

“HAND-ME-DOWNS”

TREASURED MEMORIES TO BE PASSED

ON AND ON...

by

KELLY WILHOIT

aka

EDDITH BLAIR WILHOIT

aka

“LITTLE EDDITH”

aka

“BABY”

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS AND COMMENTS BY

ELIZABETH BLAIR CARTER

aka

“BIBBA”

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CHAPTER ONE

THE MEN IN MY LIFE

OR

“THE ICEMAN COMETH”

OK. It is a take-off on Eugene O'Neill's classic “The Iceman Cometh” but in our case the ice man really came - in an open truck with big blocks of ice . We watched him get out of the truck, take a block with his huge tongs and carry it down our driveway, up the back steps, and into the kitchen where he deposited it in the pantry ice box (forerunner of the refrigerator.)

Bibba:

The garbage man also came, bringing his large can all the way to our back yard to empty our garbage cans into his and lug it back up the long driveway to the truck, which smelled a lot like garbage. The postman walked his route carrying his leather bag on his back and came up on the porch to deliver the mail into our box. If we had outgoing mail, it just added to his load.

Kelly:

There was also the milk man , who delivered milk in glass bottles early in the morning. The bottles were shaped with a slender neck, and you could see the cream having risen to the top. In freezing weather sometimes the milk would expand and break the bottle. (No cereal that morning.)

Bibba:

Mother used two milkmen. Mr. Pierce brought three bottles. Later in the week Mr. Cheek brought two bottles. (He had been so nice during the hard times of the depression that she felt obligated to continue buying from him also.) As milk changed from Grade A Raw Milk to pasteurized Mother began to trade with Mathis

Kelly:

Their lovely meadow with grazing cows was a favorite field trip for Atlanta school kids. It included watching the milking as well as receiving delicious cups of chocolate milk. We learned that it did not come from the black cows.

Of course there were the newspaper delivery boys, two of them because we took both the morning Atlanta Constitution and the evening Atlanta Journal. Jimmy Jernigan was the nicest one - so polite and friendly like a young Ron Howard. They always appeared on Saturday to collect for the week.

Bibba:

Jimmy was a near neighbor and friend. He delivered the Journal, so we saw him and chatted frequently. He liked to show us his muscles, especially in his throwing arm. He later married my best friend, Eloise, and we remained close friends through the years.

Kelly:

My favorite was the Highland Bakery man, although that came later when we had a little more money. He had a van-type vehicle which smelled delicious and was pulled by two horses. (In the 1930s this was allowed.) Mother bought bread and orange sponge cake, but we occasionally talked her in to creme-filled do-nuts.

Those were the regulars, but I also have fond memories of the policeman who held my hand to cross the big intersection of Highland and Virginia Avenues, my route home from S.M. Inman Elementary School. That lowly and unassuming locale later became the oh-so-trendy Virginia Highlands neighborhood. My kind and cheery officer regularly saved me from the menacing boys in my class who sometimes chased me, and from Danny Payne, who always threatened to sic his large black German Shepherd on me.

I was five years old when Mother put me on the bus to go to Kindergarten. It was arranged with Mr. Blackman, the grocer at the corner of Amsterdam and busy Highland Ave., that I would walk the mile from school, then come in the grocery, and he would walk me across the street. The first time I tried that he was busy with a customer and I guess he didn't look down, so finally I crossed the street by myself and from then on. One day he asked Mother why I hadn't been coming in for help, and she discovered the truth. She probably nearly fainted, but I don't remember.... Later Daddy regularly dropped us off at school on his way to work, but we all walked that mile home whatever the weather.

Kelly:

There were some other nice men whose names I don't remember, like the grocer at the A & P who stood behind the long counter and got the items off the shelf as Daddy would call them out. He wrote the prices on the brown paper bag he was going to pack the groceries in and added them up in his head. The butcher was nice too. I liked to watch him get a big slab of bacon and put it in the slicer like delis do now. Sometimes Daddy reached in the big barrel of brine for a yummy dill pickle. I can't find them like that anymore.

Bibba:

One of our most exciting moments was the infrequent appearance of the organ grinder with his monkey. The music started way up the street, and we would rush out to the sidewalk and wait for the two of them to amble on down the hill to our house. The organ grinder was a smallish man with a smile and a "hello" for all of us. Then he would take off his hat with a swoop, let the monkey down off his shoulder and begin the music. The adorable little monkey was dressed in a special suit, round red hat with gold braid and a chin strap. His eyes sparkled as he did a sort of dance, a twirl, and a bow. We were fascinated waiting for his next antics. After five short minutes the music stopped, the monkey took off his hat, passed it around, and we dropped whatever coins we'd brought out for the occasion. No amount of begging could persuade any more entertainment. Sadly we watched the organ grinder go on down the street with his tiny companion, knowing that we would not see such a marvelous event again any time soon.

Kelly:

I could start naming all the nice men at Haygood Methodist Church but for now I'll just mention the first one that I remember. Mr. Barnett, the minister, was short, fat, bald, loud, and long-winded. When we had communion he prayed over everybody as they knelt at the altar. If Verdery and I were sitting in the front, we would look to see which men had holes in the soles of their shoes. Quite a few, actually, even when the depression was sort of over.

Of course, the main man in my life for many years was my father. We called him Hoke when we were little, but later Daddy, and it's been Daddy ever since. But that's another chapter

CHAPTER TWO

DOUBLE DOUBLE TOIL AND TROUBLE

Life on the farm Daddy grew up on was not easy. It was a family farm in Douglas County that provided food for nine kids but not a lot more. There were cows and pigs and dogs...definitely dogs. Fields to plow, crops to tend.

The father – Mr. Joe, as his kids called him throughout their lives, ran a tight ship. It seems he was authoritative and sometimes tyrannical. He was educated to the extent that he earned a certificate from the University of Kentucky after completing a two- year study, later teaching school in the one-room school house in Douglas County. As children, Elizabeth, Ruth, and I became familiar with that area of Lithia Springs, Douglasville, Sweet Water Creek, and the Factory Shoals. (The factory was burned during the Civil War but the walls are still standing .) Picnics at Sweet Water Creek and visits to relatives were special outings we always looked forward to. That area is now famous for Six Flags, but Blair Rd still exists.

Mr. Joe Blair married Cora Leak Howell, and they brought Fred, Paul, Hoke, Irene, Pearl, Fletcher, Gertrude, Clara, and Jack into the world. As adults they were very close all of their lives, so we knew our aunts and uncles very well. We never knew our grandmother Cora, as she died when Daddy was in his teens. Cora had six sisters and seven brothers. They would have been my great-aunts and uncles, but we never knew them all.

Mr. Joe, or Granddaddy Blair as we kids called him, had 2 sisters that we knew - Aunt Edna and Aunt Dovie . (Aunt Dovie was a prim and proper red-headed spinster who was a head mistress at a boarding school in New Jersey. When she visited, we really had to mind our manners!) Aunt Edna and Aunt Lilla, one of Cora's sisters, both had small farms in the area, and as Daddy was very big on family, we drove across town and out to the country to visit them on many occasions. In the 1930's a journey from Amsterdam Ave. to Douglas County took an hour or so with occasional car sickness to deal with. Nevertheless we thought it a fun adventure.

Bibba:

Aunt Lilla lived out past what is now Six Flags. After crossing the river it was dirt roads from then on. Aunt Lilla didn't have a driveway, so Daddy parked in a dirt area and we

walked up to the white frame farmhouse. It had a wide front porch with a swing and several rocking chairs, and it always seemed cozy and inviting. We were fascinated with the well on the back porch and the gourd dipper, the wood stove in the kitchen, the tin-doored pie safe, and of course the outhouse in the back yard.

As soon as we'd said "hello" to the family there was a mad dash to the barn to check for any new animals. Then we would scoot back to visit the pigs. Their sty was always messy with mud around the water trough, bare corn cobs scattered around, and grunt sounds from the pigs.

Sometimes our cousin, Christine Blair, was there. She was about Eddith's age, and we played outdoors with her. She was something of a tomboy and was usually barefoot, walking easily on the rocky ground and making us feel like "city slickers."

Inside the adults sat together in a bedroom by a small fireplace if it was winter, usually talking about relatives I didn't know. Boring!!

Aunt Lilla had a very nice upright piano in the parlor and it was always expected that I would be asked to play the special arrangement of "The Sweet By and By." They loved music and were a very appreciative audience. Sometimes the afternoon would end with a slice of pound cake or a cookie. Then it was back over the dirt roads to "city" life.

Kelly:

The annual family reunion at Lithia Springs was an event we always looked forward to. Fried chicken, cakes and pies, and a ton of cousins. Blairs, Mayfields, and Howells. I could never keep them all straight. There were 13 of us first cousins from Daddy's siblings and many more 2nd and 3rds plus all the aunts and uncles.

(Paul Gann has done wonders with the family genealogy, so it's there for you.)

The kids were always eager to climb the "frog rock," and I was very excited and somewhat scared when I got big enough to get to the top along with all the others. That enormous rock that looks just like a frog is still visible in that park.

Aunt Edna must have lived not too far from Aunt Lilla, because sometimes we visited both on the same Sunday. I thought Aunt Edna must have been born looking 90 years old. She had a sinkhole about as big as a thimble right in the middle of her forehead which I found fascinating. She had gray hair and was bent over, but she smiled a lot, was very sweet, and always welcomed us.

She had an old farmhouse right next to a railroad track. Her well was in the middle of the kitchen, and we all drank out of the same dipper. We were warned to stand well

back when the bucket was lowered so as not to be hit by the crank, which was flying around at great speed. Her outhouse was through the chicken yard (be careful and always look down) and mostly to avoid, although as the afternoon wore on we might be forced to use it. You held your nose with one hand and managed the hole in the seat with the other.

Aunt Edna's bachelor son, Blair, lived with her and worked the little farm, but the only crop I remember was corn. There was a hayloft, which I thought would be a great lark to play in, but the time we were allowed to was a major disappointment. The hay was not soft and stuck me like the stiff straws of a broom.

We had to cross the railroad tracks to visit Evelyn, Aunt Edna's daughter, and husband Buren. They lived in a lonely little house way back from the highway, but Evelyn worked in Atlanta. If the train was coming, and it usually was, we would stand there and wait till it finished. I remember being constantly reminded not to stand too close lest I get sucked under the train!

At one point Daddy thought it would be a great idea for the three of us girls to sleep overnight at Aunt Edna's, so he dropped us off and there we were. That was when I found out about oil lamps and making butter in a churn. I also learned what a slop jar was. (At night you didn't go trekking off to the outhouse.) I remember being frightened when we were put to bed – it was very dark out in the country - so they let me sleep in the room with my sisters. The other thing I remember is having buttermilk for breakfast. One sip and Ugh! I was too embarrassed to protest, but fortunately Elizabeth spoke up and we got “real milk”. I must say I was happy to get home!

CHAPTER THREE

AND ON THAT FARM THERE WAS A MULE

All good farms in those days had a mule. It was perhaps the most important creature on the farm. I can't remember if the Blair's mule had a name. I do remember that you never ever stand in back of a mule. You might get kicked into the hereafter.

Bibba:

Aunt Edna had a mule that we had great fun riding on. Since no one bothered to name him, we called him "Horace." The "racetrack" was abbreviated to a short distance from the barn to the house, and taking turns was the order of the visit. Being fairly tall Horace was a challenge to mount. To manage this maneuver our cousin Thomas cupped his hands, we took a giant step up, grabbed the mane and somehow arrived, a bit awkwardly, aboard Horace. The usual equestrian commands, "giddy up" and "whoa", were just meaningless conversation to Horace. It was necessary for Thomas to lead him with a "necktie" rope around his neck. By the time all three of us had had a turn it was time to bid Horace goodbye and go home.

Of course there were dogs. Timmie and Sutt were the ones we heard about the most. They were probably very prominent participants in the possum hunts. The farm must have been very basic. Daddy was born in 1896 and there was no money for whatever modern conveniences existed at that time. There was the well, the outhouse (or "privy",) the pig sty, and the subject of several of Daddy's farm stories - the smokehouse.

Kelly:

As a feisty, mischievous, red-headed kid Hoke probably equaled Tom Sawyer in his pranks. One oft-told "legend" concerned a cousin, named Lizzie Mae but always referred to by Hoke as Dizzy Mae, who undoubtedly suffered endless teasing and must have been out for revenge. Anyway, one Sunday afternoon she managed to lock him in the smokehouse. She then proceeded to taunt him loudly, dancing around outside in her Sunday best and yelling "Yanh, yanh, yanh."

Since the smokehouse was built like a log cabin with spaces between the outside slats, Hoke contrived to find a large board which he slipped into a gap, gave a quick strong thrust and caught Dizzy Mae in the stomach, sending her flat into the mud and howling back to the house.

Bibba:

As Hoke told it in his sing-song rhythm, “She told her mother and her mother told my mother and my mother came marching down to the smokehouse with a switch in her hand.” He found the ensuing punishment well worth it.

Another time Hoke decided to enter the smokehouse by going down the chimney head first. Unfortunately his head got stuck. Hearing screams his mom came running and somehow extricated her adventurous son. The usual peach tree switched followed.

Kelly:

It was definitely not an easy life. The boys worked the farm and the girls worked the house, the cooking, the sewing, the churning, etc. Getting enough to eat with that many mouths was an ongoing challenge. When Cora died, Irene, as the oldest girl, quit school and took over the care of the family. I asked Daddy how his mother died, and he replied that she was simply overworked.

Jack, the youngest, was still a baby, Gertrude and Clara toddlers when Paul and Fred were working the fields. One day in the midst of their chore they sent Gertrude to bring them water. She came back with it and they continued to send her for more water and she continued to bring it until she said, “I can't reach anymore.” Turned out she was getting the water from the tub where the diapers were soaking and couldn't reach the bottom.

