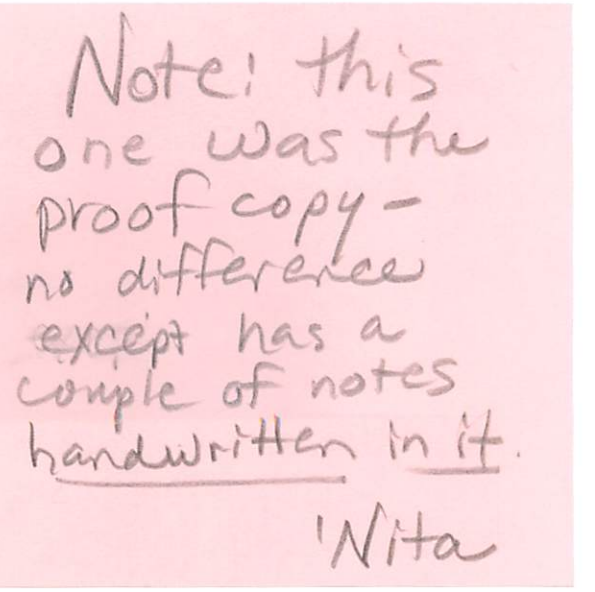
A GAME WELL-PLAYED

Ruth Annette Burke Ford



To Allen and Mary Belle Burke, our maternal grandparents, who valued education, and to our beloved teachers along the way who taught us and inspired us.

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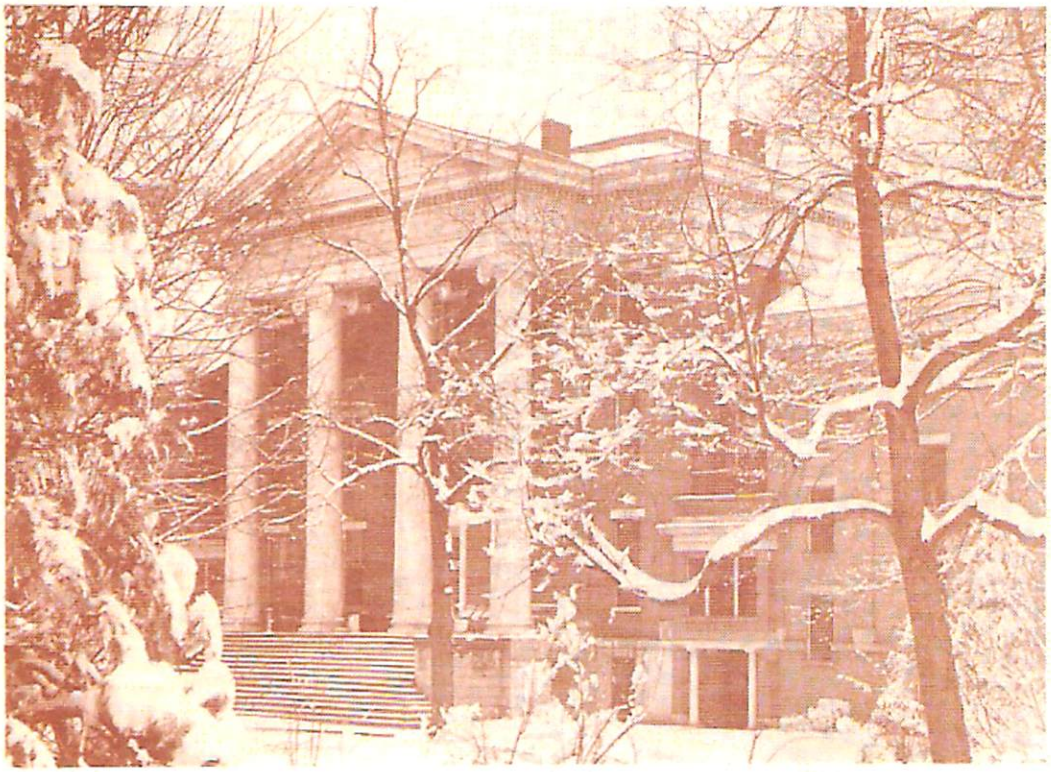


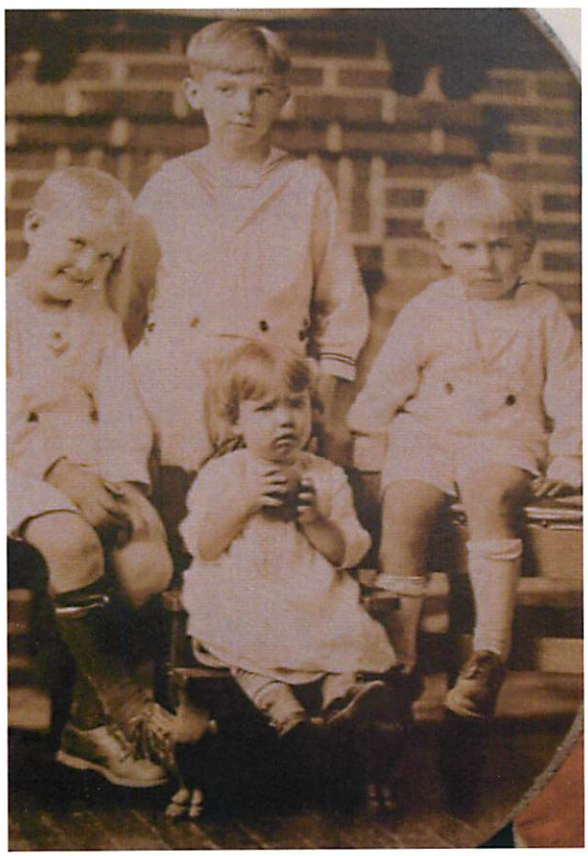
(Bethel College, Hopkinsville, Kentucky. Photo 1953. Opened as a woman's college in fall of 1856. Became co-educational in 1951. Closed in 1964, and torn down.)

Mama's Stories

The following are stories and memories recorded on October 14, 2003, as I drove Mama back to North Carolina from a visit with Denver, Rachel, and me. I have attempted to put the answers Mama gave to my questions into story form. (A few memories were recorded later, up until July 2011.)

My Earliest Memory

I remember what my brothers told me about myself. They told me I nursed so long (you know my mother nursed all the babies) that I would go around the house and say, "Hold down, Mama." I know they were teasing me, and it would make me so mad, and embarrassed me, too! But that's what brothers are for, I decided. I wouldn't have had it otherwise. (below are Billy, George, Hatton, and little Ruth, c.1923)



My Brothers and Sisters--in Order

First was Bartlett Allen, named using my mother's maiden name. He was 17 when I was born (July 29, 1922). Next was Mary Josephine, named after my father's sister. She was 15 when I was born. Third was Abner Lewis. The boys called him Hatchett because that was the grandfather he was named for, Abner Hatchett. Fourth was Christine. She thought all her life that her first name was Zanie, one of Papa's sisters. But her birth certificate only had Christine on it, our grandmother Bartlett's name. Dorothea came next. She died of colitis when she was only twenty-two months old. At that time, they didn't have any cure for that. (Dorothea's picture is below)

My mother thought what caused her to have it was strawberries. She was a toddler--went out to the strawberry patch and picked a strawberry or two and ate them, and she died. I always wanted to hear more about her, so I would question Mama. She would tell me as

much as she could bear to. Over one of the mantels in our house was a big, oval, framed picture of Dorothea. She was evidently the best looking child and it was said that she was precocious. She could do a lot of things two-year-olds could not do; she could answer the phone and she was very curious and talked a lot. So her death divided the four oldest and the four youngest children.

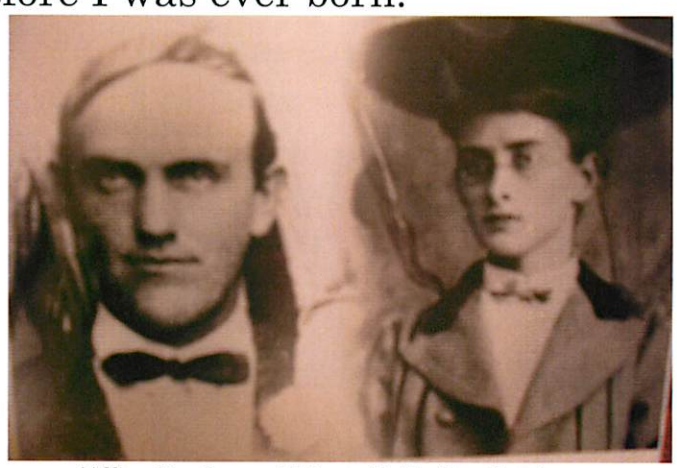
George Cullom was the next. Cullom came from one of Papa's relatives. Then the seventh one was Billy. I don't know how he got that name, but that's what we called him. His name was Allen Thompson. So two children in the family had the name Allen. It wasn't that Mama had forgotten! When he got to the Army, his wife called him T., and people called him Allen. Hatton Wood was the next one. When Hatton was a toddler, and she was preparing to have me, her excuse for having yet another baby was that she was going to have babies till she got another girl. My oldest sister, whose job it was to take the other children away when the birth came, was quoted as saying, "I hope to the Lord this is a girl," as she drove the buggy away up the hill, so she wouldn't have to do this anymore. My mother told me one time that (I was born on Saturday, I think, and that was the day Papa usually went to town.) she told him when he left that it might be a good idea for him not to go, but he went anyway!

So I think it is pretty remarkable though, that after nine children, all attended by a country doctor, every one of us has a birth certificate. Some much younger than us do not. My nephew for instance, Billy Foster, was born in a city hospital and he has no birth certificate! I think it is very strange. I recognized my mother's handwriting on my birth certificate. She filled it out, I guess. It didn't have

thumb prints or footprints or any of that on it, but it did record the fact that my mother was 37 and my father was 48; he was eleven years older.

Mary Belle Bartlett, Walton George Allen Burke, and Some Family History

Mama was from Southside, Tennessee, and she was visiting in the (Oak Grove, Kentucky) neighborhood--I can't remember who she was visiting--but anyway, my father saw her or met her somewhere and said to somebody that she was who he was going to marry. I guarantee you that if my mother knew that he had said that, she never would have married him! Anyway, that did come to pass, sometime before 1905, as best I can figure. She was 20 and he was 31 when they got married. She had gone to a school that equipped her to teach, so she taught a little bit, I think, before she was married. I know two of her sisters went to school to be teachers, but they died before I was ever born.



(Allen Burke and Mary Belle Bartlett)

One of the things I always regretted was that I never saw either of my grandfathers, my grandfather Bartlett, or my grandfather Burke. They had died and there were no pictures. The women evidently had their pictures made,

but the men didn't, because I have seen a good picture of my grandmother Bartlett (Teen had it and Doris has it now), and my Burke grandmother I remember, but I don't think I've ever seen a picture of her.

Papa did not go to college; he had a grammar school education. Back in those days, they didn't even have high school, I don't think. But he was given some sort of certificate that he had the equivalent of that level of education. My father was the oldest and only boy--he had five sisters. (author's note: the older lady in the photo below is a cousin)

When someone said that he must have been spoiled by them, Papa replied, "I wouldn't want another such spoiling!" He had to help look after his sisters, and some of them married poorly. They were never well-to-do, but, oh, they were so hospitable, and they believed in setting a good table.

Anytime we went to Aunt Zanie's, she'd love to put thirteen bowls on the table (different dishes such as meats, macaroni and cheese, vegetables, pickles and relishes). On her sideboard she would have at least two or three different desserts, especially homemade pies! She sometimes made ice cream. What we couldn't believe was that we'd say, "Aunt Zanie, I guess you'll have leftovers for supper," and she'd say "Well, I would, but Dabney doesn't eat leftovers." (I think what happened was that he wouldn't eat the same thing that night that he had for dinner. But he'd probably eat the leftovers another day.)

Papa was very smart and very much a leader. He actually owned some property by the time he was married, but before that he had just been a person who ran other people's farms. He bought a house before he married my mother. He bought a *farm* that had a house on it, rather. He was very much a leader in the church (Methodist). I remember, as a child, that he would be called on to pray! That was quite significant to me. And then he was also a leader in politics. I don't know how he came to get the job, but he was Chairman of the School Board of Christian County Schools. I don't remember if he was elected, but I think he was. I remember people coming to our house to see him about getting a job. My sister-in-law, Rosie, had to go before the school board, you know, to be hired, and my father said to her, "I have some boys I think might be interested in you," or something like that, and she was very flattered. It turned out that she married my brother Abner, after many years of running after him!

Going Back to Southside, Tennessee

One time I was visiting Teen (my sister Christine) and I told Jim when he came to pick me up, "Jim, Teen and I would like to go to Southside, where our grandmother lived," and so he agreed to take us. Teen thought she knew the way. We went through Clarksville, then down some country road, and then Jim said, "Now what do I do?" Teen said, "You'd better stop and ask." So he stopped and asked this person and she said, "Yes, I can tell you how to get there, but I don't know why in the world you'd want to go!" So when we got there, we understood what she meant. It used to be a town with familiar houses, and of course, my grandmother's house. But the only thing familiar was a country store which looked just like it did the first time I ever saw it, a long time ago, and there was also the post office. So that was about all we saw except that we did find out where the cemetery was. We went there and saw my grandmother's name, Christine. She had four names-- Susan Paralee Christine Dick (Bartlett)-- but that was the only one they could get on there. But then we also saw my mother's uncle's tombstone, my great uncle who came to live with us, Uncle Bo was what we called him. William Bobo Maveety. I wondered why anyone would name somebody Bobo, but it turns out that it was a surname.

Uncle Bo was quite a character, and it was a very exciting happening in our family when he came to live with us. I think what he did was to tell my mother that he knew he didn't have very long to live, and that he needed someplace to live because he had been out West. He had been a cowboy, a real cowboy. He had actually been on

cattle drives. (He indicated that he had had a common law wife at one time, but he wouldn't elaborate.) He had this handlebar moustache and a big black sombrero. He liked to tell wild tales about his adventures, but Hatton and I were too young to listen; we weren't allowed to listen, so he'd pay us a dime apiece to stay out of the room, so he could talk to the older boys. He called us "the reporters." One would stay in one room and one in the other and then we'd meet and exchange notes. Yes, he died at our house of cancer of the esophagus. I never remember him acting like he was sick until he was in bed. My mother nursed him religiously. One time she had to go to town, and he died while she was gone. She hated that, I'm sure. But he told her if she would take care of him the rest of his life, he'd give her some mineral rights to property in Oklahoma or Texas. Of course, she gained some from that, but I don't know how much. But you know we'd sit on the porch and rock and talk about how we'd struck it rich--that Mama's property had oil wells on it--which never happened.

Books, Fiddles, Newspapers, Radio

Oh, Mama liked reading westerns, she did. She liked to read. Maybe she was inspired when Uncle Bo was there. Papa read newspapers, and would have liked biographies if they were available. He did not like fiction and was never able to sit through a movie. He tried to, but he just couldn't. He used to like minstrel shows before I was born--and traveling plays--especially by a Methodist group called Chautauqua. Papa taught himself to play the fiddle. We always had a piano, and the fiddle was kept on top of the piano, and it was *untouchable*. But one day...I

got it down and I was prancing around the house being really silly and I ran into the door with the fiddle bow and broke it! I cried all day long, fearful. I was about eight years old. And I guess because I had repented so much, my mother must have intervened; Papa never touched me or said anything. That taught me a lesson!

We always got a newspaper in the mail. I can't remember how often. I do remember the *Louisville Courier-Journal.* Hopkinsville (twenty miles away) had a paper called *New Era.* Clarksville was thirteen miles away. (When we were finished with the newspapers, we would give them to our black tenants to paper their walls with. The tenants also were supplied with flour, meal, and pork. The man would work on the farm, and the woman would work in the house.)

Mama listened to afternoon soap operas on radio. The first radio I remember was a crystal set. My older brother who was in college brought it home. Our next one--a man in our neighborhood built it. It had a molded black horn on top of it for sound. We listened to "Amos'n'Andy," "Hit Parade," and popular songs.

There was also a portable Victrola someone brought home from college. We played records on it. Myrtle Lee, a black helper, who was fat and jolly, would teach us to dance to the music (or to Hatton's piano playing).

The Garden and the Crops

Papa grew tobacco for his main cash crop. We also had corn and wheat. He had some cattle--enough to have a milking barn--and hogs for family consumption. In the summer, we always had a big garden with beans,

tomatoes, corn, squash, potatoes, and sweet potatoes. The hired hands did the garden. My mother'd get up early in the morning, go down and gather the beans, sit on the front porch and snap them, and put them on to cook. She would also go early to get any other vegetables she would need. We never had any tomatoes except out of our own garden. We loved tomatoes and we'd almost watch the vines until we saw the first one that turned! And we had a little orchard down behind our house. We had apples, peaches, and one apricot tree. The county agent would come and advise us about them. But I think the spraying got to be too much.

At one time, I used to love to climb up and eat the apples. Papa's mother came to live with us for a while, and she was a nay-sayer. She would tell me I was going to have a bad stomach ache, but I never did! She was an invalid and had a really bad back. I thought that was what made her cross. (She was actually addicted to paregoric, an opium derivative, Mama told me when I was grown.) If we were going to the creek, she'd say there were snakes and we were going to drown. We were not supposed to go during dog days. My mother never paid much attention to her mother-in-law's warnings. We were free to run, pretty much. We called her Granny. There was a time when she taught us to cut paper in pretty patterns, and when she cut slivers of candy for us off of her big round peppermint stick. Her named was India Hamric Burke. Mama's mother we called Granteeny.

