

Chapter 16

AFTERTHOUGHTS

In my earliest memories I was always “Busy.” There were so many things to do. I stacked wooden blocks, strung wooden beads, and took many toys out of a wooden toy box Dad had built. Mom would put me in that crib with the side that went up and down. She would put a blanket over it, pin it tightly underneath the crib and quietly close the door. Shortly thereafter I would appear and say, “Nap all done.” So much to do!



Dad made a lot of things including a potty chair. I wonder if that potential for a stubborn gene extended my time in that location.

The house where we lived in Fairborn had a side porch with a red brick wall railing. The bricks were obviously spaced in a way that was meant for a three or four-year-old to climb up and walk on the top railing. We lived near the “Field,” now Wright Patterson Air Force Base. The air was always filled with the sound of motors from the testing of the propeller aircraft engines. Mom recorded my first spoken sentence as, “Look Mommy, see airplane?”

Chair Made by RJ

I liked this house because just across the alley by the backyard and only around one building was an ice cream store. I arranged to buy popsicles for five cents and the clerk would break them in half and keep one half in the freezer for me to get the next day. (I had robbed my brother’s piggy bank for the five cents.)

Then there was the clothesline. Because I enjoyed the whole neighborhood, even going out of Mom’s sight, I was soon restrained with a harness that was attached to that clothesline. After I squirmed out of it a few times, Dad built a playpen out of chicken wire. I was bored being in a cage so I took my shoes off, stuck my toes in the holes of the chicken wire and climbed out--never mind that my toes bled a little. Such restraint may have been good...but...

When I was about four I looked out a second story window and saw just below me a short slanted roof with a spouting attached. This was a decorative protrusion that went around the house between the first and second floors. I climbed out the window, planning to walk on the spouting that circled the house. I found that I was not long enough to reach the spouting and the wood shingles were too slippery to allow retreat. A passing student saw me, knocked on the door to tell Mom I was hanging out the window. My Grandma Winget, who lived with us, came in the room and saw my fingertips gripping the window sill. She reached out, grasped my forearms, called Mom, and together they pulled me back into the room. A year or so later, the owner, Mr. Shade, was painting the house and was killed when he fell from near the same place onto the concrete driveway below.

We had to move out of that house when a new officer at Wright-Patterson drove through town and offered Mr. Shade more rent than Dad could pay. We moved to a house on Central Avenue.

My father was upset and I remember he said, “We had to move because the new Commander of the Base picked our house and offered to pay more rent.”

Behind the garage was my first sanctuary. Here a twenty-by-twenty area was fenced in with several small trees that provided plenty of shade and what had been a chicken house near the center. I often climbed one of the trees to get on the roof. Even at this young age I felt I was King of the Mountain. Once on this roof, with feet firmly planted, I could shake the whole structure by swaying back and forth. Perhaps this building was weak because not enough nails had been used when it was built or it was just old. Several times I tore pieces of thin black roofing from the roof so I could send them sailing through the air. Once while climbing the tree to get on the roof, I lost my grip, caught my one piece play suit on a sharp twig and it tore off as I fell. I ran to the house wailing from the impact of the fall and the sudden exposure of me.

The house we had moved to was across the street from the Interurban line (Trolley Car). I quickly got the idea to put a stone or piece of brick on the rails. Some of the operators would stop and remove it and some just let the wheels knock it off. After being honked at by a few automobiles while crossing the street I found a new adventure in scaring the drivers by running across right in front of them. When Mom saw me she ran after me, fell on the curb and really bruised her leg.

Another time while looking for something to do I made a visit to a house down the street to see what was in a cage. When the neighbor boy’s rabbit bit the finger I stuck in his cage I wanted to get even. I went home, got Dad’s hatchet and wounded the rabbit. I don’t remember if the rabbit lived but I wouldn’t do it again!

Easter, when I was in the second grade, there was a community egg hunt. One event was the release of a white rabbit. Whoever caught it got to keep it. I was running at the front of the pack when an older boy caught the rabbit and shoved it into my arms. Dad had to carry the rabbit home and make a box for it. Later during WWII, I raised and sold dressed rabbits during the rationing of meat.



Dad 1936



Kitchen Cabinet

Mom had a kitchen cabinet to prepare our food. The porcelain top was the center for most all food preparation. The area behind the door on the left contained a large metal flour bin. A twenty-five pound bag of flour was poured into the top and there was a sifter with a crank at the bottom. I often got to turn the crank to get flour out. The flour was sifted again with a smaller hand sifter as it was measured into mixing bowls. We often helped with the cleanup evenings and always on Sunday. There was usually a discussion as to whose turn it was to either wash or dry the dishes – usually including the pots, pans and mixing bowls. When cakes were baked there was another contest of who got to scrape the bowl used for icing.

