost me ten cents apiece in the early thirties. They were selling for $12 to $15 each, in the "80s.

My first Air Corps training base was the Primary Field, run by Spartan Air College, at Muskogee, Oklahoma, where I arrived on July 13, 1941. There I learned to fly in the PT 19 A, a low wing, open cockpit monoplane, built by Ryan. Of the five students under "Pappy" Yokum, our civilian pilot instructor, only two of us made it through Primary. He was tough and was always testing you. I recall him saying frequently, when my air speed would get too low, "All right, stall the son of a bitch."

In the early Primary planes there were no radios and only the most basic instruments, so the only means of communication between the instructor in the rear cockpit and the student in the front was by means of "Gosports". A gosport is a rubber tube beginning in a small funnel in the instructor's cockpit and ending in a tube in each earpiece of the student's helmet. (Yes, we wore helmets and goggles in those days). The instructor spoke into the funnel and the student received those words of wisdom undisturbed by the noise of the engine and the airflow. When Pappy was particularly upset with me he would hold the funnel of the gosport into the slipstream and my helmet would balloon out from the air pressure. I must not have done too badly because I finally soloed and graduated from Primary.

Next I was assigned to Randolph Field near San Antonio, Texas, where I checked out in the North American BT14. This was a single engine, fixed gear, low wing, canopied cockpit plane with considerably more sophistication than the old PT. At Randolph we learned formation flying, instruments, night flying and fine tuned our proficiency in general. Here we also had the best food I encountered in Service.

Graduating from Randolph I was assigned to Ellington Field in Houston, Texas for Advanced training, ostensibly for twin engine. We arrived at Ellington in mid-December, 1941. Pearl Harbor had been hit by the Japanese on December 7, 1941 while we were finishing up at Randolph Field so our training had taken on a whole new sense of urgency. While we were still at Randolph another problem had been resolved. I and my VMI Brother Rats had been commissioned as officers upon graduation but our commissions were in fields other than the Army Air Corps. They simply didn't know how to handle us. While we were at Muskogee we had been designated Air Cadets (an enlisted rank) and our commissions were held in abeyance. At Randolph they decided

to give us back our commissions in our original fields so, on December 23, 1941 we became Officers in Training with the Army Air Corps. Of course our pay and privileges were greatly enhanced by this decision.

Just before Christmas, 1941, three other officers and I were crossing a street in downtown Houston when a gentleman approached us to ask if we had any plans for Christmas dinner. Since we did not, he invited us to his home in the River Oaks section of the city. Thus I became acquainted with the Converse family and the daughter, Roberta, a.k.a. Bobbe.

Since Bobbe was the only girl I knew in Texas we had a few dates. One evening Lt. Parsons and Reddie were double dating and he asked her to marry him. I, half kiddingly, asked Bobbe the same question. She asked me to repeat the question and then tearfully accepted. I felt I was trapped and didn't know how to get out of it when she announced our engagement to her family that same night. So I foolishly went through with it and we were married in the River Oaks Episcopal Church on February 4, 1942.

On February 13, 1942 I received my Pilot's wings at Ellington Field and on February 24th was assigned to Lubbock Air Force Base, Lubbock, Texas as a flight instructor. I should state that although we were supposed to train in twin engine aircraft at Ellington a shortage of such planes caused us to complete our training in the venerable single engine AT 6. This fine aircraft, built by North American, had a 625 horsepower radial engine, controllable pitch propellor, retractable landing gear, closed cockpit and full instrumentation.

At Lubbock we were just beginning to get the twin engine aircraft so we flew many more hours in the AT 6. Finally we got AT-9s, AT-17s, AT-7s, AT-10s and AT-11s, all twin engine training aircraft of varying capabilities. Mostly we'd read the instruction manuals and check ourselves out in a new plane. During the early war years and at Advanced training basis, such as Lubbock, our classes contained six or seven students and each class lasted nine weeks. Later some classes contained as many as 12 to 14 students. The graduates went on to Transition Schools where they learned to fly combat type aircraft. Finally they would be assigned to a base where they would get their aircraft and crew and depart for the combat zones.

