

Life and Times Of Jackie and Eva Scott

For Our Grandchildren
Jessy and Benjamin



Preface

This is the story of my pursuit for the calling of God—to discover God’s plan for my life. For years, I thought God’s plan could only be done through the preaching ministry, missionary work, or other “full-time” religious work and I relentlessly pursued what my parents called a “special calling.”

Wrongful thinking led to discouragement, guilt, and a feeling of being unfit to participate in God’s plan. Eugene Peterson, in the *Message*, wrote, “Our unimpressive, very ordinary lives make us feel like outsiders.” Unable to “label” or define my calling, I really felt like an outsider—outside God’s plan for my life.

My eyes were partially opened when I read the words of Petersen about Ruth, “[she was] given a quiet and obscure part that proved critical to the way everything turned out.”

After many years in both secular and religious work, and now in retirement, I was just beginning to understand that God’s “plans and thoughts” for me were not so much in a “special calling,” as in

obedience; submitting the various roles I played throughout life to the telling of God's story.

With this in mind, I decided to retrace my life's journey. I wanted desperately to feel the satisfaction of being part of His awesome purpose.

The Life and Times of Jackie and Eva Scott For Our Grandchildren, Jessy and Benjamin, this is an account of that journey.

“Why did Grandpa write this book for me?” I hear you asking as you open its cover. It is somewhat of a mystery, but I will tell you how it came about.

Grandparents Day

I first thought about it on September 13, 1993, the day you guys brought our first grandparents’ gift, *Generations, My Grandparents’ Reflections*. White flowers and white leaves on a light pastel green background decorated the cover. The design reminded me of exquisite linen wall paper found in homes long ago. Even the word *Generation*, written in antique script, expressed being old.

An insert in the front of the book said that for my grandchildren, life is a tapestry still forming and that the purpose of *Generations* was to help in adding thoughts and memories to the weaving of their lives. It sounded like a noble purpose. It appealed to me.

Questions about people, places, things and times seemed to be coming from a curious mind—a quest for a lifetime of memories. Jessy once said, “Do you have a favorite grandparent memory? Please share it with me.” The question wiggled its

way into my now tender heart and I wanted to preserve as many of those golden moments as I could; just for you.

Grandchildren

It has been said many times, “grandchildren are precious.” They really are, but to explain why they are greatly desired and valued is difficult. I haven’t heard a good explanation. Yet, I have had the experience. When I looked at you the first time, I felt it. Jess, your thin red hair, delicate “pug” nose (just like mine), dainty hands and fingers, unusually small feet and toes, and of course the little dimples, they spoke to me. Don’t ask me how! I just know I had this peculiar feeling, this mystical experience that burst forth in response, “She’s...! She’s precious!” It was an unplanned, spontaneous expression.

“Precious.” Precious because you were a gift from God, Creator of all good things. You were a new life, a new beginning, a new generation, an offspring of my own life. Like switching on a light, I suddenly became aware that you, baby Jessy, would continue my family line.

No! I didn't have that intent as I browsed through *Generations*. I thought perhaps I would spend time answering the questions, but that is all. I had no real purpose in writing a book.

As time went on, however, I played with the idea. My family history had become important to me and I had begun to collect information. I thought that would be a good beginning. After months of research, hours and hours writing and rewriting, I finally admitted that I didn't know why I was trying to write—there was no purpose, no reason.

She's Precious

Finally, I forced myself to sit down and think. I returned to those moments, when something within gave expression, "Ben and Jessy are most precious." I thought about Grandparents Day, the look you gave us, the things your mother and dad said about you, and our feelings as they developed over the next months. I remembered personal experiences over the years, then slowly, it became clear; I had to write my story and why.

Scott Heritage

Your Scott heritage is important and if I don't tell you about it, who will? Oh, how I wish my parents had written something about themselves. Now, I remember only fragments of the stories they told. As far as I know, no one has ever written anything about the family—we were neither rich nor famous. None of us made any notable contributions to society, but we do have a history; stories that should not be forgotten.

We lived through some of the most eventful times in history. Through many wars, depressions, through storms and earthquakes. From a one-room dugout to four bedroom homes, from washtubs, iceboxes, to washing machines and refrigerators, from polio to Salk vaccine, from cotton field to front office, from chalkboard to computer, from horse drawn buggies to flights to the moon; we have seen it firsthand. We struggled through much of it and we learned from experience.

You need to learn about these experiences to find your place in the family. Knowing something

about our education, the kinds of homes we lived in, how doctors treated us, what we ate, the games we played, our religious beliefs and values, what jobs we had, and how we coped with personal and economic crises, is the only way you will know what we were really like.

Family of God

Jessy, Ben, my desire is for you to find your place in the Scott and Friend families, but more importantly, in the family of God. Throughout this book, you will read over and over again about our families' strengths and weaknesses, hopes, fears, courage, success and failure. It will not all be exciting and uplifting; there are some sad stories. But the good news is that you need not be afraid when adversity comes your way. As our Heavenly Father has watched over us, He will watch over you.

Ok to Browse

Although this book is a personal gift to Jessy and Ben, I understand others may browse its pages. That's ok, but remember, it is most importantly,

the bonding of Jessy, Ben, Grandma Eva, Papa Jackie and our Heavenly Father.

Golden Strands

When you thumb through the pages, look for those golden strands that when twisted together make us one—a family; those moral fibers woven into the very fabric of our existence; and coarsely braided traditions intertwined together that reveal dependence on Divine guidance. The final tapestry will not be the most noble, the most exquisite, not a masterpiece of workmanship, but it will tell the story of a unique family—self-reliant, respectful of work, with a love for God and triumphant over adversity.

On the following pages, you will find many letters written to you over several years. I pray that you and generations to come will enjoy them.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben, your mom and dad came over to our house on Sunday, September 12, 1993. I give the date because it is a very important one. It was our first Grandparents Day. They brought a gift—a book. Can you imagine that? A book! Not a book to read, not a picture book to leave on the coffee table for visitors to look through. No!

JGenerations

It was simply a workbook, *Generations, My Grandparents' Reflections*. Its purpose is to help grandparents record the most important events and experiences in their lives for their grandchildren.

As we opened the book, Dana said, “It will be nice for Jessy to know something of her roots.” Nice, yes! But we are almost sixty years old. A lot of things have happened. And time! Do you have any idea how long it will take to write down all we remember? Age, events, memory, time! “What’s

that got to do with it?” Your dad thought, “It’s for Jessy and Ben.”

Life and Times

In *Life and Times of Jackie and Eva Scott* are recorded the events, people, and places that have been important in our lives. My prayer is that you will understand more fully those who have come and gone before you. That in their story you will become more aware of adversity and triumph. And, that in it all, God brought forth good.

Our story cannot be told apart from God. We recognize that it was Him who made us; who directed our paths; who brought us into a saving knowledge of Himself; and Him who planned, or allowed to happen, all the experiences we have recorded here.

To God be all the glory!

Papa Jackie

I Jessy and Ben

t's really too bad someone in our family did not take the time to record the family history. Much of the Scott story is forgotten; forever lost to the generation that will follow. When I could have heard the story firsthand from Mom and Dad, I didn't see the importance of writing it down. Now that I see the value of family roots, many of the stories I heard Mom and Dad tell are fuzzy. Times, places, people and events are often unclear.

Story Reconstructed

I tried to reconstruct the Scott story, but it will lack the detail to show the richness of their lives. There is, however, enough information available to give you a clear picture from about the time Mom and Dad were married until the present.

I am not sure when the Scott family story begins. However, more research may add detail. That may take a lot of time. So, I will tell you the story as best as I can from about the year 1915.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben, Let's go on a trip! OK? A journey into the past. Into a time where you have never been, but one you would love to visit.

Take a Trip

Close your eyes! Now start thinking back as far as you can in your own life. Let your imagination take over. Keep your eyes closed! Pretend you are living in the early days of your mom and dad. past grandma and grandpa's time. Keep going—keep thinking! Imagine that you are now in the time of great grandma and great grandpa. Go back just a little more.

Year 1854

The year 1854 is the year William Robert Scott, your great, great grandfather was born in the state of Alabama. In that same year, on July 2, your

great, great grandmother Lizzie Hannah Moore, was born in Harris County, Texas.

Jess, Ben, that completes the early record of your Scott ancestors. I will pick it up later.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben

Mother did not tell me that I was an unplanned baby until I was quite old. Even then she was hesitant. She said it would break her heart if I thought I was an unwanted baby.

Unplanned Baby

After the initial shock, Mother and Dad went to great lengths to assure I felt as wanted as any of the other children. Probably too much so. From all accounts, I was pampered from birth until they passed away. I was always referred to by mother as her baby, even after I was a grown man.

Interestingly, my oldest sister, Bernice, was already married and the mother of Bryant Wilson Sellers, a year and twenty days before I was born.

My parents were kind of embarrassed by that. They thought people would think and talk about them being too old to have children. It doesn't seem like a big thing to me, but that was their thought. More importantly, I think, were the times in which I was born—the Depression years. No one would have chosen to have a child during those trying times.

The Great Depression

It has been written that the United States has gone through two revolutions. One the Civil War, the other the Depression of the 1930s. Historians mark the beginning of the Depression from October 29, 1929, “Black Thursday,” they called it, the day the stock market collapsed. On that day, more than \$30 billion in paper value was wiped out. The stock market crash was not the cause of the Depression, but it helped trigger the decline in the economy that was already underway. The year I was born was about the time the country began to emerge from the economic collapse.

The Depression

I was too young to remember those days, but Mom, Dad, and my brothers and sisters lived in the heat of it. It was the most important event in their lives. I understand why. By 1932, twenty-five percent of the work force was unemployed. In some places it was ninety percent. Those who were employed took cuts in pay. Between 1929-1933, the average salary of manufacturing workers fell from \$25 a week to less than \$17. Farmers were hit even harder. They had no market for their goods. Banks failed at 200 a month during 1932. Hundreds of thousands of people could not meet mortgage payments.

On the outskirts of large cities, homeless men and women built shantytowns from scrap lumber, pieces of metal, packing crates and cardboard boxes. They lined up at soup kitchens for a piece of bread and soup. An article I read described the scene like this: “There is a line of men, three or sometimes four abreast, a block long, and wedged tightly together—so tightly that no passer-by can break through. There was a reason: those at the

head of the gray-black human snake will eat tonight; those further back probably won't."

My Family's Work

My family has stories from those years. Dad moved his family to the Bennett (or Tom Perkins) farm about five or six miles west of Celina, in 1929. About a quarter of a mile from the site where Dad was drilling a well. It was just off the road to Pilot Point.

Dad was a driller—oil well “roughneck.” He ran crews for Roy I. Carter Drilling and Bolivar Drilling Companies, among others. He was gone much of the time, but when the family moved to Celina, he was home. At this particular time, he was drilling on the John Willick farm. Between drilling assignments or when he was off duty, he cut wood, and did odd jobs for local farmers. He bought and sold watermelons, cantaloupes and other melons. Occasionally, he was called by the sheriff to transport prisoners to the jail in McKinney.

Dad and his boys always worked during the Depression, but their earnings were small; fifty cents for a 10-hour day was common.

Sonny worked for a man in Celina who owned a theater, a farm and other enterprises. He ran the movie projector at the local theater and cleaned up afterward. Between the matinee and the evening show, he set pins for the bowling alley. At sixteen, he dropped out of the eighth grade to work for the Texas Highway Department. Glen worked at any and everything. He worked with Haley Terry whose father, Clint, owned the market in town. Clint bought cattle, hogs, and goats from farmers in the area. Glen and Haley went out to their farms to butcher them. Glen tells of plowing, shearing sheep, and hunting and selling rabbits. Burb worked at a grain mill, doing the milling and maintenance of the equipment. At various times they all picked cotton.

We moved from the Bennett place to a farm owned by Nilan Bradford, about four or five miles northwest of Celina, near the Sellers farm. The "Rawhide" they called it because of its tough clay-

like soil. If you grew anything on it, you really had to work at it. Cotton is about all they planted there except in the bottom land.

The Scott and Sellers families became very close. Bernice married Eldred, the oldest of the boys, in February 1932.

Glen relates how Dad would give him four or five 22 shells and send him out to bring in rabbits. It was expected that he would not waste shells. Seldom did he return without a rabbit for each shell. When there were no shells, or to conserve what they had, they used sling shots or traps.

When hunting anything, they always carried a length of barb wire. If a rabbit ran into a hole, they would make a barb wire crank, run it into the hole and twist it around until the rabbit became entangled in the barbs, then pull it out. There were times when rabbit meat was all they had.

Depression Farm Life

Living on a farm during the Depression had its advantages. The garden was a life saver. Potatoes, beans, tomatoes, onions, corn, and melons were available most of the time. But there were staples

that could not be grown. Flour, sugar, spices and the like had to be bought. Some of it was supplied by the NRA (National Recovery Administration) through Paul Petit's store in Celina. Cash was not always available, so the family had an account with him. When Dad got paid, he made a trip to Petit's store right away. That is if he could get into town. Dad owned a 1925 model Dodge, but when it rained the roads were impassible, except by horse and wagon.

Depression Entertainment

Americans looked for entertainment that helped them forget hard times. They went to movies and listened to the radio. They could go to the "show" and see a double feature for a dime. The shows were lighthearted, almost always avoiding conflict and discontent. The themes were love stories, glamour, comedy, and adventure. *Gone with the Wind*, filmed in the early thirties was Hollywood's all-time big money maker.

Even more people listened to the radio. News was important, but comedy programs, like *Amos and Andy* were very popular. It is understandable from this dialogue, “Andy, is you been keepin’ yo’eye on de stock market? Lightnin: Nosah, I ain’t never seed it. Andy, well, de stock market crashed. Lightnin: Anybody git hurt?” It is estimated that seventy-four percent of the listening audience was tuned to *Amos ‘n’ Andy*. One of my favorites went on the radio in 1930, *The Lone Ranger*. I can still hear the way it came on the air, “Out of the West comes a fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of dust, and hearty Hi-yo Silver, the Lone Ranger rides again.”

Farm to Celina

From an audio tape left by Bernice, I concluded that Mother and Dad moved from the farm to Celina the later part of 1933 or early 1934. The house was on Kidd Street, an area of the town known as “Rat Row.” Not a very desirable place. Before too long, they moved to a relatively new place, gray with white trim. This may have been the house Bernice talked about in the audio tape.

She related that she, Eldred and Bryant moved into a three-room house with Dad and his family. Shortly afterward, Daphne was born (May 28, 1936) which made eleven people living in the house. This is likely the place we lived in when I was born.

At one of the homes in Celina, there was a “mean little so and so” who lived next door. Mother was on the porch sewing one afternoon when this brat slipped up with the water hose and soaked her good. Another time she looked out the window to see him chasing me around the house with a butcher knife. Mother heard me yelling and came out to find him on top of me; his thumbs in my mouth stretching my mouth open until it was bleeding. His fingernails tore into my cheeks at the same time.

Bolivar Drilling Company

About 1936, Dad went to Bolivar to drill a well for the Bolivar Drilling Company. The place was no more than a country store and post office about a mile from the well-site. Eldred, Sonny, and Glen worked with Dad under the same arrangement.

Sonny worked with them when he was not on the highway.

I'll get to Bolivar in the next letter.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben

The well at Bolivar was a real “gusher.” We have pictures showing it blowing oil more than fifty feet over the derrick.

Bolivar “Gusher”

It took five days to cap it. The sound could be heard for miles. Some workers temporarily lost their hearing as a result of the noise. Photographers

from the Fort Worth Star Telegram took pictures which were published on the front page.

Dad and the crew were invited to Fort Worth to celebrate at one of the large hotels. It must have been a high point in his career, but knowing him, I think he probably really felt out of place. His mind was more on the benefits of his leases. But that did not last long. In a few months it was found out that the leases were “clouded,” that is no good. In some way, Isham, Carlisle and Tiner, had fraudulently assigned leases to Dad and his crew. The recorded leases looked good, but Dad was unable to take possession of any of them. It went to court and two or three men went to prison for twenty years for their part in the crime. Those who took leases instead of wages were without compensation.

Celina Visit 1989

I visited Celina in the Summer of 1989. It hasn't changed much. Downtown buildings are, for the most part, the same ones that were there when I was born.

The town is built around a square. The court house, post office, theater, service station, church and other buildings, all face the square.

The square was a bustling place of activity on Saturdays, when all the farmers came to town. Glen was for a time, part of the entertainment. He recalls farmers and towns people gathering on the square to watch and bet on young would-be boxers. Glen was exceptionally good, but all he got was the attention and a few cents.

The remains of the old grain mill where Burb worked and the theater where Sonny operated the projector are still there as are several old homes, a few churches and schools.

Pretty Boy Floyd

An interesting site is a service station that sits at an angle on the corner as you leave the highway and drive into town. When Sonny was a teenager, he was at that station when Pretty Boy Floyd drove in for gas. He was a notorious bank robber who operated out of Oklahoma, but traveled in Texas to

hide. He didn't have a problem finding a place because he robbed banks whose irresponsibility had ruined many a poor farmer. He was from a poor rural community himself and people admire him. He moved freely in the farm communities.

Pentecostal Church in Celina

When our family arrived in Celina, there were no Pentecostal churches, but there were believers. They wanted a Pentecostal church. Dad helped organize a church there in a downtown store building on the square. It later moved to a location south of town. I am sorry to say that the story of the Celina church died when Mother, Dad and Bernice passed away.

Dust Storms 1930s

On November 11, 1933, a dust storm covered the land from the Texas panhandle to the Canadian border. The Saturday Evening Post described it: "By midmorning a gale was blowing cold and black. By noon it was blacker than night...It was a wall of dirt...it could penetrate the lungs until one coughed up black. If a person was outside, he tied his handkerchief around his face. Inside soaked

sheets and towels were stuffed around the windows. When the wind died...it was a different world—no fields, only sand drifting into mounds and eddies...In the farmyard, fences, machinery, and trees were gone.”

