

# **Count Your Blessings**

**By Victor F. Bogard**

*Joys and Struggles  
on the Road of Life*

*Dedicated to our parents  
Arie and Gertrude Bogaard  
John and Dora Hoevens  
who taught us "The Way"*

## FOREWORD

It is an honor and privilege to write a foreword to Vic Bogard's autobiography. His story is at once fascinating and inspirational. Although Vic would never say so, his life is a model of one lived well. These pages contain the story of a believer who is finishing strong and bringing glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

My wife Mary and I have enjoyed a friendship with Vic and Nelina Bogard that goes back nearly two decades. We first met in November 1983. At that time I served as Professor of History and Director of Wheaton College's Marion E. Wade Center which houses the world's most complete collection of writings related to C.S. Lewis.

That autumn as the Bogards were traveling through the Chicago area they dropped in to see the Wade Center. Before the day ended Mary and I took them to lunch. Vic and Nelina donated their automobile to the Wade Center and we made plans to rendezvous in California so that Vic and I could jointly spread the good news of Jesus Christ via the life and writings of that influential British apologist, C.S. Lewis.

Over the years, Vic Bogard has worked tirelessly to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. His relationship with me toward that end is only one glimpse of how this traveler, speaker, and friend has lived out Christ's call.

Vic opened numerous doors for me to give lectures and informal talks on C.S. Lewis. Beyond this he and Nelina made several substantial financial contributions to the Wade Center's efforts to collect Lewisiana. A remarkable example of his generosity took place in the late 1980s when Vic accompanied me to England and made it possible for the Wade Center to purchase C.S. Lewis's personal library. Thanks to this effort, the Wade Center has acquired more than 2,500 books from Lewis's personal collection, including many volumes signed, underlined, and annotated by the late C.S. Lewis.

Vic Bogard is a splendid example of the outworking of the parable of the talents. The Lord has given Vic a wonderful wife and good children in a home blessed with the gift of hospitality which is spearheaded by servanthearted Nelina. Over the years, this couple has held with an open hand the resources God has entrusted to them. Not until judgment day will we see how many families, churches, institutions and full-time Christian workers have been blessed through their gifts of encouragement.

In this season of Vic's life God continues to multiply the talents. Still entrusted with traveling, speaking, teaching gifts, Vic is now exercising the gift of writing.

May the Lord Jesus Christ be glorified through Vic's writing as much as He has been in the faithful exercise of Vic's other gifts.

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## PREFACE

*"Autobiography, we know, is the most unfaithful form of literature."*

- Kierkegaard

Autobiographies nearly always struggle to make the author look good. I think that is what the Danish philosopher Kierkegaard was trying to say in the above quote.

So...please forgive me if you fail to find in this book a scarcity of negative assessments. I have tried to forget the failures. I do promise the reader a faithful and accurate record of all events, to the best of my recollections.

I concur with the sentiments of a passage in Charles Swindoll's book, *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life*, (Multnomah Press, 1983) that remind us:

Quietly, without flare or fanfare, God graciously moves upon our lives, taking us from season to season as He mysteriously writes his agenda on the tablets of our hearts.

To that, my wife, Nelina, and I say a loud "AMEN!" As together we look back over 60 years of married life we can see God's hand directing our paths. At the time, each experience looked merely like another unrelated circumstance. From this perspective we gladly acknowledge our Lord's sovereign presence and superintendence in each event.

How did I get into this editorial challenge? It all began one day when I asked Peggy, my oldest daughter-in-law, to do some small task for me. "Yes, of course," she replied, "but I want you to promise that you will begin writing down some thoughts for your memoirs. I want them for us and for your grandchildren."

So, to quote the poet Robert Service, "A promise made is a debt unpaid." I had been asked numerous times to pen the highlights of events during the past eighty-four years but had successfully avoided doing so until that day.

"Don't worry about grammatical errors," said Peggy as she handed me a large, leather-bound notebook filled with lined paper. "Just write whatever comes to mind. Don't erase anything." At the end of page one, however, my eraser was nearly exhausted. My thanks to Norm Rohrer for his helpful editing and to David Christy for the book's cover design and photo displays.

The tedious details of my parental roots are well researched by Peter H. Bogaard of De Meern, Holland, who has published two books about the Bogaard family reaching back 670 years to 1320 A.D. Several copies of this book, *The Flowering Orchard*, are in the libraries of our family. One is filed with the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. I'll leave to cousin Peter the handling of our family's chronology and dwell instead on the goodness of God in shaping our lives according to His will.

I lovingly recognize the parts my father, mother and four brothers and three sisters have played. They, all in their own way, had a part in shaping my life.

I must call attention to a picture that my grandfather, Dirk Bogaard, had taken of him and his family at the turn of the Century by a professional photographer in front of their home. He insisted on having the Bible in his outstretched hands, signifying the importance he placed on God and his Word. So when I speak of my parents and siblings having a part in shaping my life, I must include these old saints who acknowledged the

importance of establishing their home and family on a firm foundation many years before I was born.

This information was passed on to us by my father who often expressed his gratitude for being raised in this kind of environment. At a recent meeting of all my brothers and sisters, we tried to recall some of our father's favorite expressions. We made a list and "Count your blessings" came out on top, hence the title of this book.

*Count your blessings,  
Name them one by one,  
And it will surprise you  
What the Lord has done.*

## CHAPTER ONE

### School Days

*A good newspaper and Bible in every house,  
a good schoolhouse in every district,  
and a church in every neighborhood...."*

- Benjamin Franklin

"Oh, oh! The kids forgot their lunch pail."

Those words, spoken by my mother in the fall of 1919, are my earliest recollection. Mother quickly asked me to take the pail to the school house a mile and a quarter away and give the lunch to my brother Richard (eight) and to my sister, Marjorie (six). I was met at the door by Miss McCrosky, the teacher in this small, one-room country school. She showed me to a seat. Thus began the First Grade of my elementary education at the age of four. I continued to attend from that day on.

Eight decades have passed since that day. Schools are more sophisticated today, but in the search for truth the educators have eliminated the only source where truth can be found. Daniel Webster (1782 - 1852), one of America's greatest statesmen and orators said:

"If religious books are not widely circulated among the masses in this country, I do not know what is to become of us as a nation. And the thought is one to cause solemn reflection on the part of every patriot and Christian. If truth be not diffused, error will be. If God and His Word are not known and received, the devil and His Word will gain the ascendancy; if the evangelical volume does not reach every hamlet, the pages of a corrupt and licentious literature will; if the power of the gospel is not felt throughout the length and breadth of the land, anarchy and misrule, degradation and misery, corruption and darkness will reign without mitigation or end."

I believe I have lived to see this prophetic statement made by Webster some 150 years ago, literally fulfilled. What we have seen in the schools this year, 1999, confirms my evaluation. One of my best teachers, Elizabeth Den Hartog, had a class called "Citizenship". She read the Bible to all the students, then emphasized individual responsibilities in truth, courtesy to others, gratitude, respect for flag, and loyalty; the list is endless but it all had a profound effect on my conduct throughout my life.

We are only on the opening pages of this autobiography and already I'm telling readers what's wrong with today. Please forgive me, but in thinking about my elementary education I had to quote this great statesman, Daniel Webster. Read on. I promise to behave.

## **'If Y'ain't Dutch, Y'ain't Much!'**

My father, Arie D. Bogaard, was born to Dutch immigrants on a farm north of Orange City, Iowa in 1885. My mother, Gertrude DeHaan, was born south of Orange City two years later. Both were faithful members of the Dutch Reformed Church. My father received from the government 160 acres of land on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota for homesteading. It was terribly lonely for the young man out there in the Coyote State. After spending only one year on the reservation he returned to Iowa, married my mother on February 2, 1911, and never went back. With money from his father, they bought a 160-acre farm south of Sheldon where all of us eight children were born.

Their first child, my brother Richard, was born 11 months after their wedding, followed by seven more children over the next 22 years. My youngest brother, Calvin, told me recently that he had "caught the last egg my mother produced at the age of 46." The family roster read: Richard (1911), Marjorie (1913), Victor (1915), Leona (1919), Milo (1921), Norma (1927), David (1928), and Calvin (1933).

When I think of my growing-up years I separate the five older children from the three younger ones. Dad and Mother had a formal family photograph taken in 1925, thinking that their family was complete. However, through the sovereignty of God three more children were born later. Of the final lot my father said, "These are the best." And with that these three juniors heartily agree.

The Bogaard family always ate together around our large tafel (table). We didn't have then the distractions of television and fast-food restaurants. After offering thanks to our Heavenly Father, Dad always started passing the food to his left. I sat to his right so you can see that I was always served last. I usually got the short end of the helpings. This might not be an accurate evaluation because I'm the tallest of the family. Dessert was always dished out before we ate so I got a fair rationing of that. As the family grew, rations became smaller because they always came out of the same quart fruit jar.

After we finished eating, my father would reach up to the telephone that had a large shelf on it. He would read a chapter or so from the Bible. One of his favorite passages was Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast."

We would all bow our heads, fold our hands and offer a silent prayer. Most Hollanders look to their Christianity as a very personal relationship. Sometimes the children have a few words they are taught to say at the close of a prayer or Bible study. After the "Amen," we would run outside for work or play, depending on our ages.

My Papa was a stern Dutchman. We children were never allowed to question any decisions he made. Mother was more flexible and, I dare say, more "reasonable". I can never remember a time when Rich, Marj or I ever deliberately disobeyed them.

## **Love Is a Debt that Can Never Be Paid**

Both of my parents had some sterling attributes which come to mind very vividly. After dinner my father would take the baby and rock it to sleep. He was always very concerned about my mother's heavy duties. Whenever Dad would see her carry a bucket

of water, milk or eggs across the yard he would call out, "Set that down! The boys will carry that."

He always did things to make life easier for Mother. He put a basement under our house. We had the first electric power in the neighborhood. He bought her a piano and he would play the violin. Mother made the three older ones sing hymns. This didn't last long because very few of the Bogaards are gifted with a voice.

Mother was a caring and loving person. If you sat next to her, she would soon be touching and caressing you. At bedtime she would take the three of us upstairs and have us kneel by the bed to recite a Dutch prayer. I have many fond memories of my youth that I can recall today. Yes, I was blessed to have been raised in a functional home.

Mom and Dad lived through a changing era. Society back then expected daughters to be homemakers; they were expected to sew, to darn socks, to can fruits and vegetables for consumption in the winter, not to mention the most important chores--cooking, baking and cleaning. In the 1920s, very few country girls went to high school. My sister Marjorie was no exception. All of my sisters were expected to help raise the younger children and mature into marriage and finally motherhood.

Growing up on a Dutchman's farm was not for weaklings. In summer months we rose at 6 a.m., herded the cows out of the pasture into the milking barn, milked from three to five cows each, separated the cream from the milk, fed the livestock and harnessed the horses for the field work. At different ages we would graduate to different chores. There was always plenty of work to go around.

Mom called us in for breakfast at 7:30. Then back into the fields we'd go during summer months to plow, harrow corn, rake hay or hoe weeds. Younger siblings pulled out morning glories from the corn fields.

After stuffing ourselves we went back into the fields to work from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., then repeated the morning chores until supper at about 7 p.m. "Lunch" at noon was called "dinner".

We had fun times on evening rides to the neighbors--the Vander Pols, Wiekamps, Van Aalsburgs and Schneiders. We usually went by horseback, but if Marjorie went along we'd hitch Slim to the buggy. As we grew older, we would take the car and go into Sheldon on Saturday and Sunday evenings. Rich was three and a half years older than I, so I got to go into town a little sooner than the usual 16 years when most fellows went out for evenings of fun, eating popcorn on Main Street.

### **What's In a Name?**

Why is my name spelled "Bogard" while the rest of the family uses the Dutch "Bogaard"? Simple. I dropped the second "a" in my name upon graduation from high school as a form of mild rebellion. I figured one "a" was enough. My father never said much about it. I cared little in those days about our rich Dutch heritage that included some of the world's greatest artists, explorers and military statesmen. I'm sure most of my readers have heard of Van Gogh, Rembrandt, and Jon Stien as some of the world's leading artists.

Some years later Dad gave monetary gifts of \$500 to each of his children, but I was not included. Dad's comment to my brother Milo was, "Victor will know why."



Dropping the extra "a" had cost me some money! Our three grandsons have corrected my youthful indiscretion. They now sign their names "Bogaard". Our Dutch ancestors would be happy. The name "Bogaard" means "Flowering Orchard."

School was never difficult for me. My siblings and I always had good teachers and plenty of time to complete our assignments during school hours. We had little, if any, homework.

Our teachers were young women, many who had two years of training at Iowa State Teachers College in Iowa City. Their classes were full of youngsters, some of whom were not much younger than the teachers. In those days, teachers received salaries from \$25 to \$35 per month. Parents supported the teachers. Pupils received little help from their parents.

### **Farewell To An Era**

In 1991, the Sheldon city fathers moved one of those rural school houses into a park and turned it into a museum. I was asked to write a short tribute to all those young ladies who had served our community so well. On June 28, 1991, I wrote what I called "An affectionate tribute to all the county school teachers and the rural schools that they taught in." Here is the complete letter:

The year was 1919. My brother Richard forgot his lunch. Although I was only four years old, my mother instructed me to take his lunch to the school nearly one and a half miles away. The teacher, Miss McCroskey, placed me in a small desk with the first graders. Thus started my education at School District #8 in Carroll Township. In looking back now, over seventy years later, I feel very fortunate to have lived in a time when it was possible to have an elementary education in this unique environment.

It is not the purpose of this essay to evaluate today's system with the past, which is impossible to reinstate, but rather to exalt the teachers of these rural schools whose footprints of their labors span the globe. These young ladies, only a few years older than some of their students, were expected to do a myriad of tasks, such as janitorial work, supervise recreation, shovel snow off the walk, keep the furnace supplied with fuel, and frequently prepare a hot meal, not to mention their basic duty of teaching--often 8 grades and 30 or 40 classes. A herculean assignment, to say the least, but what a legacy they left.

The Sheldon Community should be complimented in their endeavor to preserve a little history of those by-gone years. Possibly a corner could be set aside and used as a sort of "Hall of Fame". A plaque of good quality, engraved with the names of all of those valiant ladies from O'Brian County, would honor those who gave so much to so many for such little compensation or recognition.

My last memory of my rural school is a very somber one. In the mid forties, after the school had been closed for a few years, my wife and I drove past the site. There, jacked up on heavy timbers, ready to be moved, was a part of my birthright. Carroll School District #8 was no more....

One day shortly after World War II ended I was chatting with my only classmate, Emmett Mullin. Now an attorney, Emmett stated that any success he may have enjoyed in life can be attributed to those outstanding young teachers we had in our early years. He mentioned in particular Elizabeth Den Hartog, his 7th and 8th grade teacher. In 1963, my

friend Emmett was appointed a federal judge by his college friend, John F. Kennedy. Emmett was very bright. He sort of set the pace at school. In order to keep up, I had to study a little harder than I might have otherwise. (Thank you, Emmett.)

When I was eight or nine years old, I went to a Fourth of July Parade in Sheldon. The last man in the parade was a sailor dressed in a white uniform. He ran from curb to curb, shaking hands with spectators and having a good time. That night when we got back to the farm I announced to my family that I wanted to be a sailor some day.

My high school years were spent at Archer High, ending at graduation in 1932. Archer was a small town of about 300 souls. It had a high school of about 50 students with 100 pupils in the grammar school. Sheldon was a much larger city of approximately 4,000 people. The Archer School Bus picked up students about a mile and a half from our house, so it was decided that I'd go to Archer. My brother, Rich, enjoyed work more than school, so there was never a question whether he would continue his education by going to high school. With Marjorie, it was a different story. She was a good student and wanted to continue on to high school. I remember her tears when it was determined that she was needed at home to help raise the younger brothers and sisters. This was often an accepted practice in those days for farm girls.

### **Goodbye to Sheldon**

"A boy's will is the wind's will," said the poet Longfellow, "and the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts." I spent one year working on the farm after graduation from high school, knowing that I would be doing anything but farming later on in life. I was Iowa born and bred, all right, and on Iowa corn I was fed (not to mention all the barley, oats and flax). However, a boy knows down deep whether or not he's a farmer.

So in January, 1933, I went to Sioux City and took an examination to enlist in the U.S. Navy. I was informed by the officers in charge that it would be 10 months before I'd be called, so I went back and continued working for Dad with no pay.

On Saturday night, my mother gave us each a quarter. We would usually go to a movie in Sheldon, then have an ice cream cone or buy a bag of popcorn. With this limited activity, you can understand why I was looking for something beyond Sheldon, Iowa.

Father remained stern and inflexible. I'd frequently be at odds with him over things that are too petty to recall. Of one thing I was certain: I would leave home the instant the Navy called. Not able to wait, I made plans to strike out for greener pastures before the Navy summons arrived.

Paul Niewenhuis agreed to go with me. Neither one of us had any money in our pockets. I had noticed that my father would, now and then, put into feed sacks some hens that weren't laying eggs and take them to town to sell for cash. We were still in the years of the Depression and from 1929 to 1939 money was very, very scarce. I viewed those chickens out back as just payment for my many years of hard work. I don't want readers to think I stole these chickens. It was sort of an unauthorized requisition. They were my escape from the drudgery of farm life. So I stuffed six chickens into sacks, carried them to town and sold them for a buck apiece. With six dollars in my pocket, I was free at last! Although I left home without telling my parents, I always kept in touch. I wrote a letter every week. As soon as I had a permanent address, mother would write back.

In June, 1933, Paul and I hopped a freight train heading east and rode it to Chicago where we enjoyed the World's Fair. This was my first time away from home. Sleeping in empty box cars and on park benches was a new experience for me. We ended up in Benton Harbor, Michigan, where we found work picking berries, washing dishes in a restaurant and finally sweating it out in a foundry for about five months. Paul went home after about two months; I stayed on in Benton Harbor in a boarding house with other foundry workers earning 25 cents an hour, until the Navy sent me my summons to report for duty at the Naval office in Des Moines, Iowa to be sworn in as a Navy seaman.

Eleven months earlier, when I had taken my first physical in Sioux City, I was 6' 2", the height limit to be in the Navy. Now I stood 6'3". I must have grown some during that time. Too tall.

"Go sit over there with the other three rejects," the officer in charge told me.

That was a low point in my life. The thought of going back to the farm just about killed me. My disappointment must have been registered on my face because the commanding officer invited me to sit for the exams anyhow. When they were completed, I was lined up with the others to be sworn in.

"Now, I must warn you," said the officer. "Navy bunks are only six feet long. You'll be very uncomfortable in them."

"That would be no problem," I quickly told him. He wrote on his chart: 74". In less than a minute, I had my hand in the air, pledging my allegiance to the Navy and to my Country. However, the prophetic statement that officer had made about being "uncomfortable" in a six-foot bunk came true.

With eight other men from Iowa I boarded a train heading for San Diego. A few months earlier I was riding on top of a freight car; now here I was in a pullman heading for a new life in the United States Navy.

Four days later I arrived at the San Diego Naval Training Station. It had eight barracks at that time. Today it covers more than two square miles, but the base is no longer being used. Iowa was cold, dusty and windy when I left; California was beautiful, warm, and sunny. I determined that day, November 20, 1933, that California would some day be my home.

*"What we learn in pleasure, we never forget."*

- Alfred Mercier

## CHAPTER TWO

### Navy Years 1933 – 1937

*“If the American nation will speak softly and yet build and keep at a pitch of the highest training a thoroughly efficient navy, the Monroe Doctrine will go far.”*

- Theodore Roosevelt

I was proud to be a seaman, but I can't say that I enjoyed everything about serving in the United States Navy. It proved to be extremely restrictive for this 18-year-old farm boy. While standing guard on long hours of watches or squeezed into marginal sleeping accommodations I grew lonesome for home. If it had been easy to do, I might have hitch-hiked back to Sheldon, might have stuck my feet under my parents table once again for some home cooked grub, and might have climbed into my comfortable old bed upstairs. But in the Navy I learned the discipline required of leadership and something else unexpectedly of a practical nature- the technique of dry cleaning, a trade which I pursued profitably for several years after my discharge. During the four years that I served I saved approximately \$2,000 – something my commanding officer said had not been accomplished by any enlisted man he knew of. At every opportunity I stood watch for other seaman who would rather go ashore on liberty than earn a few extra dollars on duty. I sent every pay-check home for my mother to deposit into my account at the First National Bank of Sheldon.

### **Anchors Aweigh!**

After four months in San Diego at the Naval Training Station I was assigned to the battleship *U.S.S. California*, third division. My gun station put me in the Powder Room beneath a 14-inch gun at #3 turret. I worked in one of the ship's four turrets, each sprouting with three 14-inch guns. Each gun was loaded with power in a compartment inside each turret which was covered with 14 to 16 inches of armor plated steel to protect the 40 to 50 men who were loading the guns. Each monster was loaded with a projectile about four feet long. Four bags of powder were put in back the projectile. The breech was then closed so the gun pointer could set his sights on the target. He would then close the key and Wha-a-a-am! With a recoil like that, the 2,000-pound projectile was sent into the heavens and could travel for 20 miles to the target.

The first time this Iowa farm boy saw the recoil, heard its thunder and felt the shudder I wished that the recruiting officer in Des Moines had sent me back to the farm. But before I could have second thoughts the Gun Captain leaped onto the platform and opened the breach. Compressed air spewed out smoke like dragon's breath. I quickly grabbed another bag of powder. With a smile, I realized that I was part of a team

manning a 14-inch gun that might one day be called upon to help defend this great country of ours. It was just another day of life in the Navy.

Those big guns will never be used again, nor will the battleship U.S.S. California sail against the enemy. Today, computerized rockets are launched many miles away from their targets with sophisticated propulsion apparatuses and guided with super-sensitive electronic gear answering to satellites hundreds of miles above the earth. They travel for hundreds of miles to their targets with pin-point accuracy.

On this cruise I ran into Bill Sweeney who had trained with me at the Naval station in San Diego. We became fast friends in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division and kept in touch until Bill died in 1997.

### **The Pacific Fleet in the Atlantic?**

Surprise orders from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt during his second year in office arrived in 1934 onboard the U.S.S. California. Our Commander-in- chief had decided to send the entire Pacific Fleet of 98 ships – 12 battleships, many cruisers, destroyers and supply ships – to the East Coast. Ours was not to question why. Such orders had not been carried out since the First World War a decade and a half earlier. Navy ships were always anchored in the Los Angeles Port near Long Beach, California and in San Diego. Several times a year they all went out to sea for battle maneuvers with veteran sailors and swabbies onboard. I wondered: How could such a mass of steel pass through the narrow Panama Canal? I soon found out.

As we prepared for the historic voyage I made a interesting discovery: Athletes onboard were privileged to eat at a special table. They were served steaks, hor-d-oeuvres, and desserts that the general mess never had on its menu. You can be on the roster of the race boat crew, the boxing team, and the wrestling team. Soon, I, too, was enjoying the culinary delights of the Navy's mess hall for jocks. I didn't know then the heavy price I would pay later on for my snap decision.

On May 1, 1934, every ship on the United States Pacific Fleet was amassed on the West Coast entrance of the Canal. Twenty-eight hours later, every ship had gone through the isthmus and was heading north. At Porta Bella in the Atlantic, we had our first boat race. Twelve of us oremen, pulling like mad for two miles, came in second. Then onboard the U.S.S California, we made stops with the fleet in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and at the Norfolk, Virginia, Naval Depot before arriving at the Hudson River in New York where all the ships passed in review near the U.S.S. Pennsylvania because our Commander-in-Chief was onboard that vessel.

