

WHITTENBERGS in AMERICA
(AKA: WURTENBERG(ER), WHITTENBARGER,
WITTENBERGER)

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written by
Enid Claire WHITTENBERG TWEETON

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In Memory of Enid Tweeton



Acknowledgement

I remember many times as a kid watching The Wizard of Oz at your house. The characters in the fictional world were in search of a brain, a heart, and courage.

What I can say is you exemplified what it means to be an intelligent and kind person, someone who courageously lived through the times of the greatest generation.

I remember my grandmother telling stories of our family and her upbringing. We are very fortunate that she took the time to write about our history and the experiences she had living through memorable moments in time.

I decided to put her work into book format so that the collected history of our family can continue to be passed on. My grandmother's writings detail how the chiropractic profession has influenced generations of our family. I am proud to say the tradition continues.

Dr. Dan Tweeton – One of Enid's Grandchildren, Fourth-Generation Chiropractor

From Enid's Obituary:

Enid Claire Tweeton, 96, of Washington, Iowa, passed away Friday, February 25, 2022 at the Halcyon House Health Center.

Enid Tweeton was born January 7, 1926, the daughter of Dr. William Bailey and Thora Marie (Johnson) Whittenberg in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. She graduated from High School there in 1943 and attended North Dakota State University for two years. Enid married Marvin Lawrence Tweeton, also from Detroit Lakes, on May 18, 1945. While Marvin was in Chiropractic School in St. Louis, Enid worked as secretary to the Chief Engineer of the Helicopter Division of McDonnell Aircraft Corporation. They moved from St. Louis to Oakes, North Dakota. In 1954, they moved to Kalona, Iowa, until 1965 when they moved to Washington, Iowa.

Chiropractic played an important role in her life. Her father, husband, son, grandson, and several uncles, aunts, and cousins were chiropractors. She worked as office assistant with her husband and son for many years.

Enid was a member of the United Methodist Church. She loved music and sang in church choirs for over 75 years. She had been a member of school band, choir, played the piano, had been a member of the women's barbershop group, the Charmonaires, and performed in several musicals on stage. Enid was a member and past Matron of the Order of the Eastern Star, past leader of the Music Department of the Washington Fortnightly Club, Alpha Study Club, and Rachel Bible Circle. She enjoyed family, travel, boating, and fishing. Enid was an avid Minnesota Vikings, Minnesota Twins and Iowa Hawkeyes fan.

Enid Tweeton

Enid is survived by 2 sons: Dr. William (Ann) Tweeton and David (Diane) Tweeton of Washington, Iowa; daughter-in-law, Sue Tweeton of California; four grandchildren: Aaron (Elizabeth) Tweeton and Sarah (Jimmy) Mazerik of California, Michael (Sheila) Tweeton of Johnston, Iowa, and Dr. Daniel (Kyle) Tweeton of Washington, Iowa; and six great grandchildren.

Preceding her in death were her husband, Marvin; son, John Victor; parents; sisters, Geraldine Powles and Victoria Ellison; and brother William Whittenberg.

WHITTENBERGS in AMERICA

Stories passed down through several generations trace the name back to northeastern Germany where the name WITTENBERG means “one who comes from White Mountain”. Early WHITTENBERGS were Huguenots who possibly moved to France and then Plymouth, England before crossing the ocean.

The first WHITTENBERG immigrants came to America with their large family (as many as 13 children) where they settled in Virginia and North and South Carolina in the eighteenth century. Some researchers trace our lineage back to one of their sons, Henry Michael WURTENBERG (1700?-1767) who was born around 1700 in Northeastern Germany. On Sept. 5, 1751 he and his wife and family arrived in a port in Pennsylvania aboard the ship “Shirley”. They lived in Berks County, PA until 1766 then moved to Mechenburg County, North Carolina, where Henry died in 1767. Because the western half of North Carolina became the state of Tennessee in 1796, the location of Henry’s holdings therefore changed. The land grant to son Frederick WHITTENBERG (about 1737 in Germany-10/25/1804) from Henry’s estate placed the plantation in Greene County, Tennessee, several miles south of Greeneville along the Nolachuckey River.

Our 17th President, Andrew Johnson (1808-1875) called Greenville, Tennessee home. Because he was loyal to the Union, President Lincoln chose him, a Democrat, to be his vice president in the 1864 election. He became president when Lincoln was assassinated and lacked one vote of being impeached because he embraced Lincoln’s policy of conciliation toward the defeated

Confederate States. He is the only man to serve in the United States Senate after serving as President.

I might add another famous name from that area. Davy Crocket was born in a log cabin August 17, 1786 on the banks of the Nolichucky River near Greenville. Affectionately known as “Davy”, he cultivated the image of a shrewd, homespun backwoodsman. He served in the Congress (1827-31) and (1833-35). Later he joined Texas revolutionaries who fought against General Santa Anna’s Mexican army of thousands. He died in the siege of the Alamo which lasted from February 24 to March 6, 1836. The area where “Davy” was born is now a 63 acre State park.

Both the EARNESTs and WHITTENBERGs were prominent Methodist families of Greene County. The foremost exponent of Methodism in early Greene County was Rev. Stephen BROOKS. In 1792 he was instrumental in founding Ebenezer Church in the EARNEST settlement. Bishop Francis Asbury preached the first sermon from Exodus 20-24 and dedicated the first building April 27, 1795. Bishop Asbury was a frequent visitor at the Felix EARNEST home near the Nolichucky River.

Rev. Stephen BROOKS was a prominent Mason and took an active part in Greeneville Lodge, was a Greene County delegate to State Constitution Convention in 1796 and had a fruitful ministry for 66 years. He married Anna EARNEST and one of Frederick WHITTENBERG’s daughters, Margarete , was his second wife. Her brother, John Alden WHITTENBERG (4/7/1775-10/4/1850) continues our ancestral line. Born April 7, 1775 in what was then Rowan County, North Carolina, he was one of eleven children of Frederick and Margrette (BENSON) WHITTENBERG. He married Sarah LOTSPEICH (twin) March 3, 1803 in Chuckey,

Greene County, Tennessee. Sarah's lineage traces back to Johann Jacob LOTSCHBERG born 1680 in Germany. John Alden died 10/4/1850 in Rhea County, Tennessee.

Continuing our ancestral lineage, Samuel WHITTENBERG (11/12/1812-2/17/1898) was the fourth of eight sons born to John Alden and Sarah (LOTSPEICH) WHITTENBERG. While living in Rhea County, Tennessee, five children were born to Samuel WHITTENBERG and Sarah HUSE. Sarah's birthplace was North Carolina around 1825. While still living in Rhea County, Tennessee, Samuel married his second wife, Rhoda R. GANAWAY in 1860 before the family moved from Tennessee to Arkansas. There were no known children.

Settling in the south in the mid 1700's, the WHITTENBERG families surely shared in all the major events of our developing nation; the Revolution that won our freedom from British rule, slavery, the Civil War and coming together to form the United States of America. One can only imagine what life was like for them in those early days of our country. The family must have been caught up in the dispute over slavery that brought on the terribly cruel Civil War (1861-1865). WHITTENBERG family members surely fought in that war and, also, one wonders what prompted Samuel to move his family westward from Tennessee to Arkansas one year before the shooting war started. Arkansas had joined the Union in 1836. Many questions remain.



Samuel's family lived in Arkansas from 1860 until 1889. One of the five children born to Samuel WHITTENBERG and Sarah HUSE was our paternal grandfather, Edmond Gregory WHITTENBERG (3/5/1853-6/4/1925). Our paternal grandmother, Amanda EARNEST (2/17/1853-1/9/1934), was not of the lineage of the Henry EARNESTS OF Greenville, TN, but rather the George EARNEST family of Virginia, also early settlers in America in the 1700's. Amanda was born in Bradley County, Tennessee as were all but two of her many siblings. Amanda was the 6th of 13 children



of Henry Clay EARNEST (5/12/1823-1923+) and Mary Melton (1828) from North Carolina. Henry and Mary were married in Georgia, and two of their sons, Henry Clay EARNEST, Jr. and Charles Augustus "Jack" were born in Georgia. Mary died December 15, 1895 in Gorman, Texas.

