

# The Life of Wilbur E Bingham



By Wilbur E Bingham  
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## BINGHAM HISTORY

The Bingham Family, Great-Great Grandfather David Moses Bingham and his family, came to America on July 12, 1851. They came on a ship named HMS Enterprise. The family migrated west with brief stops in New York State and Wisconsin on their way to Olmstead County in Southeast part of Minnesota. They settled near the town of Marion, which is about 8 miles south of Rochester, which is now home of the famous Mayo Clinic. During their stay their great-grandfather John G. Bingham joined The Union Army and fought in the Civil War. After the war he came to northern Iowa where the family became the first permanent settlers in Bingham Township, which is named after him. In 1872 the first school was held in his home. His wife Clarissa was the first teacher. In those days on their farm she bore eight children. In those days when help was needed, someone would go out of the house and fire several shots in the air, this would summon help from the nearest neighbors, and they would come on a horse or horse and buggy, phones had not come to the rural prairie. Later in that year, 1872, a school house, 16 feet by 22 feet was built. It cost \$500 to build. It was named Bingham #4. Great Grand father donated the northeast one-acre of his farm for the schoolhouse. It operated till 1955, a period of 83 years till it became part of the Woden School. It is now someone's home. Woden was first named Bingham after my grand father A.W. Bingham. It had to be changed, because there was a town named Bingham in Iowa. At present the little town of Bingham is located in Page County in the southwest part of Iowa. Woden was finally chosen for the name of the town. Woden was named after the Norse God in the Scandinavian countries, actual name Oden, or Woden.

Grandfather A.W. Bingham was instrumental in building the railroad. It was called "The Klondike". It went from Garner through the town Hayfield, Crystal Lake, Woden, and ended at the town of Titonka. It had speed of only about 5 miles per hour. The railroad no longer exists. There is a small museum in Titonka as a memorial to the railroad. The trucks now haul the grain and other supplies. To all of us that lived there so long ago, the train is now just a memory.

My grandfather had 7 brothers and sisters, his older brother came to live with them in the late 1920's after his wife died. He lived with them and with my parents till he died in 1938. Grandfather's sister Mary Elizabeth, was the first one to be born and died in Bingham Township. She lived to about the age of 7. Her gravesite is in the Crystal Lake cemetery, near the East entrance gate.

The first cemetery in the township was named the Bingham Township Cemetery. Because there was no cemetery in previous years the Bingham's were buried in the Crystal Lake cemetery, the Britt Cemetery before that. Our ancestors were very prominent in the early years, grandfather A.W. Bingham was county Supervisor for 13 years.

My mother's families were the Fisher family, her father, and the McNab family, her mother's family. My Grandmother Fisher was the most accomplished homemaker, cook, baker, and all types of sewing, and needle craft that I have ever known. She was a very loving person. When I was a little boy, her eyes would sparkle with love when she would

give me a cookie. One time when I visited, she took a suit that my Grandfather did not like, and made me a complete suit. It was my first suit and I loved it. She had a hip injury when I was young and spent the rest of her life in a wheel chair. She had the kitchen window lowered and widened so that she could see in the yard while she sat at her work cabinet. She was strict and only had to tap the window with a spoon, and frown, we would all get the message! Mother's family had 13 children and she was the first child. Only her baby sister is still living. She is two years older than I and we went to high school together for two years. On Saturdays, one of my uncles would take a car to town and park it in front of her favorite store. In that evening Grand mother and Grandfather would come to town and park in that space. She would spend most of the evening visiting with all her friends as they came by. She was a very well liked and respected person and had so many friends. The Fisher family has been traced back to Ohio. My grand father Fisher is of Scotch/ Irish/English ancestry. The McNab family is traced for several generations back to Scotland, they are all of Scottish origin.

A recent book by Tom Brokaw titled "The Greatest Generation" was about my generation and is flattering for us. We won WWII, and started the space age, and put a man on the moon. We have a right to be proud, thousands came back and went to college on the GI Bill, many went on to great things.

I think that my Great Grandfather's generation was the greatest. They came and became the first permanent settler. They "put the plow to the prairie"! Their first crop determined that they exist for another year. They probably built a small sod house till they could build a house. Imagine Great Grandmother out there with the nearest neighbor miles away, as well as the nearest Doctor. In those days the neighbor's wife would assist in childbirth. All of my brothers and sisters were born at home. We lived in a house, had neighbors, and could call a country Doctor, in those days the Doctors came out to the houses when called. If help was needed, they would go outside and fire a gun several times and all of the neighbors would come to help.

## On The Farm

Many look at the farm as just a place to grow crops. The farm is actually, a home for everything that lives on it, the people, the horses, the cows, the chickens, the ducks, the geese, the bees, and the worms and insects in the ground, and all of the crops in the fields. We could not exist on the farm without the animals. The horses work hard all of their lives for the things we feed them, their water, and the kindness that we show them. Each evening after work we would brush them and some times dry them off. The cows would provide us with milk, cream, and the foods we made of the milk. The chickens would provide us with their eggs and of course we would eat some and sell some. The geese and ducks were eaten and sold for food. The Bees would provide our honey. We could not exist without the animals, they pull the machines, they are our weekly cash, crops grow only once a year. They became like friends to us, it was a great sadness to sell one, butcher one for our food, and put them down when their time came, due to health or age.

The farm was both a happy place and also a sad place as time went by. Each morning about dawn we would milk the cows and feed them and also feed all of the animals. Each morning and evening after milking the cows we had to run the milk through the cream separator. When we cranked it full speed the skim milk would come out of one spout and the cream would come out of the other spout. We would use some of the cream and sell the rest in town. From the skim milk we would use some to make cottage cheese and feed the rest to the pigs. I loved to help mother make the cottage cheese. She would pour the skim milk in a large dishpan and set it out in the sun with a cloth over the pan. The milk would sour, some would form sort of a gelatin form and the rest would be like water. We would put the gelatin-like part in an old pillow case and hang it on the clothes line where the liquid part would drain out, leaving a soft cheese. The soft cheese was known as smearcase cheese. I liked to eat some of it, mother would run the rest through a meat grinder and would add some cream to make cottage-cheese. The gelatin-like stuff was known as curds and the watery part was whey. Do you remember little Miss Muffit sitting on a tuffit and eating her curds and whey? The whey was used in baking bread and the rest fed to the pigs, nothing is wasted on the farm. Pigs eat most of the left-overs from the meals, it was put in the pig trough and mixed with whey, water, and the left over skimmed milk with some grain. Garbage cans were not used on the farm.

We had our own water well, and it had to be pumped by hand. Water could come out of a spout or it could be run through a cooler tank and from there to the large water tank for the horses and cows. This required a lot of pumping and it was my job to do it. Some farms had a windmill, and some had flowing wells, where water came out all the time, these were called Artesian wells. When my brothers were small, all of the chores were mine. My first chores helping Mother was on washdays, each Monday, I would carry in the wash water and then crank the washing machine. Each day was reserved for specific duties, Fridays were the baking day, all the bread, pies, and cookies for the coming week. I loved the bread crust, “heels”, My mother would bake a special roll for me, it was like two heels together, I loved it so much as I loved all kinds of sandwiches, which I made from my special rolls. I made radish, onion, tomato, mashed potato, and all kinds of cheese and meat ones. My mother used to call me “her big boy.” That made me very proud and happy to help her. We had to feed and water the chickens, ducks, and geese. The ducks and geese spent most of the time down at Lindsey Creek, which ran through one corner of our farm. When we were small boys we would have so much fun playing in the water and jumping off the bridge. The water was only about 2 feet deep, in a deep spot, and the bridge was only about 6 feet high. The ducks were smart, in the morning they swam up stream and just had to float home. The geese swam down stream and in the evening just got out where they were. I had to go down and chase them all home at night, if we didn’t they would get back in and keep swimming down stream. The male geese, ganders, were very bossy and would bite. I remember one time, Henry Carr, dad’s sister’s husband, came out to show us his new Ford Model T. When he turned in our driveway this big gander was there. Henry honked his horn, which infuriated the gander. The gander flew up on the bumper and picked out both headlights and also pecked a few holes in the radiator. One time a gander bit mom’s leg, she reached over and grabbed his neck and took him over to the chopping block and chopped his head off with an axe. We had roast goose for supper! For several years we would raise about 200 geese, and they would be killed and dressed and shipped to Chicago in the fall. Several of our neighbors

also raised geese, we had a "ring", similar to harvesting, we would all go to one farm after another till we finished packing and shipping all of the geese.

. We had to go into the hen house each day and get all of the eggs from the chicken's nests. Each week we would have fifty or sixty dozen eggs to sell in town. Each week my mother would take the eggs and maybe a sack of roosters to sell. The ladies had a place in the back of the store to sit and visit. The eggs had to be "candled". There was a box with a lighted candle inside, the eggs were held up to the hole, which would light up the egg so that the inside could be seen to see if it was bad. When it was time to go home, the grocer would have the grocery order made up and the change for what was sold. Farming was a hard and demanding life, we had no control over the weather, heat, or cold. When I was about 10 years old, we were eating lunch and it started to hail. I will never forget the looks on my parents' faces, as they watched the hail, in a few minutes, completely destroy the years crops. The hail stones were about the size of a golf ball! Several chickens, ducks, and geese were killed. Mother spent all day and night dressing, cooking, and canning them as we could not waste them for our food. Much of our garden was destroyed, and some building damage was done to the buildings. It was on that terrible day that I decided to never be a farmer. Had I decided to farm, I would have been the 4<sup>th</sup> generation, just in America, to have carried on. In 1936 Grandfather Bingham lost both of his farms. He had to mortgage them both due to a drainage district assessment. He was saving one farm each for his two sons, he held on too long and the great depression wiped him out. His heart was broken and he had to move to town for his last years. How sad it was for him as he had worked so hard all of his life and it was not his fault. Most of the nearby farms were also lost. He died on Sept. 10, 1944, he was very ill and I was able to get leave in 1943 to see him for the last time. I was in the war zone and could not attend his funeral, I was blessed to see him that last time! What an honor it was to be his grandson!

In about 1930 my father had ulcers of the stomach and almost bled to death from the hemorrhage.

. He lost almost all of his blood. He was in the hospital weeks to build back his blood supply, so that he could be operated on. It was in the fall, when it was time to pick corn. My brothers and I were trying to pick the corn. One morning we saw corn picking wagons coming from each road. All of our neighbors came and harvested our corn crop in one day. It was a blessing, but that was how neighbors were in those days. The farmer's wives brought all the food to feed all of the men and kids. All the time dad and mother were gone, it was up to me to take care of my brothers and the farm. That was all of the animals, cooking, and getting us all to school. One of the things that I could not make was gravy. I put in too much flour, and it was like a giant soggy pancake. When mother came home, she showed me how to make it. After that, dad had poor health the rest of his life. He would have a broken neck in an auto accident and have a cast on for seven months. A few years later he would go the famous Mayo Clinic for more stomach surgery. About 1920 or 1921 he was diagnosed with T.B. and went out near Colorado Springs to The Woodman Sanitarium for almost a year. In those days the Woodman Lodge was well known. Many of our family belonged to it. Many years later, a Doctor thought that he did not have T.B., but lung damage from the Flu epidemic during the WW1 times. In 1918 there was a flu epidemic.

I remember my first hair cut at the barbershop. Dad took me in and told the barber to cut it as I wanted. On the wall were pictures of different hairstyles. I picked out what was called a short pompadour, similar to a flat top now. My long blond hair was gone forever. When dad got home my mother was very angry about the haircut and dad was in the 'doghouse' for weeks. My dad always let me pick out things. We had cousins in town who wore knickers. I got the hand-me-downs. I hated knickers and dad said if I didn't like them, I did not have to wear them. My dad always trusted my judgement and was a true friend to have all my life. When I was a little boy, we would go to town, a friend of my father's ran a small hotel and café, and they had a large candy counter and a freezer for ice cream. I loved ice cream and did not care if it was a blizzard, I would get a cone, people must have thought I was a nut, eating ice cream in a snowstorm! Candy bars cost 5 cents, he would sell me two for 5 cents, I would have a sack full of candy and my cone. Dad would get angry with him for selling me everything for half price or less. The movies cost 10 cents for kids and we would sit in the front row cheering for the cowboys. Later the movie house closed, and in the summer they showed movies in a vacant lot for free. This was after the theater closed down forever! They were usually shown on Wednesday nights. After the show we would go to the lumberyard corner, and the town boys would fight the country boys, it was the same when Dad was a boy. In those days it was a part of growing up, the country boys would win most of time. One of the things that the farm boys did, was to drown gophers in the pastures. We would hitch a horse to a "stone-boat, which was a wooden sled. We would put a barrel of water on it and drown the gophers. The reason was that the cows and other farm animals could step in the hole and break their leg, and have to be killed, and we would lose a valuable animal. Also pocket gophers, I learned to be a good trapper. The County paid a bounty for the pocket gophers, 10 cents for each pair of front paws, The neighbors would also pay another 10 cents. One summer I earned \$3 trapping. We went to the town of Tintonka, for Indian Day as they called their holiday. Dad asked me what I was to spend my money for. I said that I was going to take an airplane ride. An airplane would land in a pasture at the edge of town, it was a by-plane and carried, one passenger per flight. The plane had two seats, one for the pilot, and one for the passenger, I had the back seat. I had an aviation cap and goggles as we flew, what a thrill it was! After we took off he asked me where we lived and flew over our farm, my first flight. My parents were sort of worried about the flight.

It was a time that taught me how to work and be responsible, which are two of life's valuable lessons. It was my job to keep our room clean and to store all of our things away. No mess or litter was allowed. Our first farm was the south 80 acres of the northeast quarter section of section #19 of Bingham Township. Our second farm and the last, was the Doolittle Farm, it was the southwest 160 acres of section #20 of Bingham Township. Both farms were in Hancock County. The above are legal descriptions, they now all have address numbers, road names and numbers. The new numbering and road names are needed for emergencies, such as, ambulances and fire trucks to find the locations. Mail was by route numbers and box numbers. Our school site is now 3095 Birch Ave, Grandfather's farm is now 3090 Birch Ave, the house where I was born is now 3055 Birch Ave, and the Doolittle farm, where lived till 1934, is now a farm with no buildings and has no address, just the legal description above. The farm where I was born has several buildings, and the house has been enlarged. We stopped to take pictures and the present farmer came out. When he found out our names, he invited me in to see the place, and we had a nice visit. I knew his father when

I was a boy! All of the farms and schoolhouse are between 310<sup>th</sup> St and 300<sup>th</sup> Street. The town of Woden is still there and does not have as many stores as it did when I was a boy. Only one of my classmates in high school lives there.

One year my uncle and aunt moved to northern Minnesota to live. They brought their dog, "Duke", to live with us till they got settled. Duke was a pedigreed pit bulldog and very well trained. He was an excellent retriever for hunting in the fields or from a boat. When a bird was shot down Duke would go and retrieve the bird. Duke was an excellent watchdog, and protected his masters. One day a peddler came, he was annoying mother and she turned to go into the house, he grabbed her arm and Duke grabbed his leg. The peddler was able to escape and climbed a tree. Duke just sat there. When Dad came in from work for lunch, and heard Mother's story, he left the guy up in the tree till Dad came in from work in the evening. He called Duke into the house and the salesman came down and grabbed his bag. He was running down the road as far as we could see, he never came back! Our other Collie dog always laid near when we were playing. One day a big bull snake crawled near and our dog ran over and grabbed the snake and violently shook the snake to death. He would always be with us kids anywhere we played, so if mother wanted us to come and she could not see us, all she had to do was call him. Where we were he would come and mother then knew where we were. The animals played a big part of our lives. One time, I had built a small buggy and hitched it up to a horse and took my brothers to Pilot Knob. It was known as a place Indians once lived. We went to see if we could find some arrow heads. We did not find any, mother had packed a lunch, and we had a great time. I did not remember how far it was, but it was about 10 miles away, quite long trip for us, it took all day.

Our Collie dog was given to us, as a puppy, the neighbor gave him to us for the new brother, Cecil, born on that day in 1923. The dog never had a real name, we just called him 'Pup' all his life. When he was younger he would wait for Dad to come in from the field and run out and drive all the cows in near the barn. The cows knew him and when he went out they would start walking in, if they did not, he would gently nip their heels.

Duke was crazy about playing with a ball. One time my cousins took him to a football game and left him locked in the car. He tore up the seats and finally broke the window. He ran out on the field, grabbed the football and run. They could no catch him and had to hold up the game till they could go back to the lockers and bet another ball. Being young on the farm was a great place to start life. we built our own little dock that we could sit on and dive in. It was about fifteen feet deep in the middle so we had to be careful. I could dive to the bottom. We took minnows from the creek and put them in the gravel pit. In a short time it was fun to fish there. I built a diving helmet from a 5 gallon cream can, it had notches for my shoulders, a small window to look through, and had a hose that came out the top. The other end of the hose had a float attached. Nothing was attached to me, I had a sack of stones to hold me down, with a handle on the bottom of the helmet, all I had to do was let go and the bag of stones would sink and the helmet would pop to the surface. At that time I did not understand about water pressure and atmospheric pressure, so I could only go down about 5 feet, and could not breathe as the water pressure would be too much to breathe. It was a great idea and a lot of fun to build and design. One of my ideas was to fill a sunken ship with empty air bags and to pump them full of air to float the ship, now they do that! I



did not realize that each bag would require a pressure regulator to keep the pressure at the required pressure. I had so much fun dreaming up all of these schemes.