Glen remembers walking a horse down a country road, when a wind came up without warning. In no time the dirt began to swirl through the fields and down the road. There was no place to hide, so he laid down on the ground behind the horse until it blew over.

The dust storm catastrophe and the financial ruin of the Depression caused many people to head west. They moved to wherever they could find work. Our family moved, but not that far. I’ll talk about that next.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben

In my last letter I wrote that our family, like so many others, moved trying to find work and a better life.

Tired of Oil Business

Dad was discouraged with the oil business. He started to work in the oil fields early, perhaps even before he was eighteen. Sonny seems to remember him saying he was a driller before he and Mother went to New Mexico to homestead. If that is true, by 1937, he had been in the oil fields about twenty-one years not counting the three years in New Mexico. He made pretty good money at times, but he was always away from home. He was now forty-two years old and he thought it was time to do something else.

Littlefield

For reasons I have not been able to determine, he moved his family to Littlefield, a small town in west Texas—a distance of over 400 miles. It was probably in 1937. There were seven of us in the family at that time, but only five made the move: Glen, Toy, Burb, Billy and me (Jackie). Sonny was working for H.B. Zachary Construction and was on the road by this time. Bernice and Eldred remained in Celina until late 1937 or 1938.

Gattis Farm

When we arrived in Littlefield, we moved into a small house in back of Mr. Gattis' home. No one in the family can remember if we rented or if we worked to pay for it. We did pick cotton while there. Dad found a job with the McNess Company, selling coffee, spices, etc. door-to-door, much like the Jewel Tea Co. I can't in my wildest imagination picture my Dad, the old oil field roughneck, selling from door-to-door.

Glen went to work for Charlie Toushay, a farmer and businessman. He helped on the farm as well as in the shop where he modified and repaired V8 engines for water wells.

Storm at Littlefield

At some point, we moved to another old, run-down farm house, sitting on a small rise in the middle of a large corn field. One day a storm came up—lots of lightning, thunder and rain. Mother and us children were alone. Strong winds blew rain in through the broken windows. It was really frightening to a little guy. Mother took all of the children to a cellar under the house and lit candles. We were scared as the cellar had not been in use

for a long time. Spider webs were everywhere. We thought there might be snakes. The candles kept going out. It seemed like an eternity. Then mother caught sight of Glen coming up the road in a Model A pickup. She was relieved and so were we. Glen was a hero to us. Many times we talked about him driving through the storm to see that we were OK.

Billy My Hero

I had another hero about that time—Billy. He was about seven years older than I, but we were together most of the time. I think Mother expected him to take care of me while she worked. One day, we went fishing for crawdads. Our favorite place was on a little stream just where the farm road crossed a small stone bridge. Under the bridge was a sizable pool of water. We used to bait our hooks with bacon and wait for the crawdads to bite. At times we caught several, but at other times we did not do so good.

This day I remember was not so good. We decide to leave, but before we left we baited the hooks and pushed the poles into the soft mud to

hold them. We planned to come back later to see what we had caught. As we started to leave, my pole came loose and began to float out into the pond. I reached for it and fell into the muddy water. I panicked. I vividly recall trying to climb the bank to get above the surface. I clawed at the sides like a wild man until Billy reached down and pulled me out. Even today I can experience that feeling when I get into water over my head.

Move to Lamesa

We all boarded Dad's green, 1931A Ford Pickup for the trip. I know we did not have much to move, and we may have made more than one trip, but it was quite an event under any circumstances. Five people in a pickup truck with all their possessions would have been a real feat. We may have had a trailer.

One of my earliest memories could have possibly taken place on this move. What I remember is a trip in a Model A pickup. Several of us were riding in the back when the engine compartment caught on fire. Dad stopped quickly. Mother made sure all of us got out while Dad and

one of the boys threw sand on the engine to put out the fire.

Business Partners

He asked Glen to look after the family in Littlefield while he tried to get the business going. His plan was to have Glen become partners with him as soon as the business could support it. Dad spent a lot of time in Lamesa, but came home once in a while. I remember watching him get off the bus down at the highway and making his way through the fields to the house on the hill. I looked forward to the candy he always brought.

Dad's Service Station

By 1938, Dad had moved the family to Lamesa. He opened a service station, radiator shop, and small market combination on the Lubbock Highway, west of where it became Dallas Avenue on the east side of town. I have several memories of the location.

I had a dog when Dad owned that station. He contracted rabies and Dad had to kill him. I remember he led him out behind a haystack where he hit him in the head with a ball-peen hammer. I

was heart-broken. Then several days later, the dog appeared at the back door apparently cured of the rabies, but weak and hungry. We kept him for some time after that.

Scrap Iron

In 1938, gathering and selling scrap iron was a big thing. One day Billy and I went out to look for iron. We found several small stacks of it along the railroad, not far from home. We took it to a dealer who became curious. Come to find out he had gathered the iron and stacked it right where we found it. He gave us a few cents for bringing it in, but our dreams were shattered.

Permatex or Blood?

It was this first place of business that Dad had an accident that he thought was the end. He was working under a car when the jack gave way and the car came crashing down on his head and shoulder. One arm was pinned above his head and the other to his side. He couldn't move. He felt an excruciating pain in his head, then something warm oozing down through his hair and across his forehead. He knew it was serious, the big car, the

pain, the blood, he almost passed out thinking about it, but couldn't give up. He squirmed and twisted his 200 plus pounds until he was on his back and had one arm free. He raised his free arm to assess the extent of his injury and wipe the blood from his forehead. To his surprise, the "warm blood" was Permatex, a glue he was using to seal a gasket. He laughed to himself and wiggled out from the car.

I'll pick up there in the next letter.
Papa Jackie

I Remember the Cafe

Funny some of the things one remembers at certain places. For example, when we had the café, I recall an incident that could have had an entirely different outcome. The café was on a main street almost on the square, and an alley ran down one side. Billy and I were up to no good one day just off that alley between two buildings. The space was just barely large enough to squeeze into. But we managed to do it and light up a cigarette. No sooner had Billie struck the match than a friend of Dad's walked past. He was horrified that we were playing with matches in such a dangerous place. We could have burned down the whole business district. Of course, he took us to Dad who was at the café. Being the little "innocent one" I got away with a scolding, but not Billy. Dad had a razor strap in those days he used to sharpen his razor. It was actually two belts fastened together at one end on a swivel-type mechanism. One was a rough one for the initial sharpening and the other was a fine one for the finishing touches. They were about three inches wide and eighteen or so inches long. Dad knew how to use that razor strap to sharpen

our attention. Billy's attention got sharpened but good.

One of the family gave me a leather braided key chain. I was playing around with it in front of the café when an older boy came by and offered to trade me a chain for it. It looked like a good exchange so I did it. I ran home to show what a good deal I had. I was excited, but then it changed. I was laughed at because I had traded a good leather chain for one made of paper clips. I remember that event well.

I'll tell you about a time I was really a bad boy. This happened at Lamesa too, when we had the café. Messing around at home one day, I began to aggravate a stray dog. He got all he could take and bit me. I came crying to Daddy. He went to the sheriff and borrowed a shotgun and we went looking for the dog. Dad thought it might have rabies. I liked the dog and didn't want Dad to kill it, so I pointed out another dog instead of the one that bit me. Dad chased him down the road a little ways and killed the innocent dog. I felt bad for a

long time after that but never told Dad what I had done until I was a young adult.

Bad Boy! Bad Boy!

I was a bad boy again when we lived in Lamesa. We lived down the alley from H.L and Toy. Mother needed some matches so she sent me down to Toy's house to borrow some. On the way back I struck a match and threw it to one side, then I struck another and threw it on the other side. When I came by the haystack, I thought I would throw one close but not into it. I missed. It went right into the side of the dry hay. I ran home, but didn't say a word. In just a short time the firemen came to put it out. No one ever thought this innocent little guy could do a thing like that. I didn't tell a soul for years.

Electrified Dad

I may have the sequence out of order, but I think that after the café experience Dad opened another radiator shop, a wet messy business. He worked on a wooden platform but he still got wet. One time he reached up to turn on a light that hung over the vat. Being wet and making contact with

the brass light socket was a serious mistake. He couldn't let go of it. Glen says he remembers knocking the wire away from Dad with a 2x4. His hands sustained serious burns.

Gulf Dealership

About 1940, a Gulf dealership became available directly across the street from the first station Dad opened on Dallas Street. It was a better location, had more space, and a well-respected logo, Gulf. Dad was pleased. He moved to the new location and began to build a small market inventory. Glen recalls that he also had three used cars that he had repaired and put up for sale. Now, Dad was the proprietor of a service station, a radiator shop, a small market, and the beginning of a used car lot. I often wondered why he put together such a combination.

It is unclear exactly when the family moved to Lamesa. While we were in Littlefield, Glen was not married, but he had already met Tessie. Apparently, he came to Lamesa for a while to work with Dad and then went back to Littlefield, married (March 1940), then returned to Lamesa.

I remember the location of the Gulf station. It was on the south side of Dallas Street. The first lot was vacant but Dad installed a sign on it, near the corner. I remember the sign because one day while playing near it, I stepped on a broken soda pop bottle that slammed up against my ankle causing a deep gash. The half-moon scar is still there. “Soda pop” was the common term for cold drinks in those days.

Across the street from our service station, was the CCC, Civilian Conservation Corps. This was a government program started in 1935 to help young people find work during the Depression. South of the station, down the street from the CCC camp was the Church of God, our place of worship.

Trouble Trees

At the back of the station, attached to the same building, was our living quarters. What it looked like inside escapes me, probably just a small apartment. Outside the door were several trees where we played. Cars were often parked there as well. One of my favorite pastimes was jumping from a car fender to a tree limb, swinging a few

times, then dropping to the ground. One time I grasped the limb just enough to swing me up to a prone position and I lost what grip I had. I fell flat on my back across a piece of pipe. It knocked the wind out of me. Mother came to the door about that time to call me for dinner and saw me standing unable get my breath. It scared her to death.

There was another unforgettable thing about those trees. Dad parked the cars he was trying to sell in front of them facing the road. One day some black children were near the cars messing around so I went out to tell them to move on. I must have spent too long talking to one of the black girls because I remember being teased about making friends with the “Right” girl. “Right” was a derogatory term for a black person.

Prejudice was common. Outside McKinney a sign read, “Nigger don’t let the sun go down on you here.” At Sherman, a black man was in jail awaiting trial for raping a white woman. Vigilantes demanded the sheriff release him to be hanged. When the sheriff wouldn’t do it, they stormed the jail, setting it on fire. And prevented firemen from

putting it out by chopping the fire hoses. The black man died.

Gulf Station Fun

The Gulf station was fun. I remember the candy rack and the soda pop box. The ice box was bright red, some white and blue, with the big letters, COCA COLA written on all sides and top. My job was to keep it full.

The job I liked best was pumping gas. The pump stood real tall and had a large glass tank at the top. Gas flowed into the car by gravity. Near the bottom and on one side was a lever attached to a hand pump that brought the gas from an underground tank into the glass tank. The attendant (Me), pumped the lever until the glass tank was full. I think it was about ten gallons. There was an indexed line up the side of the glass tank to measure how much gas was delivered to the vehicle. Every time a car filled up, I ran to the pump and huffed and puffed until the glass tank was filled again.

I think that is about enough for now.

Papa Jackie

B

y 1940, Dad's family was getting smaller. Bernice and Eldred Sellers were married in Celina on February 12, 1932. They had two children who were born in Celina, Bryant, born February 1, 1933, and Daphne, born May 28, 1936. Carl was born in Lamesa on October 8, 1938.

The Way Things Were

Sonny was working for H.B. Zackery, a Construction Company that built highways throughout Texas, Florida, and into Mexico. Burb married Demia Baldrige at Prosper December 31, 1938. His daughter, Norma Gail, was born in Lamesa, October 6, 1940. Glen married Tessie Miner in Littlefield on March 30, 1940. Glennette was born to them in Lamesa on July 17, 1942. Toy and H.L. Green were married in Lamesa. That left Mother, Dad, Billy and myself at home.

Preparations For War

War was spreading in Europe. Germany had captured the Netherlands, Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway, France, Belgium, and bombing England was under way. The United States could not remain neutral because of pressure from her European friends. By 1940, we began to prepare for war. In September, the Selective Service Act was passed, which allowed peacetime conscription of men for military service. In October 1940, 16,400,000 men registered for the draft, by November training had begun.

Sonny Drafted

Sonny was drafted in March 1941. He was inducted into the Army at Fort Bliss, in El Paso, Texas. I remember one of the saddest things to happen to our family. When he was drafted, Sonny had a Crosley convertible; a cute, stylish little car from England. He drove it to El Paso. Dad, another person, whom I don't recall, and I had to go pick it up. We returned it to Lamesa where it sat outside, under the trees, near the station. A constant reminder of Sonny's absence.

One day, a postman's truck pulled up to our house and dropped off a large trunk—all Sonny's personal items. I remember Mother going into the house and falling on her knees at the couch. She wept bitterly. When Dad came in, it was the same thing. From that day on, Mother and Dad knelt to pray every evening. We had a cat at that time. She inevitably crawled upon Dad's neck and shoulders during those prayers.

Sonny moved several times during his first months of service, but was eventually sent to join General George Patton's army that was forming in the California desert, probably in November 1941. Then on December 7, the unexpected happened.

Day of Infamy

Sunday, December 7, 1941, Day of Infamy, President Roosevelt called it. Japan attacked the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor. A few days later, Germany declared war on the U.S.—involvement in World War II was underway. A tragic event, lasting almost four years, changed the way the United States related to the world.

Sonny, Our Hero

Mother and Dad wanted to be close to Sonny, so when he was transferred to California, they decided to move. In early 1941, Dad sold the Gulf station. Dad, Mother, Billy, Toy and I made the trip in a two-tone, yellow and rust colored, 1937 Pontiac. Later, Glen, Burb, and Bernice joined us.

The California story is a different one altogether. I'll begin that in the next letter.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben

I have been unable to determine exactly when we left Texas, but it was sometime in August 1942. I was eight years old.

I Remember

I remember some of the trip. One thing about the car stands out pretty clear. It was the two water bags we carried, one on the driver's side rearview mirror and another on the Pontiac bird in front of the radiator. Those water bags were important because of the desert travel and lack of service stations along the way. The car was loaded down. Dad had built a rack for the top, where almost everything we owned was tied down. Five of us were inside the car so there was little room for any large items. You can see we didn't bring much with us, poor folks we were.

I remember the long, twisting, narrow road in Arizona that was called Route 66. We could see it

twisting down the mountain for miles. At one point we saw headlights from a car that had gone over the edge and dropped several hundred feet. A little further on we saw cars stopped helping people lying beside the road. We assumed they were people from the wrecked car.

Arrival in Needles

We arrived in Needles, a desert community where Sonny was stationed with Patton's Army. They were on maneuvers, training for combat duty in North Africa. The whole desert area was taken over by the military. We could drive Route 66, but had to be careful of army vehicles. We traveled at night part of the way and could not use our lights because of black out regulation.

When we arrived at the desert post where Sonny was stationed, he was in formation not far from the parking lot. He recognized the car immediately and "broke ranks," Dad said. Of course, that was a "no, no," and he was reprimanded for it. In spite of breaking regulations, he was given a pass to help us get settled in our new land.

Narod

We drove on to Ontario, finally arriving at a place called Narod. I do not know where the name came from or if the whole area there was called that. We stopped at the Narod Apartments, located on the corner of First Street and Central Avenue. The area is now part of the city of Montclair. It's likely others of the family or friends were living there already. It was an old, two-story apartment building. We rented an apartment on the northeast corner of the second floor. We later moved to the ground floor, next to Bernice and Eldred. At one point in time, Glen and Tessie, Burb and Demia, and Bernice and Eldred lived in those apartments. Toy and H.L. lived across the street in what was a service station.

Kaiser Steel Mill

I am not sure how long we lived there. But it wasn't long until Dad found work at the Kaiser Steel Mill in Fontana. He was fortunate to be there just as they began to expand for the war effort. Kaiser chose the location because it was inland far enough to escape shelling by submarines and close

enough to their source of iron ore at Eagle Mountain, out in the desert. The steel mill was a major source of steel for the Liberty ships that Kaiser was famous for. Dad took a lot of pride in that job. That's where he began his career as a millwright.

Christmas Tragedy

It happened at Narod on Christmas Eve, 1942. Bernice and Eldred were preparing for Christmas morning. They had purchased gifts for the children and stored them in an enclave that jutted out over the front door some six or seven feet. Eldred lost his balance and fell through the sheetrock to the side walk in front of the apartment. He landed on his back across a wooden milk crate. It broke his back. I can remember the ambulance coming. Eldred did not want to go to the hospital and held on to the door frame. It took some convincing to get him to go because he wanted to be with the family on Christmas. He was getting better then something happened. He tried to move in bed, a

blood clot broke loose and went to his heart. He left Bernice and three children.

Troubled Billy

While we lived at Narod, Billy, who was about fifteen years old, started giving Mother and Dad some real problems. He didn't want to go to school and was truant often. He began to run around with Don White, who didn't have a good reputation. Eventually he got into trouble. Don worked for a chicken farmer for a while, but he was fired or he quit. He and Billy decided they would steal some chickens from the man and sell them. During the theft, Don lost his cap. The farmer recognized it and filed a complaint with the police. Don and Billy went before a judge who released them to the custody of their parents, with the warning that if they ever came before him again, he would put them in jail. That incident didn't go over well with Dad. Billy came home late that evening and Dad was waiting for him. The rest of us were asleep, but I awoke to see Dad using the razor strap on Billy. I was frightened and let out some kind of cry. Dad said, "Shut-up and go back to sleep!"

Years later dad said that was a big mistake. He asked Billy several times to forgive him for it. All he said was, “It was something I needed. I just would not listen.”