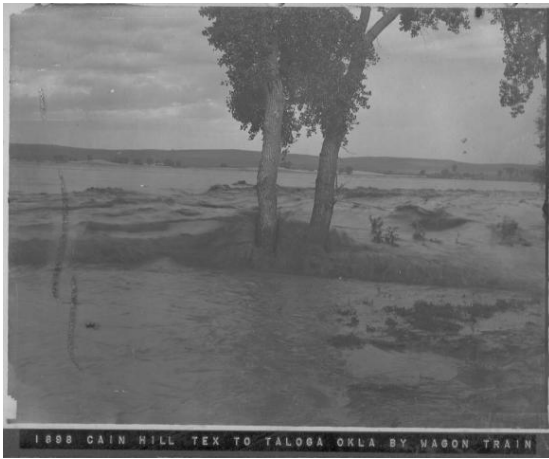
Grampa and Gramma WHITTENBERG had a very large family, too, twelve children in all, eight of whom lived past infancy. Edmond and Amanda were married at her father's home in Coin Hill, Washington County, Arkansas October



9, 1873. While still living in Arkansas, the first nine children were born; Thomas (11/2/1874-8/27/1875), Samuel Henry (2/28/1876-12/9/1968), James Albert (10/25/1878-11/13/1967), Charles Edmond (9/7/1880-7/29/1935), Ora Ireen (4/16/1883-9/1/1883), ? Whittenberg (8/16/1884-8/16/1884), Oma Winfield (7/25/1885-10/16/1968), Myrtie Lee (12/19/1888-12/29/1978) and David Earnest (11/17/1889-8/8/1968). After moving to Texas in 1889, three more children were born; our father, William Bailey (4/30/1892-2/11/1969), Mary Etta (2/9/1895-1/7/1978), and Milton Eldridge (3/28/1897-2/12/1898). A young girl, Lorena, who called their mother Aunt Mandy,, also lived with the family. Later in life



she married Marcus Bach, an author, lecturer and Professor of Religion at the University of Iowa. When Marc and Lorena traveled worldwide, Lorena's expert photography appeared as illustrations in her husband's books.



In 1889 both the large EARNEST family and the WHITTENBERGS traveled westward out of Arkansas and eventually made their way to Eastland County, Texas. They very likely traveled together by wagon

train. The oldest child of Edmond and Amanda, Samuel Henry, was then thirteen years old. Samuel Henry was no doubt named after his two grandfathers. Edmond's dad, Samuel, and Amanda's dad, Henry Clay EARNEST. David Earnest was also a family name; there was our Uncle Dave (1889), also a David Earnest born 1781 in Hanover County, Virginia, Amanda's brother born in 1859 in Tennessee, and Uncle Dave and Aunt Emily's second son just a few years older than I. Amanda's brother was a handsome man whom we all called "Great Uncle Dave". There were Uncles, Aunts and cousins by the dozens of the EARNEST family that also settled in Eastland County, Texas.



Jim & Dave with their fish caught down beyond Houston. Jim & Dave sure are good pals although Uncle Dave is quite a older than Jim.



Our dad's brother, David Earnest (1889-1968) was born same year the family traveled from Arkansas to Texas. Eighteen eighty nine was also the year of the Oklahoma Land Rush but our branch of the WHITTENBERG family lived in Texas ten years before they moved on to Oklahoma. Our father, William Bailey WHITTENBERG (1892-1969) was born in Cisco and Aunt Etta (1895-1978) in Romney, all in Eastland County, Texas. The WHITTENBERG homestead was at Staff, also in Eastland County. Dad was seven years old and Aunt Etta four when the family traveled in 1899 from Texas to Tologa, Oklahoma by wagon train. From there they made their way to Weatherford, Oklahoma where they lived for twenty years.

Having none of the modern comforts that we enjoy today; hard work, courage and deep and abiding faith must have been required just to keep body and soul together in those days. There were no automobiles, no electricity, no sawmills, no grocery stores, no ready-made clothing, refrigeration or running water except in a stream or well and travel by covered wagon, no doubt, in all kinds of weather.



Rest assured, though, Christian teachings played an important role in the children’s upbringing. All of the children were baptized either in Arkansas or Comanche County, Texas. To quote from Amanda’s obituary:

“Thru out her long life she has been a very ardent Christian worker. At an early age she united with the Methodist Church and remained a faithful attendant during her active life.

Her greatest ambition being the training of her family in the Christian faith.”

The Lord’s day was faithfully observed and a routine strictly adhered to. Preparations began with a thorough scrubbing in a wooden tub. The family would then load up the buckboard and travel many miles over and back to church service. They often

brought the preacher back with them; then waited while the women prepared Sunday dinner. The adults ate first and finally the children. My dad, being next to the youngest remembered being mighty hungry having to wait so long for his meal.



Around the turn of the century, William Bailey met with an accident that profoundly changed the course of his life and also influenced the lives of the whole WHITTENBERG family. Picture a clear Texas summer night with a full moon overhead that shone as bright as day. A young lad was out just horsing around and having some fun. In the bright moonlight he jumped on the back of a young bull to take a ride when the calf bucked him off and threw him over a barbed wire fence. Some time later the young lad began having pains in his knee that was diagnosed as “growing pains”.

The following pages relate the story quite well:

The doctors had diagnosed the young boy's trouble as "growing pains" when, in fact, the condition was a more serious tubercular osteomyelitis, or an inflammatory bone disease. At only age eleven years of age and after three surgeries, William Bailey's entire leg had been removed. The pain still persisted but when the doctors planned still more surgery, his father would not allow it and, instead, sought treatments from an early Chiropractor. Very likely, the Chiropractic adjustments addressed the trauma the boy had received from his fall from the bull and caused the pain in the affected area to subside. His miraculous recovery so impressed the rest of his siblings that all but one member of the family attended Palmer College of Chiropractic and became doctors of Chiropractic themselves. Actually, Chiropractic itself was in its infancy having been established in 1895.

William Bailey's pre-teen years were one of recovery of his health but also uncertainty about the future. Try to imagine what it must have been for a young teen-ager growing up living with the loss of his entire leg. There were so many activities he couldn't enjoy while the other young people were running and playing and having fun. He busied himself around the house learning domestic chores usually reserved for the women such as knitting, baking bread, etc. Still he was depressed and uncertain about his future. When his doctor said, "don't come crying to me", he braced himself and the one-legged boy headed for Davenport, Iowa. He hung a sign on his car, "I'm on my way to see B.J." (B. J. Palmer was founder of the college). By 1914, he and all his siblings had graduated from Palmer Chiropractic College.

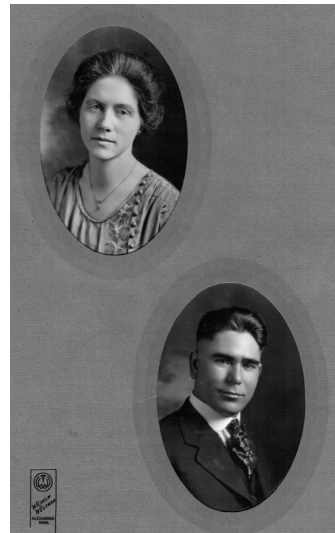


The WHITTENBERG families established their practices in various parts of the Midwest. Charlie and his wife, Alice, practiced in Knoxville, Iowa while the two sisters and their husbands opened their offices in Wisconsin.; Etta and Jack Stacy in Madison and Myrtie and Joe Rebholz in Milwaukee. Uncle Sam stayed in Texas. David Earnest, Oma Winfield and William Bailey practiced together at first in Alexandria, Minnesota, then later branched out in the little village of Evansville and what was then Detroit, Minnesota. (The address Detroit, MN was so similar to Detroit, MI, the mailman was confused so they changed the name to Detroit Lakes, MN.) The name was appropriate as the area boasts of having 412 lakes within 25 miles. The three WHITTENBERG brother's logo on their letterhead read "Nature's Playground" which describes the beautiful land with its sparkling lakes, cool summer breezes that offer

swimming, boating, fishing, etc. Minnesota winters could be long and harsh, but there were three good months of summer that were worth waiting for. Fishing and hunting were activities that Wm. Bailey could enjoy. Also, the cooler climate would have made wearing his full-length prosthesis more bearable.



At the Evansville office one day, a pretty schoolteacher named Thora JOHNSON came to William Bailey for treatments. She had long golden red hair that glowed in the sunlight. Bill Bailey was so smitten by the charming young lady that he declared, “I’m going to marry that girl”. He met her family of good Scandinavian stock; her father, Nels, a Dane and a butcher by trade, mother Mette from Norway, a good Christian worker, sister Clara, a nurse and brother Victor who worked in the bank and his father’s butcher shop and, of course, Duke the St.



