

Part II 1918-1940

CONTENTS

12	A Trip - Waco to Philadelphia	41
13	Hog Island Shipyard	43
14	Another Choice and Chance	46
15	A Year at Kokomo	48
16	A New Job in Philadelphia	51
17	Another Job - Syracuse - Marriage	52
18	Other Field Assignments - Children Arrive	54
19	Golconda	57
20	Kittanning - Back to Philadelphia	60
21	Philadelphia - Troubled Times	62
22	Dark Days of Depression	64
23	Better Days - The Family Moves	65
24	The Air Force - Dayton - Washington	69
	Illustrations and Documents	73-76

A Trip - Waco to Philadelphia

Again it was very hot, but July not August. It was Saturday afternoon and all my worldly goods were packed in a new, cheap suitcase and a duffle bag. I walked and carried them from my boarding place to the railroad station, stopping to say farewell to Dr. Guthrie. As usual he gave me kindly advice, telling me again that I should be careful of my companions when I reached the big city.

I remember well that my ticket cost about \$70, leaving me with less than \$50. The train left about mid-afternoon and it was dark when we reached Dallas. I could see very little of the city but was quite impressed with the size of the depot. It was a long night in the coach - eating, sleeping little, observing much.

Somewhere the next day, Sunday, I acquired a young man as seat companion who appeared to know much more about traveling than I. When we came to a junction where one section of the train went to St. Louis and the other to Kansas City he told me I might as well stay in my seat and go on to Kansas City and change for St. Louis. I went to look for the conductor to verify this and before I found him the train was moving. I did find the conductor and he promptly told me I should have switched to another coach and that I would have to get off at the next stop. He said I could either go back to the junction or try to intercept my proper train several miles across country from where he would put me off.

As the conductor was telling me what I might do, he was writing an explanation on the back of my ticket and then pulled the cord to notify the engineer to stop at the next station. I hurriedly got my things together and the next thing I knew for sure was that I was standing at a little depot wondering what to do next. I decided to try to make the interception across country. I could find no taxi and was told that I might hire a car at the garage. There I found a couple of men working on a car and one of them agreed to take me to the town, I think it was Selma, Mo., for five dollars. He made no effort to hurry and I soon saw that we were not going to make the connection. At Selma the ticket agent told me I would have to wait about six hours for the next train to St. Louis. It was a sultry Sunday afternoon with hardly a person to be seen. I strolled around town a bit and ran into three or four men hiding from the sun by sitting and lying on some green grass in the shade of a storage building near the railroad tracks. They questioned me as to how I happened to be there, wanted to know where I came from and where I was going. They wondered, no doubt, how a boy like me could be allowed to go so far from home. It was around ten when the train came. I was mighty glad to be on my way again — on the right train.

Early the next morning I stared and watched in amazement as the train gradually worked its way into the great Union Station in St. Louis. There was no question of changing trains; everyone had to get off. As Mr. Young, a railroad tycoon of the 1930s often said - hogs could ride through St. Louis without changing trains but people could not. It was possibly through Mr. Young's efforts that people now have equal right with hogs. Union Station was the biggest single thing I had ever seen — a maze of tracks, enormous train shed, thirty or more gates to trains, ticket offices of many railroads, stores,

Choice and Chance

restaurants, and hundreds of people crowding the waiting rooms because of the movement of servicemen and their families. I, the country boy, was seeing things that I never dreamed existed.

I had no trouble finding the train for Philadelphia. It was a Pennsylvania Railroad Express, of which fact I was frequently reminded as it went along by a trainman who would announce in loud and long tone – “This train is express for Indianapolis, Columbus, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, and New York.” I slept some that night but was wide awake as we reached the outskirts of Philadelphia around seven or eight in the morning. We stopped at Paoli, the terminus of Philadelphia’s suburban Main Line trains. It was there that I first noticed the decorous, bright red, keystone shaped, metal signs about fourteen by twenty four inches in size, on sturdy steel posts, facing the track, and bearing the station name. There was one such sign at each end of each station building. These signs were symbolic of the Keystone State and the railroad which bore that name. I had no thought of the possibility that in the future I would observe those signs thousands of times as I would travel in and out of Philadelphia and eventually become a Main Line resident and daily commuter to the city.

A few minutes after Paoli the train stopped at old Thirty-second Street Station in West Philadelphia. In another five minutes it huffed and puffed and snorted great clouds of steam and smoke right up to the high iron fence in Broad Street Station which separated people from trains. And there I was in this new world of Philadelphia with a population of over a million and only one person known to me, my friend Lee, whose address was 702 South 50th Street.

This station, like Union in St. Louis, was overflowing with people. The washroom had facilities for shaving and removing some dirt accumulation of three days of travel. I needed a clean shirt and went out to buy one. As I walked out the station door, there on my left was a large building with a statue towering high atop it. As I walked half a block to a store and back I stared at this building and the statue, not having any idea that some twenty years of my business life would be spent within the shadow of William Penn atop this building, Philadelphia’s classic City Hall.

From my experience in Waco I understood something about the layout of city streets and the numbering of houses. On inquiring as to how to reach Lee’s address I was told to take the Market Street Subway just under 15th Street where I was then standing and ride it to the 52nd St. station. There I should transfer to a regular surface street trolley, ride seven blocks south, get off and walk two blocks east to 50th Street. I entered the subway as directed and just as I was adjusting to its speed and noise it climbed above ground and became an elevated railway by the time it reached its first stop at 32nd Street. From there it was just a few minutes until I saw the 52nd Street station sign and got off. Again my venturesome mind told me I did not have to follow the directions given me but could just as well walk two blocks east on Market Street and then south on 50th the seven blocks to number 702. It was a very warm day and my baggage was heavy, but I set out to walk.

It was farther than I had expected because Philadelphia city blocks are longer than the average. I stopped a couple of times to rest. On arrival there was no response to the doorbell. After some time I decided to ring next door, the doorbell push button being only an arm’s length away. A lady answered and when I explained my presence she

quickly told me she was a close friend of Lee's and the Scott family with whom he boarded. Lee had told her to be on the lookout for me. She was Mrs. King and she and her husband had known the Scotts in Texas, all having come to Philadelphia to work at the Hog Island Shipyard. Mrs. King told me the Scotts, Lee and another boarder, Orville Groner, would be home around six and that all, including the Kings, had their meals together in the Scotts' home. She had a key and let me in, suggesting that I could wait in the house or take a walk, as I chose.

Inside the house I looked around and stared at the walls in semidarkness because there was such little chance for sunlight to enter. It was a typical row house where the only light comes in the front and rear windows, the side walls forming the walls of the houses on each side, which are just like it. Such houses are about 16 to 20 feet wide and 30 or so feet long, usually two stories and basement. There are thousands and thousands of blocks of these in Philadelphia and other big eastern cities, solid rows from one end of the block to the other. They vary in size depending on the quality of the neighborhood at the time of construction.

Eventually I went for a walk in the area, looking at the row upon row of houses and other sights which were new to me. The corners along main streets, like Baltimore Avenue nearby, were reserved for business - drug stores, bakeries, small grocers, and saloons. I was especially struck by signs on side doors of saloons which read "Ladies' Entrance." I had to inquire what they meant because I did not realize "ladies" went into saloons.

Lee and the rest of the household arrived from their work and Mrs. King came in to help the Scotts prepare the evening meal for the entire group. There was room for me to stay there a couple of days until the matter of my job was settled, then other arrangements would be necessary.

Chapter 13

Hog Island Shipyard

Hog Island Shipyard was built by the American International Shipbuilding Corporation as agent for the Emergency Fleet Corporation of the United States Shipping Board. It was organized by Stone & Webster Engineering Corporation of Boston for the specific purpose of constructing the yard and then building some 200 ships for the war effort. Hog Island was located in the far southwest corner of Philadelphia along the Delaware River. It was not really an island but a swamp which at one time had the appearance of an island. This swamp had to be filled with silt from the river to raise the ground level and make it suitable for shipyard structures. The area is now the site of the Philadelphia International Airport.

Construction of the yard began in September 1917 and, with day and night work right through a severe winter, facilities were ready for shipbuilding in less than six months. The plans called for fifty shipways, with all the necessary shops, storage and service facilities.

Choice and Chance

I recall the peculiar odor of the silt fill as Lee took me into the yard that July morning. He had to arrange for my entry as a visitor by obtaining a temporary pass. There were then about 40,000 employees at the yard. Lee had grown with the job, having arrived when construction first started.

Lee took me to see the Chief Paymaster, James V. Sealy. He was a stern looking man about forty-five and he soon learned that I knew nothing about his kind of work. But out of courtesy to Lee, and probably pity for me, he agreed to let me go to work in his department at a salary of \$25 a week. As Chief Paymaster he was responsible for the preparation of payrolls and payment of all employees, also serving as cashier for all moneys involved in the operation of restaurants and other services. He didn't really know what to do with me but placed me under the supervision of his Office Manager, Mr. Underhill.

I have always recognized the friendship and courage Lee exhibited in introducing me, an unknown quantity, to his friend, Mr. Sealy. In the early days of my work I was fearful at times that I was not going to survive, but somehow I managed to keep my job and began to learn.

With job arrangements settled, Lee helped me find a place to board not far from him with Mr. and Mrs. Markey at 5131 Pine Street, facing Black Oak park. Several other boarders there also worked at Hog Island. While I lived there the daughter of the Markeys eloped. She returned in a couple of days and her parents put on a great scene of ranting and raving, talked of annulment proceedings and implied great dismay over the mistake their beloved had made. I had noticed that the girl had done most of the hard work around the house and while she was under such pressure from her parents about her marriage I helped her a bit with washing the dishes. She then confided that the Markeys were not her real parents and that she didn't know just how they had acquired her, and, further, that they were a couple of crooks barely able to stay out of jail.

A few days later the Markeys said they were giving up the boarding house and were going to move next door and board with the Haskell family. It was also arranged that I and others could move into the Haskell home. About this time Lee and his close friend Orville Groner rented a room nearby and began to take their meals at the Haskells'.

Most of the higher level employees where I worked had come from other parts of the country where they had been employed on other jobs for Stone & Webster or similar construction companies. Mr. Sealy was an experienced Stone & Webster employee. Mr. Underhill, my boss, was a native Philadelphian. He was very considerate and took great pains to show me how to do my work. I was permitted to learn most of the operations, such as counting money for pay envelopes, handing out pay envelopes on payday, selling railroad tickets, and various other functions. I made many mistakes that were very generously overlooked by my co-workers. Fortune was my constant companion; my native ability enabled me to learn quickly.