Bobbe stayed with me in Lubbock but frequently visited her home in Houston. On February 24, 1943 Mimi was born in Houston and the two stayed on in the home of Bobbe's parents. On February 15, 1943 I was transferred to Altus, Oklahoma, another Advanced Flying School, and on April 20, 1943 was reassigned to the Air Corps Base in Del Rio, Texas. This was a Transition School for the Martin B-26 (Marauder). I was checked out in the 26 by Frank Shafer (who was later

killed on a training flight) and became an instructor pilot. The B-26s were much feared by many pilots in those days. At McDill Field in Florida the saying was, "One a day in Tampa Bay." They were also known as the Baltimore Whores - no visible means of support, or the Flying Coffins. I always felt that the pilots were afraid of them. Some thought they glided like flat irons and they did land at about 150 m.p.h., but they were fun to fly for me.

Bobbe and I lived in a bus, converted into living quarters, then lived in Base housing and finally we bought a new home in suburban Del Rio, because the mortgage rates were less than the rents. Bobbe was back and forth between Del Rio and Houston, seeming not to want to care for Mimi. On December 18, 1943 I was assigned to Bryan, Texas to the aircraft instrument school for several months, then back to Del Rio and pilot instruction again.

The war drew to a close and Laughlin Air Base (Del Rio) shut down as a B-26 Transition School. Also the Air Corps was phasing out the Martin Marauders and replacing them with the Douglas A-26 Invaders. On September 27, 1945 I was transferred to Bryan Texas once again where I was assigned as Flight Test Maintenance Officer. We tested the AT-6s in the morning and played Bridge all afternoon and far into the night. Bobbe and Mimi were in Houston during this time and I travelled back and forth on weekends. It was on one of these weekends that we became involved in a heated discussion over whether Mimi should live with us or with the Converses in Houston. The discussion developed into pushing and shoving and when Mr. Converse sided with his daughter I took the car and left - for good.

On January 30, 1946 I was assigned to the Army Airways Flight Service Center at Allegheny County Airport in Pittsburgh. Then on March 29, 1946 I was again transferred, this time to Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio and assigned to the wind tunnel division.

Bobbe filed for divorce in June, 1946 and it became final on July 13, 1946. Part of the agreement was that I must relinquish all claim to the baby. Being in the military, in a dangerous occupation, and subject to overseas assignment at any time, this sounded like the most reasonable solution. Mimi was then adopted by her maternal grandparents, who raised her as their daughter.

Ruth had married Jack Gellert in July, 1944 but he had been killed in France in February, 1945. At one time my Mother had told me how stupid I was for not having asked Ruth to marry me. So, not wishing to make the same mistake twice I commuted between Dayton and Willow Grove on weekends

to visit Ruth and see if she were interested in someone five years older than she whom she had known through Church and Sunday School for many years. Wonder of wonders - she agreed to be my wife and we were married at Upper Dublin after my tour of service of six months in the Hawaiian Islands, on March 1, 1947. In Hawaii I had been based at Wheeler Field, Oahu, where I was an Assistant Air Installations Officer as well as a pilot, flying nearly everything on the Base.

I was discharged from the Service April 11, 1947. In those days housing was difficult, if not impossible, to find but jobs were plentiful. I must have tired of the pressures of flying because I was no longer interested in being an airline pilot. Besides many of the ex-military pilots had gone with the airlines so that those jobs were scarce. I applied for work at Philadelphia Electric and at Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania. The latter accepted me first. We did find a house, through a personal friend of the Swartley's - Eleanor Worthington - and we rented the little house at York and Creek Roads in Hartsville for $45 a month. We had an agreement with Miss Eleanor that if she paid for the materials we'd do the maintenance and repair work on the house.

I went with Bell at a time when they badly needed Civil Engineers to design and inspect buildings to accommodate the growth caused by the pent up demand for telephone service because there had been no new construction during the war.