Life on Francis Street

The salary was good at Kaiser, so we soon moved to a house at 3812 Francis Street, out of the city limits, in San Bernardino county. It was an old house, not large, but much better than the one we were living in. It had a good size porch where we often passed the time of day. I remember my mother sitting there rocking and crocheting. There was a large living room with a rock fireplace in the center. Two over-stuffed chairs faced the fireplace. The dining room was on the east side of the living room. There were three bedrooms and a bath. Bernice and her children moved in with us so it was a little crowded, but that was the way it had to be. Families took care of each other then. The place was large enough for a garden and chickens.

We were in the Chino School district. Bryant and I started school there but I don't recall anything about it. I do remember, however,

standing with Mother one morning watching Bryant walk to the bus stop about a quarter of a mile over on East End. He was twisting on the soles of his shoes as he walked. Mother's comment was something like, "Doesn't he know that wears out shoes?"

Odd Neighbors

A Portuguese family who lived next door had two sons. Every day they were required to pull Bermuda grass out of a field. No way could they have pulled it all, but the parents were from the old country. Work discipline was a great value to them, so they worked, even if it was "make work."

There was a Mexican boy who lived on the corner—a happy-go-lucky kid. His pride and joy was a horse. He came by every day on his horse. He was really nice and we talked a lot. But I never rode his horse. His house was in bad shape. The father was gone most of the time and they had little money.

Pleasant and Bad Dreams

At the house on Francis, I had a lot of bad dreams and nightmares. They were very

frequent—same dream night after night. At the entrance of the driveway, there was a cattail plant; tall and dense. I dreamed of bears coming out of that plant and chasing me home.

A pleasant memory was going to Dad's bedroom on Saturday morning while Mother fixed breakfast. We talked and memorized scriptures.

Bryant and I

One day Bryant made me very angry. I can't remember why, but I responded by calling him an SOB. Where it came from, I don't know. Anyway, he told Mother, and I was called before the jury—Mother, Dad, and Bernice. The word was explained and it made me feel like I had committed the unpardonable sin. My punishment was to apologize to Bernice. I did and Bernice, with big tears in her eyes, hugged me up real tight.

Misc. Francis Street Incidents

I found an airplane in the street in front of a house. I brought it home, but had to take it back and apologize. I didn't think I stole it, but Dad said I did.

Bernice worked at the Consolidated Laundry—a tiring job and low wages. She came home at night exhausted. Mother took care of the children.

When Sonny came home on leave he brought a supply of candy from the Post Exchange (PX), mostly almond Hershey bars. And he brought a lot of fire crackers. The army used them to simulate battlefield conditions. We used them for fun.

We had lived on Francis Street for about a year when Dad got an opportunity to buy a small house in Pomona. I'll tell you about that later.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben

New Homes in World War II made profound changes in the American way of life. Millions of people left for military service, others, like the Scott family, left for new homes in places far different from what they had known.

Changes in the Way of Life

More than 27 million people migrated during the war. Families swarmed into defense towns where there were few school rooms, parks, playgrounds,

hospitals, restaurants. Most often there were not enough homes. You see, employment was down during the Depression, but with the advent of WWII, the labor force arose to 18 million people.

Even though people had more money, the nationwide rationing of goods hurt. People had grown used to going everywhere by car, but gasoline was rationed. Rubber was used extensively by the military and places from where it was imported were under siege by foreign powers, so tires were rationed. In January 1942, an Emergency Price Control Act was passed which placed a ceiling on prices and rents. It limited the goods we could buy. Cars, shoes, sugar, coffee, meat, and other items could be purchased only with government-issued coupons. So, people often traded one kind of coupon for another.

Black Market

During this time men's trousers began to be made without cuffs, it conserved material. Women could not buy nylon stockings. Cigarettes were hard to find and expensive. An extensive black market in most goods became a lucrative business,

except when you got caught. I remember my Dad going to a friend's house and buying pork that he had slaughtered in his backyard. That was illegal.

Victory Gardens

Families were encouraged to set out what was called "Victory Gardens." By 1944, they produced 40 percent of their fresh vegetables. In the media we were asked to collect metal, particularly copper, zinc, and brass for the war effort.

Bond Campaigns

Bond campaigns were a big thing. Even children in grade school were pushed to buy stamps. When their stamp book was full, turn it in for a war bond. It was considered patriotic and you were looked down on if you didn't help the war effort in that way. I remember standing in front of the school on the sidewalk pledging allegiance to the flag and bringing money up to the desk to buy war stamps. Pins and cards were distributed to all the students, they read, "I AM A 100% AMERICAN." I had the card for many years, it may still be around somewhere.

"Kilroy Was Here"

A curious thing happened in late 1942. No one seems to know how it began, but the words, “Kilroy Was Here,” were everywhere. It was accompanied by a wide-eyed, bald-headed face appearing over a fence. Everything below the nose, except for the fingers and hands were gripping the top of the fence. Some people believed it meant to show that everybody, even those you couldn’t see, were “here” doing something for the war effort.

Blackouts

I remember the extensive “blackouts.” They were ordered to diminish the glow of the skyline. Light outlined large buildings allowing submarines offshore to see a target.

Japanese submarines were seen off the California coast several times. One time in February 1942, one of them shelled an oil refinery in Santa Barbara. In June the Japanese fired on a military base at Fort Stevens, Oregon. In September they attempted to start a forest fire by bombing a forest in Oregon. German submarines entered water off Louisiana and mined the entrance

to the Mississippi River. We didn't have a lot of damage during the war, the potential was there.

Japanese Concentration Camps

Because Japan was a threat, it was feared those of Japanese ancestry might become spies or saboteurs. From 1942 to 1944, more than 110,000 Japanese were taken from their homes and placed in concentration camps away from populated areas. Their homes, cars, everything, were confiscated. Several thousand young Japanese men volunteered for military duty and they did a commendable job. Not until 1993 did the United States reimburse the descendants of these people for their losses. It was a controversial act when it happened as was the reimbursement.

Zoot Suiters

Young Mexicans, called "Zoot Suiters" were active when we came to California. They were delinquent youth who preyed on military men. They dressed in big, tight-cuffed pants and oversized coats. They hid motorcycle or bike chains in the baggy attire to use in fighting. In Los Angeles there were riots and gang fights among the

servicemen and Zoot Suiters. They were dressed and on the streets everywhere, always in groups.

Blue and Gold Stars

In many windows you would see one or more blue or gold stars. The blue star meant a son or daughter from that home was serving in the military. A gold star signified one killed in action.

OK! That's enough for now.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben

It sure seems like Dad moved a lot. I became aware of it when I started working on these letters. He never seemed to me to be a person on the move, but he was always trying to better himself. That was definitely the case when we moved to Pomona.

1472 E. Phillips

He had the opportunity to buy this property for \$4200 dollars. It was a small house, on a large lot— an acre or more. He recorded A Joint Tenancy Deed on August 30, 1943.

It was definitely a simple house—living room, kitchen, two bedrooms, and a bath. The garage seemed bigger than the house. Further back on the lot were two chicken houses, all in good shape.

It was situated in the southeast portion of the city, a short distance to the county line. A flood control channel ran down the east side of the property and was often full in the rainy season. We had a lot of fun playing in the channel. Now, it is all cement, but then it was all dirt.

Occupants

Bernice and her three children lived with us while she worked at Consolidated Laundry and Dad at Kaiser. Mother took care of the children who went to Alcott Elementary School about a mile and a half away.

New Activities

Shortly after we moved, Dad bought a few chickens, a lot of rabbits, three hogs, and a cow.

He expected the children to take care of them. At one time we had 400 rabbits. I learned how to take care of rabbits. Bryant and Daphne took care of the other animals. Seems like Mother ended up doing the milking as we could never get it all.

Those hogs were fun too. They were kept in the last chicken barn, farthest from the house. Bryant and I would ride them like a horse, but we seldom stayed on long.

We had a mean Cornish Game rooster. If you turned your back on him he would attack. I know by experience. I still have a scar on the calf of my leg where he spurred me good. He tried it one time when Sonny was on leave. Sonny picked up a stick and threw it at him, catching him right under the beak. That was the end of his escapades.

Our Dogs

Over time we had four dogs. A brown and white Cocker Spaniel and a solid black one. The next door neighbor raised turkeys. He didn't like our dogs much because they barked. Arriving home from school one day I found the black Cocker Spaniel dead--poisoned. We always

thought he did it. Then we had a big Saint Bernard. I don't know where he came from. We didn't have him long though. He was chained to a tree in front of the house with the kind of chain used for cows. He broke it and was gone.

The last dog we had was a Boston Bull Terrier, a cute little black and white streak of lightning. He was really great. One day when we were going to the dairy for milk, he was running beside us. When he spotted a young bull tied in a pasture, he headed straight for him. He went under the fence and before we could say don't, he grabbed the bull by the neck and threw him to the ground. Then he turned loose and trotted jubilantly back to us. I guess he wanted us to know just what he was capable of doing.

Daphne Injured

Daphne had a serious injury when we lived on Phillips. Leaving for school one morning she decided to hitch a ride on a van driven by our "mean old neighbor." As he was driving off, she jumped for the back of the truck and missed. She must have come down on something sharp as she

sustained a deep gash just under her eye. It took a lot of stitches to close it and today you can still see residuals of it.

Carl's Accident

Carl was also the victim of an accident while we lived on Phillips. This time by my Mother. She was carrying a container of boiling water from the stove to the sink. I believe she was canning vegetables. Carl came running through the house and ran into her. She spilled the boiling water on his head. All his hair came out and was one big scab for a long time. Mother was really hurt.

Ride a Bicycle?

It was on Phillips that I learned to ride a bicycle. I remember one Sunday morning after I had dressed for church, that I was out front riding. Mother and Dad came out to get in the car and called for me to come. I just had to show them how I could ride without holding on to the handle bars. They agreed to watch for just a minute. That was

all I needed to fall flat on my face and tear up a good pair of pants. Dad wasn't very impressed.

Jones Family

The Jones family lived just up the street from us. Charles, LeRoy, Donald, and Bobby were the boys. Dorothy and Juanita were the girls. We spent much time together. An older daughter, Katie, also lived with them. She was a divorced mother of a young daughter, Linda. Sonny met her at the fairgrounds where he was stationed for a while. They went together until she passed away from leukemia. Sonny and Katie took all of us kids to the beach quite often.

Unfinished House

A little further up the street was a house that was never finished. It was built by an older woman who had been working on it for seven years, even when we lived there. I remember we thought that was a real feat for a woman. I drove by there a few weeks ago (August 1994). The house is still there.

Alcott School

Alcott Elementary School was south of Phillips on Town Avenue. It consisted of a large elementary classroom building and a much smaller kindergarten room. I remember Mrs. Arckle, who is still there.

One day, while she was telling a story about atrocities taking place in the war, I said something that seemed disrespectful of those who were being tortured. Boy, did she get angry! I found myself sitting in front of the kindergarten classroom. She said if I was going to act like a kindergartner I would be treated like one. Oh! Did that hurt!

Alcott was a multiracial school and we didn't have racial problems. Mexicans, Blacks and Whites all went to class together and played together. I had many friends from both groups. I delivered the Progress Bulletin newspaper in both the Black and Mexican sections of town; never any problem.

Right on the northeast corner of Phillips and Town was a market. When Mother didn't have time to fix a lunch, she gave us 25 cents. We would go by the market and buy what we wanted. I

always wanted a nutritious meal, so I usually bought a package of Fig Newtons for 15 cents and saved the dime for a candy bar on the way home.

Conned at Alcott

Oh yes, there was something else about the kindergarten classroom. Somehow, I got “conned” into taking guitar. I don’t know for how long. Anyway, I went long enough to learn a few things, just a few, mind you. And then one day there was some kind of contest held in the kindergarten room. Again I got “conned” into participating. It was a calamity as far as I was concerned. I felt like the world had come to an end and I was all alone. That ended my guitarist career.

Death of President Roosevelt

The unexpected death of President Roosevelt on April 12, 1945, stunned the nation. He had given much to the country and his death came at a time of great triumph. American armies and navies were at the gateways to Berlin and on the islands near the Japanese mainland. A meeting to frame a United Nations charter was scheduled for later in

the month. The war would soon be over, but he did not live to see the national celebration.

V.E. Day!

But I was there! I remember the day very well, May 7, 1945. V.E. Day! Victory in Europe, it was called. I was on my way home from a friend's house, a short distance from my home on Phillips Street. People came rushing out of their homes shouting, yelling, jumping and running all over the place. Mother was standing in the door, silently crying. I did not know what had happened. Then Mother told me, "The war is over...our boys will be coming home." Then, I joined the celebration.

The total war was not really over. It was just the war in Europe. The war in the Pacific was still going on, but it was rapidly coming to a close.

The First Atomic Bomb

The first American atomic bomb program was started at the University of California, Berkley in 1940. By December 1942, the first controlled nuclear explosion occurred. Then in the Spring of

1943, at Los Alamos, New Mexico, scientists began working on the first atomic bomb. On July 16, 1945, the first one was detonated at Alamogordo, New Mexico.

At that time, President Truman had to make a momentous decision; use the bomb or not. Some congressmen argued that a public demonstration would be sufficient warning to the Japanese. Others claimed it would not persuade them to surrender. To them defeat was the highest form of dishonor. Some contended that an invasion alone would cause more casualties on both sides. Finally, the fatal decision was made.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki

After a final warning, on August 6, 1945, a single atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Hiroshima killing 68,000 people. On August 9, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, another 38,000 people wiped out. But it was not until August 15, that the Japanese offer to surrender came. On August 5, a weary America celebrated V-J Day, victory over Japan. At last, war was ended all over the world. On September 2, 1945,

the USS Missouri sailed into Tokyo Bay. On board was one of America's best, General Douglas MacArthur. He officially accepted the Japanese surrender.

In 1992, shortly before the USS Missouri was decommissioned, I was privileged to go aboard with the last group of visitors. The spot where the surrender documents were signed is marked by a well-polished brass plaque on the wooden deck.

That about takes care of my memories of the Phillips Street episode. I'll take up there on our next journey.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben

In June 1945, Dad became a fireman at the Ontario Military Air Base. He was in fact a civilian working for the army. On July 4, he

received his permit to drive a fire truck. I heard him say many times that was the most enjoyable job he ever had. But in November 1945, he was notified that December 15, would be his last day. The end of the war brought a big reduction in civilian personnel. Dad renewed membership in the millwright union in San Bernardino and began that kind of work.

Our New Home

Dad did not lose much time. On December 19, 1945, he purchased a half acre of a walnut grove. He planned to build a home by himself and he did. It took him several months and much of the time he was incapacitated with back problems. But the house still stands at 480 East Grand in Pomona.

While waiting for the house to be built, we lived in a small, two-room shack on the property of a long-time resident of the area. Everyone called him Grandpa Sanders. It was about a half block from the building site.

The house was constructed of cement blocks. I don't recall the floor footage, but it was rather large. It didn't have many rooms, just a monstrous

joint living room and dining room combination; a big, big kitchen; two bedrooms and a bath. Sonny and I occupied one bedroom, Mother and Dad the other. There was a garage at the back and another smaller building where we kept rabbit food and garden implements.

Mother's Garden

Mother's garden was on the back of the lot. I thought that was the most beautiful place around. She raised every vegetable you could think of and more. My favorite were the onions (I think). I remember going out to the garden with a piece of bread, wrapping it around a green onion and gulping it down. She had strawberries and figs too. These were made into jams and jellies. Our pantry was always full of vegetables and fruits.

Water rights came with our property so we had to irrigate the walnut trees and garden every time water was turned into our system. If I recall it was about twice a week during the growing season. I had to get up early on those days to help before I went to school.

Rabbits Too

We had rabbits too. Not as many as on the Phillips property, but enough. I had to dress rabbits every afternoon after school. I carefully stretched the hides, dried them, and sold them to a fur dealer. Money from the furs was my wages.

Newspaper Delivery

It was on Grand Ave. that I began my first newspaper delivery job. My route covered about ten miles of an area bounded by Garey Avenue on the east, White Avenue on the west, Eighth Street on the north, and Franklin Street on the south; all my route in minority neighborhoods. In those days there were no racial problems. People were extremely nice. Older Mexican women would bake cookies and give them to me when I was collecting each month.

I was fired from that job though. Lost my temper one time at the printing office. The supervisor let other carriers go in front of me to get their papers while I was messing around. That didn't set too well, so I walked off. Crazy me, I went back the next day as if nothing had happened.

I was told my route had been given to someone else.

Benskin Family

The Benskin family lived next door on Grand Avenue. Raymond and Irma were their children. Raymond and I became close friends. Mr. Benskin was a machinist and Raymond liked mechanical work too. Their hobby was model airplanes. They designed and built their own. They participated in flying events almost every weekend. Sometimes, when they were held on Saturday, I went with them.

First Television

We lived on Grand Avenue when I saw my first television. It was in the window of a furniture store. Very few people owned them back then (1945) even though television was invented way back when. It wasn't long until Sonny brought one home. It was a little seven-inch screen, a Philco table model.

I remember watching the rescue of Kathy Fiscus. It's unusual for me to recall the name, but it was a memorable occasion. Kathy fell into an

abandoned well in a neighbor's backyard. Rescuers spent hours, all weekend, if I remember correctly, digging a hole next to the well so they could go down below her and put in bracing that would keep her from falling further. The successful rescue was televised. One of the first incidents of this nature on TV.

And too, I had my favorite Saturday morning programs, just like kids today. One of them was a puppet program, Cecil—a dinosaur.

Dad Did It Himself

Dad always overhauled his own cars. He taught me the mechanics of the car as we worked. I helped by cleaning parts. At times he let me put in spark plugs and encouraged me to learn all I could about cars and bicycles. If something went wrong with my bicycle, I fixed it. It was the same about anything that needed to be done around our home—electrical, plumbing, whatever, Dad did it. It was partly to save money, but it was mainly the challenge of “doing it myself.”

Here is a good place to lay it aside.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben

I graduated from Alcott Elementary School in June 1946. In September of that year, I enrolled in Fremont Junior High School. It was located between Eighth and Ninth Streets on Garey Avenue.