The next day thousands of us sailors paraded up Fifth Avenue in New York City as ticker tape fell from high rise Buildings. We felt highly honored because the last time this happened was seven years earlier in 1927 when Charles Lindbergh returned from his historic non-stop flight to Paris. Then on to Newport, Rhode Island, where our rowing crew lost several more boat races.

At Norfolk, a tall Texan named John Longmire came aboard with new recruits. John, Bill Sweeney and I became inseparable. The three of us were all the Third Division Mess Cooks for a time and often went ashore together.

The U.S.S. California sailed with the fleet to Long Beach, arriving on September 10, 1934. From there we moved up the coast to San Francisco and thence to the Bremerton Navy Yard near Seattle for a major overhaul. On December 30, with thought of home, I went ashore with a 30-day pass in my pocket and boarded a Greyhound Bus for Sheldon, Iowa. The Iowa snow and cold weather reaffirmed my earlier decision not to make my home in the Hawkeye State.

Back in Bremerton I was shocked to hear the Seaman Longmire had mastoid operation at the Naval Hospital. He seemed to be his jovial self when I visited him, even talked about returning to the ship soon. But John died during the night after I visited him. His parents requested that I accompany his body back to Rockdale, Texas. There I met his sister Saphronia, a 17-year-old girl who began bombarding me with letters. After my return to civilian life I stopped by to see Saphronia at the request of her mother. By that time I had met a girl back home in Sheldon whom I planned to marry, but this didn't slow down Saphronia. Her mother called me "son" and Saphronia kept churning out her letters. We kept in touch with Mrs. Longmire until she died in 1965. Saphronia married and moved to Vermont in 1942.

My salary as Seaman Second Class paid \$1.20 a day, \$36 a month. I studied hard and raised my rank to the next grade, Seaman First Class, earning \$56 per month. Exams were mandated every six months. When I became eligible to take the tests some 500 other sailors in the entire battle fleet took the exam with me. I came in second of all those who completed the exam.

I frequently stood watch for other sailors, receiving about \$1 per night. I also scrubbed their clothes for 25 cents a bucketful of whites, shorts, and T shirts. Nearly every dime I made went home about every three months. Mother opened a bank account and watched admiringly as those dribbles climbed to nearly a \$2,000 – a sizeable amount of money in those days of depression.

Onboard the newly-overhauled U.S.S. California we sailed out of Bremerton on April 1, 1935 to join the Pacific Fleet in Honolulu 10 days later.

### **Life on the 'Quincy'**

Back in Long Beach, our homeport, Bill Sweeney showed me a bulletin informing us of some new cruisers that would be commissioned early in 1936. We both rushed to put in a request to be sent to the U.S.S. Quincy in Boston, Massachusetts. Chuck Morris joined us and we all sailed away on the U.S.S. Henderson, a naval transport, to be part of the crew of this new cruiser. Another trip through the Panama Canal...a short stop at Cuba... and finally – Boston to board the Quincy.

This sine ship was 630 feet long with nine 8" guns. Its speed was 32 knots and it was manned by a crew of 650 sailors.

Before leaving Long Beach for my trip to Boston, I enjoyed a two-week visit with my brother Rich and four other Iowa Dutchmen: Ben Kamphoff, Arie Van Nyhuis, Dick Ten Kley and Meg Rolston. My friends informed me of a certain Nelina Hoevens, a new girl who had moved to Sheldon with her parents and one brother. I heard her name frequently during our visits together. I sensed that Ben was quite fond of her. He bought her some gifts while he was in Long Beach.

The construction of the U.S.S. Quincy was delayed so on April 1, 1936 Bill Sweeney and I caught a bus for home – he to Denver, Colorado and I to Sheldon en route back to Boston where we patiently awaited completion of the Quincy.

### **Falling in Love**

On my first Saturday night back in Sheldon, Rich and I went to town with all the farm boys in that vicinity and hung around “The Rustic Mill”. Ben Kampkoff sat in a corner booth waiting for his girl to arrive. I had been told that I had met Nelina a year earlier but I could not remember the occasion. Before long I looked up and observed a beautiful girl entering the café. She looked our way with a big smile. Then she headed for our booth. “This is the girl I’m going to marry,” I decided then and there. I spent all Sunday afternoon with Nelina, and so began a serious relationship that led us to the altar on July 26, 1938 and more than sixty years of love and affection.

During those three weeks I met Nelina’s only brother, Adrian, and spent approximately five minutes with him. None of us realized at the time that within six weeks Adrian would leave this earth and be at home with the Lord for eternity where his weak heart would be made strong. Today his malady could no doubt be corrected by modern surgical procedures.

Now it’s April 9, 1936. Back at the Boston Navy Yard I was assigned to the 3<sup>rd</sup> division as pointer on Quincy’s No. 3 Turret – an eight-inch gun. Great pomp and circumstance accompanied the commissioning of the ship. Fifty-two years later, in 1988, a book was published written by Commander Grady F. Mesemer titled, “The History of the U.S.S. Quincy C.A. 39.” My name appears on page three as “A Plank Owner” (the name for men who were on the ill fated ship when it was commissioned in 1936). The Quincy was sunk on August 9, 1943 near Savo Island in the Guadalcanal area. The loss of 386 souls, in addition to many more wounded, marked the event as a terrible tragedy.

### **Decked by a Monster**

On July 20, 1936 we left Norfolk, Virginia on the shake-down cruise to England, France and Holland. En route we received orders to go to Gibraltar to protect American interests in Spain and pick-up American tourists who could not get out because of the Civil War. We witnessed bombing at Alicante Majorca (a Spanish island) but never got to England or Holland.

Being one and a half inches too tall to be in the Navy, I caught the eye of a recruiter for our onboard boxing team. I had some success when competing with fellow sailors. In Majorca, the German battleship Graf Spee invited our boxing team to a match onboard their ship. This was all before the Nazi blitzkrieg in Poland which ended all relations between our country and Germany.

When I saw my German opponent I knew I was in big trouble. If I had been able to read the words on his robe I would have known to fake some illness. Later, when I woke up on a mess table, the boxing coach told me the words on his robe read, “German

Fleet Champion". I resigned from the boxing team on the spot and lost my privileges at the athletic mess table.

### **Seeing History in the Making**

Floyd Gibbons, a celebrated news reporter, came aboard our ship and sailed with us for a few days. He informed us that we were "very fortunate to be here to see 'history in the making'". The Germans were helping General Franco using the civil war as a proving ground for a second world war. Gibbons' assessment proved to be prophetic truth. The Graf Spee would be sunk within two years in Montevideo, Uruguay. I wonder if the Fleet Boxing Champion was aboard.

The Quincy returned to Boston on October 5, 1936 for repair of items which today we would call "the punch list". In Boston on shore leave I spent a day with my classmate Emmett Mullin. He was at the Yale School of Law. I had a few visitors during my tour of duty with the Navy. Emmett's appearance was a memorable event.

I left the ship on September 3, 1937. In looking over the list of those killed onboard the Quincy I recognized some of the names from our Third Division. This was the worst defeat in the history of the U.S. Navy. Survivors are still questioning why no action was taken against those who gave poor leadership during this battle in which four cruisers and one destroyer were lost in a short time.

I wrote Nelina several letters from May 1936 to July 1937. Howard Cleveringa back home wrote to warn me that Nelina was seeing her old boyfriend, Benny, again. Rich and Howard tried to put in a good word for me, but with a distance of five thousand miles between us I assumed that this romance would end as did my fight with the German sailor. I learned later that Nelina was looking for comfort after the tragic death of her brother, Adrian. Ben, right there in our hometown, had the advantage of that round.

When Bill Sweeney and I were transferred from the U.S.S. California to the Quincy, another sailor, Chuck Morris, joined us in the transfer. He was in the 5<sup>th</sup> Division on the California so we did not know him. (There are approximately 1,200 sailors on a battleship.) Chuck became a good shipmate. He invited Bill and me to his home frequently while we were in the Boston Navy Yard. Chuck had a sister named Millie who had her eye on Bill from the first time she saw him. During every liberty, Bill would take the train about 20 miles north to her home in Wilmington, Massachusetts, near Lowell. Bill fell in love with Millie and didn't want to lose her so, they were married before our ship left for the West Coast.

### **Full 'Steaming' Ahead**

The Quincy left Boston on April 13, 1937 to join the fleet in Honolulu via Panama. My job on the Quincy was as Coxswain of #3 Motor Launch, and keeping a passageway clean outside the tailor and dry cleaning shop. The tailor's assistant, a guy named Wainwright, was quite a boozier and did not do his work. When my job finished I would help the tailor with pressing and cleaning.



One day the officer in charge came in unexpectedly and spotted Wainwright on the deck sleeping it off. He turned to me and said, "Bogard, can you handle that press?" "Yes, Sir", I replied.

A few minutes later I was a presser and Wainwright was cleaning the passageway. This job gave me an opportunity to make extra money and to learn a skill that became useful after my discharge from the Navy on September 3, 1937.

In July 1937, I knew I had to make a decision: Stay in the Navy or take my discharge. I put in for three weeks leave to consider my future plans. I had not written to Nelina often because I had been told she was seeing Ben quite regularly. My job in the Navy was paying a good wage and I had saved enough money to open a dry cleaning plant in Sheldon. The economy had hit a new low and the depression was now in its eighth year. Approximately 15% of the work force was still unemployed. As a nation, we still could not see the "light at the end of the tunnel." I was 22 years old. It was time, I decided, to find someone to spend the rest of my life with. I knew the one I wanted but...was she still available? I decided to go back to Iowa and check things out.

### **Hope Springs Eternal**

In Sheldon I quickly discovered that indeed there was hope! Nelina indicated that she still was very fond of me. We saw each other frequently. On the last Sunday of my leave, as we sat in the park at Sanborn, I made a hasty proposal. We would be married as quickly as possible and I would stay in the Navy for two more years. Today I realize that Nelina's negative response was the wisest decision we ever made together.

I returned the following day to San Francisco, quite disappointed. My future was still uncertain, although I had decided that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with that baker's daughter in Sheldon. So, on September 3, 1937, I received an honorable discharge from the U.S. Navy and headed home for Iowa. God was on his throne. All was right with the world and in my quiet time I prayed, "What's next, Lord?"

On the evening I returned home Rich and I drove to Sheldon and parked in front of a stairway that led to a dance floor over Wolfs Clothing Store. Rain poured down that evening so the two of us sat in the car watching couples going in to the dance. Suddenly a couple dashed in front of the car and ran up the stairs. It was Ben and Nelina. Ben recognized our car and waved to Rich. Soon he came back down the stairs and went next door. As he did so, I jumped out of the car and ran up the stairs. I saw Nelina talking to some friends. We greeted each other with a "Hi", and I said, "Can I pick you up tomorrow night?" Without any hesitation she replied, "Yes". I knew by the look in her eyes that there was a future for my in her life.

That fall I picked corn for my Dad and two of our neighbors. I had a very competitive spirit, so I picked 150 bushels a day at five cents a bushel. One hundred bushels a day is tops as a big day's work. As I look back, I think I was trying to impress my father. I made enough money to buy Nelina an engagement ring. I gave her the ring before her birthday on November 10.

My brother Rich became engaged to Leona Struyk. They planned to be married and take over the farm from my parents who were moving to Oregon with the three youngest children. It was decided that I would drive my parents to Oregon about

November 30. Then I would try to find a job and come back to Sheldon, marry my fiancée and take her to the West Coast. Nelina never put her approval on this plan but I assumed it would jell in time.

We arrived in Portland on about the 10<sup>th</sup> of December, 1937. The folks found a house large enough to accommodate all of us. I went out daily looking for ways to make a living. With four years in the Navy, I had some preference in all government jobs. I advertised to buy some small business – dry cleaning, restaurant, or bowling ally.

In the meantime, Nelina finally made it very clear: she could not leave her parents, inasmuch as she was their only child. I had a good lead to work in a lighthouse for the U.S. Government. This did not excite me very much, so I packed my bag and headed back to Sheldon via Greyhound bus.

I didn't fully realize that I had no home in which to drop my bags. Rich and Leona graciously let me stay with them until Arie Van Nyuis returned from the West Coast. Arie sheared sheep and lived in the old Royce Hotel. I stayed with him in an inside room, sleeping on a very small bed with no springs. I knew this job with Arie was not for the long pull. My bed in the Royce was much worse than the ones I had in the Navy so Nelina and I decided to marry and open a dry cleaning plant in Sheldon. The month of July was chosen for our wedding. We would spend August getting ready to open shop in September.

The Fiebig Bottling Company went broke, so the front office became available to rent. When the banker heard that I was going to invest all my money in a venture that already had two competitors in town he warned me that one was nearly broke and the other was always late on rent. I was deaf to these warnings and went to Sioux City to work in a plant that had the same equipment I was purchasing.

The other cleaning plants used naphthol, which was very explosive. The cleaning tubs were usually kept in back sheds. Our equipment was compact and trimmed with bright chrome. We placed it within sight of the public to observe the cleaning process. This equipment was new on the market and proved to be both efficient and profitable.

There were some problems to work out. As I recall, either Nelina or her father suggested that I join the First Reformed Church before our marriage. This involved a ceremony in which the candidate for membership would confirm his or her faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. After confirmation, you were considered to be a member of the local church and of the Body of Christ. My father was a bit of a rebel when it came to these denominational procedures. I might have agreed with some of his views, hence the delay in making my public confession. My brother, Rich, and his wife, Leona, joined me that morning to go through this ritual. Looking back some 60 years later, I see that joining the church was the right thing to do in that situation.

Nelina had to remind me that a prospective groom always asks that father of his fiancée for her hand in marriage. I had already given my fiancée a ring and Mr. Hoevens had never indicated that there was a problem. Nevertheless, I wanted to conform to custom.

My shining moment came one evening at the Hoevens' house. Nelina's mother saw me heading for the kitchen so she quickly slipped into the living room. John warmly greeted me. When I stated my intentions he reminded me that his daughter was only 19 years of age. Would it not be wise, he suggested, to wait a year? I might have mentioned

to him that night that the bed at the Royce was small and hard. John gave me his blessing on the spot so the date of our wedding was set for July 26, 1938.

*“Love is a debt that never can be repaid.”*  
- Author Unknown

## CHAPTER THREE

### Marriage

*“Who can find a virtuous wife?  
For her worth is far above rubies.  
The heart of her husband safely trusts her.”*  
- Proverbs 31:10,11

When Arie Van Nyhuis and I sheared our last sheep in May, 1938, we then started “tiling”. The ground on many Iowa farms in our area remained too soggy in the spring to till so drainage tiles were placed about three feet under the ground to carry off surplus water into some ditch or creek at a lower level. Ditching machines had been invented but it was cheaper in those days to do it by hand. Digging a ditch three feet deep and a mile long, then laying six-inch terracotta tile in the ditch required backbreaking work. After all that, the ditch had to be filled again.

I worked at tiling for two moths then turned in earnest to the job of opening a dry cleaning plant in Sheldon. I took a bus to Sioux City to work for little or no wages in a dry cleaning shop where I wanted to learn how to operate the new Triplex cleaning machine which we planned to install in our newly rented Sheldon plant. I had been exposed to the process in the Navy, but had little experience with finely-crafted fabrics. Naval Officers would occasionally bring in their wives’ clothes but 99 percent of dry cleaning in the Navy dealt with woolens.

For the entire month of June I stayed at the Sioux City YMCA. While there I bought my first vehicle – a 1936 Chevrolet panel truck.

### Wrong Time, Right Girl

When I look back on 1938 I think of the economical conditions at that time to shake my head. Nobody in his right mind would marry and start a business when up to 17% of the national work force was unemployed. The economic depression was in its tenth year, and had hit a new low in 1938. Dry cleaning was a luxury item. Those conservative Hollanders would buy a gallon of gas for ten cents, dip their clothes in the bucket and then hang them up to dry. The average wage in Iowa was lower than on the West Coast, about \$20 per week. A friend of ours married and was working for \$17 a week while living in an upstairs bedroom. The Dow-Jones Index was \$122.40. I could go on, giving many reasons not to marry, but that bed in the Royce Hotel remained very uncomfortable and very lonely.

We were two dumb kids who didn’t know any better so we decided, “We are going to marry on July 26, 1938 and open the dry cleaning shop.

## **“I Do”**

On a very hot July day, Nelina and I were married at her parents' home in Sheldon. During the day we cut some green pine branches to decorate the fireplace. After the guests were seated, Nelina's father met her at the foot of the stairs and escorted her to my corner of the room where our vows were exchanged.

One of the Van Wyk boys sang “Whispering”, and a Sipma boy played “Anchors Aweigh” on his trumpet after the ceremony. My parents could not make the trip from Oregon to attend. Remember, this was before transcontinental flights made everyone in the country only a few hours away. A trip on the train would have taken three days one way; driving a car would have required approximately four days.

I suggested that we spend our honeymoon in Benton Harbor, Michigan. When I had visited Benton Harbor five years earlier I found it to be a lovely spot on Lake Michigan with clear water for swimming, a small boardwalk, well appointed restaurants and hotels, parks and amusement centers. But in the five years between 1933 and 1938, Benton Harbor had become Slum City. We soon left and drove to Minneapolis to visit Nelina's relatives.

Back in Sheldon we learned that Nelina's father and mother had purchased a small house on Sixth Avenue for \$2,800. Yes, two thousand eight hundred dollars. They rented it to us for \$25 per month. When a garage went up, so did our rent to \$30 a month.

Thirty days into our marriage and “Bogard Cleaners” located at Third Street and Highway 60 opened for business. A handsome steam press, boiler and steam iron were kept hissing as business for the new cleaning process rolled in. My brother Milo agreed to work for us the first year. He operated the cleaning machine, delivered the clothes, picked up new business and generally took care of the customers.

Our first customer was Barney Evenson, a loan officer with a local savings and loan institution. He turned out to be a faithful customer, indeed. Half a century later when my nephew, Norman (Milo's son) celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bogaard Cleaners (notice Milo put back the double “a” in our name), Barney was still bringing in some of his clothes.

On the first Saturday of our fledging business enterprise I brought all of the cash and checks home. Nelina and I sat on the floor and did one of those crazy this kids do: We took all of the dollar bills and tossed them into the air, letting them fall on us as we sat on the floor of our living room. In those days we got 95 cents for suits and dresses, \$1.25 for overcoats. Never again were we short of money. I was just 23 years old; Nelina was 19. We worked long, hard hours – two kids who had little knowledge of running a business and limited skills in cleaning clothes. Nelina's mother helped with the tailoring and alterations. We soon hired a spotter and presser. Milo became proficient and eventually handled all phases of the cleaning operation. He boarded at our house and used the panel truck to go out to town. My brother's wages were the tidy sum of \$1 a day, in addition to his room and board. When my parents moved back to Sheldon the following year, Milo moved to their house in Sheldon.

Within six months of opening we were able to purchase an empty lot next door to the shop for \$1,150. We built on it a new, 20' x 40' cleaning shop – the first new building in Sheldon for several years. No new construction went up in the city for the decade of

the worst economic depression. For a loan we went to the same banker who had discouraged me from opening my first cleaning plant.

By the grace of God, each move was successful. This is not written to boast, only to give thanks to our Heavenly Father for his never-failing answers to prayers at a time when many of my contemporaries nose-dived into helpless debt during economic times that were worse than anything this country has seen before or since.

“Thank you, Lord. We count out blessings.”

### **Our First Son Is Born**

Having children in the first year of marriage was not in our plans. In fact, we had never even discussed offspring. However, two months after we were married, Nelina missed a menstrual cycle. After the second miss we thought it prudent to check with her family physician, Dr. Balkema.

“It’s not uncommon for a newly married girl to miss a few”, he told us.

After Nelina missed four more, I accompanied her to the doctor. He told us the same thing. But I had been sort of sizing her up from time to time and noticed that she was gaining weight. When I confronted the doctor with my observations he told us, “She’s just getting fat”.

I was born on a farm and knew more than Nelina about the reproduction process. So, I told her, “I’m going to take you to my old doctor who delivered me twenty-three years ago”. I asked Dr. Vermeer if he would examine Nelina and confirm my suspicions.

“I don’t have to examine her,” he said. “She’s pregnant.”

I reminded him that Dr. Balkema said she was “just getting fat.”

“Well”, Dr. Vermeer replied, “that ‘fat’ is going to come out and walk around pretty soon.”

On the way home Nelina told me she had felt something that morning but thought it was just a little gas bubble trying to get out. So, Vic Jr. was kicking around even before we knew he was there.

From all this it would be easy to assume that Nelina had an easy pregnancy. Hardly. Victor Jr. came only after extreme pain and difficulties. Most babies in those days were born at home. My sister, Leona, was in her last year of nurses’ training. She worked her schedule so that she could be available for our son’s delivery at home.

My sister was a little disturbed when our old farm doctor came in and sat on the side of the bed with a cigar in his mouth and wearing no gown or gloves. Only after my wife had endured approximately 14 hours of labor did her doctor decide that instruments were needed to help the delivery process along.

Eventually Grandma Hoevens, my sister Leona, Dr. Vermeer and I all got into the act, groaning and encouraging Nelina to bring that baby into the world. Finally, a 10-pound boy surfaced. We gave him the imaginative name of Victor Frank Bogard, Jr. The date was June 19, 1939 – the very day on which Nelina’s brother Adrain had died in 1936. So Vic filled a void that had been left in the Hoevens family. The doctor’s entire bill for our baby’s delivery amounted to \$25.

## **Introducing the Heir**

When our son was five weeks old, Grandpa Hoevens bought a new car. I suggested we drive it to Denver, Colorado to visit my parents who had moved there from the West Coast. I was eager to introduce our firstborn to my parents.

All my life I can remember my father boasting to his children about his accomplishments. One boast was that he took his first steps when he was nine months old. I heard it every time he encouraged one of his own children to walk. I desperately wanted Vic Jr. to beat his record. Sure enough, after many hours of coaching, Vic walked at eight and a half months.

Another of dad's boasts was that he had a thousand dollars when he was 21 years old. "None of my boys will ever accomplish *that*", he often bragged. I would remind him that I had twice that amount in the bank by the time I was 21, money saved up during my time in the Navy.

Not long after Vic Jr.'s arrival the new building for our dry cleaning establishment was finished. Our business increased considerably after one competitor closed his shop. My brother, Milo, operated the cleaning equipment; my old friend Paul Niewenhuis did the pressing. Paul was one of my first friends I had, and he stood up with me at my wedding. My parents often visited the Niewenhuis family after church while we boys went to Sunday school. After World War II, Paul opened a dry cleaning plant in Santa Monica, California and operated it for about 12 years. He died at the age of 48 with inoperable liver ailment.

Perhaps we'll understand one day in heaven the mystery of why some are taken so young.

## **Our New F.H.S. Home**

To increase homebuilding across the nation, President Roosevelt introduced a new program called the Federal Housing Authority. Money could be borrowed from a bank at a low rate of interest guaranteed by the federal government.

I heard one day about a lot on upper Eleventh Street for sale at \$350. It was on a paved street with sewer, water, curbs and sidewalks. I bought the lot and paid \$10 for a set of plans. Soon we watched with pride as our 950 square-foot house started to go up. Total cost: \$3,150. Our monthly payments, with taxes included, amounted to less than \$50. We owned one of the first F.H.A homes in Sheldon.