Aunt Pearl, also a redhead with a temper to match, was another victim of Hoke's ongoing works of mischief. One cold and snowy morning Pearl was complaining and griping about the weather. When Hoke tired of it, he grabbed her up, dressing gown and all, and hoisted her out the window into the snow managing to lock the door. Pearl could tell it very well and I'm sure murder was an option she frequently considered.

The stories went on and on. We knew them by heart.

“I was walking down the road and suddenly the thunder roared... the lightning struck... and I got scared and jumped the fence and tore the seat of my britches.”

Never mind the Brothers Grimm or Dr. Seuss. We were brought up on tales of the farm told night after night to a rapt audience of one, two, or three, and later to some eager grandchildren by a first-hand master story teller.

CHAPTER FOUR

“BUT GRANDMOTHER, WHAT BIG EARS YOU HAVE!”

The big ears were undoubtedly mine to hear our grandmother (Mother's mother) tell of her own mother going out to Kansas as a child on a covered wagon. You can bet I was all ears when she told of our great grandmother hiding in the corn fields, crouching terrified while warlike Indians were whooping and hollering and running around the front porch of their little house.

Great grandmother Watkins, (Elizabeth Marquess Watkins), was born in 1848. Kansas was being settled in the 1850s. There were 36 tribes of Indians in Kansas, particularly Pawnees and Osages. The government was trying to move them out, but it was rugged and dangerous territory. How I wish I had pressed for more details! Obviously the family survived, and that little girl grew up to marry and have our grandmother, Caroline Eddith Watkins (called Carrie by her family and friends and later called “Gobba” by all of us.) Incidentally, Ruth named Cary after grandmother Carrie.

At this point you may wonder - “Eddith” ? Where did that come from? I have been told that my great grandfather, William Watkins, discovered the name in a book in his attic. (Not the Bible, Shakespeare, or Dickens, but hopefully a worthy piece of literature.) Anyway, he liked it, bestowed it on my grandmother, and from there it went to my mother - Eddith Mae Patterson - and then to me.

(Bibba)

The names in our family bear a little explanation. The three of us sisters have no middle names. (Not much imagination from our parents, or else they were just tired.) I was named for Mother's younger sister, Elizabeth Patterson, of whom we were very fond and close to. Thanks to my baby talk and Daddy's affinity for bestowing nick names on people whether they made sense or not, Aunt Elizabeth became forever known in our family as “Aunt Chicha.”

Same story with our grandmother. To Daddy she was “Mrs. Patterson” until my efforts to say “Grandmother” came out as “Gobba.” Daddy latched on to that right away, so there was no chance for Grandmommy, Gramma, Granny, or Nana. Gobba it was.

No one ever laid a nickname on sister Ruth, but as she began to babble, my name Elizabeth came out as “Bibba” and that stuck throughout my life. In recent years Ruth felt I should be called Elizabeth, so she and Kelly took up that cause, but to most of the family and longtime friends, I will forever be “Bibba.” I answer to either.

Ruth was named for an outstanding aunt of Daddy's. Ruth Blair – never married – was smart, highly intelligent, somewhat regal, and greatly respected. Definitely one of our most interesting relatives. More about her later.

(Kelly)

I was called simply “Baby” for obvious reasons until I went to school. I thought that was my name and have discovered “Baby Blair” in childhood books signed in my own big print. At school I was always Eddith after they got past Edith. At home there was of course confusion with Mother, so the annoying solution was Big Eddith and Little Eddith. I was 58 when I adopted Kelly. It was Jon's suggestion, and it has worked great, sparing me hours of boring explanation.

(Bibba)

But let's back up a little and look closer at the line of ancestry of great grandmother Elizabeth Marquess Watkins, the little girl who escaped being scalped back in Kansas.

Samuel Marquis was born in France in 1640 and died in Pennsylvania in 1700. Along the way his son, William George Marquess was born in Ireland in 1683. Next was Williams's son, John Marquess, born in 1705 in Calvert County, Maryland. So we deviate a little from our British Isles ancestry. William M Watkins, our great grandfather, was born in 1843. He married Grandma Marquess in 1867.

(Kelly)

Wait! Spy stuff! Several years earlier William was one of two Yankee volunteers to capture a Rebel spy who was at a farmhouse 3 miles away. William and James P. Murphy “carefully and quietly worked their way into the room, up to the bed where this Capt. Anderson was sleeping. They demanded his surrender before he knew a soul was near. They forbade him to speak above a whisper at the risk of his life. They took him out of the house without waking the family and brought him to headquarters about 3 A.M. Anderson was sent to Fort Henry and convicted as a spy.” (This from a Civil War history written in 1892.)

(Bibba)

William and Elizabeth had five children who lived to adulthood, also four other children who died in infancy. Our grandmother, Caroline Eddith Watkins Patterson, (Gobba), was the third of the adult children. She was born in Wichita, Kansas in 1876. The

family moved to Dallas Texas. There she met and married our grandfather Fred Stanford Patterson, a most interesting man.

Looking into the few remaining documents concerning the career of Granddaddy Patterson is like watching a beautiful flower unfold, petal by petal. Born in Waxahatchie, Texas, a southern suburb of Dallas, in 1872, he was a handsome, elegant, well-educated young business man as he began his career with the Texas Moline Plow Co. in Dallas. We have records at this time for only a few generations back, so no knowledge of how his forbears arrived on our shores.

The story told to me was that Granddaddy was courting the beautiful young secretary of Deering Harvester Company. He'd proposed a number of times, so one morning in 1898 he picked her up to go to work and drove Carrie Watkins to a minister's house, where the marriage ceremony was performed.

Carrie must have been a very attractive and personable young girl. She received a letter stating that she was the unanimous choice of Lodge Canton Dallas No. 6 to be their sponsor during a five-day session of the Sovereign Grand Lodge. Her letter of acceptance includes "In accepting the honor I do so wishing you and your noble organization to not hesitate in making known to me your wishes... in making our branch of the occasion one that will be pointed to with pride as one of the brightest pages in our life's history."

Our mother, Eddith Mae, was born Aug. 24, 1899.

(Ha ha) Mother would never tell us how old she was. One day we were sitting at the breakfast table, casual conversation, and I said, "Mother, were you living in the 1800s?" "One year!" she answered proudly. Gotcha ! (Contrary to her expectations we didn't go blab to our whole neighborhood.) Brother Jack came along a little later. Mother loved Baby Brother devotedly. She confessed that she sometimes pinched him, made him cry and then hugged and comforted him.

1906 found the family in New Orleans, LA. with Fred Patterson as the branch manager for Moline Plow Co. Chicha was born in January, 1908. Life seemed to have been quite enjoyable for the family. Their cook, Louise, became a part of the family, cooked wonderful meals for them and taught them New Orleans culture and cooking.

(Kelly)

We always thought, justifiably, that Mother's cooking was quite a few notches above the down home Southern cooking of our friends. We attribute that to her developing more discerning taste buds in New Orleans, thanks to Louise.

(Bibba)

Judging from photos, they had a lovely house with plants on the porch which Gobba watered regularly. There was a see-saw in the backyard, a flock of geese that chased the kids occasionally, and an adult friend who let them play "horse" on his back. The street car ran right in front of their house. They had costumes for Mardi Gras, and Gobba had a collection of beautiful dresses and outlandish hats. Check out the pictures we've sent.

I imagine the Patterson couple were popular social leaders. They were near a beach and one picture shows them relaxing in the surf with full body bathing clothes including the ruffled cap on Gobba's head. Chicha reported that Granddaddy didn't show much affection for his children, but doted on Gobba. She would sit in his lap as they read the paper every evening. Later to me he was always kind but was not into playing with grandchildren. I don't remember his ever holding me or taking me to walk.

However, there is a beautiful handwritten letter to Mother when she was a child- he was in New Orleans. They were still in Dallas:

"Dear Little Sister, your letter was a dandy. Papa wants you to bring all those kisses and love to him when you come for he hasn't had any for a long time....Sister, a rabbit ate Mama's flowers.... There is a little girl moved next door and I know you will want to play with her.... Write to Papa for he is awful lonesome without you, Jackie, and Mama."

(Kelly)

Ruth always felt and said through the years that she was his favorite and that his death when she was quite young was a big loss to her. Bibba was always special to Gobba, Granddaddy Blair was extremely partial to me (threatened to call the police one time when Mother punished me,) and Ruth for that short time could claim Granddaddy Patterson. She said she felt quite abandoned when he died.

(Bibba)

1913 was a banner year. Fred Patterson, who seemed to excel in whatever he did throughout his life, was named Southern Division Manager of Moline Plow Co. He had had "remarkable success" with the company and was much sought after for his new position. This required a move to Atlanta, Ga. Fred found a nice home in West End, the kids enrolled in schools and flourished in their new surroundings, making friends and participating in community activities. Mother attended Girls High School, followed later by all three of her daughters. There is a picture of her playing in the Mandolin Club at Girls High.

(Kelly)

The few pictures we have show her as a lovely young lady attending picnics and

enjoying friends. She most often mentioned Winnie Milner and told me of a wonderful excursion the two of them took to Tallulah Falls, GA. Boyfriends joined them, and they rode the train, visited the Falls, and had a grand old time. She attended Agnes Scott College but didn't live on campus. Evidently Gobba and Granddaddy Patterson kept pretty tight apron strings!

(Bibba)

One more move - The Moline Plow Co. was thriving, selling, and developing. In 1919 the company enlarged and opened its new building for the Louisiana Moline Plow Co., headquartered in New Orleans. Granddaddy was promoted to Trade Manager in Moline, Illinois. With the south recovering from the war and business conditions improving it was the "general policy of the company to extend its operations into this territory, with an ultimate view of motorizing and tractorizing the great plantations of the south, where the mule and the Negro have held undisputed sway for the last century".

F. S. Patterson, Eastern Implement Trades Manager, exhibited the strong qualities of leadership and business acumen that drew attention, and the year 1922 ushered in a new phase for the Patterson family as Fred left Moline Plow for a brand new career with Willys-Overland cars back in Atlanta. There are pictures attached or e-mailed showing this outstanding car, one with Gobba driving.

(Kelly)

Gobba would agree to the move back to Atlanta only if they could have their old house back. She somehow managed that with the current occupant. The family attended Park Street Methodist Church in West End, and it was there that Eddith Patterson met Hoke Blair.

It would be fun to say that he spotted her across the room and it was "love at first sight," but actually it seems that everyone was paired up for an event except the two of them. They were "odd men out" so it must have been a little like a blind date. Evidently they hit it off. Soon it was "Let the courtship begin!" but it was a couple of years before "I will" became "I do!" Lucky for us "they did!"



Jack Patterson



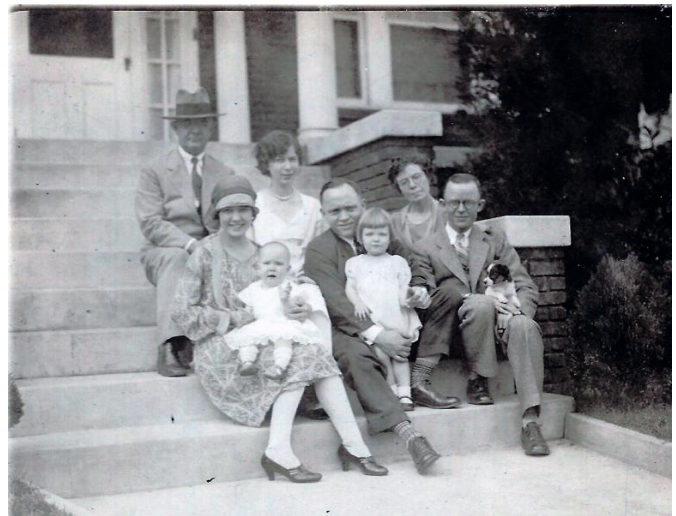
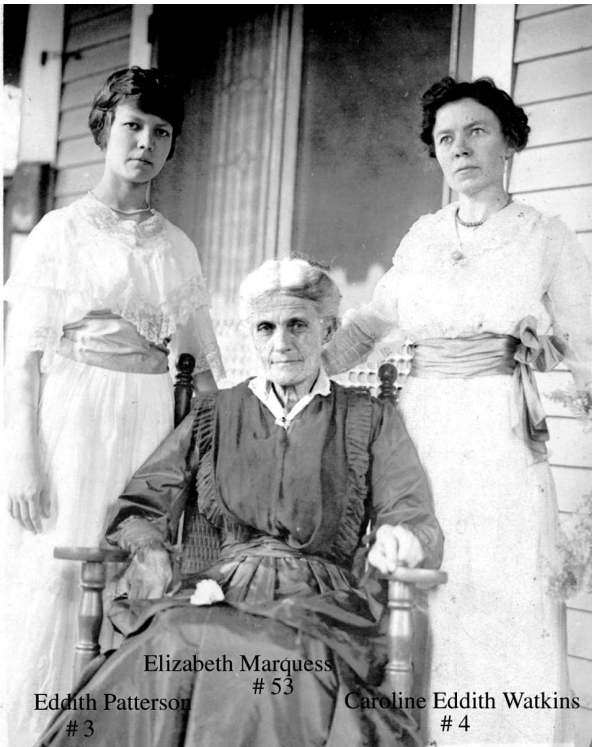
Fred and Jack Patterson

Fred Patterson



Carrie Patterson







Jack & Eddith Patterson





Fred Patterson

Hoke Blair (middle)





Dallas, Texas, July 1st '96.

Mr. H. F. Brownlee,
C. & C. Dallas Canton #6. I. O. O. F.
Dallas, Texas.