We had cattle and horses (nags). I did ride the horses. We kept them to pull a buggy or to ride. I had an idol as I was growing up, a neighbor named Camille who was older than I was. She was about Billy's age, and they had a crush on each other at one time. She was so pretty (blond

curly hair), had a nice figure, and she went to Bethel College. So that's why I had to go to Bethel College, because Camille did. I did ride horses; I just had to have jodphers, and I ordered them! But I was only riding this old nag. Somebody had to saddle the horse for me. I didn't do anything but ride. I would ride down to the store, because a friend of mine lived near there. Then, in the summertime, one of our neighbors had a niece and we both rode horses, so we'd get together and ride.

We always had a buggy and a car. Our school was five miles away, so we'd use the horse and buggy, but we eventually rode to school in the car. During the day, there was a place to hitch horses and get them food and water. I really don't know much about that, though.

When I was about seven or eight, I was riding with one of my brothers to school in a horse and buggy. It was a five mile drive. One brother was riding a horse ahead of us. The horse attached to the buggy wanted to keep up, so when we went around a corner, I got thrown out. My head hit a rock. I saw the blood and cried. A neighbor took me home. My mother called the doctor, and he told her what to do---"push it together and tape in place." It healed and never hurt. I still have a very small scar on my forehead.

Our Help with Laundry and Cooking

By the time I came along, the older ones were in college or somewhere else. My brother Bartlett was at Western Kentucky at Bowling Green, and he would mail his dirty clothes home in a certain kind of package; we'd send them to the washerwoman, then mail them back.

Mama had a washerwoman, you know. When Mama married Papa, one of his five sisters called up and said, "Well, we'll be over on Monday morning to help you wash." And Mama said, "Oh, that's all right, I'm not going to wash. I have a washerwoman." She headed them off early on, because she had to assert herself and not be under their (collective) thumb.

Papa had black men working for him and they'd have houses to live in; it was understood that the wives would help in the kitchen and work for my mother. We had one helper, Myrtle Lee. She cooked, I guess. She could play the piano. Then Hatton would play the piano and she would dance. And there was one dance she called "The Snake" that I saw later (maybe it was the "Twist?") and I thought, "That's not new, I learned that in my living room!" When my mother caught us, she sent us out to play and sent Myrtle Lee back to the kitchen. Myrtle Lee also went to the creek with us.

Much, much later my mother got a washing machine and did her own laundry. But we had a washerwoman in my childhood who ironed the clothes, too. If we ran out of clean clothes, we'd go up there and say we wanted something, and she'd just fuss at us. She didn't charge hardly anything.

But I remember something that really shocked me and surprised me. We had always been called Ruth and Hatton by the washerwoman and her husband until we got to be about twelve years old; then, Miss and Mister. And then one of the helpers had a daughter named "Kath'n." We ran around together, slid down banks, and had the best time. Then she became of age, when she would be attracting boys, and we could never play together again. It was heartbreaking for me and I didn't

understand then, but I do now. I don't remember much more about it or how long her family stayed on the farm.

The House

The house I grew up in was crowded, but at least the older ones were away at college or gone. Abner went to Detroit to make his fortune, which he did not do. He just wanted to go somewhere. He worked in a grocery store. I was seven when he left. He was wearing a cap that a country boy would wear. Then during that same year, he came back. I was so excited! I watched for the car that would bring him home. He was wearing a regular man's hat and looked so citified. I didn't know what to say to him, and he said, "Ruth, how old are you?" and I said, "Still seven." I was embarrassed that I didn't have anything new to tell him!

The house itself had two rooms upstairs. Each had an end window. We had more than one bed in those rooms. I never slept up there myself.

Downstairs, we had a screened-in front porch where people came in the front door. We had a glider and some porch chairs. My mother always had a rocking chair. She liked to sit out there and cool off--she got so hot--or snap beans out there. We had a wood stove for a long time and it was very hot in the kitchen.

There was a tiny entryway inside the front door. We had a hall tree which Doris has now (Doris Foster Russell, my niece). It was black, had an oval mirror, and open work shaped like a fan at the top. It had two holes which held some brass buckets for umbrellas at one time. Somehow those buckets disappeared.

If you turned to the left, you went into my mother's

bedroom, which we used as a sitting room sometimes, because it had a fireplace. To the right was the living room, and it also had a fireplace. That's where the piano and sofas and chairs were, and where company was taken to. At one time, we had a bed in there, too, necessarily, because we were overcrowded. But mainly we were able to keep it as a living room.

Back of the living room was a little hallway, a closet, and an extra room that had been built on in later years. That was where Uncle Bo stayed. The extra room led to my mother's room and to the dining room and to the stairs that went up.

The dining room led to a screened in back porch, which led to a kitchen, which was really not attached except by that porch. Food had to be carried in for meals, which was not easy to do. I never had to do much hard work. I would wash dishes or set tables, being the last child. Also, we had helpers, who would do the hardest work.

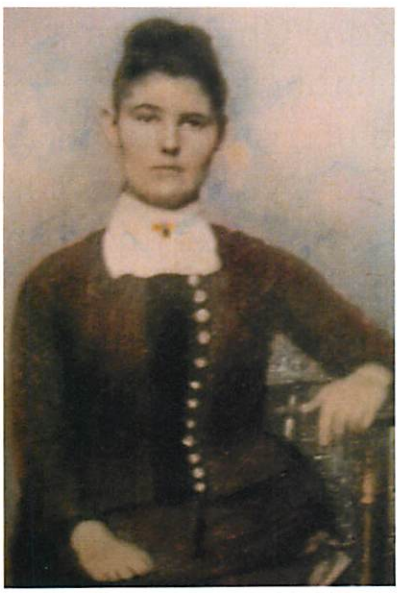
The outhouse was off of the back porch. We had just one outhouse, but it had several seats, together, not separated by partitions or anything. We did use catalog pages, but later on had actual toilet paper. Eventually we had an indoor toilet and electricity.

I took a bath in the kitchen. Beside the stove was a boiler, and that's where the hot water was. So you used a teakettle to fill up a tin tub with adequate water, every Saturday, at least. We had a cistern, which kept water gathered from rain. It was above ground, on top of the house. Water from it was pumped and piped into the kitchen. The cistern did go dry occasionally, so we would haul water from the spring---really, really cold water. We had an icebox, and the ice man came regularly. Later we

had a refrigerator.

On the back porch, there was a table with a washpan, and a bucket and soap, and a towel. We went there to wash our hands, especially when we'd been outside working or something. I don't remember ever washing my face, but I'm sure I did.

Quilts and Holidays



(Granteeny Bartlett)

My grandmother Bartlett made quilts. She had a frame up on the ceiling. I never did see her in action. Granteeny Bartlett was very tall. My mother never did quilt. We had blankets, and quilts from other people. My mother had done a lot of needlework in her youth, she said. She had done drawn work. She could sew on the machine and did so early in my life, but not later. My sister Teen learned to sew. Teen would make me a costume for Halloween out of crepe paper. We usually had a party or festival or something at school. One time I won the prize! I had Halloween earrings, a top hat, a mask

over my eyes, and some orange-colored socks I had dyed. I had on my regular clothes under a dress of some kind. I must have been about twelve. I really worked on that!

Christmas was nice but not as exciting as it is now, I guess. We didn't have a lot of toys, you know. We would each get some goodies. Each of of would have a place, and Mama would put things there for us. We also had fireworks, Roman candles and sparklers. Christmas Eve--I'm not sure if we had any traditions for that night. The best thing I ever got for Christmas was my Bye-Lo baby doll. I always loved babies!

That reminds me of a story about Aunt Gladys. Well, she was a spinster lady, you know, not very smart, but I just loved her dearly. She was about middle age, I guess. Anyway, this old gentleman came to visit *her* especially, we thought, when she was visiting us. So when I came into the room, he said, "Well, Ruth, what are you going to do when you grow up?" And I said, "Well, the first thing I want to do when I get big enough is to have a baby!" Of course you didn't mention things like that in mixed company back then, so my aunt's face got red from the neck all the way up, and they hurriedly changed the subject. But I really meant it! That's what I always wanted. It didn't even occur to me that I might need to get married! Back to my Bye-Lo Baby, I think its eyes opened and closed. It was dressed in a long white dress, and I don't know what happened to it. My brothers, sometimes between Christmases, would talk me into letting them open up the dolls and see what made them cry or what made them do whatever they did. The boys would pressure me and say, "Oh, we can put everything back" and they would say that the doll would work just fine, but it never did. They just did that to one or two of my dolls, I

think, I didn't get really mad because I knew how brothers were. And even if I did get mad temporarily, I never stayed mad because I cherished their company, so I didn't care as long as they still accepted me.

Getting back to Christmas, we did have a tree. That was Hatton's and my job to look for a Christmas tree on our property. We had a rolling farm of about three hundred acres and we would go and look and look and see *the perfect tree*, we thought, in the distance. When we got right up to it, it was really one-sided and ugly. So it was a lot harder job than you would think. A cedar tree was about the only evergreen that we had in our part of the world. And they smelled so good! I loved the smell! And it was hard to find a really pretty one, but we finally would do it, and get it home, and then we sometimes made decorations--strings of popcorn for instance. We didn't have anything like the decorations people have nowadays, but we had a lot of tinsel, I think. But the tree looked pretty to us. I don't think we had any special ornament to put on top. We'd put an old sheet around the bottom to cover up that part.

I do remember that we gave gifts to each other, wrapped and put under the tree. I don't remember much about Christmas dinner, but I do remember about breakfast, and I wonder how in the world my mother did this. She would have a big Christmas breakfast of fried oysters. Of course I didn't like oysters, so she would fry me some sausage, and looking back on it now, I wonder how could she do that on Christmas morning? Of course I think it would be kind of late.

Money and Treats

When we needed money, we just asked Papa. We didn't have an allowance. But sometimes we would do special jobs, you know, especially the boys would, to earn money. I usually just asked one of my parents for money, and they'd give it to me...or not! Usually we'd go through Mama, you know, to get money from Papa. As a child, I remember liking candy very much. I liked chocolate-covered cream drops. We could buy mostly loose candy at the store. We popped our own popcorn at home, and in order to have enough, we popped a dishpan full. We popped it in a skillet. We didn't have any other special popping pan or machine. Sometimes we made popcorn balls, and they were good , too.

Church

We had to go pretty far to church. We grouped around in the sanctuary for Sunday School. (Methodist.) We almost always went. I didn't like having to put on shoes and socks to go to church. I think Mama made some of my clothes. My grandmother once made me a smocked dress, too. She always told me to "Be still, be still." Granny lived with Aunt Zanie. Aunt Zanie had a nice clean neat house, unlike ours.

Sometimes Papa would invite the preacher to come home for dinner without telling my mother. But Mama was usually cooking a big dinner, anyway. I sort of remember getting baptized at a revival. I was about 12 years old when I made my profession of faith. I envied my Baptist friends who got dunked into the water. I loved water! Every Sunday my older brothers and sisters who

were married came home for Sunday dinner. I looked after their children, especially Doris, Billy, and Blane. They're my nieces and nephews, you know. I'm glad I was nice to them, because now they're the only family I have left.

We went to revivals in the summertime. I remember the fans, mainly. They were all from the funeral home. Even as a child, I noticed this: the preacher had been rambunctious through his youth, then he got saved and became a preacher. I thought, "At least he had a good time before that!"

Family Memories

Gordonfield Farm was the name of our farm. It was always called that, but prior to my days there had been a school there. My older brothers and sisters, at least two of them, went to school there. And it was up in the field, and the building was still there when I was a child, but it was no longer used for a school. I don't know how many years it had been closed, but two of us did go to school there and I remember Mama saying they couldn't come home to lunch as close as it was! They had to take their lunch to school. She said that Bartlett told her one day, "Don't put any more boiled eggs in my lunch. The place is full." They had a little ridge all the way around the cloakroom and he had filled it up with his boiled eggs! That was the first she knew that he didn't like them. I thought that was pretty good! I think Bartlett was well know as the smartest person in his school, yet later, he never really succeeded at anything. He went to college, and I think it was not his choice, but Papa wanted all his children to be teachers. He was very impressed with teachers, and that didn't suit

Bartlett at all, even though after two years of college, he was able to quit and he *did* teach, but he didn't like it. So then later on he was a mail carrier and after that he farmed some for my father. And then George was already in Texas. By that time, Bartlett was married and had three children; they were in pretty dire straits, so George said, "Oh, come on out to Texas; I'll take care of you. I'll get you a job." And he did! He got a good job selling real estate or insurance, I'm not sure. But he got hit by a county-owned truck of some kind, and he had a stroke on impact. He was paralyzed on one side from then on, but he did live to be eighty. I know that. That's the oldest of any of the boys. (Teen lived to be eighty-eight.) Bartlett wasn't an alcoholic, but George was. George became very wealthy. He was really good selling real estate. And Billy said he didn't ever know whether to believe what George said or not. So he had him investigated, really and truly,, by Dunn and Bradstreet I believe, and found out he was very well-to-do. But, being an alcoholic, he would become very successful and then he would lose it all. One time Billy was down there visiting and they were looking at clothes. Evidently Billy had gained some weight, and George had a jacket that was too little for him, so he asked Billy if he'd like to have it. So Billy tried it on, put his hand in the pocket, and there was a $100 bill. George said, "Oh, I always keep a $100 bill in the pocket of whatever I've got on in case I have to be rehabilitated; then I'll have enough money. You can't get in the hospital for less than $100." Anyway, that was something Billy told. Also, Billy recognized the fact that George was an <u>excellent</u> tale teller! So Billy would invite him out to California--he told me this himself--and he would find a room at his office that no one was using, and they'd get a

bunch of fellows in there and have George entertain them, telling tall tales from their childhood or whatever.

I think Billy felt a little bit guilty that George had quit college so that *he* could go. Two of them in college at one time was pretty expensive for our parents, even though both of them worked. Billy finished college all but one semester; then he was called into the war, World War II, and he entered as an officer. Then later, I don't know whether it was during his Army career or not, he went to the University of Maryland, finished that semester, and got his degree. We had, out of our family, only three people who had degrees: Hatton, Teen, and Billy. The rest of us had about two years; I went to a two-year college.

We never referred to our farm as Gordonfield Farm, but a lot of people may have remembered it that way, for maybe political or property division purposes. But my father loved land, so he bought two other farms that I know of, but lost them in the crash of 1929, I guess. He lost one that I know of for sure. Times were pretty hard back then. My mother, of course, always wanted a new house, but instead of getting a new house, he would buy more land, you know, and so she finally gave up on that.

School Memories

We had a very, very small school when I was in high school, but we had a basketball team. We never had any football or anything like that. Well, we didn't have big classes, either, so I can remember being a cheerleader one year, I know. I don't know which year it was. I don't remember trying out or who chose me. Our colors were green and white. We had green circular skirts and white sweaters--whatever white sweater we could come by. I

don't even remember having pom poms. I guess we did.

The elementary school we went to was St. Elmo School, which was about five miles from home. That was the school you had to get to the best way you could, and your parents had to provide the way. But when we went to Howell High School, school buses were provided. When that school burned (it burned in later years after I was gone from there) they built a new consolidated Christian County High School.

In the first few years of school, I never felt inadequate in reading, never! I did in math sometimes, but I always couldn't wait for my turn to read! I thought, "I can read better than that. I want to read." I think I was always able to read very well. Our mutual teacher, Miss Lula Cook, taught every one of our family, I think, except maybe the older ones. She was never married; she was a very elegant-looking lady, dressed well, and as I remember, was very aristocratic in the face, and had pretty white hair. I think she recognized the fact that Hatton was very smart. She actually provided him with some reading material that was of his mind quality. She didn't offer me any. As I told somebody, Miss Lula thought Hatton was *smart* and I had a *nice smile*. She hadn't said it that way, but she had complimented me on my smile. I think she was the first teacher who recognized Hatton's ability, you know. Then when we were in high school, he was still a lot more studious than I ever was. He would try to inspire me to stay home and study when I needed to, but instead I went to ball games! I think maybe we were a little bit favored, because at that time Papa was chairman of the school board.

My favorite subjects were Reading and English. And then I remember when I went to Bethel, I liked biology a

lot. Biology was very interesting to me. And of course English was my special favorite at Bethel because of Miss Parrish, you know. As I had an idol in my childhood, I had an idol then in her, because she was such an inspiration. She could read one pitiful little thing you had written and make it sound profound. Once she found out that you had the ability to write fairly well, you were her favorite, you know.

I took Home Economics in high school, but I didn't like to sew. I learned some of the basics of sewing, but I never was any good at it. And I remember we had to make a dress. Everybody had to help me. One of the things we had to do was *model* that dress. Somebody would play the piano while we marched around throughout the audience. I remember as I passed I heard some "kind" lady saying to someone next to her, "That's an uneven hem if I ever saw one!" I don't know if she was talking about me or someone else. I remember that material was ug-ly! I don't know why anybody ever let me select it, but it was. I always had to be helped with my projects; I was no good. But I loved cooking! They did a lot of good things in cooking. One time we had a candy making party. We made several different kinds . That was fun. And we had child care, which made me think I knew everything about babies, until I had one! I don't think we had gardening or anything like that. It was just mainly household things. I don't know whether it was required or not, but I knew I wanted to take home ec., and I did.