Bernard, Miss Florentine the cat, Della the cow and Pete the parrot. Thora taught Pete to say “hello Bailey, hello Bailey”, when he came to call. Actually, Thora had been engaged to a man named George Smart for six years but the young doctor won her heart and they were married on August 20, 1919 in Alexandria, MN with Uncle Dave and Aunt Emily as witnesses. In those



days school teachers who married were not allowed to continue teaching so that ended her teaching career. She had studied at St. Cloud Normal College and taught in So. St. Paul and Clearwater, Minnesota. Her beautiful handwriting was evidence of Palmer Method Penmanship which she taught her classes.

For their honeymoon the newlyweds attended the Fifth Lyceum at Palmer School of Chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa from August 24 to 30th, 1919 where Thora met other WHITTENBERG family members; Uncle Dave and Aunt Emily, Uncle Charlie and Aunt Alice, their children, Mildred and Palmer and Uncle Oma and Aunt Zoe. There were 5,127 registered attendants at the Lyceum.

Not only had the WHITTENBERG siblings graduated from Palmer College by 1914, but the years 1914-1918 were significant as they brought heartbreaking personal tragedy to the JOHNSON family. When World War One was declared in 1914 Thora’s brother, Victor, enlisted. His regiment shipped overseas and fought

in many fierce battles. Victor died in a hospital in France in 1918 at the end of the war. At the same time, many thousand died worldwide of the flu epidemic. Throughout her lifetime Thora could never talk about her brother, Victor, without tears.



Also in 1918, in the Detroit office William Bailey had a partner named John NARUM, a strapping healthy young man with his life ahead of him. He died in the flu epidemic, also, as many thousands did here in this country. His widow then taught school in Oak Park, IL for years and spent her summers in Minnesota. As a child, I remember many good times our family enjoyed at Aunt Inez' cottage on the east shore of Big Detroit Lake.

While living in Detroit Lakes, Uncle Oma and Aunt Zoe's beautiful little daughter died suddenly. Their marriage did not survive the tragedy. Aunt Zoe married again and moved to Salt Lake City, Utah and Uncle Oma moved to Minneapolis and married again.

January 14, 1921 my older sister, Geraldine Marie, was born

to William Bailey and Thora Marie. They were living in an apartment on the second floor of the Nunn Block in downtown Detroit Lakes. The chiropractic office was also on that floor. In a couple years Victoria Jean was born on April 26, 1924. Because the back alley was the only place for the children to run and play, they bought the house at 200 Park Street where the WHITTENBERG family lived for many years. The move meant that for many years W.B. climbed the long flight of stairs each day to his chiropractic office on the second floor of the Nunn building on main street in downtown Detroit Lakes.

The third WHITTENBERG girl arrived in a good old Minnesota blizzard on January 7, 1926, namely me, Enid Claire. Ten years later, William Charles John arrived November 26, 1936, finally a boy. As a ten year old, I enjoyed having a baby brother and we had good times together and were very close. That family couldn't be called complete without "KiYi". Actually Caroline Stregger was her name but she certainly was part of the WHITTENBERG family for many years. She was about sixteen years old when she came to live with us. Because she had a deformed spine, Thora ordered dresses made to better fit her. A little bit of a thing, she was fun-loving, hard working good cook and did a lot of running for my dad when he couldn't. She was a sweet soul and everybody loved "KiYi", a nickname I gave her that stuck because as a baby I couldn't pronounce Caroline.

The WHITTENBERG family did a lot of living in that house at 200 Park Street in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. The front entrance to the county hospital was located just across from the back entrance to our house. Nobody or at least few people ever used our front door. Our neighbors popped their heads in for a quick "hi" most every day. They probably found "Ki" in the kitchen preparing the

next meal or baking homemade breads. She cooked on a wood burning stove with a woodbox that needed constant refilling. One of my chores was splitting kindling from the woodstack in the garage to fill the woodbox behind the stove.

Dad had many different models of cars he kept in that garage. When my mother tried to learn to drive she took the garage door off and would never drive again. Ki couldn't see over the windshield so dad would drive when she needed groceries.

They also had a big garden that furnished much of the food. Dad's birthday was April 30th and planting potatoes on that day was an annual ritual. Later in the summer us kids had the chore of picking potato bugs off the potato plants.

My sister, Gerry, was just two years old when the folks traveled to Eastland County, Texas on May 12, 1923. The large WHITTENBERG family came from miles around to celebrate Henry Clay EARNEST's 100th birthday.

When the six brothers got together they saw the oil drilling business going on in that county and decided it was too good to pass. They leased land from some of the EARNEST family and started their own enterprise: "the Mogul Oil Company". The following newspaper article (see page 8a) doesn't tell the whole story, however. Some members of the family blew up the wells so the company went 'belly-up' and the brothers lost all they had invested.

Detroit Lakes was in the heart of a beautiful resort area which claimed 412 lakes within 25 miles. Vacationers came from all over the U.S. and Canada in the summertime. There were hundreds of cottages around the lake where they could stay. Lake

Avenue led from main street down to the north shore of Big Detroit Lake with a swimming beach, boat dock, a big, beautiful city park and a dance pavilion which drew some pretty good bands. In his early days in South Dakota, even Lawrence Welk played there. For years our family looked forward to a fishing trip to Detroit Lakes over Memorial Day weekend.

A 200 mile trip from Detroit Lakes to the twin cities was one of the highlights of each year. Some of the family usually traveled with dad to the Curtis Hotel in Minneapolis to attend the Minnesota Chiropractic Convention in which the WHITTENBERG brothers always took an active part. It was always great to see Uncle Oma who had a practice in Minneapolis because he loved to entertain and treated the family royally whenever they came to visit.



Money was in short supply during the great depression in the early 1930's. Having moved back south, Uncle Dave's family were in Pampa, Texas during those awful dust storms. When he and Aunt Emily and their three sons, Ed, David Earnest, Jr., and James, came

back to Minnesota, I can remember how Ki fed them platter after platter of fried chicken and wondered if she'd ever fill them up. They then moved to Hibbing, Minnesota and in later years they moved to Wadena, MN. Over the years our families visited back and forth quite a bit. It was in 1936, I believe, when their family was snowed in at our house by a blizzard for a week in the fall and we were snowed in at their house for a week sometime in the spring. Uncle Dave was a great guy and our families had lots of fun together. By the way, all three of their sons became Chiropractors.

As with most people William Bailey's personality was a mixture of the good and the not so good. He did have a short fuse sometimes but mother had a way of defusing a situation with a glance or a nod. All in all he was a good man with a big generous heart and did very well despite his handicap. He made a very good living for his family while having some fun and good times along the way.

Dad was a great story teller and he had a great sense of humor. Whenever Ki would serve meatballs, a family favorite, he would sit at the table and beat his chest saying:

“Sixteen balls went through this chest....

Were they cannon balls? - no!

Were they mini balls? - no!

They were..... sausage balls!”

On our frequent trips to Evansville to visit the grandparents were were often served Gramma Johnson's meatballs.

Often Wm. B's beautiful bass singing voice was heard singing solos in any one of the churches in town, in the Easter Contatas and, of course, the Methodist Episcople Church Choir.

Fishing was one of dad's favorite sports but he really liked most any kind of sports. He followed them all from the high school games on up. He loved to follow the Twins when they built a baseball stadium in Minneapolis.

Some of my family caught the fever and still enjoy a trip from southeast Iowa to Minneapolis to see the Twins play. In later years I often think how he would have enjoyed watching his grandson, Bill, or his great-grandson, Dan, play college football but I'm sure he was/is with them in spirit.

After his honorable discharge from the US Navy my husband, Marvin TWEETON, was persuaded by my dad, Wm. Bailey, to use the GI Bill to study Chiropractic at Logan Chiropractic College in St. Louis, Missouri....

...the second generation Chiropractor.

Eventually we had three fine sons; each one born in a different state.

John Victor (4/28/50) Detroit Lakes, MN.... Computer Sc.

William Martin (3/12/1953) Oakes, North Dakota...Chiropractor

David Lawrence (12/6/1954) Iowa City, Iowa..... .Social Work

Our whole family enjoyed the championship William Penn College Statemen's football games for which our second son, Bill, played offensive guard. After he served two years as an officer in the US Navy, he went on to study Chiropractic at Logan Chiropractic College then joined his dad's practice in Washington, Iowa where he still practices. His wife, Ann, also studied to be a Chiropractic Assistant at Logan College. She is presently his office manager and part time receptionist.....