Dear Sir:--

Answering your kind offer to me as Sponsor for Dallas Canton #6. I. O. O. F. during the session of the Sovereign Grand Lodge I. O. O. F. to be held in this city from Sept. 21st to 26th inclusive, will say:

I thank you for the honor the chivaliers have seen fit to bestow in their selection and will endeavor to serve you to the best of my ability.

In accepting the honor I do so wishing you and your noble organization to not hesitate in making known to me your wishes, in their details, to that end, in making our branch of the occasion one that will be pointed to with pride as one of the brightest pages in our life's history.

Yours in F. L. & F.

Carrie Watkins

• • HALL OF • •

Bridgely Encampment No. 25
I. O. O. F.
MEETS EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT,
IN ODD FELLOWS HALL.
Dallas, Texas June 27 1896.

To Miss Carrie Watkins
% Deering Harvesting Machy Co.
City.

Dear Miss,

By unanimous vote of Chevaliers present at a regular cantonment of Canton Dallas No. 6. P. M. I. O. O. F. you have been selected as sponsor of this organization during the session of the Sovereign Grand Lodge I. O. O. F. to be held in this city from Sept 21 to 26 inclusive, we trust you will honor us with the kind acceptance of this offer.

we remain.

Fraternally & Chevelrously
H. F. Brownlee.
C & C.

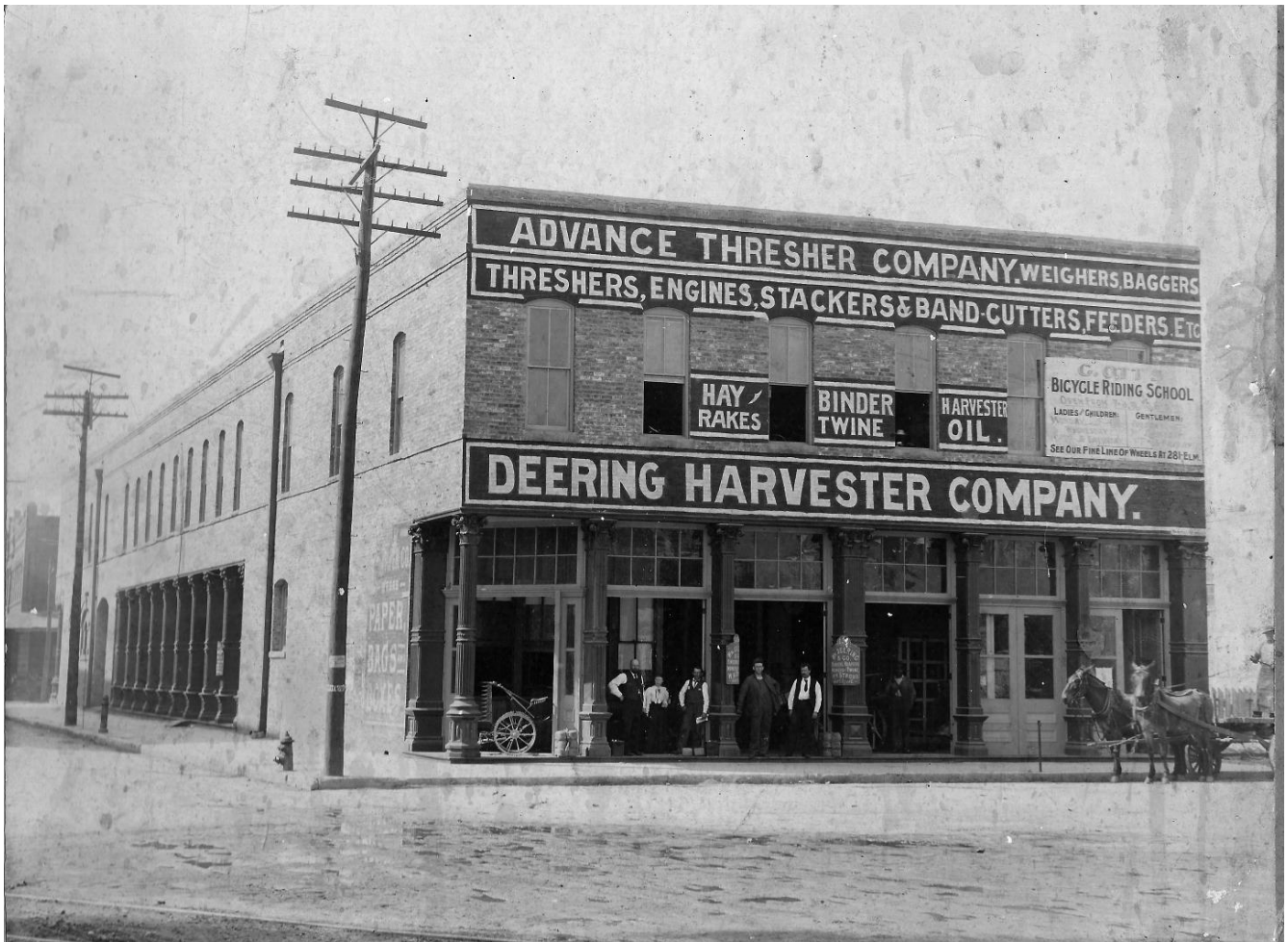
Attest
A. L. Garrett
Clerk.

AFTER 5 DAYS, RETURN TO
Progressive Encampment, No. 122,

I. O. O. F.,
DALLAS, - TEXAS

Miss Carrie Watkins
% Deering Harvesting Machy Co.
City.

Indues of
C. A. Meith



The Car That Went Hunting

Sportsmen were amazed when an Overland car was introduced into a recent fox hunt in England. This picture shows the nimble gas steed negotiating the steps of the famous Crystal Palace just as hastily as his four-footed companions of the chase.



CHAPTER FIVE

WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD WORLD?

OR

COMING READY OR NOT!

Leaving the farm must have been pretty challenging... out on your own for the first time. But sooner or later they all left. Daddy was about 16. The family home became a house in West End, but we never saw it, and Daddy never took us to the actual site of the old farm. We knew it was out there in Douglas County.

I'm not sure in what order he took the steps that eventually led to real estate, but it took some years and a lot of effort and determination. There was an opportunity in Daytona, FL to work on a bridge being built over the Halifax River. Hoke seized that chance and spent a year or more on that project. It was there that he suffered an accident which resulted in a small piece of flint lodging in his eye. It stayed there throughout his life, perhaps contributing to some of the many problems he had with his eyes in later life.

Hoke fell in love with the beautiful beach at Daytona and couldn't wait till he made enough money to take us there. That didn't happen until much later, but we all loved Daytona, and it became our annual vacation trip for many years and for several generations! Those happy summers deserve a whole chapter...

In 1914 Hoke took a correspondence course probably to get a high school equivalent of a diploma. I'm not sure if he was still on the farm or not. Anyway, he won a gold watch, a beautiful Elgin, which I have. It needs a little repair but is still quite beautiful. On the back is inscribed, "Awarded to W. H. Blair First Prize Winner Student Study Contest 1914 E.S. Hammond Superintendent."

World War I was happening and Hoke wanted to join the Navy. His weight didn't come up to requirement so he ate a ton of bananas until it did. He was stationed in Key West, never saw battle but experienced a lot of seasickness. That made a big impression on him. I don't think he ever considered a cruise for a vacation.

As Hoke worked and looked for a career path he spent some time as a plumber and for a time was employed at Ford Motor Co. As he ventured into real estate, he worked for a small firm in Atlanta but then found his future at Adams-Cates Co., beginning in

residential sales. When Mr. Adams died, the name was retained, and Mr. Alvin Bingham Cates (“Bing” to Daddy) headed up the company. He was the one we knew and looked up to. As children we tried not to look at the sleeve of his coat, always tucked into the pocket since he had lost his left arm. Daddy was forever reminding us not to put an arm out the window of the car.

As we all know, Adams-Cates became the premier real estate company in Atlanta but getting through the depression was a huge challenge. As the company struggled, so did the salesmen, and Daddy recalled going to Mr. Cates when times were desperate and convincing him to advance \$500 with the promise of eventual repayment. He was forever grateful, and, as time would prove, so was Mr. Cates.

(Bibba)

Many of his clients returned to him for further transactions in selling or buying homes. This attests to his honesty and integrity in business practices and the clear and open relationships he had with his clients.

(Kelly)

However, he wasn't above applying a little savvy about human nature. I love the story about the lovely client he had whose beautiful house he had listed at a reasonable price. The potential buyer, a pretentious woman with rather lofty airs, returned several times to “look at the house again” to the point that both Daddy and Seller were getting pretty annoyed. Daddy took matters into his own hands. He knew the woman wanted the house, so one day he “confided” to her that the Seller thought Miss Buyer “couldn't afford it.” That did it!

(Bibba)

Daddy never talked much about his religious beliefs. As kids we knelt down and said prayers every night. Then Daddy decided to have a Bible reading at bedtime. This was very boring. Ruth and I soon learned to interject “Daddy, what does that mean?” The routine soon changed.

We adhered to the Methodist Discipline. No drinking of alcohol. No card playing on Sunday. Nor could we go to movies, dance, sew or knit. These restrictions softened as we grew up.

(Kelly)

Actually I don't remember Daddy ever having liquor in our house or serving it until he sprang for champagne at my wedding, doubtless out of relief that I finally came up with a desirable son-in-law.

(Bibba)

During World War II dancing with soldiers was allowed in the dining room on Sundays with the windows closed so as not to disturb the next-door neighbors. Movies were OK too.

Daddy and Mother joined Haygood Memorial Methodist Church and became strong members and financial supporters. I should mention that Granddaddy Patterson was also a big supporter and enthusiastic member of Haygood. The contributions Mother and Daddy made to Haygood were so significant, both in the building of the new church on Rock Springs Rd. and through the years thereafter, that after their deaths a classroom in the new addition was dedicated to them, a brass plaque prominently placed above the door.

We attended church and Sunday School every Sunday after we got beyond the sick baby and toddler stage. This was in the old building on Highland Ave. These were Depression days when most families were struggling, and church members were a caring, supportive group of people. Mother and Daddy made close, lifelong friends, and they spent many hours together playing rummy, celebrating birthdays, weddings, picnicking, backyard cook-outs, walking to the corner drug store between Sunday School and Church for a “dope”.

(Kelly)

My longtime high school boyfriend was the son of Shackelford's Drug Store, and he and several of his friends were “soda jerks”. They would give you an extra dollop of ice cream in a shake or other little subtle indications of their passion for their current heart throbs. All the teenagers and many adults made the half-a-block trek to the drug store between Sunday School and church.

I have to inject one of my life's most (and there were many) embarrassing experiences when Verdery and I arrived late for church because of the above. The ushers were already gathered to take the offering so they seated us on the empty back row. This economically deprived church had purchased theater seats, linked together in 4's and screwed to the floor. Except that particular row had come unscrewed and when I plopped down, the four empty seats turned over backward and me with them, heels over head with all the ushers watching. Needless to say Verdery and I giggled uncontrollably throughout the rest of the service.

(Bibba)

In later years the groups would adjourn from church for lunch at the “CLUB,” better

known as Morrison's Cafeteria. They took trips together and were frequently at Lake Lanier for week-ends with the Grizzards or with Uncle Jack and Aunt Frances at their nearby cove.

The W. D. Luckie Lodge was a very influential force in the life of the young Hoke Blair. He was a Mason and regularly attended Lodge Meetings. He attributed much of his business success to the friendship and practical assistance of these men in helping him enter the business world of Atlanta. He also made a great contribution to the Lodge in his loyal attendance at their meetings, projects, and especially in helping other men to meet the memory requirements and become members.

Hoke had a phenomenal memory. He became a high priest of the Lodge, was an active Shriner (although he disapproved of some of their social activities and crude parade behavior), and was a member of Scottish Rite. In 1924 he was awarded a unique and beautiful watch fob in recognition of his high standing and many contributions. It is a beautiful piece. Mother gave the Mason's apron, fez and other items to a young Mason friend after Daddy died. As a child we were allowed to play with his Lodge book, a small volume about an inch and a half thick. I loved the soft leather cover and the India paper. Unfortunately, with the demands of work and a young family, he had to fall back from active participation, but the Masons were always an important period of his life.

Early on, Daddy was asked to be on the Atlanta Board of Education. His career there was short, but his name is on the cornerstone of Boys High School, now named Grady High School.

(Kelly)

The Blairs were a close knit family. Besides the aunts and siblings, Hoke had that most interesting relative mentioned earlier - his Aunt Ruth, our grand aunt, altho we never referred to her that way. She was just Aunt Ruth.

(Bibba)

She attended Austell High School and the old Cox College. She was Historian for the State of Georgia under Governor Ed Rivers and played an important part in the state acquisition of what is now the Rhodes Memorial Home, which years ago became the headquarters of the Dept. of Archives and History. In the early days she lived in The Rhodes Home on Peachtree in a lovely second floor apartment. We would visit her on Sunday afternoons and add a little exploration of the downstairs. There was a wooden wheelchair parked near the beautiful wide staircase that had belonged to Alexander Stephens. We were fascinated with the stained glass, polished furniture and floors, but it always seemed dark and spooky compared with the bright sunny area upstairs where Aunt Ruth lived.

In 1937 she became executive secretary of the Atlanta Historical Society and helped develop it into the great organization it is today. She developed and compiled a pictorial history of Atlanta, considered one of the finest of its sort in the United States. She was the only woman appointed to a national committee of 21 members to organize the American Legal Aid Society and was also curator of the Georgia Historical Society. In 1955 Aunt Ruth was the Woman of the Year in Professions.

(Kelly)

Those are just the highlights, some of which I never knew before Bibba and I began digging into old clippings and pictures. But here's one that really surprised me - she actually assisted Margaret Mitchell in preparing historical background for - you guessed it - "Gone With the Wind" .