## **"Open the Gate!"**

At about this time, a salesman from Triplex Cleaning phoned with some hot news: The firm I had worked for in Sioux City would soon close its doors. All its equipment was for sale. I immediately made a ridiculously low offer to buy everything in the shop. Later that same day a bank officer phoned and said, "Open the gate. You have just bought all of Sioux City's dry cleaning equipment." On the strength of that sale we soon had dry cleaning plants in Sheldon, Rock Valley, and Beresford, South Dakota.

I trained workers for those establishments and sweetened the deal so each operator could eventually own his own plant. We didn't make a fortune on those deals but it was fun and a great experience.

*“Try to enlist in your service  
men who are better than yourself”*

- Andrew Carnegie



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Pre-War Years 1939 - 1941

*“There never was a good war or a bad peace”*  
- Benjamin Franklin

In 1940 my brother-in-law, Jack Duimstra, said, “Let’s go fishing in Northern Minnesota.” Nelina and I were always ready to go anyplace. A few days later we went 1,000 miles through Canada, Niagara Falls, and on through the state of New York to see The Big Apple.

The fair was a memorable event. We saw many exhibits of futuristic projects that were just dreams at the time: freeways... television... air travel... and many other displays we thought were only fantasies, a free play of creative imaginations. But we have lived to see all those things come to pass and much, much more.

Nelina was chosen (because she was such a beautiful girl) to be on a telecast. We went to another room to view this event in black and white.

While at the Fair we rode the free drop parachute fall. I don’t think my sister Marjorie realized what was going to happen until the chute hit the trip and we fell to the earth.

One evening while in New York, we discovered that the one and only fish we had caught while in Minnesota was still in the trunk of the car. Need I say more? A fishy aroma clung to our car until we sold it in 1941.

### Gearing Up for War

On the way back to Iowa we saw headlines in the newspaper screaming: “Paris Has Fallen!” It was Jun 14, 1940. The German march through Europe was almost complete. The future of the United States looked bleak and uncertain. The British needed supplies, ships, and weapons to fight off the Nazi intruders.

Milo was a member of Company I in the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Sheldon. Every summer he went to an encampment for two weeks. While there, he and members of his company were notified that the National Guard would soon be activated. The entire National Guard was soon called up for action and Company I was kept at the Sheldon Armory for several weeks beginning on February 1, 1941.

Their day of departure for active duty finally came. Church bells rang and bands played as the entire Company of 120 young men marched to the Union Depot to board a troop train for Camp Claiborne in Louisiana. The day impacted citizens of Sheldon emotionally. Wives, mothers, brothers and sisters, friends and neighbors gathered at the depot to say farewell. The dark, cloudy day matched the mood of the people in that melancholy atmosphere. Those men would be trained for one year before being sent to

England and later to North Africa where many of them paid the supreme sacrifice with their lives.

With Milo gone, we had to hire more help at the dry cleaning shop. Many of the young women of our town began to take jobs formerly held by men. Selective Service was brought into the picture and all males under 40 years of age had to register and be classified. 1-A was given to young single men; students and married men were classified as 2-A; the classification of 3-A was assigned to men over 25, married with children; I was given the classification 3-A – married, one child, and 25 years old.

Inasmuch as I had already served four years in the Navy and had lived in a town of 4,00 people, I was frequently asked, “When are you going to enlist, with all that training you’ve had?” War had not yet been declared so I put the matter aside for eleven months into 1941.

We had an ample amount of employees in the shop during the month of December that year and business was slow. So, on December 3, at about 11 a.m. I phoned Nelina and suggested we drive to California for a couple of weeks. Although we had only been married for three and a half years she was already prepared for these hasty decisions.

“Yes, I promise, we’ll be home for Christmas”, I told my wife.

We did not realize it then that four years would pass before we live together in Sheldon again.

We left Sheldon at about 2 p.m. on December 3, 1941. Grandma Hoevens hurried over to help Nelina pack. Vic. Jr. was two and a half years old. Just as I was leaving the office Hessel Dyksta, a young man who helped in the cleaning plant, walked in and heard that we were going to California. “Is there room for me, too?” he asked.

“Be at our house in one hour,” I told him.

We decided to drive south to Louisiana first to visit my brother Milo and other friends at Camp Claiborne. We arrived there on December 5 and spent Friday evening, and all day Saturday, with him. We left early in the morning of December 7.

### **‘Tora!Tora!Tora!’**

We had in our blue, 1941 Ford a small portable radio. At about 2:30 p.m. we heard a faint news report only partly audible. I pulled the car to the side of the road and placed the radio in the bridge for better reception. There in a remote part of the nation we heard the historic news: “The Japanese have bombed the U.S. Fleet at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.”

It is difficult to put into words the emotion we felt when the first words of that calamitous news struck. Every adult American alive at that time has carefully carved out in his mind a sort of mental souvenir of that moment. We all knew that our lives would be changed by what had just happened in Hawaii. Washington quickly confirmed the report.

We all sat momentarily stunned by the news. “Let’s go back to Iowa,” Nelina suggested.

“Everything is going to happen on the West Coast,” I said. We will all be in military service very soon.”

It was decided that we would drive on to Long Beach, California. Hessel had a 1-A classification so he would be inducted quickly. Somber thoughts characterized the rest of the trip. No one knew what would happen next. Along the road to California we saw many armed convoys heading west. Many of the main bridges were protected by armed guards posted to prevent sabotage.

### **Back Up the Gangplank**

In Long Beach we found accommodations at the Venetian Court Hotel, the same facility where my parents stayed when they visited me in 1935 while I was stationed on the U.S.S. California. Nelina and I never had a discussion about my enlisting for the duration of the war. Nearly every able-bodied man was ready to put his life on the line to defend his country. My 3-A classification was not being called up – only 1-A such as the one given to Hessel Dystra. He returned to Sheldon and was inducted.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of December I went to the Naval Recruiting Station to see what was happening. Hundreds of men were milling about. The Long Beach Press-Telegram reported that there were “thousands of men” at the Civil Service office but if they weren’t A-1, they couldn’t be processed for several days. I read that guards were needed at the Douglas Air Craft factory so I worked there for a couple of weeks.

Paul Niewenhuis notified me that he was going to enlist in the Navy so there was no presser at our dry cleaning plant. This caused us to drive non-stop back to Sheldon and work out this problem.

The matter resolved, we headed back to Long Beach, towing a small trailer to live in after we got there. Our Ford was overloaded so we blew out several tires along the way. All sales of tires were frozen for the duration of the war so old, second-hand tires finally got us to California.

It is now March 1 and the shipyards are calling for workers. I took a job as a machinist and worked on the main engine of a Liberty ship. My sister, Leone, and her new husband Sid lived in the same trailer park: 2930 Long Beach Boulevard. Sid and I rode together, had the same days off, and enjoyed this fellowship. Sid was drafted on about May 1, 1942 as the war heated up. I went again to the enlistment center for the Navy. Upon learning that I had been a journeyman machinist the recruiters offered me a First Class rating in the Black Gang. I wanted to have a deck rating so did not accept this proposal.

On the elevator going down to the street I met a Coast Guardsman from the recruiting office. Upon hearing my desire to be a Boatswain he said, “Come in. I think we can take care of that.” I was assured that there were plenty of slots for sea duty. A short time later I found myself back in uniform as a First Class Boatswain Mate in the U.S. Coast Guard.

I was assigned a 60-foot fireboat with 28 sailors. Think of it – farm boy from Iowa a captain of his own ship! With me at the helm we sailed that boat to San Diego and tied up to a dock with a small building on it to house the men. Our only job was to put out fires on ships, in case the Japanese bombed San Diego.

This was really a dream job. We pulled the trailer to San Diego where Nelina, Vic and I lived in a park right on the ocean. Every day we would take the boat into the bay

and shoot water into the air or aim it at a buoy about 200 yards away. It soon became clear to me that I didn't want to spend my time doing this kind of duty.

When an order came through to send two petty officers to Baltimore, Maryland for schooling in fire fighting and Port Security School, I knew this was an opportunity for a change of duty. So, I made arrangements for Nelina and Vic to return to Iowa and live with her parents. I went on to Ft. McHenry, Maryland.

On the first day I met the Commander of the base. He told me he had just been transferred from the U.S.S. Duane, the finest ship in the Coast Guard. He offered to take me there at once and make arrangements. When the Captain heard that I had four years duty on a battleship he told me to go back and get my seabags. The transfer would be in my hands before I got my bags packed. So, within 48 hours I was out to sea on convoy duty.

*“Things I delight in: The smell of the sea,  
interesting conversation, a good book, a trip  
to almost anywhere, my wife,  
family and friends – not necessarily in that order.”*  
- Victor F. Bogard

## CHAPTER FIVE

### World War II 1942-1945

“War is at best Barbarism. Its glory is all moonshine. It is only those who have neither fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded who cry aloud for blood.”

- William Tecumseh Sherman

#### Into the Fury of War

Our first orders were to sail to Boston where new equipment called Radar could be installed. It was a device used to detect and identify other ships to determine whether they were friend or foe. Within 48 hours we were sailing aboard the U.S.S. Duane toward Greenland, Iceland and Murmansk, Russia. Seventy-two hours later we saw our first evidence of war. The transport ship S.S. Dorchester was sunk the day before and the ocean was covered with debris. A total of 668 soldiers were lost, along with four chaplains who became famous for giving their life jackets to other sailors. These four brave men of God held hands, praying as the ship went down. I did not witness the sinking of this mighty ship, although several articles were written by some of the survivors.

One night shortly after the Dorchester had gone to the bottom of the sea I was standing watch in frigid weather. Salt water spray was freezing on our guns and lifelines. The sea was rough and my stomach was churning. At that moment I asked myself, *What are you doing here?* My classification had not been called up. I could be back home with my beautiful wife and sweet little son. I reminded myself: *“You volunteered for this duty so quit your bellyaching.”*

Very soon, orders came to sail to Argentina, Newfoundland to escort a large convoy leaving for the British Isles. Planes and blimps were overhead for the first few days; convoy speed: 8 knots. On the third day air cover left and we were on our own.

Every evening we were at our battle stations. The watches were four hours on and four hours off. The Duane’s position was to the rear of the convoy. When a ship went down we’d pick up survivors. All in all there were 105 ships, all cargo vessels – no troop ships. I don’t recall how many were sunk. The convoy was spread out over a patch of ocean ten miles square. Other ships would also pick up survivors.

#### An Ocean Crawling with Enemies

Early one morning the Spencer made contact with an enemy submarine. The Duane joined in the skirmish. Both of our ships dropped depth charges so no one will ever know which charge caused enough damage to force the German U-Boat’s sailors to

abandon ship. All of a sudden we saw German sailors popping up out of the water. Their sub was still moving under the water so the sailors were riding air bubbles to the surface. Orders were given by our convoy commodore: "Pick up survivors!"

The following detailed information about that battle was taken from the book, *The Defeat of the German U Boats, or The Battle of the Atlantic* (pages 37-40):

Convoy H X 233 sailed from New York on 6 April 1943 to Halifax. There the convoy joined with Convoy 126 – sailing to England 1 April 1943. 13 April, 18 German U Boats were ordered to attack the convoy (Convoy Commodore was notified by U.S. Naval intelligence) 15 April 5 more U Boats were ordered to join the wolf pack.

17 April 1943 at 11:50 the Escort vessel Spencer made a Sonar Contact with a German sub. At 12:17 the Duane joined in and both ships made runs over the area and dropped depth charges.

A short time later, the German sub U-175 broke surface. Many German sailors had abandoned the sub while still submerged and underway. When the sub came to the surface both ships opened fire with 5" guns and 20&40 caliber guns. Both ships then picked up German sailors. The Spencer lost one sailor from friendly fire. (This information taken from the publication named above.)

Just before we left our gun stations we saw the sub surface. The Duane and Spencer both opened fire on the sub. Suddenly we learned that the captain and engineering officer and two crew members were still onboard. We could see them coming out of the hatch. I was gun captain on # 4 gun and our firing was limited to about five shells.

The Duane had eight 3-inch guns, plus many 20 and 40 caliber machine guns. Whenever a shell exploded on the German submarine many crew members would shout and cheer. Later on, while writing a letter about this event, I compared it to some sporting event. When thinking about it at a later date you wonder how a human can cheer at the sight of another person being killed. But the rules of warfare are, "Kill or be killed."

When the order was given by the convoy commodore to pick up survivors, our captain told him there were other enemy subs in the area and requested to resume his position. He was told to carry out the order.

### **Enemies Onboard**

Since I was the senior boatswain mate aboard, I was given the job of taking a small powerboat out on the water to rescue the German sailors. I was not given this job because I had special talents in handling small boats on the open sea, although I did have extensive experience with small boats while in the peacetime Navy for four years. This boat assignment was given to me before this event ever happened.

The German sailors were spread over an area of about a mile. We were in a small boat and could carry approximately 12 men. After the second trip I saw a German sailor calling to be picked up. We already had our limit in the boat but we stopped and picked him up. I met that same man again in 1988 some 40 years later (more about that in following chapters).

With my prisoners in tow, I was given the keys to the Brig that could hold four men. The other 23 were kept in the ship's library. The men in the brig were officers; the

other men were separated from them. I remember many of the sailors went to the brig to give the Germans cigarettes, candy and ice cream. Just a few hours earlier we were trying to kill them; now we were treating them as human beings.

We landed the German prisoners in Greenock, Scotland and then sailed to Londonderry, Ireland. My brother Milo had been there for several months but was sent to North Africa about two months before we arrived.

Before we left Boston a Life magazine photographer came aboard. We became good friends. Upon returning to the States, he gave me several pictures of our trip and our encounter with the enemy sub. These pictures were classified and not to be released to the public. When we returned to Boston I was given a short leave so I went to Iowa to visit Nelina and Vic Jr. I showed these pictures to P.C. Woods, the editor of the Sheldon Mail. He made copies and said he would not publish them until this event was made public. Through a misunderstanding, however, he published the whole lot about six weeks before it came out in the United Press Wire Service and Life magazine. To make matters worse, the editor boasted the following week how his small town newspaper had carried important news ahead of the major newspapers. I was frightened by the incident, fearful that I would be found in violation of censorship, but nothing was ever said about it.

### **When Irish Eyes Were Smiling**

It was springtime when we arrived in Ireland and the grass was green and beautiful. Young Irish lads came aboard and sang Irish songs as soon as the gangways were secured. These Irish tenors made me appreciate Irish lyrics.

The Germans had a new type of acoustic torpedo so we had to wait a week until the device was built in the stern of our ship to counteract this new Nazi weapon. Finally, we were underway toward London to pick up several empty ships to be escorted back to the States. On this voyage we stopped in Gander, Newfoundland, where I sent Nelina a message: "Meet mother in Boston. Stay at YWCA." This subterfuge sounds silly but censorship was strict. We had some passengers aboard, and we knew they had to be in Boston, but nobody knew when.

Whenever a ship has been out to sea for a time, some of the sailors start anchor pools. The moment the heaving line hits the wharf the quartermaster records the minute in the ship's Log. I am not a gambler, but I did buy a number on that trip. I was thinking more about seeing Nelina who would be in Boston waiting for my arrival. As we approached the pier I looked at my watch and realized our docking was going to be close to my number.

As soon as the gangway was in place I usually was the first ashore to supervise the securing of the ship to the dock, placing the rat guards, etc. However, this time I saw a pay telephone so I placed the first call that was made by the ship's crew. Nelina was at the YWCA where she had been waiting two days for my call. I told her to catch a cab and come to the Boston Navy Yard.

When I returned to the ship, several sailors were looking for me. I had won the Anchor Pool - \$300.

It is hard to put into words the emotions my wife and I experienced after being separated four months under conditions that were both hazardous and strenuous for both

of us. I believe Nelina was the first visitor to greet these happy sailors that day. She told me that when my telegram arrived in Sheldon from Argentina, Newfoundland, she was just ready to wash her hair. One train passed through Sheldon bound for Chicago and Boston, and it was leaving in 30 minutes! Needless to say, her hair didn't get washed. Two nights and two days later she arrived in Boston, a very tired girl. As instructed, she checked into the YWCA and was given a dormitory room with a cot for 50 cents a day.

I had arranged for liberty and a short leave during the week we were in Boston. I don't remember the name of the hotel where we stayed but I do recall that next door was a display window with a beautiful three-quarter-length Silver Fox fur coat. After passing it the second day I said, "I want you to have that." Now, Nelina is very thrifty and wasn't about to try it on. I reminded her of my windfall on the ship's Anchor Pool. After she tried it on the clerk said, "It is made for you." We tried to justify this luxurious purchase so we called it our memorial for this time together in Boston.

### **A Gift from the Sea**

On the night before the ship arrived in Boston, the cooks threw all the potatoes, butter, carrots and some meat into the ocean. I rescued a few hams that were being destroyed and hid them in one of the ship's lockers. If these provisions are not used by the time the ship comes in for restocking, they cut down on the amount given for the next trip. That's why the crew disposed of the surplus.

We found out that my friend Bill Sweeney was working in the Navy yard where we were tied up. The Sweeneys invited Nelina to stay with them in Tewksbury while I had duties at the dock. Our friends invited Nelina and me to dinner when I could arrange for shore leave. And this is where the meat from the sea comes in.

It was very difficult to get meat during the war, of course, so my secret ham heist was treated like treasure. I wrapped it and stashed it in a garbage can on the dock. Later I retrieved it and gave it to Bill and Millie, his wife. They invited his parents and her brother to a ham dinner that we all enjoyed immensely. The Sweeneys were gracious hosts. Nelina enjoyed her short visit with them.

A radioman onboard our ship told me we would be leaving for New York for a few days and then join an eastbound convoy. He was so certain about it he sent his wife to meet us there. He encouraged Nelina to join his wife and stay in a small hotel in New York City. I told her that if she didn't hear from me in a week to return to Sheldon. We sailed to New York but joined a convoy that had already left the harbor. Nelina and I never made contact. As planned, she returned to Sheldon.

In the center of the convoy was an odd looking vessel, a converted tanker with a flight deck with about six planes parked on it. This proved to be the end of submarine warfare. The "Battle of the Atlantic" was won. No convoy sailed without these "Baby Flat-Tops". Enemy subs could not surface in daylight and at night they were spotted by radar.

I have a book, written by a German Sub Captain, Herbert A. Werner, titled *Iron Coffins*. He writes that "happy times" ended for the German subs when Baby Flat-Tops traveled with the convoys. Admiral Karl Doenitz, the German admiral, called all his submarines back to European ports when he was notified that he had lost 16 subs without



sinking one allied ship. At this time they started putting Schnorkels on their subs – a device that permitted a boat to draw air from the surface via this long tube while submerged.

### **Winding Down in Europe**

We made three more trips – North Africa, Gibraltar, and Casablanca. On our last trip to North Africa about June of 1944, we were three hundred miles south of Bermuda when the Convoy Commodore had an attack of appendicitis. The ship he was aboard had no doctor so we were ordered to take a boat to his ship to transfer him to the U.S.S. Duane. Inasmuch as I was the senior Boatswain mate, I was given this assignment. After spending a short time in the water the ship made contact with than enemy submarine. All the escort vessels and the entire convoy increased speed and left us there alone. A message was sent via a signal light telling us: If we were not picked up to head for Bermuda. The eight sailors in the boat cheered because we knew the Bermuda search ships would send out rescue vessels and we looked forward to a nice stay on this lovely island. However, at about sundown we saw our ship returning to pick us up.

The next morning we repeated this event and this time safely brought the Commodore aboard. He climbed up the ladder and waited for the whale boat to be secured. He then turned to the Captain and said, That Boatswain Mate should be made Chief.”

A month later we arrived in Norfolk, Virginia. My orders were to be transferred to a new construction on the West Coast as a new Chief Boatswain Mate.

I had a short stay in Sheldon, Iowa, with Nelina and Vic Jr. Nelina’s father, John Hoevens, always took me to the train when leaving Sheldon. Nelina never accompanied me to the depot. Somewhere along the way I heard that this was a bad omen. Anyway, it worked out for us because I came through the war without a scratch.

### **In the Land of the Midnight Sun**

Upon arriving at Alameda, California, I was assigned duty aboard the U.S.S. Sausalito P.F.4. This vessel was a British designed Destroyer Escort built for escort service and back-up duty for island invasions in the South Pacific.

One day before we set sail we could see the supply personnel taking off all tropical gear and replacing it with heavy winter clothing. Our nice, South Seas tour ended before it started. Ordered to the Aleutian Islands, we arrived there the first of September, 1944, and seldom saw the sun for five months. Our ship was a beacon for observation planes flying over the Kurile Islands and Northern Japan. We would sail approximately 1,000 to 1,500 miles west and go in circles for 30 days then return to Adak, Amchitka, Attu or Dutch Harbor – the absolutely worst duty a sailor could have.

In January, 1945, I put in for new construction to get off this dismal circuit. The skipper said he would approve my request if I put in for shore duty. I had more than three years of sea duty under my belt so the transfer was approved for shore duty in the St. Louis area.

Approximately three weeks later I found myself in Seattle. I sent Nelina a telegram (her parents didn't have a telephone) to meet me at the Sioux City Airport. Nelina was working at Starrett's Store as a cashier when the telegraph messenger headed up to the cashier's desk. Many of the clerks stopped and watched. Telegrams usually brought sad news but when a big smile came across her face they knew the telegram carried good news. What a happy meeting we had after nearly a year apart. Vic. Jr. and Norma were with Nelina at the airport. I had a 30-day leave en route to my new assignment in St. Louis.

On the way home we stopped to visit Marj and Jack in Orange City. Jack Duimstra informed me that F.D.R., my Commander-in-Chief, had died. A few days later Germany surrendered. We could see that the war was winding down.

I reported for duty at St. Louis and was assigned to be the officer in charge of guarding dams in the Tennessee Valley. I could see that there was no need for this service anymore. Knowing I would be shipped to the Japanese invasion force I put in for "New Construction, East Coast." I figured it would take several months to outfit and commission a new vessel and maybe the war would be over by then. I was sent to the U.S.S. Ponchartrain at Ft. McHenry, Maryland. The ship went into commission a few days before Japan surrendered. A short shake-down cruise to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba followed and then a return to Norfolk, Virginia before I was sent to St. Louis for discharge.

### **Home, Sweet Home**

We sold our new home on 11<sup>th</sup> Street in 1943. During my last trip to Sheldon we purchased another home on Sixth Avenue. This was an older house built of masonry units with a large crack on the porch wall. It is strange that I would mention this but that crack remained a sore spot with me because it could not be repaired. We spent about two months revamping and repainting, installing new plumbing fixtures which were nearly impossible to buy. But we Vets had a lot of preference and we used this title to our advantage.

The fellow who was running our dry cleaning plant had a lease on the place for another year. We made a satisfactory offer to compensate him and he bought a plant in Sutherland.

### **A One-in-12,444,000 Win**

Nearly everyone who has served a hitch in the U.S. Navy, and many other game lovers as well, has been exposed to "Cribbage". It's a game of cards with a board for pegs to keep score. Basically designed for two players, it can be expanded to include three or four players.

After I was discharged from the service I had no job because I had leased the dry cleaning plant to one of our employees. Seeing my restlessness, Grandma Hoevens suggested that Nelina learn the game of cribbage. You can't learn the game in one

evening. There are too many combinations to remember. But Nelina is a fast learner. Soon we were playing very competitively.