I dwell on this period because it is the base of all my future life's work. Practically everything I have done has been to some degree related to the things I did at Hog Island. It emphasizes to me the importance and possibility of learning by doing when formal education is limited.

Shortly after my arrival at Hog Island the first ship built there, The Quistconk, was launched. President and Mrs. Wilson, along with other dignitaries from Washington, came for the event. I was able to see them all at close range. It was a big day for the shipyard.

Choice and Chance

Then in November the armistice was signed and the war was over. There was no work at the yard that day, and all the people in and around Philadelphia tried to get into the center of the city to celebrate. Lee and I and other friends were among the seething thousands who strove to show their joy as noisily as possible. Although it was long past midnight when we reached our beds, it was work as usual the next day.

One of the first events I recall following the armistice was my keeping a date with the draft board. I took the required physical but never heard from the Board again. Then Christmas was upon us, which I enjoyed as a happy time around the Haskell home. The new year brought no change in our work situation at the Island; we continued full force, on the assumption, apparently, that the ships would be needed in general commerce.

It was not long, however, until the Congress began to investigate charges of waste, profiteering and mismanagement of war contracts. The Hog Island management was called to testify. Volumes of testimony resulted. A major outcome of the investigations was the disclosure of the inherent weakness of the form of contract used in most of the urgent military procurement. It was called the "cost-plus-a-percentage-of-cost" contract and is now generally prohibited for use in federal procurement. In simple words, it means that the contractor is to be paid the cost of producing the goods or service ordered and then is paid a percentage of that total as a fee. The fee rate during the war was usually ten percent.

Although there was no indication in early 1919 that the shipyard would soon close, there was an attitude of doubt as to how long it would continue. Many of the top white-collar staff left to work for their former or new employers. My work did not change much but Mr. Sealy began to notice my volunteer work at night trying to keep my records and files up to date.

The winter of 1918-1919 was the time of the great influenza epidemic. I came down with it on the first of February and was confined about two weeks. The Haskells looked after me as one of their own. Many thousands died in the city and I was lucky to have good care.

Soon after my return to work Mr. Sealy selected me to interview persons who wanted advances on their pay. The employment rules were such that a new employee had to work two weeks before receiving his first week's earnings; afterward he was paid each week. This system made it difficult for many who had suffered illness and for returning servicemen who were being employed in increasing numbers. Complaints were being received about delayed payment of board and other bills. The payroll advance system was established to help alleviate this situation.

I was given an office, and an assistant much older than I, near the entrance to the paymaster's building so people could come and go with the least interruption of other activities. We did a rushing business and listened to all kinds of reasons for the need of an immediate cash advance. I was given certain guidelines but still had to use some degree of personal judgment as to the worthiness of the requests. This experience of meeting and talking with all kinds of people was quite educational. After questioning those applying, I turned down many pleas which did not seem to me to meet the established criteria.

Another Choice and Chance

It was in February 1919 that I saw under the Religious Services listing in the evening newspaper a notice of the Church of Christ. Until then I had not heard of this church group, of which I was a member in Texas. I determined to visit the congregation, which was located at 51st and Brown Streets in West Philadelphia, at the earliest opportunity.

The following Sunday evening I took the trolley north on 52nd from Pine Street and, after passing Market, I began to look for Brown, because I had found that it was only a few blocks beyond there. I did not know, however, that Haverford Avenue intersected 52nd at the same point as did Brown. I therefore missed seeing the Brown Street sign and went on a few blocks before deciding to get off and try to find it on foot. I walked back along 52nd, noting that it was getting late and saying to myself, "forget it – try again some other time." Then suddenly there was the sign – Brown Street. I stood gazing at it and the complex intersection of streets in a state of indecision. Finally, I thought, "Well, I know it's late but I'll just go and look at the building; it's just a block away." This was another time when choice and chance conspired to change the course of my life. I walked the block to 51st and Brown and there on the southeast corner was a little red brick church building. The lights were on and I decided to go inside. The minister was speaking to a group of thirty or forty who took up about half of the capacity of the chapel. I took a seat near the rear and when the service was over I was warmly greeted and invited to attend the special series of services being held that week. I promised to do so.

One reason, no doubt, that I returned the next evening was the attractive young ladies I noticed among the group. Although impressed by the words of the venerable and learned preacher, I was more struck with two young ladies who sat together and were obviously sisters. I took a seat as close behind them as I could, but was unable to make their acquaintance the first couple of nights. On the third evening I managed to develop conversation with them out on the sidewalk. They invited me to walk with them to their home just diagonally across the street from the church. Their parents were also at the service and came along shortly. My choice between the two had been made as I sat behind them in church, although they were very much alike and have often been mistaken one for the other. As Solomon said long ago, "There is no understanding the way of a man with a maid." It was only a matter of days until Gladys Drinkwater and I were dating. Her parents and sister treated me well as I spent much time in their home. I soon became deeply in love with the girl I married almost four years later – the one who has come all the way with me, through pain and sweat and tears, joys and sorrows, and all that is involved in being a good wife and mother.

This new interest of my life affected my social activities in that I did not go out with my former associates as much as before and developed new friends and relationships among the people of Gladys's acquaintance.

Late that spring the Haskells gave up keeping boarders and I found another place a block west on Pine Street. I was the only boarder but was not happy there. After a few months a fellow Texan and coworker, Harold Robinson, and I found a place where we

Choice and Chance

could board together with Mr. and Mrs. Deegan at 5646 Belmar Terrace, southwest Philadelphia. We both enjoyed and appreciated this family very much.

About this time Harold and I began to study a correspondence course in accounting. We wanted to improve our chances for employment when the anticipated shutdown of the shipyard came. Our studies included night classes in the center city, requiring a long trolley ride each way. We began enthusiastically, but as everyone knows who has taken such a course, it is very difficult to maintain that initial interest and a regular schedule. I was no exception and gradually fell behind in my submission of completed lessons.

Talk of closing the shipyard continued. Mr. Sealy assigned me to work where I could learn more about accounting. He knew my need and hoped to prepare me better for the future. Christmas arrived and I spent all available holiday time with Gladys and her family. With little thought of my future prospects of making a living, Gladys and I had come to an understanding that we wanted to spend the rest of our lives together. Love would find a way and somehow take care of everything. So it is that life goes on. Each generation finds its way as though no one had traveled the pathway before. We spent these happy holidays together, unaware that within a few short weeks we would be separated.

During the previous summer and fall Gladys's sister, Mildred, had dated a young man who also shared the hospitality of the Drinkwater home this Christmas season. He was a ticket agent for the Pennsylvania Railroad at the main city station, Broad Street. I relate the following incident as a warning to any young people who may read this writing. This young man remarked to me one day that people sometimes walked away from his counter without picking up their change and that he was tempted to keep it. He said some even forgot their tickets, which, he said, he could pick up and later redeem for himself. The rules required that he turn in all such to the chief ticket agent. Shortly after Christmas we learned that he had yielded to temptation by picking up and pocketing some valuable tickets left on his counter. He had gone home as usual that day but reported by phone the next morning that he was ill and unable to go to work.

The man who left the tickets came back to the station the next day and said he was certain he had left them at the window. The chief ticket agent became suspicious and went to the young man's home and recovered them. His story that he planned to turn them in when he returned to the office was not accepted and he lost his job. Two years later I tried to help him get a job but he could not be bonded, which was a requirement for the work involved.

I feel a certain amount of guilt in connection with this case because I did not strongly point out the seriousness of what was in the young man's mind, the taking of property which did not belong to him. He lost his job and his reputation for integrity. Each is his brother's keeper and should not hesitate to help him with words of encouragement in the face of temptation.

It was mid-January when Mr. Sealy sent for me. I was, of course, excited and expected the worst. The end had come, I guessed. I sat down in his office and he began asking odd questions about what I expected to do in the future. My answers were, quite naturally, indefinite. He then told me that his friend, H. H. (Hap) Ward, was Chief Accountant on a new construction project at Kokomo, Indiana, and had asked him to find

Choice and Chance

someone for work in his office. Mr. Sealy thought I would do and would I accept? I certainly would; it was the chance I was looking for and would pay \$35 instead of the \$32.50 a week I then received. My travel expenses to Kokomo would also be paid. Stone & Webster, Inc., of Boston, for whom both Sealy and Ward had previously worked, was the contractor on the Kokomo project.

My roommate, Harold, received a similar assignment on another Stone & Webster job in Missouri about the same time. So we both left the Deegans by the first of February 1920. Gladys could not feel the same thrill and excitement about my new job that I did. It meant our being separated but we saw it as a step toward our getting married.

It was just eighteen months since I had seen my family in Texas. From Mother's letters I knew the children were getting along well in school. I had written about Gladys, and Mother had replied that I should consider carefully before marrying a girl with a city background who did not know what farm life was like. She assumed I would be returning to Texas and the farm. That was, of course, far from my mind. I had decided to try to make my way in the business end of industry. My study of accounting and work in that field should lead me where I wanted to go, so I reasoned. Now this new job was a step in that direction.

Chapter 15

A Year at Kokomo

My first-class ticket, including Pullman berth, took me to Indianapolis where I changed to an interurban, single electric car to Kokomo, sixty miles north. This was my first Pullman car experience but only the beginning of hundreds of such trips up and down and across America and other lands. On arrival at Kokomo I went directly to the construction job office to see my new boss, Mr. Ward.

He explained something of my work and introduced me to members of his office, ten or twelve in all, timekeepers and clerks. For Ward and several others who had previously worked for Stone & Webster, this was their first postwar assignment.

I was assigned quarters in the bunkhouse built at the site for administrative type personnel. It was real communal living, four men to a room, double deck bunks, common washroom and lounge, all with economical, temporary furnishings.

My work involved the application of the accounting principles I had been studying. Mr. Ward learned that I was taking the accounting course and encouraged me. His principal assistant was a very considerate man who helped me learn the routine of my work. It provided excellent experience for me by developing a working knowledge of what I was studying in books.

After a few weeks in the bunkhouse I found a place to board with a widow who had three other boarders, a man and two women. Here I had some new experiences. The landlady was a homely, crude person. I soon noticed that one of the women boarders had a steady caller and also learned that he was her boss and a married man. This was a little shock to my country-boy ignorance.