The third generation Chiropractor.

The rest of the story is waiting to be written as the second son of our second son, Dan, will attend Logan Chiropractic College in St. Louis after playing his last semester of football this fall for the Truman State University Bulldogs in Kirksville, Missouri.....Undoubtedly requirements for graduation from any college of Chiropractic have changed considerably over the years.

Dan will be the fourth generation Chiropractor.

This is written by Enid Claire WHITTENBERG TWEETON, an eighty-five year old widow of eighteen years in the year 2011 living in a retirement home in Washington, Iowa. Recalling wonderful memories of family good times with the WHITTENBERG FAMILY, my beloved husband, Marvin Lawrence TWEETON, and our three sons and their families makes it seem like yesterday.

My father's story is, I believe, a compelling one. As the third daughter of William Bailey WHITTENBERG I write this in memory of my loving family with special remembrance of my

remarkable father. His belief in the principles of Chiropractic is a legacy he has passed on to three generations.

The following article written by Dr. William M. TWEETON answers The question very well – “What is Chiropractic”

Marvin and Enid

I should have kept a diary but time did not permit it or so I thought. Perhaps I just didn't realize that my personal story recorded day by day would have been part of a larger mold that would make up the history of family, community, nation and the world around. I wish now to write my story, to recall some events that left lasting impressions over the years. Since the year 1995 marks the anniversary of the fiftieth year of our marriage on May 18, 1945, I'll begin with the first time Marvin Tweeton and I ever met. It is the winter of 1940 in Northern Minnesota where the temperature can drop to 48 degrees below zero after a blizzard comes howling through. (They didn't count wind-chill in those days.) The deep pure-white snow covers the ground and is piled high along the roads and sidewalks, the frozen snow crunches underfoot and only the dark, barren branches of the trees are silhouetted against the colorless background. At the high school the janitor is flooding the ice skating rink that attracts so many young and old skaters alike in the winter months. Inside, the Detroit Lakes High School Choir is rehearsing for the annual Christmas pageant in the auditorium. The choir sits on planks at the back of the stage behind a gauze curtain in front of which the performance takes place. The high, clear tenor voice of Bud Omundson sings, "Fair are the meadows, fairer the woodlands, robed in flowers of blooming spring; Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer, he makes our sorrowing spirit sing," as the choir hums softly in steady, unbroken tones. Then as the music swells, the choir carries the melodic strains of "Beautiful Savior" to its grand conclusion. To the members of that choir, it is an exciting, thrilling and "spirit-filled" moment never to be forgotten. Even so, the rehearsals are long and tiring and everyone is getting weary. Then I

hear a voice from the next row saying, “lean on me”, as Marvin offers his knees for a back rest. As I accept his kind offer it is all quite romantic, but little do either one of us realize this is the beginning of a beautiful relationship that will last a lifetime. It wasn’t until the following fall we chanced to meet again. A girl friend of mine and I, wearing our marching band uniforms, were walking home from a high school football game. It was a beautiful autumn night, the air cool and crisp, with a harvest moon shining bright as day. We were in a jubilant mood because the “Lakers” had won the game. Kiddingly she said, “Let’s catch up to the guys “Tweet” is walking with. So we did. Of course, I expected “Tweet” to go for my cute, popular friend who usually had her choice of boy friends. To my surprise, however, he came over and walked with me and asked me to go have a soda with him at Bunnell’s, the teenager’s usual hang-out after the games. It must have been hilarious watching the two of us trying to dance together that night; like two sticks trying to push each other around the floor. It didn’t matter a bit to us because we were enjoying each other’s company so much.

After that we gradually became acquainted with each other. He was tall, dark and handsome with a terrific sense of humor and I was growing very fond of him. Marvin had graduated from high school in the spring of 1941 and was working at the J. C. Penney store in Detroit Lakes. I was a junior in high school active in choir, orchestra, marching and concert bands. We had several dates that fall and as I was learning to drive and he lived two miles east of town and had no car, I’d sometimes offer him a ride home in my dad’s car.

Then came a day that was to forever change the course of our lives. After attending church with my family in the morning, I went with a girl friend to the Sunday matinee at the state theater. The date was December 7, 1941. In the middle of the performance a murmuring

was heard through the audience, the lights went up and the theater manager stood before us and announced that Pearl Harbor had been bombed by the Japanese. We sat there in stunned silence and when I got home my mother was crying. She had lost her only brother in the First World War and knew firsthand the heartbreak of losing a loved one in a war. Over the radio the next day President Roosevelt addressed the Congress, calling it “A day that will live in infamy.”

Oh, there had been rumors of war for a couple of years before that time. Names like Hitler, Mussolini, Nazi, Fascist were becoming familiar in the newspapers and over the radio. Germany had invaded its neighboring countries, Italy wanted to spread into Africa and Japan’s military was expanding its territory in China and in the South Seas. I confess that my parents paid more attention to the news reports than I, although I do remember seeing newsreels at the theater that showed the bombing of England by the Germans and the British people seeking the safety of the bomb shelters. The full horror of all that was taking place in Europe would be learned as time went on. As I was a busy teenager, I guess I was more concerned with school studies, music practice and having fun with my friends. I was totally oblivious of the fact that what was happening on the other side of the world would soon touch our lives so completely. Now came this shocking act of aggression that was totally without warning. The very next day on December 8, 1941 war was declared with Japan and in a few days the United States was drawn into the European conflict as well. Now our country was totally involved in a global war.

You could not call Marvin’s life up to that point completely carefree. Both our families had lived through the great depression. Money was in short supply in those days and his dad was one to watch every penny. As a boy he had learned to work hard milking cows and

doing chores on the small farm where they lived on the edge of town. Marvin didn't have any fond memories of the one-half acre of ground on which he planted, weeded, picked and sold cucumbers to the local pickle factory. They had to be an inch long, perfectly straight (no crooks) and he sold them for just pennies. He didn't have much to show for all that work after he paid his dad rent for the land and bought the seed besides. Times were tough. In all fairness, I believe his brother, Donald, six years younger got in on helping with that cucumber patch, too. Years later Marvin would retell the story of the cucumber patch to his sons to convince them how hard he worked as a boy, and when they asked to use his car he'd remind them he had no car and had to walk a couple miles home from town. His sons still claim that the stories grew with the telling especially the length of that walk home from town.

Life wasn't all work in the cucumber patch, however. Even though money was scarce, as a boy Marvin didn't think of himself as being poor, and in some ways he was not. There were plenty of activities in the neighborhood that he and Donald could enjoy that didn't cost a cent. The Northern Pacific railroad track ran along the south edge of the Tweeton farm, highway 10 was just beyond that and the north shore of big Detroit Lake was on the further side of the highway. They could swim in the lake, fish, and spend hours watching the trains and cars go by. At one time Marvin could tell you the make, model and year of any car he saw until there got to be too many to keep up with or they didn't change in looks from year to year as they once did. Marvin also enjoyed his pet calf that followed him around the barnyard and his dog, Nippy, a big beautiful border collie provided many hours of fun and companionship hunting squirrels and other game in the woods beside their farmhouse. When Donald was just a little fellow, between two and three years old, he took off down the railroad track one day and was gone for hours. Living so

near the lake, the highway and the railroad there were any number of misfortunes that might befall a little boy that age. Finally, they called the police station and sure enough, a little boy fitting his description was safe and sound at the police station eating pancakes without a care in the world. He had followed the railroad track all the way into town. Later on, Donald was listening to a conversation about the terrible food that was served to the prisoners at the jail and he assured them that the food at the jail was very good. His folks then had to do some tall explaining why Donald was so familiar with what went on in the jail.

Living just beyond the highway, down on the lake shore, was a family by the name of Olson whose son, Art, became a good friend of Marvin's. Many people with good Scandinavian names settled in Northern Minnesota. Art's grandfather was a Swede, the grandmother full-blooded Chippewa Indian and sometimes the kids at school called art a "half-breed." Marvin and his friend considered those fighting words and consequently got into many scraps while fiercely defending his name. It was years later his friend asked Marvin, "When did the two of us decide we couldn't lick the whole school?" The grandmother would sometimes share her "indian lore" and one time when Marvin got a good case of warts she told him, "Rub juice from milkweed plant on night of full moon." In secret he tried it and then forgot about it. A little while later he checked and low and behold the warts were gone!