Sonny and I

Sonny was into motorcycles about that time. He had a Norton motorcycle from England, that was a beauty. He taught me how to ride. I rode up and down the driveway and across the lot before I was old enough to get a driver's license. When I got my license, he let me ride it to school; that was junior high. Boy, did I ever feel big and bad! Funny how something like that makes you feel.

Later, Sonny bought a small motorcycle for me. He called it an Indian T, I don't know where that name came from but it was made in

Czechoslovakia. I rode it all over the place until one day the alternator went bad and we couldn't find another. It had to be junked.

Sonny My Hero

If you haven't guessed by now, Sonny was my hero. From an early age, I am told, I tried to mimic him, his walk, mannerism, the lot. He used to stand with his back to a wall with his knee bent and foot braced against it. Mother said she found me in the pose often. He wore khaki pants and so I wore khaki pants. He always wore new ones, so I got his hand-me-downs. I was big for my age and I was able to wear just about everything he did. From early on at Halloween, I wore his military dress uniform to school parties.

It seems Sonny was continually bothered with ulcers. I remember one time he asked me to go with him to the bathroom. He didn't explain why, but I thought something was wrong. It was, he was hemorrhaging and passed out. He fell into the tub with a crash. I was just barely able to grab him before he fell and cushioned his fall. I took hold of his arm and pulled him to the floor. I got help and

we took him back to bed and called the doctor. Doctors made home visits in those days. Dr. Butka was his physician and came right away.

Sonny stayed at home for many years while I was growing up. We did lots of things together, just the two of us. We went to motorcycle races, to the fair, boxing and wrestling matches, and lots of fishing trips.

He even took me with him to work. He was the mechanic in charge of the vehicles at McCormack General Hospital in Pasadena, a military hospital at that time. It was there he met Helen Glorianne Beaudoin, who became his wife on May 29, 1949. Sonny was special. He still is, even though he is now 77 years old. We get together often.

Dad Taught Me to Drive

Dad taught me to drive in Pomona. I went back and forth, up and down the driveway, into the garage and back out again. Over and over. Finally, it seemed like months, Dad let me drive on Grand Avenue. I was fifteen and a half years old.

Junior High School Teachers

In junior high, about twelve years old, one begins to think he is grown, or at least old enough to be heard. I was that way. In junior high we no longer sat in one classroom with one teacher all day. We had five or six classes and as many teachers. It was then I began to see teachers for who they really were, some I really liked, others I couldn't stand.

Many of the teachers at Fremont Junior High will always be remembered. They liked kids and enjoyed teaching. Students were important to them. You didn't have to wonder if they liked you, they showed it all the time.

Doyle Montz

A man who became very close was Doyle Montz, Social Studies teacher and sponsor of the Projection Club. He was a member of the Brethren Church in La Verne. When you talked with him, he looked straight at you. He gave you his undivided attention. He made you feel you were important enough to be heard.

I secured a job through Mr. Montz at the Pomona Adult Education Forum. This group

gathered once a week during the school year to listen to a speaker or world traveler. Most often the speaker had films he/she had taken around the world. I operated the movie projector, the public address equipment and other duties as required. I earned seventy-five cents an hour. More importantly, I was privileged to hear well-known speakers from around the world. It was very educational.

Mr. Montz was also responsible for my job at radio station KPMO operating sound equipment for a musical variety show called YOUNG IDEAS; broadcast Saturday morning from the Fremont Auditorium.

Anne Juhl

Then there was Miss Anne Juhl, the old maid who taught English. She was as hard-nosed as they come. You couldn't get away with anything. Homework was just an extension of the classroom, and woe be unto the one who came to class unprepared. Her philosophy was, "I came here to teach and I am not going to waste my time, you are here to learn." Wouldn't you know it, she was

sponsor of the Scholarship Club, the largest club in the school. Miss Juhl made us feel that her time was well-spent with students. We knew she liked us because she spent time with each of us and wouldn't let us waste precious time. There needs to be more teachers like her today.

Mr. Weide

Of course, I can't forget Mr. Weide, the Manual Arts instructor. One day someone stole a student's project and he had the whole class look for it. Guess who found it? Me of course! Then, Mr. Weide accused me of stealing and hiding it. He should not have done that. He didn't know my big brother. But he did get acquainted. Sonny went down the next day to explain that I didn't do that kind of thing and I was not to be accused of it. I felt exonerated.

Agatha Palmer

I shudder when I think of Miss Agatha Palmer, my homeroom teacher. She wore her hair braided and folded up on top of her head. Kind of what you would expect of a cold, unfeeling, uncaring, school teacher. It was in her class that we took "guidance

tests” for selecting classes in high school. I wasn’t good in math, then or now, but this woman shattered my motivation for years to come. She emphasized that without math one couldn’t achieve much in education. So, the thing to do was take general education classes to just get through high school and go into some kind of trade. “Forget college,” she said, “forget it.” Little realizing the damage she was doing to a student who felt teachers were to be looked up to and respected. I took her at her word. Years later I found I could perform better. When I got my Bachelor’s Degree and again when I received my Master’s Degree, I remember thinking, “I wish Miss Palmer could see me now.”

At the Awards Assembly, I received an award from both the Music and Drama Departments for services rendered to them as a member of the stage crew. The most prestigious award was given by the Veterans of Foreign Wars for citizenship and service to others.

On June 15, 1949, at 7:00 p.m., in the Fremont Junior High Auditorium, I graduated from the

Ninth Grade, thus ending my hard-fought junior high school experience.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben

Pomona High School

I entered high school in September 1949. It stood on the corner of Holt and San Antonio Avenues. When I think of those days, I am amazed at how little I remember. It's like a mist, that I can barely see through. I wrote the names of my classroom teachers in the 1950 yearbook as if I would not remember them without it. I even wrote in my grades for the year. I remember only two, just two mind you, vocational instructors. The names of the academic teachers are gone forever.

Pomona High School

Frank Glenn, my old friend and gray-haired shop instructor, played a crucial and very important part in my high school experience. Without him my high school story would have been entirely different.

He recognized my potential and offered the encouragement I needed. He took me as his under study and I became his assistant. He taught me how to use the drill press, lathe, screw machine, and milling machine. He gave me special projects which I completed in record time. Then I was permitted to work on projects of my own.

During my second semester in high school, Mr. Glenn referred me to Caco Molds—a tool and die shop. At that point, I was in machine shop four hours a day (for three units of high school credit) and eight hours a day on the job. I went to school in the morning during the second semester of my junior year and all through my senior year. I started work at Caco Molds for ninety-five cents an hour.

A closely related class was drafting. Mr. Lewis, the teacher, gave me bad grades because I didn't

complete very many projects. Uncompleted projects were the results of my “professionalism.” I had to do them over and over again to draw them just right.

David Bunch, my pastor’s son and I were close friends. Both of us were quite heavy (over 250 lbs. each) and the coach kept after us to join the football team. We were just not interested.

Trailer Park

We sold the house on Grand Avenue in 1951 or 1952. During my senior year in high school we lived in a trailer park on Mission Blvd, right at Pomona city limits. Dad bought a Spartan trailer, made by an airplane manufacturer of the same name. It was a nice mobile home, but too small to live in for long. I have no idea why Dad sold the house and bought a trailer. Perhaps someone offered a price he could not turn down.

Need for a Car

Dad had a blue 1946 Ford when we lived in the trailer. I wanted to use it on Friday nights, but he did not want me to. I would never talk back to Dad. He was not the kind of father you could

reason with at all. Once he said, “no,” that was it. He wanted no more discussion. Of course, that did not leave anyway open to let your feelings be known.

During this time, I had long talks with Glen. He lived in a little community called Los Serranos, in the hills south of Chino. He built the house himself. On weekends, he came by our trailer and took me home with him. I usually stayed Friday night and Saturday. I slept on the couch.

He had a 1931 Model A with a “rumble seat.” A rumble seat folds down into the car body and looks like a trunk door. I drove it to visit a girl in Corona several times. He also had a Ford pickup. I used it more often. Glen understood a young man’s need to exert independence. Dad tried to hold on too long. It was Glen who persuaded Dad to let me use his car to go on dates. Dad had a hard time with that. His car was a “personal possession” and he didn’t like loaning it out to anyone.

A Car for Me

When Dad finally understood that I had to have more freedom or I would leave, he went overboard

trying to solve the problem. He allowed me the use of his car on Friday nights, but it made him very uncomfortable. He tried to work it out by buying me a car. He first bought a 36 Ford 60, a small, tan, two-door sedan. It was in poor shape and didn't run most of the time. He then bought me a Studebaker coupe, 1940 model, I think. I drove it awhile, but it was not a young man's car. Kind of embarrassing to be seen in it, really.

One day, while I was at work, Dad drove up in a black, 1948 Ford Sedan, a beautiful car. He said he would pay the down payment on it if I would keep up the payments. I was shocked, taken completely by surprise. I had no idea Dad was thinking about another car for me. I am still not sure what made him decide to do it. It was a great move on his part for I saw him in a different light from then on.

High School Years

My high school years were relatively uneventful. I spent most of my time in the machine shop (6-10 hours a day) and going to school. But church was very important too. We attended twice

on Sunday, Wednesday night, and every night during revivals.

Even though I didn't follow the Lord faithfully during my high school years, I always attended church services. I knew that one day I would be a committed follower of the Lord.

Suck in or Sip

Once I was tempted to smoke, but I thought, no, I won't do it. I don't want a bad habit to keep me from following the Lord. I don't remember taking one puff on a cigarette.

I remember taking a sip of beer at Billy's house. It tasted so bad I never wanted to try it again. But, as youth would have it, one of the guys at Caco Molds persuaded me to try a sip of whiskey in a coke. I spit and sputtered until I thought I would die. Sonny had a bottle of wine in his garage that he won at a golf tournament. I tried a sip of it. That too, was horrible. That was the extent of my smoking and drinking.

Movies

"Son, that is a choice you will have to make," my Dad said. Believe me the choices were few-

Flicka, Son of Flicka, Rin-Tin-Tin, and Lassie. You could count the movies I saw on your fingers, the results of parental guidance.

Life's Purpose

I was raised with the idea that God had a specific purpose for my life. I couldn't get away from it. My miraculous birth influenced my thinking about school, work and church. Questions about my decisions in all these areas continue to come up. I have a lot to talk with the Lord about on that Great Day.

Home Church

One Sunday night I was sitting in the center section on the back row. I was in deep sense of worship when a message was given in tongues and someone interpreted it. I don't recall the interpretation, but it had to do with God calling. It went on to say that person should prepare for ministry. I thought maybe it was for me because of my miraculous birth and my parent's feeling that I had a special ministry,

Nothing more was said in that service, but I thought about the message often over the next few weeks.

Mom, Dad, and the pastor wanted to know how I felt about it. I told them I couldn't say for sure, but would continue to pray about it. And I did. There was no voice from heaven yet I felt a need to continue the search for God's purpose for me. I decided to go to Lee College to explore the calling further.

Lee College

I made application to Lee College in Cleveland, Tennessee for the Fall Semester (September 1952).

I did not have money for tuition or room and board and neither did my parents. In addition, I had no commitment from the church.

All I had was my 1948 Ford—my pride and joy. It was paid for. I could sell it for enough to pay for the first year. I wanted to know the will of God for my life and felt that Lee College was the place to find it, so I sold my car.

College Bound

I remember Mom and Dad driving me to the railroad station in Pomona. There were others there but I don't recall who they were. I boarded the Sunset Limited nonstop to New Orleans. Everybody on the station platform waived goodbye and the train slowly pulled out of the station.

As it picked up speed, even before leaving the station, I realized I didn't know what I was doing. It was glamorous to that point, but now it was for real. I was leaving the comfort, safety and acceptance of home. I was on my own. Mom and Dad would not be there when I needed guidance. I slept some, ate a little, and cried a lot.

Forty-two hours to New Orleans. I remember asking the Lord, "Is this really what you want me to do?" You can ask that a lot in 42 hours.

In New Orleans I changed trains. There were no fast trains from there to Cleveland, Tennessee; they were all "milk-runs." The old steam-driven engines chugged along at a snail's pace. They wouldn't even get up speed before they slowed down again. The train stopped at every town, village, and hamlet along the way.

Arrival at Lee College

A student welcoming committee was on hand to greet new students. I didn't know there were other student on the train. The greeters drove us to the college and unloaded us at Walker Hall.

All I had was a large footlocker that Sonny used when he was in the military service. I still have it. I wouldn't take anything for it. Eva and I took it through Central America and back. There is a lot of history in that old trunk. I hope it remains in the family forever.

Walker Hall

Walker Hall was a large three-story, red brick structure. Old furniture and odds and ends were stored in the basement. A large living area in the basement was converted into a chapel. We had services there every evening.

I cleared another room for my private devotions. I left only an old mattress to kneel on. That was my place of refuge. Many times I would just kneel and cry—nothing to say. Other times I pleaded with the Lord to let me know if I was doing the right thing.

My room was on the second floor, Room 215, second room from the north on the east side of the building. It had one small window, a small desk attached to the wall, and a sink. Shower and bathroom were down the hall.

Curfew

Curfew was at 10:00 p.m. The outside doors were locked at that time and a night watchman was stationed at the front entrance. If you came in after curfew, you had to sign in with the night watchman. Next morning, he gave the list to Franklin Smith, Dean of Men. If you were ministering at a church, you were excused. If not, you could expect to be disciplined.

The problem with curfew was that some students wanted to go out late to get a snack, nothing more, mind you, just a snack.

As luck would have it, my room was on the back side of the building. Even though it was on the second floor, the window was only a short distance from the ground. No one would expect that I would be involved in breaking dormitory rules.

One night some friends decided to go out after curfew. Butler was one of them. They slipped down to my room and I slowly opened the window. I looked around to make sure the coast was clear. Then I took Butler by the arm and helped him down the wall to the ground. As his feet touched the ground, Mr. Smith appeared. "Where are you going, Butler?" "No place," he said, "I was just going back to my room." He quickly climbed back into my room and ran down the hall.

In a few minutes, Mr. Smith opened my door. He looked in, smiled and never said a word. An incident like that could have cost me lots of demerits, but I never heard another word. Neither did anyone ever leave the dormitory via my window anymore.

Church Attendance

Students were to attend chapel every day and church services twice on Sunday. In addition, they were expected to belong to a ministry or club.

I belonged to the mission club. Sorry to say, the club sponsor, did not make a good impression on

me. I attended the North Cleveland Church of God most of the time, but we also visited rural churches.

Sunday afternoon was jail time. Several of us visited the Cleveland jail. Few prisoners were incarcerated there, probably because it was no more than an animal cage in the middle of a big room.

Lee College was a good experience. One that I am glad I had, but would not want to do it again. I went there to find the Lord's will. I thought if He were ever going to speak to me, it would be at a Christian college. He never did. If He did, I was not listening.

It is time move on in search of God's purpose and will for me.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben
Home for Christmas 1952

A student offered to take students from Lee College to Arizona for \$20 each. We jumped at the bargain. Mom and Dad picked me up in Phoenix.

I don't remember one thing that happened that Christmas. I just know I was glad to be home. I was even happier when classes ended in June 1953.

When I came home from Lee, Dad had a surprise for me. He had located a 1939 Chevrolet Coupe which a car salesman had put away for his son. He was not returning home so he wanted to sell it.

God, It's Me Again

During the summer of 1953, Vessie D. Hargrave, Superintendent for the Church in Latin American, visited our church. He invited me to attend the Insitituo Preparatorio Internacional (IPI) in San Antonio, Texas. He said it would be a good place to get the feel of missionary work. It sounded like a good idea, so I enrolled instead of going back to Lee College.

I drove my 1939 Chevrolet Coupe to San Antonio. It was the first time I had ever driven

such a distance by myself. I really enjoyed the trip. It was not at all like my trip to Tennessee the year before. I stopped often and took some very pretty scenic pictures, arriving in San Antonio about the middle of September 1953.

Instituto Preparatorio Internacional

IPI was a unique institution, founded by Vessie Hargrave as a training center for Latin American young people who wanted to become ministers to their own people. Rev. Wayne McAfee was school president while I was there. All the grounds work, maintenance, food service, etc. was done by the students. Each one was assigned to a specific job. I worked in the kitchen.

Classes were taught in Spanish. That was a real disadvantage for the first several months.

Social activities at the school were very limited because of the Latin culture. Girls and boys were not allowed to socialize without a chaperon. School officials took precautions to avoid violating those customs. Even in church services boys sat on one side and girls on the other.

Consequently, there were very few serious relationships, but if they did, however, marriage was expected to follow. I didn't understand that custom when Febe Flores, a diminutive little girl from Nicaragua, got my attention.

We never went on a date, but managed to talk through our dayroom windows. Our relationship was not considered serious by school officials. They allowed Febe to ride the bus I drove to take students to churches around the city.

On Sunday morning, after delivering the last student, I drove to a poor section of town and picked up children for Sunday School in the bus. I parked in a vacant lot and a student taught. Febe happened to be one of the teachers.

Mom's Dreams

My roommate at IPI, Abel Sanchez, was from Guadalajara, Mexico. He was the very bright son of a shoe cobbler. I learned a lot about Mexican culture from him. He helped me with Spanish and Bible classes.

A young Cuban student had a violent temper. One day he got into an argument with another

student and took after him with a pair of barber scissors. The boy ran into my room, but before I could close the door, the Cuban was inside. Without thinking I jumped between them. He took several jabs at me before calming down.

A few days later I received a letter from Mom. She had a dream about a black man (Cubans are very dark) attacking me with a pair of scissors. She often had dreams that related to her children. She never failed to pray.

I recall a dream she had about Billy (brother) when he lived on Grand Avenue in Pomona. She dreamed that he was on his way to work when his car was forced off the road and hit a telephone pole. He lived a short distance away so before he left for work, she went to his house and told him about the dream and encouraged him to be careful.