After I was married, I learned how to use a pressure cooker from Jim's mother. She had always used one, and they gave us one. It was when we lived in Louisville, which was before Jimmy was born, so you know how old it is. And I had watched her use it, so I knew how to. It's a

real help when you want to do something fast. I've even made soup that way. The only problem is that sometimes you overcook it and it is all mushy and not as good as the other way. What I used to do with beef stew was cook the meat separately and make gravy with it. I think I could cook beef stew in about twenty minutes in the pressure cooker, and then I would cook the potatoes, onions, and carrots separately. Then I'd put it all together, but sometimes I wouldn't. We could just put the meat and vegetables together on our plates if we wanted to. I guess I've made that for years. I always put a little catsup and water to add to the color of the gravy. You also need to brown things. Some people never brown things first.

Back to memories about high school, I remember that we could wear anything we had, except of course slacks were not an option for girls. The boys also wore whatever they had, and some of them may have worn overalls. There didn't have to be any restrictions because nobody even wanted to dress differently. Nobody that I can remember ever tried to wear short skirts in grammar school or high school. We used some kind of rollers for our hair and bobby pins. And that was one thing that I thought might become extinct--bobby pins. Other people have predicted that regular clocks and clothespins might go completely out. But I don't know, as many uses as we have for clothespins, it will take a long time before they go out of style.

As far as swimsuits go, I think I had a lot of pretty ones. I thought I couldn't live if I couldn't swim! I remember having a two-piece, bright yellow wool bathing suit. I had seen it in a store window on a trip to town. I begged for it and got it!

And oh, that wonderful smell of sunshine on clean clothes! Nobody will ever be able to capture it. You know we had clotheslines in the basement, which helped a lot. Jim never did mind hanging out diapers. At night, he would hang them in the basement, and they would dry by morning in the wintertime. But Doug McElwee told me something that was really funny. She said that her children were kind of late getting toilet trained, you know. And one of the children came in and said, "Mom, you better get the diapers in, they're all getting wet. It's raining!" She thought, "Well, that child needs to be trained. It's time!" And she told me about one very snooty old, old lady who told her that she mustn't be seen hanging out clothes, that that was for your servant to do. Somebody told her that when she was a bride. I said, "Well, I'm sure you obeyed her rules," and Doug just laughed. And I can imagine that there was a day when people had servants and they would do that. The lady of the house might serve tea and she might do some cooking or sewing. In this day and time, that sounds ridiculous, of course. I never minded hanging out clothes. Even when I had Laura one day a week back in the '50's (and early '60's?), she did the cleaning and straightening. She was wonderful at those things. You all would come home from school on Friday afternoon and say, "I'd forgotten that I had this!" She had unearthed some toy that had been lost all week. How she could do all that in one day I'll never know! Oh know she was very fast and had quick movements. She would borrow money ahead sometimes because she had some debt she had to pay, you know, but

never a whole lot. But my goodness, we paid her so little. I think we paid her $4.50 for one day's work, and I now pay $50 for three hours!

Mama's Family

Aunt Susie was the only aunt I ever knew besides Gladys, but my mother had two sisters who taught school and they were Eva and I can't think of the other one's name right now. But they were very attractive women. I have had a picture of them. I don't know if I still have it or not. And she had Uncle Barnes and Uncle George and Uncle Corbett. Uncle Corbett lived in Lexington, Kentucky. He raised his whole family there, but I didn't know that, and I guess some of his people are still there. Their last name would be Bartlett. Some of her people stayed right around Southside,Tennessee. And Uncle George went to Florida. He was our rich uncle, you know. He ran a steamship line; I don't know if he owned it or not. And I know my mother said she went to visit him one time. They came to visit us and took her home with them. It was the first time she had been on a long trip in the car, you know, and she got motion sickness. But anyway, she enjoyed the visit. Mama told us about something that she said was a first in her life. Uncle George was furious with Aunt Eileen; he got a bill from a department store and it was so little he said, "Eileen, if you can't buy any more than that, it doesn't do them any good to have our business!" My mother said it was the first time she'd ever heard anyone fuss at his wife for not spending enough! I think he was embarrassed at how little she spent. She was very frugal even though she could have had more than she wanted. Mama came home from there trying to

teach us to eat grits. She said they ate grits every day. We didn't much like grits, or rice, for that matter. We thought rice had to have sugar and cream, like a cereal. There were several things that she learned from her visit. I just don't see how we managed without her, but I guess maybe Teen or Sister, one or the other, was there. I don't remember how old I was then. But it was a big thing for her to go. She came back on the bus, I think. Aunt Eileen and Uncle George just had the one son. His name was Lewis Clark. He was so handsome and so nice. I loved him dearly. I mean I had a big crush on him, I think because he was the only boy that I knew that had ever been nice to me. I never remember hearing what he became, what he did in life. I know he had been to a military school, but that's all I know. I think he was named after the Lewis and Clark expedition. Lewis Clark Bartlett. It think it is a beautiful name.

Bethel College

The reason I wanted to go to Bethel was that I had an idol, somebody that I admired a lot and wanted to be like. She was a real pretty girl, the only girl in her family: blonde hair, Camille Anderson, and she went to Bethel College. So, my parents couldn't afford it, really, but since I wanted to go so badly, I agreed to wait tables to pay part of my tuition. That was fun, except that we waited tables on Friday night. Well, Friday they had fish for supper, and my hair smelled like fish when I got back to the room; I had just washed it and I had to wash it again! We might have had to wear an apron, but no particular uniform. But we did have a good time because after everyone else was gone, we sat around and ate our supper, and the cooks

were really good to us. If anything was scarce, they saved some for us. Something else I remember: we had to have a teacher at every table! It was a girl's school, you know.

In my English class, I was never a real student. I was lazy and didn't want to work very hard. So my English teacher humiliated me in my first freshman English class, and I don't know what she said, now. So I went to my room and wrote her a hate letter, which I didn't deliver, thank goodness, because later on when I became *literate* and wrote a little poem, then that's when she started noticing me. She loved people to write. And she encouraged me and so I became *somebody*. Because of Miss Parrish, I became a member of Chi Delta Phi, a writing sorority, and we had a little magazine-type thing that some of our stuff was published in. I had some things in it, but I don't remember a one of them. But anyway, through the college, she recommended several people to go to the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee for a writers' workshop in the summer. It was for about two weeks, I think. One other girl went from my school. We didn't much like it there. One of the teachers there was a writer for the Reader's Digest. He taught our class. He had his wife and two boys with him. After that, I went home and looked in the Reader's Digest and saw his name. (I got to go twice, in the summers of 1940 and 1941.) I can't remember his name but I would recognize it, because there was somebody I knew by that last name.

Burke, Spence.

• **RUTH BURKE,** Oak Grove, Kentucky. Ruth has two particular assets for which we all yearn—a low, resonant voice and lovely thoughts. These are the characteristics Audubon tried so hard to cultivate in his granddaughter. It is no wonder that the chorus, Chi Delta Phi, Phi Epsilon Chi, and Pedagogues all boasted of Ruth as an able supporter. •

MARGARET SPENCE, Norris City, Illinois. We can't compare Margaret with Audubon, for while she is quiet, serene, and friendly, he was boisterous and quite hard to get along with. He lacked the business ability which Margaret has gained from her commercial work, leadership of a YWA group, and presidency of the Illinois Club.

S E N I O R S

[32]

(from Bethel College yearbook, *The Scroll*, 1941---"Ruth has two particular assets for which we all yearn--a low resonant voice and lovely thoughts. These are characteristics Audubon tried to hard to cultivate in his granddaughter. It is no wonder that the chorus, Chi Delta Phi, [writing sorority], Phi Epsilon Chi [science club] and Pedagogues [student teachers] all boasted of Ruth as an able supporter.")

I liked biology---my favorite subject besides English. I got an elementary school certificate. I never could do math, though! College was very strict. We had a book of rules. We couldn't go to town alone. We had to wear hats and stockings. If we had a date, we had to meet him in the front room or parlor. It was a Baptist school. We all went to our own churches on Sunday. I think I went to the Methodist. After starting at Bethel as a freshman, you didn't go home for six weeks, and I nearly died! I wanted to get sick so bad, so I could be sent home. Every time I called home, I cried.

One Room School

When I applied for my first teaching job, I was nineteen years old. They assigned me to the last unconsolidated school in the county. (I found out later that the superintendent of schools thought that if he put a new teacher in the worst school in the county and she survived, then she'd be a good teacher.) I felt so inadequate...with seventeen students, and classes first grade through the seventh grade, all in one room. I had done my student teaching in a city school! The teachers

they had before were middle-aged women who had gotten tired of it and quit. I don't remember what our textbooks were. I think I taught some children while others were busy; and also had students help each other. I do remember that some of the first graders were my favorites, but I loved them all, except one. And I had to expel him, the son of the people I boarded with! They weren't mad at me because they said they couldn't control him, either. Looking back, I think he had a crush on me and tried to get my attention. (By the way, I had full authority in running the school. I could expel anyone. I never whipped anyone. I could say when school started or ended. I was not allowed to wear slacks, but I could wear socks [instead of stockings] with my skirts and dresses.)

I had to find a place to stay that year, with the family of one of the students. I paid very little. I had to walk to school. At the school, we had outdoor toilets, and a spring for our water. The first note I ever got from a parent said, "Don't send Junior to the spring; he gets a cold." I had to

depend on volunteers. On boy came and started the fire in the winter.

For entertainment and to raise money, we had box suppers, where people bid on a lady's packed supper and then highest bidder got to eat with her. Of course my mother prepared mine! Someone would furnish lanterns and help get the box supper set up. We had no electricity at the school.

It was December of my year at the one-room school when Pearl Harbor was bombed. I heard about it on a bus, coming back home from spending a weekend with friends. Three of my brothers went to war: Billy, to the Army (He made it a career); Hatton, to the Navy; and George, to the Air Corps.

My Return to Teaching

I didn't go back to work at school until Doug was in second grade (1968-1969), because I knew I would work in first grade, and I waited until he would be out of first. Even so, one day he did run across the hall to my room. His teacher came and said that he couldn't do that. I understood. It was nice to have a job where his days off were mine, too.

North Wilkesboro Elementary was the school, and I worked there as a teacher's aide for fifteen years, through the 1983-1984 school year. The good health insurance (which started then) and a small retirement check ---- I still receive them to this day. I worked with Martha Smithey Nichols (1st grade), Joann Laney (K), Peggy Marley (1st), and Susan Briggs (1st). (I'm not sure of the exact order.) It was a very good time in my life. The last few years were tiring, though. Patsy got married in 1979,

Hatton died, and then Alan was born in 1983.

As for a particular highlight of those years, I can only say I enjoyed the children and the teachers very much. How did I come to apply? Someone I knew worked there, and encouraged me to try it, saying I was qualified. So I did! My duties: whatever the teacher told me to do.

It was a real pleasure to get to know the children, and a sadness, too. Some of the children I wanted to take home with me. I remember walking one little boy who was sick to his car. I had to leave him in the backseat of a dirty car with a cranky father who didn't even ask him how he felt. The teacher told me, "Well, the father may have been on night shift and hasn't slept." There was another little boy, very small, who had never even been talked to (conversed with). He hadn't held a crayon or pencil in his life. He only knew one color. One day we had just learned something and he looked up at me with his big brown eyes and said,"God A'Mighty! Ain't I learnin'?!"

While at N.W, Elementary, I invented an alphabet game called The Picnic ABC Game. I found some red and white checked paper plates, and cut pictures out of magazines representing foods starting with letters of the alphabet. I mounted the pictures on cardstock. To play, a child had to pick up one of the cards, say what it was, and then tell the letter it started with. If he could do that, he could put the card on his plate. There was really no winning; it was just fun having a picnic. Later I gave that game to someone--I don't have it any more.

During some of those years when Douglas and I rode together, he could go out to the car and start it in the morning. I'd park it up on the grassy lot beside our street, you know, because I didn't want to back out of our driveway. One morning, he said, "Can't start the car." and

I said, "Why not?" "No battery." Somebody had stolen the battery out of my car! It turned out there were a bunch of thieves around. They stole Doug's bicycle off the driveway, too. Anyway, it was nice to go to school together.

At first I could use my aide's pay for anything I wanted to---and that was a *good thing* (as Martha Stewart would say). Finally, after a number of years, Jim asked if I'd give $100 a month for the "pot." Jim shopped on Saturday mornings for groceries. He'd buy anything that was on the list, but nothing extra. The only mistakes he'd make would be to buy a large economy size. I'd have to say "small."He really liked to grocery shop. I still got up and made breakfast for him. But there came a time when there was a cover on Time magazine with fried eggs and bacon, and an article about quitting eating that kind of stuff and eating healthier. So Jim started eating cereal. I didn't have to get up and fry bacon!

I worked for Joann Laney first as a kindergarten aide. When I was teaching that level, the teachers needed all kinds of stuff (miscellaneous and odd items). I would bring something in, and they'd say,"Where'd you find *this*?" and I would reply, "I just opened the drawer and there it was!" [Editor's note: all of us knew just how full of interesting things Mama's house was: in the drawers, on shelves, in the basement, everywhere!] There were two kindergarten classes. We had a pet in our room, a little gerbil they called Richard Petty. One time we had a terrarium, with plantings in it from nearby woods. I had gone to some store and found some tiny ceramic rabbits. I put one in there before the children came to school one day. And this little boy came up to me, "Mrs. Ford! Mrs. Ford! There's a bunny rabbit in there!!!" He was so cute. But you know what? We also taught them to grow things,

you know, plants for them to take home to their mothers for Mother's Day. We'd have to start real early and I would do it. So anyway, one little boy found a discarded orange on the playground and he got the seeds out. We took the seeds inside and planted them, and one grew into a little tree! That child moved away, out in the county. And the aide at his new school called me and told me that he still had his little orange tree that I helped him grow! Oh, that makes me want to cry!

I kept books on my desk and as a treat, the children could come and pick out a book for me to read to them. Before I did this, sometimes the teacher would do the awfullest thing to me----she would go on her break and she would hand me some book she hadn't even read and say "Read this." I'd look at it and say, "I can't read that!" I would be just so mad. That's the reason I started to get my own books to read to them if need be.

Creative Writing Class

Before I started working at the school, I took a creative writing class with my friends Mary Smithey Patterson and Doug McElwee from Mrs. Gaylord Hancock. She had written books and was qualified. It was really nice. I had a notebook at the time. She taught at a house on E Street where Carolina and Gordon Finley once lived. (I put together my poetry book much later than that, after our 50th wedding anniversary in 1994 I think.) The class was in 1962 or so. I think I talked about it in a Christmas letter I wrote.

Sentimental Journey

I think it was after we both had retired that Jim and I went back to Kentucky to revisit all the places of our youth and courting. St. Elmo Elementary School was still standing. We also went by the church where we were married. My high school had burned, and my college, Bethel, had been torn down.

We went to Ft. Campbell, six miles from where I grew up, and where I met Jim. We went where my house used to be. It was of course unoccupied, but still looked about the same, and later was torn down. (One other time we went back and couldn't even find a familiar looking place---the highway had totally changed.) When we started dating, Jim wanted to come and see me. But you couldn't get a car back then. So he found a wrecked car, and had it repaired. Then he started coming to see me! It was a '37 Dodge Coupe (two-door), a faded blue color. I learned to drive it. I had to drive back and forth to work as a secretary at Camp Campbell (the job I got after my year as a teacher).

(photo below from the internet)

After we were married on April 22, 1944, we just lived at my house since we knew Jim would be shipped out. My mother was so glad when I started dating Jim because I had been going with a boy from New Jersey, I think, called Catalano--he was an Italian--very good looking. My mother really enjoyed cooking for Jim and was delighted that he was from *Kentucky* (Lancaster). I got Jim on the rebound. He was a big shot in finances. I fell in love with his hands first. He had small hands for his size--very nice hands.

James Kinnaird Ford 3/18/1945, Panama)

Burke Family History

This is an article from the history of Christian County, Kentucky, which was published in the 1980's. Nephew Sam Burke submitted this portion of the family history. At the current time, October, 2011, Ruth Burke Ford is the only one of Allen and Mary Belle's children still living.

ALLEN BURKE

Walton George Allen Burke, of Scotch-Irish descent, was born on June 22, 1874, the oldest child and only son, with five sisters. His father, Abner Hatchett Burke (Sept 28, 1853-March 22,1914) came to Christian county in 1867 from Prince Edward County, VA. Grandson of Adolphus T. Burks (no record) and Jane Crafton (May 20, 1820-March 15, 1881) buried in the Fields Cemetery on the Glenn Wade farm in south Christian. Great-grandson, Abner Hatchett Burke born about 1788 in Lunenburg County, VA, and married Lucy B—about 1809. He died in 1823. Great-great-grandson, George Burks and Mildred Hatchett, Charlotte County, VA, on April 2, 1787.

Abner Hatchett Burke married India Hamric, of Todd county, KY (May 5, 1851-January 12, 1938). They farmed the Mary Ann Garrott farm near Salem Baptist Church, Pembroke, KY.