In her later years she occupied an apartment at the renowned Biltmore Hotel, and we visited her on occasion and had her to dinner at home. When some of Daddy's aunts, cousins, or other relatives died, the funerals were usually held in Douglas County, and Sam and I were always asked to "please pick up Aunt Ruth." That was a favor we truly enjoyed as conversation with her was always interesting and never trivial!

Another impressive detail I found in her obituary: She discovered the only Button Gwinnett signature known to be in Georgia. He was one of the three Georgia signers of the Declaration of Independence! His autograph is the rarest among the signers.

DESTINY STEPS IN... The West End Blairs, at least Hoke for sure, attended Park Street Methodist Church. Well, you know what that led to! The wedding was small. The Pattersons had moved to the Morningside area and had close friends with a lovely house on Highland Ave. right at the end of the street car line. (The old Haygood church was just across the street.) There was a piano and flowers and the wedding took place in that warm and homey atmosphere surrounded by close friends and family.

So I, Hoke, took thee, Eddith, and life began again!

CHAPTER SIX

“AND A MERRY OLD SOUL WAS SHE”

Gobba lived to be 86 years old. I was 27 when she died. You can imagine what a significant part of our lives she was. She deserves this special chapter. Bibba got a head start on Ruth and me, and I have loved reading what she has written about those very early years. I can picture Gobba and the others doting on that sweet, bright toddler – the first grandchild!

Mother and Daddy were settling in to married life and starting a family. Daddy was meeting the challenges and demands of getting a real estate career off the ground at the onset of a Depression. Having grandparents nearby was not just a blessing but a huge help.

(Bibba)

I can't remember when Gobba was not an integral part of my life. She lived only four blocks from us around the corner from where Hoke and Eddith were married. Mother had her hands full with another baby, Ruth, just a year and a half younger.

I spent many days with Gobba. Mother would walk me two blocks and there was Gobba meeting me a few steps farther and then just a couple of blocks to 1307 Morningside Dr. It was an inviting house on a pleasant level street with wide sidewalks and trees.

(Kelly)

There is a picture already on Google Drive of the family sitting on the front steps. Ruth was a baby, Gobba and Granddaddy Patterson are there plus Jack and Chicha. (Later we played many a game of “Rock School” on those front steps.)

(Bibba)

Those were busy days for me. She had a beautiful garden sectioned off into rectangles of flowers with rocks, and a spooky but enticing rock garden with ferns, mosses, and the dampness and shade required for it. The bright colors appealed to me, and I was happy to perform the task of watering, on hot days twice. I loved hearing the names of the flowers - daisies, cut-and-come-agains, bachelor buttons, larkspur, candy tuft, zinnias, ragged robins and the royal foxgloves. (Johnny-jump-ups?) There was also a rose

garden and a blackberry patch that produced delicious flavors for the blackberry jelly we ate all winter. And there was our favorite - the delicious summer dessert, fresh blackberry cobbler.

Besides the garden there was the old Underwood typewriter. I was allowed to play with it long before I knew any letters, sitting on two cushions, no paper in the roller. We played games. I helped all over the house, dusting, my own short mop and broom.

Grandma was living with the Pattersons then. She stayed in bed a lot, sometimes got up, always wore a black dress. The furniture in the living room was dark and comfortable, especially the armchair. One day Grandma, who moved pretty slowly, sat down and immediately jumped up with a loud yell. She had sat on the black kitten, who also let out a pained yelp.

(Kelly)

I was little and found Grandma kind of spooky, all in black, and dreaded to go in her room to see her.

(Bibba)

Sometimes Gobba played the piano and sang for me, mostly hymns. Later when she chose hymns, I noticed that her right hand played the melody pretty well but the left hand played whatever notes landed under her fingers. That's how I learned "Bringing In the Sheaves". It was a long time before I knew what a sheave was.

Gobba had a Fridgedaire, an electric refrigerator with the compressor on top. Really old timey. It made pretty bad, icy, ice cream, but we ate plenty of it anyhow. One day I arrived and she said, "Come see what I've just made for us." On a lovely plate in the fridge were beautiful little yellow balls. We devoured them all immediately... yum.. and I asked how she'd made them. "Sunshine Balls". A stick of softened butter, add a few drops of vanilla and enough powdered sugar to roll into balls. Try it, and don't think about fat or calories.

The rest of the family, Granddaddy Patterson, Chicha, and Jack were in and out. They were all loving, friendly, congenial. Chicha was still in college at Oglethorpe, Jack was working, and they all paid a lot of attention to me. We were one big, happy family.

(Kelly)

Bibba was always Gobba's favorite, and you can see why. Gobba was sweet to all of us but obviously Bibba was the bright little no-trouble girl, unlike the baby sister that came along later.

(Bibba)

For two years during the period from 2nd grade into 4th, I was out of school with an illness which turned out, as you might guess, not to be fatal (not even close) but a lot of “quiet time” was considered to be the road to recovery from whatever it was. (More of that memorable time of my life in a later chapter.) I read so much during that time that returning to school was not a problem for most subjects, but there was that pesky matter of multiplication tables.

Mother and Gobba to the rescue. Mother made flashcards from cardboard that came back from the laundry in Daddy's shirts. 2x1 to 12x12 she printed them out with the problem on the front, the answer on the back. During those pleasant summer days Gobba sat with me on our back steps and drilled me until I knew them cold. No problem for this fourth grader, and I'm still a whiz in multiplying.

(Kelly)

Some summer days were spent in the backyard in the shade of one of those big oak trees. Mother brought out an old army cot and put a mosquito net around it with us inside. I remember being too little to join in. They were doing pretty things with brightly colored beads and I loved sitting in Mother's lap watching them.

(Bibba)

But I wanted to learn embroidery stitches like my cousin Charlotte. Mother had refused to teach me because she “wanted us to play outside.” This was also her answer to why we couldn't attend the Saturday afternoon serials at the Hilan Theater with every other kid in the neighborhood. Again Gobba saved the day. She taught me lazy-daisy, French knots, back stitch, and a few others. I had a ball playing with my new skill.

(Kelly)

After Granddaddy Patterson died and Chicha got married, Gobba moved to several different rented rooms near our house and one just up the street. The family wanted a better arrangement for her, and Jack procured a large lot just five houses down from us and built a lovely duplex for her. She rented out one side and also took in a couple of working women to share one of the bedrooms on her side. It was a great way for her to keep her independence. Jack had married the lovely Frances Greene from Hiawasse, GA and they bought a house just four doors down the street from Gobba. A real family avenue!

Our grandmother was a willing baby sitter from the time we were small and was frequently called on, especially if Mother and Daddy took a trip (usually fishing.) That meant evenings of game playing, which she loved. Parchesi was one favorite. And Go Fishing. In later years, at dinnertime Mother would say, “Call Gobba and see if she

wants to come up.” Easy answer to that, and when she got too old to climb the hill one of us would drive down and pick her up. She had a great sense of humor, and sometimes dinners would get so hilarious that she would be wiping tears from her eyes.

We would go down on Saturdays to help her change the beds. Saturday nights one of us would go help roll her hair for church the next morning. Which reminds me that actually she wasn't all sweetness and light, although her roomers called her “Miss Pittypat,” as in GWTW. But I sensed a feisty side when she told me in great detail about another woman in The Ladies Bible Class who was flawless in every detail of her appearance, from the immaculate hairdo to the chic (if 80 year olds can be chic) clothes she wore. Even the handbag was distinctive.... “but she was mean as a snake and nobody liked her!” was the punch line.

(Bibba)

It's hard for me to realize that the grandmotherly person I remember is the same glamorous and beautiful young secretary who was the unanimous choice for sponsor by a group of prominent business men... who was whisked off to the altar by an adoring handsome suitor... who insisted on having the house of her choice when moving back to Atlanta. I hope we all got some of her genes!

CHAPTER SEVEN

BROTHER, CAN YOU SPARE A DIME?

OR

POME: HOBOSIT IN THE BOXCAR DOOR
FEET HANG DOWN
TOUCH THE GROUND
...Longfellow

That was Daddy's little joke regarding poetic literature, Henry W. Longfellow being a popular poet of the day. It was appropriate for the times just like soup kitchens and handouts. I was born in 1929, the year of the Crash. We were Depression children, and the three of us grew up in those rather harrowing years. Of course we weren't aware of the dire situation that most people, and sometimes us, were experiencing. We had enough to eat, clothes to wear, and plenty of childhood pleasures. We never felt deprived even though we knew there were things we "couldn't afford."

We bought "day old bread" because it was a nickel instead of a dime. Jon tells me Hoke spoke of buying tires for 50 cents. We always had a Christmas tree and presents. Also Easter baskets. We were better off than some of our friends, but everyone scratched and saved. When I spent the night with my best friend, Betty, we would take a bath but were only allowed two inches of water!

(Bibba)

I frequently spent the evening or night with my good friend, Eloise, who lived in an old house in Inman Park, drafty and chilly. We sat in the dining room around a table, all the other rooms closed off and stone cold. If I took a bath there I used my friend's only bath towel, a Christmas present! So some people had less, a few friends had more, but nobody we knew had a lot.

(Kelly)

My friend Mignon once said, "All I remember about the Depression is that we ate a lot of cabbage." Pretty accurate. "What's for dinner?" Black-eyed peas and rice. "What's for dinner?" Vienna Sausage. Macaroni and cheese. Scraps. (That means left-overs.) But it was always good and there was cornbread or biscuits...add sorghum syrup and it was dessert.

It was the Depression, and many of Daddy's friends and colleagues were declaring bankruptcy. Daddy was determined to pay his creditors, and there were many. We were sick so much that he had large bills at the corner pharmacy. He told of sitting down with the pharmacist and convincing him that if he would just be patient and not sue, he would eventually get paid. And of course he was. I think that people knew they could count on Daddy's integrity.

Later on Daddy told of walking the streets downtown at lunch hour with only a dime in his pocket. I remember dinner times when I would wait to hear if he had lunch, and if he did, it usually was minimal and ended with a disgusted "Thutty-five cents!"

Mother made all of our clothes, even pajamas and underwear, and Ruth and I never complained about wearing hand-me-downs. Mother was a most capable seamstress. As we got older we got used to people asking where we got a dress or outfit. I'll never forget my "rainbow dress" when I was a toddler...later my yellow organdy pinafore..and so on. Daddy said that he was taking me to see the circus and I, looking proudly at my frock, said, "Daddy, am I the pittiest one at the Circus?" I think I was born loving clothes and was probably picky about my diapers!

We had the old fashioned telephone that stood on a stand. You had to take the receiver off the stand to talk and hold it to your ear to listen. Our first number was 2228-J. The J indicated we were on a party line and people with the letters M and W could listen in. Most were too polite to do that, but sometimes a long winded and inconsiderate sharer of the line would tie up the phone. Because of that and Daddy's business we later got a single line. Our number for years was Hemlock 2103. Next came the phone with a dial, but you could still get an operator easily.

Talking to a live operator continued for years. In the 1950s little "Buddy" (now Walter) was heard to answer the phone and say, "Well, operwayter, I heard the phone wing and I wan as fast as I could, but when I got here, somebody had aweddy hung up." (One of his many cherished quotes.)

And there was Jon at about age 6 coming into the room with his friend, Blair, both chuckling, announcing "We just talked to the operator and she agreed to meet us at Lenox Square." Ha ha..."We led her on a wild goose hunt!"

(Bibba)

Our phones got plenty of use back then. At night Daddy was on it with potential clients answering ads he put in the paper. Mornings Mother had to talk at length with Gobba, then Irene, then Pearl. Some days the neighbors, Mrs. Henderson or, heaven forbid,

motor mouth Mrs. McGee. I learned early not to share too much with Mother because I would soon hear it repeated on the phone to one or all of the family.

We had a big old-timey radio that sat on a table in the living room. Afternoons we couldn't wait for "Little Orphan Annie." Sponsored by a yukky malted drink called Ovaltine, you could join the club and send in for the badge with the secret code. We finally persuaded Mother to buy a can of Ovaltine. We promptly sent in for the badge and then waited eagerly with pencil and paper for the next coded message. Such excitement. Set it to R17 or F26 and decode the message. Three or four short words. No clue about anything new. Our excitement waned but the darn can of Ovaltine lasted for days till Mother finally threw it out.

(Kelly)

We were fans of I Love A Mystery, Fibber McGee, Bob Hope, Saturday Night Hit Parade, and several good live music shows. Unfortunately, The Lone Ranger came on at dinner time so that was a definite no-no unless you were sick in bed and then, in more affluent times, "the little radio" was your comfort, along with dinner on a tray. I was quite small when we were allowed to stay up on Wednesday nights for Gangbusters. It was a crime series based on true stories and some of them stick in my head till this day.... Al Capone stuff. I was always frightened and can't imagine why Mother and Daddy let us listen to that.

(Bibba)

The program I really wanted to hear was "One Man's Family," the program everyone at school talked about. But it was another dinnertime show, and Mother never relented so I had to suffer the embarrassment of being the only one who was not in the know.

(Kelly)

Times were hard, and for a year or so Granddaddy Blair came to live in our basement, unfinished as it was. No one would argue that I was his pet. He was not very popular with any other member of the family. He had a bad temper and the siblings would talk of how fearful of him they were growing up. He would get furious with Mother if she punished me.

(Bibba)

One morning at breakfast I sat down first, right across from Granddaddy. The salt and pepper shakers were right in front of me. I stealthily loosened the cap of the salt, passed it to Granddad and watched while he salted his scrambled eggs. The salt poured out and we all laughed. Granddaddy wasn't one to take a joke. He stood up, grabbed his plate and stomped out of the breakfast room without a word. I'm not sure I was sorry.