There were times when the younger brother bugged the older one, which is pretty normal in most family situations. When Donald was learning to play the violin Marvin suspected he scritch-scratched with more intensity when he was trying to study. Then there was an incident when Marvin and his buddy, Art, were camping out in a tent in the woods and, as a lot of kids have done at one time or

another, they tried smoking coffee grounds or cornsilk or the like. Having followed them, Donald caught them at it so they made him smoke, too, and let him sleep there with them. They thought if they made him smoke he would never tell on them. Unfortunately, Donald got sick in the night, went home and told his mother, "Mavern made me smoke." When he got home in the morning "Mavern" was in big trouble.

Being a normal kid there were the usual teenage pranks. One halloween night "Tweet" and his buddies went just down the road, sneaked in and put a chicken in "Swan" Carlson's bed, then waited in the bushes. The lights went out and all was silent until the chicken and Swan came squawking out the door. Next day Dad Tweeton answered the pounding on his door. "Var vas dat damn kid of yours last night," he demanded. Though dismayed at his son's behavior, I suspect even Dad Tweeton had a bit of trouble hiding his amusement.

While growing up, Marvin's nose took quite a beating. When he was six years old he broke it when he smacked into a tree while sliding downhill on his sled. The accident left him with a crooked nose. Then when he played football in high school there was very little protection from the leather helmets they wore. Consequently, some guy broke his nose again. The doctor said he couldn't have done a better job of straightening it, put a piece of tape on it and sent him on his way.

The many "panhandlers" that rode the box cars in the railroads were evidence of the hard times during the depression years. It wasn't unusual in those days to have men come to the door asking to mow the lawn or do some other work in exchange for a meal. Both Marvin's and my folks often tried to help them out. It paid to be

resourceful during those days and make do with whatever materials were available. With a bamboo pole, a wooden spool, some string and a nail, Marvin made a dandy fishing pole with a reel that worked just great. He was down on the shore of the lake one day catching some nice fish when a downon-his-luck “bum” came by. After he said he wished he had a pole like that so he could catch some fish, Marvin felt sorry for him and gave him the pole. Problem was he never could make another one that worked quite so well.

People had to eke out a living any way they could. One family that lived in the neighborhood ran an ice cream stand along the highway. They called it “The Barrel” because of its shape. As I recall, they sold ice cream cones two for a nickel.

There were also colorfully clothed bands of gypsies that would show up in the summertime. They’d offer to read your fortune if you “crossed their palms with silver,” or, rather than begging, they had a reputation for stealing what they needed. On one occasion Marvin’s dad let them camp on his land if they’d agree not to steal his chickens. To thank him the gypsies made the family a nice set of porch furniture out of the reeds that grew nearby in the swamp.

To get the economy going again Roosevelt’s New Deal government instituted various programs which were sometimes controversial. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) offered jobs to millions of unemployed workers to build schools, hospitals, etc. A standard joke pictured a WPA worker getting paid to lean on his shovel all day. Nevertheless, I must admit the addition to our old high school was built by the WPA. The Rural Electrification Administration (REA) brought electricity to farm homes and cottages which changed rural life dramatically. One of Marvin’s jobs was the wiring of homes as an electrician’s apprentice. He also worked at

Fingalson's gas station and helped his mother's family with the farm work at the Kvamme farm near Pelican Rapids.

One of the most colorful of all his jobs was helping with the ice harvest on big Detroit Lake. Just west of Olson's house down by the lake was the big Fargo-Detroit ice house where tons of ice were stored and box cars loaded for use on the Northern Pacific railroad to cool refrigerator cars and for use in water coolers and plush dining cars on the trains. In the days before refrigeration, the pure, crystal-clear water from the spring-fed lake also supplied drinking water to major cities along the route, Fargo, Grand Forks, Casselton in North Dakota and, of course, Detroit Lakes. In the winter, when the ice had frozen to about 18 inches thick it was ready to cut. For many years teams of horses were used to clear the ice and pull the big saws. The work was sometimes dangerous as a team could drown if it fell into the icy water. The huge cakes were cut off, floated onto a tram run by a long belt attached to a steam engine, loaded into boxcars or into the ice house and packed with sawdust where it would stay frozen all summer. The 400 lb. cakes were swung into place with huge grappling hooks. If the cakes were not uniform in size they went up a chute onto the "cripple" pile which was visible from the highway most of the summer. For years it was Dad Tweeton's job to set out the lanterns at night to mark the places where the ice had been removed. It was rough work for the men working out in the cold. One year the whole side of Marvin's face was frozen and turned black from working in the subzero weather. There were barracks where some of the men stayed if they lived too far away and really good food for the workers. I think that's where Marvin learned to like railroad pie (raisin). He was really just a kid when he was sent with the rough, seasoned men of the ice gang to ride the train into North Dakota to help unload the boxcars of ice for the Northern Pacific. One of crew got drunk and abusive and threw

a bottle through a window which made the rest of the trip mighty cold. Finally, another workman smacked him in the face, knocked him out and he slept the rest of the way.

Just beyond the ice house was another operation of the company, the Pokegama Springs Bottling Works. They bottled and distributed pure drinking water, distilled water, Mission Orange and Pepsi-Cola beverages (sometimes the kids in the neighborhood would stop in for a sample).

Since I lived in the town of Detroit Lakes on Park Street, I can remember the Fargo-Detroit Ice Company truck stopping in front of our house to deliver ice if we displayed a card in the window showing how many pounds we needed for our ice box. All the neighborhood kids would gather around to catch the pieces that flew when the ice man chipped off the block of ice, weighed it, and with big ice tongs carried it in to the house. I also remember when out walking in a meadow or along a lake shore there were fresh-water springs bubbling up out of the ground where one could get a drink of sweet, cold, pure water. It was the glaciers that moved across the land a million years ago that left in their path the lakes, the springs, the rocky ridges and rolling terrain. I know it is not possible to “love the lakes” but what other word describes our fondness for the country in which we grew up? Let’s just say we had a life-long infatuation with all the beauty that surrounded us while growing up in the “Land of the 10,000 Lakes”, Minnesota.

The scenes were ever changing according to the time of day or the time of year. After the long winter there was always speculation as to when the ice would go “out” on the lake. It would usually take a fiercely windy day that would break up the ice on one side of the lake and push it up on the opposite shore. No docks could be left out

year-round as the force of the ice would smash anything in its way. It could uproot trees and even damage cottages when the wind forced the broken chunks of ice up on shore. For many years a car was driven out on the ice in the middle of Big Detroit Lake in winter and a contest was held to guess which day in the spring of the year the car would disappear (I wouldn't be surprised if the ecologists frown on that practice these days).

Every season displayed its own palette of colors. In the warm days of spring all creation came to life. The baby animals and birds, the fresh green leaves, the flowers, the deep blue lake water all heralded the newness of life. As spring turned into summer the lake water became a mirror of the sky above. On stormy days the lake was gray and angry filled with "whitecaps" on the rolling waves. Sometimes, after a storm passed, there might appear a rainbow arching over the lake. On sunny days the sky was azure blue with fluffy white clouds drifting over the deeper blue ripples on the lake. From across the water at sunset on a tranquil summer day could be heard the plaintive, lonely call of the loon. Then, moment by moment, the blue sky would change from lovely shades of pink and lavender to orange gold. On balmy summer evenings, the silver light of a bright, full moon shimmering on the gentle waves would paint a peaceful scene. As the brochures read, there are 11,412 lakes within 25 miles known as the "Lake Region" and in the heart of that area lies Detroit Lakes. It was in the fall of the year that that whole land was at its splendid best. Around every bend in the road or over the next hill awaited another dazzling splash of beautiful autumn colors; mother nature's last hurrah before the many months of winter.