Allen married Mary Belle Bartlett (March 23, 1885-January 31, 1958) on November 5, 1905. She was the daughter of John Bartlett and Christine Maveety of Southside, Tennessee. He farmed the Sallee farm near Thompsonville Station before purchasing 220-acres from Chiles Barker estate, known as "Gordonfield". A one-room school, Gordonfield (about 1905-1930) was located in the corner front field. Later, he owned the Moody place, Peyton Harris place presently the Beel's Subdivision, Oak Grove, KY).

They were life-long members of Bethel Methodist Church, near Fort Campbell, KY, where he was a Steward for many years.

Mary Belle attended a Girl's Preparatory school, Southside, TN.

Allen Burke had a significant role in the advancement of education in Christian county and was on the Christian County School Board for twenty years, (chairman for many years). He was Democratic chairman for precinct #59 for many years. He was active in local and county events until his death, November 30, 1945.

There are five of their nine children surviving——

Bartlett Allen (Sept. 23, 1906- Oct. 3, 1975) married Dorothy Gee (July 23, 1919-) in 1936. Children—Mary Blane, Allen, Lucy Belle.

Mary Josephine (Nov. 29, 1907-) married LeRoy Lackey (deceased) and Arthur McKelvie (1902-1981). St. Cloud, Florida.

Abner Lewis (August 5, 1919-July 26, 1952) married Rosemary Miller (Nov. 14, 1914-) on November 22, 1954. Children——Samuel Lewis, Janet Ruth.

Christine (August 27, 1911-) married Harvey Rudolph Foster (Oct. 1, 1908-Dec. 26, 1982) on Oct. 16, 1931. Children——Doris Ann, William Rudolph. (See GOLDEN WEDDING Section)

Dorothea (1912-1914).

George Cullom (Aug. 12, 1916-) married 1st Juanel Womack. Children—Bettye Faye, adopted son, Jimmy Wayne. 2nd Martha Hephcoat.

Allen Thompson (Billy) (Sept. 3, 1918-) married Irene Pillar, Bern, Switzerland (Oct. 21, 1920-) Retired Colonel. Director of NASA, J.P.L., Pasadena, Calif. Owner of homeplace, "Gordonfield".

Hatton Wood (March 10, 1920-Aug. 20, 1982), Navy veteran and College English Professor. (See sketch of Hatton Wood Burke)

Ruth Annette (July 29, 1922-) married James Kinnaird Ford (March 11, 1918-) on April 22, 1944 at the First Methodist Church, Hopkinsville, KY. Children—James K., Jr., Anita Burke, Patsy McKee, Douglas Hatton.

(Ford family residence: 1108 Trogdon Street, North Wilkesboro, NC from 1951 to 2008)

Letters from Years Past

Letters

The first three letters in this part of the book come from Mama's little book, Thoughts on Paper, first printed in the mid-1990's and reprinted in June 1998 by Margaret Morrow Scarborough, a very talented family friend. I will also include Mama's introduction to her book, which will tell *in her own words*, about her writing, and which is a sort of autobiography:

> Any successful efforts I have made in putting thoughts on paper, I attribute to my college English teacher, Anne Parrish Markham. The inspired and inspiring "Miss Parrish,"as she was then, read our humble writings SO WELL that they sounded profound and our egos soared!
>
> This little collection begins at Bethel College (Ky.) and continues through World War II, and marriage to a soldier, James Kinnaird Ford from Lancaster, Kentucky. We met in the office where we both worked at Camp Campbell, Ky.
>
> After the war we established a home in North Wilkesboro, N.C., and raised four children, and now enjoy our seven grandchildren.
>
> In 1962 Mrs. Gaylord Hancock taught a creative writing class which I attended, along with several friends. Mrs. Hancock was a delightful person and a helpful teacher. She encouraged me in all my creative efforts.
>
> It occurred to me sometime after we celebrated our 50th Wedding Anniversary that I had nothing to leave my children. I was never any good at "hand work," except for a short period when I made hooked rugs, and they were used up. So...these "thoughts on paper" are gifts to my children--- who would probably prefer a homemade quilt---
> TOO BAD!!!

FORD'S FROLIC
Page 1, Volume II
July 3, 1944
222 Franklin Street
Petersburg, in ole Virginny

You will notice, if you take the trouble, that I am one day early with my communication this week, tomorrow being the 4th of course. Not that the Ford family will be observing with any noticeable glee, but it's the 4th anyway and one just doesn't write letters on a day like that.

As those who know me most intimately will affirm, mine is not a personality which thrives best on work. You might have an altogether different name for this condition, but let us use mine for the present, and continue happily. Appetites and personalities do not always agree however and this being the case, your humble correspondent set forth in pursuit of a "position." the Civil Service Office at Jim's own Camp Lee my goal, I arose (in the middle of the night, it seemed to me) bearing in mind the old proverb, "the early bird catches the worm." Having before held a 'position' in a government office, I was not at all surprised upon arriving to find that even a glimpse at the proverbial worm would take waiting. Standing first on one aching foot and then the other, I glared ferociously at the occupant of the one sittable object in the waiting room and when the occupant finally sheepishly crept away, I lunged into his place and would have sat there contentedly until now if the monotone had not at length summoned me for the interview. When I had finished telling her how good I was, the lady shamefacedly admitted that Camp Lee offered nothing equal to my ability! She did say, however, that if I could prove that I had taken and passed a Civil Service exam as Clerk-Stenographer, that I would be indeeed welcome to file my 6 page application along with the thirty others already on file. So as you can see, I can expect a call any day--just any day between now and 1948.

As a stringly haired fourth-grader I was enchanted by the history book accounts of the place first settled in these, our United States. Yesterday I 'seen' it with my own eyes. Jamestown. I saw the bronze statue of Captain John Smith and Pocahontas; I walked through the ancient ivy-covered church, built by our forefathers in order that they might worship freely--sleeping through many a tiresome sermon, no doubt, just as you and I today. Jamestown is today little more than a grassy mound, much the same as it was when founded in 1607 I imagine. The memorials are there, of course, and are kept quite sacred, but a worldly character stood at the gate, eagle-eyed, with hands outstretched for "your ticket please." Much more thrilling to me than anything I saw at Jamestown, was our trip across the James River by ferry. I had never been on a ferry of any kind, but this seemed to me a super one. Carried nine cars. I was a little afraid at first that ours would surely roll off and into the water, but Jim patiently assured me it wouldn't, so I relaxed and enjoyed our two mile trip across, breathing deeply the most refreshing air I've smelt since leaving Oak Grove. We also watched an old gentleman crab fishing. All he did was lower a wire basket containing a fish head for bait into the water on a rope. Going down, the basket would open on the sides, the crabs crawl in, then when he pulled the basket up, the sides closed and there you are. They're awful looking creatures--crabs--they look too mean to make good eating, but I guess they are. As if the above trip was not excitement enough for one day--do you know what we did last nite--had Italian Spaghetti! I was so tired by the time I finished that I didn't know if it was good or not. Never again! That's all for now--see you next week.

Love, Ruth

TUESDAY'S TRIFLES
Page 1 Volume III
11 July 1944

Will somebody please send me a calendar? At first I didn't mind so much, but as the weeks pass, it is getting more and more difficult counting on my fingers from June 9th--the day I arrived in this vicinity--to determine what day is today. I'm afraid I will get arthritis or something, as it is also by that method that I decide when furlough-time is supposed to be and that's a "fur" piece off. I could use my toes, too, of course, as I've a pronounced tendency to go barefooted, but that's too confusin'.

Prepare for a shock folks--sit down, et yourself a nice tall glass of water--your correspondent has again acquired BANGS. Remember the $12.50 cold wave permanent I was so proud of? Well, it now rests among cigarette butts, Kleenex, and cracker crumbs in our overflowing waste basket. When I first came down I made the mistake of purchasing some very dull 15-cent scissors. There is something magnetic between me and them. They lay in the bureau drawer, apparently useless but somehow I couldn't forget they were there. The final decision came Sunday when my husband asked the fateful question,"When are you going to cut your hair off in front again?" And again Ish Kabibble has a rival.

Jean Creek just called and I am to meet her downtown in about 20 minutes. My beds are as yet unmade, the floor unswept, and an untidy atmosphere prevails over my whole one-room household, so now I must tear myself away, lest she come home with me and discover such untidy negligence. Three hours later. Now with my feet free again, my appetite appeased, and heart warmed by society, I am equipped to continue to bore you indefinitely. We had a good lunch, a good gaze in the store windows and a quieting half hour in the public library, where I was surprised to learn that a library card could be had without even your fingerprints, much less money. So, taking advantage of all things free, I got two books--the ones with the most gaily

colored backs of course. Oh, and I forgot to tell you. The restaurant today had cornbread, a rare delicacy here; and though it could never come up to Mama's, just the fact that they had it will make me happy for days.

You should meet "Skippy." At first I thought he didn't have eyes, but later I discovered that it's his artist's hairdo that hides them. He's very pretty though. I'm not sure of his nationality since dogs are just dogs to me. Skippy is very special, tho'. He is the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Gardner, our landlord and lady, and can be very naughty when going-to-bed time comes. Did I tell you that one of the requirements is that we leave our door open at night in order that the breeze from our eight windows might circulate through the whole upper floor. Well, the other night just on the eve of Jim's first snore, I heard persuasive voices downstairs and I knew immediately what was up. "Skippy darling" was behaving badly again. After finally coaxing him up the steps, Skippy stubbornly refused to enter his own boudoir--and whom should he choose to snooze with but us! After creeping almost noiselessly into the farthest corner of our room, no amount of cooing calls from the hall could disturb him--then comes Ruthie-to-the-rescue. I was sure I had a way with dogs. So I said gently, (shoe in hand) "Skippy, go home," and if he'd been a Great Dane he couldn't have growled any more fiercely. I cowered onto another corner and finally he rose and leisurely strolled away. About this time Jim awakened crossly and I now know--not only that if we ever have a dog he'll be trained differently; I am also certain that the Navy ain't got a thing on the Army when it comes to cussin'!!

My grins are toothy and frequent these days. Reason--<u>letters</u>! At last my unresponsive audience has come to life, and don't think I ain't grateful. The postman no longer has a haunted look when I question him; he beams brightly and hands over the loot. Each letter has its own place on the typewriter table, and were it not for dwindling funds, caused by an overdose of postage stamps, there would be a frame to accentuate the characteristic of each handwriting. Now then, before I become too drippy, there are those of you who need a talking -to. Didn't your mother ever tell

you that it is not polite to wait over thirty days before answering a letter? Government correspondence says 24 hours, but in these hectic times that is a little strict. Anyway, those of you who have trouble sleeping nights may know what the trouble is. My little gremlins are at work on your conscience!

What I am about to include in this edition is th only thing my feeble leisurely brain has produced in literary form since my arrival in Petersburg, and as yet it is unnamed. Mr. Gardner, whom I have mentioned previously, retired from business many years ago, and this is how he impressed me.

It was quiet and cool;he sat there
undisturbed
Admiring his work.
A wooly little worm crawled over the pointed
iron gate.
It was late evening and the crickets
could be heard, yet not described
As they confirmed the tranquility of
his day.
The grass, evenly cut, moist and green.
A day's work.
70 years fulfilled.

Did you ever try to live within a budget? At first it starts out to be a game where you play with money and it pays off in sandwiches, cigarettes, and a place to sleep. After a while you begin to feel like a one-man ration board, trying to argue your stomach out of being hungry for things like chocolate nut sundaes, large limeades, and luscious-looking lemon pie; all the time trying to guide your feet down streets with no shoe store displays of marked-down non-rationed relics that most likely wouldn't wear well anyway. I find myself hard to reason with sometimes.

I've been reading mythology, and I find it not nearly so dull as it sounds. In fact, not dull at all. I haven't enjoyed anything so much since *Little Red Riding Hood.* It is in some respects very similar to the Bible. How do I know it is? Well, dear children, I have delved into Genesis--which for the information of those of you who have

never opened THE BOOK at all, is the first chapter of the Old Testament. My varied reading also covers the Post Script page of the *Saturday Evening Post*, *The Progress-Index* and other Petersburg dailies, along with my husband's beloved *Esquire* and an occasional murder mystery.

I must cut this short for I have to olive-oil my hair and launder it in my basin beauty shop. I shall expect the postman to bring my mail in a wheelbarrow next week--I'm sure he would love the idea, so please don't disappoint the boy.

Love, Ruth

CAMP LEE COLIC or READER'S INDIGESTION

Page 1 Volume IV
July 18, 1944

Current reason for title this week--Jim is C.Q. tonite. The others speak for themselves, just get yourselves transferred here, you'll see! If it rains so they have to call off a parade, the boys don't get home early, no indeed, they have rifle inspection at 8:30 p.m. If, when you see him, Jim appears to walk in a stooping position, don't worry, it's nothing serious, just reflex action from "policing the area." And, do you know what the soldiers here use for gasoline? A number 13, C last, half-soled time and again. It is my opinion that Camp Lee must employ a noted psychologist who works day and night (probably getting time and a half) on mental and physical torture problems so that for escape the boys will apply for overseas duty. And then, as a bonus, whether they apply or not, they get it. CAMP CAMPBELL WAS NEVER LIKE THIS!!!!

....Time droops by....

When I discovered, after finishing the first paragraph this morning , that the only mail on the table downstairs was a *Pathfinder* for Mr. Gardner, I was so depressed that I just couldn't face the typewriter again until now. I covered its face, for the old

thing seemed to gloat over my mournful state of "no letter today." Now, my faith is restored. The afternoon mail bore fruit and I am again pounding the ragged ribbon.

I have just been invited to join a game of Parchisi with the ladies downstairs. Pardon me if I seem to sneeze every time I say the word, but that's just the sensation it gives me--or maybe I'm just pronouncing it wrong. I will not go into the sensation playing the game gives me, but as you have probably guessed, I refused. The ladies are Mrs. Gardner's friends. Each with an ailment all her own and each lamenting the fact the corner drugstore almost didn't let her have any more medicine without the prescription. Aren't you flattered that I'm writing to you instead of enjoying their exciting company? Of course, if they had invited me to supper also, I might have been glad to suffer a little Parchisi with them. Gosh, there I go sneezing again!

Some day I'm going to settle down and write something really worthwhile--how many years is it I've been saying that? Well, I am, and if I'm not too feeble to sign my name by then, you shall each have an autographed edition--whether you want it or not!

Thanks again for the letters, but don't think I won't be looking for more.

Love, Ruth

December 15, 1962

Dear Friends,

This year has been a year of many blessings at our house. As you will see, "now we are six." Douglas Hatton Ford chose to arrive three weeks late, a long wait for his impatient brother and sisters! Entirely worth the wait, it was indeed amazing how one so small could make willing slaves of so many, so soon. He is a little bit of each of us, and a lot of himself. Doomed to spoiling, he is the pet of my contemporaries, who rejoice with us, unenviously.

Patsy, the baby for nine years, accepted her displacement with dignity, though reminding me on occasion, that, unlike many of her friends, she had never especially wanted a baby brother.

Anita, the all "A" student of the family, spends her time on the phone, reading, and babysitting--mostly with her baby brother. She wonders how I ever raised the other babies without her supervision--and sometimes I wonder, too!

Jimmy, 15, is a six foot sophomore, played 2nd string varsity football this year and is basking in the glory of membership on a championship team. A Scout Camp counselor last summer, he made me a weekend washwoman! It was worth it to know that he was pleasantly and constructively occupied.

Adding years and responsibility are like vitamins to Jim, Sr. He maintains his early-rising schedule, hunting hardware buyers, and manages to look much too young to be flattering to me. The get-things-done member of the family, I sometimes thingk the house and all that's in it would fall apart without him.

My accomplishments are few, but worthwhile, I think. Having a baby at 40, I am convinced, is the best "therapy" of all. No restorer of youth, he has made age of little importance, compared to the delights of grandmothering your own child! I take special pride in giving up smoking after a 20-year enslavement--now, if I can just give up overeating! My life recently took on new sparkle when I joined a class in creative writing. Thus far, my homework leaves much to be desired, but the class itself is pur joy.

One of the real joys of Christmas is hearing from old friends, and we look forward to your message this year. May we wish you much happiness at Christmas and through the New Year.

With Love, Ruth and Jim

(This photo goes with the following 1967 Christmas letter. Left to right: A.F. Kilby, Ed Oakley, local Roses' manager, who also won a car since Mama had registered at his store for the contest, Ruth B. Ford , and Mayor George Wiebel)

December 19, 1967

Greetings!

Christmas came early at our house when Dacey's beloved stray dog surprised us with six pups! He wondered how she knew it was Christmas!

Anita is home from College and we expect Jimmy Friday, the 22nd from Texas for Christmas and for 30 days before Vietnam in February. Pat will be out of High School for the holidays tomorrow - and Doug is already out of Kindergarten - with chicken pox!

It is a rare day that Jim comes home without being greeted by a household crisis "Daddy, I'm sorry I dropped the radio" - or "Jim this vacuum cleaner will not work!" The miracle is that he still come home - cheerfully and efficiently putting us all in working order again!