(Kelly)

The Blairs had some cousins in Umatilla, FL. We visited Cousin Minnie and family as we headed toward Daytona. They lived in a little house back in some woods. It was truly rural Florida. I was afraid of snakes and also of Mark, the son my age who was somewhat intimidating to a city cousin. Granddaddy would visit down there in the winter and hang out with the old men of the town who gathered each day at the park to play shuffleboard.

(Bibba)

We grew much friendlier when he moved to Umatilla. I was in Jr. High by then and loved writing, so I sent him copies of my essays. One was about the beautiful park where he played shuffleboard, and I described the clear, pure waters of Juniper Springs nearby. He must have been proud as he had it published in the local newspaper.

(Kelly)

When he was away Granddaddy and I carried on a regular correspondence. I have some of my letters to him when I was probably in 4th grade. Mother must have retrieved and saved them. They are hilarious since I spent pages describing football plays which I had devised. I was always happy to see him come back to our basement. When in Atlanta, Granddaddy worked part time at a little grocery store. He died in his 60's of a heart attack. In writing this I am struck by the difference in the two grandfathers.

Through all the years of the Depression we children were very aware of saving money, making do, and in general being frugal. The worries and struggles Mother and Daddy faced were never passed on to us, but the impact of those years made a lasting impression on many people who went through it, including Daddy. He made the decision years later to stay in the mortgage free Amsterdam house even though he could have afforded to move up. And, in spite of advice from successful relatives, he would never go near the Stock Market!

It was called The Great Depression but I don't recall that we were ever depressed!

CHAPTER EIGHT

“...AND SO HE BUILT HIS HOUSE OF BRICK”

OR

“..NOT BY THE HAIR OF MY CHINNY-CHIN-CHIN”

I did have one lurking cloud of anxiety during the Depression. When there was talk of default or mortgages I didn't have a clue, but I would hear the phrase “lost the house.... had to move...” and my stomach would experience a small knot. Move? From our cozy brick house? Surely Daddy will keep the wolf from the door!

Granddaddy Patterson had retired from Willys-Overland and for the last five years of his life established an excellent reputation as a builder. That was in the late 20s and early 1930s. He built our house and seven or eight others on the street. Little bungalows... 3 bedrooms, 1 bath. It is interesting that, unfortunately, several people who bought those houses owed considerable money on them and with the financial stress of the depression decided to go bankrupt rather than honor the mortgage. Some even stocked up on groceries and other staples before declaring their inability to pay. Sad to say that was not unusual. After the war those same neighbors became financially stable, but Gobba was never repaid, greatly reducing her expected income and affecting what should have been, as she approached old age, a worry-free, financially comfortable life.

Our house had a full attic with permanent steps in the hall and a full basement. Also that wonderful Southern front porch. On the driveway side was a coal bin and a window so the “coal man” (I forgot him when I was listing the “Men In My Life”) could drive his truck down and shovel the coal in.

(Bibba)

Ours was typical of most new houses on hilly terrain. The front yard sloped slightly to the street, but the back yard was one long slope, actually a red clay bank, which ended far back at an alley with a fence separating us from the house in back on McLynn St. (That house had a big black pot in the back yard where they boiled water and washed clothes. That was a little eerie.) Behind our garage we had a chicken coop with a

dozen or so chickens . Trees back there were plentiful - large oak trees, a poplar, dogwood, and a leaf bin used to become fertilizer. Mother and Daddy planted shrubs and flowers front and back - iris, jonquils, thrift, and others.

(Kelly)

My earliest memories of the back yard were watching as Daddy transformed it into four nice terraces with rock walls and steps. The bottom level was mostly plants, unfortunately including a peach tree renowned in the family for the dozens of switches it provided throughout our childhood. On the next level up he built a barbecue pit which was put to great use through the years. But he didn't get around to making those improvements for quite awhile. The top two terraces provided a great place to play.

(Bibba)

One tall, straight oak had the perfect limb for a swing. High enough for long ropes, the swing could soar all the way to the neighbor's driveway. Great fun when an adult would give us strong pushes. "Higher...higher.." then ..."let the cat die," which meant quit pushing and let the swing slow to a stop.

(Kelly)

One of the largest oak trees was about 30 feet from the house. Daddy connected two clotheslines to it, one near the ground and one way up high. They were on pulleys so we could stand at the top of the kitchen steps and hang the clothes, sending them out on the pulley to the tree. Our cat, Smokey, once climbed the oak tree and was afraid to come back down. We coaxed to no avail. Finally Mother hit on the idea of fastening a market basket to the high clothesline and sending it across the yard. Believe it or not, Smokey crawled gingerly into the basket and Mother pulled him high in the air across the yard to safety. He did that twice. Maybe he liked the ride!

(Bibba)

Our backyard was an open playground. We sometimes had a sandbox with shovels, pails, sifters, etc. A trapeze was mounted in a wooden frame, high enough so I could barely reach it, enabling me to hang by my knees and skin-the-cat repeatedly. No audience was there to applaud, but I loved the feel of "going over" ...and over..and over.

I played alone or with Ruth. Sometimes Mother would let us play with the hose. Once Ruth wanted a drink so I kindly held the nozzle to her mouth, then slyly turn it on full blast. Of course she went crying in to Mother, and I probably experienced one of those ever ready peach switches!

(Kelly)

I was too little and came along too late for some things. I never learned to skin-the-cat but I was pretty good at making mud pies. One of the favorite things I remember rather dimly was the store. I just remember how I loved it.

(Bibba)

The “store” was made of corrugated cardboard with an open space for a counter. We would take turns buying and selling to each other. The yard provided all kinds of greenery. Carrot tops and other goodies were begged from the kitchen – raisins, fruits, and with any luck some cookies. Unfortunately the thriving business folded after a few weeks and a heavy rain.

Summer was time for watermelon. Daddy would go to the farmer's market, thump a few melons, choose one and bring it home to cut it open on the kitchen sink – with all of us watching, of course. Our favorite place to eat it was on the back steps landing. There we would see who could spit or blow the seeds the farthest out and over the driveway.

(Kelly)

The basement was a big plus. It was unfinished for those first years, but it had a bedroom, a shower, and laundry tubs with a wringer that had to be cranked. Also a “maid's toilet” which we used if desperate, but it was up some steps and faced the dirt banks that were always part of basements. That meant it was rather dark and scary since you never knew what might be lurking back there behind the tools Daddy kept there. Later on he made wonderful improvements, but even unfinished in those early years the cool basement was the place to be in summer and the spot for many activities and chores.

(Bibba)

And the chores were unending. Mother truly had her hands full! Keeping house, cooking, sewing for three little girls, herself, and often Gobba, she was swamped with work, so even though times were hard, help was cheap and we usually had a maid. At times the maid lived in that downstairs bedroom. I remember Maggie bathing herself with a washcloth and a bucket of water beside her feet. She helped with the laundry, which was almost daily since we had so few clothes, plus the housework and the kitchen chores.

One night Mother had some guests for dinner. She asked Maggie to come and remove the dishes from the table. Maggie immediately appeared with the dishpan under one arm and began to pick up the dishes. A little training needed!

(Kelly)

Daddy was really pinching pennies in those days, so of course we had no carpet, just some rugs. There was a fireplace in the living room but it was never used unless it snowed. Occasionally we roasted marshmallows. On cold mornings Daddy would put on the old thick green sweater he wore for years and go down to that frigid basement to shovel coal into the furnace. Then we dressed standing over the registers where nice warm heat poured out in each room. It was a momentous event when we got a “stoker”. He could fill that each night and it would, as if by magic, stoke the furnace with coal at set intervals. What an improvement!

Privacy was one thing there was not a lot of. Poor Daddy with four females and only one bathroom. Somehow he managed and never complained. With just three bedrooms we never as children had our “own room.” The sleeping arrangements varied according to age and who might be sick. My earliest memories are sharing the back corner bedroom with Ruth in the brass bed. We would fight over the covers but spent a lot of night time whispering with our games of pretend. The theme was usually “Dick Tracy” with Ruth having Pat Patton for a love interest and me having the Chief. It was against the rules that either of us should have Dick Tracy!

I still miss those open windows with the breeze coming in and the crickets loud and constant. (Mother loved open windows so much that she kept them open even when they graduated to air conditioning, enduring much ridicule by some relatives.) I hated it, however, when the neighborhood cats would mate in the back yard. I thought they were fighting, of course, and their yowling would get so loud and obnoxious that Daddy would go to the back porch and throw things at them till they ran off or whatever cats do.

Once a mad dog got in the basement next door - I don't know how he got in or how they knew he was mad, but we heard the gun shot when they killed him and watched out the window when they dragged the body up the driveway. Small little traumas that stick in your mind.

(Bibba)

When the front porch got screened in we spent many summer hours there. In the afternoons we knew Mother would appear at some point with a bag of butter beans to be shelled or green beans to string. My least favorite were peas to “depod.” At night it was the cool and pleasant place to be. If you sat on the front step or lay on the lawn you could see several million stars. How I wonder where they went.

(Kelly)

The houses up and down the street were all pretty similar, but I always liked ours the best. It seemed more airy and open... more cheerful and sunny.. a very happy place to grow up.

It was home to Mother and Daddy for over fifty years. They cared for it and decorated and redecorated, but basically it simply retained its charm. We were amazed when that \$6,000 little bungalow sold in the late 80's for \$120,000 and several years later with some improvements for over \$400,000. As mentioned earlier, the humble, unassuming neighborhood of Highland Virginia somehow morphed into “Virginia Highlands,” the trendy, upscale community of choice for the very cool.

WE PAUSE FOR A MOMENT TO EXPRESS THE INEXPRESSIBLE...

WE WISH SO DEEPLY THAT RUTH WERE HERE TO ADD HER WIT AND ENTHUSIASM AND UNIQUE INSIGHT TO THE RECOUNTING OF OUR MEMORIES, BUT HER INFLUENCE THROUGHOUT IS APPARENT, AND WE ARE GRATEFUL THAT SHE HAS BEEN AND WILL FOREVER BE A PART OF US.

CHAPTER NINE

RUTHIE DOLL

(Bibba)

Daddy's pet name for her. Ruthie Doll never became a nickname, but it was definitely a term of endearment. She was called Buddy Baby until Kelly came along and became the rightful heir to the title of Baby. Of course for nearly three years Ruth was the baby, just a year and a half younger than her big sister. The middle child. A special place in the family constellation. Mother said she was a happy little spirit who toddled around the house singing.

Those carefree early years came to a jolting halt when her ear troubles began. She was just three years old when she was diagnosed with an infection that could only be treated with a mastoid operation. This was very serious back then as there were no antibiotics, and infections that close to the brain were truly frightening. She was taken to Eggleston Memorial Children's Hospital for surgery by the well-known Dr. Calhoun MacDougall. Through the next few years he was almost like one of the family.

(Kelly)

This very serious surgery required a week long stay in the hospital, a sad dilemma for the whole family. With me as an infant and Bibba to take care of, it was impossible for Mother to stay with little Ruth except for daily visits. How Mother must have suffered not being able to be there to comfort and help. Ruth remembered that experience vividly. She described it for years as feeling frightened, alone and abandoned with no family there with her. She viewed that period of her life - the ongoing pain and fear as she dealt with subsequent ear problems - a traumatic turning point and for a time, at least, a definite damper on her happy nature. In recounting how her life came tumbling down, she always coupled that physical tsunami with the loss of Granddaddy Patterson with whom she cherished a warm and mutual attachment.

(Bibba)

That first operation was in a different way traumatic for me too. At home the bandage had to be changed every day. It went all the way around her little head like a turban. The kitchen table was moved to the living room every day for a better light, and each day Dr. Thornton came to change the bandage. Mrs. Henderson, our motherly neighbor, was always there to help. I would hear Ruth cry, and this really upset me, but I never told Mother.

When Ruth was five she developed trouble with her other ear, leading to another round of mastoid surgery. Thankfully the hospital separation wasn't so severe this time. She was put in a ward with other children so it was not so lonely. Recovery at home involved a long bed stay. It's no wonder that those years made such an indelible impression.

(Kelly)

Because of the danger of another infection, swimming in city pools was not allowed for Ruth. A clean private pool was permitted only if she didn't get her head under. Now wouldn't you know she was the one who really loved the water! Salt water was the answer and thus eventually began our annual vacations to Daytona!

(Bibba)

In spite of the interruption of childhood illnesses we had plenty of time to play and have fun. We also had responsibilities. I remember so well one particularly challenging “job” that, as the oldest, Mother took for granted I could handle.

The Perkins family, who lived at the bottom of our long, steep hill, had a baby just our Baby's age – Marjorie. (She and Kelly became good friends and are still in touch after all these years.) The two mothers hit on the idea of making soup for baby food on alternate days and sharing. Five-year-old me was the designated carrier. The quart jar full of soup was heavy, breakable, and awkward, but that was my daily chore and I did it. Objections went unnoticed. Until....

One hot summer day Mother decided I should roll Baby in the “stroller” to deliver the soup. In those days the little vehicle was called a “kiddy-car,” small wheels and not very easy to maneuver. Not too bad going down, but coming back was a different matter. My little friend, Barbara, who lived just beyond the Perkins, offered to help. Together we pushed and trudged up the hill while Baby sat placidly observing the climb. Along the way was a big pile of rocks, so we sat down to rest. A large elephant-ear plant was nearby, and Barbara suggested we pick a few leaves to shade the baby. Not easy, but we did manage to pull several huge leaves and hold them over Baby's head. My helper then had to turn back, and I struggled the rest of the way up. When we finally

reached home, Ruth kindly brought me a glass of water and patted Baby's head. Mother never asked me to do that again.