I learned to peel potatoes at an early age. Mom used a wooden masher to make mashed potatoes until we got a Sunbeam Mix-Master. It seems that this mixer was used almost every day to combine the ingredients of various recipes. It was great to let a machine do all the stirring. Everything had to be mixed. Mom often made bread.

There was a bread man whose truck had several drawers of unwrapped cookies and shelves for white or brown bread. He did not come every day. We had to remember to put a sign in the window for him. The bread Mom baked was always better.

While we no longer had an iceman we did have delivery by a milkman and a bread man. Mom left a note in one of the empty quart glass milk bottles if she wanted extra milk, cream or butter and placed it on the back step. During WWII the milkman used a horse-drawn wagon.

I wonder what happened to the time that our parents spent in food preparation. On several occasions we brought two dozen live chickens home. Dad, Dave and I went into the garage, cut the heads off and put the headless chickens in a bucket lined with newspaper to drain the blood. Then we dipped the bird in very hot water, plucked the feathers, and carefully removed the entrails. The guts and feathers were wrapped up in newspaper and put in the garbage can, except for the years that Mom saved the feathers to stuff a pillow or a comforter.

In the kitchen the de-feathered chickens were thoroughly cleaned, cut up, placed in quart canning jars, cooked, cooled and stored on shelves in a special room Dad had built in the basement called the “fruit cellar.” Sunday dinner was the highlight of the week with Mom’s canned chicken or beef. I remember the day that Dad brought the leg of a cow into our kitchen. After he cut it up, much of that meat ended up in jars.

Mom also canned many kinds of fruit. We had a pear tree in our yard and she made the very best pear butter. I picked cherries from trees in the neighborhood and we got berries and plums from Thurman’s farm. Sometimes Dad bought a bushel of peaches. All of these were processed and canned in our kitchen. Every fall there was a bushel of Jonathan or Winesap apples in the garage that lasted until after Christmas.



Monday was washday. I often got to help. The washing machine and two rinse tubs were filled with clean water, one hot and one cold. The faucets were over on the wall and Mom used a hose for the fill. Part of a cake of Fels-Naptha soap was shredded into the wash water. The clothes from last week were sorted and bluing was added to the rinse water for the white load. Mom also used Borax and starch. Starch was cooked on the stove and selected clothing or parts like collars, cuffs were dipped in starch prior to ironing.

For me the fun part was pulling clothes up with a stick and poking the right amount into the ringer. Some of us may remember getting a hand caught in the ringer and still bear the scars. Clothes

Wringer Washing Machine were then hung outside on a rope or wire line even in cold weather unless it was raining. More than once I ran out to help Mom take a nearly dry wash down because of an unexpected rain.

Our story began with the Warners in England who made cloth. Then there's another story about making clothes. An inventory from a store in the early 1800s lists: "26 yards Irish Lining, 14 yards Green Broad cloth; 14 yards Blue broad cloth: 13 yards cashmere, 19 yards Striped Broad cloth..." Clothes were sewn by hand in those early days.



Many of the women and girls bought patterns and made dresses and other garments in the early part of the twentieth century (some still do).

The pictures on the McCalls package shown here were for making the aprons that were always worn while cooking and doing other chores. Depending on the mood and the time of day, an apron was yanked off, laid aside, and with a quick glance at a wall mirror, a knock at the door would be answered.

My aunts would have learned to sew using foot power to operate a treadle sewing machine. They not only made clothes, they altered them to fit, especially during the depression. These machines were later modified with the addition of electric motors.



Mom made me a suit from parts of Dad's old suit. She could make a pattern for the dresses my sister would sketch while doodling in school.

I remember my sister buying a pattern and material, making the dress and wearing it on a date that same evening. I don't know how Mom did so much. She wrote a genealogy and had it published while raising me!



Elementary Classroom

In school we lined up to enter, go out for recess or to leave the building. We did not march to the beat of a drum as Uncle Hubert did in Woodstock. We did have the fasteners to floor desks with ink wells. The floors were wood and the furnaces burned coal.

We played outdoors a lot. We made up our own games and argued about the rules. People seemed friendly and trustworthy. It was a good time to grow up.