When we moved to California we decided to play one game every day. Each game lasts about 14 minutes. We carry a little folding Crib Board in our bags as we travel and often find ourselves playing on the plane, in a motel, or in our R.V.

It is every player's dream to get a perfect hand of 29 points. I won't burden non-players about what this is composed of, but on May 19,1995 at 4:45 p.m. I, Vic Bogard, had a perfect Crib hand - "29 points". Nelina wanted to forfeit the game, but I insisted on finishing and won. I have recently learned that the odds of getting a perfect hand are one in 12,444,000. There were no prizes given, no cheering, and no requests for me to make a speech. Karla, my daughter-in-law, put the cards of this perfect hand in a frame and now it graces a wall in our home. I have never met anybody who had this moment of excitement, which I greatly enjoyed. One frequently hears of 28 but 29? Never!

We are sorry to report that no record has been kept over the past 55 years showing who won most of the games. We both have periods that are too long when it appears we are losing.

*"Few men are wise by their own counsel or  
learned by their own teaching; for he who was only taught by himself  
had a fool for a teacher."*

- Benjamin Franklin

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **California, Here We Come! 1947**

So, here we were in 1946, once again running Bogard Cleaners in Sheldon and once again cleaning old men's trousers. Not much had changed. When the steam gun was used on some stained clothing it caused an unpleasant aroma. I just wonder if that's the reason my olfactory glands won't work today.

Milo came home soon after I was back in the plant. He made a quick trip to California and then returned to Sheldon because he had met Nurse Hazel Kreykes a year earlier and didn't want to lose this gal who had just been discharged from the Army.

We worked together for a short time. Milo had a little money saved. He offered to buy 50% interest in the plant. The building was mine and I received rent above splitting the profits - a nice arrangement.

To say that I was content with my role in life would be inaccurate. I became restless and wanted to move to the West Coast. I took every opportunity to go fishing, to attend cleaning conventions, and to take trips anywhere just to keep moving. Milo was very tolerant and we never had any disagreements.

In April 1947 we had a snow storm, but before I relate that experience I must tell you that Nelina became eager to have another baby. This time we were wiser and knew early in 1947 that Nelina was pregnant. All babies born around that time are now called "Baby Boomers." Some 15,000,000 returning servicemen soon married and began raising families. Now, 50 years later, this age group is still known by that identification. I was content with one child but Nelina wanted a larger family.

Now back to the Snow Storm. When April flowers should have been blooming I couldn't even get the car out of the garage. Even if I could have, all the streets were closed. I had to walk to the shop to put coal in the stoker. The walk to the shop is only about half a mile but it took a considerable amount of time to tread through high banks of snow. There was not one person on the streets that morning. I completed my task of filling the coal hopper and headed back to the house. Upon opening the door, the first thing I said was, "As soon as I can get out of Sheldon I'm going to look for a place on the West Coast." Nelina knew that the time had arrived so she gave her blessing. But her pregnancy meant that she should remain at home while I went ahead and scouted around to find a place to live.

### **Searching for a New Location**

My invitation to my father-in-law to accompany me on my journey was accepted so John Hoeven and I headed for the coast, deciding first to visit John's sister Anna in Seattle. After that we could head down the coast to find a city or town with possibilities for establishing a dry cleaning plant. When we arrived in Grants Pass, Oregon, we both were pleased. A large river flowed through the town past beautiful parks and many trees.

We located a nice house for sale with a small cottage in the rear for Nelina's parents. John seemed to be interested. We slept on this major decision and felt by the next morning that we should purchase the house. As we drove slowly up the street, a car passed us and stopped at "our" house. He hopped out of his car with a clipboard in his hand and told us that he had just purchased the house. Our dream of occupying the beautiful residence in the shadow of the Rogue River Mountains was gone.

Disheartened, we headed straight back over the 1,800 miles to Sheldon. (The reason I am making such a big deal out of this part of my journey through life will become clear later on.)

Meanwhile, back home John began showing signs that he was more than ready for a move. I didn't want to lose this momentum so we planned a second trip three weeks later. This time we would start in Northern California and make our way to the Pacific Coast. This time my brother, David, decided he would accompany us.

The first city the three of us looked over was Santa Rosa which was a pretty city. Some houses were acceptable but the weather was sweltering and we soon decided it was not for us. Next day we headed south. The Bay Area was too busy. In San Jose we stopped for gasoline (remember when attendants filled your tank at 12 cents a gallon?) And again complained about the uncomfortably hot weather. Our attendant told us to take Highway 17 to Highway 1 along the coast.

As we were traveling along, we suddenly saw a large white church with a high steeple. We crossed a river and saw a quiet little village. This sign read, "Welcome to Santa Cruz. Population 14,000 (more or less)." My brother-in-Law, Jack Duimstra, had spent a weekend in Santa Cruz during World War II. He told us, before we left Iowa, that he was very impressed by Santa Cruz and asked us to check it out. We suddenly realized that the temperature was quite comfortable.

Before we entered the city, David began to boast about what a great bowler he was. So, the first thing we did in Santa Cruz was to find a bowling alley.

As we were returning to the car a young lady greeted us. She had noticed our Iowa license plates which identified our residence as being in O'Brien County. This young lady was Bea Bilsland. I knew her brothers very well. They lived just a couple of miles from our farm south of Sheldon. We told Bea that we were looking for a place in Northern California to move our family from Iowa. She told us, "Santa Cruz is a good place. You cannot find anything better."

She told me that they had planned on buying a house and had searched over the entire area. They found a good house but decided that day not to buy it. She took us out to Opal Cliff and showed us the house. The neighbor lady, Phyllis Hill, said the owners would be there the next day. Two Swedish carpenters had built the house for speculation. It was a small, two-bedroom house with a single garage. Nelina was in Sheldon, so there was no discussion as to location, schools, and other important factors one needs to know when buying a house. When the Swedes showed up the next day we agreed on the price: \$8,500.

## Nothing by Chance

We look back in amazement on those critical “if only...” incidents. All of our good fortune was brought about when someone recognized our Iowa license... when Bea Bilslund by chance was in that area at the right time... when David desired to roll a few bowling balls... If we had arrived a few moments later, Bea would have left and we would be headed south to Southern California. As we look back we can say with complete assurance: “The Lord led us to Santa Cruz,” although He used individuals to accomplish his purpose.

Nelina and I, half a century later, are satisfied that it was all “Divine Intervention.” Most of the time you cannot see it when it is taking place. Only years later does it all become very clear. “The Lord moves in mysterious ways....”

We closed the house deal on a Saturday in May 1947, close to Memorial Day. We slept on the floor of our new house that night. Before Bea Bilslund Carlson left we asked about a church in which to worship the next day. She said she always went to a small Baptist Church on Seventh Avenue. The word “Baptist” frightens Iowans because it involves a lot of water. However, Nelina’s father said he often attended a Baptist Church when he lived in Washington and he was willing to worship there.

So on Sunday morning, we went to a small brown church on East Cliff and Seventh Avenue. A new church was being erected next to the present church. The pastor, Roy Kraft, was a man about my age. That morning he directed the message to the young people who were graduating. He likened this new phase in their lives to a ship heading out to sea.

“Every ship needs a captain (Jesus Christ); a ship needs charts to tell you the course (the Bible); and finally, a ship needs communication (Prayer).”

I had spent nearly eight years on ships, so I could relate to the message. Here was gospel with an analogy that spoke to my heart. It was a challenge for all who heard the message to take action. I forgot the clock as I listened to the speaker. Wow! What a message. Now more than 50 years later I can still recall the main points of that sermon.

John Hoevens looked around for some property but did not buy anything on that first trip to Santa Cruz. He headed back with us to Sheldon with no firm commitments to purchase or build a home. He finally told us, “I’ll stay in Sheldon.” But this decision was not set in concrete. Eventually Grandpa and Grandma Hoevens wound up across the street from us on Opal Cliff Drive in Santa Cruz.

We determined to stay in Iowa until Nelina delivered our second baby due in five months. We put our Iowa house on the market but had few lookers. John said he would go west with us if he sold all three of his houses to one buyer. This happened the week before we left for California. Our house sold very soon after Bradley Bruce was born on September 22, 1947.

A friend of ours agreed to take our furniture to California in his cattle truck. The price was very reasonable, so we made a deal with the trucker for the trip west.

Another friend, Bud Daniels, came into the office and said he was a carpenter and wanted to ride to California in the cattle truck. I told him we intended to build a house at once, the look around for the possibilities of getting back into the dry cleaning business.

My brother David decided to come with us and help Nelina's father with the driving. John was 64 years old and never had been a good driver, so Dave's help was welcomed.

The trip out was uneventful. We celebrated Nelina's 29<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary in Rock Springs, Wyoming. After dinner we went to a movie. Nelina's folks took care of the children, as usual.

This would be a good time to remind my readers about our lack of problems with baby sitters. During the first quarter century of married life we spent fewer than five dollars for babysitters. The reason was that Grandma and Grandpa Hoevens did this job for us. We spent a lot more to get help in taking care of our grandchildren than of our own sons. This arrangement with the Hoevens was wonderful for us and for our sons. Grandma Hoevens came over nearly every day to help Nelina with work around the house. I have referred to this amazing lady before, but I cannot say it too many times: Grandma Hoevens was one of a kind.

When we drove into Santa Cruz and out to Opal Cliffs, Nelina didn't seem to be impressed. She never made any secret of the fact that she missed Sheldon, our friends, and members of the Bogaard family left behind in The Hawkeye State. After all, Nelina sang in the church choir back in Iowa and had a host of friends there, many that she went to school with. During that first year in California she shed a few tears, even though her parents were there with us in The Golden State.

About three days after our arrival we bought a lot for \$1,260.00 on Opal Cliff Drive. Plans were drawn less than a week by a young chap named Bill Burr. This was the first of many hundreds of homes Bill did for us in the following years.

We made a loose agreement with Bud Daniels that after the first house was built we would sell it and split the profits. We both drew \$50 a week for living expenses. I had about \$12,000 when we arrived. Bud Daniels had \$21.

After the house was framed there was no carpenter work to be done on the house for several weeks, inasmuch as the roofing, masonry, and other specialty work was done by other craftsmen. Bud looked around for other work but construction is very slow during the winter months in Santa Cruz. It was decided that I would buy him a railroad ticket back to Sheldon. When the house sold I would send him his share of the profit. I had to hire carpenters to finish the job. The house sold the first of May and there was \$3,200 in profits to split between us. He was very surprised when he received his share and went out immediately to buy his first new car.

### **A New Career Is Born**

While we were building house number one a neighbor watched us work. He was so impressed that he wanted us to build a house for him. This was the beginning of Bogard Construction. We never looked any further for a cleaning plant. Never again would I have to put a steam gun to old men's trousers. Just the thought of it makes me sick.

My parents came to Santa Cruz for a visit and decided to stay, so I built a house for them. We bought a lot on the cliff about three blocks from them and stayed in this house for about 32 years.

Nelina's father didn't like the little house in the Pleasure Point area so he bought a lot across the street from us on Opal Cliff Drive. His new house had plenty of room to "mess around" in a double garage.

In the summer of 1949 we made a trip back to Iowa. When we returned to Santa Cruz, Nelina said, "I'm happy we are in California." She was no longer homesick.

We had been attending a Bible study in Roy Kraft's home. There we met many couples who became our friends for the following 50 years. Roy and Jeanette frequently came to our house with their three sons. They and our three sons grew up together.

After we moved from Iowa, and began attending Twin Lakes Church, Roy and his wife Jeanette became good friends of Nelina and me. We made many trips in our plane together. In 1957 we traveled around the world and visited various missionaries and their work.

I can say without hesitation that these two people had a great impact on our lives. We've had disagreements but the Lord used them to accomplish a work in our lives that we may not have experienced in any other way. Yes, we are deeply indebted to the Krafts.

After considerable doubts about the question of baptism, we finally decided that if Twin Lakes Baptist Church was going to be our church then we would be baptized. We have never had any regrets. The church services contributed to the spiritual growth of our entire family.

When we look back, we think of the many people who gave us help, understanding and courage. We did not recognize this fully until many years later. If I have one regret it is that I can't say a word of thanks to many friends because they have left this planet.

My brother David, who lived on the farm with Richard, soon returned to Santa Cruz where he started working for Bogard Construction. He remained for sixteen years. As David looked to the future, he could see our three sons coming into the business. He decided he would be better off starting his own construction company. David built a very successful company, and was later joined by our brother-in-law, Roger Gintert.

After building many "spec" houses in the Opal Cliff area we were invited to build a home for Ray Tucker in Santa Cruz. Louis Rittenhouse had purchased acreage from the C.C. Moore Estate in 1942 at a very low price. This was during the war. Many people still feared the Japanese would be landing on the beaches here in Santa Cruz. The property had two large homes, a small golf course, horse barns, and pools. Ray Tucker showed us his lot and we were quite impressed by the area.

My brother-in-law, Roger Gintert, and my sister Norma were looking for a site to build their home. They chose a lot on the creek. We became acquainted with Louie and made arrangements to build on all the remaining lots, including those on the west side of Highland Avenue which were not yet developed.

When we had about five lots left, Fenner Angell took me to the Westlake Pond. Here we saw beautiful acreage with a three-acre lake. The owner had a wire cage with peacocks in it. Fenner gave us the owner's address in Los Angeles. I flew to Los Angeles and was successful in obtaining this new parcel of land to develop. We now had 80 more lots to build on.

The cost for a lot with improvements in place was approximately \$2,100. These were the "happy days" in construction. Building permits were \$50 per house. I'm told



that a comparable house permit now would cost more than \$35,000. Most of the houses sold for \$22,500 with lots included. We were happy to make two or three thousand dollars per house. Yes, this was a very enjoyable, yet profitable, time to build houses for many clients who were please with the finished product.

### **Westlake Pond**

This would be a good time to bring in the beautiful Westlake Pond referred to previously. Our engineer, Tom Williams, suggested putting a draw bridge in the center and then building our home in the lake, sitting on piles and piers. It would then look like a medieval fort. The approach can still be seen today where the benches are built on Major Street.

After studying the problems involved, we decided to give it to the city with the stipulation that they maintain it as a park. They informed me that there was no money in the budget to take on any more parks. Some time later they told us they would take the park, but I would have to remove the condition of perpetual maintenance. I felt some loyalty to the many families for whom we had built houses and with whom we had become well acquainted. So, I decided to give it to the city. They gave us \$5,000 to put a curb around the Park. Today as we watch youngsters fishing and playing there, we are very happy that the city owns it. They are doing an acceptable job to maintain it (not great, but acceptable).

After completing 80 lots near the Westlake Pond we bought a parcel of land from Mr. Sundean. Lots were now selling for \$3,000 each. He valued the six lots overlooking the Monterey Bay at \$5,000 each. We bought all of the lots except the view lots. I didn't think any lot was worth \$5,000. My son bought the last remaining view lot 20 years later for \$140,000. Today it is valued at more than \$400,000.

At about this time, Vic Jr. joined our team and worked with the finishing crew. We built some commercial buildings to keep as an investment. These include Medical Plaza, Bermuda Apartments, warehouses, and other buildings that sort of supplement our Social Security checks today.

I don't want readers to think that we never had any developments that were not profitable. I was invited to join a partnership in a development called Carbonera Estate. This was started during a down turn in the economy and cost us about \$250,000. I was happy to get out of the arrangement.

### **And James Douglas Makes Three**

Our third son was born on October 5, 1950. We had moved into the house at 4500 Opal Cliff Drive and determined this would complete our family.

As a family, we did the usual things - picnics, camping, trips to San Francisco and to the National Parks. Whenever Nelina and I would go on trips by ourselves, Nelina's mother and father would move in and take care of the boys.

At this time, I am pleased to say that our three sons never caused us any concern. We never had to go to the police to get them out of trouble. They had no major accidents

or other troublesome problems to work out. I'm certain there were incidents which we never heard about that would have brought sorrow if we had known. The boys always attended church and Sunday school. I can't remember a time when anyone of them said on Sunday, "I don't want to go to Church today." They knew this was not an optional choice. Sunday was a day for worship.

### **Another Godsend**

Frequently the Lord sends individuals into our lives who become indirectly responsible for any success enjoyed. In our case, this man would be Louis Rittenhouse. Louie was from an old, well-known family in Santa Cruz. He practiced Law with his father. Unfortunately, I never met the elder Rittenhouse. The first *Santa Cruz Sentinel* newspaper I picked up had large headlines saying, **RITTENHOUSE SHOT**. A mentally-deranged man had gone into the second floor of the Rittenhouse law firm and shot the elder gentleman.

Louie had several acres of land around his home. He subdivided one portion and we bought a lot to build a spec house. He told us to pay him when we sold the house. This same arrangement was made for many, many homes in the next five years. His asking price was very fair. There was never any arbitration about price. Louis was a very wise man. I valued his counsel highly.

In 1998, I went to visit Louis for the last time. He was then in his eighties and suffering from terminal cancer. I took with me a mutual old friend, Kermit McGranahan who was also very ill. They enjoyed recalling mutual interests and shared school day memories. Both men died a few weeks later.

After completing nine subdivisions on the west side of Santa Cruz, we joined Kerm McGranahan on a joint venture in Scott's Valley. We made some money on this project but were so captivated with commercial work we started bidding for work with the University of California in Santa Cruz.

Our first large job was erecting the building for "Applied Science." This was a great challenge, inasmuch as some of the work was different from what we had ever constructed. We put together our "Dream Team" with Vic Jr. serving as superintendent. The job took nearly two years to complete, with 104 piers in the rock and dirt. Some piers went down more than a hundred feet. We had to dig through many caves. All excess concrete was an "extra," with a good margin for profit. The job proved to be highly profitable and we were now in a different category of construction, although we completed about 500 houses and enjoyed subdividing very much. We even named a few streets in the subdivisions after cities. Iowa such as "Sheldon," Archer," and "Iowa".

Bogard Construction built many schools, strip malls, and more than 30 Long's Drug Stores. We also erected many buildings for Albertson's Lucky and Safeway supermarkets throughout Central California.

Bradley, our second son, worked in construction during the summers. His last year in high school he helped build a pharmacy. I believe this is when he decided to go to the University of the Pacific and study pharmacy. After spending holidays and vacations as a pharmacy apprentice, he decided that counting pills was not too exciting.

So, he changed his major to business. Upon graduating from the university he joined our construction company.

When Jim graduated from Westmont College in Santa Barbara, we owned Blue Bird Van and Storage. He took a crash course in management and led this company to a good margin of profit in the first year.

Our construction office was above the Van and Storage Office. We soon saw Jim spending more and more time working with the estimators in the construction office. When a vacancy turned up he moved into the office and has done an outstanding job ever since.

Our three sons have many different attributes and skills, but one thing they all seem to have in common is their ability to choose excellent mates. Let us try and recall that part of our family history.

### **Victor Frank Bogard, Jr.**

Vic Jr. showed signs of restlessness in 1958 and wanted to move out of our house. I don't know if he started building a house for himself before he met his wife-to-be, but we heard he was going to Watsonville to see a certain Peggy Estes. I talked with a friend of ours, Vern Hart, concerning this young lady. He gave Peggy very good marks and told us all about her family, which he knew intimately. Vern had met Rex Estes, Peggy's father, during the Second World War and was instrumental in leading him to the Lord. Vern ended our conversation by saying, "I wish she was my daughter."

Vic soon brought Peggy to our home. We grew very fond of her and confirmed Vern Hart's evaluation of this young woman. She is a fine lady.

Peggy's parents, Rex and Aileen Estes, became friends and we often enjoyed each others' company. This did not last long enough because Rex was diagnosed with leukemia. He passed away in 1964 at a very early age.

Since Peggy was our first daughter-in-law, she was the recipient of many of our mistakes. She was always very gracious. During the nearly forty years we have known her, she has never verbalized her displeasures with us once. Thank you, Peggy.

I want to share a letter Vic wrote to me on Jan. 15, 1999:

Dear Folks,

I have never been one who sits down and writes much not having to do with business, but when I received a copy of Tom Brokaw's book, *The Greatest Generation*, and read the fly leaf, I couldn't help but think: This is my parents' generation he is writing about. How we have underappreciated what was done for us, your children.

Even though I was very young, I have vivid memories of Dad going off to war and Mother being very sad and crying. At the time it made me sad also, but not for the same reasons. My sadness was missing my father, never thinking he might not return. Mother's fear (probably more like terror) was of never seeing him again.

Tom Brokaw talks about you generation having common values such as duty, honor, economy, courage, service, love of family and country but above all, responsibility for oneself. I have often asked you, Dad, what made you leave your wife and young son to answer a call from you country, and Mother, letting you go with no

apparent objection. I can still feel Mom's arms around me, her tears making my neck wet, and my saying, "It's OK, Mommy. Don't cry. Everything will be OK." I had no idea of what the implications were. She sacrificed as much by staying home as you did leaving. (Boy, writing this brings back memories long forgotten.) A secure, safe, stateside shore assignment would have just as easily fulfilled any obligation you may have felt. Your only answer is, "I can't explain. You just had to be there and feel the power." I never had a sense that you thought it was heroic, only that "everyone else was doing it, too." Those common values mentioned above can only explain the greatness. Well, I think I'm starting to ramble, so thank you both for your example, your sacrifice and your love. Read and enjoy this book.

Your admiring son,  
Vic

### **Bradley Bruce Bogard**

Now we come to number two son, Brad. While attending the University Of the Pacific, he frequently brought girls home for a visit. His stock remark came to be, "This is the one." We don't know what happened but often we would never see them again. During Brad's senior year of college we decided to drive up the Gold Country Highway 49. We told him we might stop for a short visit in Stockton. He said he would like to meet us because he had a new girl friend who showed promise.

When you meet Karla, the first impression is her beauty, but we soon discovered other qualities that made her a very special person. Later we found she was very artistic and had great skills in painting and design.

We were concerned that Brad might not recognize these qualities and attributes that Karla possessed but before the trip was over we saw sort of a sparkle in his eyes as he eyed her. Brad's weekend visits to our home from then on were always in the company of Karla.

When Brad graduated from U.O.P. the entire family was present. At that time Brad gave Karla an engagement ring. At a celebration party after the graduation ceremony we met Karla's parents and discovered that her Dad, Keith Carlson, was an outstanding artist. He expressed a desire to paint a portrait of them in front of Twin Lakes Church where they were married and also of Ponderosa Lodge where the reception was held. It was an emotional moment when this beautiful painting was unveiled at the close of the reception. Yes, Number Two Son had finally picked a winner.

As I write this, Karla is a battling an aggressive kind of cancer. Just a year ago she detected a lump in her abdomen and it was surgically removed and diagnosed as cancerous. This past year has taken her to Stanford Hospital where she has had several operations, chemotherapy and extensive radiation treatments. She finished her last radiation in December 1999. Our prayer is that through the miracle of God's working through these treatments, she will be free of cancer.

We solicit your prayers for Karla. She and her family are trusting the Great Physician with her health. She has been such a blessing to our family and a real helpmate to Brad. She is a "super mom" to our grandchildren and so willingly shares her talents

and skills with others in the community and church. The happiness and joy she has brought to us causes us to say again, "Thank you, Lord."