(Kelly)

That may have been the beginning of my lifelong feeling of having two very sweet big sisters. In general I never felt that being the youngest was a disadvantage. They played with me, included me, shared, and taught me a lot. Early on, Elizabeth introduced me to the Franck D Minor Symphony and Griffes' beautiful "The White Peacock," Ravel's "Bolero" and Grieg's "Peer Gynt Suite." Ruth shared books like "With Sword and Song," all of the Alcott library, and poets like Eugene Fields and James Whitcomb Riley. A lot must have rubbed off on me because after one semester in Kindergarten the teacher observed that I was ahead of the rest and moved me up to First Grade, attributing that not to my genius but to my big sisters.

I wonder now why we fussed and fought like siblings do, but we did, and therefore not just the peach tree switches but bolo paddles, hand tyings, and soapy mouths were among the tools for behavior improvement. Mother once said to me that she just "ran out of ways to punish me." Time Out had not been discovered. Unfortunately, it didn't even come along in time for my own offspring. Anyway, Mother continued to favor the switch when necessary as her adored grandchildren will testify.

(Bibba)

Ruth and I were "best playmates." We had a few dolls, a doll bed, and several tiny doll chairs. For Christmas we'd usually get new doll clothes, rarely a new doll. The thrill of a trunk with drawers never happened for me, but a few years later Kelly got one for her Nancy Orlean doll, complete with a beautiful pink and blue wardrobe, thanks to Mother and Aunt Irene. On a rainy day Ruth and I would dress our dolls in their warm clothes, coat, scarf, and blankets. Then we'd settle in for a cozy time on the front porch swing.

The porch swing hung from chains in the ceiling and was wide enough for all of us. We loved swinging and rocking in the big chairs. We could see all the street activity and talk to passing neighbors. How Southern is that! When better times came we were excited over the new glider, but nothing is as great as a swing.

Sometimes Mother dressed Ruth and me in matching dresses. I loved the clothes she made for us. One of my favorites was a printed lavender silk with a wide lace collar. The two of us could still sit both together in a chair. They took a picture of us on Gobba's porch, me in my beloved dress. I remember our dotted swiss dresses, Ruth's green, mine blue, and later our smocked gypsy blouses for school. When we were older we frequently swapped clothes.

(Kelly)

I got in on that also. I loved their hand-me-downs. Years later we were still doing it. Bibba wore my blue lace evening gown to have her wedding portrait made and later loaned me her blue linen “going away” dress to take on my first college glee club tour. All made by Mother, of course. She was truly a couturier seamstress, and we appreciated it. A couple of my “wardrobe triumphs” were cleverly made from scraps of previous creations. Compliments were inevitable and totally enjoyed.

(Bibba)

Ruth learned to sew at an early age and made some of her things. She learned to bead and created some beautiful blouses showing her flair for originality. She was always ahead of us in innovative ways to create “arty” designs in beautiful crafts.

One year there was a polio epidemic, and we weren't allowed to go anywhere even though it was summer vacation. Mother took the sewing machine to the cool basement and made a project of us helping to sew identical sailor suits for the three of us, light blue with red stars embroidered. Daddy insisted we should have real sailor hats to complete the outfits and stopped in Jacksonville on our way to Daytona for a visit to the Naval Store. Once as we paraded down Highland Ave. all decked out, we overheard “Look, Mom, triplets!”

(Kelly)

In spite of the age gap, playing together was constant and ongoing. My earliest memory of a game was, as you might guess, “This Little Piggy.” A little later it was “Walk-A-Pecker” which we usually played in bed with much giggling.

I had an ongoing game with Daddy which began as a bedtime story. Trouble was I didn't know it was a game. I believed every bit of it for a couple of years. It was based on Daddy's assumption that after two girls, I would be a boy. Wrong. So he conveniently invented the roles of Big Brother and Little Brother. I fell for it wholeheartedly. With Daddy's skill at tale telling, there were endless stories of us growing up on the farm and of the hired man named Randall. Ruth joined in the pretense, and my fascination was sustained by stories and promises that “in the spring we'll go see Randall.” That never happened, of course, and every spring until I grew up enough to catch on, I suffered the disappointment of no trip to meet Randall. I never knew if Ruth really believed in Randall or not, but, like Santa Claus, she never let on that my dream of actually meeting him might be in vain.

“Pretend” was always my favorite entertainment. Ruth was often a willing participant and with our neighbor, Warrene, who had the world's greatest imagination, we spent hours in the jungle as Tarzan and Jane, hurling ourselves on to the front lawn stabbing savages with the wooden “knives” Daddy had carved for us. Warrene, a lonely only child, went on to become a brilliant writer. She was hugely creative, and every day of the summer she would explain the plot and the two of us would act out some amazing scenario she had come up with.

(Bibba)

When Baby was in a crib, Ruth and I shared a double bed. If our knees were bent, the covers made a nice connection between us. We played games of “Attack and Collapse.” We would chase the giant (we hadn't discovered monsters) and other adversaries of our imagination until Mother would appear and demand that we stop talking and go to sleep. I think Ruth usually fell asleep while I was talking to her.

(Kelly)

Not being an only child was a tremendous blessing. We played paper dolls, built forts with the Daniel Boone logs, cut and colored for our scrap books. Sometimes we played piano duets, going through “Just We Two” from start to finish. When Ruth took up the mandolin it was “Neopolitan Nights” over and over with me or Bibba on the piano.

(Bibba)

The Depression made life pretty bleak for many people, but Mother and Daddy really loved having children and they were wonderfully inventive and imaginative in finding fun things to do. Sunday afternoons we would walk in some nearby woods and Daddy would show us the trenches still existing from the Civil War. We would run down the slopes and climb up again. He would find a good hickory tree and make us walking sticks. We always looked for “piggies,” the tiny urn shaped blooms of the ginger plant. Only Daddy could spot them, but we ran to look again and again, usually mistaking violets for their similar leaves.

Outdoor activities were always preferred. Mother hoped to “keep us healthy.” Oops. Anyway, Piedmont Park was a favorite destination on Sunday afternoons. We sometimes took dinner there for a picnic. On special occasions we visited the pony ring. For a nickel we could ride around the ring led by a young black “groom.” In cold weather clad in our sweaters and coveralls, we would race to the upper section of the park in order to trudge to the top of a wonderful steep, grassy bank. The purpose, of course, was to roll to the bottom. It could be quite dizzying but worth a second or third time. I think Mother and Daddy reveled in watching us have so much fun.

(Kelly)

Writing about it, our childhood sounds idyllic. Certainly we never doubted that we were truly loved. We always felt safe and secure, surrounded by caring relatives in addition to parents we knew we could count on. I'm happy to remember it that way even though I know there was some of the usual childhood elements as well... confusion, frustration, rebellion, etc. sometimes referred to as "growing pains."

I prefer to picture us singing lustily in the car or harmonizing as we cleaned up the kitchen...raking leaves and jumping into the pile while anticipating Mother's hot vegetable soup... and joyously running barefoot in the grass when at last it was warm enough for permission. Never mind that I pouted a lot, Ruth suffered painful shyness at school, and Bibba...well, frankly, I can't recall her making many wrong moves. Maybe some day she'll confess.

It's really not possible to write only about Ruth. The three of us were pretty much "glued" together, mostly referred to as "the Blair girls." Being in the middle, though, you might say Ruth was the glue.

CHAPTER TEN

“SWEET HOME, ATLANTA”

....“Where the skies are so blue...” and the hills are so steep...

Amsterdam was a very long street beginning way off at Monroe Dr. (Then it was called Boulevard.) It climbed gradually up to Highland Ave., continued on up to the very top of the hill, then started down. We were about five houses down. Our section of the hill was much longer and steeper but tapered off just before it reached Lanier Blvd. When we were young it was a dirt road from there on, but of course that later got paved and developed. The dirt road led into the woods, and there was a little creek, and venturing into the woods for a hike or a very small picnic was quite exciting.

Streaking down the hill on a bicycle or skates or a Flexi Racer (a sled on wheels) was very popular with the delivery boys or bigger, brave kids. If you were on skates you'd better cruise from side to side or you'd meet with certain disaster. On foot we would scamper down it but sometimes groan over the climb back.

The hill was a consideration when we decided whether to take the bus or the street car to “go to town.” The street car meant up a short hill and down the other side a few houses to Highland Ave. However, some things were on the bus route at the bottom of the long hill. Going down was easy. Returning was that long and arduous climb. However you got there, downtown Atlanta was well worth it.

But before we explore the Atlanta of our childhood I'm injecting a little slice of history that Mother spoke of when I was quite young. She said, “I cried when I learned of this cruel treatment of the Indians.” Its connection to Atlanta makes it worth retelling.

The original inhabitants of the north Georgia locale that would one day become the Atlanta metropolitan area were the Cherokee and Creek nations, with the Chattahoochee River separating the two. Despite treaties and other official policies prohibiting white encroachment, white settlers moved into the region. In 1830 the United States Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, which called for the relocation of all southeastern Indians to western territories. The Cherokee Nation contested the act in court, but the discovery of gold on Cherokee lands near Dahlonega in 1832 brought an influx of white

squatters and gold hunters, and the state of Georgia illegally surveyed and parceled out the Indian lands.

In 1838 General Winfield Scott and his troops rounded up the Indians and began the forced march west to Arkansas and Oklahoma. Some 18,000 Indians were forced to leave their homes and lands in Georgia on a journey known as the "Trail of Tears." Almost 4,000 died en route. The lands they formerly occupied were opened to white development, but evidence of the first inhabitants abounds in geographic names still used today: Chattahoochee and Oconee from the Creeks, and Kennesaw, Tallulah, and Dahlonega from the Cherokees.

That's a tragic chapter in our history, but a hundred years later Atlanta had grown and developed, and Peachtree St. downtown was an exciting and vibrant place to be. Once there we usually got off the bus at Davison-Paxon Department Store. (Now Macy's). At Christmas time Davison's was our primary destination and we "got off" with butterflies of anticipation, for there back in a special corner was the city's best and favorite Santa Claus. We would gather in a group to hear his stories and to sing "This Is the Way At Christmas...when Santa Claus comes to town..." Then one by one we confided to him our heart's desire, confident that he and the elves would deliver. Actual shopping was minimal in those lean days, but Davison's was indeed a magical experience!

It was a really special occasion when Daddy would meet us for lunch at either the S&W Cafeteria just across the street or the Frances Virginia Tea Room, Atlanta landmarks for years. Then there was the Henry Grady Hotel with its Dogwood Room, a nightclub open for lunch where women dressed up in their fancy hats and white gloves and had lunch while enjoying a floor show. That was never on our agenda.

In the heart of downtown was the Loew's Grand Theater, which hosted "Gone With The Wind," an event which, appropriately, took our breath away. Hollywood came to Atlanta! Being MGM it couldn't play at the Fox Theater, a mile or two north, but never mind. Downtown Peachtree St. was agog with limousines, sirens, flood lights, and cheering fans. For a week Atlanta poured on the Southern hospitality from Aunt Fanny's Cabin to Pitty Pat's Porch, not to mention the Piedmont Driving Club. Even Clark Gable was impressed.

Just a block away from Davison's was the infamous Winecoff Hotel and we pause again for a tragic bit of Atlanta's history. It was the scene of the worst hotel fire in the USA. That event was much later than the childhood excursion I'm recounting. December 7, 1946. One hundred and nineteen people died. I had a friend from Thomaston, GA who

still teared up remembering it. Her father ran the only funeral home in town and she described the grief when the bodies of five or six of Thomaston's most outstanding teenage girls, in Atlanta as delegates to a regional Youth Assembly, were returned to Thomaston for burial. They had been found clinging together in upper story rooms.

If you Google Winecoff Hotel Fire... [Winecoff Hotel Fire](#) (you may have to hold Ctrl and click on it to open this) you will find fascinating facts and pictures. I thought of the Titanic! The Winecoff was built in 1913 and declared to be “absolutely fireproof!” But it had no sprinklers, no fire escapes, and not even an alarm system. Many people died jumping from upper stories, some of them landing in the nets below and bouncing off onto the pavement. Two brothers survived by hand-over-hand descending on sheet ropes. As the ropes caught fire they would grab a rope from another window and actually made it down from the 12th floor! Years later the hotel was rebuilt and called the Ellis.

Back to the 1930s, a serious shopping trip usually meant leaving Davison's for a long walk to the other end of town. (Although for a nickel one could hop on the Shopper's Special bus.) Heading toward Five Points we passed the Volunteer Building where in those early days Daddy's real estate business was located. From his office window we could look down on the Christmas parade as well as the parade celebrating “Gone With the Wind.”

On Forsyth St. we would sometimes peek in the lobby of the Ansley Hotel. Their lovely night club, the Rainbow Room, at one time engaged a popular act known as “The Merry Mutes.” That group, pantomiming to funny records, consisted of Dick Van Dyke plus Nancy and Phil Erickson who later formed the very successful Wits End Players after Dick departed for greater glory.

Finally we arrived at Broad and Alabama for everyone's favorite shopping destination - Rich's Department Store - six stories of shopping for everything from undies to fur coats and suspenders to easy chairs. Their tea room was famous for chicken salad or other delicacies and gala fashion shows with Frances Wallace at the piano. You could easily spend the day there even if you didn't have money or the Rich's “Charga-Plate.”

Rich's reputation for the “customer is always right” was so ingrained in Atlantans that it was often taken advantage of even if the customer was wrong. The Wits End Players had a great skit in which an unhappy spouse plotted to get rid of her husband. After singing several verses of her failed schemes for murder she suddenly launched in to a

rollicking chorus of “I know... I'll take him back to Rich's...They'll take anything back, you know...”

As young children we went to Rich's for shoes. We always asked for Mr. Williams and put our feet into a large X-ray machine so that we could look down and see where our toes came to. Mother let us help choose our shoes, but when I got home I frequently preferred the ones Ruth had chosen. I always envied her saddle oxfords.