One Sunday we were all up to grandfather's house. When we came home there was a large crowd of people at the gravel pit. Dad thought some one had drowned, so he let me off to get my swim suit on and run to the gravel pit. Some one had drowned, he had run down on the dock and dived in. He could not swim. I could dive down and locate him, but I could not get him out. From the next farm, they brought a big hay rake and ropes. They dragged the rake across and got him out. It was too late, he was gone, Later the gravel pit was filled with dirt. When they were using the gravel to cover the roads, their trucks went past our house. There was one that was special, it was a WWI army truck, no doors or windows, the driver was called "Spike", sort of crude, wore a T shirt. One day while I was watching the truck go by, at our gate, he stopped and said "hey kid, do you want a ride?" I was so thrilled to ride to the road they were covering, about 5 miles away. I had so much fun, my folks were not very happy about me riding in the truck! I have never forgotten, it was a big day for me! I built a small play house in the grove, it had a small stove with a smoke pipe through the roof, a door and window. It was made of old boxes and lumber and was my own little castle and dream house. I was always happy to be alone with my thoughts and dreams, and did not need things to amuse me. I made most of the toys for myself and brothers

One of my last winters on the farm Dad and I spent Christmas vacation trapping. We had several miles along the Iowa river to set all of the traps. That year was a great year for trapping, we made \$900 in that season, more than we made on the farm crops for the year. It was during the start of Depression. We caught about 30 minks, about 100 Muskrats, skunks, weasels and others. Each day we had to skin all of the animals and put the hides on stretcher boards to dry and to scrape off any fat. The minks brought about \$20 per hide, muskrats about \$1.50 per hide all the rest, from \$1 to \$3.00 each. It was great as we camped in a tent with snow piled on the sides, and had a small stove for heat and cooking. It was a great time to spend with my Dad and I learned so much and how to shoot and hunt birds. One night was very exciting, our collie dog had treed a Badger down by the creek. Dad and I went down there to see what was happening. Dad was able to get the Badger down and in a bag. We took him home and locked him in a metal chicken coop, but he managed to tear it apart and escape. Badgers are very powerful animals, they have very large front feet, with big claws. Later on our dog treed him again, and we caught him again. We put him in a wooden barrel, and Dad covered it with woven fence wire. He escaped again and we never caught him. In the newspaper was an article, "Bingham and the Badger". This was a great time to grow up and to learn to work, be responsible, and love the farm, our brothers, sisters, and all of our uncles and aunts, and our grand parents. I had 9 Great, and grand parents, 5 great-grand, all living, when I was born, many Great Uncles and Aunts. One year my Mother's family had a reunion at Eagle Lake Park. There were so many cousins that I had never met, from several states. The whole hillside was covered with us all, that the photographer had to stand in the lake to get all in the picture. We all had so much fun and there were several ice cream freezers to make the ice cream. Several flavors and so good. We all got to help cranking the freezers. What a great remembrance! When I was 12 years old Dad would let me drive the car to Woden on Sundays. Drivers licenses had not been invented then. One of my best Christmas Days, Dad gave me my first pocket knife, it was called a stock man's knife, and had three blades. I also got a pocket watch, it had a luminous dial, so that I could read it at

night. Also I got a flash light. What a great Christmas for a farm boy. At that time, all of the teen-agers would meet in town to get to know each other and choose our first dating partners. Dad's instructions were if I took a girl riding, to park if I wanted to hug her. My first date was with a girl named Geneva. She was a beautiful brunet. But then I was to go off to high school and we never saw each other again. Most of the farm boys and girls usually married partners from farms, as she did.

## The Country School, Bingham # 4

In 1924 I started to school, in those days there was no kindergarten, so we started in the first grade. I will never forget my first day, mother took me to school. The teacher knew my mother as they went to high school together. The teacher was happy to see mother and picked me up in her arms and hugged and kissed me and carried me inside. I was ashamed in front of the kids as they giggled! I graduated in 1932.

In those days, we all lined up according to grade, and marched into the school. We had a place to hang up our coats and hats and a shelf for our lunch pail. We were assigned to a desk and did not get out of our desk until we were granted permission, or when the teacher told us to. Teachers were then next to God, and any breaking of the rules were reported to our parents and we were punished! This happened to me just one time!! Dad got on a horse and switched my "butt" all of the way back to school. It was a good lesson and never happened again, one lesson was enough!! I will always remember a moment of shame that I caused them. I earned the switching, and thank my father for doing it. It was the only shame that I brought on the family name. The teacher's desk was at the front of the room and there was a bench in front where we were called to recite our lessons. Behind her desk on the wall was a large blackboard, and around both sides and top were all of the letters and the numerals. We had to write them just as they were written, no making up of our own style! We spent a great amount on learning the alphabet, counting, and writing. We had to hold the pencils and pens properly in our hand, After we had the fundamentals mastered we did writing, spelling, and arithmetic. In those days we used pens and ink. If you did not use the proper stroke, the ink would splatter and ruin the paper. Ball-point pens were not invented then, and I am glad as it took discipline to write, just not making marks on the paper. This took about two years, then we had geography, history, and all of the rest of the studies. Geography was one of my favorites. We had a big case on the wall, with all of the maps. One map showed all of the states, without the names or names of the capitol cities. We had to learn each one and the capital city. We had a pedestal with a large dictionary, about six inches thick. On one wall was a book case, with a 24 set of large encyclopedias. There were a few other text books. All of my life these books would contribute so much to my thinking ability. We had a large yard to play in during recess and lunch time. At the end of the day all of the students would do the janitor work. The girls would wash the black board and "clap" the chalk dust from the erasers. The boys would sprinkle a sweeping compound on the floor and then sweep it.

When I was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, we had a man school teacher. He had one arm shot off during World War I, and could not work on the farm. He was the best teacher we had. He taught several years after we left. At the first day of school, he would go out by the creek and cut several willow switches about 5 feet long. He would place them in the corner, they would set there all year, unused, because we knew what they were for.

When I was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I was always ahead in my work, so one day the teacher came back and said that he had a reading assignment for me. It was to read the entire set of encyclopedias! This was my reading task for the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades. Each day he would come back and see that I was doing it and to explain anything that I didn't understand. This was the best thing that I had in all 8 grades, it was a learning lesson that helped me all of these years. In the 8<sup>th</sup> grade I did a lot of work on the dictionary and some his text books. We had to walk a mile to school and in the winter we would ride a horse to school, all three on the horse, we could either leave him at grandfather's barn, or chase him down the road and he would go home. Each year we received, like a diploma, if we did not miss a day or were not late to school. One year, about the seventh grade, I did not get one. I was pallbearer for a boy we knew. There were no excuses accepted! I did get seven of the perfect attendance and not tardy ones. I will always remember Mr. Knefke as my best teacher ever, high school and college included. We all had to learn to use pens and ink, ball point pens were not invented then. Each desk had an ink well in front and the top of the desk raised up so that we could store all of our books and school things. When I was in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, I was the champion speller. I got to go to the county spelling contests. We had like, a newspaper, of all the words. My problem was that I could spell, not pronounce them all. Each year I missed words that I did not recognize the pronunciation of the word. One year, I made it up to 5<sup>th</sup> place before, I missed a word "rendezvous", a French word. What great learning for 8 years. They do not teach the fundamentals now as they did then, how sad! What is worse is not teaching good manners and civility. In those days there was a "knuckle-sandwich" for boys, and girls delivered a good slap to the face for being a bad boy! Everyone then paid attention to civility and good manners, or else! I did engage in administering a few of "sandwiches", and am proud that I never got my face slapped! Even at that time civility was required and expected of all.

One interesting note, my mother was the school teacher for two years, 1916 and 1917. On of her special students was my father! In those days the farm boys only went to school in the winters, it was common to have 18 year old men finishing their 8<sup>th</sup> grade, as it was with my father. I used to kid him by saying he had to marry the teacher to get through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade!

## Britt High School

The first year of high school, I lived with my grand parents on their farm and worked for my room, board, and clothes and spending money, on their farm. My high school years were, 1932 to 1936. My Aunt Jean and I drove to school together. She was my mother's

younger sister and was just two years older than me. The farm was hard work and I didn't get to go out for football. In my second year I boarded in town and got to go out for sports. I broad-jumped and threw the javelin. I played foot ball. I was captain of the football team and also captain of the wrestling team. I helped get the first wrestling team organized, after I graduated the team was stopped, and later when they got a coach it was started again. They had great teams then and now. I was my class outstanding athlete when I was in my senior year. It was a great year and I met great friends, most are gone now. In 1988, when I went back for a reunion, there were still about twenty alive from our class of 42. In 1998 there were only about 16 of left.

In my junior year, my parents left the farm and moved to town, so I lived with my folks for the last two years. In the first year they rented a house at the edge of town. It was a two story house with one bedroom upstairs. My brothers and I slept up there. One night I was awakened by a fire in the stairs. I kicked out the screens and lowered my brothers down as far as I could then dropped them the rest of the way. Then I jumped down and ran to the neighbors to call the fire department. The folks were awakened and got out with my sisters. The fire did not do too much damage to the house.

In my senior year the folks bought a house. In the summer I worked on the high way. The first two days of the job we unloaded the cement. In those days only the married men with families were hired first.. Finally the construction boss asked if anyone could run the concrete mixer? I held up my hand and he asked my experience. I told him I could run the mixer as I could drive a caterpillar tractor and other machinery. He hired me and the next, day, we went out and he showed me what to do. I never had a problem with the mixer job, it was the highest paying job. It was \$1.65/hour, and I worked 10 hours per day. I was paid for the extra two hours, as I had to stay and clean and grease the mixer, in the morning I had to get there early, to get everything running and ready to go. My father had a job of finishing the concrete, \$1.35 per hour. When I got home, the day that I was hired, he asked if I got hired and doing what? When I told him what I was hired for, he said that I would not last the first day, so I said, at least I would get paid for that day! It lasted till the job finished, about several weeks. A few days after the job started, the last mixer man came back and wanted the job, but the boss said that I was a good worker and did not drink. During that time I also worked a lot at the Maytag store. In those days, not many farms had electricity. The Maytag washers had a gasoline motor, for the farms. There was a device that looked like a small windmill, it was called a WINDCHARGER. It was used to charge the radio batteries. We would usually mount it on the top of roof of one of the farm buildings. We had several part times jobs. I always took most of my money home to the folks, I bought my school clothes and maybe kept 50 cents for spending. In those days the Maytag clothes washer was the best, as it is now. It had a one cylinder gasoline motor. All you had to do to start it, was to press a foot pedal down, and it would start. It generated its own electricity for the spark plug, a magneto, it was called. At first when cars came out they all had magnetos, they had no batteries, generators, the first lights were gas light's. When I worked in the store, I repaired and re-built the engines, and all of the machines. It was a good job and I enjoyed it, and learned a lot of skills. For a while Houge's ran the store, they moved to Oregon, and a new manager was hired. We got along very well, and he became my friend, he would tell me that I was too good for the town. On my boot leave from the Navy, my brother Vernon and I

bought my parents a very large and expensive Zenith radio, It cost over \$500, but he sold it to us for cost. Christmas Eve, he was to deliver it, as it was a surprise from us. The folks told him that it must be a mistake, he said it was a surprise from the boys! It was to be in their house, till they passed away. It also has a record changer, for ten records.

In school I loved the math and science subjects the most, I also loved the business classes. When we learned to type our typewriters has no letters on the keys. We had to memorize them. There was a big drawing on the wall, showing the position of the keys. We had to type 35 words per minute to graduate from the class, that was a "C", 45 words per minute was an "A", I got a "C", and was lucky as the small finger of my left hand is "crippled", and it was a handicap. Typing would be a help, till I finally retired for the last time on 12/31/99, by then the computer had arrived.

As I look back, it was wonderful to go to school in those years. Fundamentals were drilled into your brain, so that you would never forget them. No breaking of the rules were allowed!

This year, 2001, I may go to my 65<sup>th</sup> high school, with my brother Cecil. It will be his 60<sup>th</sup>. It is hard to imagine that I finished high school that long ago!

One of the fun things that we would do was to go to the near by towns and date the girls. We would all "chip in a dime" to buy the gas. One of the towns was Forest City, it had a large roller skating rink in a tent. One summer I was the floor manager and would skate backwards to control the skating crowd, it was free for me. We got to know the kids from all the towns near-by. One of the fun things was ladies choice, some cute girl and a good skater would skate around and choose a partner, we would skate about three times around the floor, a whistle would blow, and we would select the next partner till the floor was filled with skaters. There was also a men's choice, the same, only I would get to choose a partner, etc. There was a place called Lake Cornelia, about 20 miles away, and they had a large skating rink and dance hall. We would get to meet people from quite a distance away. There was a middle aged man with a big Car, and he would bring a load of girls. The girls were all good skaters, and he was a great skater.

This year, 2001, I was lucky to back to Britt and attend my 65<sup>th</sup> high school reunion! Mary and I were going to try, it would be very hard. Our wonderful son, Alan volunteered, and drove. It was a great trip, thanks to Alan. He got to see all of the old places where I lived as a boy and all of the graves where all of our parents are.

## Trip To California

In the summer after I had graduated, I was stopped by the local Dentist, as I was walking down town. He asked if I would be interested in taking a caravan of new cars from Minneapolis to Los Angeles? Of course I would like that very much. At that time I had never been outside of the State of Iowa. His wife's father was a dealer in Los Angeles. After

I had agreed to take the job, I asked him why he had asked me, he said that I was recommended as being a very reliable person by my high school superintendent. He had written me a letter of recommendation after I had graduated. About a week later the Dentist took me to Minneapolis, no one else showed up, but they decided to send me with a car. The state line was only about 35 miles north, and it would be my first time to be out of the state of Iowa!

I took the new, 1936, Dodge four door back to Britt and took my friend Clifford Houge with me. We went south to highway 30 and headed west. The highway was known as the Lincoln Highway. That was before freeways were invented. Our first stop was Blair, Nebraska, we stopped at a dealer to have the governor removed and the oil changed. In those days it kept the car from going faster than it was set for, 35 MPH, for the first 500 miles. Then we could go about 50 or 60 MPH. The governor was required to be on the first 500 miles to make the guarantee valid. The roads then were only two lanes, sometimes, three lanes. The middle lane was for passing only, if it was 3 lanes. Our first night stop was at Grand Island, Nebraska. We always slept in the car, next to a park, so that there was a rest room. The next night was in Wyoming. We stopped at Green River to find one of Dad's cousins and Grand Father's brother, George. All of them were out of town, so we went on. When we got to Salt Lake, city, we went out to swim in the Great Salt Lake. It had salt water like the oceans, there was a large bath house, and Inn there. Since then the lake has gotten larger and all of the buildings there are now under water. When we went through Las Vegas, then a little town, we went out to go through Boulder Dam. There was some problem and we didn't get to go through it. Finally we arrived in L.A. and spent the night at the "Y". The next day we delivered the car. At that time Hollywood was a separate little town, but we visited it and saw the famous Grauman's Chinese theater.

The next day we went to Torrance, which was then a little town. The Houge's had friends there and we stayed a week. They took us to Redondo Beach, which had several gambling houses, poker places. Also they took us to the beach at San Pedro via Palos Verdes drive. We went to Cabrillo Beach, saw the Marine Museum, and swam at the beach. Then to Long Beach to the Pike, a place with a great amusement park. That was my first swim in the ocean, it was wonderful and I loved it.

We then started to hitch hike back. We got to Indio, CA and there was such a desert sand storm, we couldn't get a ride either way. A Hobo came along and asked where we were going and we said El Paso. He said to get on the freight train and that we would get there the next night. We got on the train, there was a gondola car, for just us bums. That night we arrived in Yuma and were invited down to the Hobo Jungle, as it was called then, to eat supper with the Hobo's. We had plenty of food and got back on the train. The next night we got off and stayed over night, at Tucson, Arizona. It took two showers and when we jumped in the pool, we left a ring of oil, and we took another shower! We went to a show and were attracted to the girl ushers. We asked for a date and they told us if we won the lottery at the theater that night, yes. I guess that was how excited they were about dating us? We didn't win so we got back on the train and got off at El Paso. The next day we went to Juarez, Mexico, just across the Rio Grande river. I bought a pair of Mexican sandals, called "Huratches", they were a hit at home. We got on a street car, which took us over the river

and made a loop and came back.. We got off and walked around town and shopped. Then we left and started home.

We couldn't get a ride together so we flipped a coin and I got to go first. An elderly couple came along and stopped. They asked me if I could drive their big Buick and I said yes. They got in the back seat and told me to wake them up when we needed gas. They liked my driving and bought me food and a room at night. The next day we got to Dallas. There was a Centennial Exposition there and I went to it, and saw my first professional football game. The Centennial was like a world fair and was so much fun.

The next day I got to Hope, Arkansas, President Clinton's home town. One ride I got, the man wanted to stop and go see all of the caves along the way, so I left him and continued home. There were beautiful caves every few miles, and they cost money to get in. Since my money supply was getting small, we parted company. The next ride was in a small car, an Austin, It was delivered in a crate, that could be used for a garage. The car had to be pushed in, and pulled out, before one could get into it! My friend, Houge, ran out of money and had to wire home for money and he got back home about a week after I got home. What a great trip. It changed my life, Britt once looked so great to me, and was now just a dump of a little town. I decided that one day to live in L.A., which I did, and spent about 30 years there after I got out of the Navy.

## Iowa City

When I was about ten years old, I had fallen and smashed my nose, and it was pushed to one side. The Doctor told me to wait till after High School to have it fixed. In those days we were poor and I could get it fixed for free at Iowa State Hospital, at Iowa City. A car from the hospital, came to Britt, and took me there. At the hospital I had to have several operations before my nose operation. I had to have my tonsils removed, two sinus operations, and then the broken nose bone was removed and a small piece of my rib was put in. I got a severe infection and the nose bone had to be removed and my rib was also infected. I went home very disappointed and never went back. So it is still flat. That summer was a great disappointment to me, getting all of those operations and not getting my nose fixed! The sinus operations were very hard. After the gland was scraped out, they filled it with about 3 feet of gauze strip. Part hung out of my nostril and had a safety pin on the end. After two days, several Doctors and nurses came in to my bed. They would hold me down and pull out the gauze. The first foot really hurt, and the rest tickled so bad as it unwound, it almost drove one crazy. It was a good thing that they were holding me down! During the rest of the stay, I would go up to the operating room gallery and watch surgeries with the medical students. They soon caught me, and I was restricted to my bed. All in all, it was a great experience, and a very sad summer for me. My rib infection did not heal for almost a year.