### **James Douglas Bogard**

Our youngest son, Jim, indicated that he wanted to join his brother, Brad, at the University of the Pacific in Stockton. Both Nelina and I felt it would be the better part of wisdom to keep these two boys separate. In looking back, we have determined it was the right choice. Jim had some friends going to Westmont College in Santa Barbara so after a look at the college and noticing its proximity to the Pacific Ocean, our son chose to attend there.

The day Jim left for Santa Barbara he had his surfboard secured to the top of his car. We reminded him that Westmont didn't offer classes in surfing and that we'd take good care of the board in our garage.

At this time we must bring another family into this narrative: Bill and Eleanore Tefertiller. In the many years we attended Twin Lakes Church we frequently sat near, or behind this family who had two daughters. As many of you know, most people go to church and get into the habit of sitting in the same pew Sunday after Sunday. We found ourselves often sitting behind this family.

As the years passed we particularly noticed the oldest daughter, Cindy, growing up and becoming a beautiful girl. I was especially attracted to her long and beautiful hair.

Shortly after Jim graduated from Westmont her joined us in the pew behind the Tefertillers. That noon at lunch he said, "Didn't Cindy look pretty this morning?" Things don't usually work out this way. He had never dated her or mentioned her before. I don't know how long it took, but Jim soon realized she was the one he wanted as his wife and the mother of his children.

As we became acquainted with this young lady, we no longer saw her as a child with her parents in the church pew, but as a loving and caring person who has brought great joy into our lives.

Jim and Cindy were married on April 28, 1973. They have two children, Erin and Jared. Erin is married to Dean Schwartz, a very fine man. They have a sweet little daughter named Alannah who was born in 1998. Their son, Jared, is a senior at Colorado State and will graduate with a degree in construction management.

On the day Jim's daughter Erin was born I gave my son the following poem. Twenty-one years later he read it at her wedding reception. Yes, there were a few tears shed. Think of a loved one as you read the poem that follows:

## **A FATHER AND DAUGHTER'S LAST WALK TOGETHER**

The hustle and bustle is over now, everything is quiet,  
And at the rear of the church, I see a form in white,  
I dimly hear the wedding march, and then I take my place,  
She shyly hooks her arm in mine, there's rapture in her face.

We start to walk the longest path I've trod in all my life,  
I dread to hear those lasting words, "Now you're man and wife,"  
She seems so young, this child of mine, just yesterday she was born,  
But I knew how time has really flown, when I awoke this morn.

As we slowly walk along the aisle, memories blur my sight,  
The woman who walks beside me now should still be small and slight,  
I think of a toddling little girl, squeezing my hand so hard,  
Trying not to stumble and fall as we walk across the yard.  
My thoughts go on a few years more: I see an eerie sight,  
She's trying to use some makeup now, but she sure looks a fright,  
My mem'ries fade to realize now, we've finally reached the place,  
I see a young man standing there with nervousness on his face.  
We stand together, arm in arm, I look into her eyes,  
I see a lovelight shining there, more beautiful than the skies,  
A light that I remember well when I stood where he stands,  
A light of love that burned like mine, as I took my wife's hands.

The preacher now begins to speak, his voice so soft and low,  
"Who gives this one in marriage?" now and suddenly I know,  
To this great moment are children born, 'tis part of God's great plan,  
For the family is the strongest tie, on which our nation stands.

I suddenly look toward my wife – tears are in her eyes,  
And then I turn and proudly say, "We do, my wife and I,"  
I've done my part, I've walked the path, oh God, please take control,  
Please walk with them along their path and keep them in thy fold.

And as I breathe this silent prayer, I turn to take my seat,  
Beside the true love of my life who's made my life complete,  
I hear the words of long ago, "Until death do us part,"  
I pray their lives will be like ours, sharing each other's heart.

The words of Genesis 2:24 (oh, may they never cease),  
And please Lord, give us now the strength to let them walk in peace,  
They said, "I do," and walked away, their life has just begun,  
And as they walk, I humbly say, "Oh Lord, Thy will be done."

By Darrell Graham.

## **Nelina Hoevens Bogard**

Although this is my autobiography, I want to give recognition to Nelina's family because they were frequently a part of the Bogaard gatherings.

First, a word about her parents whom she called Mom and Pop. They were both born in The Netherlands. Her mother came to the United States in 1898 when she was 10 years old; Nelina's father, born in 1884, came when he was 21 years old. He had served an apprenticeship in Holland as a banket baaker, (fancy baked goods) specializing in pastries. Some of these pastry recipes were passed on to Nelina, who passes them on to the next generation. In fact, there is one almond paste recipe, made at Christmas that she considers to be a requirement before any woman can marry her son. She is very happy that even the grandchildren are carrying on this tradition.

Now, back to the Hoevens: Dora Koole and John Hoevens were married in Hull, Iowa. They went to Alberta, Canada on their Honeymoon. Some relatives encouraged John to buy a farm and try farming. In less than a year he lost his inheritance of about \$10,000. The only good thing that happened in Canada was the birth of their son Adrian, or "Eddie".

When returning to Hull, Iowa, a banker loaned John enough money to open a bakery in Primghar, Iowa. This was a successful venture and was also the birthplace of their second child, Nelina. Why John sold out and moved to Sanborn, about 10 miles north of Primghar is not known. Most of Nelina's elementary education was in the town of Sanborn.

John and Dora worked very hard, putting in long hours at their bakery. In a few years they had enough money to buy a farm. But alas, this was not to be. The banks closed their doors and went bankrupt. Another \$10,000 lost.

John became despondent. He closed the bakery and moved west for a few years. Nelina remembers that she went to five different schools in one year. While they were living in Lynden, Washington, several merchants in Sanborn, Iowa wrote to John and encouraged him to return to Sanborn and open the bakery. So, they made another move to Sanborn where the Hoevens lived for three years. In 1933, John being semi-retired moved to Sheldon. He was quite successful in buying old houses and rebuilding them.

Nelina enjoyed her high school years in Sheldon. They attended the First Reformed Church where Nelina became active in music at the church and school. As stated earlier, she has a beautiful voice. She sang in various groups and also did considerable solo work.

Six of these Sheldon, Iowa girls became very good friends. Even though they moved away and married, their friendship remained steadfast. A "round robin" was started in 1950. These letters still make their rounds every year.

In finishing up Nelina's family history I must add a little bit of humor. Nelina kept a diary. While writing this tribute I read the part where she was dating and "hanging out" with her friends. One word she used frequently was "swell". Everything was "swell" and she used it occasionally two and three times in a paragraph. Today I hear young people using the word "cool". That is something I thought had to do with the weather.

John Hoevens died on May 14, 1968. Dora Hoevens died on February 15, 1975. Both are buried in Sheldon, Iowa next to their son Adrian "Eddie" Hoevens (1914-1936)

**A PAGE FROM NELINA'S DIARY**  
(All trips overseas-none in U.S. or Canada)

1954-Holy Land Tour with my parents  
1955-Short trip to Cuba  
1957-Around the world with the Krafts  
1960-Europe with The Boys  
1963-South Seas-S.S. Mariposa, 25<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary  
1968-Scandinavian Countries – Vic, Peggy, Brad and Jim  
1976-Alaska with the Tefertilers  
1976-Aboard the Concorde to Europe  
1977-England, purchased C.S. Lewis library  
1979-Panama Canal with Everett and Iva Otto  
1982-China with Vester and Esther  
1983-Europe with Norma and Roger Gintert  
1984-British Isles with Vic, Peg and Shelle  
1988-Hawaii, entire family – 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary  
1989-Russia Leona and Sid Vander Woude  
1991-Hawaii, Pearl Harbor Day 50 years E.I. Kingham  
1996-Through the Chunnel, England

**For my loving companion of sixty-one years:**

Nelina, some fourteen years ago I wrote you a birthday letter expressing my love and appreciation for you. Everything I wrote at that time is still true. In part, I thanked you for the wonderful memories of the past years, from the time you first walked into my life. This is what I wrote:

*We both have the same background. Our parents seldom expressed their feelings to each other in words, and I believe we have sort of adopted this same lifestyle. I regret I did not verbalize my sentiments more often over these many years, but may I say: "I love you" with all sincerity from a grateful heart.*

*Although I can never correct this neglect after these many years, let me try to put in writing my love, devotion and affection for you.*

*You have often heard me say, "Behind every successful man is a good wife." This certainly has been true in my life. Your thrifty and conservative qualities have contributed greatly to any success we may have enjoyed. In trying to name some of your sterling attributes I find that so many come to mind.*

*Foremost is your love for our Lord. Your faithfulness in worshiping and serving Him in various ways has been consistent these many years. I have never seen you on a spiritual high or low, but ever ready to give thanks for our many blessings.*

*Secondly, you have been a faithful and supporting "helpmate," always concerned with my well being. The countless deeds you do for my comfort do not go unnoticed.*

*Thirdly, you have been a wonderful mother to our three sons and the mothers of our grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I am certain your love and care for this younger generation will be remembered long after we are gone.*



*And lastly, your matchless ability in being such an accomplished homemaker, skillful cook, and gracious hostess can never be equaled. Needless to say, these many qualities have made me extremely proud and grateful that you are mine.*

Now fourteen years have passed since I wrote that letter and I appreciate you even more.

You have undergone many operations, enduring painful arthritis and debilitating illness during your later years. Throughout all of this, you have been borne these afflictions with grace and a smile. At the time I write this, you are in a weakened condition and we are unable to get out and travel, as we so loved to do. I am grateful for the memories we have and how God has blessed our times together.

Now, together we can look forward to the Eternal City where *“there will be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither will there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.”*

Under His mercy, the best is yet to come for us!

*“And what does the Lord require of you?*

*(1)To act justly, (2)To love mercy,*

*(3)And to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:80)*

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Travels and Friends

*“A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”*

*- Proverbs 18:22*

I won't go into detail about each trip we made. If you are interested in travel, I suggested that you buy some travel magazines. They can describe the following places better than I can.

I have visited more than seventy countries, not counting the U.S. or Canada. Some of these I visited while I was in the United States Navy, so Nelina didn't see all of them.

When I was a youngster at Carroll District #8, we used a large book in our Geography and History classes. It had six or seven full-page colored pictures of places all around the world which I would dream about, hoping to see some day. History and Geography generated in me a passion for travel. After Nelina and I were married, I discovered that she had this same addiction. As a result, we never needed much of an excuse to go almost anywhere. Being self-employed, and always having capable help, we could always be ready on very short notice. “Thank you, brothers, Milo and David.”

### We Walk Where Jesus Walked

Our first overseas trip took place with my parents in 1954. They had booked a tour with Dr. Joseph Free, a Professor of Archaeology at Wheaton College who had an active dig at Dothan, Jordan. Each year he would take students and tourists to the Holy Land. This dig was near the area where Joseph was sold to the Egyptians.

Since Nelina and I were always interested in the Holy Land we decided to surprise my folks, who were on this same trip, by joining them in Beirut, Lebanon. They went by ship, we went by plane. Dr. Free was aware of this secret surprise and cooperated as we arranged our meeting. The reunion took place as we were standing on the dock and greeted my parents loudly with a Dutch phrase. They were surprised and happy to see us. The seas were rough for their voyage and they experienced some seasickness, so solid ground for them was welcome indeed.

We saw all the usual tourist attractions around Jerusalem and Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. We also visited Dr. Free's “dig” at Dothan. Israel and Jordan were still at war, so Dr. Free did not take the party into Israel. We said goodbye to our folks and crossed “no man's land”, carrying our own baggage. It was a weird experience because we could see soldiers above us in bunkers with rifles. This was 1954 and accommodations were marginal. It was interesting for us to see with our own eyes the rivers, seas, mountains and cities that we had often read about in the bible. We took several rolls of pictures. Back home we enjoyed sharing them with small groups. Nelina is a beautiful soloist and

often sang, "I walked Today Where Jesus Walked" as we showed slides of the Holy Land.

We returned home through Holland and met Grandma Hoeven's only brother whom she had not seen for more than fifty years. They were surprised that we could understand them in their native tongue. We took them out to dinner but Uncle Cor hesitated about going out since in all his life he had never eaten in a restaurant.

Our relatives shared with us their wartime experience in Holland during the German Occupation. One of their relatives, a young boy, hid under the bed during a German search. The Nazi soldiers found him and they never saw him again. This was a very difficult time for our relatives and for the entire population of Dutch people.

### **Around the World with the Word**

In 1957 we put together a trip with our pastor and his wife, Roy and Jeanette Kraft, that took us to mission stations around the world. This one, Nelina and I both agree, was the best of all. On this trip we met our friends, the Dicks.

Vester and Ester Dick moved to Santa Cruz the same day we did. He was a commercial photographer and soon set up a successful operation in his garage. He heard about a need in Nigeria, Africa, as a mission photographer. Vester was a missionary kid who had been born in China. He had a great burden for the lost in all nations. When news came of the need for his services in Nigeria, he closed his business and took his family to Lagos, Nigeria.

Why am I adding so many words about the Dicks at the start of our trip with the Krafts? Reason one: The Dicks became very special friends. Reason two: Vester died just a few weeks ago as I write this.

Back there in 1957 we made plans to visit the Dicks after a few stops in Europe. After studying our maps, we found that it was very little farther to continue east and go around the world to California and home. We won't go into the problems of improper visa signatures. They eventually proved to be a blessing because we visited other missionaries on that trip. Vester and Ester were waiting for us at the Lagos Airport with a rented car. We enjoyed seeing their work with the African Challenge magazine published by the Sudan Interior Mission. As I wrote this section of my memoirs I learned that our traveling companion, Roy Kraft, died very suddenly in his sleep. I have often asked people, "Who (aside from your parents) had the greatest influence on your life?" Nelina and I agree – that would probably be Roy and Jeanette Kraft. Roy was a great preacher because he didn't get all messed up by going to seminary and learning Greek and Hebrew and then trying to explain to us Iowa farm boys what each syllable of the original Middle Eastern languages meant. Roy spoke to the worshipers where they lived. As we and his family look back on his life and ministry, there is a great satisfaction in knowing that the thousands who heard and accepted the Lord through his ministry will multiply through an ever widening circle of reproduction until the Lord returns.

After Roy's funeral Nelina and I wrote to Jeanette and her family to express our condolences. Following the salutation we added:

We cannot give you any new thoughts or assurances which you do not already know, and I don't have all the answers how this is going to work out, but believe that you will again know Roy and live in a dimension that is beyond our wildest dreams, where there will be no more sorrow, pain or sickness. Wow! What a future!

Nelina and I always give funds through the Gideons for ten Bibles in memory of friends who have gone to be with the Lord. May we close this letter with a song?

Think of stepping on a shore... and finding it Heaven  
Of taking hold of a hand... and finding it God's hand  
Of breathing new air... and finding it Celestial air  
Of feeling invigorated... and finding it immortality  
Of passing from storm and tempest... to an unbroken calm  
Of waking up... and finding yourself home.

Yes we have lost another friend, but only for a while.

Sincerely,  
Nelina and Vic Bogard

Those who live in the Lord never see each other for the last time.

### **Celebrating Anniversary Number 25**

To celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1963 Nelina and I decided to take a South Seas tour on the S.S. Mariposa. After several stops at different islands, we boarded a plane and made stops at New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan and Honolulu.

While in South Korea we visited my cousin Ben Sheldon and his wife Amy, missionaries in Andong, with the Presbyterian Board. They showed us many sights in their adopted country which the average tourist never sees. We worshipped in the Young Nak Presbyterian Church which, I understand, has one of the largest congregations in the world.

A young Korean named Edwin Kang made our acquaintance. Ben Sheldon told us he was trying to go to the United States for further study. Ben was of a different opinion. He felt that Edwin had sufficient training and could help with their work at once.

A short time after we returned to Santa Cruz, this bright lad was at our door early one morning. We told him he could stay in our home for one week. Later that morning I was going to fly our plane to Monterey. He gladly accompanied me. The plane had dual controls, so I let him fly for a short time. I also showed him how to drive a pickup truck.

At dinner that evening he was very slow in coming down to eat. Since he had just arrived from Korea we assumed that he was resting.

"No", he told us, "I was writing my friend. I told I'd been in the U.S.A. less than a day and I piloted a plane and drove my first car."

Edwin Knag still keeps in touch with us. His trip to the United States is a real success story. He went to a Presbyterian seminary on the East Coast, spoke Japanese fluently, and returned as a missionary to Japan. He has married a lovely lady and has two sons who are in professional work today. The last I heard from him he was doing

missionary work among the Japanese people in South America. We have found that many Asians have great determination to succeed. To quote Edwin in the letter to his friend about the United States: "This is one great country!"

### **To the Land of the Midnight Sun**

In 1976, Bill Tefertiller, our son Jim's father-in-law, told us that he was planning a trip to Alaska. I don't know if we were invited at that time or how the following all happened, but arrangements were made to meet at Dawson Creek and continue on the Alcan Highway to Alaska.

We both drove vans with minimum accommodations. As I re-read Nelina's journal on this trip I see that nearly every day she wrote, "Rain today". This did not hinder us, however. We'd unite the two vans and put a tarp over the opening and cook out under the cover. We kept a portable potty inside. Each evening we would play cards or other games.

Bill had done considerable planning ahead for this trip. He told us that a short side trip to Dawson City was a must. This proved to be a wise move, inasmuch as there is a considerable amount of interesting history in that city.

I have often enjoyed reading poems of Robert Service. Among them are, "The Cremation of Sam McGee", "The Shooting of Sam McGee", and others. Service's home in Dawson City is now a small museum. College students read poetry during the afternoon visits. If you enjoy his poetry, I would recommend that you visit the Robert Service museum in Dawson City.

### **Traveling at the Speed of Sound**

When I heard that the British Concorde S.S.T. was carrying passengers from Washington, D.C. to England, Nelina and I booked a flight as soon as possible. The cost of operating this most unusual bird was enormous and British Airways considered terminating the flights from Heathrow International Airport in England to the Dulles International Airport in Washington, D.C. The news prompted us to act quickly, so we were among the first to fly in this unusual and amazing aircraft.

While waiting to board, the passengers are treated graciously. All kinds of goodies and drinks were spread before us. Everybody was in a good mood for the flight.

After leaving the ground, the angle of climb is so severe you can hardly walk forward. The plane needs only 20 minutes to reach 60,000 feet above sea level. When it passes mach 1.00 the air passing over the plane sounds different. I anticipated that there would be some vibration but there was none. The Concorde's oval windows are about 4"x 6". As you look through windows across the aisle you can see the curvature of the earth. And when passing from daylight to darkness, traveling eastbound, night descends so quickly one would think that someone turned out the lights.

Theses fascinating statistics were presented to passengers:

Speed: Mach 2:00- 2:04 OR 1,480 miles per hour

Altitude: 60,000 feet above sea level

Time: 3 hours and 20 minutes to span the Atlantic Ocean  
Supersonic time: 2 hours and 29 minutes  
Temperature on the nose cone: 260 degrees

Our landing at Heathrow was so smooth the passengers applauded loudly. The pilot soon came on the public address system and said, "Thanks for the applause. I cannot take any credit for it. However, I did set the headings when we were about fifty miles out and the automatic pilot landed the plane".

What an enjoyable experience it was.

### **Into the Land of the Czars**

When my sister Leona and her husband Sid Vander Woude (a good Dutch name) suggested we join them on a trip to Russia in 1989, we accepted at once. The tour would include stops in Helsinki, Warsaw, Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) and Soche on the Black Sea in Southern Russia.

Two museums especially offered remarkable displays of collected artifacts. One is "The Armory" in Moscow, which holds some of the costliest treasures in the world such as gold plates, crowns, bushels of diamonds and pearls, and the largest collection of chariots used by Kings and Queens of the world. In front of "The Armory" hangs the largest bell in the world.

The other museum, called "The Hermitage", is in St. Petersburg. This former winter palace of the Czars now houses the greatest art collection on earth. As a Dutch farm boy from Iowa I never studied much art, so I could not appreciate fully the beauty we beheld. However, I did take note that the buildings were absolutely spectacular.

While in the former Leningrad I asked our guide to direct me to a book store where I could buy a book on the life of Vladimir Lenin written by a Russian and translated into English. I stood in line to be waited on. Then I stood in another line to purchase Lenin's biography. When it came time to pay, I learned that the price was eight rubles but I only had six. So, I took out a Traveler's Cheque but was informed that the clerk could not cash it in the bookstore.

At that I sort of threw my hands up in frustration. Suddenly a young, 18-year-old girl stepped up and asked, "May I help you?" I told her about my dilemma and she quickly said, "I'll get it for you." Upon returning, I handed her a \$10 bill U.S., which was worth about 50 rubles. "Oh, no!", she exclaimed. "This is my gift to you."

Nelina got her address and told her we would send her some books from the United States. She told us her name was Irine Polinskya. I'm sure some readers have heard this tale before, but bear with me. There might be another part of the story you haven't heard.

Irine's address was misplaced and I had forgotten that I gave her my business card. Some time later we received a letter from her telling about some of the problems in her country. She included comments about the spiritual and moral decay in Russia. Nelina was pleased to have Irine's address. Now she could go out and buy the books she had requested.

We discussed the possibility of buying her a ticket to come to the United States. Pan American Airways informed us that, indeed, it was possible to pay for the ticket in the United States and have Irine pick it up at the airport in St. Petersburg.

Gathering together the passport, visa and letters to the Russian government was the easy part. Approval from her parents was harder. Her mother remained reluctant to send her young daughter half way around the world to visit two old people in the United States. When we went Irine our family picture which included 18 of our clan, her mother put her stamp of approval on the visit because, she said, we looked like “such a noble family”.

I can't go into all the “O-o-ohs” and “Ah-h-hs” Irine expressed when she was here. If you must know, ask me. I enjoy telling it. Irine was with us for a month. We took her to all the local sight including San Francisco, our cabin in California's Gold Country, a trip to Disneyland and other attractions in Southern California. After a month she returned home with a suitcase filled with electric toys for her brother and clothes for herself.

While Irine was visiting us we invited the Russian professor at University of California at Santa Cruz to dinner to discuss a U.C. scholarship. He told us later, “You don't have an average Russian girl – Irine is brilliant. However, scholarships are difficult to obtain.

About a year after Irine returned home she inquired about procedures to obtain a scholarship. Since she didn't have a degree she would have to be present to take an entrance exam. Again we made it possible for Irene to return to the United States. Nelina and I spend about six of the winter months in Palm Springs, so Peggy and Vic. Jr. Suggested that they take on the responsibility of caring for Irine. Peggy did a good job of mothering Irine for more than a year.

Our Russian friend took the exams and Stanford University offered her a four-year, “Full Ride” scholarship taking Irine through to her Ph. D. Her date of completion of her thesis was scheduled for December 1999. In the meantime, Irine married a young Russian at Stanford and made several trips to Europe to conduct research. Her parents (both engineers) received a permanent visa to move here also, along with her younger brother, Peter (also brilliant). He received a “Full Ride” scholarship to the University of Berkley. Irine and her husband now have a son they named “Itzy” (Issac). She told us she is planning to write a book entitled, “May I Help You?”

Don't we live in a great country?

### **Wolfgang Verlohr, A German P.O.W.**

In a previous chapter titled “War Years”, I went into detail to describe the sinking of a German sub. Since we have devoted so many pages to people who have been such a great part of our lives I must include the German Sub's Executive Officer, Wolfgang Verlohr.