The immensely popular Pink Pig came to the toy department years later, along with the big Store For Homes across Forsyth Street. The connecting bridges hosted multiple choirs on Thanksgiving night to usher in the Christmas season and drew thousands of spectators to downtown Atlanta to witness The Lighting of the Great Tree. This Rich's extravaganza quickly became a tradition, one more star in their glittering crown of public relations. Bibba was there in the very first performance, as The Atlanta Choral Guild was one of the participating choirs. For several years both she and Walter were committed to the event, causing the disruption of many a Thanksgiving dinner, although Rich's took care of that in their own first class way.

After a shopping expedition and perhaps loaded with packages we often stopped at Daddy's new office in the Hurt Building. I remember how elegant it felt to mount those wondrous curving marble steps and go through the glass doors to Adams Cates Co. When we were small Daddy took us around to “speak to” his various salesmen friends. After paying our respects to Mr. Cates and the affable John O. Chiles we sort of settled in at the switchboard, fascinated with the plugs and cords which patient and ever friendly Maud so deftly handled. Even as we grew up Daddy proudly had us make the rounds, continuing that practice throughout nine grandchildren. Adams Cates occupied the main floor of the beautiful Hurt Building for many years but, keeping pace with a changing city, eventually relocated at the more upscale Peachtree Center.

The Atlanta of our childhood remained much the same through our high school years. The fabulous Fox Theater and the Georgian Terrace Hotel across the street are still there, the Fox having survived at least one monstrous campaign to raze it. We grew up with Grant Park and the Cyclorama and Zoo. Gone now is the ballpark on Ponce de Leon Ave. that once housed the Atlanta Crackers baseball team. But then as always Atlanta's pride and claim to fame were the residential areas.

When we were children Daddy would frequently drive us around on Sunday afternoons to see the amazingly beautiful homes of Druid Hills, Ansley Park, and West Paces Ferry. Even Peachtree St. from midtown to Buckhead (then just a crossroads) was lined with stately old homes. We loved those excursions, so fascinating because Daddy knew

who owned every house and all the skeletons in the closets. He had sold many of them himself. We always stopped for a minute to look in the gates of the “pink castle” where the Calhouns lived and never missed Blackland Rd. to see the “horseshoe drive” house. Both have been featured in prominent magazines. The Calhoun estate has since been broken up into a subdivision, but the Blackland Rd house is still there in all its majesty.

These fabulous homes were built in the 1920s and are still of special value if the architect was either Phillip Schutze or Neil Reid, sometimes spelled Neel. Any real estate agent who is fortunate enough to have such a listing will mention one of those famous architects in the first sentence. Their amazing achievements could be seen – or ogled - on Habersham, Andrews Dr., West Paces Ferry, etc. as well as in Druid Hills and other areas. We can still admire commercial landmarks like the Brookwood Amtrak Station and the Rhodes Hall of Aunt Ruth's experience... East Lake Country Club... Druid Hills High School... Academy of Medicine and Swan House to name a few. Neil Reid died at the height of his brilliant career at the age of 41.

I think one reason Atlanta boasts these impressive estates is that our unique terrain lends itself to gorgeous and graceful landscaping, which these genius architects used so skilfully to their advantage. Anyone experiencing the dogwood, azalea, tulips, and wisteria of spring in Atlanta would surely agree that our miles of residential areas deserve to be the showcase of the country. Check it out. (Hold Ctrl and click on it) [Architect Neil Reid](#) [Architect Phillip Schultze](#).

Atlanta was busy and exciting. Amsterdam was full of kids and neighbors. Our house was home sweet home, even when the aroma from the kitchen was cabbage!

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE “ILL”-IC PART OF IDYLLIC

OR

THREE SICK CHICKS

(Bibba)

Between the three of us we could probably have kept a full time nurse busy. We had the usual childhood colds and generously passed them around to each other. Mother didn't have time to get sick. She was too busy mopping our throats with cotton swabs of mercurochrome, or washing the torn up sheets we used for handkerchiefs since Kleenex hadn't been invented. We lined up for the gross brown nose drops called Argyrol plus cough syrup of various brands.

Worst of all was an upset stomach. The old fashioned treatment was Castor Oil. Gross doesn't begin to describe that thick oily hold-your-nose substance. Whoever Mr. Castor was, any victim of his product would know him to be an evil entrepreneur who probably never taste-tested his vile concoction. In later years his invention was thought to perhaps cause appendicitis and totally fell from favor, lucky for the next generation.

(Kelly)

Mustard plasters were a nightly ritual for me as I was very prone to bronchitis and coughed nonstop a lot of the night. No one seemed to know about steam. Anyway, I was definitely the lucky one, escaping any really serious childhood ailments. Of course chicken pox and measles were givens. I did have my tonsils out at age 5, but what I remember most besides the banana ice cream in recovery were the two little nightgowns Mother made for me to help get through the ordeal. Pink print for the first day and yellow roses for the second. With ruffles. To this day I find that new clothes definitely help to “ease the pain” of many dilemmas.

Mumps didn't attack me until the 8th grade and kept me out of school for over a week. No new clothes that time but I coped as I got better by writing fan letters to some of my idols - Deanna Durbin, President Roosevelt, and Cecil B. DeMille were a few who kindly responded with typed notes and autographed photos. At least I was nice enough to keep the mumps to myself.

Ruth's mastoid crises were in the past and except for a broken arm which she never much talked about, she went through the above afflictions with only the normal discomfort. For Bibba not so good.

(Bibba)

Of the three childhood diseases I always got the first and worst case. With measles I was in bed a week, curtains drawn, spotted all over and itchy. Really sick. My sisters got away with just a few spots. We all had chicken pox but mine was the worst and the itchiest. Jars of carbolated vaseline and “Don't scratch!”

(Kelly)

(I'm not sure how she knows how much someone else itches, but her case must have been bad.)

(Bibba)

One positive outcome was getting my first board game. Parcheesi. I could play this in bed and it became one of our family favorites. I still remember the sound of the dice dancing in the cardboard cups as we shook them and the pretty colors of the “men.” Whooping cough was a pain but at least it didn't itch. As an adult I had mumps on one side. But that's all just an intro into the major physical traumas of my young years.

When I was seven we went one day to McClatchey Park. There was a small wading pool surrounded by knee high grass. After romping awhile in the water Daddy told us to run around in the grass to dry off. I hurried since the grass was quite prickly and – bad news – I stepped on a piece of glass and got a bloody cut under my big toe. Daddy took me to the drugstore so the pharmacist could bandage my foot. The next day we went to the doctor and I was given a tetanus shot. At seven no shot is easy but this was major pain! It was put into the back of my shoulder. To this day I remember how bad it hurt. This was before the advent of toxoids. For a couple of days I was delirious and stayed in bed. Then of course I bounced back and resumed seven-year-old activities.

(Kelly)

I can't compete with that but I do remember as a toddler I was heading barefoot with Mother up the back path to see Mrs. Henderson when I stepped on a bee. Mother carried me crying the rest of the way and I was comforted only when Mrs. Henderson gave me a piece of candy. I know. That doesn't compare to a tetanus shot!

Bibba had a lot of bad breaks. (Not bones.) There was the Sunday afternoon when we were going for the typical Sunday drive, but I insisted on not going so the plan was nixed. Instead, Bibba went across the street to the Kidd's house where there was a nice porch type swing in the back yard hanging from a 4 x 4 beam atop two posts, one of which was rotted away. As she sat placidly swinging to and fro, that post gave way and came down right on her head. A vicious conk! She came home with a bloody scalp.

(Bibba)

The doctor came to the house. Mother cut off my bloody sweater, Doc cut my hair, bandaged my head and left. I still have the very visible scar on the back of my head.

(Kelly)

I got frowned on for causing her to be in that swing in the first place. I was also thought to be somewhat responsible for the death of our fox terrier, Bingo, when I declined to accompany Bibba to the corner store one evening after dark. Mother had said, "OK, but take Bingo along." That was fine until the return trip when Bingo bolted across Highland Ave. right into the path of a car. Bibba had to carry the little dead body home. You can imagine the aftermath! My guilt trips were beginning to add up.

(Bibba)

All of these recounted crises might be considered a prologue to the main event... the couple of years that so significantly dominated what should have been the idyllic growing up period of my life. I loved school and was about two weeks into the second semester of Second Grade when Mother became concerned that I looked "run down," so off to the doctor we went. I was running a low grade fever. X-rays showed signs of something questionable at the time. (Later recognized as bronchitis.)

Back then tuberculosis was a killer disease and dreaded at any stage. The very idea of such a diagnosis totally panicked a parent. I, of course, knew nothing about all this. I felt fine, but it was a different story for Mother. We came home. She told me to get in bed and stay there. Then she went to her room, closed the door, and remained there all afternoon crying. Granddaddy was living with us then. He knocked on her door to no avail. She later told Ruth it was the worst day of her life, but she never mentioned that to me.

It was soon determined for sure that TB was not the problem but with that initial possibility lurking and not knowing for sure what was going on with me, I was at first sentenced to isolation. Only my parents came into my room. Occasionally Ruth and Baby could stand at my door. My windows were open all the time. My meals were served in special dishes, new with orange flowers. Chicha, Jack, and Gobba came to see me, and Mother said hardly a day went by that a neighbor didn't bring food or a small gift.

One lasting favorite was artist Howard Pyle's "The Wonder Clock," a fat book of marvelous tales of princes, paupers, princesses, and challenging adversaries. Twenty-four fascinating plots, one for each hour of the day. They were illustrated so imaginatively with drawings by Pyle. I read them many times over. As did Ruth and Kelly. It is a beloved family classic.

Besides having to stay in bed, I had to “rest” doing nothing for four hours each day. This was the worst part, as I didn't feel that bad. I could get up to go to the bathroom and had a bath every other day. At night alcohol rubs. Daddy spent most evenings reading to me or playing a game with me.

Ruth was in First Grade and came home one afternoon with an award she'd been given. She brought it right to me... hadn't even opened it. It was a book of cut-out fold-together rooms with furniture. What a wonderful surprise! I've never forgotten how happy and touched I was with her gift and her thoughtfulness.

Three and a half months of “bed rest” finally came to an end. I felt great, as usual, had gained weight and outgrown my clothes, all positive signs except for that nagging bit of fever. I was released from bed, had my tonsils out, but was very restricted in exercise and not allowed to return to school until the fourth grade! Two whole years! By then I was extremely shy but got reacquainted with friends and caught up on academic subjects. I was not allowed to play ball games or run and exert myself. This went on through high school!

That physical restriction didn't limit my enjoyment of other activities and pursuits. However, it was a glorious turning point one Christmas when I was stunned and thrilled with a beautiful blue bicycle. I knew Ruth was getting one, but she was the more athletically inclined of the three of us. Mine came as a total surprise. My world had truly turned a corner.

(Kelly)

Just a note of sour grapes. Daddy didn't see the sense of three bicycles in one family. (???) So they refurbished a small used bicycle which came from someone's garage or attic and that was mine. What a waste. I had to pedal ten times for their once and could never keep up so I abandoned the effort rather quickly. My bicycling experience was then limited to whenever I could borrow one from a sister. Oh well. Life is sometimes not fair.

(Bibba)

I can definitely attest to that!

CHAPTER TWELVE

ONE FOR THE MONEY... TWO FOR THE SHOW

OR

TWINKLE, TWINKLE LITTLE STARS

(Bibba)

I can't remember when music was not a major part of our lives. From the time I was little Daddy sang (never the same tune twice) “The Bear Went Over the Mountain” before he launched into our bedtime stories. He was better at story telling and he didn't exactly come to mind when people would ask, “Where did you get your talent?” By the time Kelly and I both obviously excelled at the piano and she in singing, we heard that question a lot and wondered ourselves where it came from. We eventually decided that there was definitely a great love of music on both sides of the family but, by living in the country or for whatever reason, the talented ones probably didn't have the opportunities to develop it. Call it “hidden talent.”

That enthusiasm for music of all kinds was generously passed on, for me at a very early age. Gobba had an old Victrola with a wonderful collection of records from her days in New Orleans and from listening to the Metropolitan Opera perform each year. (Later she gave me her beautiful pearl opera glasses in a black blue-lined case.) Since I spent several days a week at her house I grew up hearing Caruso, Melba, Madame Schumann-Heink to name just a few of the greats.

(Kelly)

There were other records not so classical in the collection that were played over and over as Ruth and I joined the listening audience. We loved the “Dancing Doll”, the famous John Philip Sousa marches, and the sad folk songs “The Dream Of A Miner's Child” and “The Death Of Floyd Collins,” a true tale of a tragic event in a Kentucky mine. Seventy years after it happened, we attended the drama festival at Niagara- On-the-Lake and were excited to discover that our so familiar saga had been made into a musical. It was a poignant and nostalgic night of theater.

(Bibba)

Pianos were wonderfully present in our homes, usually the old “uprights” which looked a little cumbersome but often had a rich and mellow sound. Gobba played hymns and sang for me. She read treble notes slowly and made up the bass part, grabbing any keys but always with good rhythm. Mother could play a little and would sometimes let me pick out something from her stack of music. That was probably a hopeless challenge for her since I would always choose the ones with the most black notes. I remember picking out tunes before I could read, asking Mother if my tune sounded like “Jesus Loves Me” or “London Bridge.”

(Kelly)

My first bumbling efforts at finding a melody with one finger was “My Country 'Tis Of Thee.” Nevertheless, these were the first clues that Bibba and I were blessed with the ability to “play by ear,” an asset we both value highly, especially when coupled with being top notch sight readers. So you play with music or without, whatever the occasion calls for. May sound like bragging, but it's really just the way it is and it has sure come in handy.

(Bibba)

I was eight years old when I started piano lessons with Mrs. Morgan Stevens, well known for having her own school-studio on Juniper St. She wore a long brown coat and had a wonderful head of white hair done up in a bun. She would ride the bus to the bottom of Amsterdam and then walk up the long hill to teach several neighborhood kids. My 30-minute lesson cost all of 50 cents. I learned quickly, practiced diligently, and loved playing in the recitals she held in her home.