Choice and Chance

My ignorance and innocence were responsible for my leaving my mail where anyone could read it. I never thought of anyone being so rude as to read another's personal mail. I had written Gladys about the goings on in the house and had described my landlady in detail. Gladys had referred to these things in her letters to me. I was later certain that my landlady had read my mail, based on her remarks and attitude. Thus I had learned another lesson. She moved to another house but did not invite me to go along, as she did the others. One of my co-workers and I found a place where we could share a room and board with a widow who had a daughter away at college. I found nothing objectionable about my roommate; he was quite tall, thin, and wore a derby hat. But we had been in this place only a few weeks when he was told by Mr. Ward that because the bonding company had turned him down for a bond he would have to leave. It seemed that there were some bills back in South Carolina that he had neglected to pay and the bonding company therefore said he was unreliable. Little acts of neglect can become permanent parts of personal records and turn up to haunt one.

Mr. Ward asked me for a suggestion of someone to replace this man. I promptly thought of my friend and Lee's friend, Orville Groner, from our Hog Island days. He was then at home on a farm in Texas but responded to Mr. Ward's offer by telegram saying he would accept. Lee had left Philadelphia and was working in Cotton Plant, Arkansas, where he also had married. Orville arrived and moved in with me.

Orville was a little older and more sophisticated than I. He had graduated from a business college in Waco and had later taught business courses there. His older brothers were also well educated. We got along well and made several short trips together. One such was to the great city of Detroit. A month or so after Orville's arrival we found another place to board with a large family in a large house. This family had moved into the city from a nearby country community so the children would have better educational advantages. This was an excellent place with an abundance of food on the table at every meal.

Summer was soon gone, Harding was elected President, and Christmas was coming up. I had not been home in over two years and wanted to go for Christmas. It was rumored around the office that no holiday vacations were being granted because the job might be closed down any day due to the economic recession. However, I got up courage and asked Mr. Ward for two weeks off over the Christmas and New Year holidays. He agreed.

I had received two small increases in pay and now had a bank account, my first, I believe. Recollection of my first-class travel from Philadelphia caused me to go likewise to Texas. Now I see that as a mistaken waste of my money. I was physically able to stand the ride in a day coach and there was certainly no prestige to be gained by being seen in a Pullman by people who didn't know me and cared nothing about me.

I had not told the family I was coming, so when I reached Belton I had to hire a car to take me to Salado. The family was surprised but happy to see me. They were still on the Seymour Rose place near Salado where they had been since 1916. But it was no longer my home. All had changed during the five years since I had been a part of the household. To me and my brother and sisters they had been long years. Years are so much longer in youth. There are so many things to be observed and learned during them. As we grow older, today and yesterday are so much alike that we spend much of our time

Choice and Chance

absorbing nothing. I had changed in that I spoke with a slight Yankee accent, although my Texas tone had never been noticeable to my associates in the north.

In that respect I should relate an incident which occurred at Hog Island when I was interviewing people for cash advances. One day the foreman of a group of Negro charwomen brought about a dozen of them into my office with a request that they all be given advances with which to buy new uniforms. They had to line up around the walls of my small office, which caused a bit of confusion. I became very angry. For one thing they had not notified me they were coming. Second, the purpose of the advance did not come within the scope of my normal guidelines. Third, and possibly basic, they were all Negroes. I told them to leave without granting their request. My assistant in the office remarked that he had never before noticed my southern background. Unfortunately, children of the South and elsewhere were at that time, and some continue to be, trained from birth to feel and act superior to Negroes. It is very difficult to overcome the prejudice thus developed. It is, of course, wrong to be rude or overbearing with anyone and I regret having ever been so.

Some of my Salado friends noticed my use of words they were not used to hearing, such as "lunch" for their dinner, and they accused me of putting on airs. It was not true. I sincerely believe that I have never been guilty of that. But one can never really go home again after an extended absence. The home left behind is not there. Children grow away from it and the adults grow old. The house shrinks and the roads are narrower and shorter. On each return one sees less and less of what used to be.

Following Christmas day I took the train to visit Grandfather and Aunt Mary in Comanche County where I had left them in August 1917. I got off the train in Gorman about four A.M. and decided to walk the six miles south to where they lived, the same place I last saw them. The sandy country road was very lonely at that time of the morning, but I knew it well and took shortcuts across fields. It was still dark when I walked past the Hamlin home. Will and all the family were sleeping soundly, I was sure. At Grandfather's, just a quarter mile beyond the Hamlin house, I had a hard time rousing them, even though it was nearly getting up time.

I spent two days visiting with Will Haynes and other friends in the area. Ruth, Will, and Flora's little girl, now three and a half years older and in school. She did not recognize me because, she said, "Randall had a lot of freckles." My work in the shade for the several years since she had seen me had caused my freckles to fade so much that she did not see me as before. Again it was not home as I had come to feel it before I went away. Several of the boys I had known went to war and never returned.

At the end of my short visit with Grandfather and Aunt Mary, I went back to Salado and prepared for my return trip to Kokomo. My vacation was over and I had to go far away from home again. To my family it indeed seemed far away because they had never been more than a hundred miles from Salado.

I arrived back in Kokomo on January 3, 1921. The office talk was that the job would soon close down and we would all be out of work. The depression had become so severe that the company for which we were building could not afford to continue the construction. The bad news came about the fifteenth of January. Everyone except a few who were required to close up and pack were laid off.

I, along with several others, took the train to Philadelphia. My good friend and roommate, Orville Groner, returned to Texas. I sent a telegram to Gladys stating the time of

my arrival but gave no details as to why. She and the rest of the family met me at the station. I had asked and received Gladys's father's consent to our marriage, although I had not presented her a ring, and when I was laid off I thought only of returning to where she was. I never understood why the entire family met me but I thought they may have suspected that I had an elopement in mind.

So there I was, back in Philadelphia, with no home and no job. I spent the first night at Gladys's home and then went to live with her Aunt Hannah, her mother's sister, a few blocks away.

Chapter 16

A New Job In Philadelphia

Now that I was back in Philadelphia I renewed acquaintance with some of the people I had known before. No one had a worthwhile suggestion as to where I might find a job. The recession was getting worse. I read the daily 'want ads' and after about a month answered one which resulted in employment as a stock clerk for The Great A & P Tea Co. The pay was about half what I had been getting but I was glad to have a job.

My work was in the main warehouse where there were a hundred or so office and warehouse workers, all very strictly supervised and regimented. The office supervisor sat up front facing his workers and watched them, taking an occasional walk to stand by a desk and inquire why so much conversation, "Don't you have enough to do?" Sometimes he would call a girl to his desk and talk to her until she left in tears. I spent most of my time out in the warehouse counting piles of groceries. My reports of stock on hand were used by the buyers as a basis for reordering.

During this period I took some courses at night in one of the convenient high schools. Some of the senior men at A & P sensed that I had the capacity to advance beyond my clerical job; one in particular suggested that I try to find something else. He did not work under my supervisor but could see the regimented situation.

In the spring of 1922 I answered an ad for accountants with a college degree or equivalent. I was called for an interview and a technical test. A few days later I was asked to see the Treasurer of The U.G.I. Contracting Company, Mr. Weston J. Hibbs, at 112 North Broad Street. I managed to get time off and saw him at the appointed time. After some questioning about my experience he offered me a job. He told me my work would be out of the city on construction similar to the Kokomo project. I accepted his offer but had some mental reservations about leaving my fiancée. After talking it over with Gladys I decided to write Mr. Hibbs and cancel my acceptance.

By midsummer I had not found another job and was becoming more discouraged. I then made a choice by deciding to call Mr. Hibbs and ask whether his recently proffered job was still available. It didn't seem advisable for me to ask for time off, so I called and made an appointment to see Mr. Hibbs at his home in the evening.

He lived in one of the better suburban areas called Cynwyd, on the Main Line. After some walking and searching among the winding streets I found his home. I was

Choice and Chance

admitted by a maid who asked me to wait and Mr. Hibbs would see me in a few minutes. He came down the broad stairway in dressing gown and slippers, much to my surprise. He apologized for his appearance and made me feel comfortable by his casual attitude and remarks about his wife being away and certain minor household problems with which he was having to contend. I went into some detail as to why I had changed my mind after accepting his previous offer and assured him I would not make that mistake again. He listened patiently and then said there was still a place for me. My conversation must have been convincing as to my general ability and stability of mind. We agreed that I would give my employer two weeks' notice and report to Mr. Hibbs on July 31, 1922. I left him, walking in the clouds and rushing to tell Gladys the good news. My base pay would be more than I was getting at A & P and there would be an equal amount as a living allowance when assigned to work outside Philadelphia.

I reported for work at my new job at Broad and Arch Streets, just north of and within the morning shadow of William Penn atop City Hall. The next ten years were spent with this company on assignments in and out of the city. Most of those who had been employed for my type of work, field auditing it was then called, were graduates of the Wharton School of Commerce of the University of Pennsylvania. Mr. Hibbs often remarked that all his Field Auditors were Wharton graduates or equivalents. The few of us who were not from that school dubbed ourselves "equivalent."

It soon became apparent that my work would be very similar to what I had done with Stone & Webster at Kokomo. There were several other new men in the office and we were all put through a training program. This was the beginning of the business boom of the 1920s. The company management foresaw and prepared for it by recruiting for all departments – engineering, construction and accounting, and each had its training program.

After a few weeks on the job I developed a feeling of reasonable security and purchased the long delayed engagement ring. It was not a splurge, but I was able to pay cash for it. It has lasted well! Then Gladys and I anxiously awaited my first field assignment so we could plan our wedding.

Chapter 17

Another Job - Syracuse – Marriage

It was early September 1922 that I was assigned as an assistant to the accountant in charge on a small construction job in Syracuse, New York. The work was quite similar to my job at Kokomo and my boss was very helpful with my learning the procedures. Another assistant in the office, W. E. McCormick, and I became close friends. Although he died several years ago, Gladys and I still keep in touch with his wife. As soon as I felt secure in this, my first field assignment, Gladys and I set December 16th for our wedding, that being the anniversary of the marriage of her parents and of her maternal grandparents.

Time passed swiftly. The snow began to fall and it was soon December the 13th, the date for my departure for Philadelphia and my wedding. I was ready - new blue serge

Choice and Chance

suit, shirts, ties and such all packed in a new suitcase. My boss granted me time off from Thursday through Sunday so we could be married on Saturday and I could return for work on Monday. This arrangement was against the rules but my boss justified it on the basis that it was for my wedding – an extenuating situation.