Because of my job on the ship, the cutter Duane, I had the keys to the brig and became quite well acquainted with Wolfgang, the German officer we captured. He spoke English very well. For a man just pulled from the frigid Atlantic, he still displayed a

sense of arrogance that was hard to comprehend. He made no secret of his loyalty to Hitler and being a Nazi. We exchanged address but were out of contact for 43 years.

Nelina and I enjoy traveling the world and looking up old friends and acquaintances. On several occasions during our travels we tried finding Wolfgang, but the part of Berlin where he lived had been destroyed and the streets renamed. Finally, I called a German Consulate in San Francisco. The staff said there was an agency in Germany that offered a service of looking up individuals who were being sought by others.

We soon heard from the agency with a note stating they had forwarded my letter to him. If Wolfgang wished, they said, he could contact me. We soon received a letter telling us he was planning a trip around the world, stopping for a few days in Japan to visit his son, and then traveling on to meet us in Santa Cruz.

Inasmuch as Life magazine had made the sinking of the German Sub one of their featured articles, with photographs in the June 7, 1943 issue, Nelina suggested notifying the periodical and informing the editors about this upcoming reunion. Wally Trabing, a columnist for the local Santa Cruz Sentinel News, heard about this meeting and suggested he and I have lunch.

After asking many questions, Wally suggested he write an article before Wolfgang arrived and then another article after he attended our first meeting. Wally's ability to verbalize the questions and answers were outstanding in his article.

The following is taken from the May 25, 1986 issue of The Sentinel. These are answers by Wolfgang to Wally's questions:

As a result of the explosion of Depth Charges, the batteries cracked and poisonous gas began to form inside the Sub. As the boat rose to the surface, many sailors escaped by riding bubbles to the surface. "We were certain that the enemy would open fire on us. When the boat surfaced, I certainly didn't expect the Americans to stop their ship dead in the water and pick us up. We would never have done this."

The two articles are too long to share fully here. Wolfgang did try to explain how it feels to "pop up" out of the water, knowing you are 600 miles from land and dead-center in the sights of your enemy's guns.

I had many questions as well regarding that trip and about life in the German sub under attack. Most of Wolfgang's answers were given with single syllables and very vague. Finally he said, "I don't like to discuss it". He added, "I put my life on the line for Hitler. He deceived us. I lost my only two brothers. It should have never happened."

Wolfgang's stay in our home was a pleasant visit. He told us that after the war he worked for the Siemens Corporation and lived in New York for seven years. His best friend in New York turned out to be Jewish.

When speaking about spiritual matters, Wolfgang did not agree with the claims of Christ. I gave him two books, "Mere Christianity" and "Surprised by Joy" – both C.S. Lewis. Upon arriving home he wrote a letter of thanks and added, "The books I shall treasure and read very thoroughly. Maybe they will enlighten me and change my belief."

One month later a letter dated 8-28-86 arrived with the following paragraph:



In the meantime I perused the book by C.S. Lewis. I am sorry, but he did not catch me. According to him I am a lunatic, as he says on page 50, if I don't agree with him.

When we visited the Verlohrs in Hamburg the following year they were very hesitant about showing us any of the historical sites relating to World War II. We expressed a desire to see "The Eagle's Nest", often referred to as an engineering marvel, digging through rock to build a road and an elevator to the top of a mountain to make a small retreat for Hitler. Wolfgang told us it was deteriorating badly and not worth seeing. He did show us some other museums and interesting sites.

On the last day, Nelina tried to direct his thinking toward eternal concerns. She reminded him that it was through the providence of God that we were sitting there together. "I think God has a plan for you", she said. Wolfgang sort of shrugged and reached for another cigarette. We knew our visit was over. We have not heard from him since.

Afterwards we traveled to Ramstein Air Base to visit my brother Calvin who was an Air Force Chaplain there. When we arrived he asked if we had seen "The Eagle's Nest". We told him about our experience with Wolfgang, to which he replied, "It may be one of the most interesting places to see in Germany. It is a view that must be seen because it cannot be described."

Nelina was eager to return, even though the extra mileage would take us two more days. So we decided we would save it for the next trip. But we have never gone back.

### **Enter Peter and Pauline Day**

In 1984, Nelina and I decided to take an extended tour of the British Isles. Vic Jr., his wife Peggy, and their daughter Shelle accompanied us for two weeks. After they left us we planned a trip to the Jersey Islands, a part of the Channel Islands south of England – the home, I might add, of Victor Hugo (1802-1885). I had read many of Hugo's books and a biography of his life. His book "Les Miserables" is well known. However, I think "Toilers of the Sea" is his best work. I had read that there was a Hugo Museum there worth seeing. The Guernsey Islands were the only British Territory occupied by Germany during World War II.

I have given the names of Peter and Pauline Day as a heading for this section for a good reason. Forgive me, but what happened provided a most interesting side trip.

When you want to have lunch in Great Britain the most popular places are small pubs along the country roads. We stopped at an attractive pub and went inside. I wanted to order a 7-UP, or something similar, to go with my lunch. I had been having trouble making people in Great Britain understand what I wanted to drink. The tables in this pub were small and close together. I came back to our table complaining to Nelina about "these Englishmen who can't understand their own language."

A couple sitting next to us overheard my grumbling. When I told them of my problem the lady said, "Why, that's 'Fizzy Lemonade'". Peter and Pauline Day offered other tips that day about ordering food in England. Before we parted, they invited us to join them at their table. This was the beginning of a valuable friendship. You can't list friends on a financial statement but friends are by far among one's most valuable assets. I

told the Days that we were scheduled to catch a plane from the South Hampton Airport to Jersey for a two-day visit.

“Call us when you return,” they said, “and we’ll go out to dinner.”

After returning from Jersey we checked into our hotel and phoned the Days. Peter said, “I’ll be right over to fetch you.” Instead of going out to a restaurant, we were amazed to find that Pauline had prepared a delicious English meal for us. What a wonderful evening we had in their home. On the following day, we had tea in a cute little teahouse at New Park, an area where many horses are permitted to run wild.

Afterward, the Days accepted our invitation to come to California. I sent Peter a book by their own countryman, C.S. Lewis titled, “Mere Christianity”. During our discussions in their home, Peter raised questions about creation vs. evolution. Later, when he visited us in our home in Santa Cruz he told us, “After reading the book by Lewis I’m about seventy percent on the way.”

The Days were in our home over Easter 1985, so we went together to a Sunrise Service at the Duane Davidson home. Duane spoke about the resurrection as he stood on the edge of a steep hill and ended his message by shouting loudly, “He is risen!”

Later that morning Pastor Marv Webster spoke at the regularly scheduled church service. His dynamic message focused on the same theme – “He is Risen!” Peter didn’t disagree with anything he heard and seemed to be very moved.

On the following day we took out motor home affectionately called “The Bogie”, to our cabin, to Yosemite National Park, to Palm Springs, to Disneyland, and many other interesting sites. The evening after visiting Disneyland we again talked about spiritual matters. I said, “Peter, what hinders you from accepting the Lord and becoming a Christian?” Immediately he answered, “Not a thing.” The claims of Christ were presented, he made his confession, and I congratulated him as a brother in Christ.

The next day, as our friends prepared to leave for England, Nelina and Pauline went shopping in a very exclusive area in Los Angeles. Suddenly a horrible thing happened. Pauline found “a ladder in her tights.” This meant “a runner in her nylons.”

My knowledge of English grammar increased dramatically during the visit to America of our new friends.

While the girls were out shopping I challenged Peter, “Let’s read a chapter from the Epistle of Paul to the Romans on the first of every month at the same time of day and then write each other a letter. We’ll do it for the next 15 months. On the last day as we read Chapter 16, Nelina and I will come to England and read the last chapter together in C.S. Lewis’s house at ‘The Kilns’.” We read Paul’s Epistle to the Romans as planned, but we didn’t go to C.S. Lewis’s house for the reading of the final chapter.

I challenged Peter to share his newfound faith with his friends in England. He assured me that the Brits take their “religion” very personally and don’t spread it around “like you Yanks.”

What a pleasant two weeks we enjoyed – and all because I wanted to order a 7-UP.

Following is a letter from our friends written in 1988 to help us celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary:

**Pauline & Peter Day  
Wishing Well Cottage**

*South Gorley*

**1938 1988**

Victor and Nelina Bogard

*A Story of Making Friends – with apologies to Robert Service*

‘Twas in the summer of ’84, we worked for an Arabian Sheikh. We toiled as guardians to his sons, our fortunes so to make. But they were very difficult, so spoilt and rude were they that we gave in out notice and gladly sped away.

Mid-day in deepest Somerset the weather can be hot. We dallied at a wayside inn, a drink and lunch we got. Just then into that crowded bar a massive stranger strode and by his side a lady fair, a tapestry she sewed.

“Two Seven-Ups, please,” I heard him say. His voice was strong but low.

The barmaid looked quite blank at him. “That drink I do not know.”

I got up quickly from my chair, these people I must aid. For they are from home. I said, “It’s fizzy lemonade.”

“Oh, thank you, ma-am,” the stranger said, “I sure have trouble here. Nelina wants a bite to eat, and I don’t like your beer.”

“Let me help you, sir,” I said. “Now tell me, what’s the matter?”

He said, “What’s a Ploughman’s Lunch, and what’s a Fisherman’s Platter?”

My husband Peter then joined in and soon we all made friends. And we were anxious to be nice, for the beer to make amends. “I’m just a farm boy from Iowa,” said the stranger tall and wide. “I’ve traveled through the British Isles, with Nelina by my side.”

“It’s been great to know you and I’ll tell you what I’ll do. When we come back from Jersey, we’ll come and meet you.”

We thought that was a great idea. A hotel we would book and planned how we would bring them home, and what good food I’d cook.

And sure enough, they kept their word, to Bournemouth they did come. And visited us, and talked and talked. Oh, it was all such fun!

And thus began our friendship with those folk we love so well Victor and Nelina, there is so much more to tell... Of how we went to Yankieland and met them both once more, the holiday of a lifetime, all California we saw. Oh yes, we love them dearly, there’s still more we could say but time is short, so that’s all for now...

Happy Golden Wedding Day!

*Countries Visited by Victor F. Bogard*

All 50 of the United States

Ireland

1. All Canadian Provinces

2. Mexico

Tahiti

3. Panama

Midway Islands

4. Colombia

5. Dutch Guyana

6. Cuba

7. Puerto Rico

8. Martinique

9. Trinidad

10. St. Martin

11. Dominican Republic

12. Jamaica

13. Bermuda

14. Azores

15. Gibraltar

16. Balearic Islands

17. Ivory Coast

18. Nigeria

19. Morocco

20. Algeria

21. Egypt

22. Israel

23. Jordan

24. Tunisia

25. Syria

26. Lebanon

27. Turkey

28. Greece

29. Pakistan

30. Bahrain

31. India

32. Hong Kong

33. China

34. So. Korea

35. Japan

36. Philippines

37. Thailand

38. Fiji

39. Australia

40. New Zealand

41. Russia

42. Finland

43. Sweden

44. Norway

45. Denmark

46. West Germany

47. Belgium

48. France

49. Netherlands

50. Switzerland

51. Italy

52. Portugal

53. Spain

54. Monaco

55. England

56. Ireland

57. Wales

58. North

59. Scotland

60.

61.

62. Guam

63. Bahamas

64. Aruba

65. Wake

66. Morocco

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### C.S. Lewis

*“The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of man, and His compulsion is our liberation.”*

- Clive Staple Lewis

Why would I write a chapter in my autobiography about a man I’ve never met? We have written many pages about interesting people who have crossed our path and given us great pleasure and joy. How would this old English professor, C.S. Lewis, become an important figure in my life?

We live ten mile from Mount Hermon, a Christian conference center that has been in operation nearly 100 years. Each summer Bible conferences at Mount Hermon feature some of the best Christian speakers known. My mother and father encouraged us to take advantage of this opportunity. I can’t say I went often but it was there I first heard quotes by C.S. Lewis. I subscribe to a few Christian magazines. While reading different articles and authors I found the name C.S. Lewis quoted again and again. I bought a book titled “Surprised by Joy”, a kind of autobiography of the life of Clive Staples Lewis. After that I began looking for his comments. I found that he died in England on the same day and hour that President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas.

Linda Marty, a friend of ours, told me about the Wade Collection of Lewis memorabilia at Wheaton College near Chicago. As I’ve written before, my wife and I don’t need much of an excuse to go anywhere, so soon we found ourselves in that library at Wheaton College.

There we met Lyle Dorsett, Curator of the Wad Collection. He was converted after reading some of Lewis’s books and has authored several books of his own. While conducting research on his book “And God Came In”, Lyle was offered the position as Curator of the Wad Collection. This is a library of the books and writings of Charles Williams, Tolkien, George MacDonald, Dorothy Sayers, G.K. Chesterton and C.S. Lewis. Lyle was a professor at the University of Colorado and moved to Wheaton in 1979.

We visited the library the Friday after Thanksgiving. It was a holiday on campus, and Lyle should not have been there. I marvel at the way these things happen. You could call it “Divine Intervention”. The docent on duty told Lyle that there was a couple from California in the library that he should meet.

Lyle did an excellent job of telling us about his interest in C.S. Lewis and gave us some personal history of his life. Suddenly he said, “I want you to come to our home and meet my wife Mary.” And so began a sweet relationship with these folks that has resulted in our finding a new and consuming interest in C.S. Lewis. It has all been very rewarding.

Let me tell you about this Christian giant, C.S. Lewis, a Fellowship Lecturer in English Literature at Magdalen College, Oxford University. A short time before his death on November 22, 1963, he was the distinguished occupant of the Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge University. He was among the best literacy critics

of this period. Because of the death of his mother, at an early age, and because of the influence of a tutor, Lewis became an atheist. His conversion to Christianity is an interesting story. However, if you want to learn about that, you will have to buy his book "Surprised By Joy". We all must accept Christ by faith. Of Lewis it is often said that he had "an intellectual conversion". His picture was on the front page of the September 8, 1947 issue of TIME magazine. (I have a copy) According to Time, "Lewis is the most influential spokesman for Christianity in the English speaking world."

During the Second World War Lewis gave a series of lectures over the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) to the Armed Forces. He was known as "the most listened to" voice, after that of Winston Churchill. Now, 36 years after his death, he is one of the most quoted writers in England and America – one of the few writers of his generation whose books have never been out of print. Millions are still buying them. "Mere Christianity" is one of those 36 books, and it is still a best seller.

Even though Lewis was a man of high intellect he wrote many books for children. "The Chronicles of Narnia" are tales of fantasy that delight both young and old. My granddaughter Suzie is now reading them to her children. His books always have a strong moral conclusion.

I could go on, but Nelina often reminds me that everybody doesn't share my interest in C.S. Lewis. I must bring you back to my newfound friend, Lyle Dorsett.

### **Buying 'The Kilns' and the Lewis Library**

I had the honor to serve on the Steering Committee of the Wade Collection. Being a farm boy from Iowa, I contributed very little, inasmuch as most of the members were professors, authors, and publishers. When it was learned that C.S. Lewis's home, "The Kilns," was up for sale, Bob Cording became interested. He formed a limited partnership to purchase the home. My three sons and I bought four units, and I served on the board of "The Kilns Limited".

A short time later, Lyle discovered that a branch of Fairleigh-Dickerson University in England owned C.S. Lewis's personal library, some 2,700 volumes. The university wished to sell the entire library. Lyle and I made a hasty trip to England and soon were the possessors of every one of the books in Lewis's personal library. Many of the books are signed and filled with annotations and underlining. The Wheaton College library caused me to have a new interest in C.S. Lewis. As I inspected the covers I found that many books were given to Lewis by the authors. Chad Walsh, a professor at Beloit University, wrote a book titled, "Behold the Glory". Inside are written the words, "For Jack – who helped make this book possible. Devotedly, Chad. 1956".

I wrote DR. Walsh and told him that I had this book in my possession. After a few letters, Nelina and I found ourselves in his home in Vermont. We enjoyed a pleasant evening together, talking about the man we both admire.

## **At the Presidential Prayer Breakfast**

We have attended a few of the National Prayer Breakfasts in Washington, D.C. This occasion, officially called “The Presidential Prayer Breakfast” in one of the large hotels of the Capital, is a time when hundreds of Christian believers from around the world meet with the President of the United States and hear him speak on the issues important to people of faith.

We introduced ourselves to one of those people who stayed in the same hotel as we. The last night we saw him sitting in the lobby so we invited him to join us for dinner in a nearby restaurant. The man was John Lennox, a Professor of Pure Mathematics” from Cardiff, Wales. During our conversation he made the following statement: “The spiritual nature will be served; deny it food and it will gobble poison.”

“That sounds like a C.S. Lewis quote”, I said.

“Oh”, he responded, “C.S. Lewis was one of my professors.”

Whenever I tell this little story, Nelina remarks that I nearly jumped over the table to embrace him. (Not true.) We became good friends with John Lennox and his family as we visited in each other’s homes. We could share many more interesting encounters with the remarkable people in the circle of C.S.Lewis’s influence. Lyle Dorsett challenged me to advertise in nationally circulated Christian magazines and newspapers to find people whose lives were influenced by Lewis’s writings. The following tributes are from a few of them.

### **Dr. Joseph Cooke**

I think I can truthfully say that C.S. Lewis’s writings have had a more profound impact upon me than any other writer. It was not quite a case of first love at first sight, though I did enjoy his books from the very beginning; but before long he had completely captivated me; and I found myself devouring everything of his that I could lay my hand on.

The wonder of it all was that he somehow managed to capture my mind, my imagination, and my heart all at the same time. So profit was combined with pleasure in a manner and to a degree that I had never known before. It was as if I had suddenly discovered a recipe for liver and spinach that proved to be the tastiest dish at the banquet – or contrariwise that I had just found convincing evidence that ice cream and cookies should be ranked as the number-one health food. Substance wedded to delight! Who could have believed?

Nor has the substance proved passing or trivial; for Lewis gave me a solid, vital, and lasting perspective on the greatest truths of “mere” Christianity. In particular, he gave me an insight – a living picture- into the meaning of love and personhood (and their opposites) that has proved foundational for much of my understanding of God and man – an understanding that has expanded and deepened with the years.

Yet I cannot say that I have ever outgrown Lewis. Still he has the ability to touch my mind and my imagination as I read him. Over and over again I keep coming back to his books : “The Great Divorce”, “Till We Have Faces”, the Planetary trilogy, the Narnia books, the sermons and the essays. And I would be hard put to it to choose a favorite; for

each one seems to be my favorite as I reread it. But one which never fails to bring instruction and delight is his “Weight of Glory”. Frankly, it is the only thing I have ever read on the Christian hope that so deeply touches my mind and heart. Every time I read it I am amazed afresh at the depth and vitality of the insights there revealed.

Needless to say (but it gives me pleasure to say it anyway), I am profoundly thankful that I have had the joy and privilege of owning and reading Lewis’s books. And I always will be.

### **Dr. Chad Walsh**

I saw Lewis a fair number of times, but certain of these occasions have a touch of the numinous about them. One such memory is when we went to Oxford with Joy, long before she and Lewis were married. We had two teenage daughters with us and Joy reported that Lewis was very nervous about meeting them because he had heard such terrible tales about the antics of American children. But he did exactly the right thing. We all walked to Magdalen College and he suggested we climb the tower. Far below, the familiar world had a different dimension – the moment had something of Narnian flavor, though of course, Narnia was waiting to be born. Quietly we all descended and went out in the grass behind the tower. There Lewis stretched out on his back and recited stretches of Shakespeare, and snatches of 18<sup>th</sup> Century poetry.

Then there was Lewis and his hat, this latter object, shapeless but functional, had a way of disappearing and turning up weeks later. I was with him one time when he saw a hat that stirred his memory. “That looks like my hat,” he exclaimed. “It is my hat”, he shouted louder. Smiling triumphantly, he put it back on his head.

Lewis was a person of fixed habits. When he wanted a drink he seldom ventured beyond the “Bird and Baby”. It was there that he met Tolkien and various other Inklings about once a week for ale, talk and lunch. On my first trip to England, Lewis included me in on one of those meetings and I was properly awed. The talk was sharp and bracing – Lewis loved a good argument, loved to match wits with his peers, though one subject that did not come up was politics. His thinking on that subject hardly extended beyond the hope that politicians would fashion a system both Christian and intellectually convincing.

My last memory of Lewis is a somber one. I was in London and he suggested that I come to Oxford and be with him while he had a blood transfusion. By this time he had such a combination of maladies that if one was treated it was bad for the others. When I got there we talked in a very low keyed way. The dark shadow over us was the recent death of Joy. He seemed to have lost his zest for life and indicated that he was fully prepared to die. We shared memories of her and soon his eyes closed and I realized he was asleep. That was my final time with him and when I really said “good-bye”, though his actual death was almost a year away.

### **Dr. D.G. Kehl**

“Books serve as the ax to break up the frozen sea within us”, Franz Kafka said. The writings of C.S. Lewis, perhaps more than any books except the Holy Scriptures,



have broken a lot of ice for me as I have read and reread them personally and analyzed and discussed them with my students at Arizona State University.

I began reading Lewis as a college student myself, starting with “The Screwtape Letters”, then moving on to “Mere Christianity”. I was impressed by how Lewis discussed complex theological issues with simplicity, clarity, and freshness. His apologetics helped settle and confirm my own faith. Several students in my university classes on Lewis have been converted, receiving Jesus Christ as their Savior as a result of reading and discussing “Mere Christianity”. (Or, as Lewis’ Edmund would have put it, they were “undragonned”)

I regret that I didn’t discover the Narnia Chronicles as a child, but I read all seven of them to my two sons, who have since reread them several times on their own. They surely are among the very best works Lewis wrote. They have helped my family and me to slip past those “watchful dragons” and catch fresh glimpses of Jesus Christ through the figure of Aslan.

I shall never forget reading Lewis’s “Surprised by Joy” and “A Grief Observed” on the deck of the “Queen Mary” in August, 1966, returning from England to New York. The ice within me was not only broken up; it was melted. Thank God for this dear man of God and his gift of verbalizing the Christian faith.

**Dr. J.C. Lennox**  
*Professor of Pure Mathematics*  
*Cardiff, Wales*

In 1962, in my first year at Cambridge, I decided to “gatecrash” the English Faculty Lectures Lewis was giving in the Lecture Rooms in Mill Lane just across the road from the Department of Pure Mathematics. I was driven by sheer curiosity simply to see and hear the man to whose writings I was already enormously in debt. The rationale of “Mere Christianity” had played an important part in stabilizing my faith. His defense of the sheer “reasonableness” of Christianity was then, as now, powerfully convincing – so much so, in fact, that my father used to keep copies in the glove compartment of his car to give to hitch-hikers.

I was not disappointed with the lectures. As has so often been said, they began fractionally before he entered the room, almost at a run. The theatre was so crowded with students sitting on the floor and lining the walls, that one might have been forgiven for thinking that he was running the gauntlet as he came in and getting the first blow for truth before unbelief had time to rally! He was expounding John Doone and appeared to me to be using every reasonable opportunity to “smuggle” the faith in. I can remember the whole room roaring with laughter as he said: “And now a word from our weaker brethren...” (meaning the unbelievers). I had no idea at the time that he was dying. I just wish I had gone to more of those last lectures he ever gave.