The most exciting and unbelievable thing happened to me last April - I won a car! A 1967 mustang - one coupon out of 1,347,000 - as the man said. I had had my driver's license less than a year then - and I now have the distraction of being the only person in town who drives a mustang - slow! But I am not ready for Christmas as usual - but the tree is up, the wreath on the door, and the prospect of everybody home for Christmas is wonderful! Your greetings are one of the reasons real delights.

Our love and best wishes to you all for Christmas and next year!

Ruth + Jim

Mama's Happy Birthday

The thing about being 55 is that, having been an "explainer" all my life - "Oh, I'd love to, but you see because---," now I can just say "No" with no explanation, no guilt feelings. Lots of people reach this goal in life at 18 or 20, but as you all know, "Mama's a little slow!"

I guess along those same lines, the desire to <u>have</u>, just because somebody else <u>has</u> no longer rears its ugly head - and that's comfortable.

One of the best of all perks is to have such a <u>fun</u> bunch of grown-up children. And Lorraine and Fred, that includes y'all too. I may have fallen short on many of the things Mamas are supposed to teach - but I can say this - I surely managed to get across to each of you just the things I <u>like</u> for gifts. I never have to hide a thing you give me. I've worn my pajamas, gobbled up my Hickory Farms goodies (secretly!) and put up my pretty towels for show [I wanted to put up a sign for Doug and Jim saying, "Don't use these, get an old ugly out of the cabinet."].

You all know my addiction to long distance phone calls - so that <u>treat</u> you added to <u>make</u> my day! I chattered to my heart's content (with nary a growl in the background!).

Doug I haven't educated so well. He did ask me what I wanted, and I told him and he got 'em [no wrapping of course]. You guessed it - juice glasses! They dwindle mysteriously between Christmas and birthday and now I have eight <u>matching</u> (no jellies, no peanut butter, no bicentennials). If you all hurry home there might be enough still intact for us all to use!

Thanks and love to all of you!

Mama

July 1977

TO---"ALL MY CHILDREN"

Hearing from all of you on the same day (or thereabouts) made me want to write you all, but I decided to take the lazy way and duplicate this letter. (Your father would say I've had a lot of practice doing things the lazy way!) Never mind. I'm enclosing an Erma Bombeck column, and she has him down pat, even the name!

You communications to your father (gifts, cards, calls,) were all very well received. I enjoyed them, too, and sort of came awake from a "limbo" period in which I did nothing for several weeks but read books. Now maybe I can get some yard work done. We were in Kentucky at the time I usually put out plants in the back yard---so when I went to look recently, the "crafty" plant people had bunched their full-grown plants into pots and charged $2.00 a pot. I bought some anyway and disengaged them from pot captivity into an instant flower garden for myself! They look a little sparse but brighten up the heretofore weedy landscape.

As I sit here, I feel the pain of two unsightly fever blisters on my mouth---which must have prompted me to resume my diet this morning! I already feel so virtuous and hopefully at the completion of this diet I will not only feel THIN, but LOOK THIN as well!

I called Teen Monday. Sister is there now, and Blane (our niece from Texas) is coming today. Wish I could join them, but I really think Teen will have all she can handle. Teen told me she has sold her house. She will get an apartment in Hopkinsville until they have a place for her at "Sunshine House", a retirement home at which she has applied. She was pleased---had found living alone increasingly difficult and lonely. I'm sure her friend, Dora, will miss her very much---especially when her pipes freeze next winter!

We talked to Mama Patsy and she is doing fine. A lady comes at nine at night and stays till nine in the morning. That way someone is there to help with bedtime preparations and with dressing and doctoring the leg in the morning. The other lady

comes about 9 to 12, then again in the afternoon for a while. I think she likes them both, but was a little hoarse from feeling obliged to "entertain" them. She said Dr. Sides was pleased with the way her leg is healing. She is still distressed because she cannot wear a girdle or stockings; she feels "undressed" and says her legs get cold! I'm sure by fall she will be able to resume "proper" dress.

Louis called Jim and reported on his recent visit with Mama Patsy. He was pleased with the way the living room looked, liked the women we hired, and is thinking of putting in a shower downstairs. That would be nice. Jim says he doesn't plan to "supervise" this job!

Jim and I thought we'd tell Mama Patsy that if she'd like to give her ladies a few days off, we'd come up and stay---in July or August. We shall see.

We wish we could see all of you---especially our grandchildren! Allison will soon be a year old! Alan is two and Neil is over three months! Betsy and Rachel are practically grown-up, and are enjoying Louisiana so much it makes me jealous!

When Jim and I celebrate our 50th in a few years, you must all come---we'll rent a park somewhere! Lorraine, I'm so happy your mother and dad are having a celebration. You must take lots of pictures----(and send us one),

Did I tell you we went on a Book Club picnic--to Doughton Park recently---and almost froze?! It was 44 degrees, and breezy. We had a wonderful lot of food---including a freezer of homemade peach ice cream---which we ate huddled around a fire! Speaking of food, Jim went out beyond the garden (braving the poison ivy) and picked enough blackberries for a pie---I stopped writing this letter and made a pie for lunch---well received by both Doug and Jim. Still seems a little strange for Doug to have a "shirt and tie" job this summer---but he really likes it and feels he's learning a lot.

Time to stop. Will try to be a better letter-writer this summer. Much love to you all! Mama June 22, 1985

Jim helping to run the house now

Erma Bombeck
At Wit's End

See Jim.

Jim used to run and jump and chase accounts. Jim is going to stay home now. He has a new watch. He will tell you what time it is even when you don't ask.

It is time to get up.

It is time to remove the oil stain from the driveway before it spreads to the rest of the house.

It is time to alphabetize your spices.

It is time to eat. (Lunch/dinner/breakfast/break/snack/party.)

It is time to use the packet of yeast before it expires at noon tomorrow.

Sometimes Jim will act like a house guest.

"Where do you hide the iced tea glasses?"

"The hall bath needs toilet tissue."

"There is someone at the door selling something."

"I'd put the dishes away, but I don't know where they belong."

Sometimes Jim will act like he has hired you for the summer.

"Who was that on the phone and what did they want?"

"Where are you going and what time are you coming back?"

"I don't think that grass can wait another day."

Retired men like Jim bring efficiency to the home.

"It is cheaper to make your own tea bags than to buy ready-made."

"Don't heat up the oven for one baked potato. Do a dozen and freeze them."

Jim likes you to go to bed when he is tired, stay awake when he is not sleepy, turn down the thermostat when he is warm and eat when he is hungry.

See Jim drive a nail by the door to hold your car keys.

See Jim drive a nail by the phone to hold a pencil.

See Jim drive a nail in the kitchen to hold your glasses.

See Jim drive a nail in the desk to hold your unpaid bills.

See Jim drive you crazy.

You are surprised. You did not know you married a man who knew so much about dishwashers, wax build-up, hand-washables, stain removers, children and how to keep bananas from turning brown.

Jim is surprised. He does not know how you have managed to stumble through 40 years of running a house without him.

Everyone is surprised he is busier than ever.

You're not.

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Ruth and Jim Ford in 1989

(Anita and Rachel--North Georgia College , May 1999)

Letters to a Granddaughter

Rachel Ford Springer (1977-2006) was like her grandmother in that she saved nearly every letter and card that she ever received. These are excerpts taken from some cards and letters from Grandmama, found recently in a box of Rachel's college mementos.

September 20, 1995
Dear Rachel, Thanks for your thank you note! I just read in Ann Landers that some girls say they think it's dumb to thank people, that they give because they WANT to, not to be thanked---You can imagine what I think of that idea! Those girls don't know that good manners will always be "in fashion"! .....Granddad and I went with some friends on a middle-of-the-day picnic to Mt. Jefferson. It was so cool I kept a jacket on the whole time. The views from up there were spectacular and the food dee-licious! Time to make us a sandwich for lunch. (Leftover barbecue from the picnic.) Take care and write us sometime. Much love, Grandmama

October 19, 1995
Dear Rachel, Happy Halloween, says the rabbit! [rabbit stationery] Gathered up some sweets for you----and bought this "underwear look-alike" sweater which I'm leaving the tags on so if you don't like it you can exchange it at K-Mart! I've just had Garden Club at my house--which I prepared for, for weeks by dislodging the home of many a spider! --Among the many shine-up chores I did! Hope all is well with you. Have you heard from Betsy? Hope I'll have an address in time for her birthday. Much love, Grandmama and Granddad (who mails all pkgs)

November 3, 1995
Dear Rachel, Thank you for your thank you letter!! Can you believe your "old grandmaw" has been to the beach?!Sharon's mother asked me to go with her---it was beautiful and I loved looking and and listening to the ocean. Sometimes it is peaceful and other times ferocious!! I'd love to have heard your band--I'm sure your Mom and Dad enjoyed it. Sorry the sweater didn't do--if there are no K-Marts there, I'll be glad to exchange it for you. Maybe you can exchange it for socks or something. Did you know we are coming for Thanksgiving? We'll come Wednesday and come home

Saturday. We're still having UGLY weather, dark, rainy and yucky. I find it hard to be happy without sunshine. ..... Must stop and TRY to get some work done. I just want to sleep in on a day like this! Much love, Grandmama

January 8, 1996
Dear Rachel, ...Granddad and I are snowed-in with about 13 inches of snow gorgeously arranged around us like a velvet comforter! I so happy for the children because even at my advanced age, I can still remember loving snow! Did you have it there? I thought I saw on TV that Atlanta had some. Doug said Charlotte had about 2 inches and Jimmy said they had about 8--it came on Jimmy's birthday, so I know that made him happy.....So you're saving for a VCR? I would think you wouldn't have TIME for much except studying--? Wrong?? Anyway, I'm glad to be a contributor.....Our little Christmas tree is still up, but I have plans to put it away this morning--also the rest of the"stuff"--as you see, I've taken my time this year--WHY NOT? Write when you can and I will be thinking of you with MUCH LOVE. Grandmama

January 24, 1996
Dear Rachel,.....Hope all is going well for you---no more snow I hope---we have the ground to look at again and I'm glad.....Granddad is at his desk playing solitaire--I've been down at the church working with the Library Committee. All we do is take the books off the shelves, dust them, and the shelves, and check if the cards were in the books. Doesn't require high intelligence but needs to be done!.....Jimmy wrote to thank us for his birthday check and said they'd be going to Disney World Feb 2nd thru 9th.....This is not much of a letter but there's not much going on with us. I NEED to do a lot of housecleaning--but I have all kinds of excuses---ONE being that it's too cold--pretty inane, huh?.....Much love, Grandmama

February 4, 1996
Dear Rachel, Thanks for your letter with the bunnies scampering across the bottom! Which reminds me, Granddad showed me rabbit tracks in the snow this morning. I am a country girl but I didn't know what rabbit tracks looked like! We are iced and snowed in! First we had several inches of sleet, and freezing rain which covered everything with a beautiful coating of ice! Beautiful, but frightening when you consider how many power lines it's going to bring down---we are so THANKFUL to have power--even tho we

have lost some stations on TV. Talked to Patsy yesterday and they had zero temperatures plus sleet! It was 9 degrees here this morning which is the lowest we've had. Mardi Gras sounds like fun! What an honor that your band was invited. At least down there you won't have to worry about ice and snow! How long will you be there?.....Jimmy called Friday and said they were to fly to Florida leaving Sat. night--BUT the weather we had was predicted for there also--so I hope they got to go.....When is Mardi Gras? Take care and study hard! Much love, Grandmama

February 26, 1996
Dear Rachel, Got your letter this morning and DID have to get my glasses to read it! Glad your Mardi Gras trip was good and that you survived the seven mile march. I will not delay any longer talking about the sadness and disappointment we all feel over your Dad's decision .....I know that you have always been devoted to your Dad, and he to you---but I hope that you will be especially kind and attentive to your Mom because she is in great pain and needs your love and support. I wish Betsy was not so far away. As soon as Anita is settled in an apartment, we will come down and bring the antique bed Mama Patsy left her. Did you like the apartment? About my little book--this famous author will be delighted to autograph your copy--and thanks for re-reading it! It is about time to go to the P.O., so I won't write any more now. But I will be thinking of you with MUCH LOVE because I know you are hurting too. Grandmama P.S. Congrats on your A in psychology! Keep up the good work!
(editor's note: Fred and I separated in Feb. '96 and were divorced Sept. '96. As the house was to be sold, I chose to move into an apt. and let Fred sell the house.)
March 15, 1996
Dear Rachel, Thanks for your good letter! I always feel like I've talked to you! .....Granddad and I are coming to bring your bed March 29th and will be there a day or two. We hope you can be there, but if not we will understand.....I made Granddad a coconut cake for his b'day and got him a good card and a small box of candy. Earlier I had bought him an electric chain saw--which he had already used. He got gifts, calls, and cards from everybody and enjoyed it all. Jimmy said when he called that Lorraine may have broken her foot---slipped on the ice. I will call soon. Hang in there! Grandmama loves you! As ever, Grandmama

April 19, 1996
Dear Rachel, ARE YOU still THERE? I never realized how much I enjoyed

your notes/letters 'till they quit coming! Poor Old Grandmama goes hopefully to the mailbox and only gets "cart-sort" and "occupant"! We enjoyed seeing you when we brought the bed down. (Hope the smoke has dissipated from your room! As you know, Granddad smokes outside; that's about the best we can do. [Rachel's room had a balcony--that's where Daddy went to smoke]) Hope you're enjoying your new roommate--maybe you can help her "adjust" and not be so homesick. I can still remember how miserable I was (for awhile) but glad I stuck it out!.....Study hard and take time to write to ME! Much love, Grandmama

May 5, 1996
Dear Rachel, YES, I'm very happy to have one of your good letters even if I had to whine a little to get it! We are watching Columbo on TV so I only write during commercials! Also we just had a little storm which I did NOT like--so I was glad when it didn't linger.....Your rifle (?) team sounds interesting and I'm sure you will soon be expert at the drills (something I could never have done, too klutzy!) My little doctor's office piece evidently didn't please the Reader's Digest but I was pleased it was published in Generations, a little "Seniors" paper that comes out once a month. A friend of mine submitted it for me. They changed the title to: *Are You Prepared to Wait Patiently?* Our back yard has been beautiful (is beginning to fade). Azaleas down the side below the deck, and a mixture of pansies and other flowers around the birdbath and in the space by the basement back porch. Lots of wild phlox (lavender) down the side toward the garden. We should have taken pictures. Granddad has planted lots of vegetables in his garden--know you can't wait! Actually we will have green peppers! Had a letter from Betsy the same day yours came so I must stop and write her, too. Much love, Grandmama

December 1, 1996
Dear Rachel, A day, a night, and another day of rain--NON-STOP! We went to church (already decorated for Christmas!) came home, ate lunch--then I called Circle members and THEN went to bed upstairs and slept 'till 5 o'clock! Jim watched football/slept on the sofa--a very restful afternoon!!.....Your video was fun for all the family and I hope your teacher likes it. Alan was an impressive "doctor" and Jay was so proud of him! Jimmy and Lorraine called yesterday to hear all about the celebration of Thanksgiving. I do wish they could have been here. If I weren't such a slow thinker, I would have had this idea sooner: to rent a motel room.