The War Years

Our country was at war. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor all thoughts of isolationism vanished as the flames of patriotic fervor were fanned by every means available. Once again the men and women of the armed forces of the United States were called upon to defend democracy and freedom against tyranny and aggression. The war-related industries increased production of the implements of war: ships, planes, tanks, munitions, creating a need for more and more jobs to be filled. My two sisters went to work for Boeing aircraft in Seattle, Washington where the B-17 Flying Fortress and B-29 Superfortress were manufactured. American citizens of all ages; men, women and children, were eager to support the service men and women by becoming involved in the war effort through their various organizations. The Red Cross rolled bandages, the Boy Scouts collected scrap metal, others sold war bonds, etc. The USO (United Service Organization) tried to provide a “home-away-from-home” for lonely servicemen far from home. The most famous celebrity, Bob Hope, and many others brought much needed light-hearted entertainment to battle weary troops. In civilian life there were shortages to deal with and as a result ration books were issued for commodities such as meat, sugar, gas, etc. It became a common sight to see long lines of people waiting to buy cigarettes, silk stockings or any number of goods in short supply. As you might suspect, the shortages gave rise to black market operations which were illegal, but, alas, there are always those who will do anything for a profit even in wartime. The draft boards sent letters beginning, “greetings from Uncle Sam.” There was a sick joke going around, but almost too true, that if a man was warm and could stand up he’d be drafted by the military. Very few escaped the draft except conscientious objectors who were sent to special camps and some farmers who were needed to produce food. After listening to a

particularly rousing sermon by his Baptist minister, Marvin decided to enlist and not wait to be drafted. On April 15, 1942 he joined the Navy and was sent to boot camp at the Great Lakes Naval Station near Chicago, Illinois. When they arrived the new recruits were lined up, checked over, given shots in both arms, issued their gear and uniforms and lastly, were given the famous haircut. They threw a gob's hat in the air and when it landed they were finished. It was not good but it was quick! After the navy took the necessary deductions from their pay check, they were lucky to have a couple of bucks left. The first night the new recruits tried sleeping in their hammocks, most of them ended up on the floor, but eventually they got the hang of it and found them quite comfortable.

His next experience in boot camp some would say was typical navy. One of Tweet's first assignments was to guard the gate; don't let anyone in that didn't belong there. Unfortunately, having just arrived, he didn't know an ordinary seaman from an admiral. He took no chances, though, as anyone could be shot who entered without a pass. He knew he was in trouble when he stopped an officer with a lot of brass and braid on his arm who tried to bend the rules a bit. Scared to death, he was called in but felt better when they decided he was only following orders.

Tweet may have escaped a lot of KP (kitchen police) duty while in boot camp as he was assigned to the Great Lakes Naval Choir directed by Paul Christianson from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, it was a great experience to be chosen to sing in that choir. He would never forget hearing, at Easter time, a tenor from the opera singing "Were You There?" accompanied by the choir. The Navy Choir broadcast a program over the radio on Friday evenings and, if there wasn't too much static, we could listen to it back in Detroit Lakes. The choir also sang for five services each

Sunday morning, the last and largest in attendance being the Admiral's Service just before his company was to go on leave, Tweet broke out with a suspicious looking rash. Fearing they might all be quarantined, the men urged him to wait until they were gone to turn himself in. With a diagnosis of measles he spent the next few weeks in the hospital and then was released. Of course his friends and family were overjoyed to have him home on leave. Thanks to all the exercise and training, the servicemen looked trim and handsome in their new uniforms which they were required to wear even on leave. Of course, his faithful dog, Nippy, was overjoyed to see him but his pet calf, now a full-grown bull, was a different story. When Tweet approached him out in the field he began to paw the ground and look rather vicious as though he were going to charge. Nippy then ran him in circles till he was totally exhausted. The dog would nip at the bull's heels and then flatten out on the ground so he wouldn't get kicked. When he related the incident, Marvin couldn't seem to convince his dad until one day the bull pushed his dad up against a wall of the barn and nearly crushed his ribs. His dad had to turn the ring in his nose to make him back off. After that the bull was quickly sent off to market. From boot camp Marvin was assigned to Chicago University where he went to radio school. While he was in Chicago he received the tragic news that his dad had been burned badly in a fire that destroyed their home. Trying to get a fire started on a chilly October morning, he had unknowingly poured kerosene where there were still live coals and the resulting explosion engulfed him in flames. Mom Tweeton managed to get him Outside the burning building but by that time Donald couldn't get down the inside stairs from the second floor. Dad, though he was hurt, said "Jump out the window, I'll catch you!", so he did. Don was just thirteen at the time but he drove his dad to the hospital that morning. Later one of the nurses scolded him for running around

the halls in his pajamas with no shoes on. At the time this happened, Marvin was confined to the Naval hospital while recovering from an appendectomy. He wanted to go home but the Navy doctor called his dad's doctor in Detroit Lakes and they decided he shouldn't go home as they thought he wouldn't live. He suffered terribly and had to endure painful skin-grafting treatments. A few weeks later when Marvin did get home on leave he thought his dad would die even then from the way he looked but he was already beginning to improve. Though their dog, Nippy, found a home on another farm, sadly he would return every day to lay by the cement step which was all that remained of their home.

Having no place to live, Marvin's family decided to move to California where the warm weather might help Dad Tweeton to recover. At first they lived in Hawthorne, California and later found a small house in Inglewood. Rev. Prentice, a Baptist minister who had been in Detroit Lakes, helped them find a church home. Marvin's dad got a job at North American Aircraft as a maintenance man. There was a black man who worked there who was so kind that he would do Dad's work for him when he didn't feel up to it. Before going overseas Marvin was sent to Radio And Radar School in Memphis, Tennessee. When they first arrived, carrying their white duffle bags on their shoulders, the sailors were milling around waiting for a ride out to the base. Since it had been Raining for days, the place was a sea of mud. Woefully, the first guy to set his bag down had to watch it slowly sink out of sight as the rest quickly piled their gear on top. The good thing he did remember about that place was that Clyde McCoy, a popular band leader, once served him his Thanksgiving dinner. He also got to hear Eddy Peabody who could play the banjo like nobody else could.

Having become familiar with the radio system on the Liberator, Tweet, by this time had helped write a manual and served as instructor on the subject. On October 1, 1943, the Naval Air Squadron VB-115, composed of twelve Liberator bombers, was commissioned in San Diego, Ca, with Lt. Commander James R. Compton as squadron commander. It was known as the— Bulldog-Squadron and they did have a little dog as a mascot. The long-range, land-based patrol bomber was manufactured by Consolidated Aircraft there in San Diego. Marvin was then stationed in San Diego and was assigned, along with other crew members, as radioman on the “Skipper’s” crew number one. In January 1944, they received more schooling at Hutchinson, Kansas and while there they were given their own plane. There were test hops and gunnery practice leading up to the flight overseas. Before they left, Marvin sent me a pin with silver wings which I wore with pride, all the time praying for his safe return.

During the next several months the squadron saw plenty of action as their patrols penetrated deeper into the South Pacific war zone. They flew first to Kaneohe and Hilo in Hawaii, then Palmyra. From Funafuti to Espirito on April 15, 1944, they crossed the dateline. On April 26, they flew their first combat patrol at Sataban. From then on they flew their long patrols from bases on six different South Pacific islands; Munda, Green Island, Los Negros, Wakde, Owi and Morotai. The planes that were damaged in combat had to be patched up but parts could be hard to find or were needed while still in flight. On one occasion, when an engine was shot out, Captain Connors, the mech, drained gas from one tank to another by the use of an oxygen equipment extension hose enabling them to return to base. Tweet liked Connors a lot and thought he was often very resourceful. On another flight, Tweet took quite a shock from the auxiliary generator while testing it when their radio was shot out. Of

course, the present day radar equipment is less bulky and much improved over the type they had available then. By trial and error they learned to distinguish the surface of the ocean or a cloud in the sky from a plane or a ship. At one time Marv ended up in sick bay with an infected knee when it got caught in his turret as it swung around. Another time he cut off the end of his finger during combat and, out of the corner of his eye, could see it go around in the sprocket wheel as he was firing his guns. He was more fortunate than many. After returning from long patrols with only fumes left in their gas tanks, instead of getting some needed rest, the men might find themselves diving into fox holes when they were on the ground. One day while taking a shower, Tweet took off an agate ring and the watch he had gotten for his high school graduation. Before he could finish his shower, the Jap planes came and he dove into a foxhole stark naked. When he got back all that was left of his watch, ring and the shower was a big hole in the ground. Another time their mess tent got hit so they lived on K-rations for awhile. Apparently those were very much like dog biscuits. The cooks had to be pretty imaginative at times as the men were amazed how many ways a can of Spam could be prepared. One night after their plane had been damaged, its radio hit, the fuel so low they couldn't get back to base without refueling, the rumors flew they weren't coming back. They were ready to break out the life rafts and ditch the plane but they got the radio going, found a place to refuel and limped back to base. Tweet remembered that the cook prepared food especially for the crew when they finally returned to base.