## Miami, Florida

That winter after I got home a group of us friends decided to get out of Britt for the winter and go to Miami. We were to go out and work and save our money for the trip. I went out and picked corn for a month and made \$60. When I got back to town they were still

sitting in the pool hall, broke. I decided to go alone, and I saw an advertisement in the paper “for a young man to drive a couple to Florida”. I had my friend, Houge drive me there. It was about fifty miles to where we lived. On the way there I marked out a route, on my road map, and nightly stops to Florida. When we got there, I made my presentation and they were impressed and said they would call me with their decision. About 40 others came in the next few days. They called me and said that I was selected. I went down there and we got ready for the trip. They had a lot of boxes and suit cases to go on the back of the car. They had a 1930 Chevy two door car. They were going to spend the winter at Saint Augustine, Florida. A few days later, it was a Sunday Morning and we were stopped for a train and it was raining very hard. After the train went by we started, the car would not run as the rear axle had broken. It was a common problem with that year of car and I knew just what it was. I convinced them not to worry and hitched hiked back to the next town, Dothan, Alabama. On the way to town we passed a junk yard which was open. They had a wall full of axles for our car. The junk yard man had a truck and said he would go out and put the axle in for \$20, plus \$2 for the axle. It only took him a few minutes and he was covered with the red mud. At first the people were worried about the price and I convinced them it could have cost a \$100 and they were happy with the price. When we got there they offered me the chance to drive them back, but I was going a different route, so I declined the offer. They were very nice, the man referred to me as “the boy” and were very happy with my driving.

I hitched a ride to Miami and later found out that it was against the law to hitch hike in Florida, I was lucky to have gotten a ride before the police saw me! At that time, I would have been arrested, and would have to spend 10 days in the chain gang! When I got there I rented a room in a dump for 50 cents for a night. What a dump, but all that I could afford. It had a cot, an orange crate for a dresser, and chicken wire for a ceiling. The next day I found a room and shared it with a guy from Indiana. I decided to get a job as a dishwasher as we received our meals and I didn't have too much money. In those days you had to pay an employment agency Five dollars for a job location. The job was just down stairs and it was at a vegetarian café. A man and his wife owned the café, they had to be a resident to practice medicine. Both of them were Doctors. They had ridden their bikes all the way from New York City. They were both very nice people and I liked them very much, they were health food people, and the food was delicious. They made a vegetable loaf, and it tasted just like a meat loaf and looked the same. They hired me for five dollars a week, plus three meals a day. I really had never washed dishes in a café before, and after the cook asked me if I had ever done the job before and I said that I used to help mother. He liked me and taught me the job. After about a week the vegetable man left and I got the job.\$10 a week. I prepared and cut up all of the vegetables and sliced all of the home made bread by hand, it had to be exactly ½ inch thick. The baker was a young lady and a great baker and was very particular with how things looked. After a couple of weeks a friend told me that the Deauville Hotel was hiring. In those times I was shocked at the way Blacks were treated. At 7 PM they had to be in their part of town, or had a police permit to get back and forth from work.

## The McFadden Deuville Hotel



The owner was a famous publisher, had another hotel in New York, in the Adirondack mountains. He was a famous physical culture advocate then. He sold books on the subject and magazines. When he was 70 years old he flew his plane, solo, to his hotel, in Miami. He was very strict about quality and service at his hotels. One day he got a glass of orange juice with lip stick on the glass, he had all of the kitchen workers fired, I was off that day, or I would have been fired also.

I went out there and they hired me as an assistant steward. \$50 a month and room and board and laundry. I helped the steward check in all of the fruit, vegetables, and all other supplies for the kitchen. The job included being the boss of all the kitchen help. There was the kitchen boy, dishwashers, glass washers, and the silver ware washer. It was a fun job and I stayed all winter till they closed in the spring. One of the best parts was that I got to eat in the kitchen with the cooks, anything we wanted. I got to eat my first lobster there, they were serving a large group and several did not come, so we got to eat the lobsters! Shortly after I started I developed a carbuncle, similar to a boil now, but had three heads and very painful! The hotel Doctor put me on a fruit plate for a week, he said it was going from vegetarian back to meat. The fruit plate was very delicious, cost the customers \$20! What great food, the hotel was for the rich, a cup of coffee was 75 cents, it came in a real silver pot. I enjoyed the whole season and went to the beach every day as my hours were, 5PM till the kitchen closed, sometimes as late as 3AM. I had to stay up till all of the food stuff was delivered. The baker came in at 3 AM and I always had a hot pot of coffee ready for him, of course I got my choice of all the fresh bakery goods! What a sun tan I had, as we went to the beach every day. We had a great group of friends from the hotels nearby. In those days it only cost about \$50 for a round trip to Cuba, I always wished that I had gone, but wanted to save my money for the trip home. Cuba, was then a large resort and gambling city, before the revolution and Castro. It was a famous tourist place then.

## The Trip Home

When the job ended I hitch hiked up through Washington DC. Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and back through Chicago and home. At Buffalo, New York I stopped over night at a house that had a sign, room for tourists. It was about nine PM and a lady answered the door. I said I wanted a room and she asked me my name, I thought it was unusual and said "Boleshawski". She was Polish and said to come in and insisted that she fix me a snack to eat. When she started to speak Polish, I said I was an orphan and did not know the language. The next morning she fixed me breakfast and offered me the room at half price. I was so ashamed that I insisted on paying full price, which was only \$2. When I got home I looked so strange with my sun tan compared to the pale guys that had not gone with me. It was such a trip for me, I was able to see 21 states on the whole trip. I had saved up \$100 for the return trip. When I went up to the top of the Empire State building, it was the tallest building in the world, we got to go up to 108 stories and could see 66 miles that day. Boston was great to visit then, and Chicago. I stayed in Chicago for a week with My Aunt Mary and her husband Paul. They ran a small store then and I helped them, they did not have any children. It was next to a grade school, and they had a large candy counter, it had candy bars, 5 cents then and a lot of hard candies, several per penny. The school kids would come in to buy mostly

candies. It was fun and they asked me to stay with them and go to school, but I had to go home. At that time there was a great electrical trade school there. I thought of going back, but decided to join the Navy. The trip home was a great experience for a farm boy. All the big cities were great. In those days everyone picked up hitchhikers, some wanted help in driving, or just someone new to chat with. At Philadelphia I got a ride in a Cord Roadster. It had either three or four exhaust pipes coming out of side of the hood, and it was guaranteed to go 150 miles per hour, it was the greatest sport car, at that time. This guy would go about 90 MPH on those two lane highways. As soon as he stopped for gas, I said goodbye, and got another ride! I was scared to ride with him!

## Joining the Navy

In the summer of 1938, since I did not have the money to go to college, I decided to join the Navy. There were no college loans then. The nearest recruiting station was in Mason City, about 35 miles from Britt. I hitched a ride there. The first thing they did was to have me stand bare foot on a marble slab to check for flat feet, the Navy was very strict on feet. Next was the color-blind test, since I got through the first two tests, I was given a written test of about 150 questions of all kinds of things. Math, science, etc. You were required to get 92% to qualify for recruitment. I got 94%! They did not want many then, so they flunked most of the applicants. The next step was to go to Des Moines to the main recruiting station.

There were 120 men taking the tests. We were all lined up naked in rows. The Doctor again checked the feet and about 20 didn't pass. They made about a dozen other tests, blood pressure, blood tests, urine tests, etc. About another 40 were gone. The Doctor examined hands and saw my crippled left little finger. He asked how it was hurt and I told him it was cut when I was a baby, I was worried and said I could type about 40 words per minute. He had the clerk bring a typewriter and I stood there naked I showed him how I could type with it and he passed me. We were finally down to about ten men and were accepted into the Navy! We were all put on a train and were on our way to Great Lakes Training Station, about 40 miles north of Chicago.

## Great Lakes Boot Camp

I was entered into Company 24-38, there were 99 of us. The training period was for three months. Our Company Commander was Chief Quartermaster, E.W. White. He taught us well, and several times we were the honor company of the whole training station. That meant that we

were the first company to march, and we carried the flag. We also were first in the 'Chow' line! There were 6 companies at a time. In later years, 4 of us would meet again in the Asiatic Fleet. We were able to have a few times together before the war, and I was never able to find out if any of them made it through the war.

When we arrived we were put in a three week Isolation camp outside of the main boot camp. We were given all of our vaccinations, our arms were sure sore! Then they issued our uniforms and assigned us to a hammock. The hammocks were only 3 feet above the floor, so that we could learn how to sleep in them. It is sort of tricky getting into them and getting out of them. We were taught how to roll our uniforms and how to lay them out for inspections. We also learned how to wash our clothes. Of course how to march when they called out the cadence. We also had places we had to stand watches. The south gate was closed to entry. One night the Admiral decided to make a short cut. The man on watch would not let him in as per orders. The Admiral was in civilian clothes, not in a uniform. He explained that since he was an Admiral he could go through. The boot on watch said that he didn't look like an Admiral and he needed a haircut and told him, shove off ,

“Grand Father! The next day the boot was in front of the company Commander. He was told that he did correct in not letting anyone through, but was lectured on what he said. When we first came in it was time or first hair cut. We marched to the barber shop The guy in front had long wavy hair, the barber asked him how he wanted it cut, and then clipped it off bald. That was the hair cut we all got.

When we got over to the main boot camp our hammocks were 8 feet above the floor. We were issued our rifles and a bayonet for training. On of the useful uses of the bayonet was to put it across the hammock above our heads, that made the head end more comfortable to sleep in. We were allowed to get either \$5 or \$3 per payday. We chose \$3, and the rest was saved for our boot leave. When it came time for pay day we were shown how to fill out our pay slip, it had to be exactly. We lined up and the \$21 was laid in front of a store keeper, so much was taken out of it at each station and when it came to us there was a \$2 dollar bill and a \$1 bill left for us. We were issued two pair of shoes, at one stop they gave us a coupon book for two new soles and heels of our shoes, and when we were through marching we needed them. One book was for a hair cuts, one each week, and they sheared it all off each week. On coupon book was for spending at the recreation hall. We had two work uniforms and one dress uniform. In that time only the wool uniforms were worn, in the summer we had white cotton uniforms, two whites and one dress white. Each day we would take the uniform, socks, and underwear that we wore to the wash and shower area in the basement. One of the things issued was a bucket and brush and soap. After washing and putting our clothes in the big dryer racks we would shower. At bedtime the Bugle would play taps. At morning the bugle would play reveille to get up. We had a half hour to shave, dress, and line up out in front of our building. There we were mustered and marched to the mess hall for our breakfast, after which we were marched back.

We were put in platoons and in squads of eight. That was the way we always lined up. All morning we were trained in marching, with fixed bayonets on our rifles. When we first started, there was a lot of bayonet “clicking! We were being taught how to present our rifles while marching and when we were at halt, we would stand at attention, and with our rifles down and to rest we would stand at parade rest with our rifle butts on the ground. We marched morning and after noon except to classes. We were issued a pocket knife and were told to have it with us at all times when dressed. We had knot tying classes, boat rowing classes, wall climbing classes, swimming classes, and were taught how to use the gas mask,

we were taught how to put it on and then go into a gas chamber filled with tear gas. Inside we had to hold our breath, remove the mask and put it on again. Since we could not open our eyes, we had to do it, by memory. That means that we had to pay attention to the first instructions, the first time. There were instructors also in the gas chamber, to get us out if there was a problem. The tear gas would burn your eyes and lungs. etc. We had to learn to swim a hundred yards to graduate, which was no problem for me. One guy could not swim and I spent weeks training and showing him, he finally passed only a couple weeks before we graduated, I was happy for him and proud that I could teach him. We had many teams, I was on the wall climbing team, rowing team, swimming team, we were the champion team. I swam free style and was the last swimmer on the relay team, I was the heavy weight champion wrestler of the whole district. We had rifle shooting classes, I shot 147 out 150, and was third in our company. We also had pistol shooting. 147 was good enough for expert on the rifle but I never got my badge. We had this Chief, he was always tricking some one into odd jobs. One morning it was below zero, he came by and asked if anyone could type, I and several others said yes, about five minutes later we came back on the trash trucks, dumping the trash cans. Needless to say it was my last time to volunteer, unless I knew for sure what the job was. We finally graduated and went home for three weeks of leave. One of the tests was for mechanical aptitude. I was second highest and was scheduled for Machinist school. When we came back from leave we could take a test for Seaman 2<sup>nd</sup> class. When it was time for the test we met in the rigging loft. It was Friday afternoon and the Chief was scheduled for weekend liberty, the same one, that got us to "Type" He was one of my favorite chiefs, as we learned so much from him, at one of his lectures, he said never to volunteer unless we knew for sure what we were volunteering for! He came in and asked each person to show his knife, only four of us has our knives with us. He said we passed and the rest failed and could take the test next week and left. One of the ones that failed complained to the Officer. The Officer said what more practical test could be given and assigned him to mess cook for the week. During the month I was there I volunteered for mess cooking, it was in out of the cold. I volunteered for the vegetable prep room, the cooks were happy with me as I had experience. As soon as we finished we were off for the rest of day and could go to the recreation room and could play pool or other games. One of the fun things was that they had roller skating in the big drill hall on Thursday nights. I was really a good skater and could dance on skates. I met a real cute girl and skated each time with her. Her father was a Warrant Officer and notified me skating was o.k. but not to even think of dating her! I guess he knew all about sailors. We had great times skating, and there were no times for dating.

We then had tests for being able to go to schools of our choice. I had the second highest grade for mechanical aptitude and chose Aviation Machinist School. At that time you had to go to Machinist School and be #1 in the class. I wasn't, so after the Machinist school was sent to sea. Machinist School was a great thing for me as learned so much that would help me not only in the Navy, but the rest of my life. Being a good mechanic was a big plus, in any job in the Navy. In 1998, when Alan Jr. graduated, there was a new Boot Camp built. It was outside of the old one. Alan Sr. and I got to tour the old one, a lot of the old buildings are still there, and large, new schools there. It was great to see my old boot camp again, probably, for the last time! Thanks to our Company Chief Mr. White, and the Chief Rayburn, we had a great time and learning experience!

## Machinist School

Finally we all left on the train for Norfolk, Virginia, for schools. The day that we left it was 20 below zero, at that time wind chill was not invented. Virginia looked good from that climate! We finally arrived at Newport News, across the bay from Norfolk. It was 50 above zero, but with the wind coming across Chesapeake Bay, it seemed colder than Chicago! We rode the Ferry across to the Norfolk Navy Base and was checked in for the school. We were put in Bungalows, all very old wood buildings. Everything at the base was old buildings and the school machinery was old too.

We were entered into classes and started our 20 week school. We had a Warrant Officer in charge and several Chiefs for instructors, they were very good instructors. The first week was spent, getting our books, and then the rest of the week was spent on how to use common hand tools and how to sharpen them. Being a farm boy was a big help as we knew a lot about tools, some of the city boys could not even use a saw or screw driver, correctly. Each week we had class room times to learn all of the things about metals, and the cutting speeds for each, also shop math classes.

The second week we spent in the carpenter and moulding shops. The moulding shop made moulds and poured the melted iron and steel into them. We all made a cube mould and poured in the melted cast iron. The finished cube was 4 inches square and we used it for one of our projects. In the carpenter shop we made several things out of wood, and learned how to use wood tools. Including boring holes.

We then moved into the machine shop and learned to use drill presses, how to sharpen drill bits. Then it was time to learn how to operate the metal lathe, and we made several projects. We learned how to machine iron, steel, and brass. One of our projects was to make a large,  $\frac{3}{4}$ " drill bit blank, to be completed later. We spent 4 weeks on the metal lathes, learning how to cut threads, how to cut tapers, and all the other things done on a lathe.

The next two weeks we spent on the shapers. Our 4" cube was to be cut into a perfect 3" cube. The machines were old and worn so it was difficult to be accurate. The student before me, told me to put two cigarette papers under one corner and then it would cut a perfect cube! The shaper had a table and vise and the tool bent back and forth and could only cut flat surfaces and grooves in the metal.

The next month was spent on the milling machines. Both the lathes and milling machine had gear boxes, it was necessary to change gears for different cutting speeds. We went to classes to learn how to take the gear boxes apart and figure out which gear sizes to put in. Now they have a lever to shift speeds. One of our projects was to cut the curved slots on the drill bits that we had made, and how to sharpen the drill. The milling machine had an index wheel with holes. We had to learn how to set it so that different curves could be cut. It was a very complex machine and very interesting machine to operate.

Our last 4 weeks was spent in the job shop. We would get a blue print, and then had to select which machine to use and the metal to check out from the supply room to complete

the projects. It was very hard and required all that we had learned as we were now machinists, and were able to do any machine job. One time we ran out of food at the mess hall, Our Warrant Officer told the cooks, do you want to get more food, or do you want me to go to the Admiral? The food appeared immediately, as he was a friend of the Admiral, as they had served together in the past and were good friends. Warrant Officers had great influence in the Navy! They were very seldom challenged and highly respected by both Officers, Chiefs, or anyone. Finally we graduated and were now ready for 30 days leave and to report for duty. After graduation from Machinist we were changed from Seaman 2/c to Fireman 3/c so that we would be assigned to the Engineering Department when we went on a ship. Seaman 2/c and Fireman 3/c are equal rates and pay. Now, in 2001, those buildings are replaced with a new school complex. I chose the west coast for duty and after leave, to report the USS Rigel, a receiving ship for further assignment. At that time there was a Destroyer Base with shops and many other buildings and ships to work on, mostly WWI destroyers. At that time, and till the war ended our pay scales were Apprentice Seaman, “Boots”, was \$21 per month; Seaman Second class and Fireman third class were \$36 per month; Seaman first class and Fireman second class were \$54 per month; Petty Officer third class and Fireman first class were \$60 per month; Petty Officer second class was \$72 per month; Petty Officer first class was \$84 per month, Chief Petty officer Acting Appointment, and Chief Petty officer Permanent Appointed, the pay for Chief was \$125, acting, and \$150 for permanent.