My first job was as a building inspector, working for a boss named Lee Owens. It was he who told me "You'll never get rich working for the Telephone Company but you'll never have to worry." And he was right - the Company was a good place to work and its benefits for the employees were among the best in industry.

My first assignment as an inspector was at Jenkintown, where an addition was being built onto an existing Central Office building. It was a time/material job and I had to check in all the material and verify the time sheets of the workmen before Bell would pay the bills. After about three years at Jenkintown, Sunset-Hilltop and other miscellaneous locations I was transferred to the office at 1401 Arch Street where I worked under Irv Lyons in the Building Planning Group. There we worked with the architects and engineers on new building plans. The Building Group, under Tom Aveson, was a good place to work and we had boating parties at Ed Woods place on the Chesapeake, dinners and group luncheons. We were all engineers and a compatible group because of mutual interests.

I next had an assignment in Plant Extension and worked for Tommy Tomlinson in short range budgets. (The whole equals the sum of the parts). This was a group headed by Walt Denkhaus, who always felt he needed more people. In truth, Jack Donohue and I were bored by lack of work and used to play Battleship over the telephone to help pass the time of day. I requested out of this job and returned to work for Aveson and Lyons in Building Planning.

I took a leave of absence from Bell in 1951 when I was called to active duty with the Pennsylvania Air National Guard for Korean War duty that took us to Newfoundland.

When the 111th Wing was called up the "In" group aligned themselves to go to SAC in Spokane, Washington. They thought this would be much better duty than the alternative - an assignment to Langley Field, Virginia. So the "out" group, of which I was a member, was assigned to Langley. First we flew all of our A-26s there where they promptly junked some and sent all the others through major overhaul at the Sub Depot. I was ranking man in the Squadron and its commanding officer with the rank of Captain. This had always been a source of irritation to me. I had been recruited into the Guard by a First Lieutenant when I was a Major. He told me there were no openings for a Major but I could come in as a Captain - Squadron Commander of the 117th. He said I'd get my Majority back in no time at all. He lied. Several years later, when we were recalled to active duty I was still a Captain and the Lieutenant was now a Major. So much for National Guard politics.

Anyway, as it turned out, the "in" group were treated like dirt at SAC and were never permitted to fly the B-36s. They spent their time in C-47s and grunt duty.

Meanwhile, back at Langley, they decided that Captain was too low a rank to hold as a Squadron Leader in an active duty unit so I became the Executive Officer to Lieut. Colonel Greffett. Shortly thereafter I was reassigned to the Northeast Air Command. We had moved the family to Hampton Roads to be near Langley. Now I moved them back to Hartsville while I went to Saint Johns, Newfoundland to find housing.

When we returned from Service I was assigned as head of the Building Maintenance Group at Bell, working for Russ Swarr. I had all of Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware as my responsibility.

After two or three years in Building Maintenance I became District Traffic Superintendant in Chester and after two years, DTS in Jenkintown. Then back to Philadelphia to the Widener Building on Chestnut Street in Traffic Staff, working for John Hibberd.

Then I had stints in mechanized budgets, building and automotive maintenance, vehicle purchase, modular furniture, word processing and computerization. During those times I worked for Charlie Newitt, Jay Clymer, Al Kamman, Bob Berger and others; some good and others not too progressive. I always felt myself to be an innovator and a solver of problems and was frequently frustrated by not-so-progressive bosses. During that time I developed the philosophy that "It's easier to get forgiveness than permission." All in all I feel that the Company benefitted from my employment. (What else can I say?)

During my 35 years with the Telephone Company I feel I was responsible for several significant improvements:

1. Modular furniture in the Headquarters Building at One Parkway.
2. Use of smaller vehicles for passenger travel.
3. Use of bucket vans for Installers and Linemen.
4. Use of Carpet Tile in lieu of sheet goods.
5. Computerization of the Expense Budget.
6. In-house design of small Community Dial Offices.
7. Music in Operating rooms.
8. Introduction of Word Processing.