It is very hard to capture in a small space what Lewis has done for my thinking. His books, from the Narnia Chronicles which I first read as an adult to “Miracles” are like a wind from another world and helped sharpen my thinking on the limitations of science and the fact that true science and the supernatural are not at variance. He also

educated my imagination – in particular helping me to understand the way in which symbolism is used in Scripture, putting colour into abstract concepts.

But, over and above all of these things, he was a man who loved God. His “roar” was but an echo of that of his master. He believed that Aslan had landed.

**Dr. Earl F. Palmer**

*Pastor, University Presbyterian Church*

*Seattle, Washington*

C.S. Lewis the writer broke in upon my life like a very good rainstorm while I was an undergraduate at U.C. Berkley. My first C.S. Lewis book was the “Screwtape Letters” and this small book has remained one of the most influential books upon my life.

Lewis has a way of asking questions that I want to ask and a way of thinking up stories and analysis to go with the questions that always help me to really see more clearly the most important things to see. He is a story teller who loves stories of the fantastic and I owe him to him a great debt in helping me to grasp the greatest of all stories – the one that is both wonderfully fantastic and yet true.

Lewis never wasted a word and so I owe him that love of economy in language too. There is an integrity in this spareness that works on me to keep my words honest.

Finally, I appreciate all those little pieces of the puzzle that have come together to help me understand the man. He was reserved, interior, honest, ruffled, witty, thoughtful, strong-willed, non-stylish in appearance, yet with a face that was arresting and generous. I have wondered if the lad Shasta in “The Horse and His Boy” is not the self-portrait of C.S. Lewis after all.

**Charles W. Colson**

### **The Impact of “Mere Christianity”**

One hot summer night in August of 1973 I visited an old friend at his home outside of Boston. It was during the darkest days of Watergate. My whole world was being turned upside down.

My friend was a keen businessman who had worked his way to the top. President of one of the largest corporations in America in his early forties, he was a hard-charging man driven to succeed. I understood because I was just like him.

But when I had paid him a quick visit during a business trip several months earlier, I had been astonished to find him peaceful, calm, relaxed: dramatically different.

When I asked him about it. He answered with an extraordinary explanation: “I have accepted Jesus Christ”. I had never heard anything like those words before; but I could not deny he had changed.

So, this August night, though I couldn’t admit it to anyone, I was seeking something – and I knew my friend might have an answer. Something was wrong in my

life. Something much more than Watergate; I was empty inside, groping for whatever meaning there was to life, if indeed there was any.

That night he told me about his encounter with Jesus Christ, how his life had been transformed. Then he picked up a book off a coffee table, opened it to a chapter titled “Pride” and began to read.

It was one of the most extraordinary moments of my life. The words from that book – “Mere Christianity”, written by the great English scholar C.S. Lewis – ripped through the protective armor in which I had unknowingly encased myself for forty-one years. Lewis wrote about man’s great sin- his pride – as a spiritual cancer.

The events of my own life flashed before me. I thought I had been driven by desire to provide for my family, build a good law firm, serve my country. But in reality what I was doing all those years was feeding my pride, proving how good I was. Lewis convicted me that all my efforts had been in vain, that in my drive for the top I had missed the real pinnacle – to know God in a personal way.

As I left my friend’s home that night, I accepted his gift of the copy of “Mere Christianity”. I was deeply moved by his testimony and by the chapter he had read – though I refused to show it. But as I got into my car, The White House tough guy – the hatchet man, or so the press called me – crumbled in a flood of tears, unable to drive, calling out to God with the first honest prayer of my life. That was the night Jesus Christ came into my life.

Over the next week I studied “Mere Christianity”. I underlined, made notes, even kept a yellow pad at my side with two columns – one headed “there is a God”, the other headed, “there is not a God.” On another sheet of paper I had two more columns – “Jesus Christ is God” – “Jesus Christ is not God”.

I read the book as if I was studying for the most important case I ever argued. Lewis’s logic was so utterly compelling that I was left with no recourse but to accept the reality of the God Who is and Who had revealed Himself through Jesus Christ. “Mere Christianity” simply sets forth a powerful, rational case for the Christian faith in a wonderfully readable way.

Since then I have given out hundreds of copies of “Mere Christianity” and have met thousands whose lives have been transformed by it. It is the book God has used most powerfully in my life, apart from His own Word.

But I must warn you, it is not a book you can pick up and put down easily, nor is it a book you can read and return to being the same person you were before. For it masterfully presents the case for Christ. After reading it, the uncommitted person can only make a choice for or against Him. In the choice for Him the reader will discover, as did Lewis himself in his own conversion, that “that hardness of God is kinder than the softness of man, and His Compulsion is our liberation.”

**Dr. E Eugene Williams**

**Church and Institutional Consultant**

Mr. Bogard, your request regarding Clive Staples Lewis opened a Pandora’s Box of memories classified under the year 1944. I was a first pilot with the 435<sup>th</sup> Troop

Carrier Group of the Ninth Air Force at the time. Our 76<sup>th</sup> Squadron was stationed at Welford Park, a quaint English village easily accessible to Oxford through the town of Wantage.

Inclement weather during this war year in southern England was endemic. To gain relief from boredom on non-flying days I would engage a jeep and a driver from the motor pool and spend time in Oxford, a university city that intrigues me to this day. The only attractions were not the double-deck busses, the medieval architecture, good friends and the leisurely flowing Thames.

The main attraction in Oxford for me was a Fellowship Lecturer I English Literature at Magdalen College, Oxford University. At our base in Welford Park I would listen eagerly to his broadcasts over the British Broadcasting Corporation radio. His name was C.S. Lewis and he was sharing his writings from his book, "Published Beyond Personality: the Christian Idea of God", which was later revised and presented as the last part of "Mere Christianity", my favorite of all his incredible writings. This personal partiality emerges from two vivid experiences deeply implanted in my memory. Its content related to my initial contact with C.S. Lewis, a solid reason number one. Secondly, in 1948 while a student at Pennsylvania State College, I presented a copy of "Mere Christianity" to a professor of philosophy. He claimed to be an avowed atheist. After he read this volume by C.S. Lewis and discussed its issues in our home, my wife and I had the exciting privilege of seeing him openly acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ to be his personal Savior. He later acknowledged his conversion to his class.

I first met Mr. Lewis in a pub on Turl Street in Oxford, located not too far from Magdalen College. A friend of mine mentioned that I might find him there, a place he sometimes frequented to imbibe ale, eat a sandwich, or play darts. When I introduced myself to him he was doing all three while in the company of two close friends. In the course of a rather brief, but very meaningful, conversation I asked him for permission to audit some of his lectures. That was a bold and, by British standards, perhaps a bit impolite. He asked me about a dozen questions concerning my motives, availability, and background. Then, to my surprise, he said if the University would grant permission for me to do so it was alright with him. As I recall, I think I backed out of the door of the pub without taking my eyes off of him.

Unfortunately, this 21-year-old "fly boy" could attend only eight of his lectures due to increased activity in combat and eventual movement of our base to France.

C.S. Lewis made a lasting impression on my life. I believe I met him during the most productive period of his life as far as writings were concerned. From 1942 when he published "The Screwtape Letters" until he was awarded the Doctorate of Divinity degree by St. Andrews University in 1946, and published his "Miracles" in 1947, I think he was in his prime. His mind was exceptionally sharp, his wit was ever present and his sarcasm was at its best. He challenged me to take careful inventory of my life, its purposes and its plans. C.S. Lewis personified the words of the late American jurist, Oliver Wendell Holmes, who stated that "Once the mind is stretched by a new idea it will never return to its original dimensions." Dr. Lewis stretched my 21-year-old mind and continues to do so as I return from time to time to his stimulative writings.

*"Find people you admire and try to emulate them."*

## Chapter Nine

Flying...Fishing...R.Ving

*“For my part , I travel not to go anywhere,  
but to go. I travel for travel’s sake.  
The great affair is to move.”*

- Robert Louis Stevenson, 1978

### Up, Up and Away

In 1946, a customer came into our dry cleaning shop in Sheldon with an armful of clothes to be cleaned. “I have started a school to train people to fly and get their pilot’s license,” he reported. Then he added. “I have you signed up at four o’clock next Tuesday to start your training.” This offer included night school for navigational training.

I stood there staring off into space, wondering, *Why do I want to fly?* When he told me it would not cost money, inasmuch as it was all under the G.I. Bill, I then looked at the bundle of clothes on the counter. I realized that my competition had a son who was a ex-G.I. I told the customer, “I’ll be there.”

I learned to fly in a Piper Cub J-3, a very light two-seater shortly after I obtained my license we moved to California. Flying didn’t catch me, so I did no more for a couple of decades.

After my oldest son, Vic Jr. joined the construction company, one of the carpenters he worked with was a pilot. He invited Vic to take flying lessons. Our son was still living at home, and I assumed I had the final say, “Yes” or “No”. It took only a few comments from Vic for me to realize that he was no longer under my control. I remember the incident very well. It was a frightening realization.

So, while Vic Jr. was getting his training I renewed my license and we formed a club called “Vernal” with five pilots including Vic Jr. and myself. We bought a Model 35 Bonanza, the third one built by Beechcraft. This craft proved to be an excellent airplane. In the next forty years we traded three times for later models: 35-B, 35-G, and 35-V, reported to be the best. To keep one’s license current, a physical is required every two years. At my last one I asked John Morris, the examining physician, “What is the age of the oldest pilot you have examined?” Without hesitation he replied, “You are.”

I continued flying for two more years until I reached the age of 75. We flew all over the United States, Canada and Mexico. In 1977 we built a cabin (sleeps 20) in the foothills of the Sierra Mountains, a four-hour drive from our home. We kept a car at the Auburn Airport. Flying has been an enjoyable experience. However, we don’t fly anymore. The airways have become so busy our three sons who are pilots didn’t feel comfortable flying anymore. The cabin on the lake is still used, most often now by the grandchildren and yes, even the great grandchildren.

## A Fish Story

From the time I was a small boy, I have loved to fish. The sport has provided many happy and exciting moments. One of them was with Orville Helmle, another avid fisherman. He has owned fishing boats for all the 40 years I've known him.

Orville told me he had been reading about a place in upper British Columbia called "River's Inlet." This bay is 80 miles from the nearest road. The only access to the lodge is by pontoon planes or boats. Orville make all of the arrangements to go on the fishing adventure.

I met him at the Seattle Airport. The next morning we boarded a float plane for our fisherman's paradise, "River's Inlet." We made a short stop for fuel about half way to the Inlet then we crossed an extremely high mountain range with a little cloud cover. We could have followed the coast and then turned up this long bay. The Pilot said he had made this trip so many times the plane could practically find it with out a pilot. The trip through the mountains was spectacular. He put me in the front seat because he heard that I was a pilot. I am not instrument rated so I must confess I had sweaty palms as we snaked through the mountain passes.

The Lodge was an old fish cannery converted into a very nice resort for fishing. A prize is given every year for the largest fish caught during the season. We both were successful each day we went out. Orville had a movie camera so we took pictures in the boat as we landed our catch. On the third day, I thought I had hooked a floating log. Orville said, "You've got a keeper!" He then started his camera to record the catch. When he got a glimpse of the fish I had he dropped his camera and grabbed the net to help land this monster.

The camera kept running, all the while pointing to a red gasoline can. All of our conversation and Orville's cheering was recorded, however. After we had this large Chinook in the boat, Orville picked up the camera and said, "I think this camera was running." He put our catch on film. Yes, it was the record for the year – 64 pounds plus. If you ask Orville Helmle he will show you about 10 minutes of re gas tank and conversation of two excited fisherman.

The following year I was 80 years old and my wife wanted to give me, my three sons, and three grandsons a trip back to River's Inlet as a birthday present. We caught some fish but no records. The boys said the plane trip through the mountains was worth the trip.

In my files I have the proof – a letter from the River's Inlet Resort date August 24, 1991:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Let this be to all men & ladies and all B.S. put aside, Victor Bogard did in fact catch the biggest chinook this season at River's Inlet Resort.

We would like to congratulate you for landing the largest chinook, a 64.4 pound fish. We hope you enjoy your knife and look forward to our next meeting in the "LAND OF THE GIANT SALMON" in 1992.

Sincerely,  
River's Inlet Resort  
Terry Johnson  
Gloria Johnson

### **Mostly About People**

The date may be about 1975, which is not important in this little saga. I know it was Sunday at Twin Lakes Church. Roy Kraft had a good message (as usual). He ended by asking a question, "Are you a good neighbor? When was the last time you went out of your way to show your neighbor that you cared about him?"

On the way home I turned that thought over in my mind. My next door neighbor and I had a nodding acquaintance, but we never had a conversation. I knew that his wife had moved out several years before. I saw a taxi drive up frequently to deliver packages. His work habits were very irregular. I determined I would call on him that afternoon. That was a mistake. I should have never gone to church that morning!

I was cordially greeted at the door and invited into his home. "No," I said, "I don't care for a glass of vodka." He told me of his only child living in Joplin, Missouri, whom he had not seen since he was a baby, about thirty years earlier. I said "I'll take you to the airport tomorrow," I called the airline and ordered the ticket. I called his son to be sure he would be home. Then I took the bottle of vodka and poured it down the drain. "I'll pick you up at two o'clock tomorrow." I shared my afternoon experience with Nelina. We wondered if perhaps we had taken Pastor's challenge too seriously.

The next day I was at his door at the agreed-upon time. When I opened it I knew he couldn't make the trip. He told me that he had disappointed his son frequently by not showing up at previous appointments. I told him, "You're going, and I'm going with you." I grabbed a bag, packed a few things and met Nelina as she was returning from some duties. "Where are you going?" she asked. I kissed her on the cheek and said, "I'm on my way to Joplin, Missouri." We stayed over night in Kansas City. The next morning was a short hop to Joplin.

It was worth the trip to see a father greet his son and embrace his two grandchildren whom he had never met. I went back to the hotel so they could be left alone to get acquainted with one another.

While drinking a cup of coffee in the hotel's café the gentleman next to me made some conversation and we soon shared stories. I told him I had come through Joplin some forty years before and that I was kicked off a freight train here. I told him I had slept all night under a water tower because it was raining. He told me he knew just where

it was and said, "Let me take you there." I soon found out he had spent four years in the Navy and was now selling real estate. He took me down to the old park next to the tracks. I smiled as I recalled a miserable night in that very park.

My new friend wanted to show me the lots he had just listed. These were three-acre sites on a gentle rolling hills with oak trees scattered, and plenty of open space. He pointed out a lot that he was planning to purchase. When I heard the price of \$10,000 with water and roads in, compared to Santa Cruz, this was a buy! "I'll take it," I said.

I was asked to be back for dinner at the son's home that evening. We enjoyed the family setting and a good meal. That evening back at the motel, we read the Gideon Bible together and the doctor was very serious. After the claims of Christ were presented he said he wanted to clean up his act and accept the Lord.

Back home, my neighbor attended church and attempted to stay off the vodka, but we saw evidence of his reverting back to his old life style. He became more of a nuisance and would try to talk to Nelina when I wasn't home. Finally, I told him I would try to have him committed if he continued his aggressive behavior. He pleaded not to be taken away for help. I later saw him sitting on his cliff about 90 feet above the rocks below. No one knows if he accidentally fell, or if he jumped off the cliff. The insurance company paid the life insurance policy. I met his wife – a very gracious lady – who received 50 percent of his assets. I soon found out the doctor had appointed me as the custodian for the grandchildren's inheritance. We also discovered that there were six grandchildren instead of two. There were a couple of previous wives. These funds were to be distributed periodically as the children reached certain ages. The last would be distributed in 2015.

I hired a friend to take care of this mess. Cliff Meidinger was a retired merchant and did a good job. The doctor's wife and the son's inheritance was not our problem. Then the grandchildren's portion was given to us for safekeeping. Cliff sold all the gas stocks, and portions of real estate and converted it all to cash so there would be little work to oversee this responsibility. A few years later when discussing my problem with a friend, who was an attorney, he suggested I present it to the court. The grandchildren were now all of age and the judge said if each would agree he would approve the distribution of the funds at once. My friend Cliff took care of all the legal work and put in his fee and included \$1,100 for my efforts and cost that I had incurred.

When the check came, as a surprise to me, I gave it to Cliff. "No, no!" he insisted as I protested. "I got paid for everything I did. It's yours."

The scene now changes to a young preacher in Hollister. My wife and I have always tried to encourage and help young pastors in small churches. Dwight Koopman started this church a year before. When visiting them, just before Christmas, they told us that they and their three children would have a very meager Christmas because the church was not making the salary budget.

I suggested to Cliff, "Let's cash in that eleven hundred dollars and give ten one-hundred-dollar bills to the Koopmans so the family could enjoy a Christmas. We'll take the last one hundred dollars and go out for dinner. The four of us went to the Koopmans and, needless to say, they were very happy.

About three years later, my son Vic, who takes care of all my affairs, walked into my office with sort of a smirk on his face. "You got away from me didn't you?" he said as he threw down a notice from the IRS, notifying me that I owed them \$600 (plus or



minus) for not reporting this income. Cliff had done such a thorough job he sent the final distribution of all the funds to the IRS. A few months later the state came in for its share with a letter informing me that if I wish to contest, “call us at Fresno.” At least I didn’t go to jail.

I can’t close this little episode without bringing in two very close friends of ours – Doug and Norma Welty. They were the parents and the grandparents of the Koopman children and have included us in their circle of friends for many years. Doug is a fine draftsman. We frequently meet for a noon lunch. The Welty’s have experienced some difficult medical problems within their family. Two of their six children have been affected with cystic fibrosis. One child, Jill, died when she was nine years old and the son, Nathan, died when he was about 20. The parents spent hours, day and night, nursing these two children.

During one of our last lunches, Doug must have been a little depressed. He shared with me some of his feelings. He was now nearly old enough to retire, but he had not invested for retirement. He expressed other concerns and said he felt that he had failed. I tried to encourage him and assured him that he and his family had other successes that he could look to with pride.

When I returned to my office I shared some of Doug’s remarks with my son Vic Jr. He was very vocal about the Welty’s many achievements. He remembers both of them singing in the choir. He also remembered the Bible studies they had with their neighbors in their home. Last, but not least, they had raised a great family. He said he worked with a daughter, “Toots,” when she helped out on a job in Chico. He valued her abilities very highly. “Yes,” he said, “they could be a mentor for any couple that was looking for a guide to successful living.” He ended by saying, “Success is not always measured in dollars and cents.”

Now if the reader is wondering about the lot I bought in Joplin, Missouri, here is the story: We sold it about three years later for approximately twice the purchase price. Yes, the IRS received its share!

### **Seeing the U.S.A. in Our ‘Bogies’**

Along about 1955, Wayne Elliston, one of our carpenters, bought a motor coach. I thought it was a foolish thing to do, but it did stir some interest in my thinking. Shortly thereafter I, too, was the owner of a Recreational Vehicle. Nelina reminds me that we’ve owned nine of them. Each named “Bogie”. The last one was a rear-engined diesel. We’ve had thousands of hours of happy motorcoaching in our Bogies.

If you just get in and start down the road you will not enjoy it. Careful planning is required to find common interest that makes every trip exciting. You don’t have to leave the United States to find beauty of all kinds. Our National Parks have the most exquisite scenery in the world. Just to park the R.V. and enjoy God’s handiwork is quite inspiring. Select a good book, lean back and enjoy.

We developed an interest in Presidential Libraries, and have visited all of the completed ones in an R.V. I usually buy a book about the presidents. Nelina had become interested in their wives. We rest and read for a while then go in again for a closer inspection of the facilities.

In 1992 we purchase a lot in an exceptionally well appointed development in Palm Springs. It has a gold course, six pools, two clubhouses, numerous tennis courts, hot tubs, spas, and other goodies. We look forward to spending approximately four months of the year there. Our sons have hinted that we were too old to be R.V.ing so we traded in the last one on a large triple-slideout 5th wheel which stays on the lot permanently.

Every Sunday we have a chapel service in the clubhouse. Bill Gwinn, formerly the director at Mount Hermon Conference Center, retired in this "Outdoor Resort". He does an excellent job of managing the chapel, speaking once a month and bringing in outside speakers for services on the other Sundays. We frequently have as many as 300 in attendance.

### **A Memento for the Farm**

In 1924, my father bought a windmill to pump water on the farm. It was erected over a well some distance from the house. As a boy, I thought it reached to the sky. I often told my boys how I helped my father assemble it. My father was not a patient man, and having a nine-year-old boy trying to assist him only irritated him. As Rich and I grew older we would often take my Dad's .32 rifle and shoot at the tail of the windmill more than 1,000 feet away. We occasionally would hit it. Dad thought the little dents in the sheet metal must have been the neighbor boys because they were always carrying rifles.

Now we move this little story to 1972. We are in Sheldon Iowa at our family reunion. I took a few members of my family out to the farm where we were all raised. They seemed to enjoy seeing those places I had told them about over the years. As we were leaving the farm Peggy, my daughter-in-law, spotted that old windmill in the field.

"I surely would like to have that old mill in our back yard," she said.

I was driving the car and made a 180-degree turn. We talked to the owner about her wish. The farm had been divided and the owner, Bill De Young, owned the half with the buildings. The windmill was a few feet on his half. After a short session of bargaining he graciously agreed to let us have it.

Jack Duimstra, my brother-in-law, agreed to disassemble it and ship it to Santa Cruz some 1,800 miles away. When it arrived (in good shape) we saw that Jack had included some old rough-sawn boards about 20 inches wide. These were put on the walls on my grandson's room. Chip would often show his friends the little whit spots that decorated the boards. There had always been many doves in our barn on the farm.

The mill stood some 27 years in Peggy's back yard. It weathered a major earthquake and countless windstorms. At that time we didn't know we would build our last home adjacent to their home, so we also enjoyed the mill for 15 years.

This story of the old Windmill will end on a happy note. Peggy and Vic sold their house, but before it went on the market, Chip again disassembled the old mill and is in the process of erecting it in the back yard of a new home they are building. There is will be safe for as long as our family needs it to remind them of happy days on our Iowa farm.

*“We are not the sum of our possessions, They are not the measure of our lives.”*

- President George Bush, Inaugural Address 1989

### **Your Name**

It came from your father,  
It was all he had to give  
So it's yours to use and cherish  
As long as you may live.  
If you lose the watch he gave you  
It can always be replaced,  
But a black mark on your name son,  
Can never be erased.  
It was clean the day you took it  
And a worthy name to bear,  
When I got it from my father  
There was no dishonor there.  
So, make sure you guard it wisely.  
After all is said and done,  
You'll be glad the name is spotless  
When you give it to your son.

- Author Unknown

## Chapter 10

### CALLING THE ROLL

*“He who remember the benefits of his parents  
is too much occupied with his recollection to remember their faults.”*  
- H. Ballau (Bollou)

In the pages of this book I’ve given readers little glimpses of my brothers, sisters, and grandchildren. Let me introduce each of them individually, along with their mates:

#### **Richard Adrian Bogaard**

Rich didn’t start school till he was nearly seven. I believe he could not speak English very well, so our folks started Marg and Rich at about the same time.

When I think of my elder brother, I think of somebody who enjoyed work. I remember Uncle Henry visiting us when I was a teenager. He said, “Years ago when I visited here there was a little argument as to who would do some little chore; Rich jumped up and said, “Ik wil het doen, Ik bin niet lui.” [I will do it, I’m not lazy.] This phrase has followed my bother most of his life, for siblings seldom allow an amusing incident like that to go unnoticed.