Then there would've been room and we could've all been here at once. Oh well, it might not have worked anyway. Christmas is going to come SO FAST--and I'm SO SLOW--which is why I have to resort to MONEY gifts--sorry about that. Must stop and write more notes---Just remember that this small card contains a very big HUG! Love, Grandmama

January 1, 1997
Dear Rachel, Happy New Year! This is a spring-like day and I love it! The sunshine really lifts my spirits. Thanks for the beautiful rose tin of chocolate candy. Of course, when we opened it, Grandad and I started sneezing and finally had to take some of your medicine! Just kidding! (as you would say!) Hope everything is going well at school. We missed you at Christmas, but it was wonderful to have your Mom!...I'm sure Allison missed you, but she had a cold so she rested a lot. We played UNO with Evan, and *Scrabble*, of course. I actually won a game when Lorraine was playing! She and Anita are really good! .....We are comfortably back in our rut, but I must "crawl out" and call my Circle members--I'm the leader so I have a lot to do. Much love, G'mama

January 30, 1997
Dear Rachel, Now I have heard from all seven of my grandchildren! Thanks for telling me about your party dress--sounds pretty--just like you! We are on a "weather watch" (aren't all old people?!)--"they" had predicted sleet or snow but it didn't come and we hope it won't--especially since my Book Club meets this afternoon--and we meet SO SELDOM!..... Uncle Doug is being sent by his company to Switzerland for a week to learn some technology from their company over there. Two associates will be going and they will meet with a fellow who once worked in Charlotte but is now working for the Switzerland branch. SO Doug thinks he will show them around. I hope the work doesn't take all their time!.....Hope you are completely well from your FLU. We had flu shots but still keep our fingers crossed because there seem to be so many different strains of the virus. SO FAR--SO GOOD! Must stop and look at my "wardrobe" and see what I will wear to Book Club--(weather permitting). Thanks for your thank you. Much love, Grandmama

March 14, 1997
Dear Rachel, It was good to talk to you, and, as agreed, here is my letter! Apologies for the lined paper--somehow I seem to be able to keep my thoughts straighter--on lines! Because it was Granddad's birthday (I didn't tell the guests) I had two couples come for a small dinner party--the dinner wasn't small--just the number of people! One of the best things was that it forced me to clean up the house--and put in fresh flowers. Spring has "sprung" early and everything is blooming---more profusely than I've ever seen--so I had daffodils, forsythias, and pansies out of our yard. I used silver cups and lots of "finery"--made me feel good to see it "in use". The hard part came after the guests left and we were so tired, but still had all those dishes to wash! Thank goodness Granddad is a good dish washer so it didn't take us long.....We are still waiting for the plumber to find us a tub-shower unit upstairs--the problem is the low ceiling. The trouble is, Jim tore out the "boxing" around the tub to see where the leak was, so it looks awful up there--everything usable--but not"fitten" for company! Hope your schoolwork is going well---and your drilling (is that what it is called?) What is your best subject (course) in school? I can't remember liking anything much except English and biology--(breakfast, lunch and supper, too!) plus goofing off with friends--! Looking back, I don't see how I passed a two-year college! But, thank goodness, my grandchildren are smarter and more focused than I ever was!.....Must get this in the mail. Much love, Grandmama

April 22, 1997
Dear Rachel, This is probably a very busy time for you--not too far from the end of school? Glad to hear that your arm is not bothering you right now. I am still "recovering" from having my book club here last Thursday. Not only did I have to dispose of a winter's accumulation of dust and spider webs--I had to arrange flowers and cook a "ladies'" luncheon. I used the silver julep cups, blue china, bright yellow napkins (cloth) and had a small vase of blue and yellow pansies on the table. For dessert I had meringues with frozen custard and fresh strawberries. They all bragged on the meal and of course that's what I wanted to hear! Today is our 53rd wedding anniversary!! We feel very fortunate to have lived so long! We gave each other GOOD cards--G'dad enclosed BIG money in his. I gave him a tie which he liked. We went out lunch yesterday so I don't think we will go out tonight. We now have a tub/shower unit in the upstairs bathroom, plus a new

floor. We're going out in a little while to see if we can find a color to paint the walls--everything else is white--so we need some color.....Must get this in the mail. Hope you liked your pictures I sent before. They were some of my favorites. Much love, G'mama

May 2. 1997

Dear Rachel, You really know how to make an old lady happy--REAL MAIL--not addressed to "occupant". Loved the Saturday Evening Post cover post card "Gossip". When I was in college our English teacher had us collect these covers and write about them--she evidently knew early on that these covers by Norman Rockwell were classics. At the moment Granddad is painting the upstairs bathroom. It is a darker version of the old color and will probably be just as hard to match towels to--BUT--it was hard to choose--this was "acceptable" and everything else is white, so I think it will be pretty. It will be nice for our guests to have a shower upstairs, I think. I just went upstairs and looked at the color---it is NOT a darker version of what we had---more blue than green and unmatchable for sure! Ah WELL, you can't win 'em all!! (see P.S.).....Your mom told me the dress you made turned out well---I am so proud of all the things my granddaughters can do (a little envious, but mostly proud!) Since I started this, I had a letter in today's mail from Betsy--mostly about plants, gardens, etc. I think it is just now getting to be spring over there. Must stop and get some work done! Thanks again for writing. Much love, Grandmama P.S. After Granddad had painted a good bit, I realized I couldn't live with that color, so persuaded him to"let's take it back and make it greener", which we did!!

May 6, 1999

Dear Rachel, No more pencils, no more books....Our very best wishes on your graduation! We loved the announcement and wish we could be there but have "aged out" on long trips. We are very proud of you and love you very much. Grandmama and Granddad

(Note: By mid July of 1999, Rachel was recovering from her first brain tumor surgery. She was well for two years after that. She worked in Barnes & Noble bookstore and then became a lab assistant in the Georgia Bureau of Investigation crime lab. When the tumor recurred, she spent the next almost five years having various treatments and surgeries. She went to Heaven on March 11, 2006)

(L to R; Patsy, Doug, Mama, Jim, Anita -- Summer 2002)

Memories and Tributes

Things I Learned from Mama

Religious tolerance. There were never any hateful or derogatory comments about any religion or followers of any religion.

Racial tolerance. Never any racial comments about anybody.

Intellectual curiosity. Exploring books, poetry, literature, arts. I think these are/were very important in our upbringing, and I appreciate these lessons.

Jim Ford, April 2011

(Jim Ford, Jr., on wedding day August 13, 1976)

Memory from Lorraine

They say the heart of a home is the kitchen. Ruth's kitchen on Trogdon Street surely met that criteria, and Ruth is certainly the heart of the Ford family. She ruled that room with good times and wonderful food. In the morning, the aroma of Maxwell House coffee and sausage sizzling in a cast iron skillet would bring the sleepiest person to the kitchen. For lunch, it might be homemade beef vegetable soup with a pan of her yeast rolls or a slice of sourdough bread. Just thinking about it makes my mouth water.

We must not forget holiday dinners of baked ham or turkey with those wonderful stuffing patties. I liked it best when we all crowded around Ruth's wonderful kitchen table for great food and lively conversations. After the food was put away and the dishes washed, we would bring out the Scrabble game. No one except Jim Sr. would ever refuse a game of Scrabble. We no longer sit at the same table, but we still enjoy a game of Scrabble, and Ruth is as competitive as ever. Ruth, you are in all our hearts and we thank you for all you ever did and still do for us.

Lorraine Jacobs Ford 2011

Things Mama Taught Me

- ★ To love flowers
- ★ To write thank-you notes
- ★ To appreciate cookbooks, esp. Better Homes and Gardens
- ★ The importance of dressing well to go clothes shopping (for better service and better-trying on)
- ★ To love books and listening to books read aloud
- ★ The value of antiques, hooked rugs, pottery, picture frames and silver
- ★ The versatility of cast-iron skillets
- ★ To set a pretty table
- ★ To serve a color-and texture-balanced meal, if possible
- ★ To understand the true meaning of Christmas and to be kinder and more thankful (see the following note written to me in 1962 after I complained about what "Santa" brought me. I was so ashamed!)

Anita Ford Davis 2011

(a photo I took of Mama's flowers-- got published in the NC Garden Club calendar!!)

(the following is taken from Mama's handwritten note---Christmas 1962)

Dear Anita.
Your Daddy and
I were sorry we
were not able to
give you more at
Christmas. We know
that, compared to
your friends,(some
of whom have wealthy
parents) your gifts
seemed very small.
It is quite natural
to compare, and to
want more--we all
do. One thing I
do want you to

understand; we
try very hard to
be fair and to
divide what little
we can give equally
between you. Maybe
we do not always
succeed. Also, old
as we are, there are
things we would
like to buy for each
other, and can't. We
are glad to give
you all what we
have and do with-
out ourselves, and
I do not want
you to feel

guilty about it.
but it is not
very kind to be
reminded of how
little you got. I
know very well
how little it was,
and I also know that
it was lovingly bought
and given with the
full knowledge that.
it represented very
little compared
to our love and
appreciation for a
lovely daughter like
you.

Mama

Douglas

Ball.....3.00
Telephone...1.00
pop-blocks...1.25
another ball..1.00
6.25

Patsy

Bicycle.....29.00
Stuffed dog...1.44
Slinky.....1.00
Money case...1.00
book.....59
33.03

Anita

House shoes.....3.00
Bathrobe.....6.00
Developing kit..15.45
American Girl...3.00
Dusting powder..1.00
Book rack.....1.00
lipstick.....1.70
bath brush.....1.00
Devo. book.....50
32.65

Jimmy

Coat.....17.95
Record.....3.00
Shirt.....4.00
Bathrobe.....6.00
Pj.....3.00
Tie pin.....1.00
Devo. Book.....1.00
Sweate.....5.00
Chips.....1.00
41.95

Mama

Bowl..... (?)

Daddy

Tax on watch.....5.00

Total Savings

$150.00
117.93 less "Santa"
32.07--spent on
wrappings and allowances
for gifts and
all other presents.

Lessons Learned from Mama While I Was Growing Up

On parenting...

One memory I have is that Mama did not overreact or get mad if we broke or somehow ruined something. I might dread telling her and feel guilty but she usually just brushed it off saying she knew it was an accident and that we didn't do it on purpose. Of course there were times when I knew I had been careless, reckless or doing something I was not supposed to do or it would never have happened, but she didn't ever make a big deal of things like that.

On being happy with what you have...

Mama had a lot of friends, many of whom had higher incomes, nicer houses, and "more stuff" than we did, but she never acted dissatisfied with what we had or even acted like she wished she had more. She seemed happy for them, admired and complimented their nice things or accomplishments without apparent envy. She always made the best of what we had and didn't have the need to "keep up with the Joneses."

On sense of style...

It seems that Mama was somewhat of a trendsetter. There were many things over the years that she did before they became popular. She collected baskets, made homemade potpourri and candles, liked antiques and pottery, and grew many different kinds of flowers and roses. By the time these things had become popular and there were kits or how-to books about them, they had been done at our house years before.

Patsy Ford Eads, April 2011

Patsy and Mama, Summer 2011

(An article Mama saved, contributed by Patsy)

Hints From Heloise

Recipe for Old-Fashioned Rose Jar

By Heloise Cruse

DEAR HELOISE:

The making of a rose jar is a ly task and one which brings asure for years.

The petals of some flowers should be picked in early morning, tossed lightly on a screen or some tissue in a cool airy place to lie until the dew has completely evaporated.

Then put them into your rose jar (a covered glass jar, stone or porcelain jar), sprinkling each one-half-inch layer of petals lightly with salt.

New petals can be added every morning until you have the desired amount.

After you have a sufficient quantity of dried petals, allow them to stand for 10 days, stirring them every day.

Prepare a mixture of:
One-fourth ounce mace
One-half ounce allspice
One-half ounce cloves
One-half ounce stick cinnamon broken into bits
One-fourth tablespoon nutmeg
One ounce powdered Orris root
One-fourth pound dried lavender flowers

Mix these in a bowl and fill the rose bowl with alternate layers of petals and spice mixture.

Add a few drops each of several essential oils . . . rose, bitter almond, geranium and orange flower (these are optional if you do not have them).

Now put all petals in a large jar and pour one ounce of your favorite toilet water on them and do not stir again.

This mixture will retain its fragrance for years.

If you desire . . . various other sweet smelling petals may be added. If the jar is open for one-half hour the room will fill wi" a delicate fragrance, deli"h different from other perf

A few drops of other colognes may be added from time to time . . . just so the petals do not get too wet and become moldy.

Make one and you will treasure it for years.

Mrs. Curtis Barnhart

★ ★ ★

My memory…

Mama would always tell me to "be careful" when I was leaving the house to go anywhere. My standard reply was, "I will." She always said it and many years later she told me what it also meant.

When I was growing up, we never said "I love you" to each other. It was fine because we knew the love was there and anyway didn't know that family members said that to each other---I only realized that later when I observed it in other families.

Many years later, I realized it was a good thing to tell your parents that you loved them. I was at a weekend retreat where you think about things like that. One outcome was that I called home to thank them and tell them I loved them. Of course Dad answered. When I told Dad that I loved him, he stammered out "let me get your mother." I know he was very uncomfortable with hearing that ☺. When I told Mama I loved her, of course it brought tears to both of us because we had never come out and said it before. After that moment we both had permission to say it from then on. Mama asked me "Do you remember when I would always tell you to be careful? That was my way of saying'I love you'."

Doug Ford 3/26/11

(Doug's fourth or fifth birthday…March 31, 1966 or 1967
We may have put an extra candle "to grow on")

From the Grandchildren

In recent years I've been thinking more and more about two things: the importance of people in our lives who set an example for us early on, and about each person's link in the long line of the generations. Grandmama has, just by being herself, set me an example that has shaped my life in many ways.

I remember her telling a story about an acquaintance who was complaining about having "bad luck" with plants. "Why," said Grandmama, "she just didn't take the time to find out what they needed." Grandmama, on the other hand, has always had a green thumb when it comes to plants, children, marriage, and friendship. And why? She takes the trouble to listen, look, and think about what others need, then she does her best to provide it!

As children, Rachel and I felt appreciated and welcomed by the little things Grandmama would do to prepare for our visit. There were big glass jars full of oatmeal crème pies and other snacks at children's eye level when we came into the kitchen. There was child's size furniture to sit on and plenty of toys and books. There was a sandbox outside and I remember once digging through the sand into the dirt underneath and thinking it looked like dog food. I tried to feed it to Sugar, the dog, and was surprised when she wouldn't eat it.

Grandmama has always been able to make and keep good friends. Her hospitality and friendship do not depend on lavish entertainment and luxurious accomodation, but on good manners, good taste, and thoughfulness. For Grandmama, good manners are about, once again, thinking of the other person, rather than adhering to an elaborate set of do's and don't's. She has made a lifelong study of tact and of speaking the truth in love. I have always been able to count on her for an honest answer, and she knows the art of combining candor with kindness.

I only knew Grandmama and Granddad in their more mellow grandparent years, but their relationship with each other was an example to me of a good old-fashioned marriage. They each had their roles and together they made the household work. Granddad showed his love for Grandmama with forthright Kentuckian chivalry---I rremember his CB radio handle was "Crusader"---and Grandmama's affection for him showed an equal mixture of respect and humor. I say 'old-fashioned', but a happy marriage like this is surely classic and never out of style.

Mom can tell you that I have always enjoyed the sound of Grandmama's voice---from my earliest days. I remember Grandmama and Granddad coming to Boone when I was in college there to take me home to their house for the weekend, Granddad puffed away steadily at his pipe as he stomped and let up on the brakes of the station wagon again and again, going down the mountain.When we got to North Wilkesboro, all I wanted to do after a long hard week at ASU was lie on the sofa in the living room and close my eyes. Grandmama came and sat in the former bird chair (I think you and I both now agree, Grandmama, that it should never have been recovered in non-bird fabric) and talked to me. About what? I have a vague recollection that family members, N.

Wilkesboro friends, church, the garden, recently read books, dinner, etc., might have been touched on. I just remember being soothed by listening to her voice, as always. Who do you know that can make you feel good just by talking?

There are things, some learned by example and others, perhaps, passed on genetically that go from one generation to the next. It is these that are the true legacy of generations past. I like to think that I know something about our long-ago ancestors by the qualities I've seen in Grandmama and Granddad. And when I think of my mother, my aunt and uncles and cousins, I see some of the attributes, traits, and gifts of Grandmama and Granddad in each one of them. (Maybe part of the reason Rachel and I got to be left-handed is because of Grandmama, even though her father paid her a silver dollar to use her right hand instead.) It's a wonderful thing to see these traits carry on, and a comfort to know that we have these things to bind us together down through the years.

Grandmama, I would like to think that thirty or forty years from now my grandchildren will look forward to visiting me as much as we loved to visit you. My children and grandchildren will think of "home" as a place where pretty antiques are used and cared for, where there are hooked rugs on the floor and roses in the garden, where the many delights of the kitchen include home-grown vegetables and sourdough bread, where everyone values education and loves a good read. This is all because of *you*. And if my grandchildren love me half as much as I love you, I will consider myself blessed indeed.

Sarah Elizabeth "Betsy" Springer van der Hoek

(the "bird"chair on the right)

(Betsy, Rachel, Alan, Neil, Evan, Allison 1987)

I always enjoyed visiting and looking through family photo albums. Grandmama would tell us about the pictures and everyone in them for hours and I will always remember that. Another thing I always looked forward to when I was younger was the rabbit piggy bank, full of change, that the grandchildren would divide up when we visited.

Alan Kirk Eads, April 2011

One memory I have is that Grandmama taught me to enjoy coffee. I remember using a spoon to eat the sugar/coffee/cream mixture at the bottom of a cup of coffee. I'm sure I used an excess amount of sugar. I enjoy coffee for other reasons now, but the first time I tried it was at Grandmama's in North Wilkesboro. The prevailing memory I have of Grandmama is that she is such a sweet lady. She was always happy and always seemed tickled when telling stories of her children and grandchildren. I can't remember a time when she was angry.

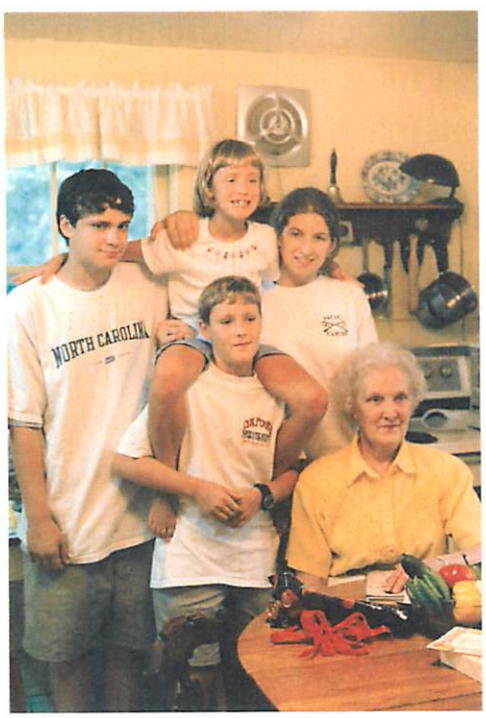
Neil Kinnaird Eads, April 2011

(Alan and Neil Eads in Maui, Hawaii, November 1989. Grandmama and Granddad visited them in Hawaii in April 1990.)