On his way to work a car came barreling down the wrong side of the road. He swerved and went off the road into a telephone pole. Somehow, he managed to get out unhurt. Later, when Sonny and Billy went to look at the car, they found that he struck the pole on the driver's side. There was no

room for a man in the front seat. It was smashed all the way against the passenger side. Praying mothers are a gift from God.

Am I on Track?

When school (IPI) closed in June 1954, I thought it would be a good idea to visit Central America. If God was calling me to be a missionary, He might reveal it more clearly.

A Nicaraguan couple and their two children were going back home as soon as school was out. After discussing it with Reb Hargrave, I decided to sell my Chevrolet Coupe and buy a Kaiser sedan. (We bought in the couple's name to save paying a heavy duty on it and make it easier to sell.) With that arrangement, the couple, their children, Febe, and I could travel by car. They agreed to buy the gasoline.

It was really a bad idea. Traveling overland was not the way to get to Nicaragua. They called it the Pan American Highway, but in places it was little more than a trail. The road to Mexico didn't even connect with the one in Guatemala. At the southern Mexico border, you had to ship the car by rail to

the border to connect with the road again. A new, four-wheel drive vehicle would have had a difficult time.

I could have made the trip by plane and had money left over. I guess I felt sorry for the family. They did not have the money to get back to Nicaragua.

The car we bought was ready for the junk yard, but that was all we could afford. Furthermore, I was the only driver. I was expected to drive from Texas, through Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and half of Nicaragua without a relief driver. I don't know where I left my brain.

Mom and Dad came to San Antonio to see me before we left. They stayed two or three days. I found out later their motive was to meet Febe.

Driving Through Mexico

We had a terrible time getting through customs at Nuevo Laredo. A missionary told me we would have difficulty if we didn't pay bribes along the way. Ten or twenty dollars would go a long way he said to be on your way. We didn't have money to spare, so we were in a pickle, After the first full

day at customs, we decided we would have to pay to get on our way. I gave the custom agent \$20 and they immediately cleared us.

For the next three days we traveled. Several times we were stopped by the Guardia Civil—ten or twelve soldiers in an army truck. They patrolled the highways to protect tourists and check passports, visas, etc. We were told they expected to be paid, but we didn't want to spend the money we had that way. Somehow, we managed.

I became so tired one night I couldn't go further. I pulled over for a few minutes to rest. In minutes an army truck pulled in behind us. The officer said, "You can't stop here. It is too dangerous. You may get robbed." I explained how tired I was. He said, "OK. Get some rest. The men and I will stay here with you." I think I slept for an hour. The soldiers were still there when I awoke. And we didn't offer them any money.

Down the road we stopped at a little thatched roof hut. The sides were made of bamboo type reed. The dirt floor was clean. Obviously, they were poor farmers. Their clothing was worn and

they didn't have shoes. Yet, they were very nice. They seemed so happy that we stopped. Plantains, mangoes, and other vegetables were piled on the table and they insisted we take some.

We drove to historic Mexico City where we met Alexandro Portugal. He was in charge of the Church of God mission work in Central Mexico. We stayed in his home while we obtained visas for Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

By that time the old Kaiser had gone its last mile. It was burning as much oil as it was gas. It was over-heating and the generator went out. We could not find any parts. About all the parts you could find were for Ford and Chevys. We had to abandon the old car and make new plans.

The family with whom I was traveling, and Febe, decided to stay in Mexico.

That was only part of the problem. A revolution broke out in Guatemala during the summer 1954. We could not have traveled through the country even if we had a car.

Go to Nicaragua

I called Brother Hargrave to see what we should do. “Go to Nicaragua,” he said. “You can’t stop missions work for revolutions. They are common place in Latin America.”

I had enough money for airfare. I bought a ticket and boarded an old DC-3, the two-engine work horse of most Central American Countries at that time. We had to fly around Guatemalan airspace because of the revolution.

We hit a storm over the ocean—wind, rain and lightning like I had never seen. In fact, this was my first flight. I was scared as the plane plummeted several feet in air pockets.

It was a relief to land in Managua. Pablo Abreu and his wife, missionaries to Nicaragua, met me at the airport. Brother Hargraves had previously made arrangements for me to spend most of the summer with them. While I was there, we visited several nearby churches and they planned a week-long trip for me into the bush.

I visited Febe's family in the little village of Masatepe, not far from Managua—no paved roads, electricity, or indoor plumbing.

“Downtown” was a string of one-story buildings on each side of the street. There were no business or official buildings, only a few street operations and a small open market.

Homes were made of rough cut lumber, plastered on the outside with what looked like mud. A few had Spanish tile roofs, but most had corrugated metal.

Mr. Flores was the town mayor, though he had few official duties. Most of his time was spent at his small appliance business in Managua.

Febe's brother worked in the business as well. Her sister, however, was a cosmetic salesperson. She traveled the entire country and took me with her on several trips. An uncle, one of three generals who ran the country at the time, was in charge of the airport.

Nicaragua Back Country

“Bush” they called it. Early one morning I boarded a narrow-gauge train in Managua. We are

not talking about an American train, this was an antique steam engine used primarily to haul produce and animals to market. Passengers were secondary and sat on side benches. Cages of chickens, animals, and produce were stacked in the center of the car. Fortunately, the window was always open.

I traveled until late afternoon. Along the way were isolated platforms, the locations were named, but they were not communities—no homes or business. The loading platforms made loading the railroad cars easier.

I was met at one of these platforms by a Christian brother in a cart pulled by two oxen. I got in the car and traveled the rest of the day along muddy roads and trails. It was beautiful with lush green foliage and colorful insects. Butterflies fluttered across the road. Their colorful birds, and multicolored parrots darted here and there. The brother told me there were monkeys as well, but I didn't see any except the one they kept as a pet.

We arrived at his home about dark. His wife and children were expecting us. They had prepared

a dinner of native fruit, vegetables, and homemade tortillas.

Their home was a thatch-roof affair built on stilts. It was high enough to walk under without bending over. A ladder made of tree limbs allowed one to climb into the sleeping area above. All cooking was done on a mud stove under the thatch roof and another one on the ground outside.

There were no toilet facilities. However, I was able to get a shower behind a bamboo fence. Water came from a fifty-five-gallon barrel hung from a tree. A few small holes allowed water to come down at a measured rate. You couldn't spend a lot of time in the "shower" or the water would be gone.

Guests were given the best sleeping place—a hammock hung between two poles underneath the thatched roof. I slept there for three or four nights.

One night I was rudely awakened. Something was pushing my hammock back and forth. It was an ox. My host had two of them for plowing and pulling his cart.

Preparing a meal took a long time. The lady of the house started from scratch every morning. Tortillas were made fresh every day. She began with ears of dried corn which had be soaked overnight. After being shelled, she put them on a large concave rock and beat them into a pulp. Water was added periodically to make it easier to work with. She worked the corn until it became a patty, about the size of a large thick pizza. They were delicious.

For breakfast, we had eggs, tortillas and coffee. The coffee was so strong I could hardly drink it.

One night she prepared a fish soup. A whole fish was thrown into a pot and boiled. It was probably cleaned first, but the head and goggling eyes were still there. I think I ate it. I am not sure.

We visited a few neighbors while I was there, but we did not have church services. I don't think they had a meeting place.

That trip gave me an idea of what missionary life would be like in the bush. Of course, missionaries did not live in that kind of

environment. They lived in the city and made evangelistic trips into the countryside.

By that time, I had experienced the bush and city life. It was exciting to visit such places and I enjoyed the people. Still, I had not received a “call.” The most I can say is that I felt a love for them and was concerned about their spiritual condition.

Summer finally came to an end and I returned home. I arrived in Los Angeles in late July 1954. Mom and Dad picked me up at the airport. It was a great reunion.

Ozark Hillbilly

While I was in Nicaragua, my home church built a new sanctuary in Pomona. Families were coming from everywhere. A church in Chino disbanded and almost the entire congregation came to Pomona. Sinners were coming to the Lord. It was a thriving church—a good place to call home.

I was glad to be home and reveled in the attention I was getting. I was proud of myself. I know I wasn’t very humble. Having completed a year of college, a year at a missionary preparatory

school, and a summer in Nicaragua, was quite an achievement for me. I was really upbeat.

By the time I arrived home, I knew the girl I met at IPI would not be part of my future. What I had seen in Nicaragua and in her family convinced me that if a missionary needed a wife at all, she should be from his own culture. The fact is I wasn't sure a wife was necessary at all. My desire for a partner was almost nonexistent—a wife just didn't seem to fit in.

God, however, had “thoughts and plans for me,” far beyond my expectations. He sees the beginning from the end. He knows what is best and He plans and works accordingly. Unknown to me, He was guiding my foot steps in a way I never dreamed.

Who could have thought a family from the backwoods of Stone County, Missouri would come to California at such a time as this? Who could have thought that their daughter would arrive a short time later? And who, even though discouraged and without a job, would remain?

Who could have planned a meeting of these country folks with a city boy reveling in his achievements? He didn't need anybody. He had already decided that he would go it alone.

No human being could have planned those events. Divine providence brought them about. He alone set in motion a series of events that brought Grandma Eva and me together.

Rendezvous in the Parking Lot

No person could have called the signals that brought events together like that. Think about it.

Junior Huff, June's husband, completed a tour of duty in Korea aboard the USS New Jersey. He was scheduled to arrive in Long Beach, California on October 30, 1953. June wanted to meet him at the pier. Cleo, Freddie, and Ted decided to go with her.

James and Blanche (Freddie's daughter) were living in Chino. He was working at Potlach Forests Inc. and thought he could get Freddie a job. Freddie thought that was better than farming so he took the offer.

At that time, Grandma Eva was living in Kansas City, Missouri with Deet and Orville. Faye (Eva's sister) was still in Ponce de Leon, Missouri—alone and very homesick. Together they decided to go to California.

Faye completed high school, but neither she nor Eva could find employment. So, they decided to return to Missouri. They bought tickets, and decided to attend a church service one more time—Divine intervention.

Pastor Drake persuaded them to look for work just one more time. Eva applied at Potlatch Forests Inc. and was hired within a few days.

These events brought us together in the church parking lot on that memorable August 1, 1954.

Snack and Go Home

After service, the youth group decided to go for snacks. You won't believe the finagling that went on.

There were three or four car loads of us. We stopped to get gas and, for some reason, somebody suggested we rearrange our seating in the car. Honestly, I don't know how it came to be, but I

was “assigned” to ride in a car with Tom Latta, Virginia Cox, Faye Bradford and your grandmother. Your grandma was the only “uncommitted” girl in the car. There was a discussion where I would sit—front or back. That seemed odd, but I didn’t pay much attention to it. After all, we were just going for snacks and then home. Right? Wrong! I ended up in the back seat with your Grandma Eva.

I think we went to the A&W Drive In on Holt Ave. Then we took the long way home. During our “long way” home, I began to think about this farm girl sitting next to me. She was tall. I liked that. Her long hair flowed flawlessly down to her shoulders; I liked that. Her eyes were blue and sparkled like stars on a clear night; I liked that. When she smiled, wrinkles formed around her eyes—she looked very mischievous; I liked that. She laughed and talked effortlessly; I liked that. No doubt about it she was genuine. There was no put on; I liked that.

It wasn’t just a snack and then home. We saw each other every night after that. I couldn’t believe

it. Just days before girls were unimportant to me. Now we were staying out late every night. We talked and talked.

Grandma Eva bought a 1949 Ford very soon after she went to work. While she was at work she insisted I use the car. That's the way your grandma was then and is that way today. Her family and everybody who knows her talks about her unselfish generosity. She gives and keeps on giving.

Penniless

I had very little money when we met. It was embarrassing. Your Grandma often paid for our trips to McDonalds, (Yes, there were McDonalds "back then." One of the first ones was on Fifth Avenue in Pomona). Many times after I paid for the food Grandma would slip money into my lap. I didn't know she was doing it for a long time. When I got out of the car, the money fell to the ground. No telling how much money we lost, but the point was, she did not want me to feel bad by offering to pay for the meal up front. She "had" to

do what she did. It is part of who she is. Grandma has to give. She has to do something for others.

We didn't spend a lot of money. Once we went to the San Diego Zoo, but most of the time we went to church or to the park. We liked to walk the trails in Ganesha Park or lounge on the grass.

A favorite spot was on a high hill overlooking the city of Pomona. It was beautiful up there. The stars sparkled in the heavens and the lights of the city gave off an assortment of colors. Time went fast. Once we were shocked into reality when a policeman knocked on the car window. "Park closed at 10:00 p.m." he said. "Better be on your way." I don't remember what time it was, but we were shocked.

God, What's the Plan?

I had to be in Tennessee the first week in September. We really didn't have much time together. Maybe three or at the most four weeks.

College was much harder than I expected. After the first year I was ready to quit. Thanks to a year at the Internacional Preparatorio Insituto and a

summer in Nicaragua, I acquired a working knowledge of Spanish; not enough to say I had learned a second language, but I was on my way.

Thanks to the Spanish language, I was on my way to a successful year at Lee College. With a newly found esteem builder, I enrolled in a Spanish class. It was an eye-opener. I was further advanced than other students and the teacher often ask me how to pronounce certain words. My self-esteem soared again. Consequently, all my class work improved. I was now making above average grades.

Will You Marry Me?

Your Grandma and I wrote regularly. We even sent audio tapes back and forth. A few times I called her collect. Once in a while she sent a “care package” with candy, cookies, the whole bit. She spent a fortune on me.

Our relationship developed quickly and deeper than I thought possible. I could hardly wait to get home at Christmas. Remember, we had only been together three or four weeks during the summer.

Letters, phone calls and audio tapes were our only contact.

Christmas was going to be the day of all days. I planned to ask Grandma to marry me. I didn't. She said I was afraid of her father. That may have been true. Freddie was very protective of his family, particularly his girls. I may have been afraid he would say, "No way."

We really enjoyed Christmas. Most of our time was spent together. She was still working at Potlatch Forests and owned a 1949 Ford sedan. I didn't have a dime, so she provided the cash we needed. I didn't want to go back to college but there was no way out.

A few days after my return, I called her again—collect. This time my friends were standing by at the public phone in the hallway. They knew I hadn't popped the question at Christmas. I was supposed to and they were not going to let me get out of it.

Under pressure I gave in. Not being a romantic and a man of few words, I spoke directly. "Sweet One," I squeaked, "Will you marry me?" Nothing.

It was like the still of a summer night. In a wavering voice, she said, “I can’t, I can’t give you an answer right now.” “Why not?” I asked over and over. “We haven’t known each other that long . . . I don’t know, I don’t know,” she mumbled. I kept pushing, until in exasperation she said, “Yes for now, but let’s pray about it.”

When I repeated what she said all the guys yelled. I was very happy, but often wondered how she really felt. She said yes under pressure.

Interestingly, I never proposed again. It never occurred to me. From that point on, we just began making plans for our wedding.

I know her dad was not pleased. He didn’t want her to marry a preacher, much less a missionary. Keep the family together was his motto.

I don’t remember much about college after that. I still made good grades, but my heart was not in it.

I have to smile at one of my attempts to leave college. I thought if I talked with the head of the mission department and tell him I was wasting time at college he would give me an appointment. I

could return home, get married and go to one of the Latin American countries.

Paul Walker, Executive Missions Secretary, graciously gave me an interview. He let me stumble through my prepared presentation, then with the finesse of a Drill Sergeant he said, “Get back to school, get good grades, find a good wife, then we will talk about the mission field, not before.”

I stayed in school, but didn’t wait for the graduation exercises. A friend from Phoenix was going home immediately after class on the last day of school. I got a ride with him and we were off. Faye and Grandma Eva picked me up in Phoenix.

I found a warehouse job at Sears in Pomona very quickly. Warehousemen unloaded trucks, uncrated goods, and prepared them for delivery. I worked hard, but anticipation of the future occupied much of thoughts.

The excitement of that “day of all days” brought us together every day and late into the night. We talked and planned until exhausted.

Marriage: The Favor of God

The Scriptures tell us that if you, “Find a good spouse, you find a good life—and even more, favor with God.”

Grandma Eva nor I could have never planned it liked this. It doesn't take a lot of hoopla, partying, guests, or gifts to pull off a good wedding.

Our marriage ceremony was simple; held in the same church where we met a year earlier. There were probably no more than 300 guests. We stood in front of a flower-covered archway flanked by a candelabra and two large baskets of flowers.

Grandma Eva wore a baby blue ballerina gown with taffeta and lace covering and a short sleeve jacket, white pumps and hat. A band of tiny flowers across the top of her head, and a white Bible with purple and orchid streamers completed her outfit.

I wore a gray suit, black handkerchief, and shoes.

No wedding invitations were sent out. But it was announced in church, the newspaper, and the Sears and Potlatch Forests newsletters.

The wedding was scheduled for August 20, 1955, at 7:30 p.m. Grandma Eva arrived after 8:00 p.m. No rings were exchanged because it was against Church of God regulations.

The reception was held in the yard at Earl and Bernice Fortner's home. It took entirely too long; I wanted to get on with the honey moon.

The first night, we stayed at the Wigwam Motel on old Route 66 in San Bernadino. Next morning, we tried to drive up to Big Bear Lake, but the old Pontiac could not take the heat.

At Big Bear, we stayed two nights at the inexpensive Seven Dwarfs motel—Sleepy Cottage. Then it was back down the mountain to Knotts Berry Farm in Buena Park.

We returned "home" late the same day. "Home is really a misnomer. We rented a room in what was once a motel at 1269 West Holt Avenue. It had a small kitchenette, a bath, and a combination living room and bedroom. The bed pulled down from the wall.

We chose that place, not only because it was all we could afford, but it was near Potlatch Forests

where Grandma Eva worked. She could walk to work, but I worked at Sears all the way across town.

We didn't talk much about the "call to the ministry" at that time. I felt I should be doing something for the Lord but I didn't know what or where.

God, Is That You?