If they ever got a chance to relax a bit they'd turn on the radio and listen to Tokyo Rose because she played all the latest popular music. With her seductive voice she'd talk about being back in the states with your best girl having a malt at the corner drug store - anything to make the men homesick. She also would predict who would be

bombed that night, sometimes said their names, and she was often right on.

The mail had a hard time catching up to the squadron as they hopped from one island base to another. Mail call was good for the moral, though, especially when there was a letter from home. I tried to write every day but sometimes he'd get a bunch of letters all at once. Cookies didn't survive very well in the heat of the jungle, though, as some that Tweet received from his mother were nothing but a box of crumbs when they arrived. The V-mail that came from overseas was put on microfilm printed about half the size of an ordinary letter and sent through the Fleet Post Office in San Francisco, Ca. It also might be cut to ribbons after the censor got a hold of it. The servicemen weren't allowed to write much so as not to give away secrets to the enemy. Two native chiefs of one of the islands where the crew was based came to their tent one day along with a bunch of native kids. They brought with them bracelets and beads made of shells to barter with the crew. Instead of taking two quarters for a fifty cent piece, they wanted the "big" shiny one. The trading would have gone pretty well but the native kids kept telling the chiefs they were being cheated. Marvin's regret was he didn't have a camera as the pictures would have been priceless. While clearing out a place in the jungle a bulldozer driver got the surprise of his life one day when a big python dropped on the hood of his rig. They had to shoot it, but what a terrible practical joke it was to wrap that dead snake around a squeamish guy's bunk and when he stepped on it with bare feet in the middle of the night, it was still writhing.

The squadron went to Australia twice on much deserved R&R leave to Brisbane, Sydney and Coolangatta. They had done a lot of low level flying but the crew still tried to lift their feet when the pilot, Monroe, flew under the Queensbay Bridge. At any rate the crew was

ready to relax and that they did. One day they found some bikes and proceeded from one pub to another until they got very relaxed. There was a family that opened their home, let them ride their horses and even had their daughters show them around. When they left they always had to have a “spot of tea.” They had a very good time and found that the people really liked those “Blinkin’ Yanks.”

When they were back in combat in November, the tail gunner was hit. He was awarded the purple heart and later he did recover. After a new tail was put on the plane they flew their last patrol and headed for the States. While they were at Morotai they scraped off all the old jungle camouflage and painted the plane silver. Some said the Liberator resembled a “ruptured duck” as its design was not as sleek as some aircraft. Still it did its job. From Morotai to Owi Marvin got in some stick time and tried some banks. At Canal they had fun swimming. Then they flew from Funifuti to Palmyra to Kaneohe, and from Honolulu to Hilo to the United States. Happy day! It wasn’t until recently a history of Squadron VB-115 has been compiled and an attempt made to find all the crew members. On the following pages you’ll find a picture and the roster of crew number one and their action report. It is interesting to compare it with Marvin’s aviator’s flight log book. In writing these stories of our personal memories of World War II, I can’t ignore the dark side of the war in general. Hundreds of thousands of America’s finest died in battle, many more wounded. horrible weapons were put to use by both sides, unspeakable atrocities committed. It’s hard to think about much less try to understand it all. Still we should not forget those who gave so much to preserve the precious freedoms we enjoy each day yet often take for granted. We owe them our gratitude.

Back to the States

It was early December 1944 when “Dick’s Dixie” touched down at the Naval base on North Island near San Diego. Marvin very likely kissed the ground and thanked the Lord for their safe return. He and a buddy first drove up the coast to see his folks in Inglewood. As a precaution, night drivers were required to keep their headlights on low all the way up the coastal highway.

Before they left Hawaii, Marvin and a friend of his went to ship’s service in Honolulu to pick out a diamond ring. His friend was a jeweler and when they had looked them all over, he said “This is a good one.” I was in my second year attending North Dakota Agricultural College, (now North Dakota State University) in Fargo, North Dakota. my roommate and I shared a room near the campus. We were also sorority sisters (Alpha Gamma Delta). At two o’clock in the morning I was awakened from a deep sleep by our landlady saying there was a phone call for me. I was so excited I’m not sure I made much sense, but Tweet said he would be flying in in the morning. When I got back to bed I just couldn’t stop shaking. My roommate, Elsie, didn’t appreciate that very much but I guess she understood.

When Tweet arrived in Fargo next morning the temperature outside was minus thirty degrees, the wind was howling and he was freezing. A few days before he had been in the jungle where the temperature was around one hundred degrees. What did it matter - we were together again. We had our breakfast, it was Friday and I had classes to attend, so he headed for a downtown hotel, filled a hot tub to the brim, got in and soaked just to get warmed up. He said he had never been so cold in all his life!

The next day we went to Detroit Lakes which is just fifty miles east of Fargo and stayed with my folks that weekend. It was December 8, 1944, the day after Pearl Harbor Day. We had gone to the woods where Marvin used to live to cut down a Christmas tree for my folks. It was then that Marvin asked me to marry him and slipped the diamond ring on my finger. It was such a beautiful day, the sun shining on the fresh fallen snow. I couldn't tell which sparkled more - the sun shining on the snow or my beautiful diamond. My Love had come home to me and I had never been so happy. The Olson family had given Nippy a home after the fire and now lived on a farm not too far away from where we were that day, so we drove over to their farmhouse in an effort to find him. No one was home when we arrived but Nippy was on the front porch and evidently was still a very good watch dog. He didn't recognize his old master when Marvin called to him because he was so old and almost blind. He just stayed on the porch growling and snarling at us while Marvin talked and talked to him. He coaxed him to chase his tail or do some other of his old tricks hoping he might remember but it was no use. He must have kept trying for at least fifteen minutes when all at once the old dog started whining and crying and he jumped up so hard and licked his face. He almost knocked him over, his tail wagging frantically all the while. I just stood there with tears rolling down my face watching that touching scene. Nippy had finally remembered his old pal that had left him so long ago. Marvin couldn't give him back his old home the way it was before it burned down or before he had gone off to war, but they played and played for a long while and had some precious time together. Then sadly we had to say goodbye to Nippy, Marvin's beautiful, faithful old friend.

Marvin had signed up for a pre-flight program the Navy offered to enlisted men as he wanted to be a pilot. First he had to take a

refresher course in math, physics, English and history so he was sent to Cornell College in Mt. Vernon, Iowa. Marvin fully appreciated his opportunity to study in the program the Navy offered and was very motivated to do well. While he was stationed there the next few months I happened to have a friend who worked for the telephone company and after Marvin and I had talked three minutes she would pull the plug so we could go right on talking. That helped a lot when we were making wedding plans. I finished my second year in college by taking the final examinations early thanks to a few very understanding professors. The Navy program at Cornell was very strict and the officer in charge was a real stinker. Our wedding date was all set but for no good reason he moved it up a week. I had to call all the guests and change the date. It's a good thing it was a small wedding with only about thirty guests invited. My mom didn't feel the greatest those days so we bought my clothes the easy way and they were so special. She took me to the oval room at Daytons in Minneapolis where the models show you the clothes. We chose a blue Davidow suit, a pink chiffon blouse and a Sally Victor hat with pink chiffon and apple blossoms. It really was the nicest suit I've ever had and such a practical choice and I was glad to have it to wear later when we were on a really tight budget. Since the date was moved up my clothes did not arrive from Minneapolis Marvin and until the morning of the wedding. That was a very close call!

We were married by our Methodist minister, Rev. Charles Pavey, in my parent's home on May 18, 1945. It was a small but very lovely wedding. my sister, Vicki, was matron of honor. It was too far for Marvin's family or my older sister, Gerry, to come from the west coast. Ron Wilder from La Crosse, Wisconsin, a shipmate at Cornell College, was best man. Still at home were my mom and dad, my eight year old brother, Bill, and Kiyi who had lived with us so many years she was part of the family. The music was provided by sisters

from a very musical family, the Omundsons. Anne was a high school classmate of Vicki's and Marcia was in my class and of the sweetest people I've ever known with a voice like an angel. Sadly, within a year she would die of a brain tumor. Although it was the middle of May it was blustery weather and there were snow flurries in the air. There were a few pranks pulled such as wiring a spark plug to the driver's car seat which became a "hot seat" for whoever was driving. Also, we found "tons" of rice and a pair of my brother's footed sleepers inside the new luggage, a gift from my folks ... the luggage, that is!