She

She spoils you every time you visit.
She is always happy to see you.
She helps when you're upset.
She will brighten your day
With all the flowers she keeps near.
She loves to laugh and play Scrabble,
Always such a joy.
She is my Grandmama!

Emily Katherine Eads



(Alan, Emily, Neil, Rachel, and Grandmama 1997)

Special Connection

I have always felt a special connection to Grandmama and have always hope that others would view me as similar in nature. It has been a struggle to come up with just a few words to express just how much Grandmama has meant to me and how much I love her. There are a few memories that stick out in my mind and bring a smile to my face as I remember them. First, I will never forget going to the beauty parlor with Grandmama. I loved to watch her get her hair done and loved to sit with my head under the big dryer. Grandmama would always buy me a Coke in a glass bottle and I thought that was the coolest thing. Grandmama always seemed very invested in me, her red-headed grandchild, and in the care of the red hair that she informed my parents that I needed to have before my birth. She used to wash my hair in the sink and used mayonnaise and vinegar. Back then, I surely thought it was crazy, but I would give anything to have Grandmama wash my hair again!

Moving right along from hair and beauty parlors, my brother and I were always fascinated when Grandmama told us that she had to go "put her face on." I must've been at least ten when I figured out that she did not have a mask she wore during the day!!

I also thoroughly enjoy hearing about Grandmama's funny memories of me as a child. She seemed to get quite a kick out of my antics. My favorite story was when Grandmama, Mama Patsy, and my mother, Lorraine, were going to play Scrabble. As a four-year-old child, I was very upset that I was not invited to play and I assured them that I knew how to play Scrabble (let alone read and write!)

If I can be half the woman, mother, grandmother, teacher, writer, and overall fabulous human being that Ruth Ford is—I will be set for life! I could not be more proud to call her my grandmother.

Allison Meredith Ford

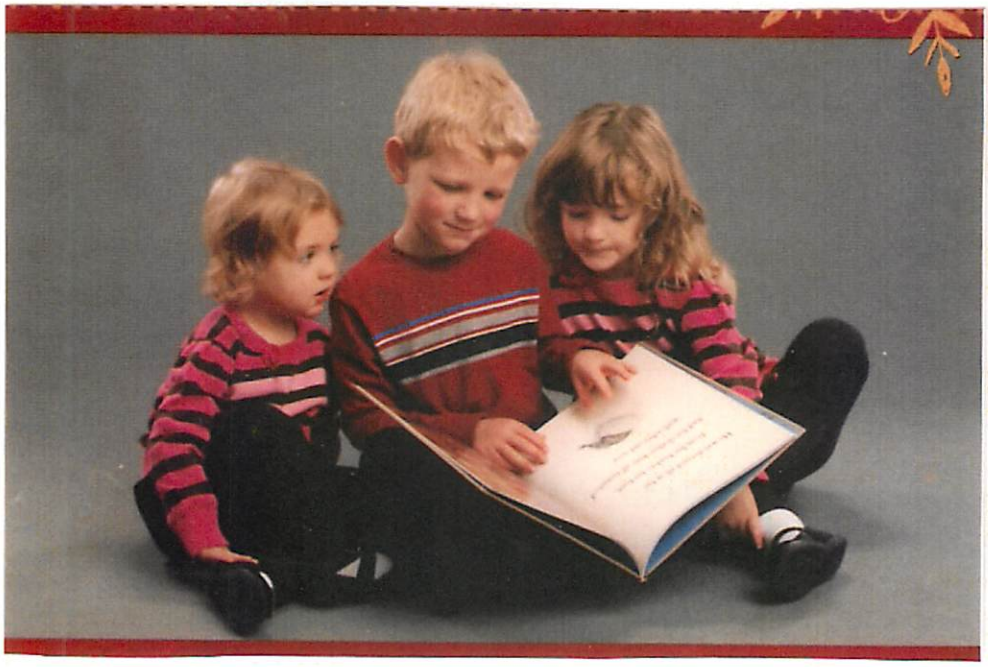
(Allison with Grandmama at beauty parlor -about 1987)

I remember going on holiday trips to see Grandmama and Granddad. We always looked forward to the trips because we didn't live near any family, so we would see each side of the family maybe once or twice a year. Being greeted with Grandmama's southern accent just made you feel home. Grandmama knew that I enjoyed the mini boxes of Kellogg's cereals, so she would always have them when we would come to visit. Allison and I would fight over who got the frosted flakes and corn pops. We also got to split the change bunny in the kitchen between me and Allison.

Evan James Ford

(Allison and Evan Ford 1989

Younger Grandchildren



(Doug and Michelle's family---Sarah Ann Ford, Elijah James Ford, Madeline Ruth Ford-Christmas 2010---Stephanie Jacqueline Ford born August 1, 2011)

And Great-Grandchildren

(Betsy and Michel's family--Robert Daniel and Peter Thomas van der Hoek, Christmas 2010)

Nieces and nephews

From Doris Foster Russell.....Christine Burke Foster's daughter

I just reread Thoughts on Paper by Aunt Ruth and enjoyed them even more this time. (Mama put together a collection of her stories, poems, and letters dating back to college days and including Ford family life when all four children were at home. She had this desktop-published. See the chapter *Letters from Years Past.*)

From Bill Foster...Christine Burke Foster's (Aunt Teen's) son

Bill's wife Jean asked him what he remembered about Aunt Ruth. He said he remembered the devilment her brothers were always up to, trying to embarrass her or tease her. Case in point: around 1942 or so, when Aunt Ruth was 19 or 20, Uncle Billy came home from the Army, and asked little Billy Foster (age 5 or 6) to go over and put his hand up on Aunt Ruth's chest. Then Uncle Billy sang the jingle from Camel cigarette commercial, "So round, so firm, so fully packed.....so easy on the draw!" Jean said she will always remember Aunt Ruth as a Southern lady. She appreciated the silver cups that Ruth sent to each of her grandchildren when they were born.

From Blane..... Bartlett Burke's daughter

Aunt Ruth and Uncle Jim left for Panama when I was young (10 or so), then we moved to Texas when I was 12. When they were in Panama they sent Lucy (my sister) and me shoulder bags, hand-tooled leather purses. I was so proud---I had never had anything that nice and "store-bought." We didn't see Aunt Ruth and Uncle Jim very often, but we always knew they loved us. I guess she has told you she was "Noo-Noo" to us until we were grown!

Note: Blane's brother, Allen Burke, passed away this past summer (2011) after a long battle with cancer. He and his wife, Mary Dell, visited Mama several times in recent years. (They lived in Texas and traveled via NC to VA, I think, to visit other family members.) She loved those visits!

From Sam Burke….Abner Lewis Burke's son

To the children: My mother Rosemary Burke Pace adored your mom. My dad Abner Lewis Burke passed away in 1952 when I was 9 and my sister Janet was 7. Mother passed on March 5, 2003 at 88. Your mom has always been a sweet, kind, and gracious lady, and I would love to be able to talk to her on the phone again.. As years pass by, (I will be 68 September 2) I treasure family memories more and more.

To Mama: Aunt Ruth, I am delighted to be a small part of your memory book. You and Uncle Jim were always so wonderful to our family.

One of my fondest memories was the week I spent in North Wilkesboro one summer in 1956. Mother drove me to Clarksville and put me on a Greyhound bus for an all-night ride to visit your family. You treated this 12-year-old kid like a king. I remember a wonderful week playing baseball and basketball, going to 25-cent movies, and eating great meals. No one could have been nicer to this little country boy. To this day I treasure that expeience as a great adventure and think about it often.

Over the years you and Uncle Jim would visit Mother at Glenburnie and then at her Hopkinsville home where I was often in attendance. She thought the world of you both and often remarked that you were the sweetest, kindest, and most gracious lady she ever met. Love, Sam Burke

(Aunt Ruth, Uncle Jim, and Sam Burke c. late '80's or early 90's)

Favorite Recipes

Mama's Cornbread

1 cup cornmeal

2 tsp baking powder

¼ tsp soda

2 tsp sugar (optional)

1 egg

¾ to 1 cup buttermilk

Mix dry ingredients together. Add egg and milk. Heat 2 or 3 Tbsp. shortening in cast iron skillet. Pour into cornbread mixture —then pour mixture immediately back into hot skillet and bake at 450° for about 20 minutes.

Bojangle Biscuits

2 cups self-rising flour

2 Tbsp powdered sugar

1/8 tsp cream of tartar

1 tsp baking powder

4 Tbsp margarine

1 cup buttermilk

Mix dry ingredients. Cut in margarine until mixture is like corn meal, add buttermilk—stir into ball. Knead a few times. Pat or roll, and cut. Bake at 400° for about 15 minutes. Coat with melted margarine after baking.

Spoon Bread

1 cup corn meal

2 cups milk

3 eggs

2 Tbsp butter (about)

1 tsp salt

Scald milk; gradually stir in corn meal—continue stirring over low heat till thick. Remove from heat, add butter and salt. Separate eggs—add beaten yolks to cooled mixture. Beat whites till stiff but not dry—fold in. Turn into greased casserole dish (greased on bottom and part way up the sides) and bake at 350° about 45 minutes. (you may add ½ cup fresh, frozen or canned corn for added flavor)

Doug McElwee's Banana Bread

¾ cup margarine

1 ½ cup sugar

1 ½ cup mashed bananas (3 medium)

2 eggs

1 tsp vanilla

2 cups flour

1 tsp baking soda

¾ tsp salt

½ cup buttermilk

¾ cup broken or chopped pecans

Mix sugar and margarine together. Add eggs, bananas, and vanilla. Add other things and mix well. Bake in loaf pan at 325° for 1 ¼ hours or until done. Better if cooled and wrapped in aluminum foil overnight before serving)

The Best Refrigerator Rolls

½ cup shortening
½ cup sugar
1 ½ tsp salt
1 c. boiling water
2 eggs, beaten
2 pkg dry yeast
1 c. lukewarm water
6 cups unsifted flour
(bread flour works well)

Pour boiling water over shortening, sugar, and salt. Blend and cool. Add beaten eggs. Sprinkle yeast onto the lukewarm water and stir until dissolved; combine with egg mixture. Add flour. Blend well, cover and place in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours. (The dough should be in a large mixing bowl or deep saucepan as it rises slightly in the refrigerator.) This will keep a week to 10 days and it may be used as needed.

Rolls, continued

About 3 hours before using rolls, roll dough into desired shapes using only enough extra flour to make them easy to handle. Place on greased pan and allow to rise at room temperature for about 2 hours (or less) or until they are double original size. Bake in hot oven 425° for about 12 to 15 minutes.

Cure 81® Ham

Wrap ham in foil.

Bake in 300° oven at least 4 hours or more.

Unwrap from top. You can remove fat, if any. Peel rind from top and sides. Score ham and put whole cloves in grooves.

Mix together ½ to ¾ cup brown sugar, some corn meal, some fruit juice (pineapple, orange, peach), some syrup, and yellow mustard. Stir into a paste. Spread on top. Raise temp. to 350°

Bake 30 more minutes.

Beef Pot Roast

Choose shoulder or chuck, red and marbled with fat.

1. Sprinkle with tenderizer (opt.) and pepper. Prick in with fork.
2. Put 2 T. Crisco—heat till hot in Dutch oven or skillet.
3. Brown roast well on both sides.
4. Sprinkle top of roast with onion soup mix—1/3 envelope.
5. Take 2 T. catsup. Thin down to ½ cup with water.
6. Pour liquid over roast.
7. Put top on. Bake in oven at 250° for 3 to 3 ½ hours.

Grandmama's Oven-Fried Chicken

Mix flour, salt, paprika and seasoned salt in a bag. Shake pieces of chicken one at a time. Melt a little Crisco in skillet and turn chicken over in it to coat. Bake 30 minutes at 400°, turn over and bake 30 minutes more.

Flying Farmer Chicken Salad

5 cups cubed chicken*

3 cups cooked rice

1 ½ cups small green seedless grapes (halved)

1 13 ½ oz. can pineapple tidbits (drained)

1 11 oz. can mandarin oranges (drained)

1 cup toasted slivered almonds

1 ½ cups mayonnaise (or ½ cup mayo, ½ cup sour cream, 1 T. lemon juice)

2 T. vinegar*

2 T. orange juice*

1 ~~T.~~ tsp. salt*

2 T. salad oil*

Combine chicken and starred ingredients. Let stand overnight in refrigerator, covered. Next day, gently toss chicken mixture together with all other ingredients. (Or you may serve the mayo dressing and almonds separately at the table.) This is good served on lettuce leaves for a luncheon or a summer supper. Probably serves about 8.

Vegetable Soup

1 lb lean raw ground beef (2 cups cooked chicken or chopped cooked beef may be used ,or no meat at all)

½ green pepper, chopped

2-3 stalks celery, chopped, with leaves)

1 medium onion, chopped

about 1 ½ cups finely chopped cabbage

about 2 cups tomato juice

about 2 cups water (more, if desired)

1 15 oz. can diced tomatoes

½ pkg (1 cup or so) frozen baby limas

2-3 peeled, sliced carrots

1 can white shoepeg corn

2-3 peeled, cubed potatoes

optional: 2-3 T. beef bouillon granules or cubes

optional: small pkg frozen mixed vegetables (about 2 cups)

1. Brown ground beef. Spoon off fat. Add onions, celery, and green pepper. Stir, saute´ till vegetables are translucent.

2. Add tomato juice, tomatoes, water, carrots, limas, and cabbage (bouillon and frozen veg., too, if desired) Simmer about 40 minutes Stir occasionally.

3. Add corn and potatoes. Simmer gently about an hour. Season with salt and pepper. Sometimes a little sugar helps. Makes about 3 quarts.

Each serving: About 210 calories, 5 g fat, 0.3 mg cholesterol, 330 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 21%.

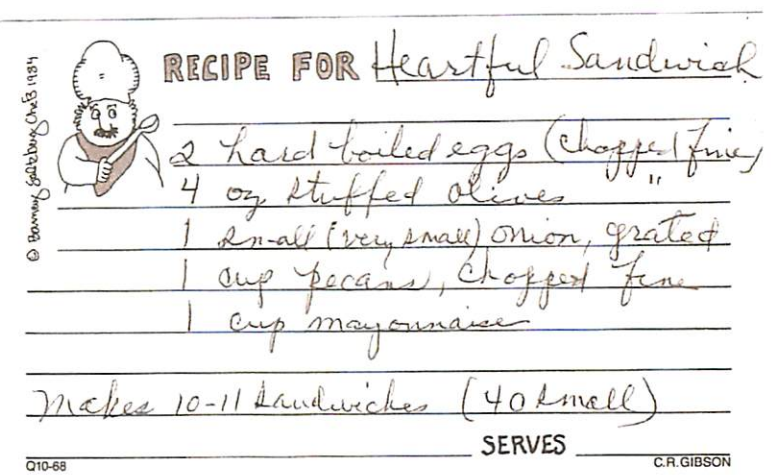
VEGETARIAN CHILI

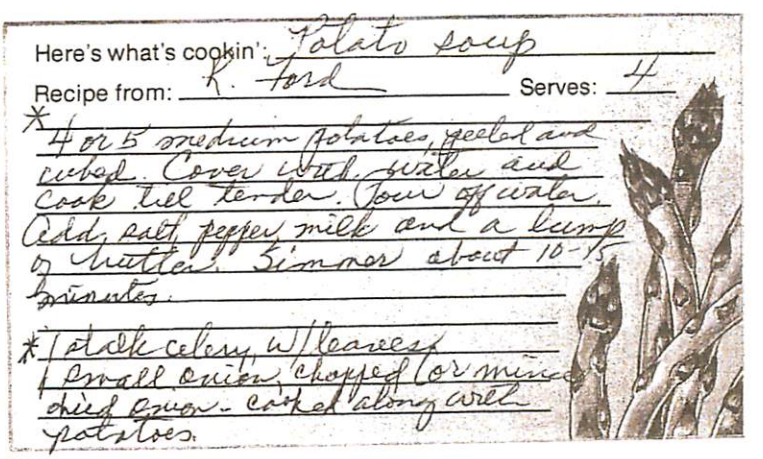
¼ 16-ounce package elbow macaroni (1 cup)
2 tablespoons salad oil
2 medium-size carrots, thinly sliced
1 large onion, chopped
1 medium-size zucchini (about 8 ounces), cut into ½-inch pieces
1 medium-size yellow straightneck squash (about 8 ounces), cut into ½-inch pieces
3 tablespoons chili powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 28-ounce can tomatoes
1 16-ounce can whole-kernel corn
1 4-ounce can chopped mild green chilies
⅓ cup tomato paste
¼ teaspoon hot pepper sauce
2 15¼- to 19-ounce cans red kidney beans, rinsed and drained

ABOUT 45 MINUTES BEFORE SERVING.

1. Prepare macaroni as label directs but do not use salt in water; drain. Set macaroni aside.
2. Meanwhile, in 5-quart Dutch oven over medium-high heat, in hot salad oil, cook carrots and onion, stirring occasionally, until vegetables begin to brown. Add zucchini and yellow squash; cook, stirring, until all vegetables are tender-crisp.
3. Stir in chili powder and salt; cook 1 minute. Add tomatoes with their liquid, corn with its liquid, chopped green chilies with their liquid, tomato paste, hot pepper sauce, and *2 cups water.* Over high heat, heat to boiling. Reduce heat to low; simmer, uncovered, 20 minutes. Stir in beans and macaroni; heat through. Makes 6 main-dish servings.