We settled into a routine as if that would be our life's work. I had decided to "wait God out."

I was waiting on January 10, 1956, when I received one of those "greetings" from Uncle Sam. The Selective Service had determined that I was subject to the draft because I was not in the full-time ministry. They reclassified me 1A and ordered me to report for a physical exam on January 17.

Now was the hour of decision. I talked with my pastor, my dad, and others. I needed guidance and I needed it now. Young men were being called every day to serve in Korea.

Even though the "ministry" thing was not clear, I didn't feel military service was the place for me.

Someone very close to me suggested that going into the ministry was a good way to avoid the draft. That hurt. It came from one whom I admired very much. Soldiers were my heroes. I would have been proud to wear the uniform. Skipping the draft was not my goal. Finding God's will and pursuing it was my motive.

I called Vessie Hargrave, Superintendent of the Church of God Latin American Mission. He said a missionary in Honduras had to return to the States because of his son's medical condition and that I could fill his position. If he was unable to return, I could take his position permanently.

I forwarded Rev. Hargrave's letter to the draft board and asked for reclassification. My minister's classification (4D) arrived on February 17, 1956.

Right or wrong, I was now committed to the mission field. One might say that was God's way of getting my undivided attention—of "calling me." I was confused. I always thought God would make His calling known in a definite manner.

Going into the ministry just because one feels like it is not the proper thing to do. Working for the

Creator of the universe, should not be taken lightly. I want you to remember: being a Christian is not a religious addition to a secular life. It is our life. Secular work, whatever it might be, is or should be, full-time service for God.

The Selective Service reclassification was the incentive I needed to make some of the most important decisions I would ever make.

Before I could move, I needed the mission board approval of my assignment. On January 19, 1956, Vessie Hargrave, Superintendent of the Church of God in Latin America, called to say that I could go to San Antonio, Texas for an interim position.

We left March 7 and stopped over for the night at my brother's (Glenn) home in Buckeye, Arizona. After sleeping in Van Horn, Texas, we arrived in San Antonio at 6:00 p.m. on March 8.

Time spent in San Antonio was not all that exciting, but visiting local churches showed the variety in mission work; not only in the preaching ministry but the day to day work as well.

The Executive Missions Secretary, was quick to give his approval for us to go to Honduras, but the Board had to make the final decision. Approval was granted on April 26, 1956 and we were ready to leave the next day.

Paul H. Walker Jr. took us to the Laredo, Texas border crossing and helped us through customs.

On April 28, aboard Transportes Del Norte Bus Lines, at 2:00 in the morning, we were on our own.

Grandma Eva reminded me about this incident last night. Rev. Walker and his wife were “old-timers” to the mission field. During our time with them they counseled, cautioned and encouraged us. “Be especially careful of the

water,” they warned. “It is unsafe to drink most everywhere. Boil it thoroughly.”

So while we were just over the border in Nuevo Laredo, your grandmother went to the ladies’ room. Shortly, I heard “psst! psst!” She motioned for me. She was all excited. She had committed a “no, no” without thinking—she washed her dentures in “contaminated” water. She didn’t want to come out of the ladies’ room without her teeth and she dare not put them back in her mouth. Most importantly, she did not want anyone to know she had dentures. Neither of us remember how we got out of that dilemma. At 2:00 a.m., April 28, we boarded the bus for Mexico City.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben,

We arrived in Mexico City on April 29 at 6:00 a.m. We were there four days. Most of the time was spent trying to get visas for Guatemala, Honduras,

and El Salvador. We did, however, have time to see some tourist's attractions. The problem was money. We had very little to spend on sightseeing, but we sacrificed other things to do so. We didn't know when, if ever, we would be back to this ancient city.

If you ever have the chance, you should visit Mexico City. It is the ancient land of the Incas. On the outskirts of the city, are very large pyramids they built. Near one of them is a large altar to the Sun God, their principal deity. On top was a smaller altar of stones where they offered human sacrifices. Most of the time the sacrifices were other Indians whom they had captured, but at times they offered their own children as ultimate sacrifices.

On the way to the pyramids, the tour bus stopped by El Grotto, a restaurant in a cave.

On the return trip, we visited an old Catholic convent. At one time the church was the dominant force in Mexico and owned much of the land. But during the revolution, the power of the church was broken. The old convent was a reminder of that

revolution. The guide pointed out one large room that had been excavated to reveal the bones of many babies that had been born to nuns and killed to hide their immoral activities.

We walked around the city itself. The National Cathedral, built in 1567 by the Spaniards, was particularly important. It is a beautiful piece of architecture. From the entrance for about a hundred yards or more there is a large open area paved with red stone-like bricks. Many of the worshippers who come to the gates, kneel on the bricks and crawl the entire distance to the cathedral door. On arrival, their knees are bloodied. I saw several women with babies in their arms making this sacrifice. We were told it was their way of doing penitence or thanking God for answering a specific prayer.

Inside the cathedral, we saw images of saints and the apron of the little Indian girl, who their tradition says picked roses in winter time, placed them in her apron, and when she let them fall to the floor at her home, a picture of the virgin Mary appeared on the apron. The elaborate ornaments,

some covered with gold, and the poor Mexican peasants and even poorer Indians, were quite a contrast.

The Governor's Palace is right in the middle of town. It, too, is a very old building dating back to the time of the early Spaniards.

The Palacio de Belles Artes is one of the most expensive buildings in Mexico, perhaps in the world. It is made of marble. Inside are lush carpets, very old antique furniture, and famous paintings. It is a museum and yet it is known for its concert quality auditorium. World famous opera singers, musicians, and other such performers visit there regularly.

There were many very expensive hotels in Mexico City. We walked through some of them, but needless to say, we could not afford them. We stayed at a place called the Calvin Hotel. It cost 41 pesos a night. At 12.50 pesos to the dollar, that was \$3.28. In the states it would have been called a flop house.

By bus again (the cheapest way to go) we left for Oaxaca on Wednesday, May 2, at 7:00 p.m. We

arrived there at 6:00 o'clock the following evening. This city is the last one in Mexico where you can take a plane to points south. It is an ancient city of Indians. You see ox carts, people dressed in colorful serapes, open markets, dirt streets, and old, old buildings everywhere. We stayed there for a while, just a few hours. Then we went to the "airport." I guess you would call it that. I recall only one dilapidated wooden building and a waiting area of four poles and a thatch roof.

The landing strip was dirt covered with a few blades of grass, built on a small incline. I'll never forget when the plane came in. It was an old DC-3. It looked like it was coming in too fast, but we really didn't know until it hit the ground the first time, bounced maybe twenty feet into the air and came down again. I think it bounced three times before it stayed on the ground. Your grandmother had never been on a plane before. When she saw it come in, her first words were, "You mean I have to ride that thing?" Yep, we did. It was the only way out.

Without any mishap, and forty minutes later, we arrived in border town of Tapachula, on the border with Guatemala. I don't have anything good to say about this town. It was dirty, hot, muggy, no place to eat, and the Hotel Pan Americana, was no place for a human being to live. We ate or drank something that made me terribly sick. I stayed in the shower and on the stool most of the two days we had to stay there. Your grandmother ordered a meal at the hotel. After chewing the first bite for a while, she decided to check it out to see why it wouldn't chew up. Turned out to be some kind of meat with hair all over. She concluded it must have been a dog. From then on, we ate only fruit, melons, bananas, and things like that.

Well, that gets us out of Mexico. Next, we will be in El Salvador.

Papa Jackie

\J J

essy and Ben

On our way to Honduras, we had to stop in El Salvador to obtain government permission to enter and remain in the country for six months. O'Neil McCullough, the resident missionary, met us at the airport and drove us to the mission headquarters in Santa Tecla.

One of my classmates at Lee College was David Syverson. His parents went to El Salvador many years before on their own. They started the mission in Santa Tecla and David was born there.

His father was very energetic and creative. When we met, he was probably 60 years old, but still very energetic, passionate, kind, and dedicated to the Lord's work. He financed the mission by making adobe bricks for the construction of homes. The workers were very young men whom he was training to be lay-preachers. In the morning, they made bricks and in the evening attended Bible study. Years later, he became acquainted with the

Church of God and with the promise of financial aid, joined the church. When he retired, O'Neil McCullough took his place.

We were in El Salvador from May 5-10. O'Neil was also a highly energetic redhead. He was on the go all the time. During the five days we were there, we visited churches every night and sat in on Bible studies during the day. The mission property was out of town a short distance. Across from the house was a coffee finca (farm). One day a man was chopped to death with a machete right in front of the house. The murderer escaped into the heavy finca undergrowth.

The machete is a very heavy knife, about two feet long. The blade is about three inches wide. A very useful tool for farmers. It was used to cut heavy growth, and cut fire wood among other things.

On another occasion, when we went to a church out in the "bush," several men came to the open windows and propped their machetes up against the frame. Quite a fearful experience, for only a

few weeks before men wielding the knives chased the lay pastor out of the village.

While in Santa Tecla, I preached my first sermon in Spanish to young lay-pastors. I still remember the message, “Jesus Vendra Otra Vez,” Jesus is coming again. I was scared as usual, but was encouraged by O’Neil and, of course, your grandmother, even though she didn’t understand a thing I said.

On May 11, 1956, we arrived in La Ceiba, on the Caribbean coast of Honduras, where we were to take care of the mission until Rev. Skaggs returned. It was terribly hot.

La Ceiba is a shipping port. The United Fruit Company is the only large employer. Most everyone in town works for them or their job is dependent on them. A couple times a week, freighters dock to take on a load of bananas. Interestingly, the population is primarily an English-speaking people of African descent.

At that time, there was a street down the middle of the town paved only in the center of the “business district.” Other streets ran from main

street into the countryside and bush. The United Fruit Company had a compound for its American workers just out of town. It was fenced and no one could enter without permission. Someone told us they had a nice restaurant and that we would probably be allowed to go there since we were Americans. So we tried. We went in, sat down and ordered. Our meal was brought, but just before we were about to leave, the manager came to the table and told us the restaurant was only for employees of the United Fruit Company. Our American eating place was gone. There were other places to eat, but not nearly as inviting as that one.

This brings up another thing--medical help. A few offices around town were labeled "Medico," but again we were afraid of the quality of service. Pharmacia's (drug stores) sold medications over the counter, then you would take them to the "medico" or nurse, who administer the injection. Thank God we were never sick enough to need their services.

The local school ran through the sixth grade. After that students had to go to the capital to attend

the “colegio.” Most young people did not finish even the sixth grade.

There was a small park, with tall coconut trees and a few trees that looked like they were from the deep jungle. A bandstand structure stood in the center. It was really picturesque because it was separated from the ocean only by a retainer wall. Often, big waves splashed over the wall making a very pretty scene.

Our house was comfortable, considering other Honduran homes. It was located on a dirt road about two miles south of town, way out where the “bush” began. It had two stories. The bottom floor opened to the street and was converted into a church, except for our kitchen. The top floor was the living quarters. At one time, it may have had an open porch all the way around the house. But when we were there it had been screened in. No glass windows. It was so hot that the screen was welcomed.

The furnishings were meager. I remember the bed in particular. It swayed so bad it hurt our backs. At times, we resorted to sleeping on air

mattresses. There were a few wooden chairs in the living room, a kerosene refrigerator and stove in the kitchen. Until that time, I didn't know a gas refrigerator existed.

At the back of the house were four, fifty-five-gallon water barrels elevated on scaffolding to the height of the second floor. Every morning, I had to hand pump the barrels full. Their height provided the pressure needed to get the water into the house. Even though we had our own water, it had to be boiled before we used it.

Grandma had few of the conveniences of home. She did all her washing on a rub board, just like the old days in America. No washing machines in town that I knew about; no dryers either. We had a clothesline, but it was stolen while we were away. Thereafter, clothes were dried just like the natives did, spread out on the grass or hung on bushes. To bleach them, she would sprinkle more water on them and leave them in the bright sun. Grandma was really thankful for her electric iron. Occasionally, a woman across the street would do

some ironing for us. She used a hand iron that burned charcoal.

There were no places to buy ready-made shoes or clothes. If you needed furniture, it had to be made. The people were very skilled in doing that kind of work. It was not as expensive as you might think. Labor was cheap, cheap.

We had two very good bicycles. We rode them everywhere, to get our groceries, go to the meat market, and get mail. They probably kept us in good shape, but it was not always convenient, particularly if it was raining.

I have to tell you about the rain. Honduras is in the tropics. They told me it had a wet and dry season. In the dry season, it only rains once a day. Every time you left home, you took an umbrella, even if the sun was shining. And when it rained, it was a gully washer. The rain kept the vegetation dense, green and pretty, but I am not sure the beauty was worth it.

The governments of all Latin America were notoriously unstable when we were there. Honduras was no different. During one election,

the Army patrolled the streets every day and night. They even had a curfew in the evening. They were afraid the opposition would take the country by force. They were not sure who the opposition was most of the time. Unknown to us, the colors you wore were interpreted to signal the party you belonged to. One day when your grandma went to town to get the mail, she wore a bright red skirt. That was a no, no, because red was the color of the opposition party. As she passed in front of the Guardia (army barracks) a soldier jumped in front her and shouted, “alto!” Stop! She was beside herself, not knowing what to say or do. Luckily soldier inside apparently recognized her and told the soldier to let her go. The most beautiful word she heard that day was “pase.” One late evening we were out walking when a squad of soldiers stopped us and searched me. They were serious about their politics. Several days before the elections people became frightened and remained inside their homes. The streets were deserted. We couldn't have church services because public gatherings were prohibited.

I'll tell you about something grandma did. You ought to know what she was like in our missionary days. As I told you earlier, we lived on the outskirts of town. One time a man came out of the bush on horseback and fired into our neighbor's house. Another time our neighbor got into an argument with another man and chased him from his house. At the corner of our street, he caught him and chopped him to death with a machete. At other times we heard people fighting and drunks crying in the street. Now the scene is set to tell you what grandma did to me.

Late one night, we heard a disturbance outside. It sounded like it was coming from the street right in front of our house. I quietly got out of bed and tip-toed to the living room and peered out the screen. I didn't see anything. As I turned to go back to bed, your grandma was right in my face. She shouted (I think it was a shout) and threw her hands out at me at the same time. I don't remember what I thought, I just knew that what I heard outside was now inside and about to attack me. My heart stopped. I don't ever remember being scared

like that before or since. Now that wasn't very nice of her, was it?

I'll tell you more about the islands in the next letter.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben,

The most beautiful islands are about twenty miles off the coast of Honduras. Three of them are known as Islas de la Bahia. The largest, Roatan, is seven or eight miles wide and twenty-one miles long. The smallest is Utila, about seven miles long and three miles wide. The only way there is by boat. The dock on Utila is small, just large enough for two 30-40-foot fishing boats on each side. When you get off the boat, you walk just a few yards to a small store; only one on the island. No cars, no motorcycles, no paved streets. They have cleared wide walkways throughout the small community and keep it extremely clean. Two

American women, Mrs. Evan and Miss Mullins, are the missionaries there.

Utila was the hideaway of the historic Pirate Morgan. Morgan was an Englishman who roamed the southern Caribbean looking for helpless ships. He plundered small coastal communities all the way to Panama. We visited the ruins of a town in Panama that he burned after taking everything of value. He had several wives, some were on Utila. There is a large prominent family on the island to this day with the name Morgan. I went to school with two boys from there with that name. Most of the Islanders are white and English-speaking. They don't like to identify with Honduras, preferring to use American dollars as a medium of exchange.

Some bananas were grown on the island, but its primary "industry" is the making of brooms. They grow a tall reed that breaks into small strands. They cut it near the bottom of the plant, trim the ends, bind them together, and produce a respectable broom, all by hand. They are then sent to the mainland.

It wouldn't be a tropical island without coconut palms. And Utila has a lot of them. Everywhere, at most every home, you see wooden frames on legs, with chicken wire across the bottom. These are for drying coconuts. Dried coconuts are shipped to the mainland where they are processed and exported to the United States.

Fishing is also a big thing. Fish is a big part of their diet. It is not surprising then that they are a healthy people. Old people are everywhere on the island.

Let me tell you about meat on the mainland. They had no refrigeration when we were there. Cattle were killed early in the morning and people would go down to the open market to buy what they needed for the day. You should have seen how they killed the animals. They led them into the ocean until they floated, tied their heads to an old dock post, then with a sharp ax hit them in the soft spot on top of the head. The animal died instantly. While it was floating, they would dress it—blood flowing all around them. Fresh meat was thus available at the open-air market.

During World War II, the residents told me several German submarines came to the island. These are the same ones that sank our ships off the Atlantic Coast. Even though they were for America, they could do nothing against them.

Roatan is the principal island of the group. Though larger, it was much the same. Several settlements around the island are built right up to the waters' edge. Many of them are over the water, with the main door opening onto a dock. Everybody owns a boat of some sort. They travel around the island in boats as we do in cars.

I can't explain the beauty of Roatan. Just as you leave the dock, about a hundred yards to the left, is a small church. It looks much like one of our country churches you see on postcards. The dirt walkways are kept clear of weeds throughout the village. The church was pastored by Captain Ray McNab, the owner and operator of the boat we came over on. He was a great Christian. While there we visited communities with names like Coxen Hole, Bodden Bite, French Caye, French Harbor and Six Hut. The travel was all by boat, in

crystal clear water where one could see down many, many feet.

The one and only trip we took to Six Hut was a memorable one (October 3, 1956). We traveled by boat to a spot at the narrowest part of the island and nearest the village. It took about two hours to make the trip and we didn't leave until past 4:00 p.m. There is no road, only a path through swamp and jungle. Large blue crabs, walking sideways, came out of the bush unexpectedly, frightening us almost every time. Ticks, of course, were everywhere. We sprayed with clordano, but missed many places.

The building that housed the church was small—mud walls, dirt floors and a thatch roof. There were openings for doors and windows, but no covering. The people were of African descent, but spoke English and lived in thatch huts. In spite of their poverty, they were fine people. Going home was dark and spooky. It rained most of the way. Splashing through mud, dodging crabs, scratching ticks, and getting soaked did not make for an enjoyable evening.