(Kelly)

I remember one recital, although I was pretty small. I really looked forward to the refreshments part of the evening, hoping for some delicious cookie. Of course, it being the depression era, the dessert turned out to be some kind of dark pudding with seeds (?) on top. I had no use for Mrs. Stevens after that.

(Bibba)

In three months I was devouring all the music I could find, sight reading and having a ball. Mrs. Stevens told Mother how well I was doing, bragging every week. Mother didn't take her seriously, even suspected she was lying, as music teachers are often known to do. Anyway, she stopped my lessons when Mrs. Stevens hiked her price to 75 cents a lesson!

For a year I had no lessons. Then Emilie Parmalee (Spivey), a charming and attractive young teacher who lived in Morningside, began driving to our neighborhood to teach

Jeanne Lindley up the hill, so Mother let me start again with her. Once again my progress was impressive and soon Ruth and Kelly began sharing a lesson.

(Kelly)

I loved Miss Parmalee. Talk about bragging! Daddy said she was the best bragger he'd ever met, and I think he was right. As long as she lived, that was her trademark, but somehow she carried it off so well that one just sort of basked in it and hoped she really meant it. It seemed to come natural to her, and I'm sure many a mousy little student or choir member was made to feel quite important.

(Bibba)

For Christmas I received a hymnal like those being used in our Junior Church at Haygood Methodist. What a bonanza of new stuff for me to play. A few weeks later in my most memorable moment of bravery EVER, one Sunday morning I walked up to the Superintendent and said, "I can play all the songs in this book."

She looked at me with amazement and disbelief but answered that the pianist was not able to attend that day. "Would you like to play today?" I of course agreed, carried it off quite successfully and thus embarked on a lifelong career in church music. When Kelly came along it was just expected that she would also be on the piano bench whenever needed.

(Kelly)

My first recital piece at the age of seven was called "Busy Corners." I recited a little description of it before I sat down at the piano. Miss Parmalee thought I should enter a piano contest being held at the Lakewood Fair Grounds. Chicha took Bibba and me out there, and once I had played she said, "Let's go." I was reluctant since they hadn't announced the winners, so she humored me and consented to stay. Good thing, since I won Second Prize in my age group and had my picture taken with Miss First Prize for the newspaper. I have it in a scrapbook somewhere.

(Bibba)

As mentioned, Kelly and I are excellent sight readers so it was not only easy but great fun to open any of our many songbooks and play anything asked for. Everyone in our family enjoyed music, especially singing around the piano. Uncle Jack Blair, Aunt Gertrude, and Aunt Clara lived elsewhere, but whenever they were in town this was a treat they really looked forward to. Jack taught us "Lili Marlene," a beautiful song he learned from his days in Europe during WWII. Gertrude was a WAAC during the war, and she told of hours spent singing with friends while sitting on the barracks steps of a South Pacific island.

(Kelly)

When Uncle Jack Patterson married Frances she was an enthusiastic participant, having taken voice lessons for some years. Aunt Irene bought a grand piano. Aunt Pearl bought a piano. Wherever we were we were asked to play and sing....play and sing.. Daddy had made one stipulation when we first started lessons. "We would play whenever we were asked." No problem. We were delighted to oblige. As the years passed Mother and Daddy were immensely proud of us but were not inclined to show it. I think at the beginning they were caught off guard by our talent.

(Bibba)

The most fun was when the neighborhood kids gathered in our Amsterdam living room and sang straight through whatever book we had out, including opera selections. We had a good collection of sheet music by then with some of the current pop songs. One day a new neighbor, who happened to be a professional singer and voice teacher, heard us singing and came over and introduced herself. Mrs. Hovey. She volunteered to give us some lessons. We were eager and were happy to lie on the floor and learn to "breathe from the diaphragm." We learned Italian syllables and even practiced some, but the group fizzled out when it became apparent that Kelly was the only one with a "voice."

(Kelly)

Ruth loved music as much as we did. She didn't stay with the piano lessons but she always loved singing and we did plenty of it, not just around the piano. Whenever we were in the car the three of us in the back seat would swing into our "repertoire". We sang everything from "Swanee River" to "Anchors Aweigh". Mother and Daddy were a captive audience, but they never complained.

Later Ruth took up the mandolin and played with a group formed by the Dobbs family. The Griffith School of Music. They played a live radio show on Sundays that she participated in. Through the years she sang in choirs and choral groups. She was thrilled by classical music with the exception of Bach. "Please omit him." In later years jazz, especially Miles Davis, was her passion. Her idea of a fabulous vacation was the "Jazz Cruise," listening to great jazz from morning till midnight. Bibba and Paul were right there tapping their feet for several of those cruises, and I was along for one. The three of them hardly got off the ship. They were there for the jazz!

(Bibba)

Daddy was The Star Of the Show when he announced the thrilling news that he had purchased a beautiful Steinway grand. What an event! We were beyond happy! He had found it in a house he had for sale. It was fifteen years old and barely been played. He paid \$500 for it and later obtained the twin to it for Uncle Jake. After wearing out both our old upright and then Gobba's we were ecstatic to have this beautiful instrument

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in our living room. Now finally we could get great sounds – mellow and rich with a resonant bass. The touch was smooth, the case elegant, and the family bursting with pride. It was built around 1927, has been rebuilt once in the 70's and now resides in Kelly's living room where it has been beloved for many years.

The twin was never played much at Uncle Jake's except by us and eventually I obtained it from Trisha, although it suffered some from having been transported to her home in Miami, deteriorated with the humid climate and then shipped back to Atlanta. I had it rebuilt and we cherished it for many years. It was sad to part with it when it came time to downsize. A Steinway becomes one of the family!

(Kelly)

Our musical “history” wasn't just limited to piano. Bibba soon became enamored with the pipe organ. For me singing was as significant a calling as piano. If I were to enumerate our early performances we would start with Junior Church or the Ladies Bible Class or the WCTU (Women's Christian Temperance Union) or living room recitals. From there, thanks to the encouragement and support of family and teachers, we could happily fill many a chapter on the joys of having musical talent and the unspeakable pleasure and reward of being able to share it all.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

ONE POTATO...TWO POTATO...THREE POTATO...FOUR

OR

EENY ... MEENY ... MINEY .. MOE

(Kelly)

However you counted it out, “...and YOU are IT!” was the final result. You put your fists out and hoped you'd not be the last to get tapped. And so went the games for many a warm summer night under the neighborhood street light. “Mother, can we play out?”

Of all our many blessings we were uniquely fortunate in having a wonderful potpourri of kids on our street. We knew the 6 or 8 at the top of the hill and a group of smaller kids at the bottom of the hill, but in the space of 10 or 12 houses halfway down were the ones we really grew up with.

In the summer we couldn't wait for dinner to end and the dishes done so we could join the others under the street light for “Hide and Go Seek” or “Red Light” or “Mother, May I?” On summer days our activity would depend on the current craze. One year we had a giant jump rope and lined up to compete. Other years it was dodge ball... football ... baseball...and badminton. This went on all year, but of course summer fun was the best.

(Bibba)....

Our favorite game was the new Monopoly. It became rowdy and exciting as we bought and sold properties. To this day I have never won a game of Monopoly. Somehow Ruth landed on all of the most desirable assets, quickly added houses, then hotels, cleaning up with her rents. She was a cut-throat trader. No sisterly love there. We also played card games, Make a Million, Go Fish, Old Maid. On winter nights masses of people gathered around our dining room table for Rummy, all ages, especially including parents.

(Kelly)

There was a vacant lot next to Dick Kidd's house and a tree house that had a wire cable running down to a big oak tree. From the tree house we grabbed a pipe and catapulted

down the cable, across the lot to the oak tree, stopping ourselves with our feet against the trunk. Luckily, no one ever really got hurt. But what fun! We may have been the first zip-liners!

(Bibba)

Our screened porch was a mecca in the summer for family and neighborhood gatherings. A vivid memory is that of Jack and Daddy screening the porch, no small feat considering the two long arched openings. The hand-cut framework was put together in pieces, forming an arch. This was joined to the straight vertical pieces put in place. Then the caulking began, filler in each little crevice created by the mortar between the bricks. No power tools for this stage. Jack, up on a ladder, held the caulking apparatus shoulder high, twisting the handle of the plunger to force the caulking into its crevice. I can still hear the groan with each twist and see the grimace on his face. What an effort. But Hallelujah!!! Now we could enjoy outdoors without the mosquitos and other bugs.

(Kelly)

Josephine and Henry Taylor lived four doors down. Henry was my age, Josephine younger. During preschool years Henry and I played together, sharing books and mischief. We spent a lot of time digging a hole which we figured would ultimately end up in China. Henry began early as an entrepreneur, raising pigeons and servicing the neighborhood with Coca Cola and other soft drinks.

Josephine's claim to fame was her ability to climb the highest in their pecan tree. She was also the smallest of the whole group and therefore, like me, being next, was usually the one flying through the air at the end of "Crack the Whip". Sadly, for Henry and Josephine, they got into an argument with Warrene (of the great imagination) next door. For the only time I can remember the parents on the street getting involved in a fracas, theirs stepped in and forbade them to cross into the others' yard. From then on and forevermore if we played in Warrene's yard, Henry and Josephine stood on their side of the driveway and watched. And vice versa. What a bummer!

Adding to the personalities on the street were the regular summer visits of the neighbors' relatives. Anita Ray, Rosemary, and John - don't you love those names! Their whole family visited the grandmother next door to us, and we looked forward to it. They were a military family and full of fun as well as being, I thought, super smart. They plunged in with enthusiasm and skill the summer that our nightly gatherings had morphed away from the streetlight and into someone's front porch for "Charades."

There were also Gwendolyn and Jackquelyn, twins about Ruth's age, visiting on the other side of us. We had our own twins that age - Jane and Jean daSilva, a few doors down the street. Their backyard lent itself well to our occasional attempts at a Broadway show. The first and earliest one I remember was Bibba singing "Love's Old Sweet Song." I think later she played the piano from inside the house through an open window. Jane was learning the violin, so you can imagine the painful evenings our parents endured.

(Bibba)

Blackberry picking was a command event each summer. Ruth was always gung-ho for this and didn't seem to mind getting up so-o early for the adventure. We donned long pants, long-sleeved shirts powdered well with sulfur powder to prevent itchy chigger bites, and piled into the car with our buckets and great anticipation. Daddy could always find wild blackberry patches along the country roads, so we braved the bugs, briars, and brambles and picked until all the buckets were filled.

(Kelly)

I successfully managed to avoid all of these outings. Chiggers were my nemesis and I lost the battle with them on several memorable occasions, worst of which was gaily rolling in the spring pine straw with favorite cousin Mildred.

(Bibba)

The berries were put into flour sacks and hung overnight on the back porch to strain the juice. Then came the cooking and filling newly sterilized jars. It was hot and intensive work. Mother later observed that with the costs of gas, laundry for a ton of clothes, the jars, paraffin, etc., they could have bought jelly at the A&P for the same price or less. We all knew there was no comparison! The rest of the summer included similar operations with strawberries (so delicious), apples, pears and figs. My mouth waters! Of course these were mainstays for our school lunches year round.

When we were lucky Mother would appear on the screened porch with a special treat. One hot summer day with her apron still on, she brought us out yummy slices of bread and butter loaded with just made blackberry jelly. We devoured them, but the limit was one per person. However, our young neighbor, Bob Sanders, looked up at her with pitiful eyes and plaintive voice and said "Mrs. Blair, could I please have just one more?" She couldn't resist and said, "Of course, Bobby."

(Kelly)

Uncle Jack, Mother's brother, and Aunt Frances lived at the bottom of the hill. Jack had a workroom in his basement, and later, after the screened porch, he and Daddy came up with at least two wondrous things. A ping pong table for our basement was first.

Not only did it attract neighborhood gatherings but parties through the years as we got older, plus serving as a huge table for the fantastic fish fries along the way. In our opinion Mother was a cooking genius for her crispy, flaky fish and the amazing hush puppies that accompanied it. Daddy was a passionate fisherman, and Mother was pretty good at it too. Cedar Keys in Florida was a favorite getaway, and Lake Lanier was a regular destination. Daddy was exceedingly popular during those trips, and we stood in line for a package of his catch. No wonder. He never gave away any fish that he had not cleaned and fileted. And, oh, the taste!

The second and most memorable carpentry triumph came the winter of 1938 (?) when we woke up to a breathtaking white world!

(Bibba)

Ah winter! Usually winter was cold for some days, then a warm spell, then back to the cold. Some Christmases were warm enough for just a sweater. I was about 13 when we had the GREAT SNOW. IT WAS BEAUTIFUL! Of course the schools were closed and for nearly a week we reveled in the joys of a "real winter."

Jack and Daddy put their carpentry expertise to work and made us two wonderful wooden bobsleds with ropes to guide them. They were big enough for three or four of us to pile on at one time, and up and down Amsterdam we went. The adults joined us in the evening, and Mother had a continuous supply of hot chocolate and cookies.

Mostly kids were on the sleds and the whole contraption would slow down and stop at the bottom of the hill before we reached a cross street, Lanier Blvd. One night Warrene's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Harris, wanted a ride. I confidently volunteered to take them down. They were heavier than my previous cargoes, which I hadn't counted on. As the three of us raced faster than usual down the slope, I realized that we weren't stopping. What to do? As the street flattened out and Lanier Blvd. loomed up ahead, I made a big unexpected circular turn. My passengers both slid off - kapoot - into a snowbank - bodies, fur coat and all! They didn't want another ride, but thanked me for that one.

So here's to "the days of yore" ...happy memories...lucky us!