The trip to Philadelphia required change of trains at Binghamton about midnight. There I took the Lehigh Valley train directly south. As I entered the coach I noticed a Negro sitting near the back who was mumbling to himself with cigarette stubs and ashes all around him and his head bowed as if in self absorption. I took my seat toward the middle of the coach but glanced around occasionally to observe the Negro still smoking and talking to himself.

When the train left Binghamton there were only ten or twelve persons in the coach. An elderly lady sat directly across from me and a young man sat behind me with the back of his seat against the back of mine so that he faced the Negro. Others were here and there about the coach.

I had exchanged a few words with the lady across from me but soon decided to try to get some sleep by curling up on the seat and pulling my overcoat over my body and head so the light would not be in my eyes. I had been in this position about an hour when I was aroused by terrible screams. I started to jump up but then thought to myself, "It must be a train robbery and they haven't seen me, so I'll just lie still."

But the screams continued and I decided to look up. My first sight was the lady across from me, bloody from head to foot, with great gashes in her neck and face. Then a few feet away I saw the Negro going from me toward the end of the coach where he had been seated. At the same time I saw two men coming toward him. As they approached him the Negro wielded a big knife and cut down through the hat and face of one of them. I ran to help and we soon had the fellow subdued and tied up on the floor of the coach. As I looked around I saw that the young man who was seated just behind me had evidently been the first victim and was very seriously cut. With the man subdued, we turned to helping the three bleeding persons, using wet garments as best we could. There was no trainman in the coach during the happening but the conductor and brakeman soon arrived.

Arrangements were made to remove the injured at Palmerton, Pa., the first available hospital. The Negro was turned over to the police at Allentown, Pa. I was questioned by the conductor and also by newsmen when I got off the train in Philadelphia.

It was Thursday morning, December 14, and we had until Saturday evening to get ready for the wedding. We had to get a license, of course, and I shall never forget what a routine thing it was for the clerk who prepared it. As we sat before him he inquired whether the sun was shining outside and seemed unconcerned as to whether the sun would shine on the lives of the two persons he was helping bind together in a great adventure. Other details had to be taken care of for a simple wedding in the bride's home.

Alfred Joynes, an elder of the Church of Christ, performed the ceremony. After the reception we managed to leave by taxi and elude those who tried to follow us to the railroad station. But we went instead to the Bellevue Stratford hotel in Philadelphia. The next morning we took the train for Syracuse by way of New York City. We reached

Syracuse about nine in the evening and went directly to the apartment I had rented a couple of weeks before.

It was a small, furnished place, with a living room, a bedroom, a kitchen with a three burner gas plate, and a bath shared with the couple in the apartment next to us. The kitchen was about four feet square, with a box outside the bedroom window serving as a refrigerator.

The first morning in Syracuse we had nothing on hand for breakfast but a quart of milk. Gladys made a list of things, one of a kind, and I went to the grocer across the street. As the lady was selecting the items she remarked that it reminded her of her first grocery list. I didn't tell her it was, indeed, my wife's first list. Eventually we had some breakfast and I went to the office, somewhat late, and, after submitting to the usual kidding, resumed my work.

Our sojourn in Syracuse, although short, was memorable for several reasons. It was our first home. It was also the coldest place we have ever lived. It was below zero nearly every day and snowed some almost daily. We would walk down to the main streets in the evening but it was too cold to stop and window shop. There was no radio or television and I spent my evenings studying the Company's Field Manual. I was anxious to learn all possible about my work, and, with Gladys's prompting, I was able to memorize the entire manual.

We had arrived in Syracuse on December 17, Gladys's birthday, and did not go back to Philadelphia for Christmas. I recall nothing of that Christmas period except that Mildred, Gladys's sister, visited us over New Years Day.

Toward the end of January I was ordered back to the Home Office in Philadelphia. This was our first move and the beginning of a life of moves, which may or may not be ended, our last having been just the past year, 1969. We went back to Gladys's parents because we had no other place to call home. It was only a couple of weeks until I was assigned to a large project in Connecticut.

Chapter 18

Other Field Assignments - Children Arrive

My new job was on a segment of a transmission system, with my office located in Southington, Conn., a small town to which Gladys and I moved about the middle of February 1923. Here we had an apartment in the home of one of the town's businessmen. The weather was about as cold and snowy as in Syracuse.

The local labor situation was such that we built a couple of bunkhouses about a mile from town, where imported laborers could be housed and fed. The job superintendent and I had our office in the mess hall. The facilities would take care of about 150 men. These laborers were used to clear timber from the right of way and dig holes for the steel tower foundations. There were also tower erection crews.

Choice and Chance

My functions included preparation of hiring records, payroll work, cost accounting, and purchasing local materials, such as lumber and supplies, tools, and groceries for the mess hall. Jimmy, the superintendent, was responsible for all physical work. He was some twenty years older than I and had been on construction work most all of his life. He was an alcoholic who had a hard time staying sober long enough to manage his job. He was, however, intelligent and had a strong personality whereby he could dominate his men.

In recruiting labor Jimmy engaged an agent in nearby Hartford to scout for him at two dollars a head for each man delivered to the job. As spring came many men came out of the North Woods of Maine to spend their winter's earnings in Hartford in "riotous living." Our labor scout would pick up some of these men when they had spent everything, or he might find them in a drunken stupor and haul them out to our job in a truck. In one case a man was prostrate on the floor of the truck and could not be roused. I was afraid he was going to die on our hands and had him taken to the hospital immediately. It proved to be just acute alcoholism, but the hospital kept him five days. The man then came to work and I deducted his hospital bill from his wages.

Some of these men had prison records and became very mean and difficult when drinking. There were some terrible fights in the bunkhouses and sometimes they were just outside my office. These fights were real and dangerous, not movie fakes.

After each payday a number of the men would go to town for a spree. One of them, who was rumored to have served time for murder, tried to explain to me what a great feeling it was as he went under the influence of alcohol. He said I was missing something. Another of the men, on his way back from town one night, wandered off the road into a nearby cemetery and fell into an open grave. He told me of his shock at finding himself there the next morning. It isn't hard to imagine the consternation caused by finding one's self six feet down in a narrow hole.

Jimmy had spent his life with such men and knew how to speak to each in accord with his particular personality. He bawled his instructions in a raspy, alcoholic voice, using the accent of the Irish, Swedish, Italian, or other, as appropriate. He knew them all and punctuated all utterances with a broad vocabulary of profanity. But Jimmy was quick to realize that I came from a different background, He was considerate of my ways and we got along very well.

An outstanding memory of our eight months on this job is our unavoidable association with Jimmy and his wife. She was an unfortunate illiterate, born and raised in railroad construction camps — a very unnatural companion for Gladys. But as far as we knew, she and Jimmy were honest. We were together frequently because Jimmy did not trust himself to drive the company car. I was, therefore, the driver on weekend jaunts in the surrounding area.

During my period on this job I was called to the Home Office to talk with Mr. Hibbs on an accounting subject about which he had been told I had some special experience. I was flattered and did my best to make a good impression. I assume I did not hurt myself because I received future assignments with gradually increasing responsibilities.

The details of my experiences on this job would require a volume alone. It was a period of intensive learning on my part from men of all walks of life. Gladys and I were included in a few of the local citizens' social activities. The general superintendent of the

Choice and Chance

project was a Dartmouth graduate, a good engineer and a fine gentleman. He and others of his staff visited us at Southington from time to time. The W. E. McCormicks, who were at Syracuse when we were, now lived in Waterbury, Conn., where he was in the headquarters office of our project. In October we took a long weekend trip with them through the Berkshire Mountains and over the Mohawk Trail to view the beautiful autumn colors.

In November the work was completed and I was sent back to the Home Office. Again we went to live with Gladys's parents. We had no idea where or when our next assignment would be, but we did know that we expected our first child the following March. I don't recall what I did in the office until Christmas, but during that week I was told to report to a job in Rochester, New York, on January 2, 1924. Gladys remained at home.

The Rochester job was my first without a supervisor. It was very small, only fifteen or twenty workmen and a foreman. I did the usual timekeeping, payroll, purchasing and banking activities. The weather was extremely cold and became so severe that the job was closed down, and I returned to the Philadelphia office about the first of February.

I was immediately assigned to a project just outside the city, adjacent to the old Hog Island shipyard. I was an assistant to the Accountant in Charge, Edward Mery. The superintendent was the same man who was in charge of the Connecticut project I had been on, P. W. Stickney. He was a very capable man and rose to high position with the Company.

My boss, Ed Mery, was a little older than I and one of the Wharton School graduates hired by Mr. Hibbs. We developed a close friendship which has lasted to the present. During World War II he and his family moved to Washington, where we both now live. It has been nearly fifty years since we first met on that construction job.

On that job I could live at home, Gladys's parents' home really, where a Company car picked me up each day. It was here that our first child, Thomas Randall, Junior, was born in March 1924. There is nothing like the experience of the firstborn, as parents know. But their happiness and thankfulness is often exceeded by their ignorance of what to do with him. It was not long until our first was so thin and puny that we changed doctors. We made a fresh start with new feeding methods and the child began to grow.

In July I was reassigned to a relatively small project near Harrisburg, Pa., where I was on my own. I was fortunate to have a high-class gentleman as the superintendent. We constructed a small oxygen manufacturing plant for use by the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Gladys and I moved to an apartment in Harrisburg about the first of August. It was a block from the Susquehanna River and a very sultry area. However, Gladys could take the baby in his coach to the river front, a popular place for strollers. Then, around the first of October, we found we were to be parents again. In view of her frequent sick spells, Gladys decided she would prefer living at home with her parents. I found a room and would drive to Philadelphia over the weekends in our new Model T Ford.

We had bought the car soon after our arrival in Harrisburg. I recall the details of the purchase very well. The waiting period was negligible after ordering it and I went on a Saturday morning to take delivery. I paid all cash, \$422, for the five-passenger touring model. We made a few trips to visit the family in Philadelphia, just one hundred miles from Harrisburg, and on the way would pull off on a side road and stop to warm the

baby's bottle on the engine manifold. If there were such things as thermal containers and electric heaters in those days, we had not heard of them.

The work at Harrisburg was completed in early January and I was again ordered back to the Home Office. There I spent four long months waiting for a new assignment. The field men between assignments were usually given the less desirable jobs around the office. I was no exception and worked the night shift; eight P.M. to four A.M., for about three months. Fortunately, it was in daylight hours when the next baby, Mildred, arrived. A couple of weeks after that I was given a long-term assignment as Accountant (Field Auditor) In Charge on a large project at Golconda, Illinois.