## 30 days Leave

It took me about a week to get home. To my surprise, my youngest brother, Roger was born about three days after I got home! I spent a nice 7 days at home having fun with all of my old friends. It was sort of strange, as I had so many new friends in the Navy, that I had become an outsider now. The Navy had made me sort of strange to the small town gang. They had all changed, had new friends and girl friends. It was fun to be back, and it was exciting to be going to California and the real Navy at last. One of my Machinist School class mates had invited me to come to his home in LA for a couple of days before we reported in to San Diego. We had a lot of fun and one of his friends drove us to San Diego. We went down the old coast highway, there was no freeway then. What a beautiful trip down through all the little towns along the ocean, they have all grown to be cities now.

## USS Rigel

We reported in to the Naval Base and the USS Rigel. We were there about a week, working on some old WWI, Destroyers, four pipers, as they were called. Our jobs were in the engine rooms. When we were in Machinist School our rates had been changed to Fireman 3/c. The engine room machines were covered with about a ½ inch of grease. We would get covered with grease and have to change clothes to get out to go to lunch. On my last day after noon, I was scheduled to go into the bilges, there was sea water in there and everything was covered with grease. All of my time in the Navy, I never had to go into the dreaded bilges! After lunch, just before my turn, a messenger came to the hatch, they never came down, as it was so greasy there, he paged me and told me to go to the Officer in Charge

on the double. In the Navy, on the double, meant as fast as you could go! The Officer told me that I had 15 minutes to pack my things and go to a boat at the dock! It was the boat from the ship that I had been assigned to. The USS Trinity, an old oil tanker, it was made during WWI, and then decommissioned, in 1937 it was restored and came back in the Navy. I had so wished that it would have been, a Battle ship, Cruiser, or an Aircraft Carrier, or a Repair ship. As it turned out it happened to be the best for my future. In those other types of ships, there were so many to compete with. On the tanker there were so many that just wanted to have fun, it gave me my chance in the “SUN””, and learn. My first Chief and I got along really well, and I got all of the good jobs to learn.

## USS Trinity AO-13

The USS Trinity was a WWI oil tanker, and was to be my home for the next 3 and 1/2 years. It sat in the “moth ball” basin till was re-commissioned in 1937 in Philadelphia Naval Ship yard. It came to the west coast and was assigned to the fleet and made trips to Asia and back. It was 478 feet long and 60 feet wide, it had a loaded draft of 26 feet, and carried about 80,000 barrels of fuel oil and about 250,000 gallons of aviation gas. It had a full speed of 9.5 miles per hour. It had 2 old Scottish boilers and one high pressure turbine and one low pressure turbine. My first duties were in the engine room. We had six or seven officers and about 100 enlisted men.

We went aboard, was checked in, and assigned to a locker and bunk. For duty I was assigned to the ‘A’ Division and the engine room. I was assigned to the boats The Captains “Gig”.

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when, we were in port, on the Captains gig, as the engineer. When the Coxswain, boat driver, would ring bell signals to stop, shift gears, to go forward, or reverse, and to what speed. Also my job was to keep the engine and engine room spotless, spotless in capitals. There was a small bilge under the engine, it was made of copper and had to be cleaned and shined with copper polish each morning. It had to be bright and spotless, that insured no gasoline was there, that might explode. It was a simple job and sort of fun as it meant several hours each day going from the ship to the Navy Dock. Some times we would have to wait for the Captain, and would get a coke, and visit with the other boat crews from the other ships. When we left the ship or dock, one bell meant to start out forward. Two bells meant to go full speed. AS we approached the ship or dock, one bell meant to stop the engine, Two bells meant to go in reverse full speed, one bell meant to stop. Each day they would lower a gasoline hose to fill the tank at the ship. When we tied up at the ship, there was a large pole, that stuck out from the ship, it was called a” boom”. There were ropes hanging down to tie the boat to, and a rope ladder to climb up on. There was a line, about three feet above the boom to hang on to as we slid along to the side of the ship to get on and off the boats.

In the engine room when the ship was underway, my first job was to run the evaporators, they changed used steam from the engines, back to water to be used in the boilers. The evaporators passed the steam through tubes that had cold sea water around them, and a pump to pump out the water to a holding tank. Boilers had to have real pure water to make steam. The reason for purity, was so that scale would not build up inside of the boilers

and make them less efficient. I had other stations in the engine room, as time passed, and I became more skilled. The machinery was very interesting to operate and to keep everything running.

The water, that flunked the test, was put in the drinking water tanks for the crew use. I was still very pure water, but had a salinity too high for the boilers. The engine room was quite hot, so we stood under the fresh air ducts to keep cool as much as we could. We always had a coffee pot going, that was also my job. In the merchant ships the beginning jobs in the engine room would be called an oiler. Each of the jobs were very interesting to learn. We learned the theory of the purpose the machine did as well as how to operate it.

When we were off watch in the engine room, the "A" gang would take care of the steering engine, the anchor engine, for pulling up the anchor, all of the winches used on deck for hosting things on the ship. We also had an emergency generator, if we lost electrical power. The generator engine was very hard to crank. My petty officer devised a plan. We had a very powerful man in the engineers, I was to talk to him and comment "how hard it was to crank", and the petty officer would say that even the powerful one could not crank it. I was to say no one could "spin it". It worked and the guy said show me the engine. He went down there and cranked the engine and it started! What a ruse, but it worked. We also had charge of the hot and cold water piping for the ship. When oil was pumped on or off the ship, we had charge of operating the oil valves and big pump motors, they were steam motors, that was the reason for an engineer being part of the pump crew.

After a few months it was time to change the "mess cooks", the ones that took care of the mess hall, where the crew ate, and also to help the cooks. The engineers had two tables, each seating 10 men. The other fellow and I had to flip a coin to see who got the job first. I lost, so I was first. We had 20 engineers at my two tables. If we did a good job, each man would tip us a dollar, at each payday, twice a month. Since I was only making \$36 a month, the twenty dollars came in handy. On mess cooking, we got liberty each day after supper.

When we were at sea we stood watches, four hours on, and eight hours off. When we were in port, we had the duty one day and liberty two days. In port when the boilers were shut down, we had a small boiler, called "the donkey boiler" to heat the hot water for the ship.

When we went to sea, we would take a load of oil, and go to Manila, via Honolulu, Midway Islands, Guam. From Manila we would go to the Dutch East Indies for a load, and come back to Manila. The Asiatic Fleet had to a tanker to supply them with oil and gasoline. We carried 80,000 barrels of oil, and 250,000 gallons of aviation gasoline for the airplanes. As the time passed, we were to put in about a 150 thousand miles on the old "tub", it had a top speed of about 10 miles per hour! It turned out to be an advantage for me. I bought a

small library of electrical text books and had a lot of time at sea to study. That was an opportunity for me to learn electrical theory and math. Most of the other guys spent their



time gambling or spending their time on silly games, they thought that I was “nuts” for doing so much studying!

## Trips Across The Pacific Ocean

All together we made 5 round trips across the Pacific Ocean. On the first trip it was about 20,000 miles. We left San Diego and went directly to Guam. On the way just out of Guam, we were in a real bad Hurricane, with winds up to about 100 MPH. Very heavy seas, and it did horrible damage to the Island. On the way some one had an “anchor pool” , it cost 2 dollars to enter. I told the guy if he couldn’t sell the last chance , that I would buy it. There were always anchor pools. There were 60 chances in the pool, one for each minute of the hour. When the ship dropped the anchor, the exact minute it was dropped would be entered in the ships log, the same if we tied up to a dock.. So the person with that number won. I had drawn number 58, and that minute was the minute the anchor was dropped. I won a 100 dollars. The folks had just moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico and hard up. So I sent the \$100 back to them. Guam was one of the Clipper planes stops. So I sent it on the next Clipper. When they got it they were almost out of grocery money, so it came just in time.

From Guam we went to Manila. When we arrived I was on watch in the engine room. As soon as I got off and came on deck, what a surprise it was to see the tropics! From Manila we went to Tsingtao, China to take the oil to the Asiatic Fleet. What a shock it was to see China for the first time. 25 of their dollars was worth just one of our dollars. What wonderful buys. For transportation, we would ride in a Rickshaw. It was a cart pulled by a coolie, and real cheap. I always used the same one on the two liberties there. When I would buy something he would take care of it. When I stopped to eat, I would have them send him out something. What a big shock the restaurants were. When you would set at a table, they would bring a large bowl with a steaming towel and wash your face and hands, it was very refreshing. Chop Suey was invented by a cook in Chicago, so their food was completely different than our Chinese food at home.

The Japanese had occupied China, and they were very cruel, the Chinese were beheaded on the street. I saw several and have pictures. There was a lot of hostility between them and us. We were issued the China Service Medal for going there.

From Tsingtao we went to Manila. From there we went to Tandjong, Oeban, a small island of the Dutch East Indies, about 30 miles south of Singapore. We could see the lights at night. There was not much there, but had very good Dutch beer. From there we went back to Manila. After a few liberties we came back to San Diego, 12,000 miles. On the trip we were gone for 108 days.

Our second trip would be 15000 miles. We left San Diego and went to Honolulu. It was just a small city then. At the famous Waikiki Beach there were only two hotels, now there is about two miles of ocean front hotels. It was such fun swimming in the ocean and they had giant breakers to ride. We then went to Midway Islands. Midway was a Clipper plane stop and a lot of Albatross, called “gooney” birds. The albatross would follow us all

across the ocean. They could glide a long time not moving their wings. From Midway we crossed the 180<sup>th</sup> meridian. Going West a day was skipped, and we had no Christmas day as we crossed on December 24 and skipped the 25<sup>th</sup>. We went to Manila, and then to Mare Island shipyard, in San Francisco Bay. On the way back we cross the 180<sup>th</sup> going east so we repeated the day and had 30 days in February. While in Mare Island we went on liberty at Treasure Island in the bay. We went by ferry then. Later they built the Bay Bridge, from San Francisco, Treasure Island, to Oakland. From Mare Island we went to San Pedro.

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> trip would be 18,000 miles. We went from San Pedro to Guam, and to Manila. Manila to Tandjon Oeban, to Manila. From Manila we went to Tsingtao, China. While in Tsingtao, I didn't get to shore but once. I had seen a beautiful set of chess, and checkers. One was Jade and the other from ivory. I didn't have the money, and was going back on pay day to get them. The day that I was to go ashore a friend asked me to wait till four in the afternoon, to go with him. The ones that went ashore got into a fight with the Japanese, a typhoon came in and we steamed  $\frac{3}{4}$  speed just to not pull the anchor free. The ones that went ashore stayed all night. The next day we left for San Diego. A total of 105 days. I never got to back to buy my ivory and Jade game sets, imagine what they would be worth now! At that time they would have cost just \$25 in our money, now they could not be bought at any price. The set also includes Ivory and Jade pieces larger than checkers with pictures on them. They were used to play a Chinese game called 'Mah-jong'. Many of the sailors played the game on the ships.

Our 4<sup>th</sup> trip would be 14,000 miles and for 88 days. From San Diego to San Pedro and to San Francisco. From San Francisco we would go to Midway, Guam, and to Manila. From Manila back to San Francisco.

Our 5<sup>th</sup> and last trip would be from San Diego to San Pedro, and then to Guam. From Guam to Manila. Manila to Palembang, Sumatra. On the way we would cross the equator, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1941. WE crossed at 105 degrees, 16 minutes, east longitude. We were all there to change from "Pollywogs to "Shell Backs" under King Neptune. What an initiation we had, I will always remember it. We each received a diploma, which I still have. We would stop again at Tandjong, Obeon for the last time. When we arrived back at Manila we were transferred to the Asiatic Fleet, March 1941. From Manila we would go Balikpapan, Borneo and then stop at Linkus, Tarakan, a small oil port at the north east corner of Borneo. After the war when I was teaching, the son of the man at the oil docks came to my class, we had a long talk, he was on some type of government grant. On Back to Manila. Our next trip would be from Manila, to Palembang, Sumatra. Palembang was up the Moesi River about 50 miles. There was a Dutch oil refinery there. It was fun to go ashore there. We met an American man there, he worked at the oil refinery, he took us to the Dutch Club for lunch. Only the Officers were to go there, being his guests we were welcome. Before lunch we had beer and a tray of goodies, one of the things was octopus! Each piece was about the size of a marshmallow and deep fried, it was very good. One of the things was fried locust, like a grasshopper, I passed on that! From there we went back to Tandjon, Oeban. We had to stop there to fill up the ship. There was a sand bar at the river entrance, and filled we would be to deep to cross the bar. We always had to wait at the sand bar till high tide to cross it. Natives

would come out and sell fruit. One of the fruit was called Mondos, very delicious. It had a red shell, and inside segments similar to oranges, only snow white segments. They also sold chickens, and bananas. The Doctor would get a tub of water and a disinfectant to soak everything in. Things touched by the natives could be polluted. We would buy the chickens and the cooks would fry them for us.

We would make two more trips to and from the same Islands and back to Manila. On 12/7/1941 Honolulu was bombed by the Japanese, Pearl Harbor Day, 12/8/1941 at Manila and the war was on. After all these years the Asiatic Fleet is finally honored. March 1, 2002 will become Asiatic Fleet Day and year on.

## World War II

The day the war started we were tied up to the fuel dock at Sangley Point, near the Cavite Navy Yard in Manila Bay. I got up early and made all the stops to find films that we had not seen recently. When I got back to the ship the Officer of the Deck said to take the films back? When I got back to the ship I was too late to get a full meal. Then General Quarters rang and I went to my station on the bridge. I complained about General Quarters being called at lunch time, and tied up to the dock. The Officer said “don’t you know that we are at war”? That was when I was told that Pearl Harbor had been Bombed by the Japanese. What a shock!! We had to remain at the oil pier for to unload 250,000 gallons of aviation gas for the sea plane squadron. This was to be the end of the Asiatic Fleet in the next 82 days, at a tremendous cost of ships and men. We would have 22 ships sunk, 1800+ men killed, and have over 500 POWS. Some would be executed on the islands when they swam ashore. Some while in captivity, would help build” The Bridge of the River Quai”. The people in the States were never told of us, many parents did not know where we were or if alive.

About sunset we finished unloading and all of the ships that were seaworthy left to go south. First from Manila we went to Balikpapan, Borneo for oil. We loaded up with fuel oil, gasoline, and one tank of diesel for the submarines. From there we went to the port at Makassar, Celebes and on to Warowarado Bay on Sumba Island. We fueled some ships and the left to go to Koepang, on the Island of Timor. After about a day we went to Kebola Bay, on the island of Alor. All of these places are on the Dutch East Indies. Hundreds of years ago they were called, The Spice Islands. We were then ordered to go to Darwin, Australia. At dawn just out of Darwin Harbor, we had 4 torpedoes fired at us, one went on each side of the ship, and the next two were fired in a curve to hit our sides of the ship. One went behind us and the other in front of us. It was to be our taste of war, how lucky we were. Our escort destroyers went and found them, and sunk the Sub. The next the day the navy divers went out and raised the sub. It was just a 3 man sub. We went on into Darwin Harbor and stayed a few days. We got a liberty one afternoon, what a dumpy little town, with warm beer. The place was covered with bush flies, smaller than our house flies but very persistent. We had to hold our hand over our glass of beer to keep them out, and use our other hand to keep to them off our faces Darwin was then just a small village of about 1000 people. Not much to do there. Our effort in the Asiatic Fleet was delaying the Japanese so that they were not able to invade Australia.

We then went to Tjilatjap, on the south coast of the island of Java. We could hear the gun fire over the mountains, just north of town. We were able to go ashore and see the town. I went to a tobacco shop and bought a 2 pound can of my favorite pipe tobacco. The shop owner wanted me to buy more, but I didn't have the money. He asked how much money I had. I only had about \$3 so he took it and gave me all tobacco he had. He did not want the Jap's to get it. He later burned down his shop and fled. I shudder to think of his fate as there was no way off the Island except by ship, and there were no Dutch ships there.

The next day we were to go to Palembang Sumatra for more oil, when we got out of the harbor we heard on the ships radio that Palembang was in the Japanese hands, so we came back. The next day we were sent out to go to the Persian Gulf for a load of oil and then go to Perth, Australia on the southwest corner of Australia. For the first day the USS Edsall would go along. They then went back and joined the remnants of the Fleet to go south to Australia. Most were sunk including the USS Edsall with almost all hands. The USS Edsall DD-219 and some Australian ships would sink the first Submarine of WWII, the one that had fired torpedoes at us! We continued on across the Indian Ocean, and made it to the Persian Gulf. And to Abadan, Iran. When we were going through the straits to the gulf we saw several airplanes going out and some Navy ships. A Japanese Sub had been spotted and they sunk it. The sub let us go in, and when we came out loaded, then they would have sunk us. Another very lucky day for us! We got to go ashore and when my friend and I were walking around town, we saw stones rolling past us. We looked back and a policeman motioned for us to run, which we did. We were walking on Muslim Streets, according to their belief it was o.k. to stone us and kill us for just walking on their streets! To them we were defiling their streets, by just walking on them. We went back to the ship. The next day we went up the Euphrates River to Basra, Iraq. We went ashore and I ran into a friend from Iowa. He was working in the desert putting bombers together. The Russians would come down and then fly them to Russia. During that time we would be given a Medal from Russia. Basra is only about 75 miles from where the Biblical place, where Abraham left to take his people to go to Egypt, as in the old Testament.

.While we were at the dock I watched a native operating the irrigation system. He would open the gate and drop a coconut shell with holes in it, in the water. The length of time that it took to sink was one ration of water. We saw a camel caravan starting out across the desert. The men rode the camels, or led them, and the women and children walking behind. One of the things they did was to pick up all of the camel manure. By evening it would be all dried out and would be their fuel to cook supper, by then it would be dried like charcoal that we use barbecue with.