One time when we were going somewhere we could not find an acceptable restaurant (one that did not serve liquor). I had never seen a bar with all its myriad of bottles. I asked a lot of questions and was left with the feeling that what was in the bottles was evil. Another time Dad stopped the car. I was very young (the car had wooden spokes in the wheels). Dad pointed out a man that had fallen in the gutter. Dad said, "See that man? He's drunk. That's old Man Grey, his dad died last week. I gave him a suit and I helped get him cleaned up for the funeral. Before he got there he got drunk and puked all down the front of it. There he is again lying in the gutter!"

Another Warner Builder



I want to stake my claim as a building Warner. One of my first purchases after I was married was a combination power tool called a Shopsmith. The intent was to make some of the furniture we might want or need.

While I was a student at Ohio State I drew up the plans for this chest of drawers and actually built it. It has held together and been used for almost sixty years. It was built on a frame of interlocking one-by-threes and covered with quarter-inch walnut veneer plywood. After that there were many small projects like tables and bird houses. Then the urge came to build a camping trailer.

A popular way to see America was camping. There were many places available to set up a camp and still are. At each site there

were both factory built, homemade trailers and tent campers. Our first big trip west cost us eleven dollars a day including camp site fee (usually a \$1.00) and food (we ate cereal, lots of hotdogs and cold cut sandwiches.) Gas was usually \$0.28 a gallon. Even so, we were broke when we came home.

In 1961 I built this folding camping trailer. The twelve-foot camper was built on an old truck axel with springs and a chassis of welded angle iron. The box was plywood, and electric conduit was bent to make the hoops to hold the canvas.

The canvas was from a roll of war surplus and we glued it together. The netting and zippers were sewn. The hinged top opened to make two four-foot wide beds. A single bed was along one side for my youngest.



The Camper in 2008

During the summers while my kids were growing up we camped in many state and national parks. On several western trips we camped in parks like Yellowstone, Glacier, Black hills, Sequoia, and Yosemite. We also traveled to the Grand Canyon, Mesa Verde, Disneyland, and the Great Salt Lake. Eastern trips included: Acadia National Park, Cape Cod, Gettysburg, Cape Hatteras, Great Smoky Mountain, Washington DC, and the Florida Keys.

We soon found we were eating for less on the road than when we were home. We were able to travel so much because of this. One of our economies was to avoid restaurants. We usually grabbed lunch from our cooler and found a camp site where the kids could swim about four o'clock and fixed supper and an evening campfire.



A quick lunch on the way to Pikes Peak 1964

The camper has been used here on the farm but is no longer roadworthy.

When we moved into the farm house that Joan's granddad had purchased in 1906 there was a need for a laundry room. I dug for and laid up the foundation, built and insulated the room and installed the plumbing.

We were a "do it yourself generation." I know many of my cousins have built much more than I have. Some built their own houses and other buildings. We continue the Warner tradition! I encourage all my second cousins to record get the pictures and tell the stories of all my first cousins!



A Bit about The Ohio State University

Rodney, Roger, Hubert, and Hildred Warner had all walked the path from the main building of The Ohio State University between 1917 and 1937. Joy May and my brother, Dave, attended in 1942 to begin the list of those to attend OSU in the next generation.

Harvey and I ran around the track stadium in 1948 before the first football game. We were being introduced as part of the freshman class of 1948. Also attending OSU were Mildred, Elvira, Shirley, Dorothy, Myron and Duane.



University Hall early 1900s



*The Ohio State University Football Stadium "The Shoe" as it appeared during the mid-century.
(Picture property of The Ohio State University)*



The 1950 Snow Bowl

Several of us had walked through falling snow to attend the Michigan vs. Ohio State Football Game. We were seated just under the upper (B) deck and not really aware of the accumulation that was coming down. Volunteers with snow shovels attempted to uncover the yard marker lines as the game progressed. There were 45 punts – one blocked punt allowed a Michigan touchdown and OSU lost the Big Ten Championship. Les Fesler resigned and Woody Hayes became coach.

When the attendance at the football games outgrew the stadium an addition was planned. Shown in the Alumni Magazine below is part of the construction on the addition. Inside, the playing field was lowered and seating was added above and to the area where the track was. Elevators and additional restrooms were also added.

When I was trying to decide if I should include this story, I counted over thirty names of those who have attended Ohio State, including several spouses and some of the next generations.



“Shoe” addition construction 1999-2000

The latest to graduate was Benjamin Murray Thomas, Elvira (Warner) Covey’s grandson from South Carolina. This was March 22, 2009, in Saint John Arena. The OSU President, E. Gordon Gee, told the audience there were now over nine hundred buildings and over one hundred miles of sidewalk on campus. The latest OSU student I know about will be my granddaughter, Phoebe Clouser, who has been accepted for the 2009-10 year. And we all know, “You do not have to be an alumnus to be a Buckeye fan!”