Chapter 19

Golconda

Golconda — was it animal, vegetable or mineral? I think I had never heard the strange sounding name before. So I went to the library near the office for a definition and information. I found that Golconda is, "a) A ruined city of India famous for its diamonds and diamond cutting; b) County seat of Pope, southern Illinois — Pop.1092; Newspaper — The Herald Enterprise; Railroad — On a spur of the Illinois Central." Reference to a map showed the town on the Ohio River about 35 miles up stream from Paducah, Kentucky, and some 80 miles up from Cairo, the point of confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi. Cairo is sometimes called the capital of 'Little Egypt,' the southwestern corner of the state of Illinois. Golconda! We would live there four years.

I left Gladys and the babies and arrived in Golconda the latter part of May 1925. The project, already three months underway, was the construction of a lock as the first part of unit No. 51 of the Ohio River Lock and Dam system, designed to increase the channel depth to nine feet. I took the place of E. S. (Gene) Fuerst, who was being reassigned to start a similar project, Lock and Dam No. 47, at Newburg, Indiana.

Gene Fuerst, like Ed Mery, was a little older than I, and also one of Mr. Hibbs's Wharton School men. Gene and Ed were classmates. During Gene's three months on the job he had acquired three or four assistants from the Home Office and had recruited several clerks and timekeepers locally. I had never supervised a group of this size and was quite excited about my new responsibilities. Under Company policy the Treasurer was responsible for financial, accounting, and certain other commercial aspects of field projects. A vice president in the Home Office was responsible for engineering and construction. Therefore, I reported directly to Mr. Hibbs, the Treasurer, and the job superintendent (then called "Erecting Engineer") reported to the vice president for construction.

This divided responsibility provides a check against collusion, fraud, payroll padding and other financial manipulations. It works very well until an unscrupulous accountant and a similarly inclined superintendent become associated on the same project. Engineers and construction men have never fully accepted this principle because they feel that because they

Choice and Chance

are responsible for progress and completion they should have full authority over all elements of the work.

There was no desirable housing in Golconda, from our viewpoint. It had electricity but no water system. The place I rented was the upstairs part of a large, old house, supposedly furnished, but actually with scarcely anything in it. Water had to be brought from a well in the yard. I did not have enough forethought to buy additional furnishings, thinking, perhaps that when Gladys arrived she could select what she wanted.

Plans were made for her to reach Golconda on July 4th. Her sister would come along to help with the two infants. About the first of July I became very ill. The doctor came in to see me a couple of times a day and men from my office took care of me as best they could. But I was still in bed when the 4th arrived. Two men from my office took the Company Buick and drove to Paducah to meet Gladys, where she arrived about eight P.M. with babies, bottles, bundles and baggage. She had to stand the shock of being told of my illness and of having to drive 35 miles at night to Golconda.

Locating a place to eat, obtain milk for the children and warm their bottles was a major undertaking in the area of the Paducah railroad station. The next shock was having to cross the Wide Ohio from Kentucky into Illinois by ferry, a trip many were loathe to take in daylight. Then began the drive over the single lane dirt road through the hills and thickets, with crying babies, a worn out mother, her sister, and two strange men, bumping along the dusty road for two hours in total darkness except for the car lights. When they finally arrived they found me too sick to raise my head. What we did and how we managed that night escapes me, perhaps because I was not fully conscious of what was happening and also because I never cared to dwell on such unpleasant memories. I think the landlady helped by bringing water and providing toilet utensils – two-gallon enameled containers. The next few days, until I was able to get out of bed, were, to say the least, nightmarish for Gladys. Her sister had to return at once to Philadelphia, so that left Gladys alone with me and the two babies under doctors' care. The children were unable to adjust to the new water and milk, neither of which was tested for suitability for human consumption. The result was dysentery.

Our two-month old infant, Mildred, suffered most; she became very thin and emaciated. It seemed at times that she would not survive. Friends came and looked with pity at her and our entire situation. But no one was wise enough to tell us to take the child to a hospital for proper care. We struggled along with the local doctor for about six weeks and then took her to a child specialist in Evansville, Indiana. By that time she had rickets. The new doctor's treatment was effective, and she soon developed into a fine, healthy baby.

After a month of miserable existence in the makeshift apartment, we found a cottage, well furnished and quite desirable according to local standards. It had a parlor with a potbellied coal stove, two bedrooms, a combined kitchen and dining room, a front porch, a back porch with a cistern under it, and an enclosed yard with a coal shed and a privy in it. Neither Gladys nor I knew how to operate the stoves. She had problems with the kerosene stove in the kitchen which, if not adjusted just right, would smoke and ruin the house with soot. It happened once and she had to wash all the window curtains. I would load the stove in the parlor with coal and every now and then an accumulation of gas would blow the lid off and scatter debris all over the room.

We employed a Negro maid who was a great help to Gladys. As fall approached the children were in better health. We were living fairly normally. In late September

Choice and Chance

Gladys's parents and sister drove out from Philadelphia to visit us in the Model T which we had left with them. It took them over three days to drive the 900 miles. They stayed only a few days and drove the Ford back because we didn't really need it, having use of the Company car.

In spite of my youth and inexperience, I got along fairly well with my work. My predecessor, Gene Fuerst, a meticulous workman, stayed with me until all office details were up to date. This was the type of project where the river and the weather were major factors in the progress of the work. Ordinarily the water level was low in summer and every effort possible was made to make the most of it by working day and night. In addition to locally recruited labor, many employees came from a distance and for those we provided bunkhouses and mess.

At peak the labor force was around 800. During the winter months the river was usually too high to allow any work in it but there were some shore jobs to be done, equipment repair and other maintenance. The supervisory and clerical staffs were greatly reduced. Most of my men from the Home Office were released for other assignments.

With the sudden influx of a job work force almost equal to the original population of the village, the social and economic life of the community became very upset. Economically, the demand for housing, materials, and services caused prices to go up. Rents doubled and tripled what they had been. The social life was also very seriously affected. The young girls of Golconda had never seen so many young men with cars, especially city fellows who had been around a bit. One of my assistants said he couldn't drive two blocks in town before his roadster was loaded with girls. The cafes, soft drink and ice cream parlors had to be enlarged. This was in the era of prohibition, but bootleg booze was available to those who could pay. A gambling place was established just beyond the village limits.

The existence of widespread immorality was a matter of common gossip. This was not confined to the young and single people. Even talk of mate trading was heard. I had direct knowledge of the situation from the men of my staff; most of whom were single. The elite of the village did not escape the wave of waywardness. The daughter of a prominent doctor went away for a time. I was told that the purpose was abortion. The superintendent of our project, Mr. McCormick, called one of his top assistants into his office one day and said to him, "I hear rumors about you and Mrs. Blank and thought I should tell you; it seems to be going around." "Well", said he, "I guess I should get home and tell my wife before someone else does." He was the same who punished his teenage son severely when a contraceptive was found in his coat pocket.

After the four year period of our construction work at Golconda, the office talk was that no virgins remained. However, certain of the office men claimed they had never violated the virtue of any. No doubt the solid citizens were glad when the job was completed.

Although I had problems with administration during the life of the job, I was fortunate to have had considerate supervisors who came to inspect my performance from time to time. Mr. Hibbs had me meet him in Louisville once, where we talked over some of my problems. He took note of my interest in my family's welfare and the living conditions of the village, to which Gladys was not accustomed. He suggested that I take a few days off and bring Gladys and the children to Louisville for a little holiday at Company expense.

Choice and Chance

A few weeks afterward we did make the trip to Louisville and had a very enjoyable time. I shall never forget, however, the great fright I had when I was awakened in our hotel room during the night by someone closing the room door. I immediately reached to see if the children were still in their bed. Then I began to realize that it was probably the night watchman checking doors and had found ours unlocked. I then checked and it was locked. Nothing was missing.

I received regular increases in salary and by 1927 was earning about \$100 a week, which, I suppose would correspond to \$300 today. Our cost of living was lower in that area than in the city. We saved as much as we could with the thought that we would settle down some day and have our own home.

Chapter 20

Kittanning - Back to Philadelphia

In the fall of 1926 we bought a used Essex car and found it to be almost the same as no car. However, we decided to drive it to Texas to visit my family at Christmas time. We had been married four years and I had not been home in six. Gladys had seen Mother only when she had visited us that summer. My parents had moved in 1925 from Bell County to the village of Wilmeth, in Runnels County, about 150 miles west. Father had reached the point where he could not make a living for his growing family of six girls and a son around Salado. Some of his friends had gone 'west' and persuaded him that he should go likewise. He wanted to go also because of his pioneering nature; he liked the wide open spaces.

My brother, Henry, had a strong sense of loyalty and devotion to his parents and sisters. He stayed with them through all their troubles, even though he was old enough to set out on his own. My older sisters were out of high school and wanted to go to college. Father rented a fairly good farm and somehow managed to get the three oldest girls into Abilene Christian College, which was only 60 miles away. Their aim was to go to college long enough to be able to pass the State teachers' examination, then teach and earn money to continue college.

Our trip to Texas in the Essex was a nightmare. I don't know how long it took but we finally got to Abilene and there turned south toward the town of Winters. It was raining and the road was under construction in several places where we had to drive through mud instead of on the otherwise graveled highway. Some of the farmers along the way were having a field day pulling cars out of the mud holes. We had to be pulled a couple of times. Then the carburetor went bad and it was a long wait trying to get it fixed. We reached Winters and still had ten miles to go through black, wet mud to where the family lived. Today's cars would not make it over such roads. We slipped and slid our way along, stopping now and then to ask a farmer how much farther we had to go.

We didn't know just where the family lived, so drove to the crossroads general store in Wilmeth and there found Father and his saddle horse. He was happy to see us and directed us to the house, about a mile away. He followed on his horse and was close behind when we get stuck in the mud as we turned into the farm road. He tied his lariat

Choice and Chance

to the car and helped get it through the mud. It was an exciting greeting with my six sisters lined up to meet Gladys for the first time. They were shy and embarrassed, not knowing how they and their meager surroundings would be received by her, but they soon relaxed and became comfortable in the presence of us "Northerners."

The family had plenty of good country food and we ate well. Although we had to live in crowded conditions in their small house, we had an enjoyable Christmas season. The girls who were in college were, of course, at home for the holidays. They had rooms in a home in Abilene where they furnished their own things and did their own housekeeping.