From there with our load of oil we would go to Australia. All by ourselves. From this time we would make 5 trips across the Indian Ocean to Bahrein, Arabia, and Abadan across the Indian Ocean. One trip across the Indian Ocean we took a smaller boat with us and were going to drop it off near India and it would go alone then to Bombay, India. The reason it went with us, so that we could fuel it sea. Out in the middle of the ocean, its propeller fell off and we had to tow it into Diego Garcia, in the Chagos Islands. We left it there and went on. What ever happened to it we never knew. The Chagos Islands were also known as the

“oil Islands”. Many years later, our son Alan would stop there on his ship, there was the a large Navy station there. They were about 1200 miles south of the tip of India. There was a ship there, it was stranded as it had broken down and left by the convoy it was in. Their whole cargo was whiskey for the officer’s club in India. They signaled our ship and several of us, went over to see if we could help them. Their pumps for pumping water were broke down. We let them come to the ship and gave the packing material they needed and let them buy things from our ship stores. We were able to barter for some of their whiskey. The Captain had it locked in a storage space and had the door welded shut till we got back to Australia, and we rented a hotel room to store it in. I had to have a tooth filled, so I went to a dentist. When I asked him how much, he said to just give him some cigarettes. As I didn’t smoke them, I went back to the ship and got a carton for each in the office and they were so thankful. A carton just cost 60 cents then on the ship. Finally it was time for me to leave the ship.

## My Career on the Trinity

I went on the USS Trinity in San Diego on July 13, 1939. I was to stay on it till March, 1943, a total of 3 and one half years. While on the ship, I would progress through five ratings, Fireman 3/c, Fireman 2/c, Electricians Mate 3/c, Electricians Mate 2/c, and Electricians Mate 1/c. At that time if you made every rating in the minimum times it was possible to make first class petty officer in three and one half years, and I did it. A lot of help was needed. My Engineering Officer, Warrant Officer Birchmire was my true friend and supporter. While I was a Fireman, I did several special jobs with him. One time they were having problems with the steam motor for the refrigeration system. It clicked each revolution. He asked me what I thought was wrong, I told him it was not a bearing noise, and I thought it was the key that fastened the fly wheel to the shaft. He took it apart and the key was too small, and was the cause of the click. One time the Machinist Mate who repaired the turbines that ran the generators was off the ship on Liberty. He had taken the governor mechanism apart and left them in a box and went ashore. We suddenly got orders to leave on the Monday morning. That meant that they must be put in immediately. Mr. Birchmire asked me if I could do it. In about an hour I had them together and set for the proper speed. He was very impressed that I could do the job. When I decided to go up for Electricians Mate, he didn’t want me to, but supported my request.

I did pass the test and was promoted to Electricians Mate 3/c. There was no vacancy, but the Electricians Mate 2/c decided to change his rate to Machinist Mate 2/c, so we swapped places. I was now an Electrician. My first job was to rewind several electrical fan motors. The other electricians had tried but could not make them work. The Chief was very pleased as my job worked, and gave me the task of repairing the Sound Powered phones. I had to take them all apart for the parts, to fix as many as possible. There was an adjustment that required exact spacing. I went ashore and bought a jeweler’s Loupe. A magnifying glass that fit over one eye. They all laughed, but when it worked they didn’t think it was so funny. My first Chief was really impressed! From then on I got all of the special jobs, which really helped me learn, and to advance. AS I gradually advanced up in rate the Chief retired and I was in Charge of the electrical department, I was not the senior man, but Mr. Birchmire put me to be in charge. One of the things I had to do, was to start and stop the Gyro compass.

The others did not care as all they wanted to do was go ashore on Liberty and have fun. I was able to do all of the hard jobs and get ahead. When the other electrician that I changed places with him to be transferred, he asked me if I wanted to be the Movie operator, and I took his place. The movie operator was paid \$25 dollars a month extra. I did the job till I left the ship. The first movie that I showed was an English film. There was a bunch of bad guys on the train and the engineer was going to crash the train and kill himself. The movie jumped from one intrigue to the other and then in the end everything was ended up. I forgot to show one reel of the film, about 10 minutes of the show. No one noticed it and neither did I till it was all over, and I found the reel that I missed. Since no one had noticed, I never told them! The movie shack, as it was called, was my own little office. I had installed a phone in there, so that I could be reached, if needed. I kept my books in a locker that I had there and had a typewriter of my own there too, each night I would write a paragraph to Mother. When we got in port I would have several pages to send her. Years later when she died she had saved them all and had them stored in an old trunk. What love we had for each other. She was the President of the Navy Mothers Club. She had a banner in the window with three silver stars, one for each of us. If some one got killed a gold star was shown. Of course no one wanted to die, but I was always thankful that none of us boys were ever to be a gold star. She would have been very sad, but also very proud that we done our duty for our country.

All of those years that I spent on the Trinity were the background of my learning for my life's work. One of the Officers helped me with math and theory.

We only got through all the dangerous times, with Gods Blessing. So many of our friends, over 1800, would not make it home. On 11-8-1995, I received an award, Honorary Admiral of the Asiatic Fleet.

## Australia

When we first got to Australia, we would be greeted at the pier by families, and be invited to their homes for dinner. At that time all of their Army was in the Mediterranean area fighting. We were their only salvation from keeping the Japanese from invading them, as their Army was in north Africa.

The port city for Perth was Fremantle, similar to San Pedro and Wilmington for the Los Angeles harbor, and was about 8 miles to Perth. Fremantle was a typical small harbor town. A few Bars and Hotels. Each group would rent a room for the entire time were in the harbor. We could store our things there and have a place to sleep when we came back from liberty. We did not dare stay In Perth as we would not be able to get a cab back to the ship. Perth, at that time, was about 50,000 people. It is now the largest city, about 500,000, it would be fun to see it now. Recently, about 1997, I did a plan check of the electrical system, in Geraldton, about 50 miles north. I was a large plant to process minerals.

Cabs and cars were very few as they couldn't get the gasoline during the war. They did not have oil fields and had to import the gas and it was used for war uses only. To operate their cars they had a charcoal generator and a hose to the special carburetor to take the place of gas. The gas generator was in the trunk, or pulled behind the car in a small trailer. The cars had poor power and could only go about 50 miles per hour. Each morning

they would light the generator for the day. It was an odd little rig, but was their only method of transportation.

Perth had very nice eating places, usually in a hotel, they had not invented cafes then. They had several movie theaters. Before each movie both theirs and our national anthems would be sung. The lights would be on and we would and we would all stand and sing.

IN those days proper young ladies, the only types that I went with, had a custom. The first three dates were at their homes with the parents. It was called the “sitting in period”, if you were approved by the parents, The next period was called the “walking out” period. The parents were strict about who their daughters went with. I approved of the system then, and I still do.

They had a lot of strange meanings for things. For instance, the hood of the car was called the “bonnet”, gas was called “petrol”, it was strange, and fun to learn the different language, still English, it was a fun time. Cookies were called “biscuits” We learned how to get along with the people, parents, and girls. One family I knew, the father was very good at playing “draughts”, the same as our checkers. He was surprised that I beat him, as they referred to the game as an old man’s game. One time I went with him to his lodge, and beat the champion.

The northern city was Darwin, The southwest city was Perth. The east coast cities were Melbourne and Sidney and Brisbane.

We were in port when they brought the Australian Army men back home from the North African area. There were 4 of the 5 worlds largest ships, in that Convoy. The Queen Mary was the largest, and had about 15000 troops on it. We fueled it, about 60,000 barrels of oil. That would be like topping off our car tanks, putting the last 3 gallons in to fill the tank! We were tied up to their Starboard, right side. Our crow nests did not come up to their boat decks!

They were having cole slaw for lunch. Their garbage chute was like an elevator shaft and came out under the water. It was next to our main condenser input port, the cabbage leaves plugged it up. We had to stop, and blow the stuff out with steam. It blew the plug of leaves out with a big thud against their ship! General Quarters, battle stations, were called on both ships. They thought a torpedo may have hit the ship. All the excitement soon ended and we were on our way. That night I was having supper with a girl and her family. The girl was engaged, and he was missing in action for over a year, and presumed dead. In the middle of supper the door bell rang, it was him, he was on the Queen Mary, when it came in. Typical for Australian men, at that time, he probably had stopped for a few cool ones with his “Mates” before coming home to his loved ones! The mother answered the door bell and screamed and fainted when she saw him. After supper I excused myself and left. I never saw the family again. All in all my stay here was a great time. There was what was called a “brown-out” at night. One night I was waiting in a lobby for my girl friend to get off work. I lit my pipe, and the guy next to me said, Is that you Bing? He was a friend from back home in Iowa! Years later when I was a scout leader, a boy wanted to join the scouts, and I had to

go see the parents. It was the same guy and he lived in the next block from our home in Hawthorne, Ca. Life is strange at times! I will always remember my times and the people of Australia.

## The Trip back to the USA

The USS Gold Star, a small, and old Navy supply ship, was to take us all on our journey back to the States. It took us all across the southern ocean, it was called the Great Australian Bight. We stopped at Adeliade, the capitol of South Australia, and crossed on to the city of Melbourne. There would stay for 10 days and have liberty each night. An officer from the USS Trinity was in charge, so we got the best place to stay. The understanding was that we would be at our bunk each morning for muster. We had a great time in Melbourne, a much needed vacation. There were ice skating and roller skating halls, and of course night clubs with dancing. The people there were very nice and got as much fun with our English as we did theirs. If we were waiting for a bus they would stop with their cars and take us places. For a time the Australian Army men resented us, we had money to spend, and their girls, the girls really liked us “Yanks”, as we were called. It was from our efforts that the Japanese, were never able to take over their country! Finally the things changed and their young men were at home again. The Lord had Blessed them and brought them home safe! The Yanks would be gone and the problems resolved.

## The Poelau Laut

Finally we were put on a Dutch troop ship, The Poelau Laut. It was an old ship, it had the largest Diesel motor ever on a ship at that time. There was a Chaplain on the ship and he taught me how to play chess. We had duties on the ship, mostly standing gun watches. A friend of mine and I volunteered for Mess cook. The Army cooks were not as highly rated as us. I talked to the cooks and we got the job of preparing all of the vegetables for each day. The cooks liked our job and invited us to eat with them. All the others got Army food, as the cooks cooked their own meals. It was a nice trip for a month, back to San Francisco. The ship had run over a mine and bent the propeller shaft so we couldn't go but about 2/3 speed. We had a lot of fun talking with the Dutch sailors, they could all speak English. All of engineers would go down to the engine room and talk and have coffee with them. In the evening they would invite us to their quarters to play cards and have a drink with them. They were allowed to have alcoholic beverages in their quarters. We had a very nice time with them and learned each other's customs. Finally we arrived home.

## The Receiving Station

We were all entitled to 30 days leave. The Yeoman told me that I had to go directly to Seattle to catch a ship that I had been assigned to. We got into a big argument over leave, and an Officer came out of the office and wanted to know the problem. The yeoman stated his case, and I asked if I could state my case? The officer said that I could have 30 days to report to Seattle and I went home on leave. I went home to Albuquerque New Mexico to



stay with my folks. It was my first time to be there, as they had moved from Iowa while I was in the Navy. I also went to Iowa to see my grandfather, he was in his final times, and I got to see him for the last time. I was very sad as I really loved him. I stopped in Minneapolis for three days. My Dad's younger sister and her husband lived there. My aunt was the manager of the Newsreel theater. Since there were no TV, then, movies of news items were made and shown in theaters. Her theater only showed just news reels. You could go in and watch them for hours, of just the war news.

I finally got to Seattle and my ship was not there, it had been on the east coast

for over a year. Then I was to be reassigned. I was able to stay there over a month. The Glenn Miller music was then popular and "spoke" to my feet, and I was interested in dancing. I went to the Arthur Murray school of dance and got 7 lessons for \$35. I had a really good instructor. At first I was afraid of stepping on her toes, she told me not to worry. If I stepped on her toe it was her fault, not mine. She really taught me how to swing dance as they did then. At that time the famous Louie Primo band was there, what great dance music he played. If I wasn't roller skating, I was there almost every night at the dance hall.

At the base I was assigned as Master of Arms for two buildings. Our Officer was Henry Fonda, the movie star. One night they ran out of food at the mess hall. I went to him to complain, as 40 of my men didn't get any supper. He said tough, and we got into an argument. The senior officer came out and asked me the problem. I explained, and he said there was no such thing as running out of food in the Navy! He gave Henry Fonda a lecture, and then took me to the mess hall. When he got through giving the cooks the word, food came from everywhere for us. Finally I got my orders for a new ship, the USS Franks being built at the Seattle/Tacoma shipyards. The great liberty times at Seattle were to come to an end. My ship, a Fletcher class, Destroyer. WE had a few great weeks as the final construction crew gave us lessons on all of the equipment. We would enjoy our last period of liberty for sometime, and off to the war zones.

## The USS Franks DD554

We went into commission on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1943. Our first Captain was Commander Lidstone. We had about 12 officers and 273 enlisted men. Our ship was 376 feet long and 39 feet 8 inches wide. We had two engine rooms and two boiler rooms, which developed about 60,000 horse power. After the war it became de-commissioned and 8-27-73, it was sadly sold for \$121,000 for scrap.

We had Quarters at the ship yard till the ship was finished, about a month. The Engineering Officer and my Chief met me there. I thought I saw a glint of disappointment in their eyes when I said, in answer to their question, if I had A.C. experience, which I had not. They would be my greatest supporters as time went on. The Chief was on a battleship for twelve years and wanted off the destroyer and back on another battleship. We agreed that I would be in charge of the daily running of the electrical department, and always keep him informed as what problems there were and what questions came up, so that he would always be informed. The Engineering Officer also agreed to the plan. I would soon be Chief and the other Chief would be transferred. I would soon make chief and he did get transferred. The

USS Franks DD 554 was a Fletcher class Destroyer. It was 348 feet long and 36 feet wide. There were about 350 men in the crew. We had five 5” guns, each in its own turret, 8 torpedoes, four quad 40 millimeter guns, four barrels each. They were rapid firing, anti-aircraft guns. We had two 36” search lights. They could be turned on and aimed with the guns. I had never had experience with them, and had to learn in a hurry. They had shutters on them, the light could be on and no light showed through.

The ship, as others were during the war crunch, was quickly built, and had a lot of problems, which we survived very well. We had trouble with a lot of the machinery and did not have instruction books or spare parts for about half of the new stuff. Telephones were a big problem. At first the operators just threw them on the deck and they got damaged. The phones were used at times when we were at battle stations and had to work! I talked to the Chief Engineer and the other Division Officers. My idea was to train each and show them how to store and unplug the phones, and put the cover on the phone outlet box. If each did not comply they would be put on report and go explain to the Captain why. The Captain would not accept any excuses! I went over to the larger ships for parts. One Chief said they were short, too. I saw about 20 sets in the waste basket and said, could I have them, as they would be thrown away. He wanted to know what I would do with them? I said take them all apart just for the used parts. We didn't have any sacks, so I took off my T shirt and used it for a sack. When I left the ship, the Deck Officer looked at me sort of funny, but I didn't care as I had my parts. The larger ships had more parts than the smaller ships. One time the secret code machine would not work, The Captain asked me to try and fix it. There was only about an hour and they would need it to get our ship orders and codes for the day. I was able to fix it in about 20 minutes and report back to him that it was working o.k. That did not hurt me when I was to make Chief a short time later. One of the blowers, the one for the officers cabins would not work. It was two speeds and when it was changed, it would trip off. I had to lower one of my men down the air tube to watch, It had two windings, one for fast and one for slow. One winding was not connected right, so it tripped out. The ship yard had connected it wrong! We had so many problems like that. We had 15 men, most of them just kids with no experience. It took me about 20 hours per day to get them trained. I had two really sharp ones, a “couple of Duds”, and the rest to be trained. It all worked out and I am proud of all their good work and help. Before we went on ship, we had to go to fire fighters school. It was for three days and we really learned how to fight fires on a ship. During the sea battles many ships were lost due to fires that they could not control. All officers and men were trained together. We really had very large fires to put out. One of the things that I was trained with was called the RBA, rescue breathing apparatus. It had canisters that changed the smoke to oxygen to breathe. Later we were in port and a fire started in the fuel tank, I had to go down in the tank and put the fire out. The manhole was too small to go through with the breathing bags inflated, so I went in with just my head out, inflated the bags, I had to do the same when I came out. It was a smoldering rag, probably started from a spark from the welding, as the tank was empty at the time.

## The War Zone

We went out to Honolulu, and had a few weeks for practice, and gunnery exercises. We were one of the best ships in gunnery, For anti-aircraft, A Drone, a small target was pulled behind a plane and we would shoot at it. Our first turn, we shot it down the first shot.

Now in a couple of weeks we were ready to join the “Big Boy’s” of the fleet, and fight the war. Our first stop was Majuro Atoll , I had never saw so many ships in my life, Battleships. Aircraft Carriers, Cruisers. And about 60 Destroyers like us. Our first Invasion was Makin Island About that time I made Chief Electricians Mate. We took some landing craft ships back to Honolulu. About that time we had special radar equipment installed. We would the Picket ship, located about 60 miles from the Fleet. It would be our job to pick up incoming enemy planes and notify the Fleet. The Carrier would then launch a night fighter plane and we would guide it to the enemy plane, they were painted black, fly close to the water, and spot the plane and shoot it down. Only two words were spoken,” bogey “, as they were called when they spotted the plane, and “ splash” when they shot it down. The enemy plane never knew what hit them! What a cruel war it was.

The next invasion was Tarawa Island. It was a bloody invasion, and many men were killed. There was a very low tide, and they had to leave the boats and go about a ¼ mile to the beach. They were just mowed down, on their way to shore. They took the Islands at great cost of life. This invasion would have tremendous loss of men, one the worst of the war.

Back to Honolulu. We had a day or two of liberty. I spent all of my time going to the Navy yard for parts, and to the civilian Stores for parts. All during the war it would be that way. On shore I went to a book store and bought The American Electricians Handbook, and a comic book for the guys. The cashier said one of the clerks wanted to meet the man that bought that combination of books. She was a girl from the States sent out there to work. We went out for dinner and had a nice time, I never saw her again.