Except for the years spent in Jenkintown and Chester and the military leave of absence I was always based in Philadelphia. I would arise at 5:40 a.m. to make the 6:45 train and return on the 5:15 p.m. train, getting home at 6:15 most nights.

The first baby, whom we named Peter, came along on April 14, 1948. He lived but two days having had atelectasis which didn't allow his lungs to expand fully. In June, 1948 my Mother and Dad, having sold their house at 642 Custis Road in Custis Woods, Glenside, Pa., moved to Clearwater, Florida, where they lived out the rest of their lives. Wayne was born July 13, 1949 and Peter Alan came along on February 9, 1951. I had joined the Pennsylvania Air National Guard on December 7, 1949 and was a Squadron Leader, flying the Douglas A-26. The Korean conflict, as before mentioned, caused our Wing to be activated and we went into active service at Langley Field in March, 1951. We all moved first to Hampton Roads, Virginia, then on July 31, 1951 I was transferred to the Northeast Air Command with Headquarters at Pepperrell Air Force Base at Saint Johns, Newfoundland. After I found off-Base housing I returned to Pennsylvania, packed up the family and went to Boston, where we boarded a vessel of the Red Cross-Furness Line and departed for Halifax and Saint Johns.

Our mode of transportation was also our first venture

by ship into the North Atlantic in mid-winter. I had driven the family to Boston in our Ford and then had to get the car back to the Brooklyn Naval Yard so it could be shipped to St. Johns. Time was short after dropping off the car and I returned to Boston by taxi and train. We visited Filene's store for a pair of silver shoes for Ruth and then spent the night in a hotel to await our morning departure.

The ship was a combination passenger-cargo vessel of limited tonnage but our accomodations for four were adequate and comfortable.

Having never been seasick I did not take motion sickness medication and felt fine for the first day out. The second day I was sick as a dog and Mother had the responsibility for the two little ones - Wayne and Peter. Peter hadn't begun to walk yet but crawled very well. The weather worsened, with high winds and big waves. I remember the waves breaking over the portholes as the boat rolled with them toward Halifax, Nova Scotia. I was flat on my back, taking no nourishment and desiring none, while Mom still felt well enough to go to the dining room, where the sides of the tables had to be raised and the food kept sliding back and forth. On the last day out of Halifax Ruth, too, became ill and I recall her changing Peter's diaper while lying on her bunk. This was not easy!

The motion apparently had no effect on the children because I recall Peter attempting to crawl across the cabin floor. He'd get part way across when the ship would roll him over and over. He'd get to his knees and try again only to be rolled in the opposite direction.

At Halifax we took motion sickness pills and felt fine for the rest of the trip. We were delayed getting into the harbor by dense fog and finally arrived late at night. We moved into our house at 26 Cook Street and proceeded to make it a home with furniture borrowed from the Base and new items bought from the Sears Catalog to supplement our own furniture.

Saint Johns was an old-fashioned city - Ruth learned to make bread - the town turned out to see the seal fleet come in - the Spanish fishing fleet came into port with flags flying from all their masts - picnics with the military were up on Signal Hill, where Marconi sent his first wireless message - there was a big department store where your money travelled in little metal canisters on a wire all along the ceiling to a office on the other side and change came back the same way - we even cooked and ate seal flippers there (but once was enough) - I had cod fish tongues at a local reataurant - and Peter learned to walk! My job

was the rehabilitation of the Air Bases in Newfoundland, Labrador and Greenland and I had many opportunities to visit those fascinating areas.

In August, 1952 we returned to Pennsylvania and Holly was born November 11th of that year. I resumed my job with Bell just as if I'd never left. Because the Telephone Company wanted representatives in the various Service Clubs, I joined Jenkintown Kiwanis and was a member for two and a half years. It was a really fine group of men who did a lot of good in the community through funds raised by their Lecturama program. But I was never much of a joiner. Both my father and Pop Swartley were Masons, as was Pop-Pop (who was a 33rd degree Mason), but I never really had the desire to join.