I had been away from the family roof just ten years and had my own family now, but I did still have an interest in the welfare of my parents and their other children. I was happy that some were already in college. It was with pleasure and some pride that I can now report that all but one of the girls had some college training. Four of them became teachers. Of the other two, one married a successful farmer and the second is the wife of a business executive. The teacher sisters also married good husbands. Henry married a teacher and became a legislator, county judge and attorney. All reared fine families, except Henry, who had no children.

We made the return trip to Golconda in the Essex. My sister, Irene, then eighteen, accompanied us, the thought being that she might find a job in Golconda. We soon decided there was nothing suitable for her and also felt that we did not want the responsibility for her in the local environment. She soon returned to Texas.

In the summer of 1927 we traded the Essex on a large, new Nash sedan. This proved to be a good car and served us until 1935. We made many long trips in it. I was young and energetic and sometimes drove as long as 36 hours without stopping to sleep, with an average speed of around 30 miles an hour.

Again, Gladys found we were to be parents a third time. This made us think seriously of giving up field construction and looking for a more settled way of life. We made the decision. I submitted my resignation in early June, telling my superiors in Philadelphia the reasons for my action. They arranged to relieve me by July 1.

The top management of the Company had changed in 1928, when my original employer, The U. G. I. Contracting Company, and three other large firms merged to form United Engineers and Constructors, Inc. The new management came largely from Dwight P. Robinson Co., one of the merging firms. Mr. Robinson had been president of the Hog Island Shipyard when I was there. He formed his own company when the yard closed and recruited several of his top men from there. I was fortunate to have known some of them and now, in a sense, I had friends at court.

When I returned to Philadelphia and talked more about my desires, it was suggested that I take my time and remain on duty while they tried to find an assignment for me in the area. This pleased me and we promptly rented a house in Springfield, a suburb of Philadelphia. The Company soon sent me to a project in Wilmington, Delaware, on a temporary basis.

When this relatively short assignment was concluded, my bosses in the Home Office offered me a job as an assistant to the chief of the Equipment Division. This Division was responsible for the purchase, control, and disposition of all construction

equipment, which included everything from picks and shovels to large steam and gasoline powered machines. My salary was the same as in the field. There was some travel involved but we could make our home in the Philadelphia area. This turn of events made us very happy. After the new baby arrived we could then look for that new home we wanted.

Chapter 21

Philadelphia — Troubled Times

My new boss, Victor H. Wilks, was a rather large, red faced Englishman with white hair. He had been favorably impressed with me on his visit to the Golconda project shortly after the new management had assumed control in the spring of 1928. He was from the staff of the Robinson company and word had spread in the U.G.I. organization (my company) that Wilks was overbearing and disdainful of our methods of handling equipment. However, when he arrived at Golconda I overlooked his boisterous and overbearing manner and furnished all the information he requested. I escorted him over the project and treated him courteously, allowing him to see all of our activities. On leaving he thanked and complimented me for the detailed data supplied. This may have had something to do with his willingness to accept me into his Division.

I recall that my fellow accountant and friend, Gene Fuerst, often said that he tried to be nice to everyone, including the office boy, because he never knew when one of them might become his boss. Although Wilks had a low boiling point, and his resulting outbursts often interfered with his courtesy to others, he had a great desire for praise and personal consideration.

In the new company Mr. Hibbs, my boss in the U. G. I. Company, lost his position, but fortunately for me, the new treasurer, Harry Essley, a Robinson man, had known me when we both worked at Hog Island. Wilks worked under him. The Equipment Division was small, comprising only ten or twelve employees. I had much to learn about the purchase, maintenance and repair of a wide variety of machinery in use on our many projects. We maintained a large storage yard at Bound Brook, N.J., which was under the control of Mr. Wilks. We made frequent visits there as well as to the various construction jobs throughout the eastern half of the United States. We also disposed of our surplus and obsolete items by sale. It was excellent experience.

Our second son, Gordon, arrived in January 1930. Due to what seemed to be the nurse's carelessness, Gladys became very ill. A consultant was called in, the elders of the church came and prayed with her, and we were very frightened. I went to work in a daze, leaving a nurse and Gladys's mother with her. The condition persisted for several days, but one evening when I got home, going directly to her as usual, she was able to put her arms up and around my neck. I felt the pressure of strength in them and shall never forget the wonderful feeling that she was getting better. I believe it was the happiest moment I have ever experienced. She did in fact continue to improve and was up within a couple of weeks.

Choice and Chance

When spring came we found a new house at 1016 Lindale Avenue in Drexel Hill, another suburb adjacent to where we lived in Springfield but closer to Philadelphia. It was a three bedroom, two story and basement house with central (piped in) steam heat. We had the pleasure of buying all new furnishings for the new house and moved into it in April 1930.

Most of the houses in the area were owned by young couples with small children. The streets were not heavily traveled and the children could play in them with relative safety from cars. But there are other things just as dangerous as cars. The beautiful four year old girl who lived across the street from us became suddenly ill and lived only a few days. She was an only child and played with our Mildred, who was about the same age. It was indeed a time of sorrow, with the parents immeasurably shocked, pondering, perhaps, the irony whereby they, having only one, should lose all, and others with several, lose none.

Then in the spring of 1931 our household was beset with scarlet fever. Gladys and the boys were initially confined and two weeks later Mildred went down. I was away on a trip at the outset and found the house under quarantine when I got home. I lived with Gladys's parents during the six-week siege. We had a nurse and a housekeeper a large part of the time. This was the most serious illness we experienced in raising the children, other than, perhaps, Mildred's malnutrition and rickets when she was an infant in Golconda.

While we lived in Drexel Hill the two older children began school; Randall, Jr., who was called Bud, started in 1930; Mildred, who was known as Sister or Sis, went in 1931. From here onward I shall refer to them as Bud and Sis. Gordon never had a nickname.

As the year 1931 progressed it looked like the economic depression, which began with the stock market crash in October 1929, was going to put the Company out of business. In an effort to weather the storm, salaries were cut and many employees were laid off. Banks were closing. Things would get worse before getting better. During the summer, my boss, Mr. Wilks, went to England for about 30 days. While he was away, his boss, Mr. Essley, called me to his office and asked me to suggest the names of three men of our already reduced staff who could best be spared. I did so according to my best judgment, and they were immediately laid off.

When Wilks returned to New York a few days later, he was met at the ship by the foreman of our New Jersey equipment storage yard, his longtime associate. He gave Wilks the news of the layoffs and apparently implied that I had arranged the dismissals. My telephone rang and from the receiver I heard Wilks shouting, "What's going on down there? Have you fired everybody but yourself? Do I still have a job?" I was used to his shouting, but not at me. I replied, when he gave me a chance, "I did only what Essley asked me to." "Well, why couldn't you wait until I got back?" he yelled. "Essley told me he had to act immediately on orders of the Board of Directors." I explained. "All right, but I'll see you in the morning," and hung up. The next morning he came in but barely spoke to me and went right away to see Mr. Essley. When he returned his anger and excitement had cooled considerably. I went about my work as usual and nothing more was said about the layoffs. I knew, however, that one of the men who was dismissed had spread tales about me. But I also knew that this individual was an unscrupulous employee who accepted kickbacks from certain dealers from whom he purchased equipment. I had no fear of his attempted recrimination.

In a further attempt to reduce expenses we were told to sell all equipment that was not in use. This effort took me all across the states east of the Mississippi, looking for buyers. The sales were very slim. By spring 1932 the Division was down to five or six people, which included Wilks and me. On April 15 we were notified that we could come in the next day and pick up our final paychecks. Other Divisions of the Company were also eliminated that day. I received about three months' severance pay, which carried me up to August. Those were dark days, but they got darker as the year went on and unemployment steadily increased.

Chapter 22

Dark Days of Depression

My new situation called for a review of our family budget. Our full time maid was the first to feel the impact. There was nothing to do but cut our spending to absolute necessities. Then, of course, each person has a different idea as to what a necessity is. But a lot of things are found unnecessary when there is no way to pay for them.

Like many others, I had been drawn into the stock market and my holdings had lost most of their value. My bank had closed but my loss was very little because the cash I had on deposit was offset against loans which the bank had made to me. My main loss was in the reduced value of the stocks, which I kept and eventually sold in 1941 in order to take the loss against my income that year. That was a bad mistake. Those stocks have since increased in value many times the amount of tax saved.

Several of our neighbors were also out of work. One of such men teamed up with me to do miscellaneous mechanical jobs in homes in our community. We repaired and installed water heaters, radiators and other plumbing fixtures. Then, on my own, I built a few asphalt driveways. The money I made was very little, but being busy and accomplishing these jobs kept my mind occupied with something besides the unemployment situation.

My frustration at not being able to find a job was severe. Some would talk about it being a case of the survival of the fittest. I know that is not a truism with respect to human service. Many other factors aside from fitness are considered. Unemployment is an ogre concomitant with an industrialized, capitalistic society. Attempts to eliminate that ogre lead to socialistic or welfare states. Who has the right answer? Not I.

In February 1933, I was offered a job by a man who did business with me when I was with United Engineers. His firm had gone into bankruptcy and he had been appointed the receiver to carry on and try to salvage the small equipment and supply business of which he had been president. I gladly accepted the offer of \$35 a week. My job was manager of the service and repair shop where our principal work was the overhaul of used construction equipment for resale in the depressed market of the period.

Choice and Chance

In this new experience I learned about some new types of people. In addition to the rough and more or less tough shop mechanics, I had contact with the firm's salesmen. The ethical standards of these men and top management were not consistent with mine. I learned that this was one of the concerns that had made kickbacks to my associate in United Engineers. The firm rented equipment to state and local government agencies. I can recall the furtive expressions of guilt on the faces of the government employees as they came around to see the boss, my employer, to collect their graft for reporting excessive hours of usage of the equipment, which was rented on an hourly basis. This sort of thing was handled by the boss personally. He knew that I would not be party to such practice, and also he wanted the fewest possible in the Company to know of these payoffs.

I stayed with this job a little over a year and then resigned. I had no other prospect but had confidence that I could find something among the new state and federal welfare agencies. Some of my friends from United Engineers had found jobs in such agencies. So my first contact was with one of these men who had a good administrative job in the state welfare program at Harrisburg. I filled out the usual applications and he said I should hear from him soon.

While waiting for the results of this application, I filed another with the Federal Public Works Administration in Washington. My friend, Gene Fuerst, whom I replaced at Golconda, was with that organization. I also knew that the head of it was Col. P. W. Fleming, a brother of one of my Golconda associates, Jack Fleming. I asked Jack to kindly send my application to his brother with whatever comment he cared to make.