Or next invasion was Kwajalein Island. When we got through bombarding the Island there was just one coconut tree standing. It was another bloody invasion, as they would all be. Next we went to invade the Ellice Islands. Then to Purvis Bay on the Florida Islands. We would go back to Honolulu between some invasions. We were to go to The Admiralties, to Greenwich Island, to Bouganville, to the Marianas, to Eniwetok, to Guam. At Guam we were the gun ship for the troops ashore. One time we had to shoot down the water tower to get rid of the snipers. We shot it down the first shot! On another occasion we had to enter the harbor in total blackness, we were looking for the Japanese Army repairing cannons. When we were on station the searchlights were on, someone saw a light on the shore, we trained the guns and search lights on the spot. The lights came on and focused on a cave with the enemy repairing the guns. For an instant, all that were seen was open mouths and eyeballs. We gave rapid fire for about ten seconds, turned the ship around, and re-traced our course out in total darkness. The equipment used was the Dead-Reckoning System to come out. This was one of our of our electrical equipment, and it had to work the first time. On to Siapan Island. While we were there, a movie actor came on board, Ceasar Romero. One of our crew members, was a ‘bit’ actor and knew him. Then Rote Island, Guam, Eniwetok, Esperito Santos, Purvis Bay, Paleau, Ulithi Atoll off Yap Island, to Hollandia, New Guinea, to Manus Island. AT this Island an Ammunition Ship blew up, it was the Mt. Hood,

I think. All the men were killed. We were about two miles away at anchor. Our ship was blasted about three feet side ways! My old ship, the USS Trinity was there but I did not know it. From there we went to the Leyte Island invasion. It was there that the famous General, Douglas MacArthur waded ashore. We were protecting several Baby Flat Tops, as the small aircraft carriers were called. A Japanese Battle ship fired at us, two 16" shells fell on each side of us. We went to full speed and the next four were astern of us. We were to make a torpedo run on Them if they closed to 15,000 yards from us, but they went away. The first shots were from 17,000 yards away. That was the famous Leyte Sea Gulf Navy battle. It was there that we finished off their fleet and the war was almost finished. On to Ulithi Islands. I was ordered back to the States, but the Captain kept me aboard for the first invasion of the Phillipine Islands. When we got back to Ulithi Islands, he called me up to his state room. He apologizes for keeping me, but said he did not want to go on the invasion with out his Chief. He got out a couple of his cigars, and some whiskey. We smoked and sipped for about an hour. He said at first he did not like me, but soon changed his mind. A lot of the men did not like him, I didn't either, but since he was my Captain, I owed him my complete 100% effort! At first we would argue on some of the things, if they were wrong, I would stand my ground. I was not a "yes" man. He said that he was glad that I did the right thing, and was glad that I won all of the arguments, as it was the right thing. I was sorry for him, but owed him my best job. I never saw him again, he was killed in the next invasion. He ran the ship into the battle ship, New Jersey, and was killed. Later about 20 years, I would see the Kwajelein movie at Vandenberg Air force Base, near Santa Maria. It was at a Military Engineers lunch, I was the only one there that was at the invasion, they hardly believed that only one coconut tree, was left standing, after the shelling, but it showed on the movie.

## Trip Back To The States

First I was transferred to the USS Sturgis, a troop ship. Then to the USS Monterey, a medium size aircraft carrier. I would ride it back to Honolulu. The carrier had been bombed and lost all of its aircraft, but a few. They were in the great typhoon, as we were. Several ships were lost. The wind was about 150 MPH. We just made it through with only a few hours of fuel left. It was the worst typhoon in history. The waves washed on the flight deck. The Captain sent out a crew to cut the last plane loose and let it roll over the side. A great wave came over when they were cutting it loose, and a Chief in charge of the crew was washed over the side. The next wave washed him back on board of the flight deck and he was saved. I know that it sounds strange, but I met him, and saw the movie that showed the scene. On the way back I was put in the Chiefs Quarters for the trip. How glad we were to have made it through the war! It was God's Blessing that brought us through it all. All together I was over seas for 42 months straight, During the war would earn, a total of 18 campaign medals, including two from the Phillipine Government, one from the Government of China, and one from the government of Russia. One ribbon with seven battle stars on it one for each battle or invasion. We would come into Seattle. From there to San Diego to GyroCompass School. We made it back on January 15, 1945. Mr. Rogers, an officer, and a math professor in William and Mary college, for a while he taught classes for radiomen and electricians. He changed my life completely, he taught me how to say a formula in words and what that part had on other parts. It changed my ability to understand what I had only memorized before. Years later his grandson brought him to a ship reunion, he remembered

me and we had a great talk. A short time later he passed away, how great it was to see him for that last time!

All of the Blessings of God, brought us home to our loved ones! We lost so many, some were Friends, God Bless their Souls!! They will be our shipmates forever!!

## Gyro Compass School

Gyro Compass School was for 16 weeks. We would enter Gyro Compass Class 7-45. There were 50 men in the class, of rates from first class rating down to third class rating. I was one of the three Chiefs in the class. We each had a room at the Chief's quarters and our dining room, great food, my Teacher was Chief Electricians Mate Jones. After and during class we became great friends. At first he thought he would have trouble with me, but he soon changed his mind.

The first week in class I made 100% in the test. So during the next week, he asked me to teach the class for the afternoon. The teachers got one afternoon off. I was really scared in front of the class, but I guess I made out pretty good and it was fun. I made 100% on the class tests for 14 weeks before I missed one question, and then would make all 100% for rest of the weeks. With all my study and text books, I was able to show the teachers some new concepts.

Gyro compass machines are very complex, and had electronic controls. As I had always done, I bought some extra text books. I was able then to best understand the theory. You have seen the toy gyros that you spin and they balance on a string. The main gyro motor spinning part weighs 70 pounds, and runs at the speed of 11,000 RPM's. If it was to break loose, it would go through the side of the ship.

We had to learn how to start it, and shut it off. I had to be done in a very exact manner. We would learn all about gyroscopic theory, how to adjust it, etc. There were 5 different makes to learn, each with a different electronic control system.

We would finally graduate. I was the Honor Man, the one with the best grade. I made a final average of 99%, the highest grade in the history of the class. The final test had 150 questions and I only missed only one.

I was invited to stay on, as an instructor. I would have one class before the war ended and then would leave the Navy. The Schools Officer said that he would make me a Warrant Officer and keep me at the school for 5 years. I told him to promote me first and then I would stay. At the wars end the Navy was full of Chiefs and Warrant Officers and would have to return to their last permanent rating, maybe a couple of rates down. We both were aware that it would take place.

On the night that we graduated, I was invited to a graduation party. That was the luckiest day of my life, I met Mary, and we dated till I left the Navy. We would get a ride with a man that wanted to share expenses and driving. Our first stop was Phoenix. AZ. It

was about 1:00 Am and it was 108 degrees. We drove straight through to Albuquerque, where my parents lived, and we left him.

Of all of the time in the Navy, God would blessed me, bring me home safe, and given all of those 7 years of learning! What a great 7 years it was, it would provide me with a life time of learning. What I was to learn in those 7 years, I could not do in 20 years at home! All of those wonderful schools, and ships, and shipmates could not have happened in Iowa.

## Albuquerque

We would spend a few days at home, and buy some clothes. All I had was uniforms. I found the best suit that I ever had, a beautiful blue/gray suit. When I walked into the store, and said that I wanted a suit, he said that he just had one that would fit me. It was the one above! How lucky I was. Right after the war the stores were almost empty.

On September 15, 1945 we were married at the Central Avenue Methodist Church Mom and Dad were our witnesses. The Minister was W. Carl Clement. We rushed off by bus, to Santa Fe, NM for our honeymoon. We were able to get the Bridal Suite, in the El Fidel Hotel, then one of the two best hotels. Mom looked so pretty with her Orchid! Busses and hotels were hard to get then, and we rushed off so fast that we didn't get wedding photos.

We then spent a week or so, there with the folks and then it was time to start the rest of our lives. The folks wanted us to start out there, but we had plans for Los Angeles and took the bus to LA. The folks were so disappointed that we did not stay in Albuquerque, it was a dusty little city then. Not where I wanted to live. Remember what I promised myself on the trip to LA? We spent a few days there in a nice hotel, and then it was time to find a home. Just before and during WWII my father would get a job as Fireman at the Sandia Base, where the pilots were trained. He would advance up to Assistant Chief

## The Casa Alta Apartment House.

We tried for a few days, even went to the Veterans Office, no luck. We finally found a room at the Casa Alta. Now it was time to find a job. I found a job at the Goodyear Tire Factory. It was a good job, but I would come home very dirty at night. It would take a couple showers to get the lamp black off. Lamp black powder is used to make the tire black then. My job was working to connect and set the tire machines. Everything you would touch had lamp black on it.

After a few weeks at Goodyear, I quit. The next job was at the ship yard, in Wilmington, at the harbor. I had to join the union. We had to take a test for the job. They sent me for a test to an old, retired Chief. When we discussed my experience, I was hired and went to the test and trial group. Our job was , when the ship was finished, to test all the machinery and wiring, and then take the ship out to sea for test trials. It was the best job in

the shipyard, and paid 25 cents an hour more. It was a real interesting and fun job. Can you imagine making \$1.25 per hour? That was good money then.

The veterans administration found us a new apartment, in Downey. We notified the apartment house manager that we would be moving. He liked us and said not to move as he had a vacancy. It was a bachelor unit. It was on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor with a good view of downtown LA. It had a large walk-in closet, living room with a Murphy bed, one that folded up on the closet wall. There was a kitchen with an eating area, and a bathroom. We liked it there. The Casa Alta was on 3<sup>rd</sup> street, just across from the old Angels Flight. The Grand Central Market was about a block from the Angels Flight. In those days a book of 50 rides on the Angels Flight was \$1.

We enjoyed our little apt very much and its view was so beautiful at night. Finally the shipyard closed. And it was time to find a new job. We saw an ad in the paper for a shop electrician. I went down, it was a Saturday morning. The owner was there, and one of his men had been to an electroplating shop and could not get the generator to work. He told him to go on home and he would go out. He asked me what I thought was wrong, and I told him the fields of the generator had to be 'flashed'. He agreed and asked me why. Plating tanks form a one cell battery if the parts have been left in when the generator was shut off and not disconnected. He asked me how I would do it, and said that the truck battery could be used. He said that I was hired and could start on Monday. The name of the shop was SUPERIOR ELECTRIC WORKS. My job was in the shop repairing electrical machinery and to go out to factories and find out what was wrong and fix it or bring it back to the shop if necessary. Trouble Shooting it was called, we did the same thing on the ship. I was to work there for about 18 months. One day the owner asked me to change a 400 ampere welding machine to a 1000 ampere, 6 volt plating generator. I soon completed the job, and it worked very well. At that time a welding generator from the closed shipyards could be bought for \$50, and the generator could be sold for \$1000 as a 6 volt 1000 ampere plating generator. There were no new generators available then, and ours sold at once. One day the owner was ill and went home, it was on a Thursday. He died the next Sunday. In order to change the generator, the armature had to be rewound and a new series field had to be put in. So it didn't cost but about \$150 for the complete change. I reworked about 150 of them in the next year. The owner's son took over running the shop, he didn't know the job. And it was time to go. I had gone to school in the evenings and decided to go to college.

## Our First Home

Mom and I had bought a duplex in Westchester, David was on the way. While I was waiting at the waiting room, I was studying for a test. It was so great then, you would hear the baby's first cry over the speaker and they would announce "baby boy Bingham" born. What a thrill to hear his first cry and know it was our first baby! Our duplex was a one bedroom unit. The rent for the other unit paid the mortgage payment, so we didn't have anything but the utilities. Our tenants were great people and we liked them very much. About 20 years later, they and their only son would be killed in an auto accident, only their 2 girls, not with them, would be left.

I went full time for one semester, but could not make ends meet. So I quit college. I saw an ad for the city wanting an

Electrical Inspector. I took the test, there was about 200 taking the test, including about 20 inspectors already working for the city, and had to pass the test to get on permanently.. There was a need for eight inspectors and I made number eight on the list and got the job. The job paid \$303 per month, about the same as I made at the shop. The other men were not on the list, as they only had to pass the test. At the electrical shop, I made \$300

## The American Legion, Navy Post

In about 1947 I joined the American Legion, there was a Post for just those that had served in the Navy. It was located in Patriot Hall on south Figueroa street at about Pico Street. A friend invited me to visit the Post with him.

Little did I know that would be the yearly election night for officers. Most of the Post members were all from WWI and were trying to get WWII men to join. "New Blood" we were called, the older members were honoring the Naval service with great distinction. Now they wanted us younger men to carry on.

My friend was running for Commander of the Post. He nominated me for Adjutant, the secretary. I thought no one would vote for me on my first night and said o.k. As it turned out, I was the only candidate and was elected! He was also elected.

My job was to take notes at all meetings and do all of the correspondence. I had a typewriter that I had on the USS Trinity. I made a desk in the garage and spent most of the week ends for the year, doing the paper work. If someone had a change of address, there were seven cards to fill out and mail to seven different addresses. Imagine how many were moving around after the war.

One of the things we did on Memorial Day was to have a Navy Ship designated to us for our Memorial Service. This required a letter to the Secretary of the Navy to get a ship designated for our Memorial Service.

One of the things was to add a link to our Anchor Chain, it was not a real anchor chain, but had brass chain links made with the deceased members name and serial number engraved on it. It was a very solemn affair.

Our last memorial ceremony was to all throw the flowers into the sea in remembrance. There sometimes a few hundred member and guests, so it had to be a fairly large ship. Some times it would be at sea and sometimes in the harbor or at the dock. We would have dinners at some nice places.

I only served one term and they wanted me to be the next Commander, I finally accepted Vice Commander, after that year I would quit the Post, they were trying to pressure me to be Commander. At that time I was teaching classes and going to classes and did not have time to serve. It was a very nice experience and I had a lot of friends in the Post.

## The Naval Reserve

I joined the Active Naval Reserve in 1946. I would be discharged on 2/13/51. A total of almost 5 years. The active Reserve had weekly meetings, had classes, and was assigned to a Ship. I was the instructor. We would make weekend trips about every three months.



Usually we went to Catalina Island, or a short trip to sea. We were assigned to the USS Wedderburn DD-684. It was just like the one that I was on, the USS Franks DD554. It was designated as a reserve ship and had a partial crew to take care of the ship. At sea our Reserve crew would run the ship. The regular crew would also be on the ship.

The Naval Reserve was a great experience, mostly teaching, plus some time at sea. Since there were too many Chief's, there was no possibility for advancement.

In early 1951 we would make a thirty day cruise to Panama and to Guayaquil, Ecuador in South America. We would stop for several days in Panama City, the Pacific Ocean side of the Panama Canal. Since the Canal runs to the northeast, Colon, the Atlantic entrance to the Canal, is actually farther west than the Pacific entrance. The Canal is mostly a Canal, and goes through Gatun Lake. The balance of the Canal is dug as a ditch, the east and west entrances are not the same sea level, so a number of locks adjust for the sea levels were installed. We had a few days liberty, and would be on our way to South America. Since Spanish is spoken in Ecuador, someone made up a pamphlet of words for us to use ashore. It was fun as the local residents were very friendly and were very helpful, we would show them our word and they would find their word. It worked very well. A lot of the crew bought silver ware. We had several liberties ashore. The food was very good.

When we got back to Panama I took the train across the Canal Zone. It took all day to go across and back and was a very scenic trip. I had Shore Patrol one day. The Shore Patrol was very un-fair and arrested several of our crew. When they brought them back, I explained the actual reasons, and the Officer of the deck tore up all of the arrest sheets and threw them in the water in front of the Patrol Officer! When we got back to Los Angeles our Admiral wrote a very critical letter to their Admiral, and they were all severely rebuked. When one Admiral talks to another Admiral they respect each other! They want to take care of the problem locally and do not want it to go further up the line to Washington!

On the trip back from Panama, the Korean war started. We were all worried that we would be called back in action. The Chief Electrician Mate in our group was called up and failed the physical and was discharged, I thought I'm next. They kept me in till my time ran out and I had to extend for a year. Finally the year went by and I left the reserve. If I were to be called up, it would have been a hardship for us as I was on my career with the City and had purchased a new car so with Navy wages we could not have made it. We lived in a house on 106<sup>th</sup> St then.

## The City of LA

One day in the spring of 1947, I saw an add in the paper, wanting Electrical Inspectors. I applied for the job, and the written test was given at Hollywood High School. There were about 300 applicants. They wanted six inspectors, and I made number 8 on the list. They changed to a list of 8, and I was hired!

After about three days training, I was working as an inspector. After a few weeks they transferred me to the West LA inspectors office, they had 4 electrical inspectors, and about the same number each of Building, Plumbing, and Heating Inspectors. It was a very friendly and a great place to work and learn.

I had the Bel Air district, very wealthy people and movie stars. I would have this District for two years. I met dozens of great movie stars as I was inspecting their homes, new ones and re-models. I met Alfred Hitchcock, June Alison, her husband Dick Powell, all of the Crosby's except Bing, who did not live in LA., I saw Ceasar Romeo at his home, we had met on the ship. He invited me to have lunch, and had a very nice talk. He was in the Coast Guard when I met him. I met Jane Wyman and Ronald Reagon, I inspected their big home. At that time they lived on Beverly Glenn Blvd. Later I would inspect the home being set up for Marilon Monroe's wedding and I met her. I inspected Walt Disney's home when it was built. I inspected Frank Sinatra's home when he was first married. Many of the movie stars had a full projection room for showing movies. I inspected Natalie Kalmas's house, the inventor of colored movies. They had large movie room. It was over their 8 car garage. It had airplane seats for sitting in, and about a million dollars of fine art pictures on the walls. Up at the top of Bel Air Road was a mansion with 11 acres of flowers. It was the home of the famous radio maker. Atwater Kent. The house was so remote that it had a 4000 volt high line feeding it. There were several of the big estates that had 4000 volt feeders. One of the big estates had a tunnel from their basement to the swimming pool, you could drive a Jeep, WW2, through it. It was the one that the Beverly Hill Billy's lived in later, in the show.