In 1953 I detected a lump under my right jaw. After worrying about it for awhile I had it checked by our family doctor who said it was probably only a swollen submaxillary gland. It still bothered me, so I got a second opinion and decided to have the lump excised and checked. My surgeon was Dr. Robert Morris of the Pfeiffer Clinic at Abington Memorial Hospital.

The lump was removed in October, 1953 and found to be malignant. It was then felt that we should determine whether the malignancy had spread to other lymph nodes in the jaw, neck, armpits or groin. The disease was tagged lymphosarcoma. In November the second operation took place and removed all the nodes in the right jaw. This operation is called a radical neck dissection. There were some additional malignant nodes in the right side so it was decided to do the left side as well. There was no malignancy there.

These operations were followed up with a series of ten X-ray treatments that left me with the granddaddy of all sore throats. I was bedridden for several weeks and could only take liquids. Dr. Morris met with Mother and me to tell us that my life expectancy was two years. We had Wayne, Peter and Holly by that time and I decided they couldn't get along without their Dad so I decided to prove that the Doctors were wrong. I went to work again in the Spring of 1954 and gradually recovered from all but the disfiguring scars on the neck.

For a period of about ten years I had any lumps that I could detect removed and biopsied under local anesthesia. None was malignant. Apparently the operations and treatment had caught all of the malignancy. For awhile I thought maybe the diagnosis was incorrect so I had everything re-evaluated at Jeanes Oncological Hospital where they verified the diagnosis. The only lasting effects were a lowering of my voice and a difficulty swallowing properly at times. In the latter case I still am very careful when eating or drinking but that's a small price to pay for 33 more years to enjoy Mom and the five children. (And now the grandchildren).

Two more babies arrived; Glen on December 12, 1954 and Craig on January 6, 1957. The family was now complete.

In September, 1957 I was notified of my advancement in rank to Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force Reserve.

After ten years experience as a Civil Engineer, I attended Drexel Institute in Philadelphia at Evening School in preparation for the Professional Engineering Examination given by the state of Pennsylvania. I passed the exam successfully and obtained Pennsylvania License number PE-2888-E. Later I was able to obtain reciprocity in Delaware since Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania covered that state as well. For a few years I belonged to the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), Bucks County Chapter, but dropped out when I felt it was of no value to me.

I became active in Township politics and joined the Planning Commission. I was elected Township Supervisor in 1959 and again in 1965 for six year terms each time. (Later I served again for a period of two years beginning in 1983.) I retired from that job when I had my heart attack on April 24, 1985, but retained the job of Township Building Official. During my years of service as a Supervisor I was directly responsible for many improvements in the Township:

- Drew up the postal house numbering system for the entire Township that is still used today.
- Helped design the first Township Comprehensive Master Plan that preceeded others in the State by many years.
- Drew up the Flood Plain Zones in the Township that are still in effect.
- Had York Road moved to the East when it was constructed as a four lane highway.
- Had Creek Road closed when the homes were built behind us.
- Purchased some of the Dilworth property for use as a Township Park - the first in the Township.
- Was instrumental in building the Township Building at 2045 Guinea Lane.
- Arranged for leasing additional office space at 2319 Old York Road.
- Obtained print filing cabinets and designed the lighting system for 2319.
- Designed, edited and published the Township Booklets from 1968 through 1983.
- Organized the 250th Anniversary Celebration which was held in 1983.
- Set up three year road maintenance program which included paving certain of the dirt roads in the Township.
- Established first Police Force under Chief McCallister and obtained the first Police car and mobile radio equipment.

I retired from Bell on April 1, 1982 after 35 years of service and just before the Bell System was broken up in 1984. This latter act violated the principle that "If something works, don't fix it."

Well, we had lots of fun together as a family, camping or touring to Florida, Utah, Canada and many places in between. Also we had none of the problems that seem to have affected so many families. I marvel at how well the children have turned out - all with college degrees, all married to good mates and all well employed. As I look back many things stand out, but those that I am proudest of are Ruth, the children and the VMI experience.