I can't remember a time when the train stations were as busy as they were during war. With servicemen and civilians traveling in all directions, they seemed to be just swarming with people all the time. We rode the train to Minneapolis and from there to Cedar Rapids where we stayed at the Roosevelt Hotel. Having only the weekend for a honeymoon, it was back to classes in Mt. Vernon on Monday morning.

Though we were in Mt. Vernon only two weeks, as a new bride who didn't know a soul in that little town, I'll always remember the friendliness of the people. They greeted everyone they met on the street whether friend or stranger, which was nice for the servicemen, too.

A room with kitchen privileges was the best we could do when there was such a housing shortage.

In fact, people everywhere tried to open their homes and find rooms to rent for the servicemen. In Iowa City we found a place at 311 Brown Street for the summer. Navy pre-flight was a demanding

program. We were up at 4:00 a.m. so he could leave the house by 5:00. I discovered I had a lot to learn about things domestic. It took me forever to get his eggs cooked in the morning because I didn't want to "coagulate the protein" as I had learned in college. It wasn't long till I learned to turn up the heat and get them done in a hurry. The first time I tried to make a lemon pie, it had to be served in a glass. When I tried to starch his white uniform for inspection I got his pants so stiff they were like a board and could stand in a corner by themselves. He could hardly bend his elbows and almost drew blood when he went to salute. Experience is a great teacher and by trial and error I seemed to learn everything the hard way.

Cool and gentle lake breezes had not prepared me for Iowa's steamy, sticky, hot summer climate. I can remember saying, "If there is any place I wouldn't want to settle down it's right here." Those were to become prophetic famous last words.

Thanks to the Navy's rigorous pre-flight program at the University Of Iowa, the men were in great mental and physical shape. Their football team, the Sea Hawks, had some familiar names on its roster, such as Forrest Evachevski who would later become head football coach at Iowa and Bump Elliot who years later would be Iowa's athletic director. Of course, practicing opposite the Sea Hawks on the "munch" squad was an experience the men would never forget! They took a pounding.

In another sport, a fierce game of water polo, when Tweet was under water a guy stepped on his shoulder, kicked him in the ear and broke his ear drum. It became infected and caused Marvin to be confined to sick bay which was located where the quadrangle buildings are today.

Going back to February 1945, President Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister, came away from the Yalta conference with Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin in the USSR with a less than ideal plan for post-war Europe. The decisions made then led to the cold war with Communist Russia and the infamous wall that divided the city of Berlin. Roosevelt's failing health was evident and he died suddenly on April 12, 1945. "Give 'em hell" Harry Truman, as president, then demanded unconditional surrender by the German Nazis and on May 8th the devastating war in Europe that had taken the lives of millions of people had finally ended. Meanwhile savage fighting was still going on in the South Pacific. We were gaining ground but at tremendous cost of human lives. The kamikaze suicide pilots were still sinking our ships and the need to invade Japan would have meant enormous casualties. Then on August 6, 1945, the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and in three days the second was dropped on Nagasaki. As terrible as it was, it brought about Japan's immediate surrender and on August 15, 1945, Emperor Hirohito's broadcast brought the war to an end. This was for the average citizen the first knowledge that such a weapon even existed as it had been developed in utmost secrecy. It was the dawn of the nuclear age and would change the world forever.

At the time all this was happening, Marvin's brother, Don, and also my sister, Vicki, were visiting us. It is hard to describe what went through our minds and all the emotions we were feeling, the sense of thankfulness and celebration. When the news reached the men in sick bay, all the patients bailed out except the one whose leg was hoisted up in a sling. Tweet was burning up with fever but he came home and we hugged and kissed and laughed and cried together. Of course, he had to check back into sick bay, so Don and I decided to ride the Crandic Line to Cedar Rapids. That was a train that traveled

for many years between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City. When we arrived in downtown Cedar Rapids the confetti was knee deep in the streets, people were leaning out upstairs windows, hugging and kissing and celebrating! I've never seen anything like it before or since. the end of the war meant the end of the preflight program and since his several year enlistment was not up, Tweet was transferred to the Naval Air Station in Alameda, California, assigned to the supply department.

It was light duty compared to life in the South Pacific. He worked an extra job handling baggage at the railroad station to earn enough for my train fare to the west coast. In September, I took the train through Portland, Oregon, then down the coast to Oakland, California where Marv had found a room with kitchen privileges. I found work at the Naval Supply Depot in Oakland and rode the crowded "A" train everyday. Oakland is just across the bay from Alameda and traffic moved between the two cities via an underwater tube. It was a far cry from life in the Midwest. By December I was pretty homesick. Having never seen it rain at Christmas time, I missed the beautiful snow and my family on our first Christmas so far from home.

Marvin had a fellow worker in the supply department at Alameda that showed us a good time while we were in California. Norm was just an ordinary fun guy but we were to become increasingly impressed as we became better acquainted with him. On New Year's Eve we happened to be in the back seat when Norm had an accident and wrecked his car. The next week he borrowed his mother's car to get to work a Rolls Royce. In a few days his insurance agent showed up at the base to settle his claim - a man from Lloyds of London. After that his mother invited us to dinner at their home in Palo Alto near the Stanford University Campus. After we rode past the orange

groves, the swimming pool and tennis courts, we were warmly received and enjoyably entertained in their beautiful home. Norm also invited us to his 21st birthday party at the Mark Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco. We had a spectacular view of the lights of the city while we had cocktails at the “Top of the Mark” and later in the dining room our table was just across the dance floor from Lionel Hampton’s Orchestra. There we were - Norm’s relatives all wrapped in their elegant fur coats and I in my little cloth coat. We were a little out of our league but we still had fun.

In February 1946, an apartment became available at the Naval Air Station in Alameda so we moved and there I worked in the Radio and Radar Department on the base. We even bought a used car, a Nash Ambassador, our very first car.

There was a very popular radio show in those days called “One Man’s Family” which was broadcast from their home at Sea Cliff on the California coast a few miles below Santa Cruz. On our first anniversary Norm and his mother thought that since we had a car we might like to drive to their summer home at Sea Cliff for the week end and stay next door in their guest cottage. It was a perfect way to spend our anniversary and we were so excited about the invitation but there was a bizarre twist to the story.

Just before we were ready to leave the police called and said our used car had a stolen motor in it and we weren’t allowed to drive it on the highway. We persuaded them to let us keep it over the week end so we could drive to sea Cliff. We had a wonderful time but the car blew a piston on the return trip and knocked all the way back. The dealer had to give us our money back so we lucked out that time. That is when we bought our 1936 Dodge which would become affectionately known as “The Green Hornet” (another popular radio

show). We drove to Inglewood one weekend to meet Marvin's folks. they lived in a small house very near the Los Angeles International Airport. Years later we were amazed to find that house still standing when we drove by it on one of our many trips to California. Marv's dad was healing up but he would always bear the scars from that terrible fire. It was a miracle that his face was not disfigured but he always wore a long sleeved shirt to hide the scars on his arms and body. Marv's brother, Don, was already a junior at Inglewood high school. We went as a family to church services at the Baptist church while we were there. Tweet also worked in the radio shack which was located in one of the hangars on the base at the Alameda Air Station. Sometimes just for laughs an unsuspecting new recruit would be sent after a bucket of "prop wash" or out to look for a "sky hook." The poor guy would be pretty embarrassed when he finally caught on. now and then they would take a plane on a hop on various assignments. When the Battleship Nevada was put out of commission, Tweet flew with the crew to deliver the huge silver punch bowl and other silver accessories from the ship to a museum in Carson City, Nevada. It was made early in the century out of silver from the mines of the state of Nevada. In 1983 on a trip to California we went to Carson City and found it on display. It is magnificent. The year we spent in California seemed to be filled with one good time after another. Perhaps people were just in good spirits now that the war was over. At any rate, a group of couples that we had lots of fun with enjoyed picnics, bowling, dancing and just being together. It left us with many happy memories of that time in our lives.

On the other hand, there was one experience that left us very unhappy when a three month pregnancy ended in a miscarriage. It was a frightening ordeal for the two of us to handle by ourselves as our only help was from a Navy doctor that Marvin kept calling for

advice. Not long after that the navy released any servicemen who didn't wish to fulfill their seven year enlistment. If Tweet had stayed in he might have gone on an expedition to the South Pole but he chose to be honorably discharged on November 30, 1946.