From this District I would have the Pacific Palisades district. One of the homes that I would inspect was Ronald Reagon's home. That district would also be filled with movie stars and millionaires. Pat O'Bryan a home in the part near Santa Monica, also Angela Landsbury, she was young and beautiful then. I would have that district for about a year and then went to the Venice District. I had the big industrial district near the old airport, the air port, North American, McCullogh Motors, when they invented the chain saw, all of the Hughe's aircraft factories, and a big factory by the new airport, Airearch. Each day I would spend a half day at each of the large ones. At North American I saw the first full size model of the B-1 bomber. At several of the places I had to have a Secret Clearance from the government, to get in. Two of Howard Hugh's main scientists wanted a partnership when they invented the Diode transistor, he would not give it so they left and formed their company. They had the first analog computer on the west coast. It was a monster, 20 feet long, 4 feet high, and three feet thick. It had its own cooler system. Now it would be a chip that you could in a shirt pocket. It was a top secret place, in the fifties they were working on flights to the moon. It was a great district and very interesting.

For many years our Division would have a steak dinner at Pabst Brewery. It was a large room and kitchen and they had a free beer bar for us. We would buy all of our food and several of our group were very good cooks. After several years it just died out. What a shame, as we could meet a lot of our group that would, and get to know all and be friends. After that we would have dinners at several local dining places, and have retirement dinners.

I would be transferred down town to help re-write the electrical code, as the chief inspectors assistant.

After that I went to the new Los Angeles airport to inspect it as it was being built. That would take about a year or more. I had a flag to put on my car and could go all over, but the run ways. I had my own office there and went in to the W.LA office every Friday morning to turn in my time slips and reports. I had a special tag for my car so that I could

park in the no parking zones. I saw the first jet planes come in. What a thrill to see them land and take off. The runways then only went to Sepulveda Blvd. They had to dig a tunnel for Sepulveda to go through and lengthen the runways to about 9000 feet long. Now the houses that were on Vista del Mar are gone and the runways are about 12000 feet long.

When I sold our Duplex, we moved to Venice for a while. One day David ran away while Mom was hanging clothes on the line. She called me home from work. He had gone to the Venice ocean front walk, and hiked up to Ocean park where they had a Rollercoaster. There was always a policeman stationed at the park. When he saw a strange kid, they took him up to the Santa Monica Police Station. Ocean Park was in Santa Monica. I finally called them, and he was there having a ball, the policemen were buying him candy bars and ice cream cones. In the evenings we would go to the walk way and ride the tram cars to Ocean Park, Lawrence Welk played in the dance hall on the end of the pier. There was a place called 'muscle beach'. Some of the famous wrestlers would hang out there, one would buy all the kids ice cream cones. Those days they had crazy names, Wild Red Berry, Lord Blears, Mr. Moto, etc. Venice was a fun place then to live in. We had so much fun there.

Then we would move to Shennandoah Street, just north of Culver City. One of our neighbors was the famous Primo Carnera. A world champion fighter, turned wrestler after he lost the Championship. He was an interesting person to talk to. We lived there for a while. We had the first floor, and second floor. There was a small unit on the first floor, behind our unit. We only lived there for a few months. Then we would move to 106<sup>th</sup> street in Inglewood. We would live there for 4 years.

After that I was transferred down town, as assistant-in-charge of the LA City Test Lab. We did the same test as Underwriters Lab. One day I visited the UL lab office in LA. After a trip through, a fellow came out and said he knew me from some place. I asked him if he had been the Navy? He said that was it, he had been one of my Students at the Gyro Compass School. What a small world! I stayed at the Lab for over a year. There were two theater movie machines up stairs at the lab, I gave the tests for the Projectionist license for several years. They were the ones that worked in the theaters. I got that job because I showed the movies in the Navy. I think it paid \$15 per night, when I gave the test. The tests were in the evenings. The test lab was a very interesting job. It was an engineering job, but they did not have any engineers for the job. The job was for Senior Electrical Inspectors which I was at that time.

I did electrical plan check for a year. That was also a job for electrical engineers. I did all of the high rise, skyscrapers, and the large industrial jobs. We had a couple young engineers, but they could do only the smaller jobs. It was very interesting, one of the jobs was the Mormon Temple, in W.L.A. It was such a bad plan that I worked each Saturday. Each week the Engineers, Mormons, would fly down and correct each sheet that was done. They wanted to hire me to fly each weekend to Salt Lake, but the city would not let me go. It would have been fun, as they offered me double pay that I was making from the city and all expenses.

After that I would go down to San Pedro, to be in charge of the electrical, and inspect all of the large harbor jobs. There was a large bakery there, and every time I inspected, my car was full of bread and goodies. That was o.k. then as they did not want me to pass every thing, they wanted me to not miss anything wrong, as it was their money being spent for wiring. We had the Tuna cannery, they would always bring in several cases of tuna, each Christmas for the whole office. At that time they were building the Vincent Thomas bridge. It was fun to sit a lunch time and see them putting it up. They would put up one section on each side, so as not to pull the large suspension cables out of line. Each part of the cable had 19 strands of .190 thousands size in each wire. There would then 19 of the cables twisted together and the bridge wire would be wrapped with the wire. What a job that was. The bridge span had to be about 180 feet above the water so that a large ship could pass under. Large cruise ships, aircraft carriers, and cargo ships had to be able to go under. I also inspected all the oil wells around the harbor. I inspected the first penecilin factory there. They would fill the tanks with ground soy beans, It would mold, and they would squeeze all of the juice out, and that would be the drug. The land under The old Ford car factory had sunken, and they had to abandon it. The sinking was from taking all the oil out. It was an interesting area to work in.

From there I would be transferred Down town to the city hall. I was to become the first in-service training officer. I taught all of the new Inspectors, it would be a three week course, how to inspect, and do the paper work and forms. Each week, I would go to all of the branch offices, we had five of them. I would answer all their questions and try to have all of them doing the same job of inspecting, and enforcing the code the same. I would do that job for about a year and ½.

The city was under pressure to have just one inspector to check everything, building, electrical, plumbing, Heating, and some grading of the lot. I was given the job to write up all of the training lessons for the electrical training to be given for all of the non-electrical inspectors. I decided to also go through all the other classes and become a part of what was to be called Building-Mechanical Inspector. I would be then transferred to the San Pedro office to supervise those inspectors. The final 6 years before I retired. We had a wonderful group of guys there. It was time for me to retire after 28 1/2 years with the city. My retirement dinner was at San Pedro. There were about 200 of the guys that I had worked with and taught for all those years. It was a very sentimental time to have worked all those years with wonderful and dedicated men. So many memories, so little time. The last 6 months before retirement, I would live in our trailer home in Long Beach, I had to sell our home in Torrance, on Wood Ave and move the family to Gulf Ave in San Luis Obispo.

## San Luis Obispo

We would live there for several months in a nice little house on Gulf Ave. It had a place to park our trailer and truck, and still get the car in the garage. The kids, Alan and Linda would go to school there and have friends. We went all around looking for houses and

could not find the right one. One real estate agent suggested that we try Santa Maria, and we found a house that we liked on Brookside Ave. We bought the house and moved in March 20, 1976. It has been our home for the last 25 years. After a few months of unpacking, and playing golf. I got tired of it.

## The Deaths of Father and Mother

My father passed away on September 27, 1970 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He was born October 9, 1897 on the Bingham farm.

For the last few months of his life, he was in a nursing home. We made a trip back there to see him. He asked me to promise to have his body buried in the Bingham Township Cemetery by his second son Dean Allen Bingham and his parents and family. I kept his promise even though some wanted him and mother buried in Albuquerque, their last home since the early 1940.

He always wanted to go home, Iowa, the place he loved. How sad it was to see him standing at the window as we drove off for the last time that I would see him. I kept his promise and he got "home" as I had promised

Mother passed away on January 25, 1976. She was born in Granville, Illinois March, 20, 1897.

While we lived in San Luis Obispo, not long after I retired from Los Angeles. I was able to go back to Albuquerque and spent several weeks with her. We talked about our lives. I told her that I could remember my small pox vaccination, She said I could not as I was only two years old, I described it to her and she agreed.

She had become feeble and frail so I installed handicap hardware in her bath and a shower hose and a chair in the tub for her. I went home and later she was in the hospital and died before I could get back. She was buried next to Dad in Iowa.

We and dad and I had a great many happy years together and I will never forget the loving times and the great start in life that they gave me. They were very sad that I did not stay and live in Albuquerque near them! I was also sad, but Mary and I had other plans and a life to live.

## Santa Maria City

One day I saw an ad in the paper for a Building Inspector for 6 months. I went down and took the test and they hired me. Now a new career was opening up to me. Little did I realized, that it would be for the next 25 years!

There about 500 jobs that the city had, that they had not inspected. My job was to inspect all of them. During the next 6 months, I would also inspect some of the larger jobs, that city had. The next thing for the city was to inspect all of the existing signs in the city. They were a mess and had never been inspected. There were some irate sign companies, but they all had to fix the non-conforming signs. I would hear grumbling that we don't need

some guy from LA coming up here and telling us how to do our jobs!! After all of the griping they still had to correct the jobs.

When my six months was up, one of the inspectors had quit. The city wanted me to take the job, but I did not want to work steady, but would stay till they found an inspector. That took 3 months. Then I left and they wanted me to do their plan checking for their Electrical plans and Mechanical plans. A new career for the next twenty five years was to take place.

I would contract with the city to check their plans. My own little business was born, Wilbur E. Bingham, Inc., Plan Checking and Inspection Service. I incorporated for tax reasons. Corporate income is not wages and did not apply to my Social Security, if I had salary, I would half to give up some of my Social Security. I stayed incorporated till I was 70 ½. After that age any taxable income does not count, so I un-incorporated. If I had not incorporated, I would have to given several thousand back. As one goes through life one has to pay attention to all of the laws that apply.

During the next 25 years I would do plan checking for the City, Several Engineering firms, the city of Pismo Beach, the San Luis School system, the city of Simi Valley, city of Ventura, city of Santa Barbara, county of Santa Barbara and for the City of Santa Barbara.

I would work, part time and full time with the engineering firm of, Perry & Ring. This would for several years at both of their locations at San Luis Obispo, and at Camarillo, near Ventura.

They would go out of business, and then I would work for the firm of Toler & Kennedy in their offices in Camarillo they had took over Perry & Rings business. I worked several years, full, and part time.

During all these years I would do all of the Electrical plan check for The City of Santa Maria, and other cities.

One of the notable jobs would be to plan check and inspect the large Desalination Plant for the City of Santa Barbara. It was the largest desalination plant in the USA. Ocean water would be piped in through a 3 foot pipe that ran out about 7000 feet in the ocean. There were two 100HP motor out there to start the water. It would then come through large filter pumps, to take out the sand and other impurities. It would then go through large units to take out the salt and then be pure water, and be pumped into the main water pipes to supply the city. This plant was able to process 14,000 acre/feet of water. An Acre foot, is equal an acre covered with water one foot deep. This is equal to over 280,000 gallons of water times 14,000! It was a very interesting job. The electrical service was 2,000 amps at 4160 volts. I was a very interesting job with a lot of arguments from the engineers and the desalination company. They would always say that they never had any problems at the other jobs. We all agreed that was because I wasn't their inspector at the other jobs!! The City of Santa Barbara was always on my side!

I contracted with an architecture firm to inspect every house at Vandenberg Air Base. There were hundreds of housing units. The government wanted to modernize them. This job took about 3 months, and I got paid \$9000 dollars for it. Now they have been torn down all the houses and built new ones!

One job for the same company, was to inspect all of the buildings at the Civil Engineering Base at Port Hueneme, near Oxnard, The largest building was a three story building, 15,000 square feet. I stayed at a hotel at Oxnard, 4 days a week, all expenses plus mileage. It took about 3 months and was another \$9000 contract.

For Perry & Ring I had an inspection job for all of the buildings at the Oceanography Base at Monterey, CA. It was for the Navy. It took about 4 months, and all expenses. Mom would go up with me for a week at a time, they paid her expenses also. The hotel was very nice and they had wonderful food.

That was the last job for Perry & Ring. Mr. Ring was in a terrible auto accident and was in the hospital for months. The company went bankrupt and ceased to exist. It was the end of many good years with them. Mr. Ring passed away. He was in the German Army during WWII. He was in a POW camp in the USS for about a year before the war ended, and wanted to come back, and did via Canada. His daughter was a stewardess over in Europe. She came to get body for burial in Austria, his boyhood home. It was a strange beginning for us. He had done a job in Santa Maria, I had checked the job and turned it down. It was several months later that he would call and ask me up to lunch, and wanted to hire me for his office. I asked him where he had heard my name and he said about the job that I had turned down. He was impressed of all the things I had found on his plan and said he wanted me on his side. He hired a lot of Cal Poly students and wanted me to help train them on drawing plans as well as plan check. They are all engineers now. It was a good job and very interesting. All my life I have been blessed with so many great jobs.

During all of these years I have been able to maintain contact and sometimes do jobs for them. Many are still in business for themselves today. One I have plan checked his jobs for the last 20 years.

## The Years of Travel

In 1967 I bought a truck and a small travel trailer, Over all these years we have traveled in all of the states and all of the Provinces in Canada, and have made a trip to Alaska. We had two seats in the back of the trucks, and a bunk for the kids to sleep in, Alan and Linda have seen so many places when they were young, that they cannot remember the places.

Each year, I would have 30 days vacation and we would spend them on the road having so much fun.

After a few years and new trucks we bought a new 21 foot trailer and kept all these years till we sold it Tom and Linda. Angela would live her first year there.

One of our trips would be to go to Illinois, see Mom's sister and family. From there we would go to Niagara Falls. It was such an interesting trip. We went down under and back of the water falling. We all had to wear special rain clothes that they provided. We also saw the American falls, it had a dam, no water was going over the falls for the first time in history.

From Buffalo, we went across the state on the "Turn-Pike" as it was called. It was constructed in the 1930's and to this day it is a toll road. It ends at Albany, the state capitol. Then it is on the Massachusetts Turn-Pike, it is a toll road to Boston. After a couple days of touring all of the famous places, the Great North Church, etc. Downtown they have painted foot prints on the sidewalks, a trail to all of the Historic Places, down to the harbor where the famous Boston Tea Party occurred. That was just before the Revolutionary War that made us a nation.

We then went south to the Plymouth Rock, where the first ship came with the Pilgrims landed. We camped with our trailer about 5 miles west at a lake. We left our trailer there for a few days, while we went out to the end out to Cape Cod. We saw the Pilgrim Monument, climbed up to the top of the light house tower. We had a good seafood meal and then returned to our trailer and on the way saw the cranberry fields. We then went to Hyannis Port and saw all of the Kennedy Homes.

We then went through Providence, Rhode Island, In Connecticut, we got on the Connecticut Turn-Pike. Since nothing but passenger cars are allowed, we had to get off. We then continued to New York and across the George Washington Bridge. That was a very exciting crossing, heavy traffic, about 65 MPH, with the truck and trailer! On down to North Bergen, NJ to our trailer park. We all had showers, then through the Holland Tunnel to New York City. On the subway, what a dirty mess, a lady asked where we were from, Mom asked her why were not from New York, she said because we were the only ones enjoying the subway, on to Battery Park, ferry to the Statue of Liberty. We all went up to the top and out on the arm to see all the city and harbor. The outside is copper about as thick as a penny. The inside is all beams and an elevator to the top. We went back on the ferry. One of the men from the USS Trinity, after the war, worked on the ferry to Staten Island till a few years ago when he retired. We had supper in a famous eating place near Wall Street. Then we went up on the Empire State building. They only go to the 80th floor now, and back to our camp.

We would then go through New Jersey, and Delaware, and cross the famous Hampton Roads bridge and tunnel system to Norfolk. On to Williamsburgh, one of our first colonial cities. We had to park our car and free busses would take us on a tour of the city and all the historic places. We saw a person from LA city there as we were getting off the bus! We then drove out to Jamestown, where our first settlers landed. We saw a replica of their fort and where they spent the first winter, they were our first permanent settlers, about 1620.



From there we went to Washington DC and spent a week there, my sister and family lived in Fairfax. We went on a VIP tour of the White House. Both houses of congress, Pentagon, and through the Smithsonian Museum, Lincoln Monument..We went up to the top of the Washington Monument and walked down. I also went on a tour of the Navy Yard.

We then went across country through Nashville, Memphis, Little Rock, and back home. On the way we bought fire works in Oklahoma, mostly bottle rockets.

One trip we went across the country, El Paso, Dallas, saw the Kennedy assassination site, New Orleans, Pensacola(where Mom has a frog jump on her arm), down through Miami(where I visited a cousin that I had not seen since I came across the country and visited him in Santa Monica). He drove a limousine and took us all around town. We then went out on the Keys to Key West. On the way to Miami, we went through Tarpon Springs and visited the famous Greek sponge mart and had a Greek supper.

On the way back we went through Jacksonville, and, Savannah. When we spent the night the people that had the trailer next to us in New Orleans, stopped next to us in Savannah. We went up to the famous Myrtle Beach and spent a couple days. On the night before I had been bitten with the mosquitos. While they enjoyed the beach, I spent my time in the bunk on my stomach, my back covered with salve.

We came across South Carolina, Atlanta, saw the famous under ground mall, through Mississippi, and back home.

One trip we went up to Seattle, saw my friend, Frank, and spent a few days at his house and saw Seattle. Went up and crossed the Cascades Park, across to Omak. We saw an Aunt and Uncle(I hasn't seen since I was a boy, saw my cousin Thora(hadn't seen her since we went to the country school together) We then went and saw the Grande Coulee Dam, and on to Kettle Falls, on down to Spokane, to Coeur d'Alene. We went through Yellowstone National Park, through Idaho, Nevada, California and home.

One trip that Mom and I made was through Iowa, and to Minnesota(saw a cousin Lyle, hadn't seen him since the country school) We had a great stay, went to see his brothers grave, both Lyle and Andy went through the North African invasion, Lyle was wounded badly, and Andy was killed. He was the only one from our family to die in WWII. When they brought his body home, Steve, his dad insisted on digging the grave, After a battle with the union grave diggers, he dug the grave. It was so sad, his family custom was for the family to dig the family graves.