I had a humorous experience at Bodden Bite (October 1, 1956). We had completed service, when a man decided he wanted to be baptized. The dock, which was at their front door, was a good place so the man slipped into the water. As I was sliding off the dock a nail caught my pants and tore them up the back. The sacred act, however, had to go on.

Enough for the islands.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben,

If you do not already have the idea that Honduras was way behind the times, you will after I tell you about the trains.

The only way out of La Ceiba was by plane or train. The plane came in once a week from the capital and the train, owned by the United Fruit Co., made several trips a day up the coast and then inland to the capital. The trip to the capital by plane was relatively fast, but by train it took about 6 hours.

The rails were narrow gauge—closer together than commercial passenger train rails. You see, the trains were designed to carry supplies and bananas from the farms to the port of La Ceiba. Produce was shipped from there to the United States. Passengers were allowed in the “modified freight cars,” and the company issued us a permanent pass. We could go anywhere.

The passenger car did not have individual seats. There was a bench along each side and one down the center. They were always over-loaded. Not only with people, but with baggage, products they had raised on their own little plot of ground, or items they made at home and wanted to sell at the next village; sometimes even animals. Very cozy!

The train stopped frequently. Every time it stopped, vendors would come to the windows trying to sell items of every sort, even food. Villages along the line were right out of the movies. Some were adobe, some made from pieces of scrap wood, but most, however, were constructed of cane walls and thatched roofs. The only access to the outside world was by train.

One of our native pastors took advantage of the captive audience on the train. He would preach then walk around and talk to the people individually; definitely not my style, but he was successful.

We had established churches in several villages, and our native pastors visited them regularly. However, I did not have the time or energy to do it very often. An effective way to draw a crowd was by showing a movie. Wherever we found electricity, we showed Christian movies. I don't remember how we got them, but we showed some Billy Graham and Oral Roberts films.

On one of those trips I was introduced to Iguana. You have probably seen pictures of the animal. It looks like a dragon of some sort, but when dressed, it is all white meat—quite delicious.

Another time, I had Tepesquente, a small animal that looks much like a rabbit, but with short ears. Again, it tastes very good. I heard there were wild pigs in the area, but I never saw any nor found pig meat for sale.

Fruits were a different story. Various kinds of bananas, papaya (large the size of melons), mangos, and other fruits which I have long since forgotten.

Oh yes, there were snakes. I came across one riding my bicycle from La Ceiba to the little village of Moin, about ten miles from home. The road there is no more than tire lanes made by trucks. I estimate them to be about six feet apart. The snake I saw came from one side and doubled back. I never saw its head or tail. It had to be more than twelve feet long and five or six inches in diameter. I was told by natives that it was not unheard of. In fact, longer ones had been reported. We read of such a one in the northern part of the country that was thirty-five feet long.

Got to go. My Sweetie is calling. Would you believe it? We are going out for our 39th wedding anniversary dinner. (1994)

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben,

We had been told that Rev. Skaggs would not be returning to La Ceiba, but things changed and he was allowed to come back. That meant we would be reassigned. Where, we didn't know. First word was we would be going to Nicaragua, then it was changed and we were assigned to Limon, Costa

Rica. That is where we really wanted to go all along.

We left Honduras on January 1, 1957, to begin a new year and a new church. We landed in Managua, Nicaragua and boarded a British Viscount, a turbo prop that burned kerosene. That's an important byline because a week after we arrived, a plane on this same schedule blew apart on the runway as it accelerated to take off. The reason being, the maintenance crew had filled the plane with gasoline. We read about the incident and were apprehensive about the service. Really, we had no choice. That was the plane to our new home.

Our fears were not unfounded. On another flight from San Jose we boarded a plane and took off, but almost immediately it made a sharp turn and landed. We were informed that we had mistakenly taken the wrong plane. The one on which we were seated was on the flight line for mechanical repair. They directed us to another plane which we boarded and taxied to the end of the runway. While the crew was making the

preflight checks—wouldn't you know it, the engines sputtered and died. The steward announced that we would be delayed a short time while the plane was gassed up. By that time, we were ready to get out and walk. As you can guess, we prayed seriously.

Costa Rica is more modern than Honduras or Nicaragua. The capital is modern in most ways: buildings, schools, colleges, hospitals and paved roads; things that speak of a modern society. They have been politically stable for many years. They don't even have an army. They have national police, but it is small. They are proud to boast that they have more teachers than soldiers.

We were assigned to Limon, however, and that was a different story. It is small port town on the Caribbean Coast. Most of the people are of African descent. Several told me their descendants were from Jamaica and nearby islands. Interestingly, they speak English with a few “carib” words thrown in with Spanish.

Limon is larger than La Ceiba. In the whole province there were about 20,000 people. Most of

them earned their living working on the dock, on banana plantations, or on coffee and cocoa farms.

The town is well-situated on a protected bay. Main street runs parallel to the coast and inland a good quarter mile. It is paved. Other streets are paved for a block or two in either direction. There were at the time, a secondary school, hospital, park, government buildings and several businesses.

The United Fruit Company is a large American community set off by itself. They had a commissary we were allowed to use (if we had money). And there was a dairy called Miramar.

Near the center of town, there was a large meeting hall called the Black Star Line. On the first floor were businesses, including a bar. A second floor was the large meeting room, used most of the time as a dance hall. It could seat 700 or 800 people. We rented it every Sunday for church services.

One of the most interesting places in Limon was the open-air market where everyone went to buy vegetables, meat, bread, and just about everything else imaginable. It sat on a foundation

about four feet off the street because of the lay of the land. It was divided into cubicles and rented to whoever wanted to sell; townspeople as well as country folks. There was no refrigeration so everyone went to market every day. Families in the American sector had refrigerators, but no one else. We had a small ice box like the one used by our forefathers in early America.

Cattle were butchered in the early morning and the meat brought to market by 5:00 a.m. To get the best cuts and get them before they spoiled, you had to be there early. We ate well. Several times a week I went to the market for meat. The meat was hung out in the open on hooks. Flies and other insects swarmed all around. I made friends with one vendor who kept back the entire filet mignon for me. He would wrap it first in a washed banana leaf then in a newspaper.

Out of town, maybe seven or eight miles, was a paved landing strip. No buildings, just the one-mile long landing strip. The road ran parallel to it and not far away. When I rode my bicycle to a village in that direction, I always went over to the

runway and peddled that mile. It was so much easier than the dirt road.

When we arrived in Limon, there was a small Spanish Church of God in Cienegitas, west of town. We didn't have an English-speaking church downtown, so my first job was to get one started. Your grandmother made a note in our diary (January 4, 1957) the day we arrived, "No money, no house, no furniture, no church..." A reflection of the facts and feelings of our circumstances. We had a long way to go.

We first rented a dilapidated old house, way out of town, next to the railroad. I am sure you have heard the expression, "Living on the wrong side of the tracks." Well, we lived there! We were there about two months and basically had nothing; only a kerosene stove, two wooden chairs, and an air mattress. I made a make-shift table out of something and, just before we left, built a closet.

We finally found a house in town (January 18, 1957) that could be arranged so that two rooms in front could be used for church services. By that time a family we knew decided to move to San

Jose, and we bought their living room set and dining table.

We had benches made for the church area right away, but waited quite a while for our furniture. Our air-mattresses were a real nuisance. Every night they would go flat and I would have to get up in the middle of the night and blow them up. Yes, with my mouth! After doing that fifteen or twenty minutes once or twice a night, you can imagine how much sleep we got. How long did we sleep on those “things?” From January 4, 1957 to April 10, 1957, three months and six days.

February 24, 1957, we held our first service in Limon. That event, however, was preceded by building benches and a pulpit; arranging the house to free the two front rooms; typing song books; printing announcements and posters; advertising on the radio; and a multitude of other things. At least after the first night we thought we had a start.

I'll get back to you later,

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben,

Black population in Limon are very superstitious. Their belief in “black magic” and “voodoo” is very strong. Even those who become Christians are greatly influenced by it. Those who attended our

church referred to them as “Black Heart People.” The spirit world is very real to them. Black magic they thought was a way of putting a “spell” on people for evil purposes.

The daughter of one of our church members was reportedly having an affair with another woman’s husband. The wife went to an individual who practiced black magic and had a curse put on her. Shortly, the woman began to refuse food and grew weaker and weaker. The doctor could find nothing wrong. Her mother asked me to go talk with her and try to persuade her of God’s love and that He would deliver her from the curse. I talked with her for a long time, but she was unresponsive. She would not give me permission to pray, saying she had rather go to hell. Her mother and I prayed, but a few days later she passed away.

Early one morning a member of our church left to go to the market. When she returned, she found a lot of chicken feathers on her porch, blood around the entrance and a small green lime over the door. She became frightened and ran to our house. We went to see what she was talking about.

There it was, the objects a “black heart” person would use to cast a curse. She claimed she did not know anyone who would do such a thing, but thought it might have been someone trying to get even with her husband. I removed the articles, prayed, encouraged her to believe in God, not black magic.

A teenage girl, who often stayed with us, told of a time she was walking up the path to her house when she was grabbed from behind and held firmly. No one spoke nor did she see anyone, but she was held so tightly she could not move. She was held for a substantial period of time then released.

Another friend said she always opened her door then turned around and backed into her house to prevent evil spirits from following her. One night she came in late and forgot to back through the door and a spirit followed her. As she prepared for bed, the spirit started pinching her arms. We saw those pinch marks.

Two lay preachers told the story of following friends down a lonely road on the outskirts of

Limon. A white man came from the bush and joined their friends who were quite some distance in front of them. Eventually they caught up with them and asked who the white man was. They denied anyone had joined them. Nothing evil but it reflects their belief in the spirit world.

Those are stories we heard or experienced. The reality of the devil is unquestionable. He works in different ways in different cultures, but always with the same purpose—deceiving men and women.

It is such a relief knowing that the angels of the Lord are encamped around about those who serve Him. If you haven't read the story of Elisha's servant seeing the angels of the Lord ready to do battle for them, you ought to read II Kings 6 right away. You need never be afraid.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben,

I am going to write about our daily lives. You have read something about it in the stories we have written, but these will be more personal.

We felt God wanted us to be missionaries, so we went to Central America for that one purpose. There is no other reason we would have left the states and remained on the mission field for as long as we did. You have to keep that in mind as you read this letter.

From the moment we agreed to go to Honduras, until we returned, money was a problem. It is easy now to see why.

The Church of God mission board's philosophy at the time was to reach as many countries as possible. When you heard a representative of the department speak, and in every article written, the emphasis was on their vast missionary empire. The Assembly of God missionary board always staffed their missions with at least two couples. It was cost effective. More could be done, morale would be high, and missionaries would remain on the field for longer periods of time. Not with the board we worked under. One couple to a station, minimum

salary, and little if any financial help in purchasing property or a building, was standard practice.

We started and remained on a salary of \$140 a month, and that came after we arrived on the mission field. We traveled to Honduras then to Costa Rica on money given to us by our local church and families. Much of it was Christmas gift money. About two years after we arrived in Limon, the mission board gave us \$200 for furniture. Only then did we have a refrigerator and dresser. We ask repeatedly for money to open out stations in the bush, assistance for lay pastors, and money for a central headquarters church. They always turned us down, saying the local church had to learn to support itself. We felt deserted by everyone except our families. If it had not been for the offerings they sent, unknown to the mission board, we would not have survived as long as we did.

Native food was cheap. We had lots of meat, produce, and fruits, but it took all our money. American goods were prohibitive. For example: a small can of peaches cost eighty-six cents, a jar of ketchup a dollar and a half, peanut butter two

dollars, three pounds of canned ham three dollars and twenty-five cents, pork and beans fifty cents a can, cranberry sauce thirty-seven cents. I am sure that doesn't sound like much to you, but think about it being 1958-59.

On birthdays or at Christmas, our families would send extra money. Most of it was used for clothing and shoes. But once we splurged and bought each other watches. Another time a short-wave radio so we could listen to American programs and HCJB (a Christian radio station) in Quito, Ecuador. An extra special gift came from Velta and Lewis, your grandmother's sister and her husband. It was a movie camera. We were very proud of it, but the film cost so much we were unable to use it as much as we would have liked.

Our diary brings to memory the cost of a few things we bought. Almost all of our clothing was tailor-made as were our shoes. Your grandmother's clothes were made for two or three dollars each. Her Easter dress in 1958, cost more—six dollars and fifteen cents. I had a nice pair of shoes made for seven dollars. On my 24th birthday

(Feb.21,1958), grandma bought a desk lamp for me at the outrageous cost of \$28.50, on credit. I couldn't believe it. She was paying me back for the \$15.00 Mirror-Matic pressure cooker I bought for her on our first wedding anniversary (1956).

I wanted a motor scooter so bad. I knew a car was out of the question. So, I settled for a bicycle. Eva and I both had one. We often went for rides around town. A few times we went for picnics at Portete, a beautiful cove on the coast; the only place with a beach. And I used it to travel to out stations where we had small congregations. There were a couple of old taxi cabs in town. A few times, when we had something too big to carry on a bike, I would use them. Most merchandise for the stores was carried by horse cart, as was produce from the country. Often a pack horse came in loaded with bananas, coconuts, or handcraft type things made by people in the bush.

Not much entertainment, I might add. We were acquainted with an American family who worked for the fruit company. They attended a Baptist mission in town, but we visited each other often.

We read a lot. Early on we joined a Christian book club and read everything they sent. I don't remember it too well, but diary entries show we went to the park often to read and just watch the ocean. Your grandmother tried her hand at painting (by number, I think) and we tried to make embroidered handkerchiefs and a quilt. I remember making kites for some of the Spanish-speaking kids. Almost got in trouble though. The black boys from the church heard about it and let me know they wanted my attention. A few times, very few, we flew to San Jose to visit with the missionaries. And one time we even went to Panama to see the canal and the American Zone. Only there three days, but it was an interesting diversion.

Time to wrap up this letter.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben,

By late 1958, we had decided to try to be home for Christmas. Our parents wanted us to come as much as we wanted to go. They sent money and members of our native church gave a little, and we saved as much as we could. And by November we had enough for air fare from Costa Rica to Mexico City and bus fare on home. So we thought we would just take a little longer for the trip.

On November 24, we left Limon for San Jose. The next day we left for Mexico City. At 7:00 p.m. the same day we boarded a Chichwhurches bus for home. We arrived in Juarez, Mexico across from El Paso, Texas, at 10:50 a.m. on November 27. We left for Pomona at 4:00 p.m. and arrived there at 10:00 a.m. the next day, a long trip, with little rest.

We had other thoughts about going home at this time. I wanted to teach at West Coast Bible College and attend Fresno State University. By this time I had decided that missionary work was not where I was “supposed” to be or wanted to be. The severe conditions under which we worked made it

seem like we would never be able to make any progress. Teaching in a Christian school seemed to be an alternative, but that decision had not been made. There were probably some thoughts of returning to the mission field as I registered for some Spanish classes while we were in Fresno.

Bob Fisher was a long-time friend, and current Superintendent at West Coast. I talked with him about working there, but nothing was open. He said he would keep it in mind and if something did open up, he would get in touch.

We had a great time at home and didn't want to leave, but we had to. On January 6, Mom and Dad drove us to my brother's (Glen) in Buckeye, Arizona. We left by bus on January 8, and arrived in Mexico City on the 10th.

During two days in Mexico City, we did "cheap" sightseeing: Floating Gardens, Chapultepec Park and Castle, the University of Mexico, an exclusive, expensive residential area, Palacio de Belles Artes, and the old Catholic church downtown.

We arrived back in San Jose on January 13, and left for Limon the next day.

Back in Limon, things were pretty much the same as they were when we left. But on February 28, I thought I ought to write Bob Fisher. It was not an easy letter to write. I wasn't sure of God's will and that was very, very important. Still, I couldn't put aside the dissatisfaction I felt and thought it might be God leading me in another direction. Finding and responding to God's will has been a problem all my life. He has never spoken to me clearly.

Bob responded affirmatively to my letter on June 18. I immediately I wrote a letter of acceptance and advised Vessie Hargrave and the mission board of my decision.

Things began to move pretty fast after that. We sold all our furniture and personal belongings we could. Most of it was bought by a couple from the States who came down to work for the oil company. After they bought it, they changed their plans and left on the same plane as we did. I guess

the good Lord sent them down to buy our furniture so we could go home. Some stuff we simply left.

During our term in Costa Rica we developed some close relationships and in that sense, it was hard to leave. Yet we were excited and left Limon on the morning of July 17, 1959.

We arrived in Los Angeles at 11:15 p.m. on July 19. Many of our brothers, sisters and parents met us at the airport.

Thus ended our missionary adventure. I wish I could have reported greater things for those years, but can't. I am not ashamed of the effort we put forth. It was all we could offer—it was our best. The results, however, left much to be desired. Perhaps, and I pray it will be that more was accomplished than we know. For now, those years must be left in the hands of our Lord.

My next letter will begin a new phase of our lives. Until then. . .

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben,

July 1959 found us back in the States. We tried to keep abreast of the changes taking place while we were away, but it was not easy. We didn't have American newspapers and had to rely on our short-wave radio and Spanish language newspapers.

In our absence, Dwight D. Eisenhower and Richard Nixon were re-elected. Looking back over the chronicles of those years, it seems like the world scene was one of racial and territorial strife. Major news items were almost exclusively focused on bickering and fighting among nations and racial turmoil within our own country.