Each serving: About 390 calories, 7 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 1185 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 16%.





Johnny Mazetti

½ lb Queen Bess butter

½ lb green pepper, chopped

1 lb ground beef

1 can tomato soup

1 can tomato paste

1 bunch celery, chopped

1 lb onions, chopped

1 lb ground pork

1 can tomato sauce

1 can water for each of canned tomato items.

2 5-oz packages noodles

Cook above ingredients together for one hour, then add noodles and cook one hour longer. At the end of cooking period add 1 cup of stuffed olives and one can of large mushrooms. Sprinkle grated Parmesan cheese over. This will fill a Dutch oven and will serve 15-20 people.

Note: Johnny Mazetti was one of the most exotic things I remember Mama making for us. She told me recently she had gotten the recipe from her friend Mary Marlow, who had gotten it from a friend in Panama. (late 1950's or early 1960's?)

Broccoli Soup

2 T. salad oil

1 small onion, diced

½ small bunch broccoli, cut in small pieces

1/8 tsp ground red pepper

1 10 ¾ oz. can cream of potato soup

1 10 ¼ oz. can cream of celery soup

1 ½ cups milk

1 cup frozen peas

4 oz shredded cheddar cheese

In 4 quart saucepan, over medium heat, in hot salad oil, cook onion, broccoli, and red pepper until vegetables are tender, stirring often. (This may take longer than you think. Lower heat so as not to brown the vegetables.)

Add undiluted soups, milk, frozen peas, and 2 cups water; over high heat, heat to boiling. Add cheese; cook, stirring frequently, until cheese is melted. (Do not boil this time.) Makes about 8 cups.

Nine Bean Soup

2 cups dry bean mix (buy or make your own)*

2 quarts water

1 lb. ham, diced

1 large onion, chopped

1 clove garlic, minced

½ tsp salt

1 16 oz can tomatoes, undrained and chopped

1 10 oz can tomatoes and green chilies, undrained

Sort and wash beans. Place in Dutch oven. Cover with water 2 inches above beans and soak overnight. Drain beans; add 2 quarts water and next 4 ingredients. Cover and bring to boil; reduce heat and simmer 1 ½ hours till beans are tender, Add canned ingredients; simmer 30 minutes or so. Makes about 8 cups.

*To make own mix, combine 1 lb each of the following dry ingredients: kidney beans, pintos, lentils, Navy beans, Great northerns, black beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzos, and pearl barley. Store in jars /may use as pint-jar gifts, with recipe.

Fresh Green Beans

3 to 4 strips of bacon. Fry and remove from pot, leaving grease in pot. (vegetarians can use corn oil and perhaps onions for flavor)

Add cold water to cover the green beans you have gotten ready(by stringing and breaking), but not enough water to make them float. Bring to a boil, uncovered. Remove foam from top f beans. Put saucepan or Dutch oven top back on, let simmer 1 ½ to 2 hours.

Marinated Slaw

1 head cabbage, chopped
¼ cup chopped onion
¾ cup green pepper
¼ cup sweet red pepper
1 cup cider vinegar
1 tsp celery seed
1 tsp mustard seed
1 tsp salt
1 cup sugar

Heat sugar and vinegar over low heat till sugar is dissolved. Pour over, mix well, cover, and keep, refrigerated.

Scalloped Tomatoes

1 qt tomatoes
1 small onion
1 tsp garlic powder
¼ cup green pepper
saltine crackers and butter
Mix vegetables, layer of crackers, and vegetables in greased casserole. Top with pats of butter. Bake 300° for 45 minutes.

Stuffed Baked Potatoes

Clean and grease w/Crisco 8 baking potatoes. Puncture potatoes with knife in 1 or 2 places. Bake at 400° for 1 hour or until soft when squeezed with a hand-held paper napkin. Toward the end of cooking time, heat 1 ½ cups milk and 1 stick butter to almost boiling. Remove from heat. Split potatoes and scrape out insides into a bowl. Add salt 1 ½ tsp. Mash. Then add milk and beat. Refill skins and put a cube of butter in center. Cover with shredded sharp cheddar cheese. May be refrigerated or frozen for use at a later time. Bake 350° until thoroughly hot and cheese is melted---time depends on how cold potatoes are when you start. (portions in this recipe are approximate!)

Skillet Cabbage

2 or 3 T. bacon fat

4 cups shredded cabbage

1 green pepper, sliced

2 onions, sliced

2 cups chopped celery

2 tomatoes, (large) cut up

2 tsp sugar

salt, pepper

Mix together in skillet---Cover. Cook till done.

Sock-It-To-Me Cake

1 box Duncan Hines butter cake mix

1 8 oz sour cream

4 eggs

½ cup sugar

¾ cup cooking oil

2 T. brown sugar

1 T cinnamon

½ cup chopped pecans

In a small bowl mix brown sugar, cinnamon and nuts—set aside. In large mixing bowl with electric mixer, combine cake mix, sour cream, sugar and oil—then put in one egg at a time. Grease 9x13 pan, spread ½ brown sugar mixture on bottom; pour in half of cake mix, rest of brown sugar mixture, and rest of cake batter. Bake at 350° for 40 minutes. (This may also be made in a tube cake pan or Bundt pan, following above procedure, but test to make sure it is done)

Hot Milk Cake

1 cup milk

1 stick margarine

4 eggs (beat light-until lemon-colored)

2 cups sugar (add gradually)

2 cups flour

2 ½ tsp baking powder

1 tsp vanilla

Heat milk and margarine together until scalded. Set aside. Beat eggs with electric mixer till thick and lemon-colored, about 4 minutes. Gradually add sugar, beating another 4 minutes or so, till light and fluffy. Add flour mixture and vanilla. Beat low to medium speed just until combined. Add milk mixture to batter, beating until combined. Pour into 9x9x2 inch baking pan. Bake at 375° about 20-25 minutes. Good served with a chocolate, caramel, or lemon sauce.

Mama's Original Light Fruitcake

¾ lb butter---1 ½ cups

1 lb sugar—2 ¼ cups

10 eggs

1 lb flour –4 cups

1 ½ lb crystallized pineapple, chopped

1 ½ lb crystallized cherries, whole

½ lb citron, pieces

2 lb shelled nuts (3 cups pecan halves, 3 cups broken walnuts, and 2 cups chopped Brazil nuts)

1 large or two small coconuts, grated (or two 6-oz pkgs frozen)

figs, if desired

½ cup wine or sherry

1 cup brandy for moistening

Cream butter until light and fluffy; add sugar and continue creaming. Add eggs, one at a time. Beat well after each addition. Next, add flour (reserve some for dusting the fruits and nuts). Dust fruits and nuts with reserved flour so that they will settle well into the batter. Continue-- adding fruits, coconut, and nuts, also mixing light -colored wine into batter. Sherry is good. Grease two fruitcake loaf pans* well and line with heavy brown paper which must be greased, too. (or use parchment paper). Bake at 250° to 275° with pan of water in oven, 2 ½ to 3 ½ hours. Test with cake tester and do not overcook! While cake is hot pour about ½ cup brandy over each cake. Let remain in pan until thoroughly cooled. If cake is kept in cold place, it will slice to a better advantage. Fruitcake does well wrapped in a clean, brandy-soaked cloth and put into a tin with a tight -fitting lid. Keep in refrigerator or very cold place. Keeps well for weeks, even months!

*This recipe makes one large tube pan cake, two good-sized loaves, or about 5 small loaves (7x4x3). With small loaves, shorten time to about 1 ¾ hours.

Mama's Christmas Pecan Balls

7/8 cup butter (14 Tbsp, or 1 ¾ sticks)

5 Tbsp confectioner's sugar

2 cups flour

2 tsp vanilla

1 tsp water

1 cup coarsely broken pecan meats

about 1 cup confectioner's sugar*

Cream butter and sugar. Add flour, water, and vanilla; then pecans. You may need to mix dough with your hands. Form small balls the size of an English walnut. Bake at 250° for 30-40 minutes, checking to make sure they're only golden on bottom and firm. Roll in confectioner's sugar while hot.* Store in tin. (these may also be made into crescent shapes)

Aunt Teen's Chocolate Sheet Cake

Mix together:	Bring to a boil:	Icing:
2 cups flour	2 sticks margarine	1 stick margarine
2 cups sugar	4 Tbsp cocoa	4 Tbsp cocoa
½ tsp salt	1 cup water	6 Tbsp milk

Pour hot mixture over dry ingredients. Then add ½ cup buttermilk, 2 eggs, 1 tsp soda, and 1 tsp vanilla. Bake in oblong pan 30 to 40 min at 375°

For icing, melt margarine; add cocoa and milk. Beat in 1 box of confectioner's sugar, 1 tsp vanilla, and 1 cup nuts. Spread over cake while still warm.

Pecan Pie

3 eggs, beaten

½ cup sugar

1 cup dark corn syrup

4 T. butter, melted

1 tsp vanilla

1 cup broken pecan meats

Combine all ingredients. Pour into an unbaked 8 or 9" pie shell. Bake in a hot oven 400° F. for about 10 minutes, then reduce heat to 350° for about 30 minutes, or until the mixture does not coat a silver knife when thrust into it.

Ruth's Brownie Pie

1 cup sugar

¼ cup cocoa

¼ cup flour

1 stick melted butter or margarine

2 eggs, beaten

½ tsp vanilla

½ cup broken, toasted pecans, optional

Mix sugar, cocoa and flour. Add melted margarine. Add eggs to flour mixture and margarine; mix. Add vanilla and pecans, if desired. Pour into frozen crust, or rolled out Pillsbury crust. Bake at 350° for 30 to 35 minutes. Serve with vanilla or peppermint ice cream.

Lois Marshall's Chinese Chews

¾ cup flour
¼ tsp salt
1 tsp baking powder
1 cup sugar
1 cup chopped dates
1 cup chopped California walnuts
3 well-beaten eggs

Sift dry ingredients. Stir in remaining ingredients. Pour into greased 10x14 inch pan. Bake in slow oven (300°) 30 minutes.

Peanut Butter Fudge

1 cup brown sugar
1 cup white sugar
½ cup milk
½ stick real butter
2 Tbsp light corn syrup
½ cup peanut butter
8 regular marshmallows
1 tsp vanilla extract

Boil first 5 ingredients to soft ball stage. Cool to lukewarm. Stir in peanut butter, vanilla, and marshmallows. Beat well. Pour into greased pan. Cool. Cut into squares.

Lois Marshall's Peanut Brittle

Use iron pan (skillet) and wooden spoon. Put one cup sugar, ¼ cup water, and ½ cup white corn syrup into skillet. When boiling hard, add 1 cup raw peanuts. Lower heat a little. Boil about 10 minutes, until mixture is the color of peanut skins. Add 1 teaspoon soda and stir in a hurry. Pour out on a greased baking sheet. Cool and break in pieces. Store in airtight tin or container.

Kentucky Derby Pie

2 eggs, slightly beaten

1 cup sugar

½ cup all-purpose flour

½ cup butter, melted and cooled

1 cup chopped pecans

1 6-oz pkg semi-sweet chocolate morsels

1 tsp vanilla

1 unbaked 9" pastry shell

1 cup whipping cream

1 T. bourbon

¼ cup sifted powdered sugar

Combine first 4 ingredients in a medium mixing bowl; beat with an electric mixer till just blended. Stir in pecans, chocolate chips, and vanilla. Pour into pastry shell and bake at 350° for 45 or 50 minutes. Beat whipping cream and bourbon 'til foamy, gradually adding powdered sugar, beating 'til soft peaks form. Serve pie warm with this topping.

One Mint Julep

¼ cup bourbon

1 Tbsp. mint syrup

Garnish—fresh mint sprigs

Put the above ingredients over <u>crushed ice</u> in a silver julep cup or an on-the-rocks glass.

Mint syrup:

1 ¼ cups coarsely chopped mint leaves

2 cups sugar

2 cups water (enough for 44 juleps)

Pulled Mints

More than a recipe----this is a skill learned by being careful to follow directions---AND to be willing to fail and try again! The tools you will need: 1. a candy thermometer (a cheap one will do) 2. a deep straight-sided pot (I use a copper-bottomed Revere-ware 3-quart saucepan) 3. a marble slab 4. scissors for cutting

The ingredients:

3 cups white sugar

½ stick butter and ½ stick margarine (solid, not spread)

1 cup boiling water

3 or 4 drops food coloring

14-16 drops oil of peppermint (from drugstore in the past, now from Michael's, Hobby Lobby, or JoAnn's)

Before you begin to cook, prepare a counter-top by scrupulous cleaning, drying, and lightly coating with margarine.(Now you may use parchment paper.) Do the same for your marble slab. Also, fill a pan or sink full of cold, clean water for cooling your hands later on.

Measure sugar into saucepan, add margarine and butter, cut in pieces. Drop in coloring. Add boiling water. Put on stove on high. Stir only till butter melts. Attach candy thermometer to side of pan and with spoon, test to make sure it doesn't touch bottom of pan. Leave burner on high and watch carefully till thermometer reaches 262° exactly. Remove from heat and pour onto marble slab—do not scrape out with spoon—merely shake the pan to get it all out. Drop the mint oil over the candy with dropper (16 drops). Then, with buttered hands or buttered spatulas, gently and quickly fold candy inward and move around on slab as much as possible to cool it. As soon as possible, pick up the candy mass and pull it. Pull out and then fold back together, doing this over and over. Stop and cool your hands in the cold water when necessary. The more you pull the candy, the better it will be. (see next page)

When candy gets too hard to pull and begins to lose its shine, pull it out into thin ropes on the counter-top and cut as quickly as possible- (it hardens fast). After cutting, separate pieces so that they do not touch—and leave on counter for 45 minutes or an hour. Store between pieces of waxed paper in tins. (I use coffee cans.) The mints will cream, sometimes overnight . Sometimes in a day or two. Good luck! ----Ruth Ford

Note: I have made these several times lately. On my electric stove, it took about 20 minutes for the mixture to reach 262°, and about 20 more minutes to get the candy pulled and cut, so about 40 minutes from starting cooking to finishing. Don't answer the phone!!! Anita

(and don't make them on a rainy day!)

Cover Story

In brainstorming what to call this book, Patsy and I came up with several possibilities, among them: Kentucky Woman, She Wore a Yellow Sweater, the Story of Ruth, Around the Kitchen Table, All About Mama, From Oak Grove to Rose Glen, and A Collection of Fond Memories, Finally, because of Mama's love of and expertise in the game of Scrabble, we decided to use that theme. I personally used most of the letters (but not all--the game is still ongoing!) for the cover . I will list the words I used below and will take the liberty of describing why each one (in my mind) applies to Mama. --Anita

1. air... always opened the windows, hated stale air
2. antiques...had antiques and appreciated them
3. bids..she and Daddy used to play bridge with other couples
4. boys... loved her own and those at school
5. cook...Mama used recipes, but could also improvise--made delicious foods!
6. create...this applies to flower arranging, cooking, and other crafts
7. doll...loved her bye-lo baby!
8. eye...had a good eye for home decorating
9. fan...was cooled by many an oscillating fan over the years
10. friend...was a friend to so many!
11. garden...had both flower and vegetable gardens
12. gaze...looked out to see the weather or the goings-on
13. give...Mama has always been generous
14. hugs....Rachel particularly encouraged these
15 . humor...was there ever a day without it?
16. jam...made jam occasionally, Daddy loved it
17. lids...did quite a bit of canning for a while
18. love...full of it!
19. mother...loved her own, and her mother-in-law, Mama Patsy
20. pan...Paul Revere copper-bottomed--her favorite
21. pin...she wore this sometimes on her lapel or on a hat
22. rose...grew many beautiful ones and shared them
22. rub...has never forgotten the leg rub Rachel gave her
23. taxi...we took this to the doctor or home with groceries
24. tender...many meanings! All apply.
25. tin...had pretty tins for Christmas goodies
26. vow...always kept her wedding vow
27. water...she did plenty of clothes-washing over the years!
28. wife...Ah, yes...they got to celebrate 50+ years together

Note from the Editor

At this point in late September, 2011, I am trying to complete this compilation. If I wait any longer to learn new computer skills or insert more photos, I will never get it done! So please forgive the errors and amateur quality of this memory book. My main goal has been to find out/collect things about Mama----Ruth Annette Burke Ford----and record them for all of us (including Mama) to learn from and enjoy. Thank you so very much for helping me with photos, recipes, and tributes!! I have included a pocket page for you to use to save other mementos you may have.

Lovingly, Anita Ford Davis, September 26, 2011

Her Voice

She sang
To her babies
And read aloud
To her children
Her voice was nurturing.

She loves words
And books
And wrote
Her own volume of poetry
Her voice is expressive.

She tells stories
Of long ago
And remembers
Colorful characters.
Her voice is entertaining

She sees humor
In many situations
And lightens the days
With her laughter.
Her voice is cheerful.

She enjoys phone visits
With friends
And communicates
By e-mail regularly.
Her voice is important.

She sends cards and letters
To her grown children
And blesses her grandchildren
In the same way.
Her voice is loving.

Her voice
Is everywhere.
Her voice
Is heard.

(written by Anita in 2002 for
Mama's eightieth birthday)