I took advantage of Rich’s enthusiasm and often sat on the manure spreader and entertained him while he cleaned the horse stalls. I never remember him informing my father about my lack of participation or of any misdeeds I might have committed. I’m certain that we had a few arguments but nothing lasted to be remembered. I am indebted to Rich for many good things I learned in my youth.

When my folks left the farm, Rich married a good Dutch girl from Melvin, Leona Struyk. Rich moved from the upstairs bedroom to the bedroom downstairs where he and all his brothers and sisters were conceived and born. I’m trying to keep this account focused on my siblings, but I must put in a word for Leona. Shortly after I was discharged from the Navy I moved into the old farm house which now belonged to my elder brother and his wife, not realizing that this was not my home anymore. Thank you, Leona for being gracious about my thoughtlessness.

Rich and Leona had two sets of twins: Dick and Donna, and several years later Linda and Letha were born. Their last child Beth, was born the same day their grandchild, Doug was born. Now you know why we have a unique family. Rich and Leona have been married for more than 62 years.

## **Marjorie Lucille Bogaard**

My second sibling, Marjorie, was a beautiful girl. When I think of her I see an attractive, brown-eyed, with dark hair and bangs on her forehead. She was one year ahead of me in school. It wasn't long before the three of us took a buggy to school, drawn by our horse "Slim".

As our family increased, Dad bought a "surrey with a fringe on top." Slim was soon pulling five of us to school every morning and home again in the afternoon.

Marjorie was an excellent cook. She often favored me by making things she knew I enjoyed. When not working, which was often, Marjorie enjoyed reading books and playing the piano.

While in the Navy, I took a 30-day leave from the U.S.S. California. Before departing I noticed a piece of jewelry in the canteen – a small anchor with a chain attached to a shield. I envisioned this on my elder sister. I had never bought a present for anybody in my life and five dollars was a lot of money, even if the jewelry was gold-plated. When I gave it to her she pinned it on a part of her dress that caused it to bounce as she walked. I was very glad I had bought it.

Marjorie told me she had met a young man from Orange City and displayed a smile that told me he was someone very special. When Jack Duimstra showed up, the younger children always ran to meet him at the door. They were rewarded with candy from Jack's pockets.

Jack and my sister were married in 1935. They had three children, Dave, Dan, and Debbie. Marjorie is the only sibling that has passed away, after 52 years of marriage. Her husband, Jack, had an interesting homegoing a few years later. It happened in this way:

The pastor of their church asked Jack to take over the weekly Bible study. And he finished the lesson he said, "Let's close by singing, 'Sweet Hour of Prayer.'" He sang heartily,

"Sweet hour of prayer, Sweet hour of prayer,  
Thy wings shall my petitions bear..."

He said the last words slowly, then fell to the floor and died. Whenever I tell this account of Jack's homegoing someone will say, "Isn't that a wonderful way to go?"

## **Victor Frank Bogard**

I am child number three in the Arie and Gertrude Bogaard family, the only one to take the extra letter our or "The Flowering Orchard." In the previous pages of this book I've written enough about myself. So, I'll include a praise song. As you read it, try to make it a personal expression of gratitude for yourself.

*Something beautiful, something good.  
All my confusion He understood.  
All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife  
But He made something beautiful of my life.*

### **Leona Irene Bogaard**

Born in 1919, Leona came into the world weighing only a little over four pounds. She was in such a rush to get here that she was born before the doctor arrived. Dad had his moment of glory, playing doctor and securing things.

Leona is nearly four years my junior. I recall with sadness that I often did things to irritate her and cause her to cry, which she did frequently. Leona was like me in some ways, possessing a little rebellious streak. She left home as soon as possible to enroll for nurse's training in Sioux City. Check Leona's high school diploma and you'll see only one "a" in her Bogard. After receiving her certification as a nurse she moved west because a certain Dutchman from Sanborn, Sidney Vander Woude, had moved to California. This was the beginning of World War II. Leona and Sid went into the Army. The two of them have joined us in many trips, long and short, including the one to Russia. They also have had a successful marriage of more than 50 years. Sid and Leona, parents of four children: Cheryl, Stan, Mark and Steve owned and operated nursing homes very successfully.

### **Milo Bogard**

Milo is child number five, the only Bogaard who does not have a middle name. He was born the year Calvin Coolidge became President. During Milo's youth he was quiet and reserved, very obedient with few arguments with our father or anybody else. Milo was the last of five children I referred to when my parents thought that was the entire family. Milo graduated from Archer High the same year Nelina and I were married. He was living with us when we started our first business venture, as mentioned earlier, and contributed a lot to its success.

I encouraged him to join the National Guard. Approximately two years later he was marching to the train depot with approximately 100 other young men. The Guard had been called for training in Louisiana. After war was declared, the company was sent to North Ireland. A short time later these green kids were sent to invade North Africa. They were ill equipped, poorly led and insufficiently trained. As a result, there were many casualties from Sheldon. Milo came out without any injuries.

While on furlough in 1945, Milo met Hazel Kreykes, an Army nurse from Sheldon. Both left about the same time for the Pacific. When the war ended, they both returned to Sheldon and were married. Milo became a partner in Bogard Cleaners. They have four children: Mary Beth, Norman, Bonita and Ruth. They've been married for more than 50 years.

### **Norma Ruth Bogaard**

Born in 1927, Norma was quite young when I left home so I can't comment about her youth. There is one event in the history of our lives which I must share. It was 1944. Our ship was leaving Norfolk, Virginia in a few hours, so I called Nelina in Sheldon. She informed me that Norma was very sick. Her prognosis was not good. What started as a

strep throat was now diagnosed as peritonitis of the bowel. With this uncertainty about Norma's health. I spent six weeks of anxious moments wondering if she would recover.

Our convoy went to many different ports and we ended at Ft. McHenry, Maryland. Our mail was brought aboard and the news from home was very good. Norma's condition was greatly improved.

Norma also chose nursing as a profession. Upon her graduation she traveled west and lived with our parents who had moved to Santa Cruz in 1948. She brought everything to California except her heart. After a few months she told us that her classmate, Roger Gintert, held first place in her life. But "Alas, he's not Dutch!" Norma, we are glad you broke this cycle. Roger has proved to be a wonderful brother.

After their marriage in Iowa, they soon joined us to live in Santa Cruz. They have been married for more than 50 years and have two children, Lean and Doak. Roger was in the Armed Services during World War II.

Norma has been the glue that has kept the Bogaard family together. After doing the Family Reunion work for many years, she has passed this responsibility on to the next generation. Now, with modern technology and the use of the Internet, Norma keeps the entire family linked in a prayer chain by e-mail.

This has been a wonderful service in sharing concerns, illnesses or blessings to all of us. Roger and Norma always find older people to whom they can minister. Many times Nelina has been in the hospital and Norma always seems to be there when she opens her eyes. What a comfort. A mutual friend once said, "The lives of Roger and Norma display second-mile Christianity."

### **David Stanley Bogaard**

Number seven was still very young when I left home. During his teen years David helped my brother Rich on the farm. When we moved to California he drove Nelina's father to Santa Cruz. Except for two years in the Army during the Korean conflict, David spent most of his time working for Bogard Construction. He and Calvin, our youngest brother, married the Johnson Sisters, Arden and Ellen.

As previously mentioned, David was a great help in the success of Bogard Construction. He was in charge of all phases of the building. As you may have surmised in reading thus far, Nelina and I made frequent trips and were often absent from the construction sites. David took care of everything as if it were his own. When I was in Iowa running Bogard Dry cleaning, Milo took care of the business there. David did it in Santa Cruz. I had had four good brothers. That is why it bears repeating.

David has five children: Barbara, Brian, Julie, Jane and Amie. David and Arden have been married for more than 45 years.

### **Calvin Lee Bogaard**

The baby of the family, Calvin was born after I left home in 1933. Since he was the youngest, I'm certain that the eagle eye of my father had dimmed somewhat so that my youngest brother could enjoy the mellow side of my parents.

A little humor has circulated among our family members for years, involving baby brother. As a youngster, Calvin was supposed to be home at a certain time so that he could perform his duties around the small ranch. On this particular day he knew my parents were going to a funeral. He enjoyed all sports, as most young boys do, and played very late that day because he figured the folks would not be home. When he saw they were home, he opened the door and with a big smile said, "Hi! Did you have a good time at the funeral?" This little story has been passed around among the family for more than 60 years. This reply is given whenever someone returns from a funeral, even to this day.

Calvin graduated from Biola University and Western Seminary. After a short period as a senior pastor at a church in Riverton, Wyoming, he became a Chaplain in the Airforce. He served a term of duty during Vietnam War and was discharged as a Colonel after 26 years of active duty at various bases in Europe and the Far East.

Nelina and I visited Can and Ellen at bases all over the United States and Europe. These younger kinfolk have been married more than 45 years and have four children: Colleen, Arie (a Lt. Colonel in the Army), Karla and Dirk.

The Bogaard family has a reunion every five years. We will meet in the millennial year at Brainerd Minnesota. There will be 178 members of the family present.

Here are some statistics concerning my seven brothers and sisters (including their spouses):

Six have been married for more than fifty years.

Six served overseas in the Second World War.

One served in the Korean Conflict.

One served in the Vietnam War.

All are followers of Jesus Christ and are active in their churches and in other ministries.

"We are one in the bond of love" has been our theme song.

## **Meet My Grandchildren**

A word of explanation might be in order here:

We love each grandchild dearly. If in these writings there seems to be a disparity in content between the grandchildren it was not intentional. There are approximately 20 years between the oldest and the youngest. I have had more contact with the older ones. Therefore, some of the detail might appear to be biased.

Most readers have heard the old adage, "If I had known grandchildren were such a joy, I would have had them first." Although we never had any problems with our sons as they were reaching for adulthood, I can relate to that special affection we develop for grandchildren. Vic and Peggy gave us our first, Tammy. First, a little background:

## **Tammy Lee Bogard**

My wife and I bought our sons a new car when each celebrated his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary. When our oldest grandson, Chip, became 16 we followed the same practice



and bought a two-toned silver Chevy Camero. The next day his elder sister Tammy, asked, "Grandpa, when am I going to get my car?" My reply was, "You're a girl. What do you need a car for?" She informed me that she also drove, I must confess, I was living in the past when boys escorted girls in their cars. When I think of it today, I realize that it was a dumb thing to say and do. However, I had to buy two more cars – one for Tammy and one for her sister Shelleen.

Last year we bought our eighth car – this one for Becky, our youngest grandchild. No, this practice does not carry on to the great grandchildren.

In 1992 we realized that the birthday anniversaries of Britt and Erin were a few months apart, so we bought two Pontiac Grand Prixs – a white one and a red one. One Christmas Eve, Santa made some noise outside. We all ran out. The garage doors opened and the lights shined on two ribboned cars. The two girls embraced each other by jumping up and down for some time. Seeing those happy faces was well worth it.

Now, back to Tammy, our eldest granddaughter. Several years ago as we were having lunch together she informed me that she was not happy with her present employment. I suggested applying to the C.H.P. One year later, after further investigation, she was in the organization. She has done very well in her career with the California Highway Patrol. On May 20, 1999, the Coastal Division of the Department of California Highway Patrol in our city honored Tammy Bogard, #11791, in her thirteenth year as a patrol officer. She was selected for a position at the Academy as an Emergency Vehicle Operations Course instructor. The officials stated in a memo that Tammy "has accomplished a work safety record without flaw." As a motorcycle patrol officer in our city, she has received many letters of thanks from the public and commendations from the Department.

One of the paragraphs in a "Memorandum" from Dave Stuflick, a Commander with the C.H.P., reads:

*Tammy's contributions to the success of the Area are many and varied. She is responsible for a litany of collateral assignments. Currently, she is a Certified Motorcycle Training Officer, a Field Training Officer, a shift Officer in Charge, and a member of the Coastal Division Protective Services Detail. She is the Area Special Events Coordinator and sits on the Area Occupational Safety Committee. Her most recent accomplishment was her appointment by acclamation as a representative of the California Association of Highway Patrolmen. She has performed admirably and competently in each of these duties.*

### **Shelleen Paul**

Shelleen is second, married to David Paul. They have two sons, Matt and Cole. Shelly is a wonderful wife and mother and a bubbly girl who wears a perpetual smile. She is especially kind and caring toward the elderly. She has worked a few high-tech firms in sales and is usually first in volume for the year.

## Victor Frank Bogaard III

“Chip,” (Victor Frank Bogaard III) is married to Suzie. They have two children, Victor Frank Bogaard IV (Rex) and Ryan. Chip and Suzie have just gone through the ordeal of building their own house. I hope it was a pleasant experience. Chip is now president of Bogard Construction. He is leading the Company to expand its vision for the new millennium. A letter written to his cousin, Jared, expresses Chip’s desire to work as a team as his father and uncles did harmoniously for thirsty-plus years.

When Chip graduated from high school he helped build our present house. We had an opportunity to build a large dwelling nearby. I suggested a kind of partnership so that all the profits would be his. We didn’t know where this might lead to in future years. I soon found that this little kid new everything.

One day as I was trying to share with him a bit of wisdom he said, “Grandpa, I know that.” I responded, “You are just a snot-nosed kid and you don’t know anything.” Then I walked away.

Shortly afterward I returned and said, “Chip, I want to be your grandfather, not your teacher.”

When the job was finished Chip worked for Bogard Construction and has been doing a good job. He often tells the story about “the kid with the runny nose.”

In a 1998 letter to his cousin Jared, Chip wrote:

*I am excited about our future. It was getting a little hairy there for a while just after Suzie and I returned from Fort Collins. Your desire to follow in your father’s footsteps has really helped to solidify our future plans. Equally as important was your successful experience this summer as you have been able to experience our industry on a day-to-day basis at a hands-on level.*

*As you progress through your Junior year in college and you begin to wonder why you need to sit through those boring classes when you could actually be working in the field, you have chose, remember this: Think about our future when making business decisions which will affect our business long after you have graduated. Likewise, I expect you to make good, sound decisions as you work through your school and eventually accept your diploma...*

*...The torch has not been completely passed to the next generation but that time is coming. If this seems a little scary, good. IT is a heavy burden and I do not intend to carry it alone. The rewards are numerous. We need to be prepared. I am confident that you will be a great partner. The wonderful thing is that we have been tremendously blessed with partners committed to helping us to succeed. They won’t do the work for us, but they are willing to provide us with all of the necessary support. This company needs your education and all of the experiences you can glean from your college years. (Well, maybe not all of your experiences.)*

*...Take comfort in the fact that this business is being managed with you in mind. We have it under control for now. By t the time you graduate we will be well on our way to meeting some of our long-term goals and objectives.*

*I am anxiously awaiting the day when you walk in the door as a full-time partner and friend.*

*Sincerely, Chip*

### **Brittany Janne Bogard**

Brad and Karla have three children: Brittany, Byron and Becky. Brittany is the oldest. The comments I made for her cousin Shelley could be repeated for Britt. She continues to light up our lives with her laughter. When she enters the room she sort of brings in a contagious joy that seems to be catching to all who are in her presence. We celebrate the same birthday anniversary: July 15<sup>th</sup>.

Britt graduated from the University of the Pacific in Stockton in 1998, the same school her parents attended. She is teaching special education at a high school near San Jose. Britt will soon receive her Master's Degree.

### **Byron Nickolaas Bogaard**

Byron is also attending University of the Pacific as a junior. He will graduate in the fall of 2000 with a degree in communications. He does not seem to be interested in construction. His mother says he has to make a living with his mouth, whatever that means.

This past summer, he and his cousin Jared worked in a Young Life Camp in Eastern Oregon. This was both a spiritual and an exciting adventure for both of them. Nelina and I, along with Jim and Cindy, visited this mammoth camp (10 square miles) this summer. A Mr. Washington gave this property to Young Life. You may have heard about it 12 years ago. A guru from India raised approximately \$70,000,000 from his followers, built an airport, a hotel, and more than 300 other buildings. He had 50 Rolls Royce automobiles. The story is extremely interesting. This misguided "seer" ran afoul of U.S. law and was unceremoniously booted out of the country. I suppose he returned to India where he came from.

When Byron was 14 years old, he was riding in a four-wheel-drive Ford pick-up with a friend, Anthony Filice and two other chums—all 14 – when their truck rolled into a murky pond. The truck filled with water instantly. Anthony was pinned underneath the water, so Byron dove into the muddy pond several times until he finally dislodged his friend and dragged him out.

"Anthony's my best friend, and he was dead weight," Byron told a reporter. "It thought I was pulling out a dead person."

The poor chap's face was "dark blue" and his lips were "dark purple," Byron said. But he and Chris Ciro started cardiopulmonary resuscitation, pumping air into the lungs of their friend, while Pete Wenz ran for help.

"I just thank God that He let us all live through it," Byron said.

### **Rebecca Leise Bogard**

Becky is our youngest grandchild. She is a senior at Monte Vista Christian School, has been recognized as an outstanding player in both volleyball and basketball,

and is the student body president and Homecoming Princess this year. I am surprised that she is also an outstanding student academically. That's my Becky!

As a rule, the family has a habit of coming together for tea on Sunday afternoon. This has been going on for more than a hundred years. A Dutch practice, I think. This is not planned. It just happens. After my parents died, each sibling often follows through with this social function. Now how does this tie in with Becky?

I have noticed for several years that she is the one who gathers up the dishes and takes them to the kitchen without being told. This does not go by unnoticed by the Grandfather. I have just been reminded that all the girls did this little chore graciously. However, Becky is much younger and had done it longer. This young lady sort of catches your heart with her smile and presence. A ver fine Lass.

### **Erin Marie Schwartz**

Jim and Cindy gave us two grandchildren – Erin and Jared. I'm including a paper Jared wrote as an assignment in his Communications Class at the University of Colorado at Ft. Collins. How can I add anything to this piece of literature?

*The sun beat down upon us that scorching day in early May. Five men dressed in black tuxedos, four women in dark blue dresses, everyone in the crowd wearing sunglasses, and my sister's white dress trailed from her feet down the red carpet at the center aisle. The white roses she held signified her beauty and the love she had inside her. The only thing cooling anyone was an occasional tear rolling slowly down the face until it came to rest on the tip of their nose where it was quietly brushed away. Tears of joy, tears of sadness. Were we losing the sweet young girl we once knew? Were things ever going to be the same?*

*In the blink of an eye a little girl runs crying to her daddy after skinning her knee because her brother pushed her to the ground. In the blink of an eye she is singing the national anthem at her high school graduation. In the blink of an eye she is shopping for a wedding dress. In the blink of an eye she is holding her newborn child in her arms. I look at a picture on my wall of the days of old when we were just kids running around without a care in the world. I was unaware of it at the time, but the cute little blonde girl in the pictures with me would be the one who I look to for inspiration and guidance throughout my life.*

*Love, strength, kindness, and joy are my sister's greatest virtues. Of all the people I know, nobody can fill a room with happiness as she can. As the weather changes our moods, she can change people with her presence. Like a rainy day in the middle of summer, causing us to be gloomy, but when the sun shines through the clouds our troubles seem to cease. My sister is like the sun. The warmth she radiates is like no other.*

*Her strength holds steadfast and faithful. She is a rock on which one can lean in times of need. Her kindness is like a pastor giving jellybeans to the little kids after church. Her love is that of a mother cat caring for her kittens. She will always look out for your best interests, even if she must sacrifice to make you happy. Her curiosity makes her interesting, her courage gives her strength, her creativity draws people to her. She is*

*the quiet person in the background, willing and able in any given situation, humble if given praise, honest if asked for truth, helpful if asked advice, understanding if asked forgiveness, and loving if asked for care.*

*She'll always greet you with a smile from ear to ear. Her deep, blue eyes fill with concern for your experiences. She is full of joy when she hears about your day. Even if uneventful. She'll always ask you how you are, and if you are unhappy, she'll try to spread cheer over you like a blanket of love.*

*She doesn't need a trophy to show that she has won the hearts of her family and friends. She doesn't need a degree to prove that she is great. She doesn't need a song written about her. She doesn't need a party to celebrate her accomplishments. She doesn't need somebody to explain how wonderful she is. You can see these things when you look at her. In fact, what I am saying today does not do her justice. She wants nothing but to be loved in return. And that is what she receives. And that is what she deserves. Her wisdom and lifestyle have been a model for people to follow, and will remain that way as time goes on.*

*My sister gave birth to a daughter on April 27<sup>th</sup>. From the day she was born, she was meant to be a mother. Her love, strength, kindness and joy will be her greatest assets in raising her daughter. If I could say anything to my niece, I would tell her that she is the luckiest kid on the planet because she has a wonderful mother.*

*Jared Bogaard  
Communications Class 1998  
Colorado State University,  
Fort Collins, Co.*

Like the other grandchildren, Erin has been as exciting person to watch mature and become an adult. She married a fine young man, Dean Shwartz, who is part owner in a tire shop.

Erin is an excellent homemaker. When I watch her perform her duties as a mother with her daughter, Alannah, the thought comes to mind: "Did this young lady take a course in Motherhood?" She seems to have that professional touch.

### **Jared Douglas Bogaard**

Now last, but not least, is Jared. You have read his cousin "Chip's" invitation to join him in Bogard Construction. He is looking forward to this new phase in his life.

I frequently have lunch with the grandchildren. Recently Jared joined me for chowder at The Wharf. It is exciting to hear these young people who are ready to step out into the future and challenge the system with new ideas. As we grow older, we seem to be more comfortable with old problems than with new solutions.

I must call attention to an even in Jared's life that happened when he was 11 years old. His father, Jim, and he memorized Colossians 3 and recited it before the church body, each one alternating one verse at a time.

Things like that make grandparents very proud. A hearty thanks to all our Grand and Great grandchildren. Each one of you has contributed a special blessing to our lives that cannot be expressed in these words, so ...count your blessings.

### **“The Flowering Orchard”**

In her book, *Waiting on God*, Simone Weil wrote: “The greatest attribute a human can have is humility.” I might have lost that in this recap of our family. Pride is also a sin. Is it possible to be “humbly proud?” I guess not. Nelina and I often wonder why the Lord has blessed us so abundantly. We don’t have the answers so we end this autobiography as we started by urging readers to “count your blessings.”

As I write this last page, it is December 29, 1999, my father’s birthday anniversary. He was born one hundred and fourteen years ago. Tomorrow would be the birthday anniversary of my elder sister, Marjorie. She died at the young age of seventy-six.

In three days we will enter into the year 2000, a new millennium. I wonder if there will be as much change in the next century as I have witnessed in the past eighty-four years. I was in high school before I ever used a flush toilet. A horse and buggy was my mode of travel. Supersonic jets, television and computers were just dreams for the future when I was a boy. Recently I read that we haven’t seen anything yet. The next century will bring surprises that are beyond our imaginations.

As we enter this new millennium, I am reminded of a plaque I saw in the beautiful Gothic George Chapel in Windsor, England. On the wrought-iron gate that encloses the tomb of King George VI is a quotations read by him on Christmas day in 1939. It will help to remember that during this time the English Commonwealth was going through a very dark period. Hitler controlled Europe and was bombing England relentlessly. Some theologians might argue as to its scriptural truth. However, I think the words are appropriate for the end of this century and they will bring a closure to these, my memoirs.

The king read these words:

*I said to the man, who stood at the gate of the year,  
Give me light that I may tread safely into the unknown.  
And he replied,  
“Go out into the darkness  
And put your hand into the hand of God.  
That shall be to you better than a light  
And safer than a known way.”*