About ten days after my visit to Harrisburg a letter came from my friend there offering me a job at \$32 a week. I accepted and went to work around the first of August. I found my old friend from Syracuse and Connecticut days, W. E. McCormick, was already working there. We arranged to room together, pending the time we could bring our families to Harrisburg. There were several other former United Engineers men also in the agency and we formed a car pool for weekend trips to and from Philadelphia.

I didn't know, of course, what would happen to my application that I sent to Washington, so we decided to move to Harrisburg and rent our house in Drexel Hill. We found a place in Lemoyne, across the river from Harrisburg, for \$32 a month and were able to get \$75 a month for our house. We moved in time for the children to enter school in early September. The new place was not like we were used to but I recall no complaints.

Chapter 23

Better Days - The Family Grows

My first word from Washington was a telegram asking whether I would accept employment if offered, stating a possible salary more than twice what I was getting. I couldn't get to the telegraph office fast enough. My feeling of renewed hope was boundless. Then came three weeks of silence. I became impatient and doubtful, fearing that I was going to

Choice and Chance

be turned down. But late in October a letter came telling me to report to the agency's regional auditing office in New York City early in November. This was indeed another turning point in my life.

On reporting to New York I found that my work involved travel almost all the time as an auditor of federally financed projects. I explained this to Gladys and we decided to move back to Drexel Hill at once. Our house was rented for a year so we found an apartment about six blocks away and a similar distance from the school the children had formerly attended. It was convenient for me to get home on weekends and when passing through Philadelphia on my travels. Bud and Sis reentered their school and Gordon started kindergarten. Gordon was not quite five and he and the teacher did not adjust to each other. After he ran out of the building a couple of times we decided to let him wait another year.

After a short period of training with another auditor I was on my own, traveling to cities and towns in various parts of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, checking the accounts of municipalities and contractors who were involved in the construction of schools and utilities with federal aid. I was conscientious and energetic, working alone most of the time and trying to complete my assignments as quickly as possible. Having no interest in bars and other nighttime entertainment, I used my evenings to type my reports, thereby speeding their completion. The word was soon passed to me that my speed was not appreciated because it put other auditors in a bad light, especially those who followed me on the same assignments later.

In September 1935 we moved back into our Drexel Hill house. I was then assigned as the resident auditor on a large project in Reading, Pa. and could readily be with the family at home on weekends. The children were delighted to be back with their playmates. Gordon began school that fall and got along very well.

I had received a good promotion and my income was then higher than when I was laid off by United Engineers. In view of our improved financial situation we traded our old Nash, which we bought in Golconda, on a new Ford.

The Reading assignment lasted through 1936, and in early 1937 I was ordered to a similar but larger project in Pittsburgh. There I had a staff of several assistants and was told the project would last a couple of years. We thought it best to wait until school was out before moving and in the meantime I had a room and had my meals out — going home to Philadelphia every couple of weeks. I made this trip, 300 miles by bus or train, sitting up all Friday night with Saturday and Sunday at home, then returning Sunday night.

When school was out we moved into a house in Brentwood, a suburb of Pittsburgh, near Ed and Madge Meixner, friends I had made in attending church services. They had a boy and a girl the ages of our Gordon and Sis. We enjoyed association with this family and they remain close to us. The children had a very successful year in the Brentwood schools.

In the summer of 1938 we traded the Ford on a new Plymouth. As a break-in trip we set out for Texas one fine summer evening, with plans to drive all night in order to attend the annual Rampy family reunion. All went well until about four A.M. the next

Choice and Chance

morning on route 40 west of Indianapolis. It was a new section of four lane divided highway. I saw a farm truck some distance ahead in the right hand lane and pulled to the left to pass. There was a heavy, concrete, oval median strip and as I came near, the truck suddenly pulled across the left lane to cross the median. This surprised me but if it had continued its course I could readily have gone back to the right lane, but alas, the driver saw me coming and turned back into the right lane just as I did and stood squarely in front of me. I was able to slow down to 10 or 15 miles an hour, but the impact with the rear of the truck was terrific. No one was injured but all were well shaken.

The driver of the truck admitted at once that it was his fault. He called his insurance agent in nearby Illinois and we agreed to wait there until he arrived. It was a long wait of about five hours and when the agent finally came he took the driver aside and somehow changed the fault from the truck driver to me. The result was that we got no consideration from the insurance company. A Chevrolet dealer showed up and arranged to tow our car into Greencastle, Indiana. There they gave us an estimate of \$450 for repairs. Time was important, so we traded our badly damaged Plymouth on a new Chevrolet and got on our way again after a delay of 24 hours.

We had notified the family of our delay and arrived at Lake Brownwood just in time for a spread of food Sunday noon. It was a happy gathering with many relatives from Bell County and other places present.

We have been to very few of these reunions because of the distance we would have to travel. As families become geographically separated their interest in such gatherings and in each other decreases and family ties are weakened. I have a feeling that our country might be better off if close family relationships were better maintained.

My work at Pittsburgh continued into the fall of 1938 when I was reassigned to a complex building program at Harrisburg. I would have charge of the auditing related to federal grants to the State of Pennsylvania covering some \$80 million of building construction and the federal aid to the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission for the seventy million dollar, 162 mile long turnpike from Harrisburg to near Pittsburgh. This was the first major toll road built in the United States.

On this new job I again replaced my friend, Gene Fuerst, who was sent back to the agency headquarters in Washington. He was the same whom I had relieved at Golconda in 1925, over thirteen years previously. As at Golconda, he very carefully brought the work up to date before turning it over to me. He was the one who remarked that he tried to be nice to even the office boy because "he might be my boss someday." I was not the office boy but he was nice to me and I did become his boss in 1947 when I was a colonel and he was a civilian member of my staff.

I assumed my duties in Harrisburg in early November and rented a house just across the Susquehanna River in the town of Camp Hill. Gladys and the children arrived from Pittsburgh about the first of December. It was a lovely place on the edge of town and across the street from a recreational park. The children were at very interesting ages, 14, 13 and 8. They enjoyed the Camp Hill schools, participating in sports and other scholastic activities. Bud played football and Sis was on the basketball and hockey teams. Gordon had little interest in sports but began his interest in chemistry by use of the play sets we bought for him. He finally majored in that field in college.

Choice and Chance

We were attracted by the nice kennel in our backyard and decided to buy a puppy. We bought a beautiful, small collie in Strafford, just outside Philadelphia on our way home after spending Christmas with Gladys's parents. The dealer told us he was born about Thanksgiving and Sis suggested we name him Turkey. That suited everyone, but it was soon just "Turk."

My work was interesting and it kept me very busy trying to manage two separate groups of people in different locations several blocks apart. Of the 50 or more on my staff, several were unusual characters. Some were men who had held quite responsible positions before the depression, but lost everything, including in some cases their self-respect. Of a different type was a particular man who was a paranoiac. I had no experience with a paranoiac and was seriously concerned when I first discovered his condition. He was an accountant, sent to me by the New York office. One day I received a letter the man had sent to my boss in New York asking for help in getting rid of a group of men who, he wrote, were persecuting him in various ways. I called him in and asked that he tell me about his troubles. He related in a very matter of fact fashion that several men, whom he described in detail, had been tormenting him and other members of his family for several years. He said the police and FBI to whom he had appealed had been of no help. These men inflicted pain by means such as an invisible ray projected from a machine set up in a house across the street from him. He told me they had power to make his mother cut her finger with a knife when slicing bread and make him have toothache, or pains elsewhere in his body. Finally, he said that the men lay in wait for him as he left the office and followed him to his room but did not enter, staying outside and using their powers to torment him with pain.

In my zeal to help I persuaded the man, a war veteran, to go to the Navy hospital in Philadelphia. On his return he was quite upset because, he said, they as much as told him he was crazy. There was nothing else I could do because he did a fair day's work, although he was slow. He told me that 'these men' even had power to force him to make errors in his mathematical calculations. I also made a visit to the place where he and his sister had a home in Philadelphia, both being single. On inquiry among the neighbors they told me the two were peculiar. My need for the man soon ended and he was assigned back to the New York office. I have not heard of him since.

By the summer of 1940 the work at Harrisburg was nearing completion and the improved condition of the national economy caused by the war defense effort greatly reduced the need for federal public works projects. The Pennsylvania Turnpike was almost ready for use. Some of the top management of this project had been called to Washington to help with the military construction program then getting underway. I began to consider my own future.

I filed papers with the Federal Civil Service Commission for a position as construction accountant-auditor. Around the first of September the Army offered me a position at my same salary, which I immediately accepted. When I returned home from Washington I found an invitation to come to Dayton, Ohio, for an interview with the Air Corps.

Before deciding whether to go to Dayton I wanted to check with my former employer, United Engineers, to see if they might be hiring again. So I went to Philadelphia the next day, Saturday, and after some discussion, they offered me a field job like I had in the early years

with that company, but at a little better salary than the Army had promised. I returned home and prepared to go to Dayton, regardless of the fact that I already had two jobs in hand.

The Air Corps (now Air Force) offices were just outside Dayton at what is still generally referred to as Wright Field. There I saw Mr. C. E. Orton, the Head Accountant. After a relatively short interview he told me he had a large job in Detroit that he would like me to accept. It was a \$63 million cost-plus-a-fixed-fee contract with the Packard Motor Company and my experience fitted the requirements. Mr. Orton had a telegram in his hand from his boss in Washington directing him to employ an auditor for this work immediately.

So now I had three jobs available to me, two of which I had accepted. I called Gladys and discussed the situation, reasoning that we would have access to better schools in Detroit than in the hinterlands where either of the other jobs would take us. I decided to take the Air Corps offer and promptly notified the other people that I had changed my mind, expressing appreciation for their consideration and apologizing for the inconvenience I was causing them. This was another turning point in my life which led to eighteen years, civilian and military, with the U. S. Air Force.

Chapter 24

The Air Force - Dayton - Washington

When I reported to Mr. Orton at Wright Field late in September, things were happening so fast and he was so loaded with work that he asked me to help him recruit additional accountants. My wide acquaintance in the Public Works program, then being closed down, was helpful in this respect. I got in touch with several of my associates there, who filed applications and were employed. My assistance in his office caused Mr. Orton to delay sending me to Detroit. After a couple of weeks he selected another man for that job.