We went on through International Falls into Canada. We went across Canada on the north side of Lake Superior, we stopped at a village called Marathon and had a Pickerel dinner, it was great. Hadn't eaten a Pickerel since was a boy on the farm. We went on to Sault Saint Maria and saw the famous Locks that go from Lake Superior to Lake Huron. We spent the night at a little town St. Ignace, and then went by boat to the famous Mackinac Island and toured it for the day. Mackinac does not have cars, only horse and buggys. We toured the famous Hotel there. From St. Ignace we went across the famous toll bridge to

Michigan. We toured down Michigan through Bay City, Flint, and to the Canadian border town of Port Huron and into Canada again. We went through Toronto, and onto Quebec. In that province the road signs and every thing is in French only.

We crossed the St. Lawrence river there and continued up to a little town called Mount-Joli and spent the night. We had a beautiful room on the river side, a wonderful dinner.

From there we would cross the Gaspé Peninsula, to the Province of New Brunswick to a little place called Cape Tormentine. We would take the ferry to Prince Edward Island. We would tour the island and stop at the home of the author of "Anne of Green Gables". This Island is one of Canada's most beautiful places. Then the ferry to Nova Scotia. The lovely Cape Breton Island to the port of North Sidney, stopping at Badduck, the home and Laboratory of the great Alexander Bell, inventor of the telegraph, and many other inventions. We would board the ferry with our car and go to the Port-aux-Basques. We would travel up the west side of Newfoundland to the north most city of St. Anthony. We would visit the Memorial Park, L'Anse aux Meadows, this is where the Norsemen came to North America, in the year 1000. It is a very interesting historic place. They spent their first winter there. At St. Anthony we had a great sea food dinner. I had Cod Fish checks, and tongues. Unique but very good, it is their specialty there. As you drive along the road you will see peat bogs. They are all planted with potato plants. At a small inn we would stop for lunch, I had Moose soup! We went through Gander, a famous airport stop for trans-Atlantic flights and to St. John's, the capitol city. We would go to Cape Fear, meet Marty who would give us a tour. That is the farthest east part of North America. There WWII fortresses and a light house. His family have been the lighthouse keepers for several generations. We still exchange Christmas cards with him. Mom got her best hair style there, they loved her and all of them came to say goodbye to her. I was rewarded with my worst ever haircut!! On the way back we toured through the little port on the Island of Twillingate, the little harbor there had two Ice bergs in it. They had drifted in and would spend the summer till they melted. They were so pretty with the sun light shining through. We spent the night there and had a great meal. We would then take the road back to the harbor that we entered. Potatoes there have a blight, so they steam clean the underside of the car before getting back on the ferry. We travelled across the south side of Nova Scotia through Halifax and to the west most tip of the Island to the port city of Yarmouth. We would board the ferry there to take Bay of Fundy to Bar Harbor Maine. The trip across takes several hours and had a super buffet lunch on the way. When we arrived we toured the Acadia National park. We would tour through Bangor, Augusta, and across to New Hampshire We would cross the northern part of the state to Littleton and cross the Connecticut river to Vermont. In Montpelier we would stop and have Mom's wrist watch crystal put back in. On across to Burlington to take the ferry across Lake Champlain. This Lake was where several Naval battles in the revolutionary was fought. We would go through Lake Placid, famous for the Olympics held there, through Utica and on to Binghamton, at one time there was a large Bingham Society there, but no more. On the way south we would go through Gettysburgh,, Where President Lincoln gave his great speech during the Civil War. We went through the Museums, past President Isenhower's ranch. We worked our way across, stopping at St. Louis to see the Arches, What a wonderful tour and a movie showing each step in putting up the Arch, there is a tram to take you up to the top, where it ends there are forty steps up to the top. We went across Kansas, into New Mexico to Raton, across to Taos, famous for its ski resorts. Mom had the worst bowl of chili that she

ever had. On to Los Alamos to see my brother and tour the Laboratory. We then went on home. A great trip of a lifetime.

For about 6 months I planned our trip to Alaska. On the first day after New Years, I called the Alaska ferry office in Juneau to make our reservation. We got a nice outside cabin. We went up to Seattle where the ferry started, stored our car in a locked parking garage while we were gone. The next we boarded the ferry to go the inland passage, our first stop was Ketchikan. We went on the tour of the Island. Next we went to Sitka Island and toured the city. From there we would stop at the end, Skagway. On the way between Islands we helped the park ranger count eagles and whales. The ferry had a large viewing salon in the front of the ship, they had very good food. At Skagway, the ferry ends. They took our bags to a hotel and checked them. We took a bus from there, our bags were missing, the front bus had them and we made the bus come back to verify our bags. We were in the second of three busses. They start a half hour apart, so that they don't all arrive at stops at the same times, the stop places are small so they can't handle all of the people. The busses go up almost the same trail that the gold miners went. Our stop for the night was at Whitehorse, in the Yukon Territory. At each stop we already have our rooms, and our bags are taken to them. Our second night stop was at a place, Beaver Creek, just out side of Alaska. They had nice hotels, but there was nothing else there. All of the people but us were on from the cruise ship except us, I had made our own reservations. Our next stop would be Fairbanks, Alaska. It would be for two nights, the first night, part of the tour, and the second night was at the Motel 8 that I had reserved. The bus picked us up and our next night would be at Denali National Park, home to Mount McKinley, the highest peak in north America. The hotel was already scheduled, part of the trip. It was old sleeping cars from the train, o.k. and the fod was o.k. The next day was a bus trip, out towards the mountain, about 20 miles away and we could not see the peak because of the clouds. We saw a grizzly bear, mountain goats, and a Ptarmigan bird, like a pheasant. The miners could not say the name so they called them chickens. The next day we would go to Anchorage, on the way we stopped at a village called Talkeetna. The day was clear and we could see the peak of mount McKinley! The hotel was not furnished, so they took everyone but us to a big hotel. I had reserved a room at the Motel 8 and they dropped us off there. The next day they took us to the airport, I had a scheduled flight to Juneau, seats on the left side of the plane, so we could see all the Glaciers! Just before we landed in Juneau we could see the Mendenhall glacier. We had a room at the Motel 8 near the airport, we spent the rest of next day going around Juneau, even had a drink at the famous old saloon, Red Dog, where the miners went in the gold rush days. The next day the Motel took us to the ferry landing where I had reserved on the ferry to Prince Rupert. A large port for shipping grain from Canada. The port was in the province of British Columbia. We stayed the night and the next day boarded the train for Prince George, for which I had a reservation. Prince George is a nice city and we stayed two days to catch our train. It was a small train, two cars. I had reserved two tickets in the front car, it was called Caribou class, first class with meals furnished.

The front car was also baggage, galley, and engine. The would take two of us up to ride with the engineer for about a half hour. It was great food, and took all day to get to North Vancouver, through the greatest scenery in Canada, we went places where there were no roads. At each village where we stopped all of the town people would come out to meet

the train. At Vancouver our hotel that we had reserved, sold our room to a bus of tour people. A cab driver took us to a nice small hotel where we stayed. The next day we toured the city. The next day we boarded our bus for Seattle, which I had reserved. It was a nice day long trip to Seattle. We spent the night there, got our car, and were on our way home. It was a nice three week trip, it only was about \$3500 for both. The same exact trip on the cruise ship was about \$5000 each! I had sent for all the brochures, maps, bus schedules, train schedules, etc. I have a great time making up trips. I have scheduled all of our trips, where to stop, the highways to take, etc.

On one trip we went through Las Vegas, to St. George, Utah and through Zion National Park. Our next stop was Bryce National Park and on to Capitol Reef National Park. We stopped and we all had a great swim down the water falls. Alan and Linda really loved that. We went through Arches National Park, Moab and Cortez, Colorado. Our next stop was at Durango where we took the narrow gage train to Silverton. We had lunch there and toured the town, it is half ghost town. What a great trip, we saw places that there is no road to, just the train. We would stop at the Mesa Verde National Park and go through the famous cliff dwellings. From there we went on the scenic highway to Pagosa Springs and on to Los Alamos, the famous Laboratories where the Atomic bomb was made. We visited my brother, he took me through all the facilities, many were secret places. We would stop at Albuquerque, to visit the folks, and back home. Our trips would take us through all the states and also all of the Provinces of Canada.

We had so many wonderful trips that it is hard to remember them all and the order that we took them.

One of the great joys was that Alan would take over and level the trailer and make all of the hook-ups, he loved to do those things and we were very proud of all his skills and how he loved to do those things. Mom would put the coffee pot on, he would do his jobs, and then he and Linda would be off to the swimming pool and Mom and I would relax and visit with the other campers.

## The Navy League

For several years I was a member of the Central Coast Chapter of the Navy League. They were a great group and we met mostly at the Avila Beach Yacht Club Clubhouse. We were often invited to tour Navy ships and to make trips on them.

One memorable cruise was on the U.S.S. Cushing DD 985. It is one of the new Destroyers, they are about 4 times as large as the one that I was on during the war. I was invited as the guest of the Captain to make a week long trip from San Francisco to San Diego.

I would fly up there and be met by an Officer at the airport and be driven to the ship. On board I would share an Officer's cabin with the Supply Officer. At the Officer's Wardroom, their living and dining room. At the table I was seated at the end next to the Captain. At the table we were served our selection from the daily menu by Mess Attendants.

Actually the food was the same as that served all over the ship.

The captain, Commander Russack was very kind and had ordered all of the men that I could visit any space on the ship. He personally escorted me all over the ship on several times, we had a great relationship. On the bridge the Captain has a chair on each end of the bridge. He informed them that I was allowed to sit in his chair when he was seated on the other end. There was also a pair of large binoculars at each seat and I could use them. The ships now have satellite navigation systems that continually read the position of the ship on a screen, like a TV monitor. The position was given to a one hundredth of a minute, about 60 feet. When taking a sight with a sextant, a good reading would be a mile!

Later in the week we would meet other ships and Subs, near San Clemente Island for various maneuvers. I was very interesting, and we would arrive in San Diego. One of the things the Captain did was to present me with a ship's cap. It had Scrambled Eggs on it. After saying farewells I left the ship. There were two of the ships tied to the pier, we were the outboard one. When I left the ship I crossed the Quarter-Deck of the other ship. The Officer on watch saw my cap and ordered the men to take my bags out the gate, where they had called a cab for me. An officer's cap surely makes a great difference! I would take the bus to L.A., and Alan would meet me there. What a trip of a life time.

As the Navy League's first ship guest, they gave me a special Navy League Cap and I had to make a report to all of the members at the next meeting. After several years of great times, I finally resigned after my stroke in 1999, as I no longer go out at night.

## The United States Power Squadron

Over the years, one of my dreams, was to own a boat. I saw an advertisement for a Piloting Class and Joined the Power Squadron.

I enjoyed taking the class so much that I took all of their classes up to and including advanced Celestial Navigation. On the way up, I also taught several of the classes. Celestial Navigation uses the stars, planets, sun, and moon to compute and plot the position on the charts. I also became a Senior Member of the Squadron. At first we were members of the Los Angeles Squadron, later we formed the Centinela Squadron, we met in Inglewood, CA.

This would take about seven years and we would take a number of cruises on members boats for navigational training. We would go to several of the Channel Islands for weekend trips. Santa Catalina Island, Santa Barbara Island, Anacapa Islands, Santa Cruz Island, and Santa Rosa Island.

What great years and friends we had. Our navigation classes taught us all we needed to cruise around the world. What a great time of learning.

Golf

In 1970, at the age of 52, I joined my City Employes to start my golf career. Sid and Dick, from my office in San Pedro, would be my golf friends for many years. I joined the Los Angeles Employes Golf Club.

I bought a set of golf clubs and took a few lessons and started playing. My first tournament, in Rancho Park, in west Los Angeles I would shoot a horrible game score of 120 strokes! I was not the only one! We would have a tournament each month and played all over Southern California. It was a great experience, and on my 18<sup>th</sup> tournament I would break 90 and shoot 88 at Los Amigos Golf Course in Downey, California. It was a great day and I made first place. My handicap had not been adjusted at that time.

When we lived on 175<sup>th</sup> street, one Sunday I went to Alondra Park Golf course. I signed up as a single and was assigned to play with a group. They and I got along very well and I was invited to join the group. That golf club played 5 instead of the usual four-some. This would become my group for several years and I joined the Alondra Park Men's Golf Club They had great tournaments, dinners, etc.

One of the very enjoyable activities was to Marshall at the Los Angeles Open tournaments at Riviera Country Club. On my first event we had the first hole. I chose to be on the tee. It is an elevated tee, about 50 feet above the course, near the club house. I got to see all of the great players hit their first drive, Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player, and a number of the other great players. I got to see what brand of balls and the clubs they used. Much money is paid to advertise balls and clubs used, many did not use the brands they advertised on their golf bags! This was a surprise to me.

Alondra Park Golf Club had two handicaps, regular where all scores were figured, and a tournament handicap, where only club tournament scores were used. This went a long ways minimize the "Sand Baggers", the ones cheating on their handicap. I would remain members of the City Club and Alondra Park clubs till I retired and moved to Santa Maria in 1976.

Up here I joined the Rancho Mens Club and would play till 1999 when I had a stroke. We had a great group and really had fun, and at our monthly meeting Barbeque dinners. When I first joined after moving here, I played every day for about six months and till I had all of our moving boxes unpacked! After that I would play several times per month for a long time. After I started working for the City, I would play only on the weekends.

For several years I would go to golf tournaments at Los Vegas and to senior tournament at Los Vegas. These were great times and we had great times there and met so many players. The last time we went there, there was a lot of action in our hallway. One of the golfers had a stroke and died. It was like a message to all of us and it was the last time we went.

My golf playing would last for about 25 years up here. I may start to hit balls soon, if I can tolerate the exercise. If I can no longer play, I will have all those total of 30 years of a great times to remember.

## Skin Diving and Scuba Diving

One time while working with Bob Dilley, we rewired a large factory where diving equipment was made. When we finished the job, the owner gave us each, a mask, fins, and a snorkle. The following week, Bob, and I, and Milley and Mary went down to the ocean to give them a try. It was at the end of Western Avenue, west of San Pedro, that we tried. I was fascinated, and it frightened Bob, to see what was in the ocean below the water. We saw all kinds of fish, seals, and all the plants and large kelp fields. I was hooked!

I joined the Los Angeles Neptune diving club, and I went to Palos Verdes diving almost each Sunday for years. It was all those dinners of sea food, Abalones, fish, and many other types of fish and shell fish.

At my cove I was to spear about twenty large white sea bass. My largest was 55 pounds, I won the prize for the largest for the year. Vel's Ford, in Torrance had the tournament.

This was over many years, my smallest was 30 pounds, usually I would get one or two per year as the season was only about a month. I would meet several good friends diving, Dick Taylor, his father was a world great Magician and would have a store at Disney Land. Robert Earl, who later opened a chain of Red Onion restaurants. Mel Fisher, the one that discovered the great treasure off Key West, Florida. He became very famous, sadly his son and daughter-in-law would perish when his boat sank. His son, Dirk, was my son David's age. Mel had a diving shop and diving boat at Torrance for many years. We went on many diving trips, some at Ensenada, Mexico.

I bought my first diving suit, a dry suit and had it for several years. I became interested in making a lot of my diving equipment. Dry suits, wet suits, and spear guns, and abalone irons. I made a power head, one used for very large fish, I had a 45 caliber shell inside to blow the spear head through the fish on contact. My regular spear gun had a detachable spear head, a tube having 50 feet of cord and a parachute. It was a rip chute, one used to pull the regular chute from the bag, when one would parachute from a plane. This worked very well on large fish, they would run when speared. And without the extra cord and chute would tear the spear head out when they hit the end of the regular length.

One time while inspecting on my job, I was going down an alley, and found to spear gun handles with out the inner works. They were un-marked and I took them home and designed the inner works and made two new spear guns. Later I saw guns with the name on them. One time we went to the Long Beach Neptunes to hear a famous Navy Frogman. There I met the gun manufacturer and offered to pay him. He said that I could keep them if I showed him the inner works, I showed him, and he said he liked my works better than his! He was a great and famous diver.

The famous frog man was one of the first frogmen. When they went into Toyoko harbor to cut the nets, he was stabbed in the back and was paralyzed for months. Later a movie "frogmen" was made.

After I came to Santa Maria, I would take lessons to be qualified to use the Scuba Tanks. I had used them many times, but now one has to be certified, to get tanks filled. This is the law now as each tank is filled to 2200 pounds of pressure. Not knowing all of the diving procedures can be very dangerous. It is a good law, many divers were killed or seriously injured while diving.

When I became 75 years old, I sold all of my diving equipment and retired from diving, one has to be in very good health and condition to dive safely. The ocean is a cruel place and dangerous at the very least. It is hard to realize that one is finally too old for golf and scuba diving!!

## The Computer

It was a very unusual last few years. First Alan gave me an older computer. It was an Admiral and everything was run by DOS. I joined a computer club and too a class for the DOS system, but was never successful in using it. I then bought a modern one, Alan still has it

Then I bought a new Gateway 2000. I took a number of lessons at Allan Hancock College and learned Windows, Excel, Quicken, and a few others.

Now with this wonderful machine, I am able to write this life story! I now have a scanner and will enter a lifetime of pictures. My story is complete, I plan to give you all copies on a CD. I hope you will enjoy reading it, as I have enjoyed writing it. I thank God for giving me all these wonderful years and experiences and the Blessing to have the memory to be able to have written it. I have been blessed to have lived it and have my family, grand children, and great-grand daughter. I hope that I will get to see her again. I give thanks for all the times you have visited us, the Lizard Logs in the field, Penny chasing the rabbits, Montana de Oro park, the tide pools, Moro Bay breakwater, feeding the ground squirrels, and the trips up the coast, feeding the sea gulls and gophers, lunches at the Whales Tail, and the trips with you all. All of these times have been some of life's great times together. They are all some of life's great times, which I will never forget! Thank you all for sharing these times with me! Thanks to the Lord for his Grace and for all of my family and the Blessed 83 years He has given me, to have been a great-grand son, a grandson, a son, brother husband, father, grandfather, a great-grand-father, and still on my journey through life!

Thanks to have been blessed these past 56 years with my wife and helper Mary! I now hope that you will enjoy the picture section! You all have been the joy of my life! God's Blessings to you all!