The United States launched a prototype guided missile, one capable of carrying an atomic warhead (2-22-55); Russia exploded a hydrogen bomb (11-26-55) and launched Sputnik, the first man-made satellite, into orbit.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled (5-31-55) that racial segregation must end "with all deliberate speed"; Rosa Parks, (12-1-55) defied Alabama

state law by refusing to give up her seat in the front of the bus to a white person; Rev. Martin Luther King was found guilty (3-22-56) of orchestrating the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama; the Arkansas militia kept (9-4-57) nine blacks from entering a white high school in Birmingham; a black minister was beaten (9-9-57) trying to enroll his daughter in school; a bomb (9-10-57) destroyed a school which admitted blacks in Nashville, Tennessee; Mobs in Little Rock, Arkansas, forced (9-23-57) nine black students out of school; President Eisenhower sent the (9-24-57) Arkansas National Guard to restore order; the next day, Governor Faubus ordered the National Guard to stop black students from entering a white high school.

During those difficult times, the American people were extremely divided. America was the talk of the world. I remember vividly the talk among the black people in Honduras and Costa Rica. Even those who could afford to travel to the States were afraid to do so. I spoke on the anniversary of the Black Star Line in Limon. This

organization, based on the work of Marcus Garvey in the United States, was extremely vocal about the racial activity in the States. I, personally, was never threatened and it was an honor to get to speak to them on such an occasion.

There were positive things that happened during these times as well. For example: no-iron dacron polyester was put on the market (1-5-55). I recall wanting pants and shirts made from the material when we came home for Christmas. In the humid, Central America climate, it was just the thing. I bought several pairs of pants to take back with me. Bell Telephone used light (10-4-55) from the sun to power a phone for the first time; Ampex introduced (4-14-56) a VCR to record TV shows on magnetic tape.

And yes, when we returned, we returned to fifty states instead of forty-eight. Alaska became the 49th state (1-3-59) and Hawaii the 50th (8-21-59).

It is amazing the change that takes place in a few short years. Not only on a world or national level, but with towns, families, and friends. We left as young, inexperienced kids. We returned, three

and a half years later, much more mature, experienced, and wiser. We went through what we had only heard from our parents. Being alone, in a foreign country, without family and support, laboring against odds, and in need of finances most of the time, was what some people call a “growing experience.” For sure, we changed.

I think, too, there was a sense of disillusion. I really felt defeated. You see, I was reared under high parental expectations, that God had a special work for me. I spent several years in college preparing for what I thought was God’s will. Now, with very little to show for it, I was returning home without a clear picture as to why or what to do next. True, I planned to go back to school and teach at a Christian college, but those were temporary “fill-ins”; moves I had to make to get out of an unsuccessful, unproductive situation and try to save face at the same time.

I will return to that topic many times as I write you. For much of my life has been spent searching for that “special” work I am supposed to do.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben

We left home on August 27, 1959, for Fresno, California, to begin the 59-60 school year. A month earlier we were interviewed by Bob Fisher, the Superintendent of West Coast Bible College and the overseer of the state. It was agreed that I would serve as Dean of Boys and teach a Spanish class. Not a great job, but an opportunity to go full-time to Fresno State University. That was the goal. I don't remember the salary. It wasn't much. We had a very small two-room apartment in the boys' dormitory. A diary entry says that one time when your Great Grandfather Bradford came to visit we had fourteen cents in our pocket. Must have been a "God will provide" type salary.

Your grandmother tried to find another job. But it seemed that everyone wanted office workers who could take shorthand. So, she went to school awhile. She tried stuffing envelopes, selling Avon,

and working with the girls at WCBC. Without that, we would not have made it through the year. In fact, your grandmother left Fresno in April, 1960 to try to find a permanent job in Pomona, before students hit the labor market.

Boys Dean at a Christian college might sound like a simple job. It wasn't. Students in the dorm were students who attended high school. Most of them were not Christians and some were sent there because they were not doing well in public school.

The Church of God is known for its strict religious rules and WCBC was no exception. Young people had a hard time adjusting. I became a policeman of sorts; making sure boys stayed away from girls; checking rooms at night to see they had not slipped out; insisting on clean rooms; assuring they attended nightly prayer meetings; keeping the dorm quiet during the nightly study period; and numerous other jobs.

Some students had to be disciplined, some expelled. Some couldn't stay out of the girls' dorm, others were found with cigarettes. For a while there was stealing going on. I had to be

involved in all the disciplinary meetings of staff.
No fun!

The Spanish class did not work out. It was in the evening and only four people signed up. Finally, there was only a retired couple. I am not sure why they were even taking the class. It was probably disbanded before the end of the semester. I don't remember.

I completed two semesters at Fresno State with some degree of success. I will always remember the Spanish instructor. She was an older woman from Spain—dignified and very knowledgeable. Her primary job was hosting a Spanish language TV program in Fresno. Her speech was flawless, hard to imagine.

About Christmas 1959, Brother Glover, a teacher at WCBC, and I went to Pomona to talk with Rev. Danny Drake about working in the new Christian day school that was to open in the Fall; buildings were already under construction. Brother Glover would become Principal and I would be one of the teachers.

Rev. Drake had talked with me about the school earlier, at the time I came home from the mission field. That is one of the reasons I decided to major in education. Again, I can't say that I felt this was the "special call" on my life. It was something that looked good, but paid very little. We were, however, back in southern California with our parents.

Finances were a problem in Fresno. Only with help from our parents were we able to pay tuition and buy books at the university. We received one offering from the church (\$250) during the first semester. It was actually money pledged for a mimeograph machine while we were in Limon. For some reason, the church clerk had not sent it. We felt we had to find work that would meet our financial needs. That really was the driving force in returning to Pomona.

That takes us through our Fresno years. It was not an exciting, productive, or fulfilling period, but another attempt to find our place in God's scheme of things.

In the next letter I will tell you about our teaching experience at Pathway Christian School.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben,

In the last letter we had just left Fresno headed for good old southern California. We were really looking forward to it.

Your grandmother returned to Pomona in April (1960), but didn't find a suitable job immediately. A job was offered to her, at a place that distributed pornography. Can you imagine grandma working in a place like that? No way!

She did, however, go to work at Erskine Chevrolet (May 16, 1960) before I arrived; it was, without doubt, a Godsend.

We found a house to rent at 630 Third Street, almost downtown. At first, we rented a small apartment, two rooms and a bath, on the back side

of the house. And of course, it was not without a story.

One day the pilot light went out and allowed gas to accumulate. When Grandma Eva struck a match to light it, she was blown back against the wall. It's a wonder she was not severely burned. God does watch over us, doesn't He?

When the other renters left, we took over the entire house. It was old, but as the saying goes, "It had character." We really liked it, but it wasn't long until the city purchased the property.

Oh, yes, there was another interesting story connected to Pathway. Spanking was legit and acceptable. One time, a stubborn student broke the rules and I gave him a rather firm blow on his buttocks. When he went home his dad exploded. He promptly came to the school. When he got out of the car, he picked up a claw-hammer from the back seat. He confronted me and only calmed down after a lengthy discussion.

We lived at the Sixth Street address until grandma's parents moved over to take care of Mom and Pop Maples. While there they lived in a

cleaned-up chicken house. At that time, we moved into their home on Encino Place.

When Grandma Eva worked at Bob Erskine Chevrolet, her boss flirted with her. Since she did not wear a ring, he didn't think she was married. The flirting stopped, but Papa Jackie thought it was time to prevent further incidents. He bought her a wedding ring even though it was against Church of God rules.

The diary entry on August 17, 1960 shows I bought her a wedding ring on that date, but it was too small. A resized ring was ready on our fifth anniversary, August, 20, 1960.

Now, after all that documentation, I'll close until next time.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben,

My memory will have to serve me well from this point on. With the exception of hard evidence from the Youth Training School (YTS) riot, there are no documents to rely on.

I recorded a confrontation at Pathway Christian School in the last journal entry. Other than that, my memory is vague. There are some pictures of board members and teachers, but absolutely nothing about deliberations or decisions.

Grandma Eva was officially the school secretary, but her duties were widespread—from cafeteria help to student discipline. I can't remember how long she served Pathway, but it was more than eight years.

The Pomona Church of God, was my home church. My family attended there from the time we arrived in California, about 1947-1948. At that time the church was on Sixth and Linden and known as the Firebrand Church. Many “Texas transplants” began to worship there and, as would be expected, the name was changed.

We attended there until the auditorium was completed at Pathway Christian School. When the church building was finished on South Reservoir, our family moved with it.

I left for Lee College while the church was on Sixth and Linden. I did not return until after my trips to Lee College, International Preparatory Institute (IPI), and traveling in Central America.

You will recall that I met Grandma Eva in the parking lot of the church shortly after my return. That is an entirely different story told in detail elsewhere.

I’ll close for now,

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben,

I taught third and fourth grades at Pathway, but only for a portion of the school year. I can't remember that experience at all.

The Pathway experience ended abruptly. I can only explain it as God's providence. You will have to decide as you read this account.

My brother, Sonny, the barber who lived in Whittier, knew the superintendent of the Boys School. He asked him to put in a good word for me at the Youth Training School (YTS) in Chino. I was called in for an interview which I passed and was offered a job immediately. It was for that reason I had to leave Pathway School before the end of the school year.

Remember now, I'm telling you this story from memory. Some things, however, are as clear as if they happened yesterday.

The YTS was a prison for youth, 15-20, who it was thought could benefit from vocational training. All types of training were available; carpentry, electrical, automotive, janitorial, and others I can't remember. It was a good opportunity for those who wanted to benefit from it.

I served as a Group Supervisor and Senior Group Supervisor on a living unit, then, on completion of a BA degree, promoted to Classification Counselor.

Legal definitions and working definitions were often quite different. Following are those taken from the Report of Appointment: Group Supervisor, effective date 10/19/61; Parole Agent 1, effective date 10/17/66; Senior Group Supervisor 6/24/63; Parole Agent 1, 4/1/67 (moved to different Dept.); Treatment Team Supervisor 8/17/70; Vocational Rehabilitation, Pasadena District office 11/15/71 (transferred from YTS).

Classification Counselor was a great job. I spent my day helping inmates decide what occupation they would like to pursue. If such a desire was not available at YTS, we would find training that would help them attain their goals on the outside. It seemed too good to be true.

Peace vanished quickly one morning shortly after the inmates left for the trade area. Unknown to staff, word had been circulated to start a riot.

I was on my way to the trade area when an inmate from my living unit ran up to me. “Mr. Scott,” he said, “go to the unit and lock yourself in the control room. If you don’t you’ll get hurt.” I pleaded with him not to get involved. At that moment, another inmate I knew began climbing the fence to freedom. I begged him to get down. About that time a guard in the control tower fired a tear gas grenade across the football field in our direction. (I have the grenade in my possession).

The escape was brought under control but several inmates were still loose. Others caught in a nearby cornfield.

Younger escapees were given a year or more extra time at YTS; older inmates were transferred.

My prison work was over. There was something inside that kept telling me there is a better way to serve the Lord. That ended my “prison” ministry.

I will continue the story in the next episode.

Papa Jackie

Jessy and Ben,

My desire to help imprisoned young people changed after the riot. I soon discovered the Department of Rehabilitation—an arm of the State dedicated to training and securing employment for handicapped individuals.

My first assignment was in Pasadena, the California office of the State Department of Rehabilitation. I can’t find records to show how long I served there, but it was for some time. I then transferred to Covina when the district manager

felt he had to relieve the current supervisor for poor work.

I held that position until I retired in May 1996. Both the clerical staff and counselors were very capable people; supervising the office was a pleasure. It was to that staff I gave my farewell address.

Before I retired, on March 20, 1996, my supervisor, John Geisbauer, wrote this memo to me:

Jack: Thanks for your thoughtful reflections. You have been an exemplary Rehabilitation Counselor, Management Assistant, and Program Supervisor. More even than that, you have been our moral compass to keep us on track and to remind us of "First Principles." I will always appreciate having worked with you and having known you. And, I hope to stay in touch. You have always made my path easier, my load lighter. There is nothing to be forgiven, but I do hope you will forgive me for any adversity I've caused you. It has been a privilege to know you and work with you. John.

Retirement Luncheon

May 16, 1996

For several weeks now I have been thinking about what to say at this time. It hasn't been easy. The emotions I now feel, I have never felt before. Frankly, I don't recommend them. They are difficult if not impossible to describe. Regardless of those feelings, I want very much to tell you what a privilege it has been working with you. The problem is I don't know where to begin.

I think maybe if I were an artist I might be able to express myself in a painting. Perhaps I could paint each of you at your desk. With one big swoop of your arm, I would show that you have cleared your desk of all litter—medicals, school transcripts, letters, memos, reports. Everything! Then I would paint you looking very intently across the desk at an individual who really needs help. I would paint one “hand-signing” words of encouragement and hope. Another would be explaining in child-like language how to move

from a sheltered workshop to the work world. And yet another would be painted counseling an immigrant in Spanish. One of you would be telling an individual they could work in spite of vision loss. And, a special education student, who doesn't have the faintest idea about how to compete with others, would be receiving guidance. Most assuredly, one of you would be shown counseling with a mentally ill person who could barely force himself to come into the office. I would paint the clerical staff keeping the computer codes correct, making sure authorizations passed inspection and were mailed. I would paint you chasing down a counselor for a signature, talking with an angry client on the phone, maybe setting the supervisor straight. Somewhere, way off in the background, barely visible, but smiling and proud, I would paint myself looking at each of you as you were giving yourself to others, and a caption would read, "The way rehabilitation ought to be."

Then I thought, I could never paint a picture like that. I can't even write my name legibly.

Perhaps, I thought, if I were a composer, I could put together a symphony, showing how the different instruments play together to produce a beautiful, meaningful piece of music. Maybe I could describe in that way my appreciation of how we worked together. But alas, I am not a composer.

I thought if I were a poet or writer I could paint word pictures, telling the story of God's creation working together for good. Maybe I could disguise the human players as stars, or trees, or animals, or birds. Then each of you would read it excitedly to find out how you were portrayed. But, that idea too faded into the wild blue yonder as I awoke to reality. I am not a poet nor a writer.

Again, I ask "What am I to do?" I am not an artist, a poet, a writer, nor an orator. I am just me. What can I say that will let them know I am truly grateful for the past eleven years? I still don't know what to say or do. But, being just me, I'll tell you one of my favorite stories.

A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky

places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

In that sense, you are sowers. You are sowing seed every day. Some of your efforts will fall on stony ground, some will be burned by hard times, some the thorns of life will strangle. But most of your efforts will produce fruit. In spite of difficult times, even when you don't feel like it, keep on sowing. The Good Book says, "Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap."

May God go with each of you.

Jessy and Ben,

I retired from the State of California on May 16, 1996. Grandma Eva, however, had to continue working until a replacement could be trained.

She worked in cost accounting at Industrial Brush (IBC) in Pomona, California, for eighteen and a half years. She remained at IBC for two

weeks until her supervisor returned from sick leave.

Eva's diary shows she "left Upland, California on plane for Kansas City, Missouri. Tim and Jack left at 11:30 a.m. driving a truck and moving van with a trailer.

Jack and Tim arrived on Monday, May 27, at 6:00 p.m. On May 28, 1996, they moved into a home at 8508 N.W. Rhode Avenue, in Kansas City.

Saturday, July 13, 1996, they deposited \$100 on a Ranger Bass boat.

On July 15, 1996, they deposited \$1000 on a 1994 Jayco fifth-wheeler in Montrose, Missouri. On the 24th, they paid the balance of \$13,295."

Just a side note: on December 23, 1996, Grandma Eva walked quickly out the front door in Kansas City. Immediately she slipped and fell on her tailbone. Jack ran out to help her and slipped on the same ice-coated sidewalk and fell right beside her.

Now to continue the journey to Arizona. We left Nixa Saturday, December 28, 1996 and arrived

in Chandler, Oklahoma at the Oak Glen R.V. Park at 5:00 p.m. Next day, we drove to Tucumcari, New Mexico and stayed at the K.O.A. Campground. We left K.O.A. at 7:10 a.m. expecting to reach Las Cruces Coachlight RV Park that evening.

Earl and Oleta met us in Las Cruces about 3:00 p.m. and we left at 3:20. Drove to Lordsburg, New Mexico and stayed at KOA. We arrived in Arizona City on January 1, 1997 at 1:40 p.m. and set up camp at the Quail Run RV Park. Cost for two months, \$552.

Many, many things took place while we were in Arizona City. We spent a lot of time in the Mormon Temple library in Mesa. It greatly enhanced our genealogy research.

We had visitors at the camp ground and we made a trip to California to see my brother, Sonny and nephew Bryant Sellers. On the way, we stopped by to see Toy. And on January 20, we stopped at a RV park to pick up James and Blanche and their fifth-wheeler and pulled it to the Quail Run Camp Ground.

At 10:30 a.m. on Saturday February 22, 1996, we left Casa Grande. We drove through Arizona and into New Mexico. It was a beautiful drive seeing God's creation in full bloom. That night we stayed again at the Coach Light RV Campground in Las Cruces.

We left Las Cruces Sunday February 23 at 8:00 a.m. Had lunch at Wendys in Roswell, New Mexico. Canyon, Texas was our lodging place for the night. When we awoke at 3:05 a.m. the wind was blowing hard. Earl knocked on our door at 7:05 and said a severe front was heading our way, we needed to be on our way by 7:30 a.m.

We beat the storm and stopped at McDonalds on the Oklahoma Turnpike for supper. We arrived home about 10:30 p.m., put on extra clothing and went straight to bed.

It seems when we arrived in Missouri we pulled the trailer to the Truman Lake campground. On Wednesday, February 26, she wrote, "Rained last night. Nice to hear rain pounding on the roof of our fifth-wheeler."

On Thursday, February 27 the record shows our camper was stored at June and Junior's house in Ozark. She wrote on the 28th at 4 :00 p.m. that we packed the pickup to head for Kansas City—got home at 8:30 p.m.

Tim was working there and finishing up his Masters' Degree. We wanted to be close to them because we had a beautiful granddaughter that needed our attention.

Kansas City was not ideal because the Bradford clan was in southern Missouri. We toughed it out until our home lease expired. And Tim promised he was going south after he obtained his degree. That allowed us to move to Nixa (May 1997).

Goodbye for now.

Papa Jackie