Within a few weeks a plan of regional offices to cover the entire nation was developed. Mr. Orton asked me to accept the job as chief of the regional office with headquarters in New York City. This meant a promotion which I was pleased to accept. I was ordered to New York on a permanent basis, but after surveying the situation it was clear that no one was needed there at that time. After a few days Mr. Orton ordered me back to Wright Field to help him in the office. About this time he became ill. The pressure of the work was too much for him. He then asked that I find someone else for the New York job so I could stay with him at Wright Field. This I did by hiring the man who had been assistant to the chief of the Public Works regional office in New York. This placed us in a sort of reverse situation. With my new position as assistant to Mr. Orton, it seemed that Dayton would be the place to which the family could move. I rented a very nice house and we moved into it about the first of December 1940.

I spent a large part of November in Washington in the office of Mr. Orton's boss, the chief fiscal office of the Air Corps, then Col. Leland W. Miller. There were many matters that required attention and coordination in Washington in order to get the new auditing program

Choice and Chance

underway. Various government agencies were involved in establishing the auditing procedures. Neither Orton nor Miller was familiar with the new cost-plus-a-fixed-fee form of contract. In our meetings in Washington Col. Miller, therefore, told me to represent the Air Corps. He became impressed by my handling of matters and asked Mr. Orton to release me for his office in Washington. Mr. Orton demurred and Col. Miller understood, knowing that he needed me very much, especially in view of his health. When I first arrived in Dayton in September I called on an old friend, a former United Engineers employee, who had established his own construction company with headquarters there in Dayton. He told me that his Company had just received a large contract from the Navy. During subsequent social contacts this gentleman, Mr. G. W. Maxon, began to suggest that I should consider going to work for him and help out on this new contract. Although there was some frustration involved in work with Mr. Orton, I was generally well satisfied. Mr. Orton's health was not good and he was a person who could not quickly make up his mind. He wanted me as his assistant but was having not unusual difficulty getting my promotion approved due to budget and personnel limitations. Mr. Maxon continued his solicitation and made me an offer of about \$100 a month more than I was getting. I finally accepted about the middle of January 1941. I might call this another turning point in life, but for a time I felt it had turned in the wrong direction.

My work for Maxon Construction Co. was primarily on the new job at what was then Burns City (now Crane), Indiana, 150 miles from Dayton, making it necessary to commute on weekends. This began to cause family problems. The children were at ages when they needed me around. I soon saw that I had made a mistake and would not be able to adjust to that job.

I wrote to my friend, Col. Miller, in Washington and asked him if he could still use me. He promptly wrote that he could and that he would start the wheels rolling to get authority to hire me. This process took several weeks, but it was finally arranged at a grade lower than I had received with Mr. Orton. I had faith that I would get promoted in due course and promptly submitted my resignation.

Mr. Maxon was disgusted with me. I had been with him just five months. I had engaged an assistant whom I had known at Harrisburg and after three weeks on the job he died of a heart attack. I had not been of much benefit to Mr. Maxon.

School was out. Bud was working for the Air Corps at Wright Field. He did not go with me and the rest of the family when we went to Washington about the middle of July to report to Col. Miller and look for a place to live. After considerable searching we bought a new house at 4532 47th Street, Northwest, in Washington. I drove the family back to Dayton and returned to Washington by train. We were able to move into our new home about the first of September. Bud entered as a senior and Sis as a junior at Woodrow Wilson High School; Gordon went to Alice Deal Junior High.

My office was in the Munitions Building, a World War I "temporary" structure. It was razed in 1970, more than fifty years after construction. It is sometimes said that in Washington nothing is so permanent as a temporary job or a temporary building. At that time the war defense program was being pushed at full speed with the expectation that our country would eventually become involved in the European war. My new boss, Col. Miller, was very busy and needed help, particularly in connection with the mushroomed audit program with which Mr. Orton was contending. The Air Corps was the only segment of the War Department that

Choice and Chance

controlled its auditing function from the Washington headquarters level, requiring that all auditors perform their duties on an independent basis, just as private accounting firms do.

I was soon representing Col. Miller at all meetings of government agencies concerned with contract audit matters. The principal ones were the General Accounting Office, Army Finance, and Navy Cost Inspection Service. Much of our effort was directed toward simplification of procedures so as to speed up payments to contractors and also to reduce the number of auditors in their plants. The audit workload was so heavy that complaints about delayed payments were increasing. Mr. Orton was taxed even beyond the limit of his strength. Then came Pearl Harbor — December 7, 1941. The entire nation was quickly mobilized for all out war production. The major emphasis was on the construction of airplanes — as many as possible as fast as possible. This directly affected my work because it required more and more auditors and greater effort to simplify procedures. It was necessary to check costs of contractors carefully to avoid fraud and overpayments. This checking saved hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars.

After Pearl Harbor all military personnel in the Washington area began wearing their uniforms at all times. The work week was changed from five to six days, plus much night work. This was the beginning of the greatest show of industrial capability ever experienced by any nation. The numbers of planes required seemed fantastic. Rationing of materials and manpower was, of course, necessary.

As a family we were well established in our new home and began to share it with some to whom we rented a bedroom. Bud was graduated from Woodrow Wilson in June 1942. He then worked during the summer. Sis also had a job as a typist. Bud had indicated a desire not to go to college but suddenly changed his mind about the first of September and entered Abilene Christian College in Abilene, Texas. Sis continued in Woodrow Wilson and Gordon in Alice Deal.

In the spring of 1942 my boss, Col. Miller, was promoted to brigadier general and sent to England where the Air Force (I shall use Air Force instead of Air Corps) was building bases for our planes to use in fighting Germany. Miller's assistant, Col. Martenstein, became chief of the fiscal office, and my boss. About that time the name of the Air Corps was changed to "Army Air Forces." General H. H. Arnold was then Commanding General. Like Col. Miller, Martenstein had no knowledge of industrial auditing and left the direction of the Contract Audit Division at Wright Field largely up to me. Both Miller and Martenstein had been sufficiently satisfied with my work to get three promotions for me, so that by May 1942 I was a grade fourteen with a salary of \$6500 a year.

In justification for his request for my last promotion to grade CAF 14, Col. Martenstein wrote the Personnel Director in part as follows: "Rampy.... works out the terms of modified contracts which result in more moderate profits to contractors and gain substantial savings to the government. As an example, the personal calculations and alert thinking of Rampy resulted in the saving of forty million dollars." Thus my responsibilities in connection with major procurement had increased until it was my privilege to participate in conferences with the Under Secretary of War, who was responsible for all War Department procurement.

Choice and Chance

By fall of 1942 the Air Force audit workload was so heavy that upward of 4000 people were engaged in this function. The procedures were still cumbersome, not being designed to fit the speed and volume of the program on which we were engaged. Contractors complained about the number of auditors in their plants and of the delays in payment of their claims. In an effort to get firsthand information, Col. Martenstein went with me and representatives of other interested agencies to the Douglas Aircraft Company's plant in Santa Monica, Cal., in December 1942. Among those who went was Capt. Fladger Tannery, an organization analyst of the Air Force's Management Division, who was then making a survey of Col. Martenstein's office. Capt. Tannery was a CPA and had taught accounting at the University of Texas. Col. John McEachren, a CPA from a Detroit firm, represented the War Department's Services of Supply. The General Accounting Office was also represented. Mr. Orton went directly from Wright Field and met us in California.

Choice and Chance



Hog Island Shipyard



The Drinkwater Home (Above, Right), 1920

Courtship, 1919

Gladys and Randall



The Church of Christ, 1920

TRR's Letter of Introduction from the Church
In Duster, Texas (Right)

From the Church of Christ at Duster Tex
To Whom it may Concern
This is to Certify that Randal
Ransom has lived in our midst
and like the undersigned found
him to be a Gentleman in
every respect and also a Christian
of the highest Character and any
Confidence that may be placed
in him such will be highly appreciated
by the undersigned
Elders Signed
H.A. Huddleston
R.L. McCallan
B.M. McCallan
Deacons
J.M. Coice
C.D. Sandimer
This Feb 1st 1920



Mr. and Mrs. Alfred H. Drinkwater
request the honour of your presence
at the marriage of their daughter
Gladys A.
to
Mr. T. Randall Rampy
of Holland, Texas
Saturday evening, December Sixteenth
nineteen hundred and twenty-two
at eight o'clock
at their home
Fifty-one hundred and Thirteen Brown Street
Philadelphia

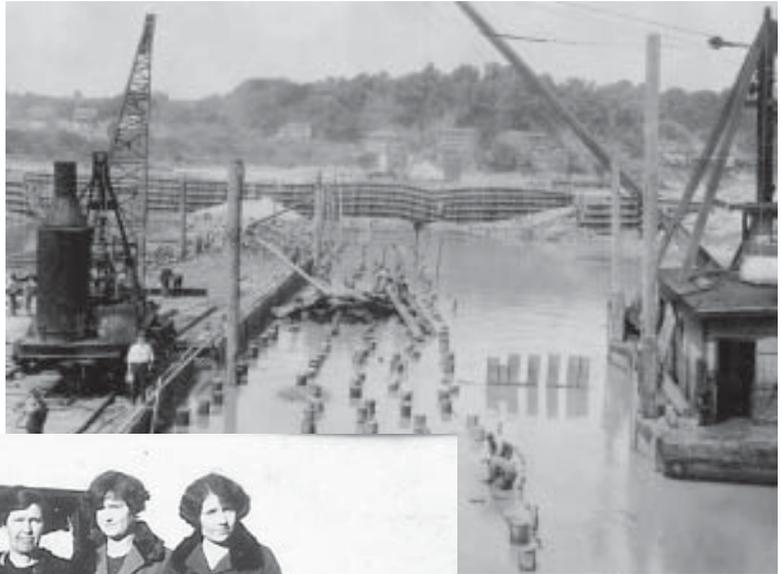
Marriage, December 17, 1922

Gladys and Randall

Choice and Chance



First Child,
TRR, Jr.
1924



TRR at Cofferdam,
Golconda, 1928
(Above)



Visiting Family in Texas, 1926
(Above)



Home in Golconda,
1927 (Above)
and
Today (Left)



Choice and Chance



Mildred and Randall, Jr., 1928



At the Drinkwater's, 1928



Gordon, 1930



Pittsburgh, 1937-38



The Family, 1933



Springfield, PA, 1930



Camp Hill, PA,
1939-40



Drexel Hill, PA,
1930-37



Oakwood, OH,
1939



Washington, DC, 1940-45



Rampy Family Reunion, Texas, 1940